

## SŪRAH 27

## AN-NAML (THE ANT)

Makkah Period

Revealed in the middle Makkah period, this *sūrah* has 93 verses, and derives its name from the word *al-naml* (the ant) in verse 18. It emphasizes that only those who accept the truths expounded in the Qur'an and order their lives according to God's commandments can truly benefit from this Revelation. One of the basic obstacles to adopting the way of the Qur'an is the denial of the Hereafter, which usually makes one irresponsible and a slave to one's carnal desires. This *sūrah* gives examples from history of those who stubbornly resisted God's Message and those who accepted it – the Prophet Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, even though they were the most powerful rulers of their time. It expounds many truths that prove God's Oneness and the Hereafter and, through a number of questions, it establishes the falsehood of polytheism.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. *Tā. Sīn*. These are the Revelations of the Qur'an, (and) a Book clear in itself and clearly showing the truth;<sup>1</sup>
2. Guidance and glad tidings for the believers,
3. Who establish the Prayer in conformity with its conditions and pay the Prescribed Purifying Alms, and in the Hereafter, they have certainty of faith.
4. As for those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have surely decked out their deeds to be appealing to them (because of their unbelief),<sup>2</sup> and so they wander in anxiety (about their worldly lives with deadened hearts).
5. Those are the ones for whom is the worst of punishment (in the world and in the Hereafter), and they will be the greatest losers in the Hereafter (as they will be left with no good deeds forwarded for acceptance).<sup>3</sup>
6. And to you (O Messenger), the Qur'an is being conveyed from the Presence of One All-Wise, All-Knowing.<sup>4</sup>
7. (Remember and recount to them) when Moses (while traveling in the desert saw a fire and) said to his family: "I perceive a fire far off. (Wait here,) I will bring you from there some information (about where we are and the way we should take), or bring you at least a burning brand so that you may (kindle a fire and) warm yourselves."
8. When he came to it, he was called: "Blessed is he who is at the fire and those who are around it; and All-Glorified is God (above having any resemblance with the created), the Lord of the worlds."<sup>5</sup>
9. "O Moses! It is I, God, the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Wise.
10. "Now, throw down your staff." (He threw it, and) when he saw it (as a big

snake) slithering (so swiftly) as if a small serpent, he turned about retreating, and did not turn back. “O Moses, have no fear. The Messengers (those who enjoy nearness to Me and, therefore, absolute security) do not (have any reason to) feel fear in My Presence.

**11.** “Only those who have done wrong (should fear). But if (they repent and) substitute good in place of evil – surely I am All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.

**12.** “Put your (right) hand into your bosom: it will come forth shining white without flaw. It is (one) among the nine signs (miracles<sup>6</sup> for you to show) to the Pharaoh and his people. Surely they are a transgressing people.”

**13.** But when Our (miraculous) signs came to them in plain sight and clear enough to have opened their eyes to truth, they said: “This is clearly nothing but sorcery.”

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1. The Qurʾān mentions a Manifest Record (*sūrah* 36: 12), and in several of its verses (such as *sūrah* 6: 59, *sūrah* 10: 61, and *sūrah* 11: 6) refers to a Manifest Book (for explanations of both, see *sūrah* 6: 59, note 13; *sūrah* 13: 39, note 13; *sūrah* 17: 14, note 10). In several other verses (*sūrah* 5: 11; *sūrah* 12: 1; *sūrah* 26: 2; *sūrah* 28: 2), it refers to a Book clear in itself and which clearly shows the truth.

The Manifest Record is the Original Register which comprises the originals of everything to come into existence and every event to happen, in the Divine Knowledge, together with the causes and laws to accompany them. As for the Manifest Book, it is the Book of Creation manifesting whatever of the Manifest Record or the Original Register which the Divine Will wants to bring into the realm of creation, and in which everything in creation, down to the sayings and deeds of every human being and jinn, is being recorded. It may be said that the Qurʾān, which is referred to as the Book clear in itself and which clearly shows the truth, is identical with the Manifest Record with respect to the eternal existence of both in God’s Knowledge, and with the Manifest Book with respect to their existence in the realm of creation. However, the Qurʾān is also different from both. It is different from the Manifest Record with respect to the fact that while the Manifest Record exists in the Divine Knowledge or is even identi-

cal with It in one respect, the Qurʾān is also related with the Divine Speech. As for its difference from the Manifest Book, the Qurʾān issues or has been revealed from God’s Attribute of Speech, and is a Book which is read, and stored in writing, whereas, the Manifest Book is the Book of Creation that emanates from the Divine Attributes of Will and Power. (God knows best.)

2. That God decks out one’s deeds to be appealing to oneself means that, as a result of the laws and rules He has established for human life and of the nature of unbelief, those who do not follow God’s Religion are usually haughty and approve of their own deeds, whereas true believers are always self-critical, fearful about whether they will be able to accomplish whatever needs to be done in order to obtain God’s approval.

Some verses state that Satan decks out their deeds to be appealing to the unbelievers. What Satan does is that it whispers to humans and invites them to do an evil deed which he tries to persuade them it is good. He has no power to compel them to do something.

3. In the Hereafter, people will find themselves at different levels, as they are in the world, according to their level of belief or unbelief, their good or bad deeds, their sincerity in carrying out these deeds, their sacrifices along God’s

way or their efforts to bar people from this way. Because of this, both Paradise and Hell will have stations for people at each level.

4. Because of this, the Qur'ān is an embodiment of perfect wisdom and knowledge.

5. As stated in *Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ* (28), God Almighty called out to the Prophet Moses, upon him be peace, from behind a tree (28: 30). We explained in note 5 to *sūrah* 20 that this type of Divine calling is one of the three types of Divine Revelation. The Qur'ān clarifies that God addresses human beings either from behind a veil, or by putting the meaning into the heart (as a special kind of Revelation), or by sending an angel (*sūrah* 42: 51). In order not to provide any grounds for anthropomorphism, as well as to mark the significance of the particular event, the Qur'ān uses the expression, *All-Glorified is God, the Lord of the worlds,*

meaning that God is absolutely above having any resemblance with the created.

The valley in which this event took place was the "sacred valley of Tuwā" in Sinai (for the sacredness of this valley, see *sūrah* 20: 12, note 5). God blessed the Prophet Moses (who was at the fire when this event took place) with Messengership and His speech to him, and also his family (who were around the fire) because of Moses, upon him be peace. He also blessed the region around this place, which is the land of Damascus, including Palestine; here He has produced many blessings for all people (*sūrah* 7: 137; *sūrah* 17: 1; *sūrah* 21: 71, 81). He has also blessed the Prophets and their followers who have lived in this region (as well as in other regions).

6. For the nine signs, see *sūrah* 7: 133; *sūrah* 17: 101, note 37.

وَحَمْدُ وَايَاهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ  
كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ  
عِلْمًا وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
﴿١٥﴾ وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُدَ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عِبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا  
تَطَافُرُ بِهَا وَيُؤْتِنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْبَاطِنُ ﴿١٦﴾  
وَجِئْنَا لِسُلَيْمَانَ جُنُودَهُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ وَالطَّيْرِ قَهْمًا  
يُورِثُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ حَتَّى إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَى وَادِ الْقَلْبِ قَالَتُمْ مَسَاءُ  
أَيُّهَا الْقَلْبُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاجِدَكُمْ لَا يُخِطُّكُمْ فِيهَا سُلَيْمَانُ  
وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَتَبَتَّ سَاحِجُكَ مِنْ  
قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ  
عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأُدْخِلْني رَحْمَتِكَ  
فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَتَقَفَّ الطَّيْرُ فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لَأَ أَرَى  
الْهُدَى هُدًى أَمْرًا كَانِ مِنَ الْعَاقِبِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ لَأَعَذِّبَنَّهُ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا  
أَوْ لَأَذْبَحَنَّهُ أَوْ لَيَأْتِيَنِي بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾ فَكَلَّمَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ  
فَقَالَ أَحَطُّ بِمَا لَمْ تَحِطُ بِهِ وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَإٍ بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٍ ﴿٢٢﴾



14. They rejected them out of mere iniquity and self-exaltation, although their consciences were convinced of their being true. So, see what was the outcome for those given in to spreading disorder and corruption.

15. (On the other hand, We saved the Children of Israel, whom the Pharaohs had persecuted for centuries, and granted them great triumph. And in time,) We granted David and Solomon (special) knowledge. Both used to thank and praise God, saying: “All praise and gratitude are for God, Who has favored us more than many of His believing servants.”<sup>7</sup>

16. Solomon succeeded David. He would say (citing in gratitude God’s favors to him): “O people! We have been taught the language of birds,<sup>8</sup> and we have been granted (some portion) of everything (which God provides for His servants). Surely this is a conspicuous favor.

17. One day his hosts of jinn, and of men, and of birds were assembled before Solomon (upon his command), and were led forth under full control,

18. Until, when they reached a valley of ants, one of the ants said: “O you ants! Get into your dwellings lest Solomon and his army crush you unawares.”

19. Smiling at her words (in humble contentment with God’s favors to him), he said: “My Lord! Inspire and guide me so that I may thank You for Your favor which

You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and so that I may act righteously in a manner that will please You; and include me (out of Your mercy) among Your righteous servants.”

20. (On another occasion,) he inspected the birds and said: “How is it that I cannot see the hoopoe? Or is he among the absentees?”

21. “I will certainly inflict a severe punishment on him, or maybe even kill him, unless he comes to me with a convincing reason (for his absence).”

22. Before long, the hoopoe came up and said: “I have obtained (some important information) which you do not have, and have come to you from Sheba<sup>9</sup> with reliable news.

7. David and Solomon, upon them be peace, were among the great Messengers of God, each of whom God distinguished with many special favors. First of all, both were Message-bearing Prophets. God granted Caliphate to David and kingdom to Solomon, upon them both be peace. Both were granted special knowledge, wisdom, sound judgment, and the ability to distinguish between right and wrong (21: 79). Mountains and birds glorified God with David; he was taught how to smelt iron and make armor, while Solomon was able to employ the jinn and the devils, to understand the language of the birds and ants, and to travel on wind. Despite all these blessings, these Prophets remained perfectly humble. David earned his living by manual labor. They attributed to God whatever they enjoyed. So they recognized that their being more favored, as compared with many of God's believing servants, was not a blessing that they had deserved or some privilege to rejoice in and be proud of; rather, they perceived it as a means of their being tested, that required praise and thankfulness.

8. The verses, *We have been taught the language of birds* (27: 16) and *The birds assembled* (38: 19), indicate that Almighty God bestowed on the Prophet Solomon, upon him be peace, the knowledge of language of the birds and the language of their abilities (how they could be of benefit), as well as pointing out David's glorification of God with the birds. Given this, and also taking into account that the earth is the laden table of the All-Merciful, set up in our honor, most animals and birds that benefit from this table may serve us. God uses small animals, like honeybees and silkworms, through the guidance of His special inspiration, to benefit humankind.

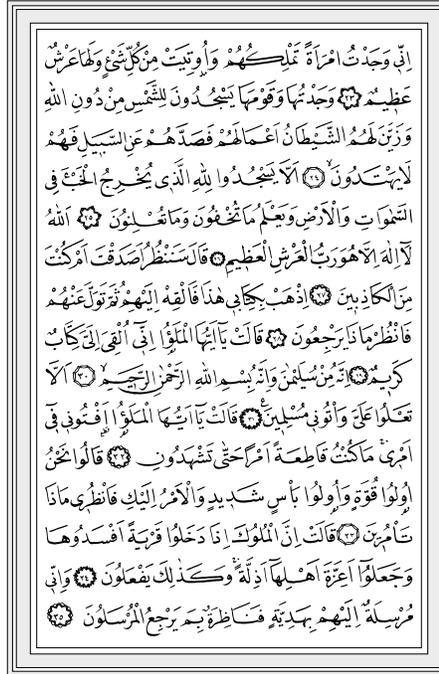
If we could discover how to use other birds and animals, many species might be employed for important tasks, just as domestic animals are. Thus, the verses mentioned show the ultimate aim in subjugating and benefiting from

birds. By specifying the greatest aim in this field, the verses urge humankind toward it.

In the same verses, God Almighty indicates:

So that his sinlessness as a Prophet and his justice as a sovereign might not be damaged, I subjugated to one of your fellow men, who was totally submitted to Me, the enormous creatures in My Kingdom and made them speak. I put most of My hosts and animals at his service. I have entrusted to each of you the Supreme Trust that the heavens and earth avoided undertaking, and have endowed you with the potential to rule on the earth according to My commands. Therefore, you should yield to the One in Whose Hand are the reins of all creatures. This will cause His creatures to yield to you, so that you may use them in the Name of the One Who holds their reins and rise to a position worthy of your potential. Most birds may be an intimate friend or an obedient servant, like Solomon's hoopoe. They may entertain you and drive you with zeal toward the perfections and attainments of which you are capable, rather than causing you to fall from the position required by your humanity, as vain amusements do. (*The Words*, "the 20<sup>th</sup> Word," 272)

9. Sheba (Saba') was the famous trading nation of southern Arabia, which ruled for almost 1,000 years from around 1100 BC to around 115 BC. Their capital was Ma'arib, located 55 miles north-east of San'a, the present capital of Yemen. They controlled the trade between East Africa, India, the Far East and Arabia with Egypt, Syria, Greece, and Rome. In addition to this, they had an excellent irrigation system which dotted the length and breadth of the country with dams. Their land was unusually fertile and lush. These explain their affluence. Greek historians called them the richest nation of the world (al-Mawdūdī, 7: 151, note 29).



23. “I found there a woman ruling over them, one who has been granted everything (that a ruler is expected to have), and who has a mighty throne.

24. “However, I found her and her people prostrating to the sun rather than God. Satan has decked out their deeds to be appealing to them, and thus has barred them from the (unique straight) way, so they are not rightly guided,

25. “So that they do not prostrate before God, Who brings to light what is hidden in the heavens and the earth (Who brings into the light of existence all things and beings in the heavens and the earth from the veil of non-existence), and knows what you keep secret and what you disclose.

26. “God – there is no deity but He, the Lord of the Mighty Throne.”<sup>10</sup>

27. (Solomon) said: “We will see whether you are speaking the truth or are one of the liars.

28. “Go with this letter of mine, and drop it to them; then draw back from them and see how they will deal with it among themselves, and return.”<sup>11</sup>

29. She (the Queen, when the letter reached her) said: “O you nobles! See, an honorable letter has been cast to me.

30. “It is from Solomon, and it is: ‘In the Name of God, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate.

31. ‘Do not act towards me in defiance, but come to me in submission.’

32. “O you nobles! Let me have your counsel in this matter. (You know well that) I never conclude a decision on a matter unless you are present with me.”

33. They said: “We dispose great power and we dispose great daring but the decision is yours, so consider what you will command.”

34. She said: “When kings enter a country, they cause destruction and corruption in it, and make the noble (ones of its inhabitants) abased. This is what they really do.

35. “Now I will send them a present and see with what (answer) the envoys return.”

10. Deluded by Satan and defeated by their carnal desires, many people stray from the Straight Path and live their entire life in misguidance. They cannot find the greatest and clearest truth, a truth even a bird knows with certainty. The Qur'ān draws attention to this fact in another verse as well: *(He [Cain] did not know what to do with the dead body of his brother.) Then God sent forth a raven, scratching in the earth, to show him how he might cover the corpse of his brother. So seeing he cried: "Oh, alas for me! Am I then unable even to be like this raven, and so find a way to cover the corpse of my brother?" And he became distraught with remorse (sūrah 5: 31).*

Said Nursi reminds us of this fact in many places in his works, for example:

Furthermore, our nature and spiritual being demonstrate that we have been created to worship God. As for our physical powers and ability to live here, we are worse off than sparrows. But in respect to our knowledge, understanding our needs, and supplication and worship, which are necessary for our spiritual life and the life of the Hereafter, we are the king and commander of all animate creatures.

O my soul. If you consider this world as your major goal and work for it, you will remain only a soldier with no more control over your affairs than a sparrow. But if you move toward the Hereafter, considering this world to be a field to be sown, a preparation for the other world, and act accordingly, you become the ruler of the animal kingdom, a supplicant of Almighty God, and His favored or indulged guest in this world. You can choose either option. So ask for guidance and success in His way from the Most Merciful of the merciful. (*The Words*, "The 5<sup>th</sup> Word," 29–30)

Your potential makes you superior to all

animals. But even a sparrow can do a better job than you when it comes to satisfying your daily needs. Why do you not understand that your duty as a human being is to work for the real, everlasting life? You are not an animal! Most of your worldly concerns are trivial and useless matters from which you derive no benefit. And yet, leaving aside the most essential things, you spend your time acquiring useless information as if you had thousands of years to live.

As for the worldly, physical dimension of your being, you cannot compete with a bee or a sparrow, are weaker than a fly or a spider, and cannot achieve what they can. As for the second aspect of your being, however, you can surpass the mountains, the earth, and the heavens, for you can bear a burden that they cannot. Thus, your acts have a greater impact than theirs. When you do something good or build something, it reaches only as far as your hand and your strength. But your evil and destructive acts are aggressive and widespread.

We have been created in the best pattern. If we concentrate on this worldly life we are far lower than a sparrow, although we have far more developed faculties than any animal. (So our duty in the world is to find God, know Him and worship Him alone). (*The Words*, "The 23<sup>rd</sup> Word," 335–336)

11. Although we ought to believe in a person's verbal declaration, the hoopoe damaged his reputation for reliability by committing a grievous fault. He deserted the army without permission. The Qur'ān orders that any statement of a transgressor be tested (one known for his or her transgressions of the limits set by God), and that no one attempt to do anything based on the statement of such a person (*sūrah* 49: 6).

36. When he (the envoy with the present) came to Solomon, he (Solomon) said: “Do you mean to help me with wealth? What God has granted me (of Prophethood, kingdom, and wealth) is much more and better than all that He has given you. It is only (people such as) you who would rejoice in this gift of yours.

37. “Go back to them (who sent you, and inform them that, if they do not come to us in submission), we will certainly come upon them with hosts which they have no power to resist. We will assuredly drive them from there in disgrace, and they will be humbled.”<sup>12</sup>

38. (The Queen, having received his message, decided to visit Solomon at his home. Knowing of her journey,) Solomon said (to his council): “O you nobles! Who among you can bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?”

39. One strong and cunning among the jinn said: “I can bring it to you before you rise from your council. Surely I have the strength and skill to do so and I am trustworthy.”

40. And one who had some knowledge of the Book said: “I can bring it to you in the twinkling of your eye.” When Solomon saw the throne set in his presence, he said: “This is out of the pure grace of my Lord that He may try me whether I give thanks or act with ingratitude. Whoever gives thanks gives thanks only for (the good of) his own soul; and whoever acts with ingratitude – (let him be aware that) my Lord is surely All-Wealthy and Self-Sufficient, All-Munificent.”<sup>13</sup>

41. He said: “Disguise her throne, and let us see whether she is able to find guidance or remains one of those who are not guided.”<sup>14</sup>

42. When she (the Queen) arrived, she was asked: “Is your throne like this?” She

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُسَيِّمٌ قَالَ لَا تَخِفُوا عَلَيَّ إِنِّي مِنَ اللَّهِ مُخَوِّضٌ أُنَاسِكُمْ  
بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَهْدِيَّتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ ۝ اذْجِعِ إِلَيْهِمْ فَلَمَّا اتَّيْتَهُمْ يُخَوِّدُونَ لَأَقْبَلَ  
هُنَّ بِهَا وَلَطِرٍ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْهَا أَذَلَةٌ وَهِنَّ صَائِرُونَ ۝ قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا  
الْمَلِكُ أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ۝ قَالَ عَمْرِيُّ  
مِنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ  
أَمِينٌ ۝ قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ  
يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ فَلَمَّا رَآهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي  
لِيَتْلُوَنِي ءَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي  
عَزِيزٌ ذِكْرُهُ ۝ قَالَ تَكَرُّوا وَلَمَّا نَظَرْتُمْ نَفْرًا تَنْتَدِبُونَ ۝ أَمْ تَكُونُونَ  
مِنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ۝ فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ قِيلَ أَهَكَذَا عَصَرْتُمْ  
قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ وَأَوْسِنَا أَلَعَلَّ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ ۝  
وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِتْمَانًا كَانَتْ مِنْ  
قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ ۝ قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الصَّرْحَ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً  
وَكَنَفَتْ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُزْدَمٌ مِنْ قَوَارِيرٍ قَالَتْ رَبِّ  
إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سَيِّئِينَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

said: “It is as if it were the same. We were given knowledge (about the magnificence of Solomon’s rule and his extraordinary power) before all this (we have seen here), and we have already decided to submit.”

43. That she had been worshipping other than God kept her back (from the Straight Path); for she belonged to a disbelieving people.<sup>15</sup>

44. It was said (to her): “Enter the palace.” When she saw it, she thought it was a pool of water and bared her calves (in order to hold her robes above the water). He (Solomon) said: “This is a palace paved with crystal.” (Having now concluded that Solomon must truly be a Prophet,) she said: “My Lord, surely I have wronged myself (by worshipping false deities). But now I submit myself, in Solomon’s company, to God, the Lord of the worlds.”<sup>16/17</sup>

12. The Qur'an never condones the mobilization of armies on others or the occupation of their territories for worldly reasons. It also forbids bloodshed, killing, and usurpation. In short, it condemns every kind of imperialism. What it reports from the Queen of Sheba in verse 34 is of this import. So, Solomon's threat to the Shebans was not a threat of warlike aggression. It is quite clear in the verses that as a Messenger, Solomon, upon him be peace, was never proud of his wealth or kingdom, and never had an eye on the wealth or lands of others. His only concern was to see that the true faith was embraced by more people, so they could attain true felicity in both worlds or that others should submit to the system based on righteousness and justice in all its dimensions. Everybody should enjoy freedom from the shackles of servitude to human-made systems of oppression, and the obstacles put between them and their only Creator and Sustainer by those systems should be removed so that they can make a free choice.

13. The verse describes the wonderful event of how the Queen of Sheba's throne was brought to Solomon's court. The verse suggests that things can be transported over long distances, either bodily or in their images. In fact, God Almighty bestowed this as a miracle upon Solomon, upon him be peace, who was honored with kingship as well as Divine Messengership, so that he could maintain his sinlessness and justice by being personally informed of all regions in his extensive realm, see his subjects' conditions, and hear their troubles.

That means that if we rely on Almighty God and appeal to Him in the language of our potentials, as the Prophet Solomon did in the language of his sinlessness, and if our acts conform to His laws in the universe and with what attracts His favor, the world may become like a town for us. The Queen's throne was in Yemen, yet it was seen in (Jerusalem in the region of) Damascus either physically or as an image, as were the forms of the people around it, who were seen and heard.

This verse suggests the transportation of forms and the transmission of sounds over long distances. In effect, it says: "O rulers. If you wish to realize perfect justice, try to see and know your realm in all its details, as Solomon did. Only by rising to such a level can a just ruler, who cherishes his subjects, be saved from being held accountable. Only in this manner may he realize perfect justice." What God Almighty is saying here is:

O humankind. I bestowed on My servant a vast realm. In order for him to realize perfect justice throughout it, I allowed him to know whatever was happening therein. Since I have created every individual with a capacity to rule according to My commands, I have also given him, as a requirement of My Wisdom, the potential to scan the face of earth and comprehend whatever is in it. Even if every individual cannot reach this point, humankind as a species may realize it. If you cannot achieve it physically, you can do it spiritually, like the saints. Therefore, you may benefit from this great blessing. Come on, and let Me see you do it. Fulfill your duties of worship. Strive in such a way that you turn the surface of the earth into a garden; so that you can see every part of it, and hear the sounds from every corner. Heed the decree of the All-Merciful: *He it is Who has made the earth subservient to you (as if a docile animal), so go about through its shoulders (uplands) and eat of His provision; but (be ever mindful that) to Him will be the Resurrection.* (sūrah 67: 15)

Thus, the verse mentioned above marks the ultimate point in the transmission of images and sounds, which constitutes one of the latest and most significant developments in science and technology, and encourages humanity toward that furthest point. (*The Words*, "The 20<sup>th</sup> Word," 270)

The Prophet Solomon, upon him be peace, was a Prophet and a king. Since he fully submitted to God's Will, he only cared for absolute justice and the good of people in both worlds.

Therefore, he used whatever ability and favors God had bestowed on him in His way and for the people's good. But other kings and/or governments, including the modern "democratic" ones that champion justice and fundamental human rights and freedoms, have used throughout history and continue to use at the present time, all the powers they have, much in the way the Queen of Sheba described in the verse 34: *When kings enter a country, they cause destruction and corruption in it, and make the noble (ones of its inhabitants) abased. This is what they really do.*

14. The Queen and her people worshipped the sun; thus, her throne may have been decorated with images or figures that belonged to, and demonstrated, her faith. The Prophet Solomon, upon him be peace, wanted to disguise it, most probably by obliterating the images on it and decorating it with inscriptions and images associated with the Divine Religion. By doing so, Solomon aimed at her conversion.

15. The Queen worshipped the sun, not as the result of willful choice or stubbornness on her part, but only as a tradition. She was born into an unbelieving nation and grew up as one who saw the sun being worshipped. Yet, she did

not have such a character that would insist on misguidance due to reasons such as arrogance, submission to carnal desires, and stubbornness. When she became aware of the rule of the Prophet Solomon, she began to grasp the truth.

16. What the Queen witnessed concerning the character, manners, and rule of Solomon sufficed for her to conclude that he could be nothing but a Messenger of God and to understand all that he had derived from his faith and mission. This is the reason why she did not hesitate to accept the true faith and became a Muslim.

17. The Biblical account of the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (*2 Chronicles*, 9: 1-12) is different from that found in the Qur'ān in many respects.

However, the rabbinical traditions of the Jews relate the story in terms and details that more closely resemble the Qur'ānic version, except for the fact that there are also calumnies against Solomon, upon him be peace, in the rabbinical texts.

The Qur'ān has restored both Solomon and all other Israelite Prophets, against whom many similar accusations are found in the Bible, to their rightful honored positions.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ  
 فَإِنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَتْ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ  
 تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ لَوْلَا تَسْتَغْفِرُونَ اللَّهَ  
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالُوا اطَّيَّرْنَا بِكَ وَبِعِمَمِكَ قَالِ  
 طَائِرُكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ تُفْتَنُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَكَانَ فِي  
 الْمَدْيَنَةِ ثَمُودَ ذَهَبًا يُصِيدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصِلُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾  
 قَالُوا اتَّخَذْنَا سُمُومًا بِاللَّهِ لَنُنَبِّئَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ نَسْتَقُولُنَّ لَوْلِيَهُ  
 مَا شَهِدْنَا مَمْلَكَتِ أَهْلِهِ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَمَكَرُوا  
 مَكْرًا وَمَكَرْنَا مَكْرًا وَهُمْ لَا يُشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَانظُرْ  
 كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْرِهِمْ إِنَّا دَرَجَاتُهَا وَمَقَامُهُمْ  
 أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ قَالَتْ بِيُودِهِمْ خَاوِيَةٌ يَأْكُلُونَ  
 فِي ذَلِكَ لَأَيَّةٌ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَأَنْبِئْنَا الْبَدِينَ  
 أَنْمُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَحَمَلُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَلَوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا  
 الْفَجَاعَةَ عَلَيْكُمْ بَلَّغْتُمْ إِلَاتِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَصْبِرُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ أَلَيْسَ لَنَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَهُاتِكَ  
 سَهْوَةً مِنْ دُونِ النَّسَاءِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّجْرِمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

48. There were nine ringleaders in the city, causing disorder and corruption in the land and not setting things right.

49. They said, swearing in God's Name: "We will certainly swoop on him and his family by night suddenly and kill them all. Then we will assuredly say to his heirs that we did not witness the destruction of his family (nor of Ṣāliḥ himself); indeed we speak the truth."

50. And so they devised a scheme, and indeed We put Our will into force (to give them their just deserts), while they were not aware.

51. So, see what was the end of their scheme! We utterly destroyed them and their people all together.

52. Those then are their houses, all lying in utter ruins because they were lost in wrongdoing. Surely in this is a sign (an important lesson) for a people seeking knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

53. And We saved those who believed and kept from disobedience to God in reverence for Him and piety.

54. We also sent Lot as Messenger. He warned his people: "Will you commit that abhorrent indecency in plain view (of one another)?"

55. "What! will you continue to come with lust to men in place of women? You are indeed an ignorant people with no sense (of decency and right and wrong).

45. And certainly We sent to the Thamūd their brother, Ṣāliḥ, (with the message): "Worship God alone." (When he conveyed the Message,) they split into factions in dispute with each other.

46. He (Ṣāliḥ) said (to them): "O my people! Why do you seek to hasten the coming (upon you) of evil instead of good? Why do you not seek God's forgiveness for your sins so that you may be shown mercy (to be granted a good, virtuous life in the world and eternal happiness in the Hereafter)?"

47. They said: "We augur ill of you and those who are with you." (Ṣāliḥ) answered: "What you describe as augury is (something ordained) by God. But the truth is that you are a people who are being tried."<sup>18</sup>

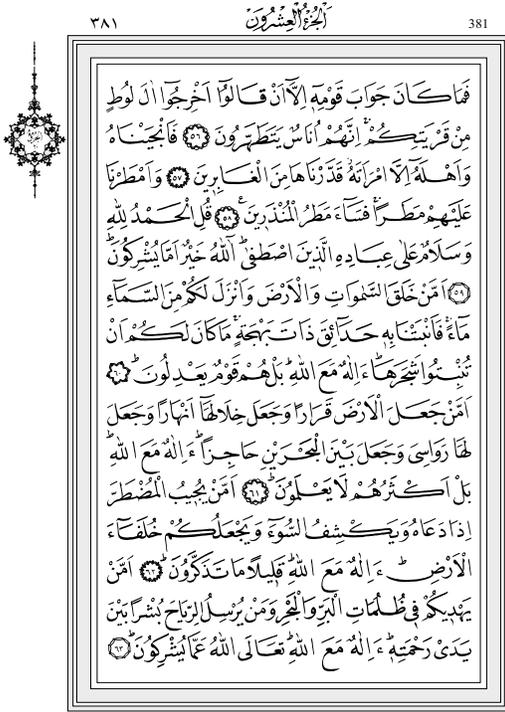
18. The peoples to whom Messengers were sent usually accused the Messengers of causing them evils. God sent the Messengers (i) to illuminate the way for humankind; (ii) to guide them to the service of God; (iii) to teach them God's laws; (iv) to be examples for them to follow in their lives; (v) to establish balance between the material and spiritual life, the reason and the soul, this world and the next, and indulgence and abstinence; and (vi) to be God's witnesses so that people will not be able to plead ignorance in the Hereafter (*The Messenger of God*, 23–32). They were the perfect teachers and educators. A human being is like raw material that needs to be worked on; each has the potential to develop. The Messengers developed this potential so that they were able to rise to the rank of perfection. Testing is an indispensable dimension and requirement of this education. Therefore, God tests people in many ways and on many matters; we may perceive these as being good or bad.

When a Messenger came to a people, they were tested in different ways. The Qur'an declares: *And We did not send a Prophet to a township but We seized its people with distress and hardship so that they might (wake from heedlessness and) be humble (invoking Us for forgiveness and turning to the truth)*

(*sūrah 7: 94*). This is also true for a human being or a community that has newly accepted God's Religion. Nevertheless, many people in history have accused their Prophets of being the cause of these evils, while they attributed to themselves whatever good they were favored with, as pointed out in verse *sūrah 7: 131*: *But whenever prosperity came their way, they would say: "This is but our due and by our deserving," and whenever evil befell them, they would attribute it to the evil auspices (they alleged) of Moses and whoever was in his company. Beware! their auspice (whether evil or good) was decreed by God, but most of them did not know (being ignorant of true knowledge).*

Ṣāliḥ's answer is the same as that in verses (*sūrah 17: 13–14*): *Every human being's fate We have fastened around his neck, and We will bring forth for him on the Day of Resurrection a book which he will see spread open. "Read your book! Your own self suffices you this day as a reckoner against you."* For a detailed explanation, see the corresponding note 10.

19. For other accounts of the story of Ṣāliḥ and his people, see *sūrah 7: 73–79*; *sūrah 11: 61–68*; *sūrah 26: 141–159*.



56. But his people's only reply was nothing but to say (to one another): "Expel Lot's family (as well as himself) from your land. They are a people who make themselves out to be pure!"

57. Then We saved him and his family except his wife. We decreed that she should be among those who stayed behind (and were destroyed).

58. We poured upon them a (destructive) rain (of stones). How evil was the rain of those who had been warned.<sup>20</sup>

59. Say: "All praise and gratitude are for God, and peace be upon those of His servants whom He has chosen (and made pure)." Is God better or all that they associate as partners (with Him)?

60. Or He Who has created the heavens and the earth, and sends down for you water from the sky? – We cause to grow with it gardens full of loveliness and delight: it is not in your power to cause their trees to grow. Is there another deity besides God? No, but they are a people who veer away (from truth). –

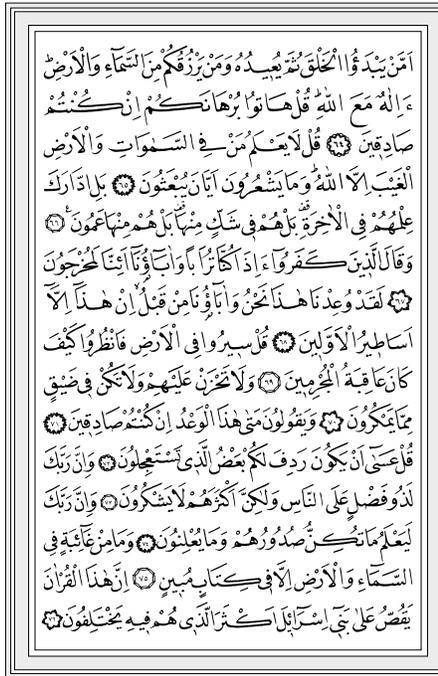
61. Or He Who has made the earth as a fixed abode, and has caused rivers to flow in its fissures, and has set for it firm mountains, and has placed a barrier between the two large bodies of water?<sup>21</sup> Is there another deity besides God? No, but most of them do not know.

62. Or He Who answers the helpless one in distress when he prays to Him, and removes the affliction from him, and (Who) has made you (O humankind) vicegerents of the earth (to improve it and rule over it according to God's commandments)? Is there another deity besides God? How little you reflect!

63. Or He Who guides you through the veils of the darkness of land and sea, and Who sends forth the (merciful) winds as a glad tiding in advance of His mercy? Is there another deity besides God? Absolutely exalted is He above all that they associate with Him as partners.

20: For other accounts of the Prophet Lot and his people, see *sūrah* 7: 80–84; *sūrah* 11: 77–83; *sūrah* 15: 58–76; *sūrah* 21: 74–75; *sūrah* 26: 160–174.

21: For an explanation of the barrier between the two large bodies of water, see *sūrah* 25: 53, note 11.



64. Or He Who originates creation in the first instance and then reproduces it,<sup>22</sup> and Who provides you from the heaven and the earth? Is there another deity besides God? Say: “Produce your evidence, if you are truthful!”

65. Say: “None in the heavens and on the earth knows the Unseen (all that lies beyond sense-perception), but only God knows it. Neither do they (or their false deities) know when (the world will be destroyed and) they will be raised to life (after their death).”<sup>23</sup>

66. No, indeed. Their knowledge does not attain to the Hereafter (as they have desired only the worldly life and wasted their faculties of learning in pursuit of worldly knowledge).<sup>24</sup> No, indeed, for (despite being informed about it through Revelation) they remain in doubt about it. No, indeed, for they remain blind to (all the arguments about) it.

67. Those who obstinately persist in unbelief say: “What! is it when we have already become dust – is it then that we and our forefathers will be brought forth (to a new life)?

68. “We have certainly been threatened with this before, we and our forefathers. This is nothing but fables of the ancients!”

69. Say: “Go about the earth and see what was the outcome for the disbelieving criminals!”

70. Do not grieve over them (because of their negative response toward your mission), nor be distressed because of all that they scheme (to void your mission and bar people from God’s way).

71. They also say: “(So tell us) when is

this threat to be fulfilled, if you are truthful?”

72. Say: “It may well be that something of that which you ask to be hastened has already drawn quite near behind you.”

73. Indeed, your Lord is gracious and bountiful for humankind, but most of them do not give thanks.<sup>25</sup>

74. Your Lord certainly knows whatever their bosoms conceal and whatever they disclose.<sup>26</sup>

75. There is nothing hidden (from them as from all creatures) in the heaven or on the earth but is in a Manifest Book.<sup>27</sup>

76. Surely this Qur’an explains to the Children of Israel most of the matters on which they differ.<sup>28</sup>

22. Life is the greatest evidence of God's Unity and the source of His bounty, a most subtle manifestation of His Compassion, and the most hidden and delicate embroidery of His art. Life is so mysterious and subtle that even the life of plants, the simplest level of life, and the awakening of a seed's life-force at the beginning of a plant's life, is still not fully understood. Although such an event is now considered to be commonplace, it has remained a mystery from the time of Adam, for the human mind remains unable to fathom the nature of life.

Life, in both its outer or material and inner or immaterial aspects, is pure. While the Divine Power usually employs natural causes to create things, so that human beings, unable to discern Divine Wisdom in some events, do not attribute to Him that which they consider unpleasant, It creates life directly without the participation of causes. So, life is a direct gift of God Almighty.

A. C. Morrison writes about life:

Life is a sculptor and shapes all living things; an artist that designs every leaf of every tree, that colors the flowers, the apple, the forest, and the plumage of the bird of paradise. Life is a musician and has taught each bird to sing its love song, the insects to call each other in the music of their multitudinous sounds.

Life has given to man alone mastery over combined sound vibrations and has furnished the material for their production.

Life is an engineer, for it has designed the legs of the grasshopper and the flea, the coordinated muscles, levers and joints, the tireless beating heart, the system of electric nerves of every animal, and the complete system of circulation of every living thing.

Life is a chemist that gives taste to our fruits and spices and perfume to the rose. Life synthesizes new substances which Nature has not yet provided to balance its processes and to destroy invading life... Life's chemistry is sublime, for not only does it set the rays of the Sun to work to change water and carbonic acid into wood and sugar, but, in doing so, releases oxygen so that animals may have the breath of life.

Life is a historian, for it has written its history page by page, through the ages,

leaving its record in the rocks, an autobiography which only awaits correct interpretation.

Life protects its creations by the abundance of food in the egg and prepares many of its infants for active life after birth, or by conscious motherhood, storing food in preparation for her young. Life produces life—giving milk to meet immediate needs, foreseeing this necessity and preparing for events to come.

Matter has never done more than its laws decree. The atoms and molecules obey the dictates of chemical affinity, the force of gravity, the influences of temperature, and electric impulses. Matter has no initiative, but life brings into being marvelous new designs and structures.

What life is no man has yet fathomed; it has no weight or dimensions... Nature did not create life; fire-blistered rocks and a saltless sea did not meet the necessary requirements. Gravity is a property of matter; electricity we now believe to be matter itself; the rays of the Sun and stars can be deflected by gravity and seem to be akin to it. Man is learning the dimensions of the atom and is measuring its locked-up power, but life is illusive, like space. Why?

Life is fundamental and is the only means by which matter can attain understanding. Life is the only source of consciousness and it alone makes possible knowledge of the works of God which we, still half blind, yet know to be good. (Morrison, 31-36)

Like life, death also demonstrates God's Existence and Unity. For example, by showing the sun's image through reflection, bubbles on a mighty river, sparkling in the sun, as well as transparent objects glistening on the face of the earth, testify to the existence of the sun. Despite the bubbles' occasional disappearance (e.g., when they pass under a bridge), the splendid continuation of the manifestations of the sun and the uninterrupted display of its light on successive bubbles proves that the images of the sun, the lights that appear and disappear, sparkle and die away and are then renewed, come from an enduring, perpetual, single sun that manifests itself from on high.

Therefore, by their appearance, these sparkling bubbles demonstrate the sun's existence, and by disappearing and ceasing to exist, they display its continuation and unity.

In the same way, beings in continuous flux testify through their existence and life to the necessary Existence and Oneness of the Necessarily Existent Being. They testify to His Unity, Permanence, and Eternity through their decay and death. Beautiful, delicate creatures that are renewed and recruited along with the alternation of day and night, summer and winter, and the passage of time show the Existence, Unity, and Permanence of an Everlasting One with a continuous display of beauty. Their decay and death, together with the apparent causes for their lives, demonstrates that the (material or natural) causes are only veils. This fact decisively proves that these arts, inscriptions, and manifestations are the constantly renewed arts, changing inscriptions, and moving mirrors of an All-Beautiful One of Majesty.

23. The absolute knowledge of the Unseen or all that lies behind human perception is with God only. Those who have some partial knowledge of it, such as the Prophets, can have it only through being taught by God. This point is of great significance concerning God's Existence and Unity and absolute sovereignty over creation. Even humankind, equipped with the greatest faculties to learn, cannot acquire perfectly accurate knowledge of the past, of what is happening in the present, and of the future. Moreover, human capacity is also insufficient to have full, accurate knowledge of itself. It is unable to conclude even where its benefit or harm lies. In addition, as declared in the previous verse, every living being needs provision, and it is God Who provides us with it. It is clear that nothing, including humankind, has determined its own needs and how these should be met. There must be One Who has full knowledge of every being, with all its needs, and how these can be met, and Who has full power to design the "natural" environment as a food store from which living beings can procure their provision. All these facts explain why human beings cannot order their life exactly as it should be ordered, based on absolute justice and for their benefit, even in this world. When

the afterlife is taken into consideration, they are completely unable to decide what they should do. So there must be One Who has full and accurate knowledge of every member of humankind; of where each one's benefit and harm lie; of the past, present, and future; of the hidden reality underlying the observable and unobservable dimensions of existence and events; and of the future, eternal life. In short, like every other being, a human being is in absolute need of God. As it is God Who informs humankind of all these things through Messengership, we have an absolute need for the Messengers and the Divine Books.

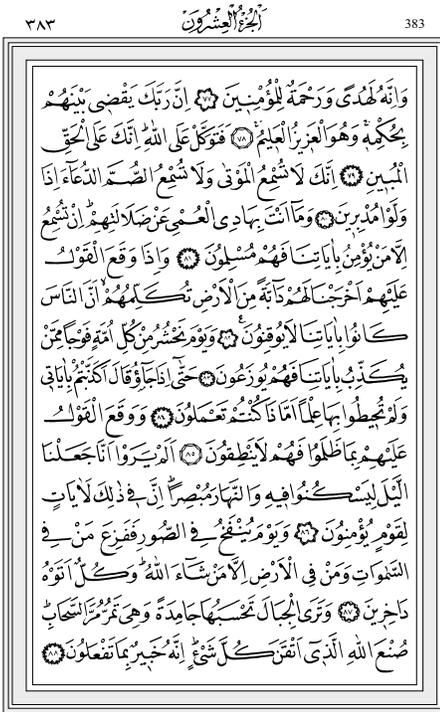
24. See *sūrah* 53: 29–30.

25. If God gives people respite, despite their stubborn insistence on associating partners with Him and their wrongdoings, this is because of His bountifulness for humankind. Although we must appreciate this and thank Him in return (by acknowledging His bounties and living in faith and obedience to Him), many insist on unbelief and disobedience.

26. That is, His postponing their punishment is not because He is unaware of their state, for He knows even what they keep concealed in their bosoms. Also, there may be hearts which are apt to believe, so they should be given a certain respite. Moreover, He is fully aware of whatever schemes they conceive of. Again, those things which human beings keep concealed in their bosoms are not always the same as that which they disclose. But God knows whatever lies in their bosoms and whatever they disclose. So whatever God decrees and does is absolutely what is required to be decreed and done and full of wisdom.

27. For the Manifest Book, see this *sūrah*, verse 1, note 1, and *sūrah* 6: 59, note 13; *sūrah* 13: 39, note 13.

28. The Children of Israel and, following them, the Christians, have differed on many matters such as Divinity, the Prophet Solomon, Mary and Jesus, and many other things concerning other Prophets, upon them all be peace. The Qur'an has clarified the truth, particularly in matters which are of particular significance concerning faith and its essentials.



77. And, most certainly, it is guidance (in all matters) and mercy (full of blessings) for the believers.

78. Indeed, your Lord will judge between them (the believers and the unbelievers) according to His decree. He is the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Knowing.

79. So put your trust in God. You surely stand on the truth, which is clear and doubtless.

80. Indeed, you cannot make the dead hear, nor can you make the deaf hear the call once they have turned their backs, going away.

81. Nor can you guide the blind out of their error. You can make none hear save those who (being unprejudiced, are willing to)

believe in Our Revelations and signs (in the outer world, as well as in their inner world), and are (therefore) ready to submit (to the truth).

82. When the time for the fulfillment of the word (of punishment) about them comes, We will bring forth for them a living creature from the earth who will speak to them – that people have no certainty of faith in Our signs and Revelations.<sup>29</sup>

83. A Day (will come) when We will raise up and gather from every community a host of those who denied Our Revelations and signs (which establish the truth of all the essentials of faith), and they will be set in array (and driven to the place of reckoning),

84. Until they arrive there, when He will say to them: “Did you deny My Revelations and signs, even without having full, certain knowledge about them? If that is not so, what else were you doing?”

85. The word (of punishment) will be fulfilled against them because they did wrong (including, especially, associating partners with God). They will then not (be able to) speak (a single word of excuse or defense).

86. Have they not noticed that We have made the night so that they may rest in it, and the day sight-giving (for them to work in)? Surely in this are signs for people who will believe.

87. On the Day when the Trumpet is blown,<sup>30</sup> all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will be stricken with shock and terror, except those whom God wills to exempt. All will come to His Presence, utterly humbled.

88. You see the mountains, thinking them to be firmly fixed, but in reality, they (are in constant motion) and pass by (with the movement of the earth) like the passing of the clouds. (And so will they be crum-

bled on Doomsday so as to take on the form particular to the other world.) This is the pattern of God Who has perfected everything. He is fully aware of all that you do.

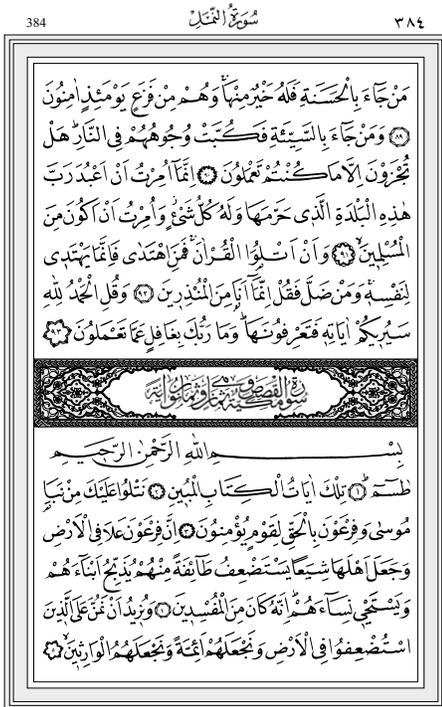
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29. Some Traditions have been reported about this verse, and especially about the moving creature to be brought forth near the end of time. Several opinions have been expressed. The gist of the matter is as follows:

Particularly through scientific developments and increase of knowledge, God Almighty will display His signs in the outer world and within people themselves, until it is clear to people that the Qur'ān is true. That is, with all their features, humankind and the universe will appear as an assemblage of proofs for the truth of whatever the Qur'ān declares, but immersed in the satisfaction of their carnal desires and deluded by the achievements with which God will favor them, people will stubbornly insist on unbelief and wrongdoing. They will most probably cause a species of small (microscopic) animals or moving things (mechanical beings) of some other kinds to grow which will harm them. It will become

clear that, whether people believe it or not, all this is because of unbelief, wrongdoing, and leading an immoral, dissipated life.

30. For the Trumpet and its being blown, see *sūrah* 2, note 31; *sūrah* 6: 73, note 14; *sūrah* 39: 68, note 22. The Trumpet will be blown twice. The blowing mentioned in this verse is the second one which will cause the dead to be raised from their graves, look around in shock and terror, and rush toward God's Presence utterly humbled. As for those whom God will exempt from the terror of that Day when the Trumpet will be blown, see *sūrah* 21: 101-103, and verse 89 below in this *sūrah*. They will be those who will come on the Judgment Day with good (free from sins) and for whom the decree of ultimate good has already gone forth from God. All, without exception, will be brought into His Presence, but the distinguished servants of utmost sincerity will be exempted from being questioned (*sūrah* 37: 128).



89. Whoever comes (on Judgment Day) with good (and purified of sin) will have better than its worth, and such will be safe from any shock and terror on that Day.

90. But whoever comes with (unforgivable) evil, such will be flung down upon their faces into the Fire. “Are you recompensed for anything but what you used to do?”

91. (Say, O Messenger:) “I am ordered only to worship the Lord of this city (Makkah, where the first house of worship dedicated to God was built and), which He has made sacred and to Whom all things belong. And I am ordered to be of the Muslims (those who submit to Him in all His orders).

92. And (I am ordered) to recite the Qur’ān

(to convey His messages). Whoever, therefore, chooses to follow the right way, follows it but for (the good of) his soul. And if any wills to go astray, say: “I am but one of the Messengers sent to warn.”

93. Also say: “All praise and gratitude are for God. Soon He will show you His signs (which will prove that whatever He has decreed is true), and you will come to know them.” Your Lord is never heedless and unmindful of whatever you do.

## SŪRAH 28

### AL-QAṢAṢ (THE NARRATIVE)

Makkah Period

This sūrah of 88 verses was revealed in Makkah. It takes its title from the word *qaṣaṣ* in verse 25. It is again concerned with the Prophet Moses’ life and mission, and also contains glad tidings for God’s Messenger and the believers.

The history of the Children of Israel is an example in and of itself for the history of humankind and civilizations. Moreover, more than any other Prophets, the Prophet Moses, upon him be peace, resembled God’s Messenger in many ways (e.g., bringing a new law and fighting against his enemies). This is why the Qur’ān mentions him frequently.

The following verses of the Old Testament, which promise the coming of the Prophet Muḥammad, upon him be peace and the blessings of God, and draw the attention to the resemblance between him and the Prophet Moses, upon him be peace:

The Lord said to me (Moses): “What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you among their brethren, and will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which he speaks in My name, I will requite *it* of him.” (*Deuteronomy*, 18: 17–19)

It is clear from these verses that, a *Prophet like you among their brethren*, means a Prophet from Ishmael's line, for Ishmael was the brother of Isaac, the forefather of the Children of Israel. The only Prophet who came after Moses and resembled him in many ways is the Prophet Muḥammad, upon him be peace and blessings. The Qur'ān indicates this in the following verse: *Surely We have sent to you (O people) a Messenger, a witness against you (one who will testify in the Hereafter as to your deeds in response to God's Message), just as We sent a Messenger to the Pharaoh (sūrah 73: 15).*

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. *Ṭā. Sīn. Mīm.*

2. These are the Revelations of the Book clear in itself and clearly showing the truth.

3. We now convey to you with truth some

of the exemplary events which took place between Moses and the Pharaoh, for people who will believe, and who will deepen in faith.

4. The Pharaoh turned into an arrogant tyrant in the land (of Egypt) and divided its people into castes. One group of them he humiliated and oppressed, slaughtering their sons and letting live their womenfolk (for further humiliation and suffering). He surely was one of those spreading disorder and corruption.

5. But We willed to bestow Our favor upon those who were humiliated and oppressed in the land, and make of them exemplary leaders (to guide people on the way to God and in their lives), and make them inheritors (of the glory of the Pharaoh and the land in which We produced blessings for people);

وَنَجِّنَ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنُرِي فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُودَهُمَا  
 مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَحْكُدُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى  
 أُمِّ مُوسَى أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ فَإِنْ خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَاَلْبِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ  
 وَلَا تَخَافِي وَلَا تَحْزَنِي إِنَّا رَادُّوهُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَاعِلُوهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ  
 ﴿٧﴾ فَالْتَقَطَهُ آلُ فِرْعَوْنَ لِيَكُونَ لَهُمْ عَدُوًّا وَحَزَنًا إِنَّ  
 فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُودَهُمَا كَانُوا خَاطِبِينَ ﴿٨﴾ وَقَالَتِ  
 امْرَأَتُ فِرْعَوْنَ قُتِلَتْ عَيْنِي لِئَلَّا يَتَذَكَّرَ عَلَيَّ أَنْ يَنْفَعَسَ  
 أَوْ يَخْتَدِعَ فَلَا يَكْفُرُ ﴿٩﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نَسَبْنَا لِمُوسَى  
 أُمَّةً مَوْسَى فَارْعَمًا أَنْ كَادَتْ تَشْبَهُ بِهِ لَوْلَا أَنْ رَبَطْنَا  
 عَلَى قَلْبِهَا لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَقَالَتِ  
 لِأَخْتِهِ فَتَشَبِهْ خَصْمَتِي إِنَّهَا تَمْنَى الْوَالِدَ وَالَّذِينَ  
 لَهَا مِنْ بَنَاتٍ غَافِلِينَ ﴿١١﴾ فَخَصِمَتْ أُمَّةً لِيَلْبَسَنَّ  
 الْوَسْوَاسَاتِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَأُولَئِكَ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ  
 أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسٌ مِنْهُ مُخْتَفِيًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَنُفِثْنَا  
 بِهِ نَجْوَاهُ إِلَى وَالِدِهِ مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ أَن يَكْفُرْ  
 بِالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَإِنَّا  
 لَنَافِثُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

6. And to establish them in the land with power, and let the Pharaoh and Hāmān<sup>1</sup> and their hosts experience what they feared from them (the people they had oppressed).<sup>2</sup>

7. We inspired the mother of Moses, saying: “Suckle him (for a time, without anxiety for his life), then when you have cause to fear for him, put him in the river, and do not fear or grieve. We will surely return him to you and make him one of our Messengers.”

8. Then, the family of Pharaoh picked him up only to be an adversary and a source of grief for them. Indeed the Pharaoh, Hāmān and their hosts were habitually in the wrong (sinful in their treatment of people and, especially, of the Children of Israel).

9. The Pharaoh’s wife said (to him): “(Here is a child that will be) a means of happiness for me and for you. Do not kill him. Maybe he will prove useful for us, or we may adopt him as a son.” They were unaware (of how the events were being prepared and how their outcome would turn to be in the end).

10. A void grew in the heart of the mother of Moses, and she would almost have disclosed all about him (in the hope that he would be returned to her) had We not strengthened her heart so that she might have faith (in Our promise).

11. She said to his sister: “Follow him (secretly).” So she watched him from afar, while the others were not aware.

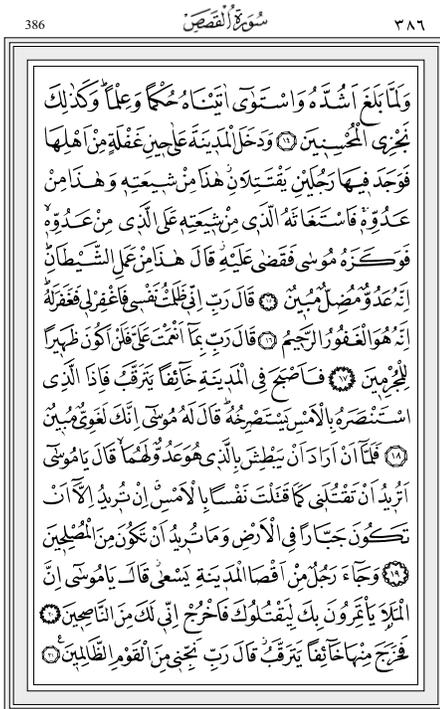
12. We had forbidden wet-nurses for him from before (so that he refused the milk of the nurses called by the Queen to suckle him). Then, his sister (who was able to get into the palace) said: “Shall I guide you to a family that will nurse him for you, and they will take care of him?”

13. And thus, We returned him to his mother, so that she might rejoice and forget her grief, and that she might certainly know that God’s promise was true. But most people do not know this.

1. Hāmān must be, rather than a proper name, Hā-Amen, the title given to the high priest in the cult of Amon that was prevalent in ancient Egypt. He held a rank second to that of the Pharaoh and served as his chief adviser (Asad, 590, note 6).

Another argument is that of the physicist, Maurice Bucaille, who claims that the name Hāmān occurs in some ancient Egyptian inscriptions, notably in one at the Hofmuseum in Vienna (now the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien) (*Aegyptische Inschriften*, I34, p. 130), and is listed in Ranke's dictionary of Egyptian personal names as *Vorsteher der Steinbrucharbeiter*, "head of the stone quarry workers" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haman\\_%28Islam%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haman_%28Islam%29)).

2. After God established the Prophet Joseph, upon him be peace, in Egypt together with the family of Jacob, upon him be peace, the Children of Israel attained high ranks there. God appointed among them Prophets and high-ranking administrators, and made them free people, masters of their own affairs (*sūrah* 5: 20). Thus, the Pharaoh and his chiefs feared that they might recover their former state, expel them from their offices of government or even from Egypt, and abolish their state-religion and their way of life (*sūrah* 20: 63). This is why they slaughtered their sons and spared their women to employ them and force them to marry the native Egyptians. They must have been practicing a form of genocide.



14. When Moses reached his full manhood and grew to maturity, We granted him sound, wise judgment, and special knowledge. Thus do We reward those devoted to doing good as if seeing God.

15. (One day he left the palace, where he was living, and) he entered the city at a time when he was unnoticed by its people, and found therein two men fighting, one of his own people and the other of their enemies (the native Copts). The one from his people called on him for help against the other, who was from their enemies. So Moses struck him with his hand and caused his

death (unintentionally). He said: “This (enmity and fighting) is of Satan’s doing. Surely he is manifestly a misleading enemy.”

16. He said (in supplication): “My Lord! Indeed I have wronged myself, so forgive me.” So He forgave him. Surely He is the One Who is the All-Forgiving, the All-Compassionate (especially toward His believing, repentant servants).

17. “My Lord!” Moses said, “Forasmuch as You have blessed me with favors, I will never be a supporter of the guilty.”<sup>3</sup>

18. Now, in the morning, he was in the city, apprehensive and watchful. And the man who had sought his help on the day before (turned up) and cried out to him again for help. Moses said to him: “You are indeed, obviously, an unruly hothead.”

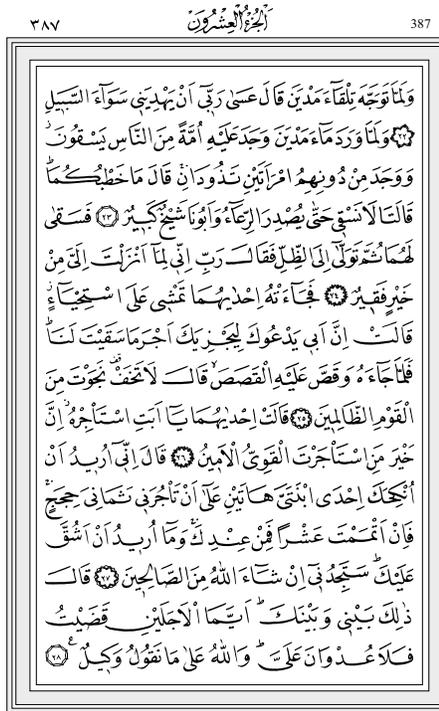
19. But then, when he was about to fall upon the man who was an enemy of them both, he (the Israelite, who thought that Moses would attack him because he had chided him severely,) said: “Moses, do you intend to kill me as you killed a person yesterday? You want only to become a tyrant in this land; you do not want to be of those who set things right!”

20. Then, a man (from the royal court) came running from the farthest end of the city (where the court was) and said: “Moses, now the chiefs are deliberating upon your case to kill you, so leave the city. I am surely one of your sincere well-wishers.”

21. So he left the city, apprehensive and looking around. He said (in supplication): “My Lord, save me from these wrongdoing, oppressive people!”

3. Some commentators of the Qur’an have taken this pledge of Moses, upon him be peace, to also mean that he decided to leave the Pharaoh’s palace forever in order to avoid doing anything which would be of help to the Pharaoh, as his government was a tyrannical one. God orders in the Qur’an: *And do not incline*

*towards those who do wrong (against God by associating partners with Him and against people by violating their rights), or the Fire will touch you. For you have no guardians and true friends apart from God; (but if you should incline towards those who do wrong,) you will not be helped (by Him) (sūrah 11: 113).*



22. As he headed towards Midian (the nearest territory independent of Egyptian rule), he said: “I hope my Lord will guide me on the right way (so as to avoid capture by Egyptian forces).”

23. When he arrived at the wells of Midian, he found there a group of people watering their flocks, and he found, apart from them, two women (maidens) holding back their flock. He said: “What is the matter with you?” The two (women) said: “We do not water our flock until the shepherds take their flocks away. (It is we who do this work because) our father is a very old man.”

24. So Moses watered their flock for them, and then he withdrew to the shade and said (in supplication): “My Lord! Surely I am in need of whatever good you may send down to me.”

25. Thereafter, one of the two (maidens) approached him, walking bashfully,<sup>4</sup> and said: “My father invites you, so that he may reward you for watering our flock for us.” So when he came to him<sup>5</sup> and told him the whole of his story, he said: “Wor-

ry no longer! You are now safe from the wrongdoing, oppressive people.”

26. One of the two daughters said: “Father, employ him, for the best whom you could employ should be one strong and trustworthy (as he is).”

27. (The father) said to Moses: “I want to marry one of these two daughters of mine to you if you serve me for eight years (according to the lunar calendar). But if you should complete ten years, that would be an act of grace from you. I do not mean to impose any hardship on you. You will find me, God willing, one of the righteous.”<sup>6</sup>

28. (Moses) answered: “So let it be between me and you. Whichever of the two terms I fulfill, let there be no ill-will against me. God is a Guarantor over what we say.”

4. ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, the Second Caliph, may God be pleased with him, commented on this sentence: “She came, walking modestly, with her face covered with a part of outer garment, unlike immodest women who are prone to loiter at night, who unabashedly find their way everywhere, and who are ever ready to go out” (al-Ālūsī, 19: 64).

5. Although there are some opinions that the old man who entertained Moses, upon him be peace, as a guest was the Prophet Shu‘ayb, upon him be peace, many scholars such as ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and Sa‘īd ibn al-Jubayr, and commentators on the Qur’ān such as Ibn Jarīr aṭ-Ṭabarī and Ibn

Kathīr, do not hold the same view. The Bible and Jewish sources are also not certain about his identity. What is certain is that he was a believing, righteous man.

6. This verse suggests that the man who employed Moses, upon him be peace, was an insightful one. He must have realized what a valuable, promising man Moses was. He must also have realized that he would need a period of spiritual education for the mission that he would serve in the future. His offer should be considered from this perspective. Once, God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, said that every Prophet, including himself, pastured animals for some time (Al-Bukhārī, “Ijārah,” 2).

29. When Moses fulfilled the term and was traveling with his family (in the desert), he perceived a fire from the direction of the Mount (Sinai). He said to his family: “Wait here! For I perceive a fire far off; I may bring you from there some information (about where we are and the way we should take), or a burning brand from the fire so that you may (kindle a fire and) warm yourselves.”

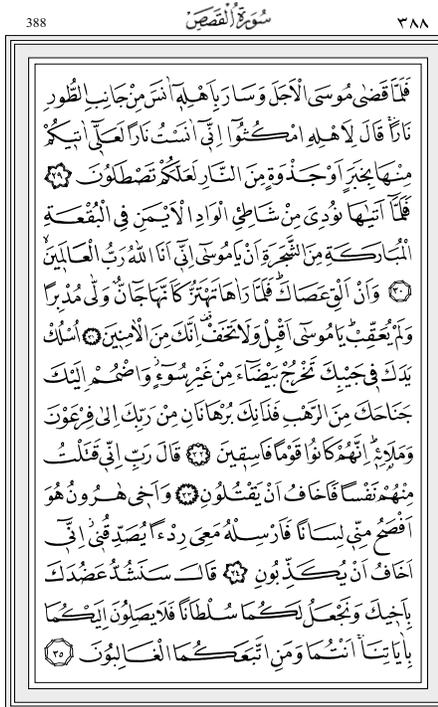
30. When he came to the fire, he was called from the right bank of the valley in the blessed ground, from the tree: “O Moses! Surely it is I, I am God, the Lord of the worlds.”<sup>7</sup>

31. “Throw down your staff. (He threw it, and) when he saw it (as a big snake) slithering (so swiftly) as if a small serpent, he turned about retreating, and did not turn back. “O Moses, come forward and have no fear. You (chosen as a Messenger) are indeed of those who are secure.”<sup>8</sup>

32. “Put your (right) hand into your bosom: it will come forth shining white without flaw, and now hold your arms close to yourself free of awe (and ready to receive My command). These are two proofs (of your Messengership) from your Lord (for you to demonstrate) to the Pharaoh and his chiefs. Surely they are a transgressing people.”

33. (Moses) said: “My Lord! I killed a person among them, so I fear that they will kill me (and not let me convey Your Message).”

34. “And my brother Aaron – he is one



more eloquent in speech than me, so (appointing him also as a Messenger,) send him with me as a helper to confirm my truthfulness, for indeed I fear that they will deny me.”

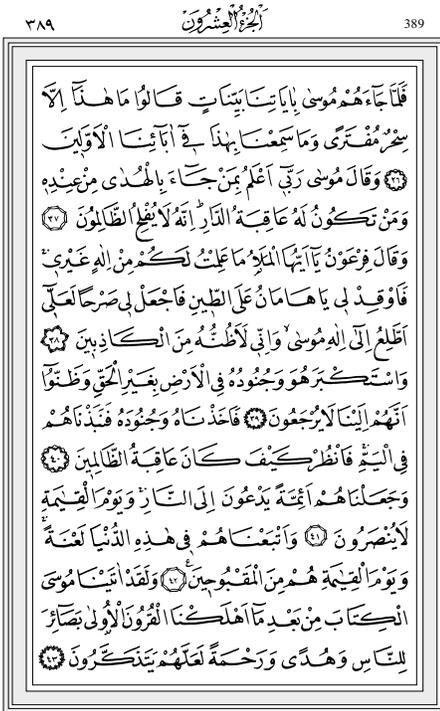
35. He said: “We will strengthen you through your brother and will invest both of you with power and authority;<sup>9</sup> and they will not be able to reach you (with any harm they intend) from awe of Our signs (miracles). You two, and all who follow you, will be the victors.”

7. For an explanation of what is related in this verse, see *sūrah* 27: 8, note 5.

8. See also *sūrah* 27: 10–11.

9. As stated in the continuation of the verse, this must refer to the miracles granted to the

Prophet Moses, upon him be peace, the calamities that God caused to visit the Pharaoh and his people, one after the other, like Moses' other miracles (see *sūrah* 7: 133–134). It may also be referring to those who will believe in and follow them.



in the Hereafter). Surely the wrongdoers do not prosper, (nor attain their goals).”

38. The Pharaoh (turned to the chiefs and) said: “O you nobles! I do not know that you have another deity than me.<sup>11</sup> Well, then, O Hāmān, kindle (the furnace) for me to bake bricks, and make me a lofty tower so that I may have a look at the God of Moses, though I surely think that he is a liar.”

39. He grew arrogant in the land, he and his hosts, against all right, and they thought that they would never be brought back to Us (for judgment).

40. So We seized him and his hosts, and cast them into the sea. Then see what was the outcome for the wrongdoers!

41. We have made them leaders (exemplary patterns) of misguidance calling (those who would follow them) to the Fire. And (even though they employ many in their service in this world,) on the Day of Resurrection, they will not be helped.

42. We have caused a curse to pursue them in this world (and increase them in sin because of their being leaders in misguidance misleading those who followed them), and on the Day of Resurrection, they will be among the spurned (those utterly deprived of God’s Mercy).

43. And indeed, after We had destroyed those earlier (wrongdoing) generations, We granted Moses the Book (the Torah) as lights of discernment and insight for people, and as guidance and mercy, so that they might reflect and be mindful.

36. When Moses came to them (the Pharaoh and his chiefs) with Our manifest signs, they said: “This (that you show as miracles to prove your Messengership) is nothing but sorcery contrived. And we never heard this (the call<sup>10</sup> to Him Whom you call the Lord of the worlds) in the time of our forefathers of old.”

37. (Moses) said: “My Lord knows best who has come with the true guidance from Him, and to whom the ultimate abode of happiness will belong (both in the world and

10. See *sūrah* 20: 47–53; *sūrah* 26: 23–29.

11. For the Pharaoh’s claim of divinity, see *sūrah* 26: 29, note 6.

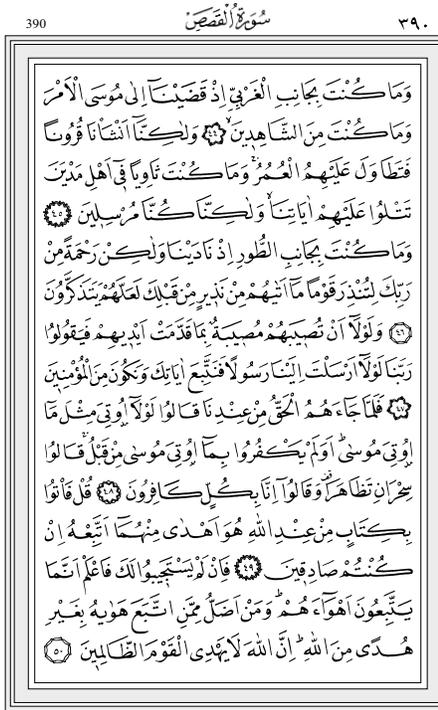
44. (All that We have told you about Moses and the Book granted to him is a Revelation We reveal to you, O Muḥammad, for) you were not present on the spot lying to the western side (of the valley) when We decreed the Commandment (the Torah) to Moses, nor were you a witness (to what happened there).

45. But (after them) We brought into being many generations and long indeed were the ages that passed over them. (The information you give about them is also that which We reveal to you, just as what you tell about what happened concerning Moses in Midian is also a Revelation. For) neither did you dwell among the people of Midian so that you are conveying to them (the Makkan people) Our Revelations (about what Moses did in Midian). Rather, We have been sending Messengers (to convey Our Revelations).

46. And neither were you present on the side of the Mount Sinai when We called out (to Moses), but (We reveal all this to you) as a mercy from your Lord so that you may warn a people to whom no warner has come before you, so that they may reflect and be mindful.

47. (We have sent you as Messenger) lest they say when a disaster befalls them (either in the world or in the Hereafter) because of what they themselves with their own hands have forwarded, “Our Lord! If only you had sent a Messenger to us, we would have followed Your Revelations and been among the believers.”

48. And yet, now that the truth has come to them from Us (through a Messenger), still they say (by way of an excuse for their denial of it), “Why has he not been granted the like of what Moses was granted (all at



once)?”<sup>12</sup> Did they not previously refuse to believe in what had been granted to Moses?<sup>13</sup>

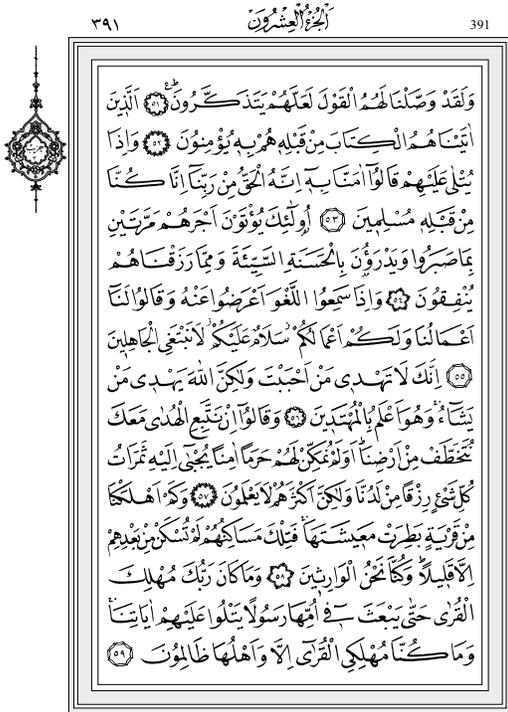
They said: “Both are sorcery, each supporting the other.” They also said: “In each we are unbelievers.”

49. Say (to them): “Then bring another Book from God which would offer better guidance than either of these two so that I may follow it, if you are truthful (in your claim that they are both sorcery).”

50. If they cannot respond, then know that they are merely following their lusts and fancies. Who can be more astray than he who follows his lusts and fancies, deprived of all guidance from God? God surely does not guide people given to wrongdoing and injustice.

12. This is referring to the objection made by the Makkan polytheists: “Why has the Qur’ān not been sent down to him all at once?” (sūrah 25: 32) The Torah was granted to Moses, upon him be peace, as a complete book.

13. The Makkan polytheists rejected the Messengership, the Revelations and all the Divinely-revealed Books, as it is stated in: *Those who disbelieve say: “We will not believe in this Qur’ān, nor in any (Message) that came before it”* (sūrah 34: 31).



51. Assuredly We have conveyed to them the Word (one verse after the other, and one chapter after the other, for their good) so that they may reflect and be mindful.

52. Those to whom We granted the Book before it do believe in it.<sup>14</sup>

53. When it is recited to them, they say: "We believe in it. Surely it is the truth from our Lord. Even before this, We were such as submitted (to the Divine Will)."

54. These will be granted their reward twice over because they have remained steadfast (in following their religion, free of falsehood, and so keeping themselves above all prejudices to believe in and follow the Qur'an and Muhammad); and they repel evil with good, and out of what We have provided for them (of wealth, knowledge,

power, etc.) they spend (in God's cause and for the needy, and purely for the good pleasure of God).

55. When they hear any vain (useless or aggressive) talk, they turn away from it, without reciprocating it, and say (to those who are engaged in it): "To us are accounted our deeds, and to you, your deeds. Peace be upon you! We do not seek to mix with the ignorant (those unaware of God, true guidance, and right and wrong)."

56. You cannot guide to truth whomever you like, but God guides whomever He wills. He knows best who are guided (and amenable to guidance).

57. They say: "Should we follow this Guidance in your company, we would be annihilated in our land." Have We not established them in a secure sanctuary to which, as a provision from Us, products of all kinds are brought? But most of them do not know (that it is We Who protect and provide for them, and assume that it is their worshipping idols that attracts other Arab tribes to Makkah for trade, and that protects them from being attacked by those tribes).

58. How many a township have We destroyed that exulted insolently on account of their affluence. Those are their dwellings – except for few people for a short time only, they have never been dwelt in after them. It is always We Who are the inheritors (Who remain as the Ever-Living when all else have passed away).

59. Yet Your Lord never destroys townships without first raising up in their mother-town a Messenger who conveys to them Our messages. We never destroy townships, save that their people are wrongdoers (who associate partners with God and are given to many injustices).

14. This does not mean that all the People of the Book actually believed in the Qur'an. This verse refers to some among the People of the Book

who believed in it during the Makkan period of the mission of the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings.

60. Whatever thing you are granted (of the world) is but for the passing enjoyment of the present, worldly life and its adornment, whereas what God keeps for you (as the reward for your good deeds, and which He will give you in excess of your deserving) is much better and more enduring. Will you not reason and understand?

61. Is, then, he to whom We have given a fair promise (forgiveness and Paradise) which he will obtain, like him whom We have let enjoy for a time the good things of the present, worldly life, but who will be, on the Day of Resurrection, among those who are arraigned (for punishment)?

62. On that Day, God will call to them and say: "Where now are those (beings, things, and powers) that you alleged to be My partners?"

63. Those (who led others to associate partners with God, and) against whom God's judgment of punishment has been realized will say: "Our Lord! Those whom we led astray, we led them astray just because we ourselves were astray (they imitated us out of their free will, we never coerced them to it). Now, in Your Presence, we declare our innocence (of their taking us for partners with You). It was not us that they worshipped. (Rather, they worshipped their own carnal souls.)"

64. And it will be said (to those who associated them as partners with God): "Call for help now upon your associate-deities!" And they will call upon them, but they will not answer them; and they will see the punishment in front of them. If only they had followed the right guidance!

65. On that Day, God will call to them (once more) and ask: "How did you respond to the Messengers?"

66. That Day, (all ways and means of finding) information will be darkened to them, and they will not (even) be able to ask one another.

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سُورَةُ الْقَاسِمِ

٣٩٢

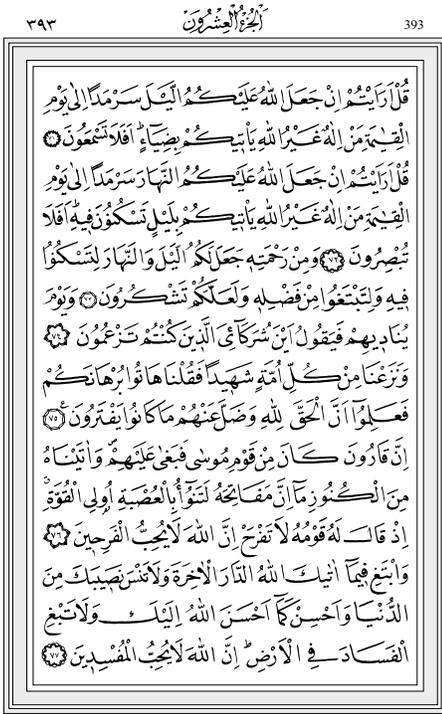
وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتُهَا وَمَا عِنْدَ  
اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ أَفَمَنْ وَعَدْتَاهُ وَعَدَا  
حَسْبًا فَيُولَاؤِيهِ كَمَا مَتَعْنَاهُ مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ هُوَ  
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَيَوْمَ نَسُوا دِيَارَهُمْ فَيَقُولُ بَيْنَ  
شُرَكَائِي الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تُرْعَمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ  
رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَغْوَيْنَا أَغْوَيْنَاهُمْ كَمَا غَوَيْنَا تَبَرَّأْنَا إِلَيْكَ  
مَا كَانُوا يَا تَابِعِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَقِيلَ ادْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ فَادْعُوهُمْ  
فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَرَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يهْتَدُونَ  
﴿٦٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ نَسُوا دِيَارَهُمْ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أَجْنَسْنَا لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَيَقِيتُ  
عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَنْبَاءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَهُمْ لَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ فَلَمَّا مَنَّ تَابَ  
وَأَمَّنْ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا قَبْلِي أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُفْلِحِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾  
وَرَبِّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ سُبْحَانَ  
اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَرَبِّكَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ  
صُدُورُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَهُوَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ  
الْمُخْدِيُّ الْأُولَى وَالْآخِرَةُ وَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

67. But as for those who repent and believe and do good, righteous deeds, they may well hope to be among the prosperous.

68. Your Lord creates whatever He wills, and chooses and decrees (for His servants) whatever way of life He wills. They have no freedom of choice (in respect of what God has chosen and commanded). All-Glorified is He, and infinitely Exalted above their association of partners with Him.

69. Your Lord knows whatever their bosoms conceal and whatever they disclose.

70. He is God; there is no deity but He (only He is owed worship). (As all beauties, perfections, accomplishments, and favors are essentially from Him,) for Him are all praise and gratitude at the beginning and at the end (of every accomplishment, both in the world and in the Hereafter). His alone is judgment and authority, and to Him you are being brought back.



71. Say: “Have you ever considered that if God should make the night perpetual over you until the Day of Resurrection, is there a deity other than God who can bring you light? Will you not, then, give ear (to the truth and take heed)?”

72. Say: “Have you ever considered that if God should make the day perpetual over you until the Day of Resurrection, is there a deity other than God who can bring you the night, that you may rest in it? Will you not, then, see (the truth and take heed)?”

73. It is out of His Mercy that He has made for you the night and the day so that you may rest (during the night) and seek after His bounty (during the day), and that you may give thanks (to Him for both).

74. A Day will come and He will call to

those who associate partners with Him, saying: “Where now are those (beings, things, and powers) that you alleged to be My partners?”

75. And We will take out from every community a witness (the Messenger sent to them), and will say (to those who rejected the Messengers): “Produce your evidence (for your claim that God has partners)!” Then they will know that all truth rests with God and that it is only God Who has the absolute right (to Divinity and Lordship); and all (the false deities) that they fabricated besides God will fail them.

76. Qārūn (Korah) was one of Moses’ people, but he betrayed and oppressed them.<sup>15</sup> We had granted him such great treasures that their very keys alone were too heavy a burden for a company of strong people. Even his people warned him: “Do not exult in your wealth; surely God does not love those who exult.

77. “But seek, by means of what God has granted you, the abode of the Hereafter (by spending in alms and other good causes), without forgetting your share (which God has appointed) in this world.<sup>16</sup> Do good to others as God has done good to you (out of His pure grace). Do not seek corruption and mischief in the land, for God does not love those who cause corruption and make mischief.”

15. The story of Qārūn (in the Bible, Korah) is another of the arguments against the Makkan unbelievers' excuse that, if they were to follow the Qur'ān in the Messenger's company they would be utterly annihilated in their land (verse 57). Those who made this excuse were wealthy traders, the rich money-lenders, and interest-accumulators of Makkah. Their only concern was to maximize their monetary earnings and maintain their luxurious life. As for the common people, many among them looked up to the rich as their role models. They wished to become like them and lead a similar life.

Qārūn, despite being an Israelite, had allied himself with the Pharaoh and become one of his closest courtiers. Since he was also one of the three most vocal opponents of Moses, upon him be peace, the Qur'ān mentions him along with the Pharaoh and Hāmān as those who oppressed people and of those to whom Moses was sent with God's signs (miracles) and a clear authority (*sūrah* 40: 23–24). This shows that Qārūn had betrayed his people and

become an agent of the enemy who wanted to destroy the Children of Israel. Due to his treachery, he had attained a very high position in the Pharaoh's court.

16. God has appointed for every living being a certain share of providence in the world, which will be enough for the maintenance of that being's life. It comes to trees and plants by itself, as they have no consciousness, will, or power to obtain it. Babies receive it almost without any effort, as they too are powerless. As a conscious living being grows in strength and self-reliance, it has to work to earn its provision. What is important for human beings is that they must earn it by lawful ways. Islam, even though it does not forbid possessing wealth, advises a moderate life. It orders a certain amount of wealth (the *Zakāh*) to be spent in God's cause and for the needy, and encourages the rich to spend more in charity and on other good causes. It also commands emphatically that money be earned through lawful ways and spent on lawful things.

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيَتْهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِنْدِي أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَم أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَهْلَكَ  
 مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مَنْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُ قُوَّةً وَأَكْبَرَ تَجْمَعًا  
 وَلَا يَسْتَأْذِنُ عَنْ دُونِهِمْ الْجَبْرِيُّونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فِي بُيُوتِهِ  
 قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَا لَيْتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ  
 قَارُونُ إِنَّهُ لَذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ  
 وَيَلَكُمْ تَوَاتُؤُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِمَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَلَا  
 يُفْقِيهَا إِلَّا الصَّابِرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ فَخَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَبَدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ  
 فَمَا كَانَ لَهُ مِنْ فِئَةٍ يَنْصُرُوهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَتْ  
 مِنْ الْمُتَصِّبِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَأَصْحَابُ الَّذِينَ تَمَتَّعُوا بِكَانِهِ بِالْأَمْسِ  
 يَقُولُونَ وَيَسْأَلُ اللَّهُ يُنْزِلُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ  
 وَيَقْدِرُ لَوْلَا أَنْ مِنْ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا لَخَسَفَ بِنَا وَيَسْأَلُ أَنْ لَا يُفْلِحَ  
 الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ تِلْكَ الْأَمْثَلُ لِمَنْ جَمَعَهَا الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ  
 عِلْمًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِئَاةً وَلَا عِاقِبَةً لِلنَّاصِبِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ مَنْ  
 جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ خَيْرٌ مِنْهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى  
 الَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

righteous deeds is better by far. But none save the patient (who persevere through adversities, and in obedience to God and avoidance of sins) can ever attain to it.”

**81.** Then, We caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling. There was then no host to help him against God, nor (for all his possessions) was he himself able to come to his own aid.

**82.** And on the morrow, those who had longed to be in his place the day before began to say: “Woe to us! (We had forgotten that) God enlarges provision for whom He wills of His servants, and straitens it (for whom He wills). Had God not been gracious to us, He would have made us too swallowed up. Woe to us! (for we had forgotten that) the unbelievers do not prosper.”

**83.** As for the abode of the Hereafter, We will assign it to those who do not seek arrogant power on earth nor cause corruption and disorder. The (truly desirable) outcome is for the God-revering, pious.

**84.** Whoever comes to God with a good deed will have better than it, and whoever comes with an evil deed – those who do evil deeds will not be recompensed save only for what they have done.<sup>19</sup>

**78.** He said: “All this has been given to me only by virtue of a certain knowledge that I have.”<sup>17</sup> Did he not know that God had destroyed among the generations before him men who were greater than him in power, and greater in wealth amassed? In fact, the criminals committed to accumulating sins are not asked about their sins (before they are destroyed so that they can defend themselves).

**79.** (Korah) showed off before his people in all his pomp. Those who cared only for the life of this world said: “Ah, if we but had the like of what Korah has been given! Indeed, he is one of tremendous good fortune!”

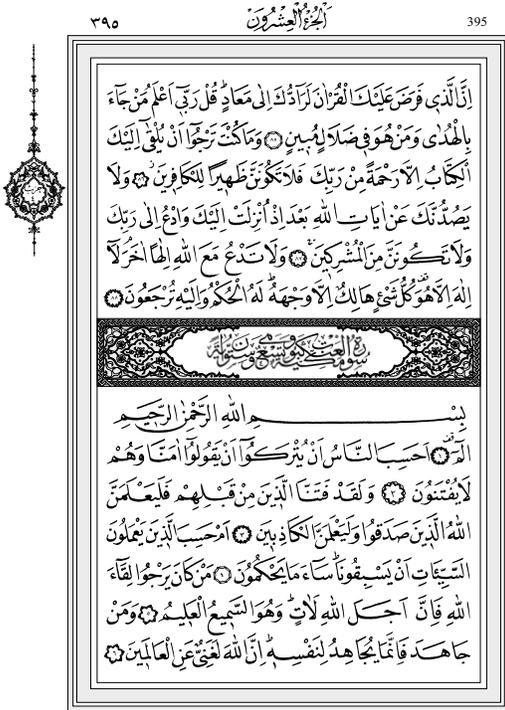
**80.** But those who had been granted (true) knowledge<sup>18</sup> said: “Woe to you! God’s reward for any who believes and does good,

17. This is a typical attitude of human ingratitude and arrogance. Human beings usually attribute their accomplishments to themselves, to some advantage in knowledge, power, intelligence, and abilities. In consequence, all such advantages and indeed all that God has granted to human beings and their accomplishments therewith become the means to an eternal loss.

18. It is of great significance that the Qur'ān implies that those who seek the worldly life are only people of ignorance. In another verse (53: 29-30), it introduces them as having very little knowledge, which is only related to the world: *Withdraw from those who turn away from Our Book and remembrance, and desire nothing but the life of this world. Such is their sum of knowledge.* In both that verse and verse 80 in this *sūrah*, knowledge is used with the defi-

nite article; it indicates the revealed knowledge. So what the Qur'ān accepts as knowledge is, first of all, revealed knowledge – God-given knowledge about Divinity and knowledge of the Religion. Those who have this knowledge desire God and what He has prepared for them in the Hereafter.

19. Another verse reads: *Whoever comes to God with a good deed will have ten times as much, and whoever comes with an evil deed, will be recompensed with only the like of it; and they will not be wronged (sūrah 6: 160).* However, the reward of a good deed is not restricted to only ten times as much. God multiplies for whom He wills as much as He wills, both out of His grace and according to the sincerity of the one who does good, and according to the time and conditions in which it was done.



to you as a mercy from your Lord, so do not lend any support to the unbelievers.

**87.** And never let them divert you away from conveying God's Revelations after they have been sent down to you. Call (people) to your Lord, and do not be of those who associate partners with God.

**88.** Do not call upon another deity along with God.<sup>21</sup> There is no deity but He. Everything is perishable (and so perishing) except His "Face" (His eternal Self and what is done in seeking His good pleasure).<sup>22/23</sup>

His alone is judgment and authority, and to Him you are being brought back.

**85.** Surely, He Who has entrusted you (O Messenger) with the (duty of conveying) the Qur'an, will certainly bring you round to the fulfillment of the promise (you will be returned in victory to the home you were compelled to abandon).<sup>20</sup> Say: "My Lord knows best who has the (true) guidance, and who is lost in obvious error."

**86.** You did not expect that this Book would be revealed to you; but it is being revealed

20. Different comments have been made on this verse. However it must be related to God's promise to those who are humiliated and oppressed in the land, and therefore to verse 5 of this sūrah: *But We willed to bestow Our favor upon those who were being humiliated and oppressed in the land, and make of them exemplary leaders (to guide people on the way to God and in their lives), and make them inheritors (of the glory of the Pharaoh and the land*

*in which We produced blessings for people). And to establish them in the land with power....* When this sūrah was revealed, the Muslims in Makkah were being brutally persecuted. Therefore, the verse implies that the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, and the Muslims will be forced to leave Makkah and return to it in victory, which means that the Qur'an will be completed to be their guide for the whole of life in its totality.

21. Such statements, which address a prohibition to God's Messenger in no way mean that he might be tempted to lend some support to the unbelievers, or to let them drive him away from conveying God's Revelations, or to call upon another deity alongside God. Rather, they stress the importance of the matter mentioned and describe the way he and his successors should follow in fulfilling their mission. For the Messenger, in particular, they also mean: "You are never expected to do that."

22. The meaning of the word here literally translated as *His Face* is "God Himself as One with infinite Mercy, Who sees, hears, and speaks, and to Whom every being turns for its needs." God can never be conceived of as One Who resembles created beings. So words such as *hand* or *face* should be dealt with as figurative expressions for some among His Attributes. When used for human beings, the *face* is the part of the body from which a person looks out to others, and to which communication from others is addressed. It therefore represents the person. For the Divine Being, *face* means that "He is One with infinite mercy Who turns to the creation with seeing, hearing, mercy, and provision, to Whom every being can turn for the fulfillment of its needs."

23. At this point, a question may be asked: Does *Everything is perishable (and so perishing), except His Face* (sūrah 28: 88) also include Paradise and Hell, and their inhabitants?

Said Nursi makes the following explanation in answer to this question:

Many qualified scholars, saints, and people of deep perception and insight have discussed this subject. Some maintain that the inhabitants of the permanent world are not included, while others hold that these people will also enter annihilation, albeit for such a brief period that they will not feel it. Although some others argue that all existence – except God – will perish permanently, this cannot be, for the Divine Essence and God's Attributes and Names are permanent. Thus, permanent beings in the World of Permanence cannot experience absolute annihilation,

for they are the manifestations of God's permanent Attributes and Names and the mirrors in which they are reflected.

I now would like to briefly mention two points concerning the subject:

First point: The All-Mighty is absolutely All-Powerful, and so creation and destruction are equally easy for Him. He can annihilate or re-create all of creation in an instant. In addition, absolute non-existence cannot exist, for there is an encompassing Knowledge. As everything is contained or has a kind of existence or an ideal form within the infinite Divine Knowledge, there is no room for non-existence. Within the encompassing circle of Divine Knowledge, relative non-existence is, in essence, a nominal veil reflecting the manifestations of Divine Knowledge.

Some people of profound understanding have called such ideal forms of existence "archetypes." Based on this, going into non-existence means taking off an outer dress (the body) and returning to the circle of spiritual existence, or existence in Divine Knowledge. In other words, that which perishes by leaving its physical body puts on a spiritual body and, leaving the circle where (Divine) Power operates, enters the circle of (Divine) Knowledge.

Second point: As nothing can exist by itself, everything's existence depends on God. Since a thing exists as a manifestation of the permanent Divine Names, it has a permanent, sublime reality due to its reflecting the Divine Name that caused its existence. The verse: *Everything is perishable, except His Face* (28: 88), also serves as a sword that cuts away from people all that is not God (e.g., the world, the flesh, and life's vanities). Thus, whatever people have or do for God's sake is not included in the meaning of this verse.

In sum, if people find God and act only for His sake, there will be nothing left to be included in the meaning of *Everything is perishable, except His Face*. So if they want to make their deeds eternal and be rewarded with permanent happiness, they must seek God and live for His sake and good pleasure. (See *The Letters*, "The 15<sup>th</sup> Letter," 80-82.)

## SŪRAH 29

**AL-‘ANKABŪT  
(THE SPIDER)**

Makkah Period

**T**his *sūrah*, comprising 69 verses, was revealed in Makkah at a time when the believers were being subject to severe persecutions. It takes its name from the word *al-‘ankabūt* (“the spider”) in verse 41, implying the frailty of false beliefs, and encouraging the believers to show patience and resistance. The *sūrah*, which also threatens the rebellious polytheists with an evil end, puts forth irrefutable arguments for God’s Oneness and the afterlife.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. *Alif. Lām. Mīm.*

2. Do people reckon that they will be left (to themselves at ease) on their mere saying, “We believe,” and will not be put to a test?

3. We certainly tested those who preceded them. (This is Our unchanging way) so that God will certainly mark out those who prove true (in their profession of faith), and He will certainly mark out those who prove false.<sup>1</sup>

4. Or do those who do evil deeds (and persecute the believers) reckon that they can frustrate Us and escape Our punishment? How evil is the judgment they have reached!

5. Whoever looks forward to meeting with God, the term set by God (for His meeting) will certainly come. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.<sup>2</sup>

6. And whoever strives hard (against his carnal, evil-commanding soul and Satan to be a good Muslim and to resist all persecutions in God’s cause) strives for the good of his own soul only. Surely God is Self-Sufficient, in absolute independence of all the worlds.

1. See *sūrah* 2: 155–157 and the corresponding notes 121, and 122.

2. God is He Who hears whatever people utter openly or within themselves, and He knows them fully in every state, all their intentions and deeds, and with all that they reveal and

all that they keep concealed. Nothing escapes Him. Mentioning God in this verse with these two Names is both a glad tiding to those who are sincere in their belief and expectations, and a warning to those who are not sincere, as well as to the unbelievers.

7. Those who believe and (in striving hard to be good Muslims) do good, righteous deeds, We will most certainly blot out from them their evil deeds, and will most certainly reward them in accordance with the best of what they used to do.

8. (As the requirement for being good Muslims) We have enjoined on human to be kind and good to his parents; but if they endeavor to make you associate with Me anything as partner, about whose being so you impossibly have no knowledge, do not obey them. To Me is your return, so I will make you understand what you were doing (and call you to account for it).

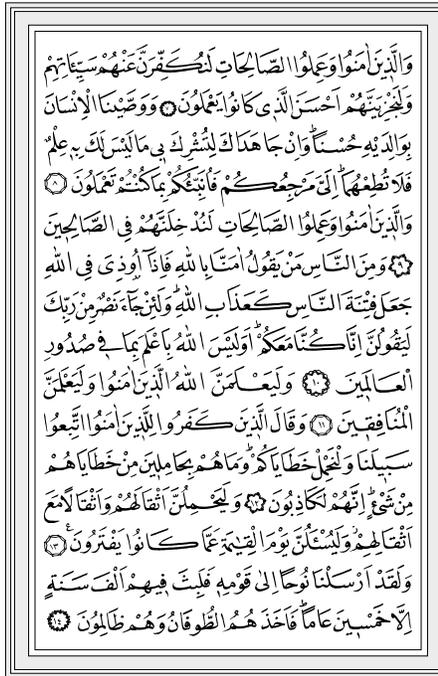
9. Those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, We will most certainly include them among the righteous (who enter Paradise).

10. Among the people are such as say, "We believe in God," but when (such a person) is subjected to persecution (for his confession of faith) in God, he construes persecution at the hands of people as God's punishment (and rejects his faith); but if a victory comes from your Lord (to the believers), (such people) will most certainly say, "Surely we have always been with you." Or (do they think that) God is not fully aware of what is in the bosoms of all creatures (that He created)?

11. God will most certainly mark out those who truly believe, and He will most certainly mark out the hypocritical ones.

12. Those who disbelieve say to those who believe: "If you follow our way (of religion and life), we will take your sins upon us, yet they cannot take upon them anything of their sins. They are liars indeed.

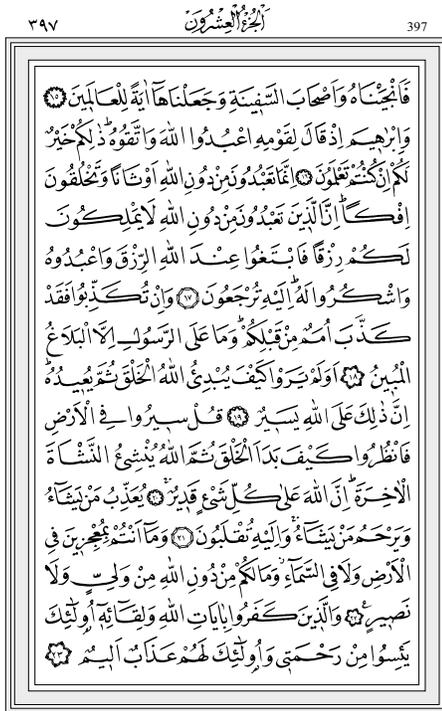
3. The burdens these people will have to bear besides their own are the burdens of those whom they have misled (*sūrah* 16: 25), and of those who follow the evil path they have established. God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, declared: "Those who establish a good path in Islam



13. They will most certainly have to bear their own burdens, and other burdens together with their own;<sup>3</sup> and, most certainly, they will be called to account on the Day of Resurrection for what they were busy fabricating (against God and other truths of faith).

14. Indeed, We sent Noah to his people (as Messenger), and he remained among them a thousand years save fifty years; and in the end, the Flood overtook them as they were wrongdoers (who persisted in associating partners with God and committing grave injustices).

receive the reward of those who follow it, without any decrease in their (own) reward. Those who establish an evil path in Islam are burdened with the sins of those who follow it, without any decrease in their (own) burden" (Muslim, "Zakāh," 69; Ibn Mājah, "Muqaddimah," 203).



15. Yet We saved him and those who were together with him on the Ark, and We made this event as an exemplary sign (full of lessons) for all the people (to come after).

16. And Abraham, too, (We sent as Messenger). He said to his people (in conveying this message): “Worship God alone and keep from disobedience to Him in reverence for Him and piety. Doing so is the best for you, if you would know (the truth of the matter).

17. “You worship only idols instead of God, and thus you invent a mere falsehood (by deifying some things and beings such that it is impossible for them to be Deity). Surely those (beings whom you deify and make statues of, and idols)<sup>4</sup> that you worship instead of God do not have

power to provide for you; so seek all your provision from God, and worship Him and be thankful to Him. To Him you are being brought back.”

18. If you deny Our Messenger, know that many communities before you denied (the Messengers sent to them, but their denial was of no avail to them). What rests with the Messenger is no more than to convey the Message fully and clearly.

19. Have they not considered how God originates creation in the first instance, and then reproduces it? This is indeed easy for God.

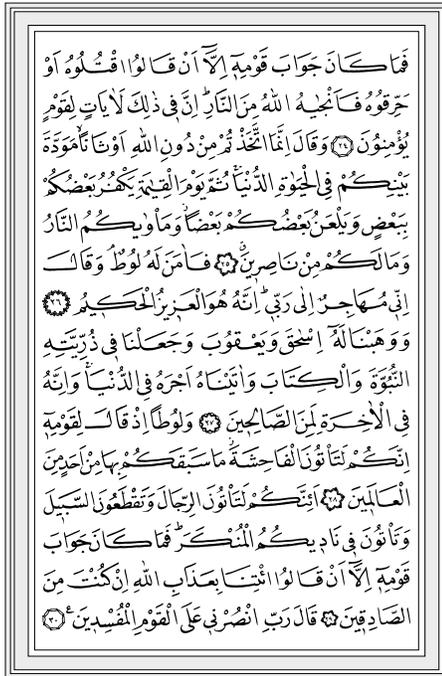
20. Say: “Go about on the earth and see how God originated creation. Then God will bring forth the other (second) creation (in the form of the Hereafter).<sup>5</sup> Surely God has full power over everything.

21. (He will bring forth the Hereafter, where) He punishes whom He wills and has mercy on whom He wills.<sup>6</sup> To Him you are being returned.

22. You cannot frustrate Him (in the execution of His Will even if you penetrate the depths) in the earth or in the heaven. And you have none to protect you, and none to help you, except God.<sup>7</sup>

23. Those who disbelieve in the signs of God (in the universe and in themselves) and His Revelations, and in the meeting with Him (in the Hereafter) – they have no hope and expectation of a share in My Mercy. (God has forbidden them Paradise.) And for them there is a painful punishment.<sup>8</sup>

4. The pronoun used in the verse and translated as *those* is the pronoun used for living beings. So this shows that, as in all the polytheistic societies, the idols or statues usually represented some beings whom people respected and then exalted and deified, such as angels, the jinn, Prophets, heroes, or statesmen. The Prophet Abraham, upon him be peace, meant both those beings represented by idols and the idols themselves. Later generations began to forget the beings whose statues were made for deification, and rather came to deify and worship the statues themselves. However, besides some beings, people would personify many powers or things, such as spirits and “forces of nature,” and attribute God’s power or acts to many false deities or adopt many deities, to each of which they would assign a Divine act or power. We should note that paganism or idol-worship has not ceased. It continues in many explicit or implicit forms.
5. For an explanation of this statement and the statement, *God originates creation in the first instance, and reproduces it*, in the previous verse, see *sūrah* 21: 104, note 25. While this verse (20) is about the initial creation of the entire universe and resurrection after death, the previous one must be the uninterrupted and ever-renewed process of creation (see *sūrah* 55: 29, note 11) and the instances of death (in winter) and revival (in spring), which take place every year.
6. This verse indicates God’s absolute Will, Justice and special Compassion, as explained in several places (*sūrah* 4: 79, note 18; *sūrah* 15, note 17; *sūrah* 17: 54, note 23; *sūrah* 24: 38, note 24).
7. This verse both awakens the fear of humankind in order to discourage us from rebellion against God, and embraces us, calling humankind to God by reminding us that it is only God Who can protect and help us in any case.
8. The verses 18–23 are implicit allusions to the Makkan unbelievers and to all humankind through Abraham’s account. From here on, the Qur’an will proceed by relating Abraham’s encounter with his people.



24. But the response of his (Abraham's) people was only to say: "Kill him, or burn him," but God saved him from the fire (that they kindled to burn him). Surely in this are signs (important lessons) for people who will believe and who will deepen in faith.

25. He (Abraham) said to them: "You have taken to yourselves idols to worship instead of God, for no other reason than to have a bond of love and attachment between you only in the life of this world. But then, on the Day of Resurrection, you will deny one another (disowning any relation between you), and curse one another.<sup>9</sup> Your final refuge will be the Fire, and you will have no helpers.

26. Lot believed in him, and he (Abraham) said: "I am emigrating to my Lord

(leaving my land and people for a place where I can practice my Religion). Surely, He is the All-Glorious with irresistible might (whomever He helps cannot be debased, and whomever He preserves does not fail), the All-Wise (in whatever He does and decrees there are many instances of wisdom).

27. We bestowed upon him (a son) Isaac and (a grandson) Jacob, and caused Prophethood and the revelation of the Book to continue among his offspring, and We granted him his reward in this world also;<sup>10</sup> and he surely is among the righteous in the Hereafter.

28. And Lot, too, (We sent as Messenger). He said (to his people in conveying this message): "Indeed, you (the men of this whole community) commit that abhorrent indecency such as no people in all the world have ever done before you.

29. (After such severe warnings of God,) will you continue to come to men (with lust), waylay (travelers) on the road (especially male travelers), and commit shameful deeds in your assemblies? The response of his people was only that they said (mocking and challenging him): "Bring down upon us the punishment of God with which you threaten us, if you are truthful!"

30. He (Lot) said (in supplication): "My Lord, help me against these people given to committing and spreading corruption."

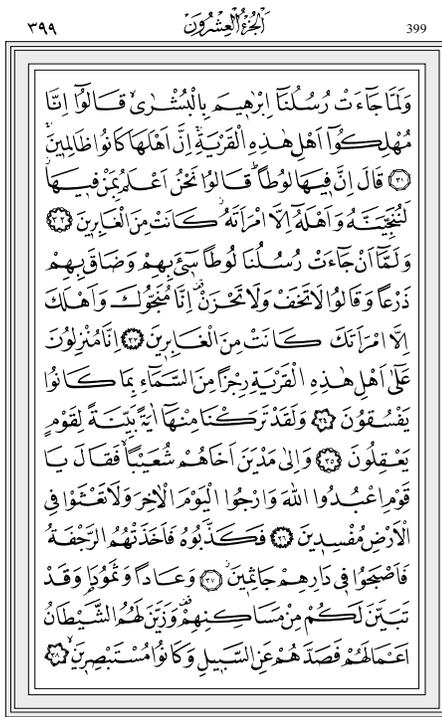
9. The disavowal mentioned in the verse is similar to that found in the verses: *No indeed! Those (whom they deified – beings such as angels, the jinn, Prophets, saints, and heroes, etc.) will deny their worship of them and turn against them as adversaries (on Judgment Day) (sūrah 19: 82).*

*At that time, those who were followed (in the world as the elders, heads, or leaders, and who were loved as God is loved), will disown those who followed them and declare themselves innocent of their evil deeds; they will see the punishment and that the relations between them are cut off (sūrah 2: 166).*

And the curse is like that which is mentioned in the verse: *He (God) says: "Enter in company with the communities of the jinn and humankind that went before you into the Fire!" Every time a community enters the Fire, it curses its fellow-community (that went before it) – so much so that, when they all have gathered there one after another, those who came later say of those who came earlier: "Our Lord! Those are the ones who led us astray: give them therefore double suffering through*

*fire!" He (God) says: "For each is double (since those who went earlier both strayed themselves and led others astray, and those who came later both strayed themselves and imitated the others blindly), but you do not know." Then the preceding ones among them say to the succeeding ones: "You are in no wise superior to us, so taste the punishment for all (the sins) that you were busy earning (through your belief and deeds)!" (sūrah 7: 38–39)*

10. God put the Prophet Abraham, upon him be peace, through tremendous tests, and he fulfilled them all, bearing many hardships purely for God's good pleasure. So God made him a leader for people and also appointed leaders among his offspring (sūrah 2: 124). He absolutely purified his household (sūrah 3: 33), and granted them (including the progeny of Ishmael proceeding from him, as well as that of Isaac, upon them both be peace,) a mighty dominion in both the material and spiritual realm (sūrah 4: 54). God also granted the Prophet Abraham, upon him be peace, a good, blessed life in the world after his emigration for His sake (sūrah 16: 122).



31. And so, when Our (heavenly) envoys came to Abraham with the glad tidings (of the birth of Isaac),<sup>11</sup> they said to him: “We are going to destroy the people of that township, for its people are wrongdoers (who exceed all bounds in indecency).”

32. He said: “But Lot is there.” They said: “We know very well who is there. We will certainly save him and his family (by allowing them to leave the place), except his wife, who (as has been decreed) is among those who will stay behind (and be destroyed).”

33. And when Our messengers came to Lot, he was troubled on their account and felt himself powerless to protect them. They said: “Do not be worried, nor be grieved. We are going to save you and your family except your wife, who (as has been decreed) is among those who will stay behind (and be destroyed).”

34. “We are going to bring down on the people of this township a scourge from the sky because they have persistently been transgressing (all bounds of decency and equity).”

35. Assuredly We have left behind a clear sign for a people who will reason and understand.

36. And to Midian We sent their brother, Shu‘ayb (as Messenger), and he said (to them in conveying this message): “O my people! Worship God alone and be prepared for the Last Day (in certain expectation that you will be asked to account for all your deeds in the world), and do not go about acting wickedly in the land, causing disorder and corruption.”

37. But they denied him, and in consequence a shocking catastrophe seized them, so that they lay prostrate (and lifeless) in their dwellings.

38. And the Ād and Thamūd - (their fate) is manifest to you from their dwellings (still lying in ruins). Satan decked out their (evil) deeds to be appealing to them, and so debarred them from the right way,<sup>12</sup> though they were intelligent (enough to see the truth).

11. See sūrah 11: 69–71.

12. Satan can only try to kindle an inclination to evil within a person’s heart and to convince them that the deed to which they have been aroused is a good thing. He has no power to force a person to do something. A person follows Satan’s call out of their free will and un-

der the influence of their carnal desires or material interests or because of arrogance or certain racial, ideological, or religious prejudices. A person’s being able to see the truth is not usually enough for them to follow the truth, unless they are saved from the influence of such deviating factors.

وَقَارُونَ وَفِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مُوسَى  
 بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانُوا سَاقِئِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾  
 فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذُنُوبِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا  
 وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ خَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ  
 وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَعْرَضْنَا وَمَا كَانَتْ اللَّهُ يُلْطِفُهُمْ وَلِيَكُنَّ  
 كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا  
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ  
 بَيْتًا وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ  
 لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُدْعُونَ  
 مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَتِلْكَ  
 الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ  
 ﴿٤٣﴾ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ  
 لَآيَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ أَنْزَلْنَا أَوْحَى إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ  
 الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ  
 وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

39. And Korah, Pharaoh, and Hāmān – indeed Moses came to them with clear proofs of the truth, but they were arrogant and oppressive in the land. Yet they could not outrun (Our punishment).

40. Each of them (of the communities mentioned) We seized in their sins. Of them are those upon whom We sent a hurricane (of stones); and of them are those whom the awful blast seized; and of them is him whom We caused to be swallowed by the earth; and of them those whom We caused to drown.<sup>13</sup> God would never wrong them, but it was they who wronged themselves.

41. The parable of those who take to them other than God for guardians (to entrust their affairs to) is like a spider: it has made for itself a house, and surely the frailest of houses is the spider's house.<sup>14</sup> If only they knew this!

42. God surely knows what they deify and invoke apart from Him, and that their doing so is not based on any truth. He is the All-Glorious with irresistible might (Who never accepts any partner in Divinity, Lordship, and Sovereignty), the All-Wise (in Whose creation and rule there are many instances of wisdom).

43. Those parables – We strike them for people (so that they may see the truth and mend their ways). But none reasons to understand (their true meaning and purpose) save the knowledgeable.

44. He has created the heavens and the earth with truth (meaningfully, for a definite purpose, and on solid foundations of truth). Surely in this is a sign for the believers.<sup>15</sup>

45. Recite and convey to them what is revealed to you of the Book, and establish the Prayer in conformity with its conditions. Surely, the Prayer restrains from all that is indecent and shameful, and all that is evil. Surely God's remembrance is the greatest (of all types of worship, and not restricted to the Prayer). God knows all that you do.

13. Those upon whom God sent a hurricane of stones were the tribe of Ād, who were destroyed in a sandstorm which lasted seven nights and eight days (*sūrah* 7: 72; *sūrah* 11: 58; *sūrah* 23: 27; *sūrah* 26: 120; *sūrah* 69: 7), and the people of Lot, upon whom an evil rain of stones was sent (*sūrah* 7: 84; *sūrah* 11: 82–83; *sūrah* 15: 73–74). Those whom the awful blast seized were the tribe of Thamūd (*sūrah* 7: 78; *sūrah* 11: 67; *sūrah* 15: 83; *sūrah* 69: 6), and the peoples of Shu‘ayb (*sūrah* 7: 91; *sūrah* 11: 94; *sūrah* 26: 189). The one whom God caused to be swallowed by the earth was Korah (*sūrah* 28: 81), and those whom God caused to drown were the people of Noah (*sūrah* 7: 64; *sūrah* 11: 42–44), as well as Pharaoh, Hāmān, and their hosts (*sūrah* 10: 90; *sūrah* 20: 77–78; *sūrah* 26: 65–66).

14. This comparison has, in fact, two meanings: (1) Whoever relies on something other than God, it is as if they were relying on or taking refuge in a spider’s web. (2) A spider’s web is formed of numerous fine threads, yet it easily catches weak creatures, such as flies; the unbelievers can easily hunt people who are as weak as a fly in spirit and will-power. The traps they build have many threads to catch their victims, such as addiction to comfort, love of position and money, lusts, ego-centeredness, racial prejudices, etc.

15. The Qur’ān reiterates that only those who believe or are disposed to believe can grasp the meaning and purposes in creation and God’s signs in it. This is of great significance because of the following examples, as expounded by Said Nursi:

The value of the iron (or other material) from which a work of art is made differs from the value of the art expressed in it. The art’s worth is far more than its material. An antique may fetch as much as a million dollars, while its material is not even worth a few cents. If taken to an antiques market, it may be sold for its true value, because of the skill involved and the fame of the artist. If taken to a blacksmith, it will only attain its scrap value.

Similarly, each person is a unique,

priceless work of God Almighty’s art. We are the most delicate and graceful miracles of His Power, beings created to manifest all His Names and inscriptions as unique specimen of the universe. If we are illuminated with faith, these meaningful inscriptions become visible. Believers manifest these inscriptions through their connection with their Maker, for the Divine art contained in each person is revealed through such affirmations as: “I am the work of the Majestic Maker, the creature and object of His Mercy and Munificence.” As a result, and because we gain value in proportion to how well we reflect this art, we move from insignificance (in material terms) to beings ranked above all creatures. We address God, we are His guests on earth, and we are qualified for Paradise.

But if unbelief is ingrained in us, all of the Divine Names’ manifestations are veiled by darkness and thus non-expressive. If the Artist is unknown, how can the aspects that express the value of His art be identified? Thus, the most meaningful instances of that sublime art and elevated inscription are concealed. In material terms, unbelievers attribute such art and inscription to trivial causes, nature, and chance, thereby reducing them to plain glass instead of sparkling diamonds. They are no more significant than any other material entity, self-condemned to a transient and suffocating life, and no better than the most impotent, needy, and afflicted animal that eventually will become dust. Unbelief thus spoils our nature by changing our diamond into coal.

Just as faith illuminates human beings and reveals all the messages inscribed in their being by the Eternally-Besought-of-All, it also illuminates the universe and removes darkness from the past and future. It displays all things and beings in their true worth coming from their connection with their Maker. But unbelief shows them only as physical entities moving toward eternal non-existence. (See *The Words*, “The 23<sup>rd</sup> Word,” 328)

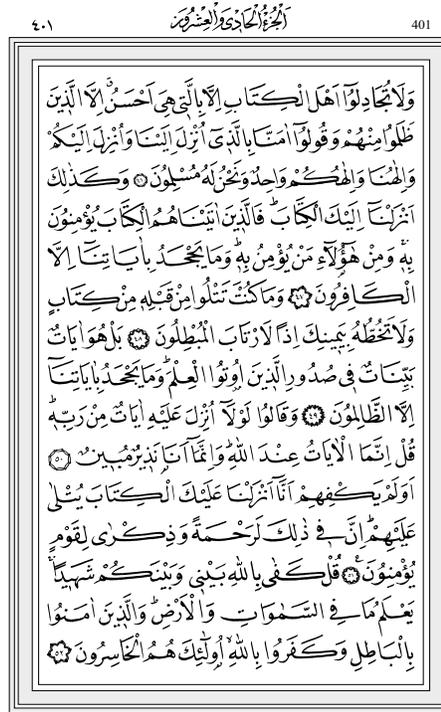
46. Do not argue with those who were given the Book save in the best way, unless it be those of them who are given to wrongdoing (and therefore not accessible to courteous argument).<sup>16</sup> Say (to them): “We believe in what has been sent down to us and what was sent down to you, and your God and our God is one and the same. We are Muslims wholly submitted to Him.”

47. It is in this way (upon the principle of submission to God and as a confirmation of all the previous Books and Prophets) that We have sent down the Book to you. So those who were given the Book before (and are sincere with respect to the Divine Revelation) believe in it, and among those (people of Makkah, also) there are some who believe in it. None could oppose and reject Our Revelations except unbelievers (those who knowingly cover them with falsehood).

48. You did not (O Messenger) read of any book before it (the revelation of this Qur’ān), nor did you write one with your right (or left) hand. For then, those who have ever sought to disprove the truth might have a reason to doubt (it).

49. It (the Qur’ān) is indeed self-evident, enlightening Revelations (revealed by God and so able to impress themselves) in the hearts of those endowed with knowledge. None oppose and reject them except wrongdoers (those who cannot determine with justice and so act arrogantly in response to them).

50. They say: “Why have no miraculous signs been sent down on him from his Lord?” Say: “The miraculous signs are but



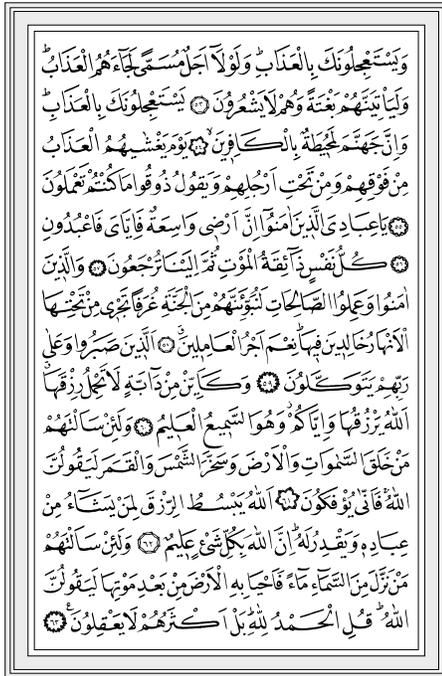
at the Will and in the Power of only God. I am but a plain warner (with no freedom and power to be able to do whatever I wish).”

51. Is it not enough for them (as a miraculous sign) that We have sent down to you the Book which is recited to them? Surely in it there is great mercy and (instructive) reminder for a people who believe.

52. Say: “God suffices as a witness between me and you. He knows whatever is in the heavens and on the earth. As for those who believe in the falsehood and disbelieve in God (by rejecting His Revelation and Messenger), they are the losers (who have ruined themselves).”

16. This verse, which must have been revealed during the migration to Abyssinia, teaches Muslims how they should behave toward the People of the Book. In fact, this manner is the general way in which the Muslims must behave in their relation-

ship with the followers of other faiths. They must convey Islam with gentle words and in a mild manner. If, however, those addressed show a harsh reaction, then the Muslims must avoid disputation with them (see *sūrah* 16: 125, note 29; *sūrah* 22: 67–68).



53. They challenge you to hasten the punishment (with which they are threatened by God). Had it not been for the term appointed by God, the punishment would have come upon them (already).<sup>17</sup> And it will come upon them all of a sudden, when they are unaware.

54. They challenge you to hasten the punishment (with which they are threatened by God). Surely Hell will encompass the unbelievers (with the reasons for them to enter it,<sup>18</sup> and is bound to have them in it).

55. On that Day, the suffering will overwhelm them from above them and from beneath their feet, and (God) will say to them: "Taste now what you used to do (in the world)!"

56. O My servants who believe (but are prevented from living according to your belief)! My earth is vast, so worship Me alone.<sup>19</sup>

57. Every soul is bound to taste death,<sup>20</sup> and then to Us you will be brought back.

58. Those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, We will most certainly lodge them in high, lofty mansions in Paradise through which rivers flow, therein to abide. How excellent is the reward of those who always do good deeds!

59. They are patient (in the face of the adversities they suffer for the sake of worshipping God only), and in their Lord they put their trust (expecting no support from any other power or authority).

60. How many a living creature there is that does not carry its own provision (in store), but God provides for them,<sup>21</sup> and indeed for you. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.<sup>22</sup>

61. If you ask them, "Who is it that has created the heavens and the earth, and made the sun and the moon subservient to His order (thereby sustaining life)?" they will most certainly say, "God." How then are they (who oppose this Revelation) turned away from the truth and make false claims?

62. God enlarges provision for whom He wills of His servants, and straitens it (for whom He wills). Surely God has full knowledge of everything.

63. If you ask them, "Who is it that sends down water from the sky, and revives with it the earth after its death?" they will most certainly say, "God." Say (you, also): "All praise and gratitude are for God." But most of them do not reason (to know the truth and distinguish it from falsehood).

17. For an explanation and similar verses, see *sūrah* 7: 34, note 10; *sūrah* 10: 98, note 20; *sūrah* 18: 58.

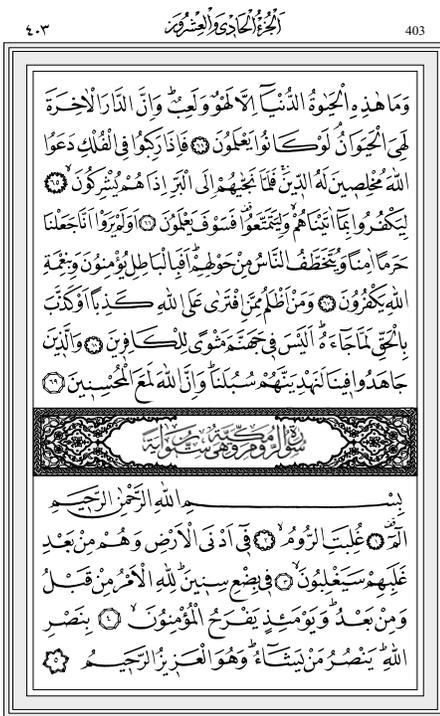
18. That is, unbelief and evil deeds are the reasons for entering Hell, and the unbelievers are bound to go into it. Secondly, as faith bears in itself the seed of Paradise, unbelief bears the seed of Hell and is in fact a manifestation of Hell in the heart of the unbelievers.

19. That is, you can search for and emigrate to another place where you can worship Me without associating any partners with Me.

20. For comment, see *sūrah* 21: 35, note 5.

21. For an explanation of God's providing for creatures, see *sūrah* 11: 6, note 1.

22. That is, you have no reason to fear for your sustenance when you emigrate to another land in order to be able to live according to your faith. There are many creatures that do not store up their provision for the future nor carry it with them. Just as God provides for them, He also provides for you and will continue to do so, because He hears all the petitions made to Him and knows all the needs of His creatures.



But when He brings them safe to land – see, they begin again to associate partners with God!<sup>25</sup>

66. And so let them show ingratitude for all that We have granted them, and so let them give themselves up to the enjoyment of the worldly life; but they will come to know.

67. Do they not consider that We have established (them in) a secure sanctuary while people are ravaged all around them? (How then) do they believe in falsehood and (show such ingratitude as to) disbelieve in God's greatest blessing (of the Qur'an and Islam)?

68. Who is more in the wrong than he who fabricates falsehood in attribution to God or denies the truth when it has come to him? Is there not a dwelling in Hell for the unbelievers?!

69. Those (on the other hand) who strive hard for Our sake, We will most certainly guide them to Our ways (that We have established to lead them to salvation). Most assuredly, God is with those devoted to doing good, aware that God is seeing them.

64. The present, worldly life is nothing but a pastime and play,<sup>23</sup> but the abode of the Hereafter is truly alive.<sup>24</sup> If they but knew.

65. When they embark on a ship (and find themselves in danger), they call upon God sincerely believing in Him alone (as the only Deity, Lord, and Sovereign).

23. For more on "the present, worldly life," see *sūrah* 6, note 5.

24. For the liveliness of the abode of the Hereafter, see *sūrah* 25: 12, note 4.

25. This reality is not only restricted to when one encounters a danger in the sea. The danger at sea is a metaphor used for perilous conditions one finds oneself in. Almost every-

one experiences this several times in their life. In such conditions people – whether they are atheists, agnostics, or polytheists – discover God in the depth of their conscience, and call upon God only, without even remembering other so-called deities or powers. So their denial of God or associating partners with Him is the denial of their inner profession of God and implies self-contradiction.

## SŪRAH 30

## AR-RŪM

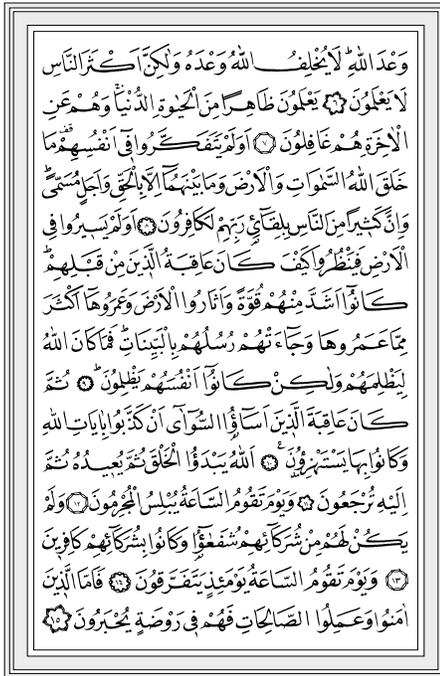
## (THE BYZANTINE ROMANS)

## Makkah Period

This *sūrah* of 60 verses was revealed in mid-Makkan period. It takes its name from the Byzantines mentioned in verse 2. The Byzantines were Christians who believed in God without worshipping idols. This is why the Muslims in Makkah felt close to them, while the pagan Quraysh sympathized with the Persians, who they thought would vindicate their opposition to belief in One God. At a time when the Muslims were a very small community subject to persecution in Makkah, this *sūrah* consoled them by predicting the unexpected victory of the Romans against the Persians only nine years after a great defeat. It also implies the future victory of the Muslims, which was soon to occur. In addition, this *sūrah* puts forward a multitude of evidence in favor of faith in One God and the Hereafter, and against polytheism.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. *Alif. Lām. Mīm.*
2. The Byzantine Romans have been defeated,
3. In the lands close-by; but they, after their defeat, will be victorious,
4. Within a few (nine) years – to God belongs the command (the absolute judgment and authority) both before and after (any event) – and at the time (when the Romans are victorious), the believers will rejoice,
5. Because of God's help leading them to victory. He helps whom He wills to victory. He is the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Compassionate (especially towards His believing servants).



those before them (who also obstinately disbelieved in Our signs)? They were greater than them in power. They cultivated the soil and mined it (for minerals and water resources), and built it up more and better than these have done. And, in time, their Messengers came to them with clear proofs of the truth (which they rejected to their own doom). God would never wrong them, but it was they themselves who were wronging themselves.

10. In consequence, the outcome for those who were lost in evil was evil, as they denied God's Revelations and signs, and were mocking them.

11. God originates creation in the first instance, and then reproduces it,<sup>2</sup> (and will bring it back in the Hereafter), and then you will be returned to Him.

12. When the Last Hour stands forth and the Judgment is established, the disbelieving criminals will be plunged into despair.

13. They will have no intercessors in the beings whom they associate (as partners with God), and they will no longer believe in their being partners with God.

14. When the Last Hour stands forth (and the Judgment is established) – on that Day, all people will be separated from one another.

15. As for those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, they will be honored and made happy in a delightful Garden.

6. (This is) God's promise. God never fails His promise, but most people do not know this (as they have no true knowledge about God).<sup>1</sup>

7. They only know (what reaches to their senses from) the outward aspect of the life of this world, but they are heedless and unaware of (what lies beyond it and) the Hereafter.

8. Do they not reflect upon themselves (even once)? God has not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them save with truth (meaningfully, for a definite purpose, and on solid foundations of truth), and for an appointed term. But surely many among the people are in unbelief about the meeting with their Lord.

9. Have they never traveled about the earth and seen what was the outcome for

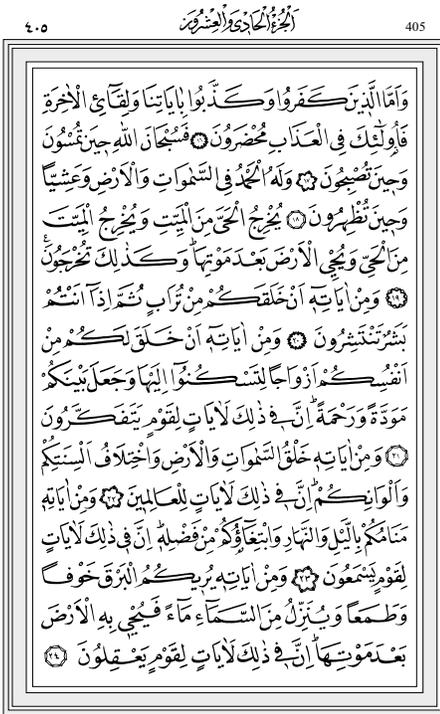
1. These verses contain important predictions. Some saintly scholars have arrived at many predictions based on these. For example, as reported by Abū Ḥayyān, a commentator from al-Andalusia, in his *Bahr al-Muḥīṭ*, Abū al-Ḥakam ibn al-Barrajān predicted the recovery of Jerusalem by the Muslims from the Crusaders in 1187 CE with its exact date. However, what is clear to everybody in these verses is that the Byzantine Romans who were defeated by the Persians would be victorious over them within nine years and in the same year, the Muslims would rejoice because of the victory which would be granted to them by God (Yazīr, 6: 3802–3803).

In 615 CE, when some Muslims were forced, by the persecution that they faced in Makkah, to migrate to Abyssinia, the Persians gained a victory over the Romans in the war that had begun in 613 CE. The victory was so great that the total destruction of the Byzantine Empire seemed imminent. The *sūrah* decisively pronounced that within nine years from that time, the Romans would defeat the Persians. The war continued and the Persians advanced as far as Constantinople (present-day Istanbul), the capital of the Byzantines, in 617 CE. No one thought that the Byzantines would be able

to turn defeat into victory so soon in the future; when these verses were revealed, the pagan Makkans made fun of them and of the Muslims for believing in them.

However, in 622 CE, just nine years after the beginning of this war, the tide began to turn in favor of the Byzantines. In that year, God's Messenger also emigrated to Madīnah. In 624 CE, again nine years after the decisive victory of the Persians, the Byzantines gained the first victory over them and destroyed the birthplace of Zoroaster in Azerbaijan. It was in this year also that the Muslims were victorious in the Battle of Badr against the polytheist Makkans. When the Byzantines completely routed the Persians in 627 CE, the Muslims won the Battle of the Trench, and the next year they signed the treaty of Hudaibiyyah, which the Qur'an describes as a manifest victory (48: 1); this proved to be a door opening to the free expansion of Islam. This same year witnessed the imprisonment and death of the Persian king, and the Messenger's entering Makkah for a minor pilgrimage.

2. For God's origination of creation and then bringing it forth anew or reproducing it, see *sūrah* 21: 104, note 25; *sūrah* 55: 29, note 11. Also see *sūrah* 29: 19–20, note 5.



have grown into a human population scattered widely.

21. And among His signs is that He has created for you, from your selves, mates, that you may incline towards them and find rest in them, and He has engendered love and tenderness between you. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect.

22. And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and colors. Surely in this are signs indeed for people who have knowledge (of the facts in creation, and who are free of prejudices).

23. And among His signs is your sleeping at night and in the day, and your seeking (livelihoods) out of His bounty. Surely in this are signs for people who listen (to God's messages in creation, and His provision for all creatures).

24. And among His signs is His displaying before you the lightning, giving rise to both fear (of being struck) and hopeful expectation (of rain), and that He sends down water from the sky, and revives with it the earth after its death. Surely in this are signs for people who will reason and understand.

16. But those who disbelieve and deny Our Revelations and the final meeting (with Us) in the Hereafter, such will be arraigned for punishment (in Hell).

17. So glorify God when you enter the evening and when you enter the morning –

18. And (proclaim that) all praise and gratitude in the heavens and on the earth are for Him – and in the afternoon, and when you enter the noon time.<sup>3</sup>

19. He brings forth the living out of the dead, and brings the dead out of the living, and revives the earth after its death. It is in this way (that He revives the dead earth) that you will be brought forth from the dead.<sup>4</sup>

20. And among His signs is that He created you from earth, and (since) then you

3. Although glorifying God or proclaiming His being absolutely free of any defects or having partners is not restricted to certain times, most commentators suggest that these two last verses specify the times of the daily Prayers. For the meaning of these times and their specification, see *sūrah* 17: 78–79, notes 33–34.

Glorification is knowing and declaring God to be above having any attributes that are never fit for Him, such as having defects, having partners, begetting or being begotten, and union (i.e. with any creature), and incarnation (i.e. taking any form of presentation or representation of Himself). Praising Him means knowing and declaring Him with the Attributes belonging and fitting for Him, and thanking Him.

It is God Who has created the heavens and the earth and all that is in and between them, and Who has put many things in them at the

service of humankind; all praise and thanks are due to Him. Moreover, all that is in the heavens and on the earth praises and gives thanks to Him, each in its own language or in the tongue of its disposition.

4. This verse, which mentions concrete events in nature, also implies that God sometimes brings up a believer born into an unbelieving family, or an unbeliever born into a believing family, and that He may finally cause a believer to apostatize because of his or her sins, and an unbeliever to enter the fold of Islam purely out of His grace or due to some of that person's good acts. While mentioning God's raising of the dead as analogous to reviving the dead earth, it also suggests that God's reviving a disbelieving "dead" person (*sūrah* 6: 122) is analogous to His reviving the dead earth. For such implied analogies in the Qur'an, see *sūrah* 7: 55–58, note 14.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ تَقُومَ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ بِأَمْرِهِ يُشْرَعُ إِذَا دَعَاكَ  
دَعْوَةً مِنَ الْأَرْضِ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ تَخْرُجُونَ ﴿٥﴾ وَلَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضِ كُلُّهُ قَانِتُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْحَيَاةَ  
يُحْيِيهِمْ وَهُوَ أَمْوَنٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٧﴾ ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِنْ  
أَنْفُسِكُمْ هَلْ لَكُمْ مِنْ مَالِكُمْ إِنَّمَا تَكُونُونَ شُرَكَاءَ  
فِي مَا رَزَقْتُمْ أَهْلًا فَنُفِثْتُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ مَنَّا فُوتَهُمْ كَيْفَ فَكُنْتُمْ  
أَنْفُسَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨﴾ بَلِ اتَّبَعَ  
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ فَمَنْ يَهْدِي مَنْ أَضَلَّ  
اللَّهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ﴿٩﴾ فَاقْرَأْ وَجْحَكَ لِلَّذِينَ هَنَأُوا فِطْرَتَ  
اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ  
اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا لِكُلِّ قَبِيلٍ لِبَنَاتٍ  
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ مُبِينٌ لِلَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ الْفِتْرَةَ  
وَالَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ الْفِتْرَةَ لَا تَكُونَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشُّرَكِيَّةِ  
مِنْ الَّذِينَ فَتَرُوا دِيَنَهُمْ ﴿١١﴾ وَكَأَنَّمَا شِيعَاكُمْ لِحَرْبٍ  
بِمَا لَدَيْتُمْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

25. And among His signs is that the heaven and the earth stand firm (subsisting) by His Command.<sup>5</sup> In the end, when He calls you forth from the earth (with a single, particular summons), then (at once) you will come forth.

26. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth. All are obedient to Him in humble service.<sup>6</sup>

27. He it is Who originates creation in the first instance and then reproduces it (in the world), and will bring it back (in the Hereafter); and that (reproduction and bringing back) is easier for Him.<sup>7</sup> Whatever attribute of sublimity there is (like existence, life, power, knowledge, munificence, and might, etc.) in the heavens and the earth, it is His in the highest degree, and He is the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Wise.

28. He strikes a parable from your selves: Do you recognize for those, over whom you hold possession and authority (slaves or animals), a share in what We have provided for you, so that you and they have equal shares in it, and do you hold them in fearful respect as you hold each other in fearful respect?<sup>8</sup> Thus, We set out in detail the signs (of Our Oneness) for people who will reason and understand.

29. No indeed! Those who do (the greatest) wrong (by associating partners with God) follow only their lusts and fancies, without (basing on any) knowledge. Who has power to guide him whom God has led astray (on account of following merely his lusts and fancies)? And such have none to help them (to salvation).

30. So set your whole being upon the Religion (of Islam) as one of pure faith (free from unbelief, polytheism, and hypocrisy). This is the original pattern belonging to God on which He has originated humankind. No change can there be in God's creation. This is the upright, ever-true Religion, but most of the people do not know.<sup>9</sup>

31. (Set your whole being, you and the believers in your company, on the upright, ever-true Religion) turning in devotion to Him alone, and keep from disobedience to Him in reverence for Him and piety, and establish the Prayer in conformity with its conditions; and do not be of those who associate partners (with Him),

32. Those who have made divisions in their religion (whereas they must accept it in its totality), and become split into different factions (following different guides to falsehood), each party rejoicing in what (portion) it has.

5. God is the All-Powerful Being Who can do whatever He wills by the mere command, “Be!” However, in the corporeal realm, He acts from behind the veil of cause and effect or regular patterns of events – that is, His exercise of His decrees or will in the corporeal realm gives rise in our minds to some notions that we call “natural laws.” So, this statement means that the heaven and earth stand firm and subsist by the laws issuing from the pure realm of His commands that originate from His Attributes of Power and Will.

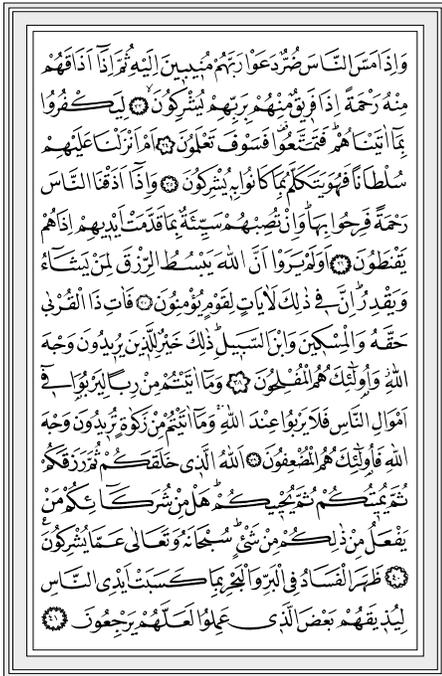
6. On the obedience of all beings to God, see *sūrah* 3: 83, note 16.

7. Everything is equally easy for God. So the use of *easier* in the verse is in the view of, or according to, the understanding and perception of human beings. Reproduction or bringing something back is certainly easier than the original creation. So, this verse addresses those who see the final destruction of the world and its re-building as impossible, and means that if one can invent or originate something, one can reproduce it even more easily. Therefore, destroying the world and re-creating it can in no way be difficult for God, Who originated it.

8. This comparison is highly significant. Basically, whatever we possess belongs to God, and our share in its acquisition is minimal. For example, in order to produce a single apple, there must be an apple seed, which the whole human-

kind would not be able to make even if we were to come together, and almost the whole universe (including the sun, air, water, and earth) must cooperate in a perfectly measured way. None of these are in our power to create or control. Our share in an apple is only our labor that we use in its growth and harvest, and it is God also Who has endowed us with the necessary power, ability, and with our body. Our share in any machine we make is no greater than this. The basic material we use in making it, and its utility in production or manufacturing, as well as the physical and/or chemical “laws” that are involved in its production, belong solely to God. Moreover, it is He Who has endowed us with the ability to learn and to make things. Despite this clear fact, we never accept that others have some share in our right to the possession and use of such machines or instruments. But God is the sole Creator and Owner of everything in the universe including us, without anyone else having any partnership in their creation or ownership. However, by accepting many other powers, such as angels, or some important persons, or “nature,” or “natural powers and laws,” or even their own selves, many people associate partners with Him in Divinity or authority regarding the rule of the universe and the ordering of human life. This is the greatest of wrongdoings and injustices, and expressions of ignorance.

9. For an explanation of this verse, see Appendix 13.



have forwarded, then they immediately lose all hope!

37. Have they never considered that God enlarges provision for whom He wills, and straitens it (for whom He wills). Surely in this are signs for people who will believe and who will deepen in faith.

38. And so give their due<sup>10</sup> to relatives, as well as to the destitute and the wayfarer. That is best for those who seek God's "Face" (His approval and good pleasure); and those are they who are the prosperous.

39. Whatever you give to people in usurious hope that it may return to you increased through the goods of (other) people, will bring no increase in God's sight. Whereas whatever you give in charity seeking God's "Face" (His approval and good pleasure), for those there is increase (of recompense) multiplied.<sup>11</sup>

40. God is He Who creates you, then He sustains you (by providing for you), then He causes you to die, and then He will bring you to life again. Are there any among the partners you associate (with God) that do anything of that? All-Glorified He is, and infinitely Exalted above what they associate (with Him).

41. Corruption and disorder have appeared on land and in the sea because of what the hands of people have (done and) earned (of evil deeds). Thus He causes them to taste the consequence of some of what they have done, so that they may (take heed, repent and reform, and so) return (to the right way).<sup>12</sup>

33. When affliction befalls people, they invoke their Lord turning to Him in contrition; then, no sooner does He favor them with a taste of mercy from Him than some of them associate partners with their Lord, (Who has created them, and sustains and cares for them).

34. Thus (do they behave) with disbelieving ingratitude for all that We have granted them. Then, enjoy (for a while the worldly favors He has granted you), but in time you will come to know!

35. Or have We sent down on them a document of authority which speaks in favor of their associating partners with Him?

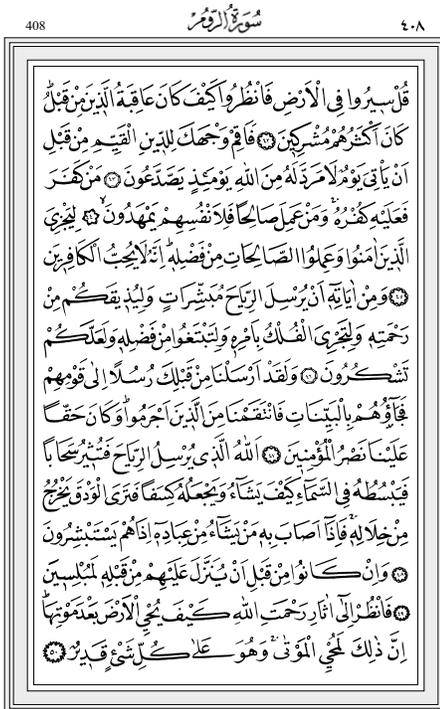
36. When We favor people with a taste of mercy, they rejoice in it (without thinking of Him Who bestows it). But if an evil befalls them because of what their hands

10. It is highly significant that the Qur'an uses the word "their due" for the portion one must give to the needy out of one's wealth. It means that since it is God Who provides for everybody, the portion the wealthy must give to the needy essentially belongs to the needy. God gives this portion to the wealthy for the poor; by ordering the wealthy to give, He both opens a door through which they can earn merits for their eternal life and establishes a bridge between people in the society, thus creating means of mutual assistance and solidarity. So whoever does not give to the needy the portion he or she should give has usurped their due.

11. Islam never aims to favor hypocrisy and hypocrites. So before establishing a law, first it trains and prepares hearts and minds in its favor or against it. This is why the Prophet's Companions could easily accept any commandment when it was revealed. To this end, Islam followed a gradual way in establishing its legal code. In Makkah, it prepared hearts and minds for its future injunctions. For example, in 17: 22-39, it propounded many rules only as moral values; many of these would later become laws in Madīnah. It also followed a gradual way in prohibiting such established vices as drinking alcohol and transactions in-

volving interest. This verse is the first to be revealed on the way to the decisive prohibition of transactions involving interest, with the aim of encouraging Muslims to avoid it. Some people would give gifts or similar things to others, particularly the merchants and money-lenders; this was not done with a pure intention, but with the hope or aim that it might come back to them, increased in value. That is, those who took these "gifts" would use them in their trade for profitable transactions, and return the "gifts" with the extra amount or value to the original owner.

12. All the social convulsions and evils, unjust wars, pestilences, environmental pollution, and similar catastrophes arise from human rebellion against God and His Religion. God has established human life on the fact that this human rebellion causes such calamities. The basic wisdom behind this is that humankind will be awakened to the truth and, giving up their wrong ways, turn to God in faith and obedience. But, unfortunately, the number of people who perceive this is quite limited. In particular, scientific materialism and materialist philosophy make this perception almost impossible and refer every such thing to "nature" or self-becoming.



42. Say: “Travel about on the earth and see what was the outcome for those who lived before you. Most of them were (obstinately given to) associating partners (with God).”

43. Set, then, your whole being on the upright, ever-true Religion before there comes a Day which God will not remove (from them) and none can prevent Him from bringing it. On that Day, they will be sundered apart.

44. Whoever disbelieves, his unbelief is charged against him; whereas those who (believe and) do good, righteous deeds, they make provision for themselves (of a happy, everlasting life),

45. That He (God) will reward those who believe and do good, righteous deeds out

of His bounty. He does not love the unbelievers.

46. Among His signs is that He sends forth the merciful winds as glad tidings so that He may favor you with a taste of His mercy, and that ships may sail by His command (according to the laws He has established), and that you may seek of His bounty, and that (in recognition of all these favors of His) you may give thanks (to Him).

47. Indeed, We sent before you (O Messenger, other) Messengers each to his own people, and they came to them with clear proofs (of the truth of God’s Unity and Sovereignty). Then, We took retribution from those who disbelieved and were committed to accumulating sins. We have bound Ourselves to rescue the believers.

48. God is He Who sends forth the merciful winds, so that they set clouds to move, and He spreads them in the heaven in the manner that He wills, and makes them aggregated particles, and there! you see rain issuing from their midst. When He has caused it to fall on such of His servants as He wills, they rejoice,

49. Even though a short while before, just before it was sent down upon them, they had been in despair.

50. Look, then, at the imprints of God’s Mercy – how He revives the dead earth after its death: certainly then it is He Who will revive the dead (in a similar way). He has full power over everything.<sup>13</sup>

13. The Qur'ān puts forward various arguments concerning the Resurrection. For example, to impress upon the human heart the wonder of what the Almighty will accomplish in the Hereafter, and to prepare the human mind to accept and understand it, the Qur'ān presents the wonder of what He accomplishes here in the world. It gives examples of God's comprehensive acts in the macro-cosmos and, at times, presents His overall disposal of the macro-cosmos, normo-cosmos, and micro-cosmos (the universe, humanity, and atoms, respectively). Verse 13: 2 is an example of this.

The Qur'ān presents the phenomenon of the universe's creation, which it defines as the first origination (*sūrah* 56: 62), while describing the raising of the dead as the second origination (*sūrah* 53: 47), to establish the Resurrection. It also directs our attention to our own origin for this same end (*sūrah* 22: 5; *sūrah* 23: 13-16).

In making analogies between the Resurrection and God's deeds in this world, the Qur'ān sometimes alludes to the deeds God will do in the Hereafter in such a way that we are convinced of them, drawing analogies to what we observe here. It also shows His similar deeds in the world and makes comparisons between them and the Resurrection. One example is *sūrah* 36: 78-81.

The Qur'ān likens the Resurrection to the earth's springtime rejuvenation or revival following its death in winter. As well as innumerable instances of death and revival or replacement that are constantly witnessed in nature and in our own bodies, an overall death and revival is repeated every year. During winter, a white "shroud" covers much of the earth. Nature already has turned pale and shows fewer traces of life. Trees seem to be no more than hard bones. Grass fades away, flowers wither, migrating birds leave, and insects and reptiles disappear.

But winter is not eternal, for it is followed by a general revival. When the weather becomes warm, trees begin to bud and, wearing their finery, present themselves to the Eternal Witness. The soil swells, and grass and flowers start to blossom everywhere. Seeds that fell into the ground the previous autumn have germinated and, having annihilated themselves, begin to grow into new forms of life without suffering the least confusion. All of these new things are similar (but not identical) to those that came into being the previous year. In short, nature appears before us in all its splendor and finery. The raising of the dead on the Day of Judgment will be very much like this (*sūrah* 41: 39; *sūrah* 71: 17-18; *sūrah* 75: 36-40).

وَلَيُنزِّلُنَا رِيحًا فَرَّادًا وَّهُ مُصَوِّرًا لَقَدْ أُولُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَكْرُهُمْ ۖ فَإِنَّكَ  
لَاشْفَعُ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ وَلَا تَشْفَعُ الشَّجَرَةُ إِذَا وَكُفُوا مَدِينًا ۚ وَمَا آتَتْ  
بِهَادِ الْعَمَىٰ عَنْ ضَلَالَتِهِمْ أَنْ تُشْفِعَ الْآمِنُ يَوْمَ يُبَايَعَاتُ فَهُمْ تُسَلِّوْنَ  
۝٤٩ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ  
قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا وَشَيْبَةً يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ  
وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ ۝٥٠ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ  
الْمُجْرِمُونَ مَا لِنُسَوِّعَنَّهُمْ فِي السَّاعَةِ كَذَلِكَ كَانُوا يُؤْفَكُونَ  
۝٥١ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْإِيمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِئْتُمْ فِي  
كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ فَهَذَا يَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ وَلَكُمْ فِيكُمْ  
كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ۝٥٢ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْمِعُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا  
مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ۝٥٣ وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي  
هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَلَئِنْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ لَيُسْوِقْنَ  
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ أَنشَأْهُ إِلَّا مُبْطِلُونَ ۝٥٤ كَذَلِكَ  
يَطْمَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۝٥٥ فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ  
وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَا يَسْتَخِفُّكَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْقِنُونَ ۝٥٦

51. But if We send forth a scorching wind (against their land) and they see it (being dust-laden) as yellow, they begin, straight after that (joy), to show disbelieving ingratitude (as if God were obliged to always treat them with mercy and it were not God Who provides for them).

52. Indeed, you cannot make the dead hear, nor can you make the deaf hear the call when they have turned their backs, going away.

53. Nor can you guide the blind out of their error. None can you make hear save those who (being capable of reflection without prejudice) believe in Our Revelations and signs (in the outer world, as well as in their inner world), and are (therefore) ready to submit (to the truth).

14. *The sūrah* began with God's promise that He would help the believers to victory and that they would rejoice. It ends with reiteration of

54. God is He Who creates you in a state of weakness, and then gives you strength after weakness, and then, after a period of strength, ordains weakness (of old age) and grey hair. He creates however He wills. He is the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful.

55. When the Last Hour stands forth and the Judgment is established, the disbelieving criminals swear that they stayed in the world no longer than a short while (of the day). Thus were they habitually turned away from the truth, (having always depended on their sense-perceptions, false reasoning and defective knowledge).

56. But those who were endowed with knowledge (of the truth) and faith say: "For certain, you have stayed until the Day of Raising according to how God decreed in His Book (of Creation and Life). And now this is the Day of Raising, but you were (persistent in) refusing true knowledge (about it).

57. On that Day, their excuses will be of no avail to the wrongdoers (who denied God or associated partners with Him), nor will they be allowed to make amends (and offer regrets to escape the punishment).

58. Assuredly We have set forth for humankind in this Qur'an all kinds of parables and comparisons (to help them understand the truth). Even though you bring them a miracle (of the kind they demand), those who (pay no heed to these parables and comparisons and obstinately) disbelieve will certainly say (to the believers): "You are only seeking a false way."

59. Thus does God seal the hearts of those who have no (attachment to) knowledge.

60. So be patient; surely God's promise (that He will help the believers to victory) is true. And do not let those who lack certainty (of this truth) shake your firmness.<sup>14</sup>

this promise, strengthening the determination of the Messenger and the believers in the face of the harsh reactions of the unbelievers.

## SŪRAH 31

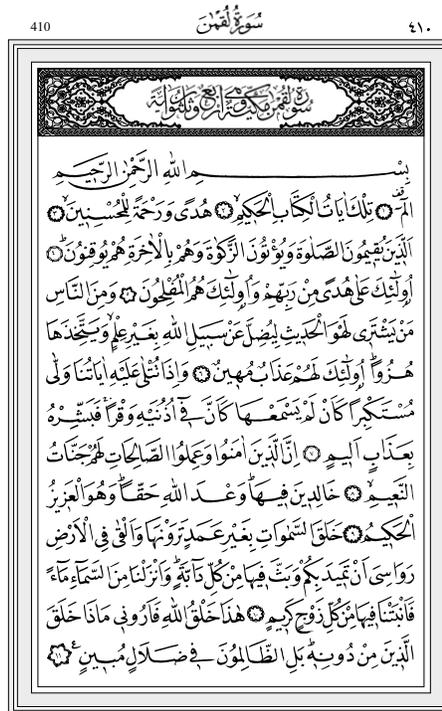
## LUQMĀN

Makkah Period

This sūrah of 34 verses was revealed in Makkah. It begins by affirming the wisdom of the Qur'ān, and offers pearls of wisdom narrated by Luqmān. It also mentions some virtues of the believers, presents evidence of God's Power and Oneness, emphasizes the essential need of human beings for God's Religion, and ends by stating that some matters are bound to remain unknown to humankind.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate.

1. *Alif. Lām. Mīm.*
2. These are the Revelations of the Book full of wisdom,
3. A guidance and mercy for those devoted to doing good, aware that God is seeing them.
4. They establish the Prayer in conformity with its conditions, and pay what is due to the needy out of their belongings, and in the Hereafter they have certainty of faith.
5. Those stand on true guidance (originating in this Book) from their Lord; and they are those who are the prosperous.
6. Among the people is one who pays for idle tales and diverting talk to lead people astray from (the Qur'ān, which is) God's way, without knowledge, and makes a mockery of it (the Qur'ān). For such (a man), there is a shameful, humiliating punishment.
7. When our Revelations are recited to such a one, he turns away in arrogance as if he had not heard them, as if there were heaviness in his ears. So give him the glad tidings of a painful punishment.
8. As against this, those who believe and



do good, righteous deeds, for them are Gardens of bounty and blessing,

9. To abide therein. This is a promise of God in truth. He is the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Wise.

10. He has created the heavens without pillars you can see;<sup>1</sup> and He has set up firm mountains on earth lest it should shake you with its movement, and dispersed thereon all kinds of living creatures. We also send down water from the sky, and cause every noble kind of vegetation rich (in color, scent, flavor, and fruit) to grow on earth in pairs.

11. This is God's creation; now show Me what is there that others besides Him have created. No, indeed; but the wrongdoers (who deny God or associate partners with Him) are lost in obvious error.

1. For an explanation of this statement, see 13: 2, note 1.

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ وَمَن يَشْكُرْ  
 فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ  
 ﴿١٢﴾ وَأذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ  
 إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا  
 أَيُّهُمَا وَهَنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفَصَّلَاةً فِي عَمِيرَاتٍ إِنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ  
 إِلَىٰ الْمَصْبُورِ ﴿١٤﴾ وَإِن جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ  
 بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبِ مِمَّا فِي الدُّنْيَا مُرُوفاً وَأَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ  
 مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ فَسَوْفَ أَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتَّيْتُكَ بِمَالٍ غَنِيًّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥﴾  
 يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَنزَلْتُكَ كِتَابًا فَتَعَالَىٰ حَبِيبٌ مِّنْ خَزَائِلِ فَتَكُنْ فِي صَخْرَةٍ  
 أَوْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَوْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَا أَيُّهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٦﴾  
 يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ  
 الْمُنْكَرِ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٧﴾  
 وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرْحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
 لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿١٨﴾ وَأَقْبِصْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَأَغْضُضْ  
 مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ ﴿١٩﴾

associate with Me something of which you certainly have no knowledge (and which is absolutely contrary to Knowledge), do not obey them. Even then, treat them with kindness and due consideration in respect of (the life of) this world. Follow the way of him who has turned to Me with utmost sincerity and committed himself to seeking My approval. Then (O all human beings), to Me is your return, and then I will make you understand all that you were doing (and call you to account).

16. “My dear son! Whether good or evil, if a deed should have the weight of only a mustard-seed, and though it be kept hidden in a rock, in the heavens or in the earth, God brings it to light (for judgment). Surely God is All-Subtle (penetrating to the most minute dimensions of all things), All-Aware.

17. “My dear son! Establish the Prayer in conformity with its conditions, enjoin and promote what is right and good, and forbid and try to prevent the evil, and bear patiently whatever may befall you. Surely (all of) that is among greatly meritorious things requiring great resolution to fulfill.

18. “Do not turn your face from people in scornful pride, nor move on earth haughtily. Surely God does not love anyone proud and boastful.

19. “Be modest in your bearing, and subdue your voice. For certain the most repugnant of voices is the braying of donkeys.”

12. We surely granted wisdom<sup>2</sup> to Luqmān,<sup>3</sup> and said: “Give thanks to God.” Whoever gives thanks to God, gives thanks but for (the good of) his own soul; and whoever is ungrateful, surely God is the All-Wealthy and Self-Sufficient (absolutely independent of the whole creation), All-Praiseworthy.

13. (Remember) when Luqmān said to his son by way of advice and instruction: “My dear son! Do not associate partners with God. Surely associating partners with God is a tremendous wrong.”

14. We have enjoined on human in respect of his parents: his mother bore him in strain upon strain, and his weaning was in two years. (So, O human,) be thankful to Me and to your parents. To Me is the final homecoming.

15. But if they strive with you to make you

2. For an explanation of wisdom, see *sūrah* 2: 129, note 108, and 269, note 159.
3. Luqmān is one of the three persons – the other two being Dhu'l-Qarnayn and 'Uzayr – mentioned in the Qur'ān about whom it is not clear whether they were Prophets or not. Luqmān was widely known in Arabia before the advent of Islam for his wisdom and spiritual maturity. Some traditions say that he was from Abyssinia and lived in Egypt (*Tefhīm*, “*Sūrah* Luqmān,” note 17). According to some other traditions, he lived long enough to see the Prophets Ayyūb (Job), Dāwūd (David) and Yūnus (Jonah), upon them all be peace (Yazır, 6: 3842).

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مِمَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ  
 وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَهُ ظَاهِرًا وَبَاطِنًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِي  
 اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا  
 مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَبِيعٌ مَّا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آباءَ نَا أَوْ لَوْ كَانَ  
 الشَّيْطَانُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ وَمَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى  
 اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى وَإِلَى اللَّهِ  
 عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ وَمَنْ هُوَ فَلَا يُخْزِيكَ كَذِبُ الْيُنْسِ اسْرِجِعْهُمْ  
 فَنَنْبِتْهُمْ مِمَّا عَمَلُوا إِنْ لَمْ يَنْبِتْ لَهُمْ عِلْمٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَنَنْبِتْهُمْ  
 قَلِيلًا لَّنْظُرَ نَبْطَهُمْ إِلَى عَذَابِ عِلْيَظٍ وَلَكِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ  
 خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَقَالُوا اللَّهُ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ  
 بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ  
 اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ وَلَوْ أَنَّ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ  
 أَقْلَامٌ وَالْجِبَالُ يَدٌ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَمْجَارٍ مَا تَقَدَّتْ  
 كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ مَا خَلَقَكُمْ  
 وَلَا يَعْتَكِرُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّهُ سَابِقٌ لِلَّهِ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ

20. Do you not see that God has made all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth of service to you, and lavished on you His favors, outward and inward? And yet, among people are those who dispute about God without having any true knowledge or any true guidance or an enlightening Divine Book.<sup>4</sup>

21. When such people are told to follow what God has sent down, they say: “No, but we follow that (the traditions, customs, beliefs, and practices) which we found our forefathers in.” What! even if Satan is inviting them to the punishment of the Blaze (by suggesting to them the way of their forefathers)?

22. (The truth is that) whoever submits his whole being to God and is devoted to doing good, aware that God is seeing him, he has indeed taken hold of the firm, unbreakable handle. With God rests the outcome for all matters.

23. Then whoever disbelieves, let his unbelief not grieve you. To Us is their final return, and We will make them understand all that they did (and call them to account for it). Surely God has full knowledge of what lies hidden in the bosoms.

24. We will (continue to) provide for them to enjoy themselves for a short while (in this life); then We will compel them to a harsh punishment.

25. If you should ask them who has created the heavens and the earth, they would certainly say, “God.” Say: “All praise and gratitude are for God,” (seeing that even those who associate partners with God feel compelled to acknowledge Him as the Creator; that recognition indeed destroys the foundations of polytheism).<sup>5</sup> But most of them do not know (what that recognition of theirs implies).

26. To God belongs whatever is in the heavens and on the earth (over which He has full and exclusive authority, and, therefore, He alone is to be worshipped but none other). God is He Who is the All-Wealthy and Self-Sufficient (absolutely independent of the whole creation), All-Praiseworthy (to Whom all praise and thanks belong and are due).

27. If all the trees on the earth were pens, and the whole sea (were ink), with seven more seas added thereto, the words of God (His decrees, the acts of all His Names and Attributes manifested as His commandments, and the events and creatures He creates) would not be exhausted in the writing. Surely God is the All-Glorious with irresistible might (Whom none can frustrate, and Whom nothing can tire), the All-Wise.

28. Your creation and your resurrection are but as (the creation and resurrection) of a single soul.<sup>6</sup> Surely God is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

4. On knowledge and guidance, see *sūrah* 22: 8, note 2.

5. Being the Creator means owning the creation, having the sole authority to judge and administrate, and deserving worship. Moreover, as there is only One Creator, He does in no way need to have a partner in administrating what He has created, or to share His authority over it. So, this single reality destroys the foundations of any other ideology or system which offers partnership with God in His being the sole Deity deserving worship and obedience, in His Lordship and sovereignty over the creation. Even though certain modern systems of thought and scientific materialism try to find a source for creation, such efforts are only ideological and artificial. In fact, they must acknowledge the existence of the One Creator, and, in actual fact, many or most of them do acknowledge this, consciously or unconsciously, yet they stubbornly insist on saying otherwise. On the other hand, some think that acknowledging the Creator is “the easy way out. But it is the denial of Him which amounts to trying to escape reality and take shelter in that which is psychologically easier. It is also a device of human presumption and arrogance, to avoid a properly rooted moral responsibility and to conform to the cultural temperament of the age, which boasts of unrestricted human autonomy in all spheres of life – something that is neither real nor credible, and whose consequences for the moral, socio-economic and physical environment that we inhabit are proving catastrophic.

6. The Eternal Divine Power is essential to the Divine Essence; it is an indispensable attribute of Divinity. Any limitation of capacity is inconceivable of God, for this would presuppose the existence of two opposites in the Infinite Being. Since this is impossible, and since impotence cannot occur in the Divine Essence, nothing can interfere with the Divine Power. Since impotence cannot be existent in the Divine Power, It can have no degrees, for such degrees of a thing’s existence, attributes and potentialities come about only through the intervention of opposites. Degrees of temperature occur be-

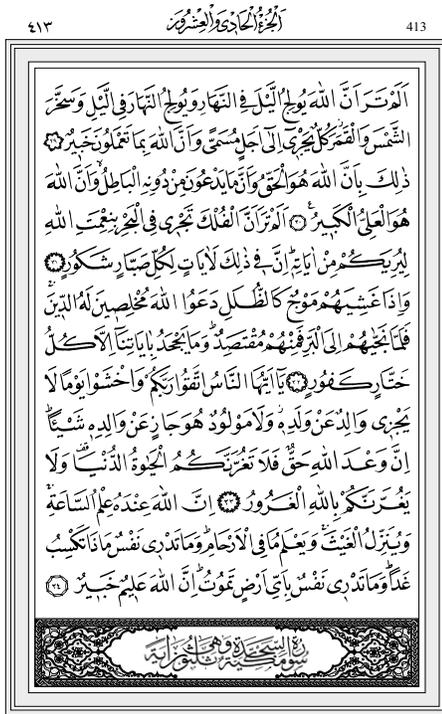
cause of the intervention of cold, and degrees of beauty exist because of the intervention of ugliness. This is true of all qualities in the universe. Contingent things and beings contain opposites, for they do not exist essentially of themselves and no undiluted quality is essential to their existence. As the world of contingencies contains degrees and graduations, it is subject to change and transformation.

Since the Eternal Divine Power contains no degrees, it is equally easy for It to create or bring into existence particles and galaxies. Resurrecting all of humankind is as easy for the Divine Power as reviving one person, and creating the whole of spring is as easy as creating one flower. If creation or resurrection were ascribed to causes, creating a flower would be as difficult as creating spring. But if there is only One Creator, for Him, creating all things is as easy as creating one thing.

As an analogy, the sun is one being, but is universal through its effects on each and every thing on the earth. Everything functions as if it were a throne for the sun. The sun is manifested in all objects with all its attributes, and so encompasses all that confronts it; with all or many of its attributes it is manifested in one single object and in all objects simultaneously, and so is present with many or all of its attributes in each and every item.

The Most Holy Being is absolutely transcendent and free of matter, time, and space, and is exalted above and exempt from any restriction, as well as from the darkness of density and compactness. His Attributes are all-embracing. Nothing can escape or hide from His manifestation with all His Attributes, particularly His universal Will, absolute Power, and all-encompassing Knowledge. Nothing is difficult for Him.

The sun’s unrestricted light and immaterial reflection make it nearer to every thing and every being than itself, although everything is far from it. In the same way, the All-Powerful One is infinitely near to everything and infinitely able to do anything He wills concerning them. (See *The Words*, “The 16<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Word,” 210–211, 542–545.)



29. Do you not consider that God makes the night pass into the day and makes the day pass into the night (and so makes each grow longer or shorter), and that He has made the sun and the moon subservient to His command (at your service), each running its course for a term appointed (by Him)? And surely God is fully aware of all that you do.

30. That (is so) because God is He Who is the Absolute Truth and Ever-Constant (Whose decrees and deeds are all true and in absolute accord with one another), and all that they invoke (as deities) apart from Him is sheer falsehood; and because God is He Who is the All-Exalted, the All-Great.

31. Do you not consider that the ships run on the sea by God's favor, that He may

show you some of His signs? Surely in that are signs (to know Him for His Munificence, Knowledge, Power, Wisdom, and way of acting) for all who are greatly patient (in adversity) and greatly grateful (for His favors).

32. When the waves overwhelm them like a canopy (of dark clouds), they call upon God sincerely believing in Him alone (as the only Deity, Lord, and Sovereign). But when He brings them safe to land, some of them are lukewarm, wavering between faith and unbelief. None opposes and rejects Our signs (knowingly) unless he is perfidious, ungrateful.

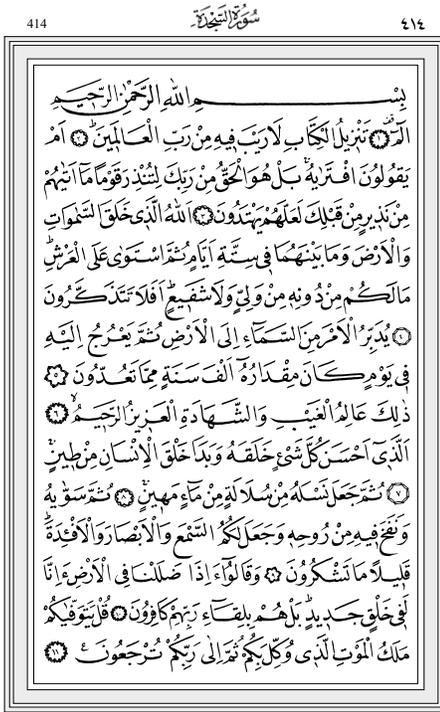
33. O humankind! Keep from disobedience to your Lord in reverence for Him and piety, seeking His protection, and fear a Day when no parent will be able to avail his child, nor a child avail his parent in anything. God's promise (of the Last Judgment) is certainly true. So do not let the present, worldly life delude you, nor let any deluder (including especially Satan) delude you (in your conceptions) about God.

34. With God alone rests the knowledge of the Last Hour (when it will come). He sends down rain (just at the time and place He alone knows), and He alone knows what is in the wombs. No soul knows what it will reap tomorrow, and no soul knows in what place it will die.<sup>7</sup> Surely God is All-Knowing, All-Aware.

7. This verse explains five things of which God alone has exact knowledge. Although the time of rain can be guessed to a certain extent, it is no more than a guess that can be made after the signs of the rain have appeared and, therefore, it is not foreknowledge. The statement referring to what is in the wombs does not merely relate to the sex of the embryo in the womb, but also to its future physical traits; to its inborn capacities and character; and to the question of whether it will be born, and if it is born, what role it will play in life, etc.

As pointed out in note 3 to *sūrah* 3: 3, it is of great significance that the Qur'ān praises the believers first of all for their faith in the Unseen (*ghayb*). This means that existence is not restricted to what is sensed and observed. This corporeal realm is, according to the measures particular to it, the manifestation of the unseen and unobservable, and it is only one of the numerous realms. The truth or full reality of every phenomenon in this world lies in the world of the Unseen. So, by mentioning five things included in the Unseen in this verse, the Qur'ān draws our attention to God's absolute, all-encompassing Knowledge *vis-à-vis* the restricted knowledge of humankind. Human existence is restricted in many respects. Human beings have no dominion over the operation of even their

own bodies, let alone over the world as a whole. They cannot prevent themselves from getting hungry and thirsty; they have no part in determining their parents, or the time and place of their birth, nor their physique or physical structure; nor do they know when and where they will die. In addition, they have no knowledge of the future and, in most cases, cannot acquire true knowledge of the past or even of the present. But just as the creation is a whole with all its parts interrelated, time and space also comprise a whole whose parts are linked to one another. Every event in the human realm is not independent of those who do it, or of the time or the place when and where it occurs, or even of the past and the future. So how can a being who is deprived of the exact knowledge of itself, of the other members of its kind, of both time and space, with all their parts, and of its environment, with its relation to the other parts of the universe, claim to order or have authority over its life, as well the lives of others, or dare to give order to the world according to its own will? As this is the truth of the matter, it is only God Who has full knowledge of everything, of all of time and place, and of every being with all its relations to others, time and space. Thus, it is only God Who can have, and Who has, the right to order the life of all creatures.



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SŪRAH 32

**AS-SAJDAH (PROSTRATION)**

Makkah Period

This *sūrah*, which consists of 30 verses, was revealed in Makkah. It takes its name from verse 15, which states that the believers prostrate upon hearing the Revelations. It discusses the Divine origin of the Qur'ān, and mentions the creation of humankind to draw the attention to the second creation in the other world, and to the end of both those who believe and disbelieve in God's signs and Revelations. It also tells how the Children of Israel were guided through a similar Divine Book given to the Prophet Moses, upon him be peace. The *sūrah* ends with glad tidings for the believers concerning the rewards awaiting them in the Hereafter.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate.

1. *Alif. Lām. Mīm.*
2. (This is) the Book which, it is beyond all doubt, is being sent down in parts from the Lord of the worlds.
3. Or do they say: he (Muḥammad) has fabricated it? No, rather, it is the truth from your Lord, that you may warn a people to whom no warner has come before you (during a long interlude during which no Messengers appeared), so that they may be guided (to find and follow the Straight Path).<sup>1</sup>
4. God is He Who has created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six days, then established Himself on the Supreme Throne.<sup>2</sup> You have, apart from Him, no guardian (to whom you might refer the ultimate meaning and outcome of your affairs), nor any intermediary (who, without His leave, can cause anything of use to reach you).<sup>3</sup> Will you not reflect and be mindful?
5. He directs the affair from heaven to the earth; then the affair ascends to Him in a day the measure of which is a thousand years of what you reckon.<sup>4</sup>
6. Such is He, the Knower of the Unseen (of all that lies beyond sense-perception) and the witnessed (the sensed realm), the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Compassionate:
7. He Who makes excellent everything that He creates; and He originated the creation of humankind from clay.
8. Then He made his reproduction dependent upon an extraction of humble fluid.<sup>5</sup>
9. Then He fashioned him in due proportions, and breathed into him out of His

Spirit;<sup>6</sup> and He appointed for you (the faculty of) hearing, and eyes, and hearts (for understanding, feeling, and insight). Scarcely do you give thanks!

10. Yet they say: “What! when we have been (dead and) lost in the earth, will we then be created anew?” No, (they do not

really regard being created anew as impossible; rather,) they are unbelievers in the meeting with their Lord.<sup>7</sup>

11. Say: “The Angel of Death who is charged with taking your souls will take your souls; then you will be returned to your Lord.”<sup>8</sup>

1. Deducing from *We would never punish (a person or community for the wrong they have done) until We have sent a Messenger (to give counsel and warning)* (sūrah 17: 15), some Muslim scholars hold that one who has not heard the Name of God or the teachings of Islam will be “excused,” unless he or she is a wrongdoing, unjust person. God, as He wills, rewards such people for the good they have done, and they enjoy the blessings of Paradise.

There are other scholars, however, who are of the opinion that humankind is created with a capacity to find the Creator through the use of reason, even though we may not know His Names or Attributes. We can also find Him in our conscience. A Bedouin once came to the Prophet and explained how he had attained faith: “Camel droppings point to the existence of a camel. Footprints on the sand tell of a traveler. The heaven with its stars, the earth with its mountains and valleys, and the sea with its waves – do they not point to the Maker, All-Powerful, Knowing, Wise, and Caring?” As he had attained faith in God through logical deduction, we cannot underrate the role of reason and thinking in faith. Thus, the exemption from punishment stated in 17: 15 means that unless a Messenger has been sent, no one will be held responsible for neglecting the other pillars of faith and for not living a life in due submission to God. God uses Messengers to convey His injunctions distinguishing what is good and evil, and does not leave human beings to stray into error because of fallible human judgment and experience.

2. On the creation of the heavens and the earth

in six days and God’s establishing Himself on the Supreme Throne, see *sūrah 2: 29*, note, 28; *sūrah 7: 54*, note 11.

3. *Shafī’* (translated as intermediary) means one who intercedes, and it is usually taken to mean one who pleads with God on behalf of people. However, it is clear in this verse that this phrase is only concerned with worldly affairs. It is also clear that the pagans who did not believe in the Hereafter would never think of intercession in connection with the afterlife. Therefore, this phrase here means any intermediary agent or principle that acts between humankind and the origin of anything that is of use to them. Humans had adopted some of their so-called deities to act as intermediaries between God and themselves for their worldly affairs. The verse categorically rejects such a belief as this, as well as the creative effect of any material or immaterial cause in the creation or government of the universe. The material causes and what we call “natural forces and laws” are only titles we give to the executions of His orders by God, or the works of His Names. It is God Who creates, administers, maintains, and provides.

4. The sun is nearer to us than ourselves. Its light manifests itself in and penetrates the “heart” of everything in the world, unless a hindrance intervenes. Similarly, God, free of all restrictions of matter, time, and space, is infinitely nearer to us than ourselves, but we are infinitely distant from Him. So this verse expresses God’s infinite nearness to us *vis-à-vis* our infinite distance from Him. It also implies the fact that we can get near to Him only by His making us near.

Secondly, the origin of everything and every affair or event in the world is the pure, heavenly realm. So what is meant by *heaven* in this verse is not the sky, but the pure, spiritual realms where God acts and executes His will without any veil or material cause. All decrees concerning the world issue from these realms.

Thirdly, as stated in note 13 to *sūrah* 7: 54, the Qur'ān uses the word *day* not only in the sense of our normal day, but also as time unit and period. While this verse mentions a day to be the equivalent of 1,000 years by our reckoning, another verse mentions a day that measures 50,000 years (*sūrah* 70: 4). This shows that the concept of *day* is relative. The world does not consist only in our world or the visible universe. Rather there are worlds or dimensions within one another. Just as time or the length of a day is different in the world of dreams, so too is it also different in the worlds of spirit and imagination and that of immaterial forms, in other spiritual realms.

Fourthly, the verse may also be referring to the fact that periods of 1,000 years are usually turning points in human history. (Also see *sūrah* 55: 29, note 11.)

5. The noted scientist, Maurice Bucaille, comments on this verse:

The Arabic word, translated here by the word 'quintessence (extraction),' is *sulālāh*. It signifies 'something which is extracted, the issue of something else, or the best part of a thing.' In whatever way it is translated, it refers to a part of a whole.

The fertilization of the egg and reproduction are produced by a cell that is very elongated: its dimensions are measured in ten thousandths of a millimeter. In normal conditions (it is estimated that in one cubic centimeters of sperm, there are 25 million spermatozoon that, under

normal conditions, have an ejaculation of several cubic centimeters), only one single cell among several tens of millions produced by a man will actually penetrate the ovule; a large number of them are left behind and never complete the journey that leads from the vagina to the ovule, passing through the uterus and Fallopian tubes. It is therefore an infinitesimally small part of the extract from a liquid whose composition is highly complex that actually fulfills its function.

In consequence, it is difficult not to be struck by the agreement between the text of the Qur'ān and the scientific knowledge we possess today of these phenomena (*The Bible, the Qur'ān and Science*).

6. For God's breathing out of His Spirit, see *sūrah* 2:31-34, notes 32-34; *sūrah* 15: 29, note 8.

7. Those who live a dissipated life driven by their carnal desires and who are lost in accumulating sins cannot look forward to being taken to account for their lives. This is what lies behind their denial of the Hereafter.

8. Verse 39: 42 says that God takes the souls, while verses 6: 61 and 16: 28 say that God's envoys and the angels take them, respectively. We learn from this verse that the Angel of Death does this task. These verses do not, of course, contradict each other. It is ultimately God Who makes people die, but out of wisdom, He has charged the Angel of Death with this task, and he has aides.

Another point to be mentioned is that sometimes God Himself takes the souls of some of His servants, and sometimes the Angel of Death does this task, without sending in his helpers. This is according to the spiritual rank of the person, or whether he or she is a believer, a hypocrite, or a sinful believer.

وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذِ الْمُجْرِمُونَ نَاكِسُوا رُءُوسِهِمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
 رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ ﴿١٢﴾  
 وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَآتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدًى بَاطِلًا وَلَكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ  
 مِنِّي لَا أُبَدِّلُ مِن مَّخَرَّتِي بِحَتْمٍ مِّنَ النَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ فَذُوقُوا  
 بِمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَٰذَا إِنَّا نَسِينَاكُمْ وَذُوقُوا  
 عَذَابَ الْحُكْمِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا  
 الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ  
 وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ  
 رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا زَرَفْتَ لَهُمْ يَتَفَتَنُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ فَلَا  
 تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا  
 يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ أَفَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا كَرِيمًا فَاسْتَوَىٰ  
 لَوْ أَنَّا آتَيْنَاهُ أَمْثَلًا وَأَعْمَلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ  
 الْمَأْوَىٰ نُزُلًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَإِنَّا لَآئِن فَسَدُوا  
 قُلُوبَهُم نَارُ كُلِّ أَرَادُوا أَن يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا لَآئِن يَدْعُوا فِيهَا  
 قِيلَ لَهُمْ دُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّذِي كُنتُمْ بِكَذِبِكُمْ لَكُمْ

12. If you could but see those unbelieving criminals when they hang their heads before their Lord (pleading): “Our Lord! Now we have seen and heard (the truth and are ready to be obedient). So return us (to the world): we will certainly do good, righteous deeds. Now we are certain (of the truth).”

13. (That is no more than a vain desire.) If We had so willed, We would have given every soul its guidance (the route to salvation particular to it); but (many choose unbelief, and) the word from Me has proven true that I would most certainly fill Hell with the jinn and humankind, all together.<sup>9</sup>

14. “So (you who willingly chose and followed the way of unbelief in the world despite Our warnings), taste the punishment because you acted in oblivious heedlessness of (the appointment I gave you for) this Day. We are (now) oblivious and heedless of you. Taste the abiding punishment for what you used to do.”

15. Only they (truly) believe in Our signs and Revelations who, when they are mentioned of them (by way of advice and instruction), fall down in prostration, and glorify their Lord with His praise, and they do not behave with haughtiness.

16. Their sides forsake their beds at night, calling out to their Lord in fear (of His punishment) and hope (for His forgiveness, grace, and good pleasure), and out of what We have provided for them (of wealth, knowledge, power, etc.), they spend (to provide sustenance for the needy and in God’s cause, purely for the good pleasure of God and without placing others under obligation).

17. No soul knows what joyous means of happiness is kept hidden (reserved) for them as a reward for what they have been doing.

18. Is, then, he who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal.

19. As for those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, for them are Gardens of Refuge and Dwelling, as a welcome (from God, in return) for what they have been doing.

20. But as for those who transgress (the bounds set by God in belief and action), their refuge and dwelling is the Fire. Every time they desire to come out of it, they will be returned to it, and they will be told, “Taste the punishment of the Fire which you used to deny.”

9. As beings endowed with free will and special mechanisms, the jinn and humankind are responsible for their free choices. Because of this, God Almighty does not compel them to choose a certain way in their lives. Therefore, in the same way as He does not impose guidance on them, He also has explained to them the causes of guidance and misguidance. For example, He decreed and declared that He would not guide those lost in wrongdoing and injustice (*sūrah* 3: 86; *sūrah* 5: 51; *sūrah* 6: 144; *sūrah* 9: 19, etc.) and in transgression (*sūrah* 5: 108; *sūrah* 9: 24, etc.), and those who have willfully chosen the way of unbelief (*sūrah* 5:

67; *sūrah* 9: 37, etc.). That is, a stubborn and prejudiced insistence on unbelief, wrongdoing, injustice, and transgression prevent one from believing. He also declared that those with whom He would fill Hell would be Satan, his progeny, and his followers (*sūrah* 38: 85). Just as He has created humankind with a disposition to belief and equipped us with necessary mechanisms, He has also sent Messengers to every nation throughout history to call people to His way and to warn them of the consequences of their evil acts, and He showed them openly the way to the truth with perfectly clear signs.

21. However (before that supreme punishment), We will most certainly make them taste the lower kinds of punishment (in the world), so that they may (repent their ways) and return.

22. Who is more in wrong than he who has been reminded (repeatedly) of his Lord's Revelations and signs, yet turns away from them in aversion. We will surely requite the criminals (committed to accumulating sins).

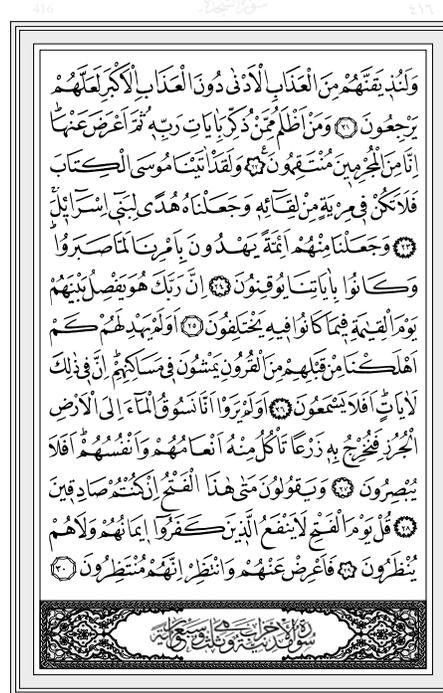
23. And We surely granted Moses the Book (as We are sending you the Qur'an), so be not in doubt of its reaching you (from your Lord, and your final meeting with Him in the Hereafter). And We made it (the Book We granted to Moses) a guidance for the Children of Israel.

24. And so long as they remained patient (in the adversity they met on the path of God), and they had certainty of faith in Our Revelations, We appointed from amongst them leaders guiding by Our command (in accordance with Our ordinances).

25. Surely your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning the matters on which they (subsequently) differed (and about which they continue to be at variance).<sup>10</sup>

26. Is it not (enough as a means of) guidance for them (the unbelievers) how many a generation We have destroyed before them, amidst whose dwelling places they travel? Surely in this are signs. Will they still not listen (and pay heed to warnings revealed directly and in these signs)?

27. Do they not consider that We drive the rain to the dry land (bare of vegetation), and bring forth with it crops, of which their



cattle and they themselves eat? Will they still not see (the truth)?

28. Instead, they say (throwing out a challenge): "When will this judgment take place (which will cause everything to appear in all clarity), if you are truthful (in your threats)?"

29. Say: "On the day of the judgment (when everything will appear in all clarity),<sup>11</sup> their faith (then) will be of no use to those who disbelieve (now), nor will they be reprieved.

30. So withdraw from them (do not care what they do and say), and wait (for the judgment to come); they, too, are waiting.

10. The Qur'an's method of guidance is extremely significant. While verse 24 implies the future victory of the Muslims at a time when they were persecuted in Makkah, verse 25 implicitly warns them of certain internal conflicts that might later ensue among them. Both the

implied good tidings and the implicit warning are certainly true for all similar periods.

11. This day is the day when death or an inescapable calamity or war, in which they will be killed, will come upon them.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُطِيعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ۝ وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ۝ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وِكِيلًا ۝ مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلرَّجُلِ مِنْ قَلْبَيْنِ فِي جُوفِهِ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَرْوَاحَكُمْ الَّتِي تَطَّلَاهُمْ مِنْ بُنْيَانٍ أَمْهَاتِكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ الْخَفِيَّ وَهُوَ سَمِيعٌ ۝ أَدْعُوهُمْ لِأَسْمَائِهِمْ هُوَ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَسْمَاءَهُمْ فَلَاخُوا بِكُمُ فِي الدِّينِ وَمَوَالِيكُمْ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا أَخْطَأْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَكِنْ مَا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ۝ الَّتِي أُولَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَضَعُوا إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِكُمْ مَعْرُوفًا كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا ۝

## SŪRAH 33

## AL-AḤZĀB

## (THE CONFEDERATES)

## Madīnah Period

This *sūrah* of 73 verses was revealed in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the Madīnan period, and derives its name from verse 20, where the word *ahzāb* (the confederates) occurs, referring to the allied enemy forces that besieged Madīnah. The *sūrah* concentrates on the Battle of the Trench, which ensued from that siege, and the campaign against the Banū Qurayzah that followed the battle. In addition, the *sūrah* introduces laws pertaining to marriage and divorce, new regulations concerning the law of inheritance, Islamic family life, and the relation between the Prophet and his wives and the Islamic community. It also abolishes a form of adoption that had been an established custom in the pre-Islamic period.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. O (most illustrious) Prophet! Keep your duty to God in utmost reverence for Him and piety, and pay no heed to (the offers of) the unbelievers and hypocrites. Surely God is All-Knowing, All-Wise.<sup>1</sup>
2. Follow what is revealed to you from your Lord. Surely God is fully aware of all that you do.
3. And put your trust in God. God suffices as One on Whom to rely (and to Whom to refer all affairs).
4. God has not made for any man two hearts within his body (one to be assigned for belief in and worship of Him, and the other for belief in and worship of others). Nor has He made your wives whom you declare to be unlawful to you by using against them the expression, “Be as my mother’s back to me!” (to mean you divorce them<sup>2</sup>), your mothers (in fact). Nor has He made your adopted sons your sons (in fact).<sup>3</sup> Those are only expressions you utter with your mouths, whereas God speaks the truth and He guides to the right way.
5. Call them (the children you have adopted) after their (real) fathers: doing so is more equitable in the sight of God. If you do not know who their fathers are, then (they are) your brothers in religion and your protégés (so observe the duties of brotherhood between you and them). However, there is no blame on you because of the mistakes you may make unintentionally (in naming them), but what your hearts have premeditated (matters greatly). God is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.
6. The Prophet has a higher claim on the believers than they have on their own selves, and (seeing that he is as a father to them), his wives are (as) their mothers.<sup>4</sup> Those

who are bound by blood have a greater right (in inheritance and charity) upon one another according to God's Book than other believers and the Emigrants – except that

you must (nevertheless) act with kindness toward your friends (and bequeath some of your goods to them).<sup>5</sup> That is what is written in the Book (of God's Decree).

1. The Muslims had to suffer many hardships after the Battle of Uhud. A group from the Adal and al-Qārah tribes, who were apparently from the same ancestral stock as the Quraysh and who lived near Makkah, came to God's Messenger and, declaring that they had accepted Islam, asked for some teachers to be given to them. The Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, selected six Companions to go with them. Upon reaching the land of the Hudhayl tribe, the group halted and the Companions settled down to rest. Suddenly, a group of Hudhaylī tribesmen fell upon them and martyred four of them, handing Hubayb ibn 'Adiyy and Zayd ibn Dasīnah over to the Quraysh for execution. In the same year, 40 (according to another report, 70) Muslim teachers were requested by the chief of the Banū 'Āmir to teach the Qur'ān to a tribe from Najd and were martyred near the Well of Ma'ūnah.

The following year, God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, was informed that the tribe of Banū Asad were making preparations for war against Madīnah, and dispatched an army of 150 soldiers to combat them, under the command of Abū Salamah.

The Jewish Banū Nadīr tribe was originally the sworn ally of the Muslims in Madīnah. However, its members secretly conspired with the Makkan pagans and the Madīnan hypocrites. They even tried to kill the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, while he was visiting them, breaking both the laws of hospitality and their treaty. The way in which this happened is as follows: the Messenger asked them to abandon their strategic position, about three miles south of Madīnah, and they agreed to do so. But when 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy, the chief of the Hypocrites, promised to help them in case of war, the Banū Nadīr reneged on their

agreement. The Muslim army then besieged them in their fortresses. The Banū Nadīr, seeing that neither the Makkan polytheists nor the Madīnan hypocrites cared enough to help them, abandoned the city. They were dismayed, but their lives were spared. Given ten days to leave, along with their families and all they could carry, most of them joined their brethren in Syria and others in Khaybar (Ibn Hishām, 3: 47-49, 190-192).

While returning from Uhud, Abū Sufyān challenged the Muslims to meet them at Badr in the following year (*Ibid.*, 3: 94). However, when God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, reached Badr with an army of 1,500 fighters, there was no enemy to meet him. They stayed there for eight days, waiting for the threatened encounter. When there was no sign of the Quraysh army, they returned to Madīnah. This campaign was called *Badr as-Ṣughrā* (Badr the Minor).

In 627 CE, God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, was told that the desert tribes of Anmār and Sa'labah had decided to attack Madīnah. He went to Dhāt ar-Riqā' with 400 fighters and, hearing that the enemy tribes had fled, returned to Madīnah. (*Ibid.*, 3: 213). In the same year, the Messenger marched upon the people of Dūmat al-Jandal, who had lived on the border between Arabia and Syria. These people had previously attacked Muslim tradesmen and robbed them. When the Muslim army came upon them, they fled and the territory came under Muslim control.

It was in these difficult days that a group from the leaders of the Quraysh under the leadership of Abū Sufyan came to Madīnah and, together with 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl, the leader of the hypocrites, offered the Messenger their support if he would not oppose

their worship of their idols and declare that these idols had a right of intercession with God? The Messenger categorically rejected this offer. This verse was revealed in connection with this event (az-Zamakhsharī).

2. This refers to a pre-Islamic custom among the pagan Arabs. A husband would say to his wife, “You are henceforth as my mother’s back to me,” and thus removed himself from conjugal relations with his wife. This was the equivalent of an irrevocable divorce, but a woman thus divorced could not marry again. The Qur’ān’s forceful disapproval here was the first step to abolishing this custom, soon followed by its explicit abolition in *Sūrat al-Mujādilah*.

3. In the pre-Islamic period adopted and foster children were regarded as enjoying the same legal status as biological children. This custom had other implications, notably that the adopted child held the same status within the forbidden degrees of marriage as a biological child. Islam abolished this practice and declared that adoption has no legal effect. (A father may not marry his natural son’s former wife, nor a son his natural father’s former wife. The extension of that prohibition to adopted children is the specific occasion of the abolition of the custom.)

4. The relationship described in the verse is of course a spiritual relationship with no legal implications, with the exception that the Prophet’s wives were eternally forbidden to other believers. As reported in al-Bukhārī (“Īmān,” 8) and Muslim (“Īmān,” 70), the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, said: “None of you is a true believer unless I am dearer to him than his father, and his children, and all humankind.” A believer must prefer the Prophet to their own person and to all other people in all matters, including love and protection; they must put the decisions of the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, above their own.

5. Following the *Hijrah*, God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, had joined the believers in brotherhood, declaring one from among the Emigrants as brother to one from among the Helpers (the Muslims of Madīnah), to the degree that they could even inherit from one another. This verse abolished this practice, but it reiterated the brotherhood in faith among the believers. However, it allowed believers to bequeath some proportion (to a maximum, as stipulated by the Prophet, of one-third of the whole) of their wealth in lawful ways, including, of course, to help their brothers and sisters in faith.

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ  
 وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿٧﴾  
 لِيَسْئَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ الْأَعْرَابُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَبَعَثْنَا فِيكُمْ هَزْأً مِنْكُمْ  
 وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا  
 ﴿٨﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَاءَتْكُمْ  
 جُنُودٌ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَجُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ  
 بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا ﴿٩﴾ إِذْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ  
 وَإِذْ رَأَيْتُمُ اللَّيْلَ الْأَبْصَارَ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ  
 الظُّلُمَاتِ ﴿١٠﴾ هَذَا لِكِ اتِّبَاعِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَزَقُوا مِنَ الْأَشْجَادِ ﴿١١﴾  
 وَإِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ  
 وَرَسُولُهُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ يَا أَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ  
 لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوا وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُولُونَ  
 إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ وَمَا هِيَ بِعَوْرَةٍ إِنْ يُرِيدُونَ إِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَوْ  
 دَخَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ الْبُيُوتِ الرَّحَابُ لَفَتَنَتْهَا لَأَوْهَا  
 وَمَا تَكْتُمُوهَا إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ كَذِبٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَأَنْتَ يَا  
 مُحَمَّدُ مِنَ الْبُيُوتِ الْمَكِينَةِ ﴿١٥﴾ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ ضَالٌّ  
 لَئِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْهَاسِلِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

7. And (remember) when We took from the Prophets their covenant, and from you (O Muḥammad), and from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus son of Mary. We took from them a solemn covenant,

8. So that He may question the truthful concerning their truthfulness (and all that which was entrusted to them);<sup>6</sup> and He has prepared a painful punishment for the unbelievers.

9. O you who believe! Remember God's favor on you when hosts (of the enemy) came down on you, and We sent against them a fierce, (freezing) wind and (heavenly) hosts that you could not see. And God saw all that you did.<sup>7</sup>

10. (Remember) when they came upon you from above you (from the east) and from below you (from the west), and when (your) eyes turned dull and (your) hearts came up to the throats; and (those of weak faith among) you were harboring vain thoughts about God.<sup>8</sup>

11. There (amid those circumstances) the believers were tried, and shaken with a mighty shock.

12. And (remember) when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was a disease (at just that point in the situation) were saying: "God and His Messenger promised us nothing but delusion."<sup>9</sup>

13. And when a group among them said: "O people of Yathrib!<sup>10</sup> You cannot withstand the enemy (here); therefore, go back (to your homes)!" And a party among them asked for leave of the Prophet, saying, "Surely our houses are exposed (to attack)," though they were not exposed (indeed). They desired nothing but to flee.

14. Now if they (and their houses) had been invaded from all sides (of the city), and they had been asked to betray (their faith), they would certainly have done so with but little hesitation.

15. Yet before that they had (in swearing allegiance to God's Messenger) made a covenant with God, that they would never turn their backs (in the face of the enemy). Covenants with God will certainly be accounted for.

6. The covenant which God took from the Prophets, except the Messengers, was that which is in the verse: *And when God took compact with the Prophets: "That I have given you a Book and Wisdom; then there will come to you a Messenger confirming what is with you – you shall certainly believe in him and you shall certainly help him"* (sūrah 3: 81). But this verse mentions another covenant which was taken in particular from the five greatest of all the Prophets and Messengers, namely the Prophet Muḥammad, upon him be peace and blessings, and the Prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, upon them be peace. When it is considered that these five Messengers were also those to whom God granted the Shari'ah – the collection of all the Divine laws to govern human life in the world – which enabled God's Religion to be applied in full and allowed it to be observed without giving way to any deviations (sūrah 42: 13), this covenant must be understood as their conveying and establishing God's Message fully and realizing the eternal unity of all the believers, as declared in the verse: *So, this community of yours (which all the Messengers and their followers have formed) is one single community of the same faith, and I am your Lord (Who creates, sustains, and protects you); so worship Me alone* (sūrah 21: 92).

As for questioning the truthful concerning (that which was entrusted to) their truthfulness, there are two aspects, as in the verses: *And (remember) when God will say: "Jesus son of Mary, is it you who said to people: 'Take me and my mother for deities besides God?" and he will answer: "All-Glorified You are (in that You are absolutely above having a partner, as from any need or deficiency whatever)! It is not for me to say what I had no right to! Had I said it, You would already have known it. You know all that is within myself, whereas I do not know what is within Yourself. Surely You and You alone have knowledge of the Unseen (of all that lies beyond the reach of any created being's perception)"* (5: 116); and *So We will surely question those to whom Messengers were sent (as to how they responded*

*to them), and We will surely question those sent with Our Message (concerning their duty of conveying it and how their peoples reacted to it)* (sūrah 7: 6). So "the truthful" here refers both to the Prophets and to the believers who gave allegiance to them and remained true to their allegiance.

7. In 627 CE, a leading group of the expelled Banū Nadīr Jews went to Makkah. They met with the Quraysh, urging them to continue fighting with the Muslims, and promised their help and support. These Jews then went to the Ghatafān and Qays Aylān tribes and, promising them help, encouraged them to fight against the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings (Ibn Hishām, 3: 225–226). These intrigues resulted in a great anti-Muslim confederacy of Makkan polytheists, the desert tribes of central Arabia, the Jews (both those already expelled from and those still resident) in Madīnah, and the hypocrites. The last two constituted a fifth column within Madīnah.

When God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, received intelligence of this anti-Muslim gathering of confederates, he consulted his Companions. It was their unanimous view that they should remain in Madīnah and fight from there. Salmān al-Fārisī suggested digging a trench around the city. It took six days of intense labor to dig this trench. The Messenger divided the Muslims into groups of ten and told them to compete with each other. It was a hard task, there was not much time, winter was about to come in, and there was great hunger. Yet all the Companions worked enthusiastically. In order to not feel the hunger, each fastened a rock around his stomach. The Messenger dug alongside them and fastened two rocks around his stomach. He kept strict control of the city so that no news of the preparation should reach the enemy.

The enemy forces advanced against Madīnah in the hope of destroying the Muslims on an open battlefield. However, this new strategy that they faced was the first blow. Numbering around 20,000, the enemy forces camped near the trench. The Madīnans

had no more than 3,000 soldiers. Moreover, the Jewish Banū Qurayzah and the hypocrites of the fifth column had already contacted the enemy.

The Messenger once again displayed his sagacity: he kept the soldiers within the city and stationed them so that they could both defend the city and safeguard their homes against possible attacks of the Banū Qurayzah.

While the war was continuing with exchanges of arrows and stones, the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, engaged in diplomatic attempts to split the allied enemy forces. He was able to do that and dissension grew among them (Ibn Hishām, 3: 240–242).

The Messenger, protected by Mount Sal, that lay behind the city, had ordered a narrow point to be made in the trench, as he expected that leading Qurayshī horsemen would try to cross there. This is indeed how it happened, for some of the most renowned Qurayshī warriors tried to cross to engage in hand-to-hand combat with the Muslim fighters. ‘Ali, the Messenger’s cousin and son-in-law, killed three of them, which discouraged the enemy from any new attempts.

The siege lasted 27 days. The Muslims suffered greatly from hunger, cold, unending barrages of arrows and stones, attempts and concentrated assaults to cross the trench, and betrayals and intrigues within Madīnah. The Qur’ān describes this situation in the verses that follow.

After almost four weeks, during which the

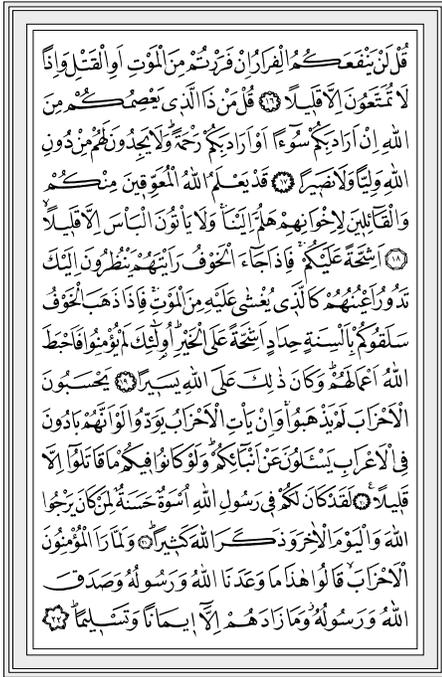
enemy was disheartened by their failure and the believers proved their steadfastness and loyalty, there was a piercing blast of cold wind from the east. God also sent hosts of angels. (For God’s sending angels and its purpose, see *sūrah* 3: 124–127; *sūrah* 8: 9–10, 12.) The enemy’s tents were torn up, their fires were extinguished, and sand and rain beat their faces. Terrified by the portents against them, they soon gave up.

The Battle of the Trench was the last Qurayshī attempt to destroy Islam and the Muslims.

8. Some thought that the unbelievers would be victorious and invade Madīnah; others that Islam would be wiped out; and still others that pre-Islamic unbelief would come back, or entertained other negative thoughts.

9. As the Qur’ān promised in several of its verses that Islam would be victorious and prevail over all other faiths, the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, also made similar promises from the very first day of his message. Even during the digging of the trench, he said: “I have been given the keys to Persia. God is the Greatest. I have been given the keys to Byzantium” (Ibn Hishām, 3:235–236; *al-Bidāyah*, 4: 123).

10. God’s Messenger changed the name of Yathrib into Madīnah after the *Hijrah*. By continuing to call Madīnah Yathrib, the hypocrites were displaying their inward unbelief and hope for the failure of the Messenger’s mission.



16. Say: “Flight will be of no avail to you if you flee from death or being killed (in battle). However you fare, you are not allowed to enjoy life more than a little while (only until your appointed time).”

17. Say: “Who is there that can hinder God from it, if He wills evil for you, or if He wills mercy for you?” They will not find for themselves, apart from God, either guardian or helper.

18. God certainly knows those of you who are bent on diverting (others from fighting), as well as those who (being hypocrites) say

to their brothers, “(Give up risking your life, so) come and join with us,” and they do not join the struggle (of battle) except only a little,

19. Being very miserly (in joining you, and reluctant to help you in God’s cause). So when (danger threatens in battle and) fear comes, you see them (O Messenger) looking to you (for help), their eyes rolling (in terror) like the eyes of one who swoons to death. But once (the battle subsides and) fear departs, they assail you with sharp tongues, being avaricious for (a share in) the goods thereof (the gainings of victory). Those have never (truly) believed, and, therefore, God has caused their deeds to come to nothing. That is ever easy for God.

20. (They are so fearful that) they think that the Confederates have not (really) retreated. Should the Confederates come once more, they would much rather be among the Bedouins in the deserts and ask for news about you (than remain in Madinah and face the battle). Even if they were among you, they would fight only a little.

21. Assuredly you have in God’s Messenger an excellent example to follow, for whoever looks forward to God and the Last Day, and remembers and mentions God much.<sup>11</sup>

22. When the (true) believers saw the Confederates before them, they said: “This is what God and His Messenger promised us, and God is true and so is His Messenger. This has but increased them in faith and submission.<sup>12</sup>

11. Islam is the universal Religion which encompasses human life in its totality, and God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, set a perfect example to follow in all aspects of life. He set this example as a spiritual guide, a teacher of minds, a perfect model of morality, an educator, a president, a commander, a diplomat, and a husband, father, friend, neighbor, and as an individual human being among

other human beings. The French historian, Lamartine, writes:

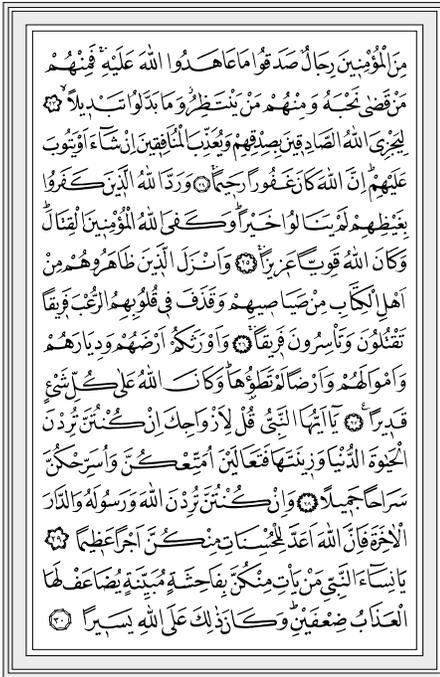
Never had a man set himself, voluntarily or involuntarily, a more sublime aim, since this aim was superhuman: to subvert superstitions which had been interposed between man and his Creator, to render God unto man and man unto God; to restore the rational and sacred idea of divinity amidst the

chaos of the material and disfigured gods of idolatry then existing. Never has a man undertaken a work so far beyond human power with so feeble means, for he had in the conception as well as in the execution of such a great design no other instrument than himself, and no other aid, except a handful of men living in a corner of desert. Finally, never has a man accomplished such a huge and lasting revolution in the world, because in less than two centuries after its appearance, Islam, in faith and arms, reigned over the whole of Arabia, and conquered in God's name Persia, Khorasan, Western India, Syria, Abyssinia, all the known continent of Northern Africa, numerous islands of the Mediterranean, Spain, and a part of Gaul.

If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great men to Muḥammad? The most famous men created arms, laws, and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislation, empires, peoples, and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and the souls. On the basis of a Book, every letter of which has become law, he created a spiritual nationality which has blended together peoples of every tongue and of every race. He has left to us as the indelible characteristic of this Muslim nationality, the hatred of false gods and the passion for the One and immaterial God. This avenging patriotism against the profanation of Heaven formed the virtue of the followers of Muhammad: the conquest of one-third of the Earth to his creed was his miracle. The idea of the Unity of God, proclaimed amidst the exhaustion of fabulous theogonies, was in itself such a miracle that upon its utterance from his lips, it destroyed all the ancient temples of idols and set on fire one-third of the world. His life, his meditations, his heroic revilings against the superstitions of his country, his boldness in defying the furies of idolatry; his firmness in enduring them for thirteen years at Mecca, his acceptance of the role of public scorn, and his almost of being a victim of his fellow-countrymen: all these and, finally his

incessant preaching, his wars against odds, his faith in his success and his superhuman security in misfortune, his forbearance in victory, his ambition which was entirely devoted to one idea; his endless prayer, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death; all these attest not to an imposture but to a firm conviction. It was his conviction which gave him the power to restore a creed. This creed was two-fold, the unity of God and the immateriality of God; the former telling what God is; the latter telling what God is not. Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial states and of one spiritual state, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask: Is there any man greater than he? (*Histoire de la Turquie*, 2: 276-277.)

12. Since the hypocrites pursued only worldly gains and judged everything according to apparent circumstances, when they found themselves besieged in the center of Islam, they thought that the promises of God and His Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, concerning the future successes of Islam were a delusion. However, the true believers were well aware of the way in which God acts and of the fact that God did not promise them success without them having to do anything in return. They knew that God would not leave them at ease merely because they had professed, "We have believed," without putting them to a test. He certainly tested those who had preceded them. This was His unchanging way; it was done so that He might mark out with certainty those who proved to be true in their profession of faith, and so that He might mark out with certainty the liars (*sūrah* 29: 2-3). He would certainly test them with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth, lives and benefits. The good tidings were for those who, when they were visited by an affliction, said: "Surely we belong to God (as His creatures and servants) and surely to Him we are bound to return" (*sūrah* 2: 155-157), and they acted accordingly. He would certainly reward those who succeeded in the test and made them victorious. The Battle of the Trench once more showed that God and His Messenger are always true to their promises.



23. Among the believers are men (of highest valor) who have been true to their covenant with God: among them are those who have fulfilled their vow (by remaining steadfast until death), and those who are awaiting (its fulfillment). They have never altered in any way.

24. In consequence, God will reward the truthful ones for having been true to their covenant, and punish the hypocrites if He wills, or turn to them in lenience and accept their repentance (if they repent).

Surely God is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.<sup>13</sup>

25. God repulsed those who disbelieved still in their rage without gaining any good. God sufficed for the believers in the fighting. Surely God is All-Strong, All-Glorious with irresistible might.

26. And He brought down from their strongholds those of the People of the Book who had supported them (the Confederates in their attack on Madinah), and cast fright in their hearts: some of them you killed, and others you took as prisoners of war.

27. And He made you heirs to their lands, their habitations, and their possessions, and a land (Khaybar) on which you never yet set foot. God has indeed full power over everything.<sup>14</sup>

28. O (most illustrious) Prophet! Say to your wives: “If you desire the present, worldly life and its charms, then come and let me make the necessary provision for you (in return for divorce),<sup>15</sup> and release you with a handsome release.

29. But if you desire God and His Messenger, and the abode of the Hereafter, then it is a fact that God has prepared a tremendous reward for those among you who act in a good manner, aware that God is seeing them.”<sup>16</sup>

30. O wives of the Prophet! If any of you were to commit a manifestly sinful deed, the punishment would be doubled for her. That is easy for God.

13. The verse subtly implies that God’s punishment depends on His Will: if He so wills, He punishes those who deserve it, but He may pardon them as well. But if any of His servants turn to Him with true repentance, He accepts their repentance. The conclusion of the verse mentioning God as All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate emphasizes His forgiveness and, there-

fore, encourages His sinful servants and even the hypocrites to turn to Him in true faith and repentance and mend their ways with the hope of being forgiven.

14. After the Confederates who had held Madinah under siege for four weeks were routed and returned to their homes, God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, focused on the

Banū Qurayzah, who had betrayed their agreement with him and allied with the Quraysh during the war. According to the agreement, they should have defended the city against any foreign attack, along with the Muslims. They also had given asylum to Banū Nadīr's leaders, like Huyayy ibn Akhtāb, who had been expelled from Madīnah and continued to conspire against the Muslims.

No sooner had the Messenger returned from this battle than he ordered his Companions to march upon the Banū Qurayzah upon God's order (al-Bukhārī, "Maghazi," 30). He had his tent pitched opposite their fortresses. He would have forgiven them if they had asked, but they preferred to resist. The Messenger besieged them for 25 days. At last they asked for surrender terms. (Ibn Hishām, 3: 101, 249–251).

15. When a husband divorces his wife, just as he cannot take back anything of the bridal-due he gave her during marriage (4: 20), he is also obliged to make provision for her according to his standards of living during her waiting period – three full menstrual cycles – appointed by God (*sūrah* 2: 228, 241).

16. The Prophet Muḥammad, upon him be peace and blessings, personifies the roles of perfect father and husband. He was so kind and tolerant with his wives that they could not envisage their lives without him, nor did they want to live away from him.

The Messenger discussed matters with his wives, although he did not need their advice, because he was directed by Revelation. However, he wanted to teach his nation that Muslim men were to give women every consideration. This was quite a radical idea in his time, as it is today in many parts of the world. He began teaching his people through his own relationship with his wives (al-Bukhārī, "Shurūṭ," 15).

When the Muslim people of Madīnah began to extricate themselves from the utter poverty that they had been suffering for years, a few of his wives (who numbered four at that time) asked him: "Couldn't we live a bit better, like other Muslims do?"

The Messenger reacted by going into retreat.

He excused himself, saying: "I cannot afford what they want" (Muslim, "Ṭalaq," 34, 35).

It is not easy to merit being together with the Messenger in this world and the Hereafter. Others might save themselves by simply fulfilling their obligations, but those who were at the very center of Islam had to devote themselves fully to the cause of Islam, so that no weakness would appear at the center. There were advantages in being the Prophet's wife, but these advantages brought responsibilities and potential risks. The Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, was preparing them to be exemplars for all present and future Muslim women. He was especially worried that they might enjoy the reward for their good deeds in this world, and thereby be included in: *You consumed in your life of the world your (share of) pure, wholesome things, and enjoyed them fully (without considering the due of the Hereafter, and so have taken in the world the reward of all your good deeds) (sūrah 46: 20).*

Thus, these special women were put to a great test. The Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, allowed them to choose his poor home or the world's luxury. If they chose the world, he would give them what he could afford to and then dissolve his marriage with them. If they chose God and His Messenger, then they had to be content with their lives. This was a peculiarity of his family. Since this family was unique, its members had to be unique. The head of the family was chosen, as were the wives and children.

The Messenger first called 'Ā'isha and said: "I want to discuss something with you. You had better talk with your parents before making a decision." Then he recited the verses mentioned above. Her decision was exactly what would be expected from the truthful daughter of a truthful father: "O Messenger of God, do I need to talk with my parents? By God, I choose God and His Messenger" (Muslim, "Ṭalaq," 35).

'Ā'isha herself tells us what happened next: "The Messenger received the same answer from all his wives. No one expressed a different opinion. They all said what I had said."

وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ مِنْكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَيَتَعَلَّ صَالِحًا تَوَاتُرًا  
 أَعْرَافًا مَرْتَبِينَ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ رِزْقًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾ يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ  
 لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَحْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ  
 يُصْطَمَعُ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ﴿٣٢﴾  
 وَقُونَّ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ  
 الْأُولَى وَأَقِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ  
 وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ  
 الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَأَذْكُرَنَّ مَا بُدِّلَ فِي  
 بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ  
 لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ إِنَّ السُّلَيْمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
 وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ  
 وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ  
 وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ  
 وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ  
 كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

31. But if any of you devoutly obeys God and His Messenger and does good, righteous deeds, We will give her reward doubly; and We have prepared for her an honorable, generous provision (in Paradise).

32. O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any of the other women, provided that you keep from disobedience to God in reverence for Him and piety (and, therefore, act with awareness of your special status). So (even more than other believing women) do not be complaisant in your speech (when addressing men), lest he in whose heart is a disease should be moved to desire, but speak in an honorable way.

33. And (prefer to) remain in your homes (unless there is a need. If you do go out for a need) do not go out flaunting your charms as (women used to do) in the former times of Ignorance. And establish the Prayer in conformity with its conditions, and pay the Prescribed Purifying Alms, and obey God and His Messenger (in whatever they command). God only wills to remove from you, O members of the (Prophet's) household,<sup>17</sup> all that may be loathsome, and to purify you to the utmost of purity.

34. Keep in mind and study what is recited in your homes of God's Revelations and the Wisdom (which especially includes the Sunnah of His Messenger). Surely God is All-Subtle (penetrating down into the innermost part of people's heart and mind), All-Aware.

35. Surely all men and women who submit to God (whose submission is attested by their words and deeds), and all truly believing men and truly believing women, and all devoutly obedient men and devoutly obedient women, and all men and women honest and truthful in their speech (and true to their words in their actions), and all men and women who persevere (in obedience to God through all adversity), and all men and women humble (in mind and heart before God), and all men and women who give in alms (and in God's cause), and all men and women who fast (as an obligatory or commended act of devotion), and all men and women who guard their chastity (and avoid exposing their private parts), and all men and women who remember and mention God much – for them (all) God has prepared forgiveness (to bring unforeseen blessings) and a tremendous reward.

17. As declared in a *hadith*, Fāṭimah, the Messenger's daughter, and her husband 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (the fourth Caliph), and their

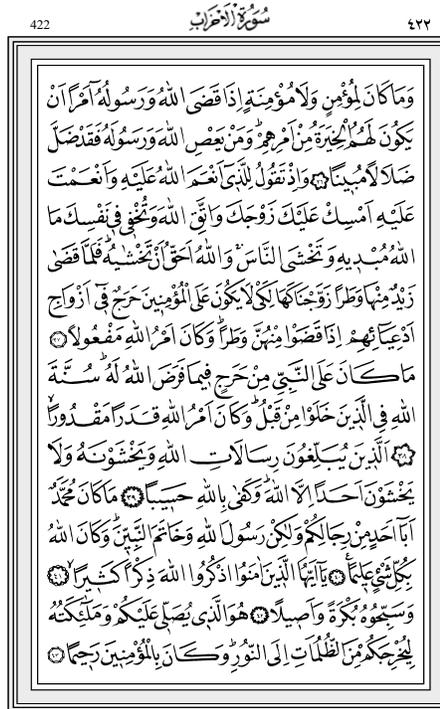
sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are also included in the Prophet's household (Muslim, "Faḍāil aṣ-Ṣaḥābah," 37, 61).

36. When God and His Messenger have decreed a matter, it is not for a believing man and a believing woman to have an option insofar as they themselves are concerned.<sup>18</sup> Whoever disobeys God and His Messenger has evidently gone astray.

37. (Remember) when you (O Messenger) said to him whom God has favored (with guidance to Islam and close companionship with the Prophet), and whom you have favored (with kind treatment, special consideration, and emancipation): “Retain your wife in marriage and fear God (concerning your treatment of her).” You were hiding within yourself what God (had already decreed and) would certainly bring to light: you were feeling apprehensive of people (that they might react in a way harmful to their faith), while God has a greater right that you should fear Him (lest you err in the implementation of His commands). So, when Zayd had come to the end of his union with her (and she had completed her period of waiting after the divorce), We united you with her in marriage, so that there should be no blame (or legal impediment) for the believers in respect of (their marrying) the wives of those whom they called their sons (though they really were not), when the latter have come to the end of their union with them. And God’s command must be fulfilled.<sup>19</sup>

38. There is no hindrance for the Prophet with respect to what God has ordained and made lawful for him. This was God’s way with those (Prophets) who passed before. The command of God is a decree determined (in due measures for every thing, event, and individual).

39. (The Prophets are those) who convey God’s Messages and feel great awe of Him; and they hold none but God in awe. God suffices as One Who reckons and settles the accounts (of His servants).



40. (O believers! Know that) Muḥammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of God and the Seal of the Prophets.<sup>20</sup> God has full knowledge of everything.

41. O you who believe! Remember and mention God much;

42. And glorify Him (in that He is absolutely above all defects and having partners) in the morning and in the evening (day and night).<sup>21</sup>

43. He it is Who (in return for your remembrance of Him) bestows His special blessings upon you, with His angels (praying and asking His forgiveness for you), that He may lead you out of (all kinds of intellectual, spiritual, social, economic, and political) darkness into light (and keep you firm therein). He is All-Compassionate toward the believers.

18. This means absolute submission to the Islamic Law, and the rule of the Law. Since the Islamic Law is primarily based on the rules established by God in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Messenger, everyone is equal before it, and no one can impose their own decisions or ideas upon others. So Islam has brought absolute equality and freedom to humankind and saved us from submission or slavery to the choices and decisions of others. It is God Who creates human beings and He is, therefor, our owner. Human beings cannot even claim ownership over themselves, as it is not they who have created themselves or who maintain or provide for themselves. Servanthood or submission to God means freedom from all kinds of slavery to the created powers, including the human carnal soul, which always calls humankind to the evil that is opposed to our duty.

19. The Messenger's actions and norms of conduct constitute, like his sayings, the second source of the Islamic Law or constitution. His Companions inherited and transmitted whatever they observed while he was living among them, while his wives narrated and conveyed the rules and norms of the Islamic personal and family life. This heavy responsibility required that he should have wives of different temperaments, upbringing, and character. A great many of the religious matters and rules were narrated by these women, known as the Pure Wives.

Zayd ibn Hārithah was the Messenger's emancipated slave and servant, whom he called "my son" according to the customs of the time before adoption was legally abolished. The Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, had requested that Zaynab bint Jahsh, a "noble-born" lady from the Messenger's clan, be married to this former slave to show in action that people should not judge others by their color or social status. However, their marriage did not last long. Zayd, realizing his wife's sublime character, admitted that he was spiritually and intellectually inferior to her. So, he eventually divorced her. As stated in: *We united you with her in marriage*, God ordered

His Messenger to marry Zaynab. This was extremely difficult for the Messenger to do, because, according to the prevailing customs, "adopted" children were treated as if they were real children, and Zayd, as mentioned above, was his emancipated slave and servant. But God willed that this custom be abolished and first put it into effect through His Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings. The Messenger apprehended that the people might draw incorrect conclusions and think unbecoming things about him if he were to perform such an action, and this would therefore harm their faith. But such a grounded "legal" fiction was to be eternally abolished, and God willed that such an established custom be abolished through His Messenger's actions, because only then would it be able to have the desired effect upon the people. So, the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, had no alternative other than to obey God's decree, as he always did.

20. The verse implies that those of superior rank and responsibility feel a fatherly affection toward those who work under them. If they are spiritual leaders, Prophets, or saints, for example, their compassion and affection will far exceed that of a father. As the people will see them as a father, they may consider it improper for such people to marry one of their women. To remove this illusion, the Qur'an tells us that: "Divine Mercy causes the Prophet to have great affection for you. Due to his position as your leader, you are like his children. But as he is not your biological father, he can marry one of your women. His calling you 'my sons' does not mean you are legally his sons."

The verse also contains an implicit prediction, which, of course, proved to be true. It is that God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, would not have a male child to survive and succeed him. He would be succeeded by a female child and his progeny would continue through her. As known, the Messenger's line continued through Fāṭimah, his beloved daughter, who alone survived him from among his children.

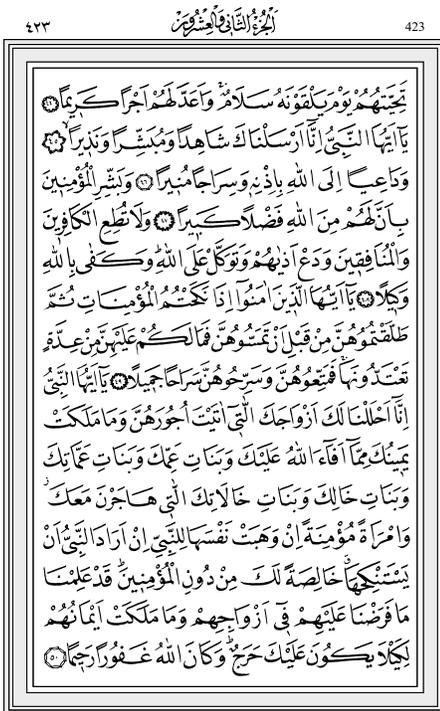
21. All words of praise and glorification of God – extolling Him with His Perfect Attributes of Power and Majesty, Beauty and Sublimity, and declaring that He is absolutely above having any defects or negative attributes shared by the creation, or above doing useless things, whether one utters these words vocally or says them silently in one’s heart – are known as *dhikr* (remembrance of God). So, glorification of Him is also included in the meaning of *dhikr*. In addition to this, reading, reflecting, studying to gain knowledge of God, and speaking about Him to others, are also included in the concept of *dhikr*.

In a *ḥadīth qudsī* (a Tradition whose meaning God directly inspired in the heart of the Messenger), the Messenger narrated: “God says: ‘I am to My servant as he expects of Me, I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in his heart, I remember him to Myself; if he remembers Me in an assembly, I mention him in an assembly better than his; if he draws nearer to Me a hand’s span, I draw nearer to him an arm’s length; if he draws nearer to Me an arm’s length, I draw nearer to him a fathom’s length; and if he comes to me walking, I rush to him with (great) speed’ ” (al-Bukhārī, “Tawḥīd,” 50; Muslim, “Dhikr,” 2).

God has bestowed a special distinction upon

those who remember Him. The Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, said: “The devotees have surpassed all.” They asked: “Who are these exceptional people, O Messenger of God?” He replied: “They are men and women who remember God unceasingly” (Muslim, “Dhikr,” 2). These are the people who are truly alive. Abū Mūsā reported from the Messenger: “The likeness of the house where God is mentioned and the one where He is not is like that of a living person to a dead person” (al-Bukhārī, Da‘awāt,” 66). Mujāhid, one of the earliest interpreters of the Qur’ān, explained: “A person cannot be one of ‘those men and women who remember God much,’ unless he or she remembers God at all times, standing, sitting, or lying in bed (as stated in *sūrah* 3: 191).”

Joining the assemblies or circles of *dhikr* is commendable, as shown by the following *ḥadīth*: Ibn ‘Umar reported: “The Prophet, upon him peace and blessings, said: ‘When you pass by a garden of Paradise, avail yourselves of it.’ The Companions asked: ‘What are the gardens of Paradise, O Messenger of God?’ The Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, replied: ‘The assemblies or circles of *dhikr*. There are some angels of God who go about looking for such assemblies of *dhikr*, and when they find them they surround them’ ” (Muslim, “Dhikr,” 39).



44. On the Day when they meet Him, their greeting (from those who welcome them will be), “Peace” (the promise of eternal security from punishment). And He has prepared for them an honorable, generous reward.

45. O (most illustrious) Prophet! We have surely sent you (with the mission of Messengership) as a witness (to the truth through your life, and through your testimony on Judgment Day for your community concerning their deeds), and as a bearer of glad tidings (of prosperity in return for faith and righteousness) and a warner (against the consequences of misguidance);

46. And as one who calls (all humankind and the jinn) to God by His leave, and a light-diffusing lamp (enlightening minds and hearts, and showing the way to those who follow that light).<sup>22</sup>

47. And (so) give the believers the glad tidings that surely for them is a great bounty from God (in addition to what they may have merited by their faith and good deeds).

48. And pay no heed to (the offers of) the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and do not mind the sufferings they cause you, and put your trust in God. God suffices as the One to rely on and to Whom affairs should be referred.

49. O you who believe! When you have made a marriage contract with any of the believing women (including those belonging to the People of the Book), and then divorce them before you have touched them, you have no reason to ask them to observe any waiting-period for you. Make some provision for them and release them in fair manner.<sup>23</sup>

50. O (most illustrious) Prophet! We have made lawful for you your wives to whom you have already paid their bridal-due, as well as those whom your right hand possesses from among the captives of war that God has granted you, and the daughters of your paternal uncles and paternal aunts, and the daughters of your maternal uncles and maternal aunts, who have emigrated (to Madinah) for God’s cause as you did; and any believing woman who offers herself to the Prophet (freely, without demanding any bridal-due) if the Prophet wants to marry her – a rule (of privilege) for you exclusively, not for the believers (in general)<sup>24</sup> – We have (already decreed and) made known what We have enjoined on them with regard to their wives and those whom their right hands possess.<sup>25</sup> (This exceptional privilege<sup>26</sup> is) in order that there may not be any hindrance to you (in fulfilling your mission because of marriage relationships).<sup>27</sup> God is All-For-giving, All-Compassionate.

22. The Qur'ān describes the sun as a lamp and the moon as a shining object (reflecting light) placed in the heavens (on this description and its meaning, see 25: 61, note 15). This verse presents God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, through the simile of a light-diffusing (shining) lamp. This implies that the Prophet Muḥammad, upon him be peace and blessings, is a sun in the heaven of humankind and the jinn, enlightening their worlds and through which they can find their way. The fact that the Qur'ān uses for the Messenger the word (lamp) used for the sun, as well as the phrase light-diffusing or shining which it uses for the moon, suggests that the Messenger has a very bright light; and although he has absorbed this light, it is in fact from God, Who is the Source of all lights. As is known, the moon derives its light from the sun. The Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, is like the sun with respect to his radiance, and like the moon with respect to the source of his light.

23. If the divorce mentioned in the verse takes place before any marriage-portion or bridal due has been determined, the husband must make provision according to his means. If it takes place after a bridal-due has already been appointed, half of what has been appointed should be given to the divorced woman. However, the woman can make remission and forgo it or the man can make remission and pay the full amount. (See *sūrah* 2: 236–237.)

24. On the injunctions about the women whom Muslim men can lawfully marry, see *sūrah* 4: 22–25, notes 7–9.

25. On these injunctions, see *sūrah* 2: 221; *sūrah* 4: 3–4, notes 2–3.

26. Because of his mission, there are some exceptional rules for the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings. Unlike other believing men, he was allowed to marry a believing woman who would come to him without demanding any bridal due. While all other Muslim men could marry the daughters of their uncles and aunts, whether they had emigrated or not, the Prophet was allowed to marry any among

them on the condition that they had emigrated. There were other exceptions that were just pertinent to the Messenger, for example: the *Tahajjud* Prayer (in the last third or later part of the night) was prescribed for the Prophet until his death; this is only supererogatory for other Muslims. Like other Prophets, his inheritance could not be shared by his “heirs” but was used as alms for the Muslim Community. Eating of the *Zakāh* was forbidden to him and his family, while all other needy Muslims could partake of it. The permission for him to marry as many as nine women was also exceptional for him, while other Muslims can only have four women together in marriage. While all other Muslim men can marry until their death, God's Messenger was prohibited to marry after some point in his life, as stipulated in verse 52 of this *sūrah*.

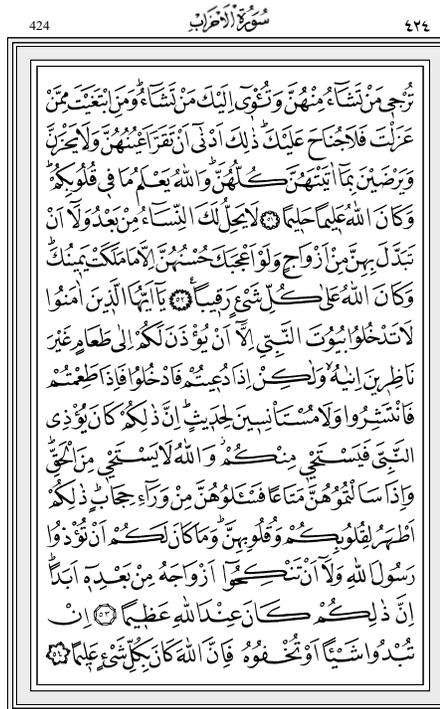
27. These special conditions were not introduced due to a need for women, but rather merely because of the role women played in the fulfillment of the Messenger's mission. Islam has specific rules for women, and many of those rules can only be learned from women teachers and could be put to the Messenger only by women who had close relationships with him. So, the reasons behind the Messenger's several marriages, while differing from case to case, all have to do with his role as the leader of the new Muslim community, and his responsibility to guide his followers toward the norms and values of Islam.

The Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, married his first wife, several years older than him, when he was 25 years old, fifteen years before his Prophethood began. He lived with her for almost 25 years, and after her death, he lived for nearly six years without a wife. Given the cultural and moral climate in which he lived, not to mention his youth and other factors, he nevertheless enjoyed an impeccable reputation for chastity, integrity, and trustworthiness. As soon as he was called to the Prophethood, he acquired enemies who made all sorts of charges. However, not even his fiercest enemies attacked his reputation, for doing so would have caused them to be

ridiculed and discredited immediately. It is important to realize that his life was founded upon chastity and self-discipline from the outset, and remained thus. All his other marriages began when he was 53 years old, an age when very little real interest and desire for marriage remains, especially in Arabia where people grow old relatively earlier, and when especially in those days people's average life-expectancy was much lower.

Some marriages were contracted for specific reasons, such as:

- The Prophet's wives were young, middle-aged, and elderly. The accurate requirements and norms of Islamic family life for every age could be learnt within the Prophet's household better, and then conveyed to other Muslims through his wives.
- Each wife was from a different clan or tribe, which allowed the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, to establish bonds of kinship and affinity throughout Arabia. This caused a profound attachment to him to spread Islam among the diverse peoples of the new *Ummah*, and also brought about and secured equality and brother/sisterhood among both in practical matters and in terms of the Religion.
- Both before and after the Prophet's death, each wife proved to be of great benefit and service. They conveyed and interpreted Islam to their people in all its inner and outer experiences, as well as the qualities, manners, and faith of the man who was the living embodiment of the Qur'ān in every aspect of his life. In this way, all of their people learned the Qur'ān, the Traditions, *tafsīr* (Qur'ānic interpretation and commentary), and *fiqh* (understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah as law). Thus, through his wives, these people became fully aware of Islam's essence and spirit.
- These marriages allowed the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, to establish kinship ties throughout Arabia, and thus to move freely wherever he wished and to be accepted as a member in each family. In addition, everyone so connected to him felt that they could approach him personally for guidance on any issue. The entire tribe also benefited from this connection; they considered themselves fortunate and took pride in their new relationship. For example, such relationships were established for the Umayyads (through Umm Habībah), the Hashimites (through Zaynab bint Jahsh), and the Banū Makhzūm (through Umm Salamah).
- It is also a highly notable fact that all the Prophet's wives (except 'Ā'ishah and Māriyah) were divorcees or widows, thus underlying the importance and care that needs to be given to lone women in Islamic society, as against the then-prevalent norm of casting them off to a life of destitution.



51. You can put off whomever among them (who offer themselves to you freely) you please, and accept to yourself whomever you please, as you can defer the turn of visiting any of them (your wives) you please, and take to you whomever you please.<sup>28</sup> There is no blame on you if you give precedence to one whom you deferred before. It will make it more likely that they are pleased, and do not grieve (when they are deferred), and that all of them will be content with your treatment of them. God knows (O people) whatever is in your hearts. God is indeed All-Knowing, All-Clement.

52. Other women (than those just mentioned, and those already married to you<sup>29</sup>) will not be lawful for you to take; nor (seeing that they – your wives – have preferred God and His Messenger over the charms of the world) are you allowed to change them for other wives, even though their fineness should please you, except those whom your right hands possess. God is ever watchful over everything.

53. O you who believe! Do not enter the Prophet's rooms (in his house) unless you have been given leave, (and when invited)

to a meal, without waiting for the proper time (when the meal is to be served). Rather, when you are invited, enter (his private rooms) at the proper time; and when you have had your meal, disperse. Do not linger for mere talk. That causes trouble for the Prophet, and he is shy of (asking) you (to leave). But God does not shy away from (teaching you) the truth. When you ask something of them (his wives), ask them from behind a screen. Your doing so is purer for your hearts and for their hearts. It is not for you to cause hurt to God's Messenger, as it is unlawful for you ever to marry his widows after him. That (marrying his widows) would be an enormity in God's sight.

54. Whether you reveal something or keep it secret, (know) that surely God has full knowledge of everything.

28. It is possible that this verse has both of the meanings given (i.e., it is related to both the Prophet's treatment of the women who would offer themselves to him, and the rotation in the conjugal attentions due to his wives.) Islam orders a husband who has more than one wife to be just in his relations with them and to observe a strict rotation in the conjugal attentions due to his wives. Since this is difficult, it advises one to be content with one wife (4: 3). However, since the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, had many wise purposes for his marriages, some of which have been mentioned in the previous note, he was not obliged to observe this responsibility. But, as reported by 'Ā'ishah in the books of *Hadith* Abū Dāwūd,

“Nikāḥ,” 39; at-Tirmidhī, “Nikāḥ,” 42), he showed no negligence in observing it during his life. Although the verse allows him freedom to prefer or defer any of his wives in visiting, it also offers him a way not to grieve any of them and make all of them happy. If he had postponed visiting any of them, he could give that one precedence the next time.

29. This prohibition is related to other women than those mentioned in verse 50. However, since the verse was revealed when the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, already had nine wives, it also forbids him to marry again. This implies that the purposes for his marriages have already been fulfilled.

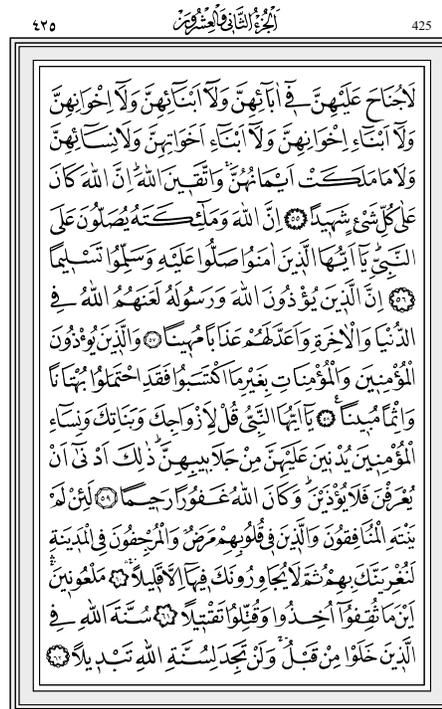
55. There is no blame on them (the wives of the Prophet, if they speak without a screen) with their fathers (including grandfathers and uncles, both paternal and maternal), or their sons (including grandsons), or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or the sons of their sisters, or the Muslim women and women of good conduct with whom they associate, or those (bondsmen) whom their right hands possess. Keep (O wives of the Prophet) from disobedience to God in reverence for Him and piety (observing this command as well as all of His other commands). God is indeed a witness over everything.

56. Surely God and His angels bless the Prophet (He always treats him with His special mercy, with the angels praying to Him to grant him the highest station of praise with Him and for the decisive victory of his Religion). O you who believe, invoke the blessings of God on him, and pray to God to bestow His peace on him, greeting him with the best greeting. (Love and follow him with utmost sincerity and faithfulness, and give yourselves to his way with perfect submission).<sup>30</sup>

57. Those who affront God and His Messenger (through disrespect for Him in words and acts and for His Messenger and Islamic values), God certainly curses them (excludes them from His mercy) in this world and the Hereafter, and has prepared for them a shameful, humiliating punishment.<sup>31</sup>

58. And those who affront believing men and believing women without their having done any wrong to deserve it, they have surely burdened themselves with calumny and a blatant sin.<sup>32</sup>

59. O (most illustrious) Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters, as well as the women (wives and daughters) of the believers, to draw over themselves some part of their outer garments (when outside their homes and when before men whom



they are not forbidden to marry because of blood relation).<sup>33</sup> This is better and more convenient for them to be recognized (and respected for their decency and decorum) and not harassed.<sup>34</sup> God is indeed All-For-giving, All-Compassionate.<sup>35</sup>

60. Assuredly, if the hypocrites and those in whose hearts there is a disease, and those scare-mongers in the City (given to spreading false rumors to cause disturbance in the heartland of the Islamic Community) do not desist, We will most certainly urge you against them, and then they will not be able to remain in it as your neighbors except a little while only,

61. Excluded from God's Mercy for ever, and wherever they may be found, they will be seized, and killed one and all.<sup>36</sup>

62. (That was) the way of God with those who passed before. You will never find any change in God's way.

30. Calling God's blessings and peace upon God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, at least once in a lifetime is incumbent upon every Muslim. Doing so at each mention of his name is a highly recommendable act. According to the Shāfi'ī and Ḥanbalī schools, it is obligatory in the last sitting of every Prayer (*Ṣalāh*) after *tashah-hud*, without which the Prayer is not acceptable. According to other schools, it is *sunnah*.

Calling God's blessings and peace upon the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, is a link between him and the believers. His responsibility was extremely grave, and he is always concerned with the Muslims individually and collectively, even after his death. So calling God's blessings and peace upon him as a religious duty was not restricted to his lifetime. By doing so, we are also praying for ourselves, because we are both building an important connection with him and petitioning God through him to help us with our religious responsibilities.

Upon the injunction of the Messenger, we must include his family and even his progeny in calling God's blessings and peace upon him.

That the injunction of calling God's blessings and peace upon him stays in effect even after his death until the Last Day signifies that praying for the dead is a valid religious act and may be of help for them.

31. The original word (which we have translated as affront) is *adhā*. It is mainly used to express any words that hurt another's feelings. So the verse is warning us about any unbecoming words that we may utter concerning God and His Messenger, and Islamic values. The verse also forbids any disrespectful act toward God and His Messenger, and Islamic values.

32. If one says something about a believer with which the believer will not be pleased, this is backbiting, which the Qur'an decisively forbids. If one says something about a believer that is untrue, this is a calumny. In addition to forbidding such talk about the believers, the verse also forbids any unbecoming talk or act that will hurt a believer.

Before the injunction of flogging with a

hundred stripes (24: 2), the Qur'an had ordered the punishment of fornicators by scolding and beating (4: 16). However, this was abrogated by the injunction regarding flogging them. Therefore, hurting a believer with unbecoming words is forbidden in any case. Thus, the permission to hurt or affront them that this verse gives in case of their having done some wrong concerns any acts that the law may punish in this way. Such a punishment can only be implemented by legal authorities.

While the Qur'an forbids affronting any believer without their having done any wrong that would deserve such an affront, it decisively forbids offending God's Messenger without specifying any exception, and it regards offending him as if one has offended Almighty God. This shows the Messenger's sinlessness and that he is exalted above any blemish.

33. The verse means that women must cover their heads and upper parts of their bodies. Some scholars, however, are of the opinion that they must also cover their faces except the eyes.

34. There are two important instances of wisdom in ordering Muslim women to cover themselves. Muslim women are women who deserve respect and who are to be protected from any offense or harassment. The veil both shows that they are Muslims, decent, and free (not bondsmen), and demands protection against any harassment. Although no one can claim that a woman who does not wear a veil desires to attract the attention of men to herself, it is an undeniable and frequently witnessed reality that a woman who displays her charms often exposes herself to unwanted attention.

35. Despite all contrary assertions in the modern world, God, Who relates the injunction of veiling for women to His infinite forgiveness and compassion, explicitly declared that it is from compassion for women.

36. This is, as will be pointed out in the following verse, the end that the hypocrites must inevitably come to, as a consequence of the sedition they cause in society.

يَسْأَلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عَلَّمَتْنِي اللَّهُ وَإِنِّي غَدِيرٌ  
 يُدْرِكُ لَعْلَ السَّاعَةِ تَكُونُ قَرِيبًا ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَنَ  
 الْكَاذِبِينَ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ سَعِيرًا ۝ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا لَا يَجِدُونَ وِلْيَةً  
 وَلَا نَصِيرًا ۝ يَوْمَ تَقُفُّ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُولُونَ يَا لَيْتَنَا أَطَعْنَا  
 اللَّهَ وَأَطَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ ۝ وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا  
 وَكِبَرَاءَنَا فَأَصَلْنَا السَّبِيلَ ۝ رَبَّنَا أَنهَضْهُمْ ضِعَفَيْنِ مِنَ  
 الْعَذَابِ وَأَعْنَهُمْ لَفَنًا كَثِيرًا ۝ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
 لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ آذَىٰ مَوْسَىٰ فَبَرَأَهُ اللَّهُ مِمَّا قَالُوا وَكَانَ عِندَ  
 اللَّهِ وَجْهًا ۝ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا  
 ۝ يُصَلِّعُ لَكُمْ أَعْيُنَكُمْ وَيُغْيِرُ لَكُمْ دُيُوتَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ  
 اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ۝ إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى  
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ  
 مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا ۝ يُعَذِّبُ  
 اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ وَيَتُوبُ  
 اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ۝

63. People ask you about the Last Hour (when it will befall). Say: “Knowledge of it rests with God alone.” For all you know, the Last Hour may well be near.

64. Surely God has cursed (eternally excluded from His Mercy) the unbelievers, and has prepared for them the Blaze,

65. To abide therein forever. They will find neither guardian nor helper.

66. On the Day when their faces are turned over and over in the Fire, they will exclaim, “Oh, woe to us! Would that we had obeyed God and obeyed the Messenger!”

67. And they will say: “Our Lord! Surely we obeyed our chiefs and our great ones, and they caused us to follow a misleading path.

68. “Our Lord! Cause them to suffer the punishment doubled, and curse them with a mighty curse (so that they are utterly excluded, absolutely and eternally, from Your Mercy)!”

69. O you who believe! Do not be like those (among the Children of Israel) who affronted Moses, and (be mindful that) God proved him to be innocent of all that they alleged against him. He was of great honor in God’s sight.<sup>37</sup>

70. O you who believe! Act in reverence for God and piously, without doing anything to incur His punishment, and always speak words true, proper and straight to the point,

71. That He will make your deeds good and upright and forgive you your sins.

Whoever obeys God and His Messenger has surely attained to a mighty triumph.

72. We offered the Trust to the heavens, and the earth, and the mountains, but they shrank from bearing it, and were afraid of it (fearful of being unable to fulfill its responsibility), but human has undertaken it; he is indeed prone to doing great wrong and misjudging, and acting out of sheer ignorance.<sup>38</sup>

73. (As a consequence of the choice of each individual) God will punish the hypocrites, men and women, and those men and women who associate partners with God, and He will turn to the believing men and women with forgiveness (and compassion in return for their repentance for any wrong they do). God is indeed All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.<sup>39</sup>

37. This warning came with respect to the Messenger's marriage with Zaynab, the Mother of Believers. Hypocrites and some with weak faith spoke unbecomingly about this event and about the Messenger in connection with it. The same kinds of offending words were uttered about the Prophet Moses, upon him be peace. Just as the Prophet Moses was absolutely free of any such offences alleged against him, God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, is also absolutely free of any similar allegations. As stated in verses 57 and 58, and notes 31 and 32 above, any offensive word uttered against the Messenger is as if uttered against God, for he is infallible and free of any blemish.

38. For the meaning of the Trust, see Appendix 14.

39. By concluding with the emphasis on God's being All-Forgiving and All-Compassionate, this verse is stating that out of His Forgiveness and Compassion, God will support the believers and enable them to follow the Straight Path because they have chosen that Path and try to follow it. He will also accept their repentance when they repent for their sins, and forgive them their shortcomings in following His Path. The verse also encourages the hypocrites and those who associate partners with God not to sink into despair and to give up their way, turning to God instead.

## SŪRAH 34

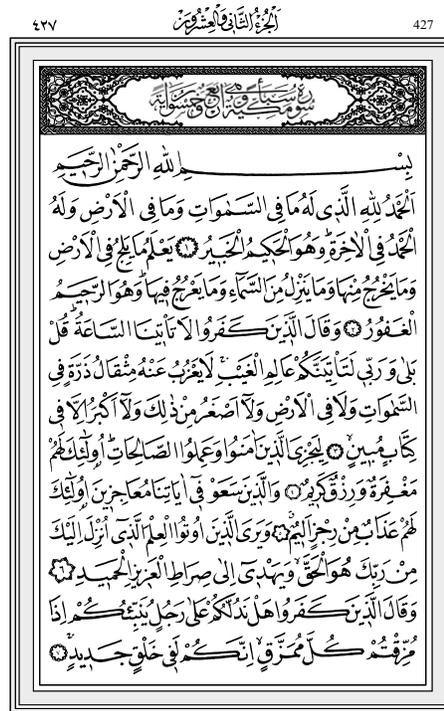
## SABA' (SHEBA)

Makkah Period

Revealed in Makkah in the initial years of the revelation of Islam, this *sūrah* of 54 verses derives its name from verse 15, in which the civilization of *Saba'* (Sheba) is mentioned. That civilization was founded in Yemen and was famous for its cities rich in greenery, dams, and trade. A queen of this country, who was mentioned in *Sūrat an-Naml* in the context of her experiences with the Prophet Solomon, upon him be peace, became a Muslim (for detailed information, see 27: 22-44, notes 10-17). This *sūrah* dwells for the most part on the pillars of faith, such as Divine Oneness, the afterlife, and Prophet-hood. By mentioning the civilization of *Saba'* with its magnificence and tragic end, and the favors God granted to the Prophets David and Solomon, upon them be peace, this *sūrah* warns us that God's favors come as a result of following His commandments for human life and continually thanking Him in return for His favors. Thanking means acknowledging that all of one's achievements belong to God, feeling gratitude in return for them, and obeying His commandments.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. All praise and gratitude are for God, to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth (for it is He Who has created them and sustains them); and for Him are all praise and gratitude in the Hereafter (as it is He alone Who will find it as an eternal abode for His servants). He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware.



2. He knows whatever enters into the earth and whatever comes out of it, and whatever descends from the heaven and whatever ascends to it. He is the All-Compassionate, the All-Forgiving.

3. The unbelievers say: "The Last Hour will not come upon us." Say: "No indeed! By my Lord – and He is the Knower of the Unseen – it most certainly will come upon you." Not an atom's weight of whatever there is in the heavens or in the earth escapes Him, nor is there anything smaller than that, or greater, but it is (recorded) in a Manifest Book.<sup>1</sup>

4. (That is so, in order) that He may reward those who believe and do good, righteous deeds. It is they for whom there is forgiveness (to bring unforeseen blessings) and an honorable, generous provision;

5. Whereas those who strive against Our

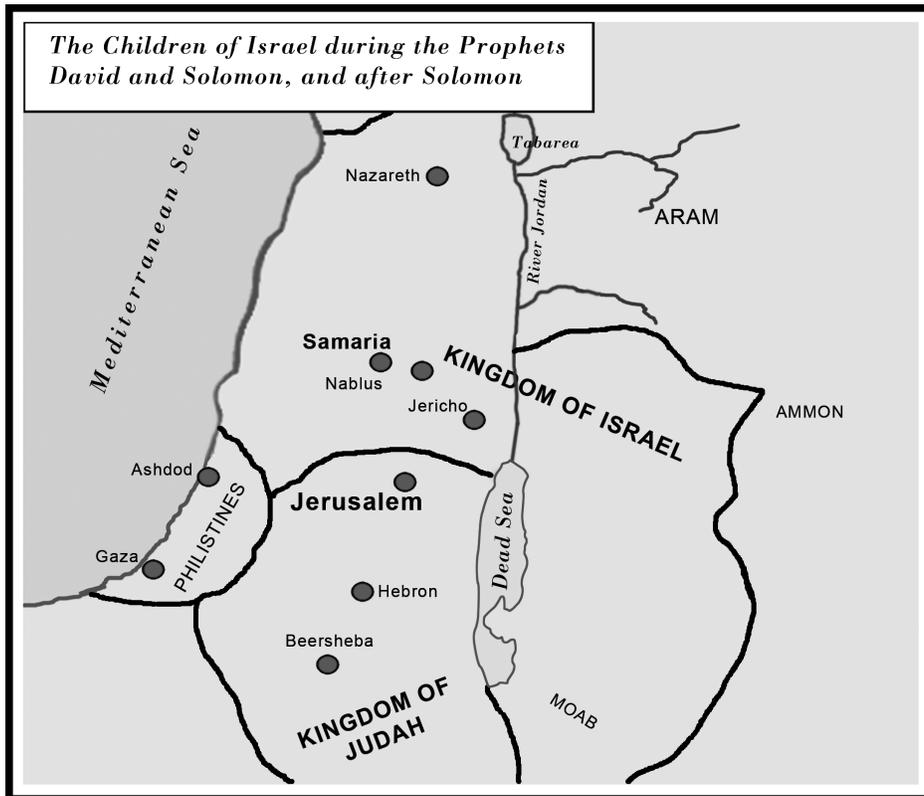
Revelations, seeking to frustrate and void (them), for those (who have thus distanced themselves from their Lord) is a painful punishment of loathsome kind (earned by their own loathsome deeds).

6. Those to whom the knowledge (of the truth) has been granted are well aware that what is sent down to you from your Lord (the Qur'ān) is the truth (and what

it declares of the afterlife is, therefore, also true), and that it guides to the Path of the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Praiseworthy.

7. But those who disbelieve say (in ridicule): “Shall we show you a man who will inform you that after you have been scattered entirely to dust, you will, even then, be raised in a new creation?”

1. On the Manifest Book, see *sūrah* 6: 59, note 13; *sūrah* 13: 39, note 13; *sūrah* 17: 14, note 10; *sūrah* 27: 1, note 1.



أَفَتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَمْ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ بَلِ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ  
 بِالْآخِرَةِ فِي الْعَذَابِ وَالضَّلَالِ الْبَعِيدِ ۝ أَفَلَمْ يَرَوْا  
 إِلَى مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ  
 لَنَشَأُ نَحْفَ بِهِمَا الْأَرْضَ وَنُشَقِطُ عَلَيْهِمْ كَيْفَ نَشَاءُ  
 إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُنِيبٍ ۝ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ  
 مِنَّا فَضْلًا يَا جِبَالُ أَوِّبِي مَعَهُ وَالطَّيْرُ وَالنَّعْلَةُ الْحَدِيدُ  
 ۝ إِذَا غَمَلَ سَابِغَاتٍ وَقَدِّرْ فِي السَّرْدِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا  
 إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ۝ وَلَسْتُ لِمَنْ يَرْتَجِعُ غَدُوهَا شَهِرٌ  
 وَرَوَاهَا شَهْرٌ وَأَسَلْنَا لَهُ عَيْنَ الْقِطْرِ وَمِنَ الْجِبِّ مَنَ بَيْنَ  
 يَدَيْهِ بِأَذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَمَنْ يَرْجُ مِنْهُ عَنْ مَرَاتٍ يُدْفَعُ مِنْ عَذَابِ  
 السَّعِيرِ ۝ يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ مَا يَشَاءُ مِنْ مَحَابِبٍ وَنَمَائِلٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ  
 كَأَنْجَابٍ وَقُدُورٍ رَاسِيَاتٍ اعْمَلُوا آلِدَادَ وَشُكْرًا وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ  
 عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ۝ فَلَمَّا فَصَّيْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ مَا دُكِّرَ عَلَى  
 مَوْجِهِ إِلَّا دَابَّةُ الْأَرْضِ تَأْكُلُ مِنسَأَتَهُ فَلَمَّا خَرَّ تَبَيَّنَتِ الْجِنَّةُ  
 أَنْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ الْغَيْبِ مَا لَبِثُوا فِي الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ ۝

8. “Does he fabricate something false in attribution to God, or is there a madness in him?” No! (The truth is that) those who disbelieve in the Hereafter are in torment (of mind and heart) and lost far in error.

9. Do they never consider that it is the heaven and the earth that are (extended) before and after them (so they are entirely and inescapably enclosed within His Kingdom)? If We so will, We can cause the earth to swallow them, or cause lumps of the heaven to fall down upon them. Surely in this is a sign for every servant of God who (being sincere in quest of the truth) will turn (to Him) in contrition.

10. Assuredly We graced David with a great favor from Us: “O mountains! Sing the praises of God with him, and likewise you birds!”<sup>2</sup> And We also made iron supple for him:

11. (So that he was enabled to obey the command,) “Make long coats-of-mail (to cover more of the body), and order with care the sequence (of actions in the process)”. And (O family and followers of David,) do good, righteous deeds. Surely I see very well all that you do.”<sup>3</sup>

12. And to Solomon, We (subjugated) the wind: its morning course covered the distance of a month’s journey (at normal pace), and its evening course, a month’s journey.<sup>4</sup> And We caused molten copper to flow for him (like a fountain).<sup>5</sup> Among the jinn were some who, by the leave of his Lord, worked under him. Whoever of them swerved away from Our command

(by disobeying him), We would make him taste the punishment of a fiery blaze.<sup>6</sup>

13. They made for him whatever he wished – sanctuaries, and figures (of inanimate objects), and carvings, as well as basins like ponds and boilers built into the ground. “Work, O family of David, in thankfulness to Me!” Few are the truly thankful among My servants.

14. Then, when We executed Our decree for his death, nothing showed them (the jinn who had been laboring at the tasks he assigned to them) that he was dead, except that a crawling creature of the earth had been gnawing away his staff (until it broke). Then, when he fell to the ground, it became clear to the jinn that if they had known the Unseen, they would not have continued in the tormenting toil that humiliated them.<sup>7</sup>

2. For an explanation, see *sūrah* 21: 79, note 10.

3. This is both an order to give thanks in return for God's favors, and a warning to use all of God's favors, such as the ability to make coats-of-mail out of iron, within the limits established by God and for lawful purposes.

4. See *sūrah* 21: 81, note 11. Despite the fact that conditions usually change, the wind kept its speed every day both in the morning and in the evening for the Prophet Solomon, upon him be peace.

5. The verses, *We also made iron supple for him* (10), and *We caused molten copper to flow for him (like a fountain)* (12), indicate that softening iron and melting copper to use in making different tools are two of God's greatest bounties for humankind, revealed through two of His Messengers. It also points to the virtues of those two Messengers. Softening iron, melting copper, and extracting minerals is the origin, source, and basis of all material industries. These favors were granted to two great Prophets, who ruled according to God's commandments, and these have become the basis of most industries that serve our needs today.

By endowing two of His Prophets, who were both spiritual and temporal leaders, with craftsmanship and industry, God urges people toward craftsmanship and industry. In these verses, God Almighty suggests the following, as Said Nursi explains:

I endowed two servants of Mine who obeyed My religious commandments with

such skill that one could cast iron into any mold and then use it as an important source of strength for his rule, and the other could make many things out of molten copper. Since these are possible and since iron and copper have great significance for your social life, such wisdom and skill will be bestowed on you if you obey My commands of creation, My laws of nature. Eventually you will attain it. (*The Words*, "The 20<sup>th</sup> Word," 269)

By softening iron and smelting copper, people have achieved great industrial progress and material power. These verses direct our attention toward this truth. These verses not only warned earlier peoples, who did not appreciate its importance, but they also warn the idle people of today.

6. Since the jinn are created from fire, it is understood that they are punished with something from fire.

7. It is understood that a crawling creature of the earth (termite?) had been gnawing away the Prophet Solomon's staff from within it. It must have taken it a long time to gnaw away a staff so that it would break. If the jinn had known the Unseen (beyond the reach of a created being's perception), they could have been aware of this. This verse may also be referring figuratively to the fact that the Prophet Solomon's kingdom had for long been being "gnawed away" from within it by some secret organizations. The jinn had not been aware of this either.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ فِي مَسْكِهُمْ آيَةٌ جَنَّتَانِ عَنْ يَمِينٍ وَشِمَالٍ كُلُوا  
 مِنْ رِزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ بَلْدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَرَبٌّ غَفُورٌ ﴿١٥﴾  
 فَاعْرَضُوا فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْلَ الْعَرِمِ وَبَدَّلْنَا لَهُمْ جَنَّاتِهِمْ  
 جَنَّاتٍ دَوَائِقُ أَكْلِ خِطِّ وَأَثَلٍ وَسَخٍ مِنْ سِدْرٍ قَلِيلٍ ﴿١٦﴾  
 ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُمْ بِمَا كَفَرُوا وَهَلْ يُجَازِي إِلَّا الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾  
 وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْقُرَى الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا قُرَى ظَاهِرَةً  
 وَقَدْرًا فِيهَا التَّيْسُ سَيْبٌ وَفِيهَا يَتَاكَلُونَ وَإِنَّمَا آمَنَ مِنْهُ  
 ﴿١٨﴾ فَخَالُوا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ أَسْقَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ  
 أَحَادِيثَ وَمَرَفْنَا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مُمْسِقٍ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ  
 لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَهٌ سَخَّرَ لَهُ  
 فَاتَّعَوْهُ إِلَّا قَرِيبًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ  
 مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا لَنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يُوْمِنُ بِالْآخِرَةِ مِمَّنْ هُوَ مِنْهَا  
 فِي نَبَاتٍ وَرَبِّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَافِظٌ ﴿٢١﴾ فَلْيَادْعُوا آلِدِينَ رَعْنُكُمْ  
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًاكَ دَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي  
 الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي سِمَاكَ مِنْ شَرِكٍ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ ظَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

15. Indeed, there was a sign (a meaningful lesson) for the people of Sheba to take from their abode<sup>8</sup> – two (lovely, vast expanses of) gardens, on the right and on the left. “Eat of the provision your Lord has granted you, and give thanks to Him: a land most wholesome and a Lord All-Forgiving.”

16. But they turned away (from thanking to the sins of luxury and heedless self-indulgence). So We sent upon them the flood of (waters released from) the dams, and converted their two (lovely) gardens into a couple of gardens yielding bitter produce, tamarisks, and sparse lote-trees.

17. Thus We recompensed them for their (sins originating in persistent) ingratitude. Do We ever punish any but the ingrate?

18. We had set between them and the lands We blessed (Palestine and Damascus, with great blessings for their people) many towns within sight of one another, and We had established the journey distances (between them for ease and safety): “Travel therein by night or by day in security!”

19. But (this comfort and security spoiled them, and) they said: “Our Lord! Make the distances between our travel-stages longer!”<sup>9</sup>, and they wronged themselves (by committing sins). So We caused them to become one of the legends (to circulate among later generations about the distant past), and dispersed them around in numerous fragments.<sup>10</sup> Surely in that are signs (important lessons) for all who are greatly patient and perseverant (in obedience to God and in adversity for His sake), and greatly thankful (for His favors).

20. *Iblīs* certainly found his conjecture (about humankind) true in what they (the

people of Sheba) did. (He called them, and) they followed him, all but a group of true believers.<sup>11</sup>

21. And yet, he had no authority over them (to compel them to do anything),<sup>12</sup> except in that (by testing humankind through him) We distinguish those who truly believe in the Hereafter from those who are in doubt concerning it. Your Lord keeps watch and record of all things.

22. Say: “Call upon those (things or beings) whom you fancy to be deities besides God: they have no ownership or authority over an atom’s weight (of anything) either in the heavens or on the earth (so that they could benefit you therewith or avert from you any harm), nor do they have any share in (governing) them, nor does He (God) have any aide from among them.

8. On the people of Sheba, see *sūrah* 27, note 9, and note 10 below.

9. This was like the demand of the Children of Israel for the produce of the soil when they were provided with manna and quails by God in the desert (*sūrah* 2: 57). They said: “Moses, we will no longer be able to endure one sort of food. Pray for us to your Lord, that He may bring forth for us of all that the soil produces – its green herbs, and its cucumbers, and its corn, and its lentils, and its onions.” He (Moses) responded: “Would you have in exchange what is meaner for what is better?” (*sūrah* 2: 61) (For an explanation, see *sūrah* 2, notes 72–73). They were not content with what God had provided for them, and instead of thanking God, spoiled by richness, they indulged in sins.

10. The people of Sheba ruled in southern Arabia for almost 1,000 years from around 1100 BC to around 115 BC. Their capital was Ma’ārib. They controlled the trade between East Africa, India, the Far East, and Arabia with Egypt, Syria, Greece, and Rome. In addition to this, they had an excellent irrigation system that dotted the length and breadth of the country with dams. Their land was unusually fertile and lush. Between their lands and Syria there were cities that were closely located to each other and travelers could travel in this vast area in security. As understood from the relationship between the Prophet Solomon, upon him be peace, and the Queen of Sheba in

his time (*sūrah* 27: 22–44), the Divine Religion found a way to their land, although they had previously worshipped the sun. However, they went astray later and their prosperous life drove them to sins without repentance. They did not give heed to the warnings of the Prophets who were sent to them. In the end, they deserved a severe punishment. The dams and the irrigation systems collapsed, and their cities and fertile lands were overwhelmed by floods, and changed into wastelands. The people were scattered throughout Arabia in small groups, and the civilization of Sheba came to exist only in tales that circulated among people.

11. For the conjecture of *Iblīs* concerning humankind, see *sūrah* 15: 39–40: (*Iblīs* said:) “Because You have allowed me to rebel and go astray, I will indeed deck out to be appealing to them on the earth (the worldly, material dimension of human existence and the path of error), and I will surely cause them all to rebel and go astray, except Your servants from among them, endowed with sincerity in faith and Your worship”; *sūrah* 4: 119: “I will surely lead them astray”; and *sūrah* 7: 17: “...Then I will come upon them from before them and from behind them, and from their right and from their left. And You will not find most of them thankful.”

12. For similar statements and an explanation, see *sūrah* 14: 22; *sūrah* 15: 39 and 42, note 10.

23. Besides, no intercession (for the fulfillment of any demand and for the accomplishment of any deed) is of any avail before Him, except that it be made for him (and by him) whom He permits.<sup>13</sup>

Yet, when the dread and awe (the angels, whose intercession those polytheists hope for, feel before God's commands) is removed from their hearts, (other angels) ask: "What has your Lord commanded?" They answer: "The truth (that which is always and unalterably true)."<sup>14</sup> He is the All-Exalted, the All-Great.

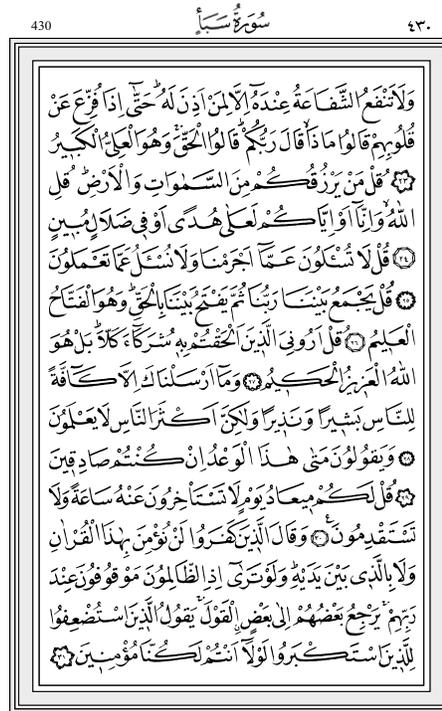
24. Say: "Who is it that provides for you out of the heavens and the earth?" Say: "It is God! Surely then, either we (who believe in His Oneness as the Deity, Lord, and Supreme Sovereign) or you (who associate partners with Him in His Divinity, Lordship, and Sovereignty) follow the right guidance or are in obvious error."

25. Say: "(If you consider us to be committing a wrong in believing in and worshipping the One God, then know that you will not be called to account for what we have done, nor will we be called to account for what you do.)"

26. Say: "Our Lord will bring us all together and then He will judge between us with truth and separate us. He is One Who judges between people with truth and separates them, the All-Knowing."<sup>15</sup>

27. Say: "Show me those beings that you have joined with Him as partners, (so that I may see whether any among them deserve worship!) No! (You cannot do it because it is impossible!) But He alone is God, the All-Glorious with irresistible might (Who never needs and admits any partnership), the All-Wise (Whose Divine Wisdom rejects partnership with Him)."

28. We have not sent you but to all humankind as a bearer of glad tidings (of prosperity for faith and righteousness) and a warner (against the consequences of



misguidance). But most of humans do not know (this, nor do they appreciate what a great blessing it is for them).

29. They say: "When is this promise (of judgment) to be fulfilled, if you are truthful (in your claim)?"

30. Say: "You have the promise of a Day which you can neither delay by a single moment nor advance."

31. Those who disbelieve say: "We will not believe in this Qur'an, nor in any (Message) that came before it." If you could but see when such wrongdoers are made to stand before their Lord, throwing back blame at one another! Those who (in the world) were oppressed (and did not oppose to being oppressed, humiliated, and misled) say to those who acted in arrogance and oppressed others: "Had it not been for you, we would have been true believers."

13. The polytheists claimed that they believed in the idols and some beings such as angels, thinking that they might intercede with God for the fulfillment of their desires. The verse categorically rejects this.

14. The angels are God's servants whom He employs in many tasks. As explained in note 31 to *sūrah* 2: 30, no event in the universe can be thought of without the function of the angels. There are angels that represent or are responsible for every event in the universe and every species on the earth. They also look on God's acts with wonder and admiration and present to Him the glorification and worship each species of creature makes in the language of their disposition. Angels are of different ranks. So, the ones who the verse tells us are asked about what God has commanded must be those of greater ranks. They receive God's commands, and when the dread and awe they feel while

they are receiving those commands, other angels ask them what God has commanded. All angels carry out whatever God orders them (*sūrah* 21: 27). So they cannot do anything of their own accord and cannot intercede with God or pray to Him for anybody they wish.

15. The manners in the verses 24, 25, and 26 are the manners to be preferred in communicating the truth to others. Although God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, clearly follows the right guidance and he is certain of this, he is ordered to say, *either we or you follow the right guidance or are in a manifest error*, instead of *we follow the right guidance and you are in a manifest error*. In verse 25, he allows that, in the polytheists' view, the believers may be people who are in the wrong, but he does not accuse the polytheists, whom he is addressing, of any sins. And, in verse 26, he refers the matter to God's judgment.

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعُّوهُمُ لِمَ نَحْنُ مُضْعَدُونَ نَاكِهِ  
 عَنْهُ هُدًى بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَكُمْ بِكُنُوزٍ مَجْرُبِينَ ۗ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ  
 اسْتَضَعُّوهُمُ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لِيَوْمِ النَّارِ لَأَنَامُونَ وَنَسَى  
 أَنْ يَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَيَجْعَلَ لَهُ أَندَادًا وَأَسْرُوا التَّكَاثُفَ لَعَنَ  
 رَأُوهُمُ الْعَنَابُ وَجَعَلْنَا الْآخِلَاقَ لِقِي غِنَاقِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَلْ  
 يُجْزَوْنَ الْآمَانَ كَمَا تُجْزَوْنَ ۗ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قُرَيْشٍ  
 مِنْ نَذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ كَاذِبُونَ ۗ  
 وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا كَسِرَافًا أَوْ لَوَادًا أَوْ مَنَاخِنَ يُعَذِّبُ  
 قُلُوبَنَا رَبِّي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرَ  
 النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ وَمَا آمَنَ لَكُمْ وَلَوْلَا ذِكْرُ الْبَاقِي  
 نُصْرَتُمْ لَكُنْتُمْ عِنْدَ نَارِ الْإِزْقِ الْأَمِنْ أَمِنْ وَعَمِلْ صَالِحًا فَإِنَّ لَكَ لِمَنْ  
 جَرَاءُ الضَّعْفِ بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَهُمْ فِي الْغُرُفَاتِ آمِنُونَ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ  
 يَسْعَوْنَ فِي آيَاتِنَا مُعَاجِزِينَ أُولَئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُخَضَّرُونَ ۗ  
 قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُ  
 وَمَا تَنْقُصُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ يُجْلِبُهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ ۗ

32. The arrogant oppressors retort to those who were oppressed: “What! did we (forcibly) bar you from following the guidance after it had reached you? No, but you yourselves were the criminals (committed to accumulating sins)?”

33. Those who were oppressed and humiliated say to the arrogant (who oppressed them): “No! Rather, (it was your) scheming night and day (that kept us away from the guidance); you were constantly commanding us to blaspheme against God and set up rivals to Him.” When they all face the punishment, they will be unable to express their remorse. We will put fetters around the necks of those who disbelieved (and keep them in the Fire). Will they have been recompensed for anything other than what they used to do?

34. We never sent a warner to any township but those of its people who had been lost in the pursuit of pleasures without scruples reacted, saying: “Surely we are unbelievers in that with which you have been sent.”

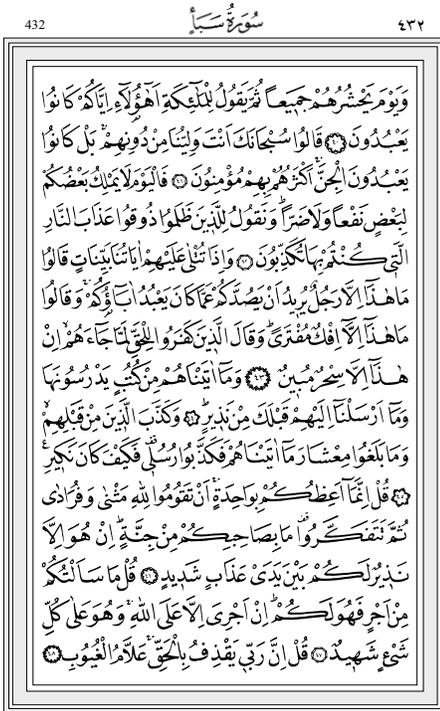
35. And they said: “We are more abundant (than you) in wealth and children and so we are not (the ones) to be punished (as you tell us will happen in the Hereafter).”

36. Say: “Surely my Lord God enlarges provision for whom He wills, and straitens it (for whom He wills); but most of humans do not know.”

37. And it is neither your wealth nor your children which will bring you near to Us; but only one who believes and does good, righteous deeds (can come near to Us), and it is those whose reward for their deeds is multiplied, and they will dwell in high, lofty mansions (of Paradise), secure (from any suffering);

38. Whereas those who strive hard against Our Revelations, seeking to frustrate them, such will be arraigned for punishment (in Hell).

39. Say: “Surely God enlarges provision for whom He wills of His servants, and straitens it (for whom He wills). Whatever you spend (in God’s cause and in alms), He will replace it. He is the Best to be sought as provider with the ultimate rank of providing.”



40. And a Day (will come and) He will gather them (those who strive against Our Revelations and those beings or things they worshipped in the world) all together, and will ask the angels, “Was it you that those used to worship (within your knowledge and to your pleasure)?”

41. They will answer: “All-Glorified You are (in that You are absolutely above having partners). You alone are our Guardian (Whom We worship,) having no such relation with them.” Rather, they were worshipping the jinn; most of them believed in them (the jinn as beings deserving worship).<sup>16</sup>

42. So, on this Day, you will have no power over one another to benefit or harm. And We will say to those who have persistently committed wrong (by following

misleading paths): “Taste the punishment of the Fire, (the existence of) which you used to deny!”

43. When Our Revelations clear as evidence and in meaning are recited to them (the Makkan polytheists), they say: “This is but a man who wants to bar you from what your forefathers used to worship.” They also say (of the Qur’an): “This is nothing but a fabrication falsely attributed to God.” Those who disbelieve say of the truth when it has reached them, (in willful defiance of its clarity): “This is clearly nothing but sorcery.”

44. But We did not grant them any Book which they studied (so that they should dare pretend to be able to discriminate between true and false scripture). Nor did We send them a warner before you (so that they should dare pretend to be able to distinguish you as being a fabricator and a sorcerer).

45. Many of those who lived before them also denied the truth. These have not attained a tenth of what We granted to those (of knowledge, as well as power and means); and yet they denied My Messengers – then how awesome was My disowning them!

46. Say: “I exhort you to one thing: pull yourselves together and draw aside purely for God’s sake, together with another person or alone, and then reflect (on this issue, leaving aside all your prejudices). There is no madness in your companion (God’s Messenger). He is but a warner to you (sent) prior to a severe punishment.”

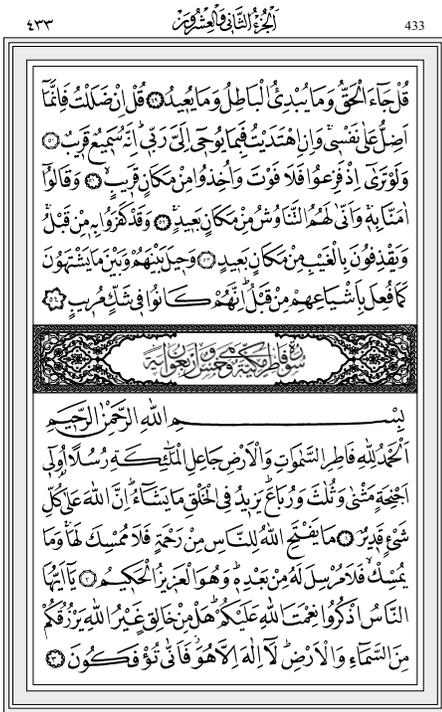
**47.** Say: “(I ask of you no wage, yet, even so) whatever you may think I might ask you for by way of wage, it is yours. My wage is only due from God. He is indeed a witness over everything.”

**48.** Say: “Surely my Lord sends down the truth, hurling it (against falsehood to destroy it). (My Lord:) He alone is the All-Knowing of the whole of the unseen (all that is beyond human perception).”

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16. During history, most of the pagans have worshipped angels they have regarded as good spirits from whom benefit is expected, and the jinn as evil spirits against whom protection is sought. However, since in many cases these people have gone astray under the influence of the jinn, they have been actually worshipping

the jinn while they have thought they have been worshipping the angels; they have been misled by the jinn. Most of them have also attributed divinity to the jinn, as they have regarded them as beings that are capable of causing harm and, therefore, are to be worshipped in order to be protected from their evil.



50. Say: “Were I to go astray, it would be to my own harm (and due to my own self). And if I am rightly guided, it is by virtue of what my Lord is revealing to me. Surely He is All-Hearing, All-Near.”

51. If you could but see when they quake with dread (of death), with no escape, and are seized from a position very near.<sup>17</sup>

52. They say: “We have believed in it (the Qur’an)!” But how can they hope to attain to faith and salvation from a position so far away,<sup>18</sup>

53. (And) when they certainly disbelieved in it before? They have been aiming at the Unseen (the Hereafter) from far away<sup>19</sup> (with words all untrue, and without any basis in true knowledge).

54. And a barrier has been placed between them and what they had appetite for (while in the world), as was done with the likes of them before. Surely they were (lost) in hopeless doubt.

49. Say: “The truth has come (and manifested itself); and falsehood cannot originate (anything even if its followers try to keep it going), nor can it restore anything (of that which it has lost).”

17. This statement expresses, in relation with the previous verse, which says God is All-Near, God’s infinite nearness to human beings. He is nearer to us than our own selves. A living being is seized at the time of death from within its own self.

18. This means that at the time of death a human being is extremely near to the Hereafter and far away from the world. There is no longer any chance of escape or return, so it is no

more possible for an unbeliever, who has lived very far away from faith, to attain to faith.

19. This signifies that a person is extremely far away from the world at the time of death when they are on the verge of being transferred to the Hereafter. It also implies that while in the world they are far away from the Hereafter. This distance signifies the distance between unbelief and the Hereafter and arises from unbelief itself.

## SŪRAH 35

AL-FĀṬĪR  
(THE ALL-ORIGINATING)

Makkah period

**R**evealed in the mid-Makkan period of Islam, this *sūrah* of 45 verses takes its name from the first verse where God Almighty is introduced as *al-Fāṭir* (the All-Originating). It is also called *Sūrat al-Malā'ikah*. The main topics dealt with in the *sūrah* are God's Oneness, the Hereafter, and the Messengership of Muḥammad, upon him peace and blessings. The *sūrah* presents proofs for these three pillars of faith and draws attention to the bounties of God.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. All praise and thanks are for God, the Originator of the heavens and the earth

(each with particular features and ordered principles), Who appoints the angels as messengers (conveying His commands) having wings, two, or three, or four (or more).<sup>1</sup> He increases in creation what He wills.<sup>2</sup> Surely God has full power over everything.

2. Whatever God opens up for human beings out of (the treasures of) His Mercy, none is able to withhold; and whatever He withholds, none is able to release. He is the All-Glorious with irresistible might (Whom none can prevent from doing what He wills), the All-Wise (in Whose every act there are many instances of wisdom).

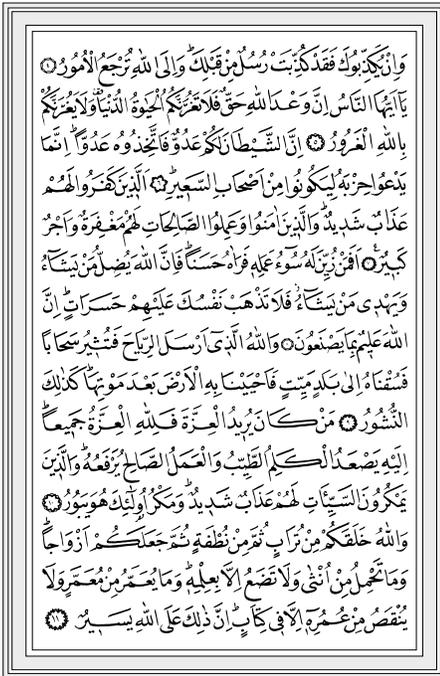
3. O humankind! Remember and reflect on God's favors upon you. Is there any Creator, other than God, that provides for you from the heaven and the earth? There is no deity but He: How then are you turned away from the truth and make false claims?

1. On the existence of the angels and their being the conveyors of God's commands and messages, see *sūrah* 2, notes 31, 36, 40; *sūrah* 11: 83, note 20; *sūrah* 15: 27, note 7.

What the verse means by the angels' wings is their speed, power, and the tasks they carry out. Their wings are not restricted to four. God's Messenger says that during his Ascension, he saw the Archangel Gabriel with 600 wings, and that Gabriel told him that he had seen Isrāfīl

with 12,000 wings, a single one of which filled up the space between the heavens and the earth (al-Qurṭubī).

2. This means that God's process of creation is continuous with expansion in scope, range, and variety. It also means that He not only creates to satisfy a purpose, but also for perfection. Because of this, He creates whatever He creates in the best, and the most beautiful and purposeful form and fashion.



4. If they deny you (O Messenger), even so Messengers were denied before you. (So do not grieve:) to God all affairs are ultimately referred (and whatever He wills occurs).

5. O humankind! (Know well that) God's promise (of the Last Judgment) is surely true; so do not let the present, worldly life delude you, nor let any deluder (including especially Satan) delude you in (your conceptions) about God.

6. Surely Satan is an enemy to you, so treat him as an enemy (do not follow him, and be alert against him). He calls his party (of followers) but that they may become companions of the Blaze.

7. Those who persist in unbelief, for them is a severe punishment. As for those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, for

them is forgiveness (to bring unforeseen blessings), and a noble, generous reward.

8. Is one whose evil deeds is decked out to be appealing to him so that he considers it as good (like him who follows God's guidance)? God leads astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills.<sup>3</sup> So do not let yourself perish in bitter regrets on their behalf (because they refuse faith). Surely God has full knowledge of all that they do.

9. God is He Who sends forth the merciful winds, so that they set clouds to move, and We drive them towards a dead land and (thereby) We revive the earth after its death (with the rain carried in the clouds by the wind). Even so will the Resurrection be.

10. Whoever seeks might and glory should know that all might and glory is for God (so let him seek from Him alone). To Him ascends only the pure word (as the source of might and glory), and the good, righteous action (accompanying it) raises it.<sup>4</sup> But those who are devising evil actions, for them there is a severe punishment, and their devising is bound to come to nothing.

11. (O humankind:) God created you from earth (in the beginning, and the material origin of every one of you is also earth), and then from a drop of (seminal) fluid, and then He has fashioned you in pairs (as either of the two sexes, making you mates of one another). And no female carries or gives birth, save with His knowledge. No one long-lived has been granted a long life, nor another one not so long-lived has been appointed a shorter life, but it is recorded in a Book. Surely that is easy for God.

3. God has two kinds of Will. One is His (pre-eternal) Decree concerning the creation, including responsible, conscious beings. This Will, called *Mashīah*, is absolute with regard to things and unconscious beings, while It takes into consideration the (future) will of responsible, conscious beings. That is, God knows beforehand in what way those beings will use their free will and decrees accordingly. God's other Will (*Irādah*) entails what He demands from His servants and denotes those things with which He is pleased. In this verse, *God leads astray whom He wills* means that He lets go astray those who choose to follow Satan and the promptings of their carnal soul, with the result that they follow their fancies and personal ideas and commit evil deeds that, though not based on true knowledge, seem just to them. As for, *He guides whom He wills*, this denotes those who choose to resist

the temptations of Satan and their carnal soul, and instead follow the guidance that God sends through His Messengers, and they see as good whatever God decrees as so.

4. The pure word is, first of all, the Declaration of the Divine Oneness, namely, *There is no deity but God*. Declarations of other pillars of faith and all other pure, truthful words are based on this Word. Without the good, righteous actions that it requires, this declaration remains only an assertion. Only good, righteous actions make it wholly acceptable in God's sight and cause it to yield pure, wholesome fruit (*sūrah* 14: 25). Other pure words and declarations approved by God likewise become acceptable in God's sight by means of the good actions that are called for. In addition, any assertion or declaration becomes true faith and is established in the heart through the good actions that are required by it.

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرَانِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَائِغٌ شَرَابُهُ وَهَذَا  
 مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَمَنْ كُلَّ تَاكُلُونَ لَمَّا طَرَبًا وَتَنْخَرُجُونَ جِلْيَةً  
 تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ فِيهِ مَوَازِرَ لَتَنْتَعَمُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ  
 وَنَعَلَكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ الْبَلُّ فِي النَّهَارِ يُبْعَثُ النَّهَارَ  
 فِي اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى  
 ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ  
 مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ فِطْرٍ ۚ إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دَعْوَكُمْ  
 وَتُسْمَعُونَ مَا اسْتَجَابُوا إِلَيْكُمْ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُكَفِّرُونَ  
 بَشَرِكُمْ ۗ وَلَا يُنَبِّئُكَ مِنْ خَيْرٍ ۚ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ  
 إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ۗ إِنْ يَشَاءْ يُدْهِمِكُمْ  
 وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۗ وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ ۗ  
 وَلَا تَسْتَوِزُّ وَآزَرَهُ وَزُرَّخْرِي ۗ وَإِنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ إِلَىٰ جِهَلِمَا  
 لَا يُجْعَلُ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ ۗ إِنَّمَا تُذَرُّ الَّذِينَ  
 يَخْتَفُونَ رَيْبَهُمْ بِالْعِيبِ ۗ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۗ وَمَنْ  
 تَرَكَهَا فَمَا بَأْسَ رَبِّكَ لِذُنُوبِهِ ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ۗ

12. Nor are the two seas (large bodies of water) alike: this one is sweet and palatable, and pleasant to drink, but that one, salty and bitter. You obtain from both fresh meat (for your nourishment), and precious stones to wear as ornament. And you see ships plowing through (both kinds of water), so that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may give Him thanks.<sup>5</sup>

13. He makes the night pass into the day, and He makes the day pass into the night (and so makes each grow longer or shorter); and He has made the sun and the moon subservient to His command, each running its course for a term appointed. Such is God, your Lord: His is the Sovereignty (the absolute ownership and dominion of all things). But those whom you deify and invoke, apart from Him, own not so much as the pellicle of a date-stone.

14. If you invoke them, they do not hear your call; and even if they heard, they would not be able to respond to you. And on the Day of Resurrection, they will disown your having associated them (with God). And none can inform you (and, thereby, lead you to understand the truth) like One All-Aware.

15. O humankind! You are all poor before God and in absolute need of Him, whereas He is the All-Wealthy and Self-Sufficient (absolutely independent of the creation), the All-Praiseworthy (as your Lord, Who provides for you and all other beings, supplying all your needs).<sup>6</sup>

16. If He so wills (in order for the fulfillment of His purpose for creation), He can put you away and bring a new generation (in your place, who will acknowledge their poverty and praise God in return for His favors).

17. That is surely no great matter for God.

18. And no soul, as bearer of burden, bears (and is made to bear) the burden of another; and if one weighed down by his burden calls to (another for help to) carry it, nothing of it will be carried by that other, even if he be his near of kin.<sup>7</sup> You can warn (in a profitable way) only those who stand in awe of their Lord though unseen (beyond their perception), and establish the Prayer in conformity with its conditions. And whoever is purified (of his wrong ideas or actions), is only purified for the good of his own soul. And to God is the homecoming.

5. The Qur’ān draws our attention to the two types of seas (and similar large bodies of water) in some other verses (e.g., *sūrah* 25: 53). The material origin of the universe is one single matter, namely ether (see *sūrah* 2: 29, note 28; *sūrah* 11, note 2); and all things in the universe are made of basically four substances: hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, and nitrogen. Despite the simplicity of origin, there is almost an infinite variety of creatures in the universe. Moreover, all human beings are created, originally, from earth. The biological origin of every human being – male sperm and female ovum – is also made of the same substances, and all parents are nourished with the same. But there is a world of difference between human beings in many aspects. This infinite variety in apparent similarity clearly demonstrates God and His absolute freedom, and based on many instances of wisdom.

6. Fethullah Gülen expands on this idea:

His is power, by which we are powerful.  
 We are well-known by His Name or fame.  
 We go beyond peaks and continue on our way;  
 We overcome all difficulties with facility.  
 We possess nothing worldly but are absolutely rich,  
 And are dignified and respectable through His Dignity.  
 We follow the way of reflection, so  
 Whatever exists is a source of knowledge of God for us.

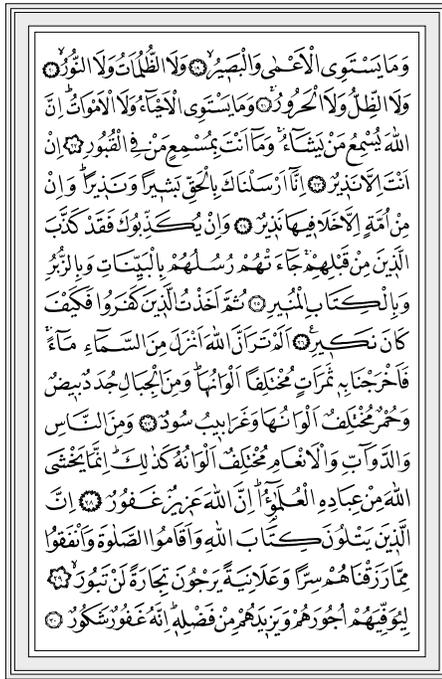
(*Key Concepts*, 1: 172)

What follows is an excerpt from Said Nursi on the same idea:

Your perception and acknowledgment of your essential poverty leads you to the Divine Name the All-Merciful, by Which you find inexhaustible treasure. Your perception and acknowledgment of your essential helplessness leads you to the Divine Name the All-Powerful, by Which you find the real

source of power. You can purify yourself by perceiving that your existence lies in acknowledging your essential non-existence. Considering yourself self-existent, you fall into the darkest pit of non-existence. In other words, relying on your personal existence and thus ignoring the Real Creator causes your ephemeral personal existence to be drowned in the infinite darkness of non-existence. But if you abandon pride and egoism and recognize that you are only a mirror in which the Real Creator manifests Himself, you attain infinite existence. One who discovers the Necessary Being, the manifestations of Whose Names cause all things to come into existence, is counted as having found everything. (*The Words*, “The 26<sup>th</sup> Word,” 493)

7. In the same way that no one is held responsible for the crime of another, no one can take upon themselves the sin of another. This is inconceivable both from the viewpoint of the Religion (and law), and because of the fact that every one will be concerned only with their own soul in the Hereafter. So, the doctrine of Original Sin, with which all humankind is supposedly burdened because of the “lapse” of Adam, upon him be peace, and Eve, is completely groundless and contrary to this basic principle of the Religion (and law) – namely, responsibility and the corresponding recompense are not transferable. Secondly, as no one can be burdened with the burden of another, nor absolved of any crime or sin he or she has committed through the suffering of another, the Christian “Doctrine of Atonement” is baseless. Moreover, God did not compel Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden tree in order to incarnate into, or create out of, Himself a human son – nor did or would He then condemn Jesus, upon him be peace, to suffer great pains and to taste death, even if temporarily. That, too, is completely contrary to Divinity as taught by the Divine Religion(s).



19. The blind and the seeing are not equal;  
20. Nor are the depths of darkness and the light.  
21. Nor the shade and the scorching heat.  
22. And nor are equal the living and the dead. Surely God makes hear whomever He wills; and you are not one to make hear those who are in the graves.<sup>8</sup>  
23. You are only a warner (not accountable for their being guided).  
24. Surely We have sent you as Messenger with the truth, as a bearer of glad tidings (of prosperity in return for faith and righteousness) and a warner (against the consequences of misguidance); and there has never been a community but a warner lived among them.  
25. If they deny you, even so denied those before them (to whom a Messenger was

sent). Their Messengers came to them with the clear proofs (of their Messengership), Scriptures (full of wisdom and advice), and the Book enlightening (their mind and hearts, and) illuminating (their way).<sup>9</sup>

26. Then I seized those who insisted on unbelief. How awesome was My disowning them!

27. Do you not see that God sends down water from the sky? Then We bring forth with it produce of various colors (shapes and taste); and in the mountains are streaks of white and red, of various colors (due to the flora or the variety of stone and rock), as well as raven-black;

28. And likewise human beings, and beasts, and cattle, diverse are their colors. Of all His servants, only those possessed of true knowledge stand in awe of God.<sup>10</sup> Surely God is All-Glorious with irresistible might, All-Forgiving.

29. Those who recite God's Book (and thereby glorify, praise, and exalt God, and declare His absolute Oneness),<sup>11</sup> and establish the Prayer in conformity with its conditions, and spend out of what We have provided for them (in God's cause and for the needy), secretly and openly, hope for a trade which will never perish.

30. For God will pay them their rewards in full, and give them yet more out of His bounty. Surely He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Responsive (to the gratitude of His creatures).

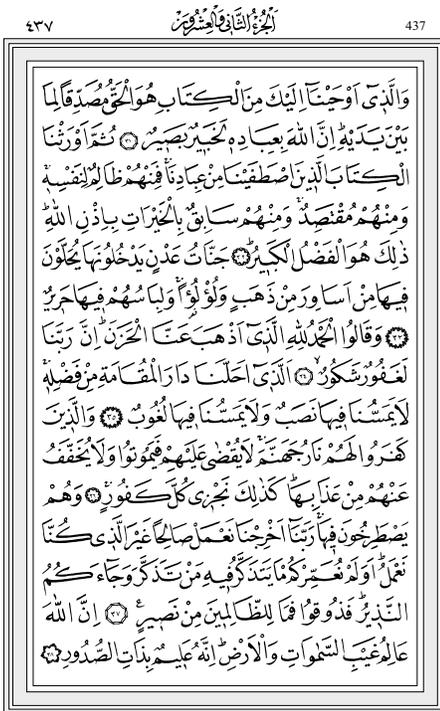
8. The comparisons in the verses 19-22 implicitly refer to the difference between faith and unbelief with their characteristics and consequences, and between the believers and unbelievers. Faith means seeing, insight, light, knowledge, and life or being alive, while unbelief is blindness, darkness with many depths, ignorance, and being dead. So faith gives a believer serenity, tranquility, and peace of heart, while unbelief is the cause of stress, discontent, and unhappiness.

9. That is, some of the Messengers like the Prophet David, upon him be peace, came with Scriptures full of wisdom and advice, and some like the Prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad, upon them be peace, with the enlightening Book. In addition, the Book also contained what there was in the Scriptures.

10. That is, only those who are unbiased and unprejudiced can have true knowledge or the knowledge of the truth. The sign of one having such knowledge is sincere faith in and awe of God. Such people can truly and deeply understand what all such phenomena in creation really

mean and cannot help but feel deep respect for God, and the need and desire to worship Him.

11. Glorifying God means believing, acknowledging, and declaring that God is absolutely free from, and exalted above, having any defects and attributes particular to the creation, such as begetting and being begotten, dying, feeling any need and, therefore, having partners or helpers. In short, glorifying means knowing and declaring what God is not and cannot be. Praising God means believing, acknowledging, and declaring that God has all attributes of perfection and therefore deserves praise, thanks and worship. In other words, praising means knowing and declaring what and who God is, and mentioning Him as such, with the attributes of perfection that are exclusively His. Exalting God means believing, acknowledging, and declaring that God is infinitely and absolutely great and there can be none comparable with Him, and that He is infinitely beyond what we can conceive of Him. We glorify, praise, and exalt Him and declare His absolute Oneness after the daily Prayers.



31. That which We reveal to you of the Book is the truth, confirming (the Divine origin of, and the truths that are still contained by,) the Revelations prior to it. Surely God is fully aware of His servants and sees (them) well.

32. Then (after every Messenger), We have made those of Our servants whom We chose heirs to the Book (to preserve and teach it, and secure its practice in daily life). However, among them are those who (in fulfilling their duty as heirs to the Book) wrong their own selves (on account of certain failings and sins), and among them are those who follow a moderate way, and among them are those who, by God's leave, are foremost in doing good deeds. That (being chosen as heirs to the Book) is the great favor.

33. (So) Gardens of perpetual bliss they will enter, therein adorned with armbands of gold and pearls, and their garments therein will be of silk.<sup>12</sup>

34. And they will say: "All praise and gratitude are for God, Who has removed grief from us (such as we had suffered until we were admitted here). Surely Our Lord is All-Forgiving, All-Responsive (to the gratitude of His creatures),

35. Who, out of His grace, has made us settle in the abode of eternal residence, wherein no toil touches us, and wherein no weariness afflicts us."<sup>13</sup>

36. As for those who disbelieve, for them is the fire of Hell: they will not be sentenced to death so that they can die (and so be relieved), nor will its suffering be lightened for them. Thus do We recompense every ungrateful one who disbelieves.

37. And therein they will cry aloud: "O our Lord! Take us out so that we can do good, (righteous deeds), not (the wrong) we used to do before." "Did We not grant you a life long enough for whoever would reflect and be mindful to reflect and be mindful? In addition, a warner came to you (to warn against this punishment). Taste then (the consequences of your heedlessness); for the wrongdoers have none to help them (against it)."

38. Surely God is the Knower of the unseen of the heavens and the earth. And He surely has full knowledge of what lies hidden in the bosoms (so that He treats you according to your beliefs and intentions).

12. For an explanation, see *sūrah* 18: 31, note 17.

13. The Qur'ān often distinguishes three groups of people, namely the unbelievers (including hypocrites) who are condemned to punishment in Hell, the believers whose good excels their evils, and the believers who are foremost in doing good deeds (e.g., *sūrah* 56: 7–11). So some commentators have concluded that verse 32 makes the same classification, and means by *those who wrong their own selves*, as the Qur'ān does in many of its verses, the unbelievers and hypocrites, and by *those who follow a moderate way*, the believers who have mixed their righteous deeds with evil ones (see 9: 102). Hence, those who have been promised Gardens of perpetual bliss in the following verse (33) are those who are foremost in doing good deeds, and for the second group, *it may be that God will return their repentance with forgiveness* (*sūrah* 9: 102).

However, as pointed out by some commentators, this verse is about the inheritance of the Qur'ān and those whom God has specially chosen among His servants for this duty. Inheritance of the Qur'ān (the Book) means to preserve, teach, and practice it in daily life (*sūrah* 5: 44). So, since this inheritance has spe-

cial importance, this verse emphasizes it and distinguishes among those among the Muslims or the Community of Muḥammad, upon him peace and blessings, chosen for this duty. They are not, however, all of the same quality and degree. Among them are those who wrong their own selves on account of certain failings and sins (not by unbelief, hypocrisy, or the association of partners with Him, of course); those who follow a moderate way – i.e., those who cannot dedicate themselves fully to this duty; and those who, fully dedicated, outstrip all others. So, as long as they serve the Qur'ān and continue to learn and teach it and practice it in daily life, all these three groups will be forgiven by God and admitted to Paradise.

God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, bequeathed the Qur'ān and his household, including his progeny, to his Community (Muslim, "Faḍāil as-Ṣaḥābah," 37). This means that, first of all, his household and progeny must and will serve the Qur'ān. However, this Tradition also gives the glad tiding that those who serve the Qur'ān, even though they do not belong to his progeny by blood, are (spiritually) included in them, as is Salmān al-Fārisī. For the Messenger declared: "Salmān is from us, from the Prophet's Household" (Canan, 12: 370).



45. If God were to take people to task for whatever wrong they commit (and accumulate to their account), He would not leave on earth any living creature. But He grants them respite to a term appointed (by Him). When the end of their term falls, (He treats each as He wills according to his just deserts), for surely He sees His servants well.

### SŪRAH 36

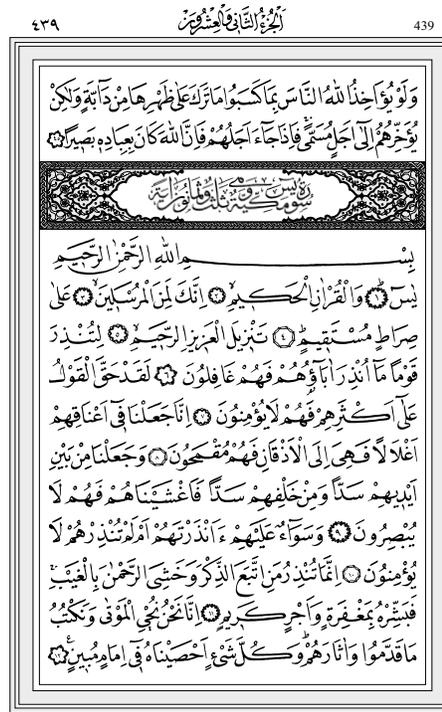
### YĀ. SĪN (YĀ. SĪN)

Makkah Period

This *sūrah*, which consists of 83 verses, was revealed in the mid-Makkan period. It takes its name from the first verse, the shortest in the Qur'an, and which, according to some, implicitly means a human being. It deals, using diverse arguments, with three of the pillars of faith, namely the Divine Oneness, afterlife, and Prophethood. God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, declared that this *sūrah* is the heart of the Qur'an (at-Tirmidhī, "Thawāb al-Qur'an," 7) because it stirs up "dead" hearts to awaken them to life. He also advised its recitation over one who is at one's death-bed.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. *Yā. Sīn*.
2. By the Wise Qur'an,
3. You are indeed one of the Messengers (commissioned to convey God's Message),
4. Upon a straight path.
5. (This is) the Book which is being sent down by the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Compassionate,
6. So that you may warn a people whose (near) forefathers were not warned, and who are therefore heedless (of the truth and falsehood).



7. The word (of God's judgment) has assuredly proved true against most of them (humankind from the very first day),<sup>1</sup> for they do not believe.
8. We have surely put chains around the necks (of the unbelievers among your people), right up to their chins, so that their heads are forced up.<sup>2</sup>
9. And We have set a barrier before them and a barrier behind them, and (thus) We have covered them (from all sides), so that they cannot see.<sup>3</sup>
10. So, it is alike to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; (although it is your mission to warn them, and you do it without any neglect) they will not believe.<sup>4</sup>
11. You can (profitably) warn only him who (is unprejudiced and) follows the Message

and feels awe of the All-Merciful though unseen (beyond their perception). To him, then, give the glad tidings of forgiveness and an honorable, generous provision.

12. Surely it is We Who will bring the

dead to life; and We record what they send ahead (to the Hereafter) and what they leave behind (of good and evil). Everything We have written down and kept in a Manifest Record.<sup>5</sup>

1. For an explanation, see *sūrah* 32: 13, note 9.

2. This is an allegory that alludes to people being purposefully prejudiced and too haughty to believe. It also signifies that they never think about their selves, their being, and their physical composition, that which would enable them to come to recognize God's signs in them and believe.

3. The comparison here symbolizes the condition in which stubborn unbelievers finds themselves. As they are too arrogant to reflect on their existence in an unprejudiced way, so too, they fail to observe the universe around them in any way that is beneficial. They are, as if in veils of darkness, blind to their environment which is full of signs pointing to God's Existence and Oneness. Their blindness comes from arrogance and the fact that their hearts are so dead that they have lost the ability to believe. So, even if they study "nature" and are specialists in many sciences, this information increases them only in ignorance about God and the ultimate truth on which the universe is based.

4. Whether people believe or not, Messengers

are charged with communicating God's Message with all its proofs. This is so that *in order that he who was to perish should perish by a clear evidence (of his deserving perishing because he followed falsehood), and he who survived might survive by a clear evidence (of his deserving survival because of his devotion to the truth)* (8: 42), and so that people may have no excuse before God in the Hereafter. The Messengers did not only communicate it verbally; they also practiced it fully in their lives and embodied it. That is, they proved its truth practically or with their very lives.

God informs the Messenger beforehand that some will not believe in order to console him and to inform him that he should concentrate primarily on those who are not prejudiced, whose hearts are not dead, and who therefore are not spiritually blind nor deaf.

5. On the meaning of the Manifest Record and the difference between writing down and keeping people's deeds in it, and recording these during their lifetimes, see *sūrah* 6: 59, note 13; *sūrah* 13: 39, note 13; *sūrah* 17: 14, note 10.



6. Although there are different views about which land this is and who the Messengers sent to them were, the Qur'ān and the Hadith are silent in this respect. So, what is of importance is the instruction the Qur'ān gives by this exemplary event. It is not possible to accept the speculations that the land or city was Antioch and the Messengers were the disciples sent by Jesus. Verse 29 informs us that the city was consequently destroyed with a blast, as the lands of many ancient peoples who rejected the Messengers were, whereas it has not been historically established that Antioch suffered such destruction after Jesus, upon him be peace. Even though some commentators have viewed the destruction mentioned metaphorically, the style and wording of the verses is similar to those the Qur'ān uses for the destruction of many ancient peoples.

7. These same words are used of the man who

informed the Prophet Moses, upon him be peace, of the plans to seize him (*sūrah* 28: 20). As suggested by verse 28: 20, this man belonged to the palace and kept his faith secret. So, the man who came to the aid of the Messengers may well have been one who belonged to the leading group, one who had already believed in the Messengers and kept his faith secret until then.

8. Many among the commentators hold that the Paradise mentioned here is the Paradise where God will admit His believing, righteous servants in the Hereafter. So the verse informs us that this valiant man, who gave full support to the Messengers and was consequently martyred, will be admitted to Paradise, where he will be specially favored. However, it may well be that by Paradise the verse also refers to his Paradise-like place in the Intermediate World (of the grave) (*Barzakh*).

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ جُنْدٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا  
 كُنَّا مُنْزِلِينَ ۝ إِنَّ كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَوْبَةً وَاحِدَةً فَأَذَاهُمْ  
 حَامِدُونَ ۝ يَا حَسْرَةً عَلَى الْعِبَادِ مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا  
 كَانُوا يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ۝ الَّذِينَ رَأَوْا أَهْلَكَ قَبْلَهُمْ  
 مِنَ الْقُرُونِ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ۝ وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَنَكْمُوعٌ  
 لَدَيْنَا مُخْضَرُونَ ۝ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ  
 مِنْهَا حَبًا فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ ۝ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ نَجِيلٍ  
 وَأَعْنَابٍ وَفَجْرًا فِيهَا مِنْ الْعُيُونِ ۝ يَأْكُلُونَ مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ  
 وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ۝ سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي  
 خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُثْمِتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ نَفْسِهِمْ  
 وَمِمَّا لَا يَلْمُوكَ ۝ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ  
 فَأَذَاهُمْ مَطْلُوكَ ۝ وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ مَعْلُومٍ ۝ ذَٰلِكَ  
 صَدِيرُ الْعِزِّ بِالْعَلِيِّ ۝ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَّرْنَا مَتَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ  
 عَادَ كَالْعُرْشُونِ الْقَدِيرِ ۝ لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ  
 الْقَمَرَ وَلَا الْبَيْلُ سَابِقَ النَّهَارِ ۝ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ۝

28. We did not send down upon his people after him any hosts (of angels) from heaven (to destroy them): it is not Our way to send down such.

29. It was but a single blast only, and see! they were extinguished.<sup>9</sup>

30. Ah! Alas for the servants (of God who fail to serve Him)! Every time there has come to them a Messenger, they have but mocked him.

31. Have they not considered how many a generation We have destroyed before them; they never return to them (nor to their life of the world).

32. Instead, every generation, all without exception, will be arraigned before us (for judgment).<sup>10</sup>

33. A clear sign for them (of God's Oneness and Lordship) is the dead earth: We revive it and bring forth from it grain, and (following the necessary preparatory processes) they eat of it.

34. And We have set therein gardens of palms and vines, and We have caused springs to gush forth in it,

35. So that they may eat of the fruit of all (that He produces) – and they did not make it with their own hands. Will they not, then, give thanks?

36. All-Glorified is He (in that He is absolutely exalted above having any peer or partner), Who has created the pairs all together out of what the earth produces, as

well as out of themselves, and out of what they do not know.<sup>11</sup>

37. A(nother) clear sign for them is the night: We withdraw the day from it, and see, they are plunged in darkness.

38. And the sun runs the course appointed for it for a term to its resting-place for the stability of it(s) system).<sup>12</sup> This is the

measured determining of the All-Glorious with irresistible might (to Whose omnipotent ordering the whole universe is submitted), the All-Knowing.

39. And for the moon We have determined mansions till it returns like an old shriveled palm-leaf.

40. It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. All (the celestial bodies and systems) float in an orbit (determined for each).

9. Although some verses (*sūrah* 3: 124–125; *sūrah* 8: 9; 33: 9) state that God Almighty sent hosts of angels and invisible hosts from the heaven, they came for positive, important purposes, namely, to encourage and reinforce the believers in their struggle against the disbelieving, unjust peoples, and to acclaim their victory. God does not send hosts to destroy wicked, criminal people; rather He destroys them with a catastrophe. The three angels He sent before the destruction of the people of the Prophet Lot, upon him be peace, were not “a host” and had other purposes, like giving Abraham the glad tidings of the birth of Isaac, upon them both be peace. Lot’s people were destroyed with a blast and a rain of stones, even though God employed these angels in that task, as it is His way to employ angels in every event in the universe.

10. The last two verses decisively reject any doctrine or assertion, such as reincarnation, that claims sinful people will continue to return to the world in new, different bodies until they have purified their souls. Instead of returning, the verses explicitly state that they will be brought before God to be judged. The verses also reject the Shi’ite doctrine of *raj’ah*, which asserts that some oppressive people – especially those who oppressed the members of the Messenger’s household – and their victims will be returned to the world before the end of time so that the latter can take vengeance on their oppressors.

11. Everything animate or inanimate has a pair; we can see opposition and complementarity in all created things and beings, whether in physical, chemical, moral, or psychological qualities. Recent discoveries of complementarity and opposition among sub-atomic particles may be an instance of the kind of pairs that we do not see directly; there will be many other instances of “pairing” of which we remain ignorant.

12. The original of this statement is comprised of four words. The phrase translated as “the course appointed for it for a term to its resting-place for the stability of it(s) system)” is *li-mustaqarrin lahā*. *Mustaqarr* means course or orbit, stability and the place and time of sta-

bility; the preposition *li* indicates both reason or aim (“for”), the course of a movement (“in or along”), and destination (“to” or “towards”). So the phrase, *li-mustaqarrin lahā* points out four facts concerning the sun or its system: it moves for a certain (appointed) term, along a course appointed for it, to its resting-place, for the sake of the stability of the system. We understand from the statement in its context that the sun is not motionless and has a vital function in the universal order.

In recent decades, solar astronomers have been able to observe that the sun is not in fact motionless. It quivers and shakes and continually rings like a well-hit gong. These vibrations of the sun reveal vital information about the sun’s deep interior, its hidden layers, and this information affects calculations of the age of the universe. Also, knowing exactly how the sun spins internally is important in testing Einstein’s theory of general relativity. Like so many other significant findings in astronomy, this discovery about the sun was totally unexpected. Having discovered the quivering and ringing sun, some astronomers have commented that it is as if the sun were a symphony orchestra, with all the instruments being played simultaneously. All the vibrations combine at times to produce a net oscillation on the solar surface that is thousands of times stronger than any individual vibration (Bartusiak, M., 61–68).

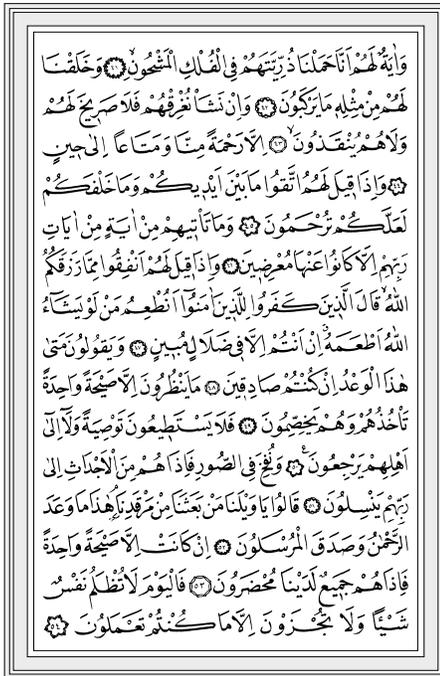
Commenting on this Qur’ānic verse several decades before this totally unexpected discovery in astronomy, Said Nursi wrote in *Muhakemat* (“Reasonings”), 68–69:

As the word *tajrī* (“runs”) points to a style, the phrase *li-mustaqarrin lahā* (“the course appointed for it for a term to its resting-place for the stability of it(s) system)” demonstrates a reality. The sun, like a vessel built of gold, travels and floats in the ocean of the heavens comprised of ether and defined in a *hadīth* as a stretched and tightened wave. Although it quivers and shakes in its course or orbit, since people see it moving, the Qur’ān uses the word travel or float. However, since the origin of the force of gravity is

movement, the sun moves and quivers in its orbit. Through this vibration, which is the wheel of its figurative movement, its satellites are attracted to it and preserved from falling and scattering. When a tree quivers, its fruit fall. But when the sun quivers and shakes, its fruit – its satellites – are preserved from falling.

Again, wisdom requires that the sun should move and travel on its mobile throne – its course or orbit – accompanied by its soldiers – its satellites. For the Divine Power has made everything moving

and condemned nothing to absolute rest or motionlessness. Divine Mercy allows nothing to be condemned to inertia that is the cousin of death. So, the sun is free, it can travel provided it obeys the laws of God and does not disturb the freedom of others. So, it may actually be traveling, or its traveling may also be figurative. However, what is important according to the Qur'ān is the universal (or solar system's) order, the wheel of which is the sun and its movement. Through the sun, the stability and orderliness of the system are ensured.



past when committed by former peoples), so that you may be shown mercy (a good, virtuous life in the world and eternal happiness in the Hereafter).”

46. Yet there does not come to them a clear sign from among the signs of their Lord (a Revelation from among His Revelations), but they turn away from it (being averse to the admonition given therein).

47. And when they are told: “Spend (for the needy) out of what God has provided for you,” those who disbelieve say to those who believe, “Shall we then feed those whom God would feed if He willed? You are but in obvious error.”

48. And they say (intending mockery): “So, when is this promise (of Resurrection and Judgment), if you are truthful?”

49. They should await only a single blast that will seize them unawares even as they are disputing (heedlessly among themselves about their worldly concerns).<sup>15</sup>

50. Then they will not be able even to make a bequest (so suddenly will the blast seize them), nor return to their families.

51. And the Trumpet will be blown, and see, out of the graves they rush forth to their Lord.

52. They will cry: “Woe to us! Who has raised us from our place of sleep?<sup>16</sup> (We have come to know that) this is what the All-Merciful promised, and that the Messengers spoke the truth!”

53. It is but one single blast, and see, they will all have been (raised and) arraigned together before Us (for judgment).

54. On that Day, no soul will be wronged in the least, and you will not be recompensed for anything but what you used to do.

41. A(nother) sign for them is that We bear their generations on the ship laden (with them and their cargo, and yet sustained in the water, without sinking).

42. And We have created for them the like of it (for land travel) on which they ride.<sup>13</sup>

43. If We will, We cause them to drown, and there is no help for them (against Our will), nor can they be saved (from drowning),

44. Unless by a mercy from Us and (Our allowing them) to enjoy life for some more time until a term (determined).<sup>14</sup>

45. When they are told: “Beware of and guard against what lies before you and what lies behind you (of unforgivable sins and punishment they will bring in the world or the Hereafter, and brought about in the

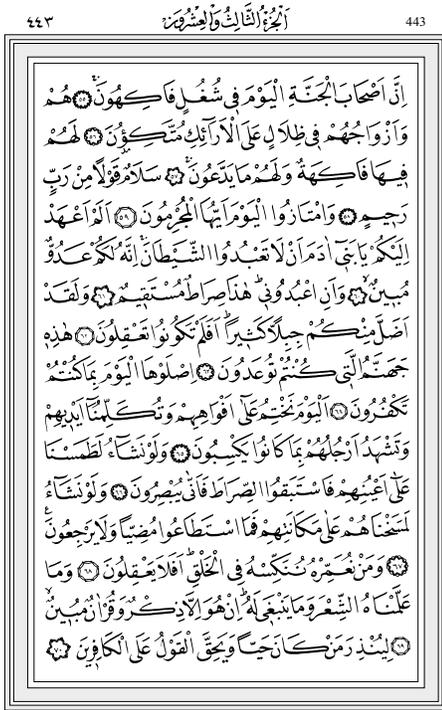
13. Many of the commentators have understood that what is meant by “the ship laden” in verse 41 is the Prophet Noah’s Ark. Although this meaning may be included in the verse, when considered together with this verse (42) and similar ones such as *sūrah* 40: 80 and *sūrah* 43: 12, we can conclude that it also refers to the ships as means of transportation on the sea and other means and animals of transport both on the sea and on the earth.

14. The term is either the end of life (pre-)determined for each person by God or the respite granted to the wrongdoers so that they may give up their way and accept the true guidance.

15. This verse draws attention to the fact that the unbelievers, especially those who are wealthy among them, are usually engaged in disputes over worldly matters in utter heedlessness of God’s admonitions. This causes

many calamities, such as wars and social convulsions, to afflict them in the world, and the Last Hour will also come upon them when they are involved in such disputes.

16. This statement reveals two facts concerning life in the grave. One is that compared with the dread of the Resurrection and the Place of the Supreme Gathering, and the punishment in Hell, the suffering in the grave will be like a sleep tormented by nightmares. The other is: ‘Ali, the Fourth Caliph, may God be pleased with him, says that the life of the world is sleep, and people wake up when they die. So, from the perspective of the truths of faith and the truths concerning creation and life, the worldly life is like dream. When people die, their seeing and perception will be much keener (*sūrah* 50: 22). Compared with the eternal life in the other world, life in the grave is like a dream during sleep. All truths will be manifested in all their clarity in the Hereafter.



55. Surely the companions of Paradise will on that Day be in happy occupations enjoying the blessings (of Paradise that God will grant them abundantly out of His grace, in return for their good deeds).

56. They and their spouses are in pleasant shade (safe from any troubling weather), reclining on thrones.

57. They will have therein the fruit (of their good deeds in the world), and they will have whatever they call for.<sup>17</sup>

58. "Peace!" is the word (of welcome for them and of safety from any trouble) from the Lord All-Compassionate (toward His believing servants).

59. "And you, O disbelieving criminals! Get you apart this Day!

60. "Did I not make a covenant with you, O children of Adam, that you should not

worship Satan – Indeed, he is a manifest enemy to you –

61. "And that you should worship Me alone? This is a straight path (for you to follow).

62. "Yet he has assuredly caused great multitudes of you to go astray. Should you not reason and take heed?

63. "This is Hell, with which you were threatened (repeatedly).<sup>18</sup>

64. "Enter it this Day to roast because you persistently disbelieved."

65. That Day, We will set a seal upon their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will bear witness to what they earned (in the world).<sup>19</sup>

66. If We had so willed, We could certainly have blotted out their eyes, and they would rush around for the right path. How then would they be able to see their way?<sup>20</sup>

67. If We had so willed, We could have fixed them in their places (immobilized where they are), unable to go forward or turn back.

68. Whomever We cause to live long, We may also reverse him in nature (so that he returns to weakness after strength, to ignorance after knowledge, to forgetting after remembering). So will they not reason and take heed?

69. We have not taught him (the Messenger) poetry; further, it is not seemly for him.<sup>21</sup> This is but a Reminder (teaching and admonishing), a Qur'ān recited and conveyed (from God), clear in itself and clearly showing the truth.

70. So that the Messenger may warn with it those who are (truly) alive (and thus can reason, and see, and hear the truth), and that the word (of Divine judgment after evidence and admonition) may be completed against the unbelievers.

17. The original of the statement *enjoying the blessings (of Paradise that God will grant them abundantly out of His grace, in return for their good deeds)* in verse 55 above is *fākihūn*, literally meaning “enjoying the fruits.” A similar meaning is given in this verse, where the word *fākihāb* (literally, fruit) is mentioned. This shows one of the miraculous aspects of the Qur’ān’s style. That is, verse 54 has mentioned that people will be recompensed for what they do in the world. As is known, fruit denotes the ultimate result of a tree’s life or, metaphorically, the result of an effort. So, verses 55 and 57 signify that people’s deeds in the world are sown in the field of the Hereafter like seeds. Each good seed will grow into a tree with many fruits, by God’s grace, according to its worth, varying from person to person, according to the degree of its righteousness and the sincerity with which it is done. The blessings of Paradise will be those “fruits.” But, out of pure grace, God will grant the people much more than they deserve, so they will have whatever they desire and call for.

18. The Qur’ān repeatedly threatens us with Hell and warns against it. God made the first warning when Satan refused to prostrate before Adam after Adam’s creation, and he was allowed to try to seduce humankind until the end of time: *My servants – you shall have no authority over any of them, unless it be such as follow you being rebellious against God, as you are). And for all such (rebellious people), Hell is the promised place (sūrah 15: 42-44).*

The Qur’ān makes many similar reiterations. It is the Book of not only law, prayer, wisdom, worship, and servanthood to God, but also of commands, invitations, invocations, reflection, glad tidings, and warnings. It is a holy book containing books for all of our spiritual needs; a heavenly book that, like a sacred library, contains numerous booklets from which all the saints, eminently truthful people, all purified and discerning scholars, and those well-versed in knowledge of God have derived their own specific ways, and which illuminate each way and answer their followers’ needs.

It is because of this and the fact that all the teachings of the Qur’ān need reiteration to explain and establish them in people’s mind and hearts that the Qur’ān has many reiterated statements. However, in most cases they are of the kind that explain truths from various perspectives and in different styles according to different conditions, times, cases, and audience. The Qur’ān calls this style *taṣrīf*.

19. This verse has two meanings or two aspects to its meaning. One is that since the Hereafter will be the abode where everything will be alive (*sūrah 29: 64; sūrah 25: 12, note 4*), the body parts of people will act as a witness in favor or against them. Second, the beliefs and deeds of everyone are reflected on their parts of the body, and people of special insight can even discern their imprints in this world.

20. This verse means that God has equipped humankind with the ability and necessary organs to see the truth. But the disbelieving people have lost this ability and made these organs functionless, and so it is as if they are blind and cannot find the right path.

21. In addition to the Qur’ān’s judgment about poets (and poetry) in *sūrah 26: 224-227* and the relevant explanations in notes 42 and 43, we can add here what follows concerning why poetry is not seemly for God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, as explained by Said Nursi.

Since the wise Qur’ān encompasses infinite brilliant and exalted truths, it is free from and superior to the fancies of much poetry. The Qur’ān of miraculous expression is not in strict verse because, despite its perfect order and arrangement, it expounds the Book of the Universe’s beauty and order in its well-ordered styles, therefore, its freedom from (poetic) constraints allows each verse to connect with other verses in an encompassing context. Such connections give the meaning of its different verses a relationship to one another.

Thus, there are thousands of Qur’āns within the Qur’ān, each being adopted by a different path or school in Islam. For example, *Sūrat al-Iklās* contains a treasury of knowl-

edge of Divine Unity provided by 36 ways of reading *Sūrat al-Ikhlās* (see 112, note 4). This is comparable to the way each star, apparently at random, extends (as if from a center) a line of connection to every other star in the surrounding area. More clearly, these verses are interrelated to one another in the same way that all cells and organs in a body are interrelated with one another. Such a network indicates the hidden relation between all creatures. This is the same relationship as that found among the verses of the Qur'an. So it cannot design itself according to the human system of

poetry. Reflect on the perfect order in apparent disorder, and learn something. Understand one meaning of: *We have not taught him poetry; further, it is not seemly for him.*

Understand also from the meaning of *it is not seemly for him* that poetry tends to adorn insignificant and dull facts with grandiose images and fancies to make them attractive. But the Qur'anic truths are so great and elevated, so brilliant and splendid, that even the greatest and most brilliant poetic images appear dull and insignificant (*The Words*, "The 13<sup>th</sup> Word," 156-157).

أَوَلَدَبَّرُوا أَنَاخَلَقْتَهُمْ بِمَاعَلَيْتَ أَيْدِيَنَا مَا مَدَدْنَا  
 مَالِكُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَذَلَّلْنَاهَا لَهُمْ فَمِنْهَا رَكُوبُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا يَأْكُلُونَ  
 ﴿١١﴾ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ فِيهَا مَسَافِعَ وَمَسَارِبَ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَالتَّخَرُّوا  
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَهْلَهُمْ يُنْصَرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ لَئِن يَسْطِيعُونَ نَضْرِبُ  
 وَهُمْ لَهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُنْصَرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَلَا يَحْزَنُكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا  
 يُبْسِرُونَ وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ الْإِنْسَانِ أَنَاخَلَقْتَهُمْ مِنْ  
 نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾ وَضَرَبْنَا مَثَلًا وَلَيْسَ خَلْقُهُ  
 قَالٍ مِنْ مِجَى الْعِظَامِ وَهِيَ رَبِيمَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾ قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي  
 أَنشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ مِنَ  
 الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ مِنْهُ تُوقَدُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي  
 خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِنْ تَلْبَعٍ وَهُوَ  
 الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٩﴾ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ  
 ﴿٢٠﴾ فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 وَاللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَىٰ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ



71. Have they not considered how (as signs of Our Lordship), out of what Our Hands have originated and fashioned, We have created for them cattle, and so they are their owners?

72. We have subdued them to them, so that among them are mounts for them, and from them they obtain food.

73. And they have many other benefits in them, and (diverse) things to drink. Will they not then give thanks?

74. Yet they have taken deities for worship apart from God, (expecting) that they may receive help (from them).

75. They (the false deities) are unable to help them; rather, they (the worshippers) are a (supportive) host for them (the false deities, and all will be arraigned for punishment on the Day of Judgment).<sup>22</sup>

76. So do not let their (slandering) words (against God and you) grieve you (O Messenger). Surely We know whatever they keep concealed (of speech or deeds) and whatever they disclose.

77. Has human not considered that We have created him from (so slight a beginning as) a drop of (seminal) fluid? Yet, he turns into an open, fierce adversary (selfishly disputing against the truth).

78. And he coins a comparison for Us, having forgotten his own origin and creation, saying, “Who will give life to these bones when they have rotted away?”

79. Say: “He Who produced them in the first instance will give them life. He has full knowledge of every (form and mode and possibility of) creation (and of ev-

erything He has created, He knows every detail in every dimension of time and space).”<sup>23</sup>

80. He Who has made for you fire from the green tree, and see, you kindle fire with it.<sup>24</sup>

81. Is not He Who has created the heavens and the earth able to create (from rotten bones) the like of them (whose bones have rotted under the ground)?<sup>25</sup> Surely He is; He is the Supreme Creator, the All-Knowing.

82. When He wills a thing to be, His command is but to say to it “Be!” and (in the selfsame instant) it is.

83. So, All-Glorified is He in Whose Hand is the absolute dominion of all things,<sup>26</sup> and to Him you are being brought back.

22. Polytheists take many deities hoping that those so-called gods may help them with their worldly affairs. Among them are idols, devils, some invisible forces such as “good” or “evil” spirits, angels, some powerful or saintly peoples, and Prophets, etc. However, they neither think nor understand that it is they themselves who raise them to the position of divinity and serve them as a host. They and their idols carved out of stone or wood, devils, and all the cruel tyrants or powerful persons rebellious who are against God will be brought up for punishment on the Day of Judgment.

23. That is, God has innumerable ways of creating, so He can create and re-create in any way He wills. Moreover, He has full knowledge of everything He has created. He never forgets anything. So, can He Who created in the first instance out of nothing when there was nothing to copy, from which He would be able to draw knowledge – can He not re-create?

24. This verse has a very subtle meaning. It explains how God can give life to a rotten bone, and suggests that God produces unexpected things from their opposites, or from the things from which it seems to us impossible their opposites could be produced. According to the classical commentators, what is meant by the green tree mentioned here – a fresh tree in which there is still water – are the trees of Markh and ‘Afār, which grow in the Arabian desert and from which people kindle fire. The verse, according to some contemporary commentators, also refers to petroleum. As is known, petroleum is formed from rotten plants, which were once green. In the past, people in countries such as Azerbaijan used petroleum that flowed on the earth without knowing that it was petroleum. It is possible that there may have been a relationship between this and fire-worship. It is also a fact that Saudi Arabia, which was once rich in greenery, is now a country rich in petroleum. In short, God creates as He wills things from their opposites.

25. That is, He creates every human being from so simple a matter as a drop of seminal fluid. He also creates many things from almost nothing. It is also He Who has created the heavens and the earth, the creation of which is something greater than the creation of humanity (*sūrah* 40: 57). So He can create or recreate the like of human beings from rotten bones. God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, said that an essential matter in the human body does not rot. God will re-create a human being from this matter.

26. The original of “the absolute dominion of all things” is *malakūt*. As the real existence and origin of a word lies in its invisible meaning, while the word composed of letters serves merely to represent it, so too, the existence of every thing and every event in the universe lies in its immaterial essence, which is pure and unrestricted by matter. This essential existence has degrees of manifestation. One of the pure, immaterial realms where a manifestation of certain degree takes place is called the Realm of the Pure Sovereignty (*Malakūt*). While God acts in the material, visible world from behind the veil of causality (on the reason why He does so, see *sūrah* 18: 22, note 13), He acts in the Realm of Pure Sovereignty without any veils. So, His saying or ordering in this realm is identical with His creating, which is immediate. This act of creation generally takes place in, or is transferred into, the material world in a gradual process. However, it is also so swift in this world that we feel as if it happened in a single moment.

In order to be able to grasp God’s creation or making of everything with a single command, we can consider the operating system of computers and “verbal” writing with computers. The operating system of computers consists in commands and the words made by pressing on keys are manifested on the screen. Like this, God’s creation or making consists in commands or, in other words, the Divine Speech operates like the Power or the Power operates through the Speech. (God knows best.)

## SŪRAH 37

## AŞ-ŞĀFFĀT

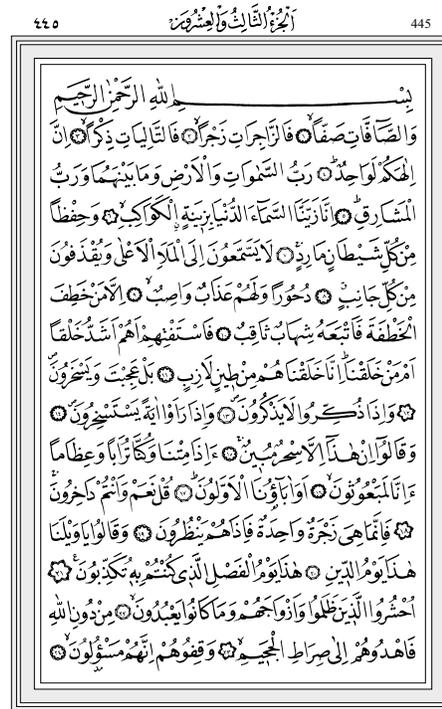
## (THOSE ALIGNED IN RANKS)

Makkah Period

This sūrah of 182 verses was revealed in the last stage of the middle Makkan period when God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, and His Companions were heavily persecuted. It derives its name from the first verse. It begins by mentioning some of the angels that are responsible for certain duties and goes on to mention the jinn, rejecting the pagan assertion that they are the daughters of God. The sūrah then emphasizes the afterlife and the Last Judgment. Afterwards, certain episodes of the lives of some Messengers are mentioned and victory for the believers is promised.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. By those (the angels) who align themselves in ranks;
2. (Some) driving away with reproof,
3. (And others) reciting the Reminder (revealed from God),<sup>1</sup>
4. Most surely your Lord is One:
5. The Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and the Lord of all the easts.<sup>2</sup>
6. We have indeed adorned the lowest heaven (the heaven of the world) with an ornament – the stars –
7. And for guard against every devil persistent in haughty rebellion.
8. They cannot hear anything from the High Assembly (of the angels of the heavens), and (whenever they attempt to hear) become targets of missiles from all directions,
9. Repelled; and for them is a perpetual punishment –



10. Excepting one who snatches something by stealth, and is pursued (and destroyed) by a piercing shooting-star.<sup>3</sup>
11. So ask them (the polytheists): “Are they more formidable in structure or those that We have created (the heavens and the angels in them)?” Indeed, We have created them (human beings) from a sticky clay.
12. You find all God's acts wonderful, and their denial strange, but they continue to mock (God's Message and His Messenger).
13. And when they are reminded (of Divine truths and admonished by His Revelations), they pay no heed.
14. When they see an extraordinary evidence (of the truth, a miracle), they take it in mockery (and call others to do the same).

15. And they say, “This is clearly nothing but sorcery.

16. “What! after we have died and become dust and bones, will we then be raised from the dead?”

17. “And also our forefathers of old?!”

18. Say: “Yes, indeed, and most humiliated you will be.”

19. It will be only a single scaring cry, and then behold, they are staring (in dread),

20. And saying: “Woe to us! This is the Day of Judgment!”

21. (And it is said): “This is the Day of Judgment and Distinction (between truth and

falsehood, between the righteous and the sinful – the Day) that you used to deny.”

22. (God commands the angels:) “Gather together all those who committed the greatest wrong (by obstinately associating partners with God), and their (devilish) comrades, and all that they used to worship (of idols, and the rebellious among humankind and the jinn),

23. “Apart from God, and lead them to the path of the Blazing Flame!

24. “And arrest them there, for they must be questioned (concerning their deeds in the world).

1. The most commonly accepted opinion concerning the angels mentioned in these verses is that they are the angels accompanying Archangel Gabriel, who was charged with gradually bringing the Qur’ān to God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings. Those angels aligned themselves in ranks along the way while Gabriel, upon him be peace, brought the Revelation to the Messenger, and some of them drove away the devils that tried to grasp parts of the Revelation. Some stood around the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, for the same purpose. Among those were the aids of Gabriel, who conveyed Revelations to the Messenger (see *sūrah* 72: 28). There are many Revelations that have not been included in the Qur’ān but came to explain it and constitute the basis of the Sunnah. There are also angels who glorify God in ranks, and recite the Revelation or parts from the Qur’ān, sometimes to or around the Messenger. (For verses with similar meanings, see *sūrah* 2: 97; *sūrah* 26: 194; *sūrah* 80: 16; *sūrah* 72: 28; *sūrah* 37: 166.)

2. This verse emphasizes the fact that it is God Who has absolute authority and control over the whole universe. By *the easts*, it indicates the spherical shape of planets and their rotations, the plural “easts” indicating many dimensions: any point on the earth is east with respect to what is west of it, therefore the concept of “east” is different at every point on the earth,

thus forming an ensemble of easts. Moreover, there are 180 points where the sun rises in one hemisphere, that is, the sun rises at one place only two days in the year, thus making 360 points throughout the earth. Therefore, this verse is also indicative of the meridians as well as of infinite dimensions, of the relativity of space and the spherical shape of planets, as well as the rotation of the earth.

3. Particularly in the pre-Islamic era, soothsaying or fortune-telling was very widespread among the Arabs, as it is today throughout the world. Devils attempted to ascend to the heavens and listen to the angels’ conversations about the Divine truths and some future events, and if they could grasp something, they would convey it to the soothsayers and fortune-tellers with whom they had relationships, adding many untrue things as well. They made the same attempts when the Revelation began to be revealed to God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings. But God did not permit them to do so; and if any among them snatched away something from the angels, they were destroyed with missiles. The devils never give up their attempts to ascend to the heavens; but in every attempt they are repelled, and if some are able to obtain something from the angels, they are then destroyed. (For similar verses and explanations, see *sūrah* 15: 16–18, note 5; *sūrah* 26: 212; *sūrah* 67: 5, note 4; *sūrah* 72: 9.)



44. Sitting on thrones, face to face.
45. A cup will be passed round among them with a drink from a pure, gushing spring:
46. Clear, delightful for those who drink it,
47. Free from any headiness or harm; and they will not suffer intoxication from it.
48. And with them will be pure, chaste-eyed spouses (whose glances are fixed on them only), most beautiful of eye,
49. (As free from any ugliness, and) untouched, as if they were hidden (ostrich) eggs.
50. They will turn to one another, indulging in friendly talk.
51. One of them speaks thus: "I had a close companion,



4. On the tree of *Zaqqūm* and its being a means of trial, see *sūrah* 17: 60, note 27.

5. We usually liken beautiful beings to angels, as the women who saw the Prophet Joseph, upon him be peace, likened him to an honorable angel (12: 31); conversely, we liken ugly beings to devils. However, there may be many other points of resemblance between the fruit of the tree of *Zaqqūm* and the heads of devils. For example, this tree will grow from the seeds sown by the evil deeds committed by the people in Hell, deeds that were prompted by Satan. The Qur'ān mentions deeds – such as taking intoxicants, playing games of chance, offering sacrifices for anything having the meaning of an idol or at the places consecrated for offerings to other than God, and polytheistic divination by shooting arrows and other similar ways (like drawing lots and throwing dice) – as loathsome evil of Satan's doing (*sūrah* 5: 90). So, it is quite natural that such deeds will grow into satan-like trees and yield fruit that resembles the heads of devils.

6. After eating, one needs water. The people of Hell will eat of the fruit of the tree of *Zaqqūm* and come out of the Blazing Flame into another area of Hell to drink. But their drink will be boiling water that will be mixed with the fruits of *Zaqqūm*, and it will cut up their bowels (47: 15). Then, they will have to return to the Flame as their dwelling, and their punishment will go on in this strain.

The Qur'ānic descriptions concerning Paradise and Hell cannot be taken as being purely metaphors. Paradise with all its blessings, and Hell with all its elements of punishment, will be the outcome of people's beliefs and deeds in the world. So people will live in them with both their spirit, their carnal souls, and bodies, as they are in the world, but in a way that is particular to the other world. However, the carnal souls of the people of Paradise will be perfectly purified. Said Nursi provides useful instruction on this point:

*It may be asked:* What do the human carnal soul or selfhood and the defective, chang-

ing, unstable, and pain-stricken body have to do with eternity and Paradise? The spirit's elevated pleasures must surely be enough. Why should a bodily resurrection take place for bodily pleasures? The answer is:

Soil, despite its darkness and density when compared to water, air, and light, is the means and source of all works of Divine art. Therefore, it is somehow superior in meaning over other elements. Human selfhood or the carnal soul, despite its density is comprehensive, and provided it is purified, it is able to gain some kind of superiority over the other senses and faculties. Likewise, the body is a most comprehensive and diverse mirror for the manifestations of the Divine Names, and has been equipped with instruments to weigh and measure the contents of all Divine treasures. For example, if the tongue's sense of taste were not the origin of all the varieties of food and drink, we could not experience, recognize, or measure them. Furthermore, the body also contains the instruments needed to experience and recognize most of the manifestations of the Divine Names, as well as the faculties for experiencing the most diverse and infinitely varied pleasures.

The Maker of the universe wants to make known all the treasures of His Mercy and all the manifestations of His Names, as well as enabling us to experience all His bounties. Given this, as the world of eternal happiness is a mighty pool into which the flood of this life flows; as it is a vast exhibition of what the loom of the universe produces; and as it is the everlasting store of the crops produced in the field of this (material) world, then it will resemble this world and life to some degree. The All-Wise Maker, the All-Compassionate Just One will give pleasures particular to each bodily organ as wages for their duty, service, and worship. To think otherwise would be contrary to His Wisdom, Justice, and Compassion. (*The Words*, "The 28<sup>th</sup> Word," 515–516)

7. For Noah's prayer, see *sūrah* 54: 10; *sūrah* 71: 26.

وَجَعَلْنَا دُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمًا الْبَاقِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَرَكَّعْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾  
 سَلَامًا عَلَى نُوحٍ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾ أَلَا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾ إِنَّهُ  
 مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ ثُمَّ أَنْزَلْنَا الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ  
 لَإِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٧٣﴾ إِذْ جَاءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ  
 مَاذَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ دُونَ اللَّهِ يُرِيدُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ  
 رَبِّي الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ فَظَنُّوا نَظْرًا فِي الْغُيُوبِ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَقَالَ إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ  
 قَوْلَ لَوَاعِثِهِ مُمْدِرِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَرَأَى إِلَى إِلَهِيهِمْ فَقَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾  
 مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنْظِقُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَرَأَى عَلَيْهِمْ صُرُغًا بِالْيَمِينِ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَاقْتَبَأَ إِلَيْهِ  
 يَرْفُؤُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾ قَالَ اتَّعِدُونْ مَا تَخْتِشُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾  
 قَالُوا ابْنُوا لَهُ بُنْيَانًا فَأَلْفُوهُ فِي الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾ فَآرَادُوا  
 بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ لَأْسِفًا لِيَوْمِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَى  
 رَبِّي سَاجِدٌ ﴿٨٨﴾ رَبِّي هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾ فَدَسَخَنَا  
 بِضَلَالِهِمْ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي  
 أَرَى فِي الْمَنَاسِكِ وَإِنِّي لَأُظَاهِرُكَ مَاذَا تَرَى قَالَ يَا أَبَتِ  
 افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمُرُ سَمِعْتُهُ إِذْ يَنْشَاءُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

77. And We caused his offspring to endure (on the earth).

78. And We left for him among later-comers (until the end of time this greeting and remembrance of him and his Message):

79. "Peace be upon Noah among all beings."<sup>8</sup>

80. Thus do We reward those devoted to doing good as if seeing God.

81. Surely he was one of Our truly believing servants.

82. As for the others (who opposed him), We caused them to drown.

83. Abraham was surely one who followed the same way as his.

84. He had turned to his Lord with a heart sound and pure (from any trace of insincerity of faith).

85. (Remember) when he said to his father and his people, "What is that you worship?"

86. "Is it a fabrication that you pursue, worshipping deities apart from God?"

87. "So, what do you think about the Lord of the worlds (that you dare to do so)?"

88. Then (when invited to participate in the religious ceremonies of the people on a festival day) he cast a glance at the stars;

89. And he said: "Indeed I am sick."<sup>9</sup>

90. So they (the others) turned away from him and departed.

91. Thereupon he approached their deities,

and said, "Will you not eat (of the offerings put before you)?"

92. "What is the matter with you that you do not speak?"

93. Then he fell upon them, striking them with his right hand (with all his strength).

94. Then, the other people headed towards him hurriedly.

95. He said: "Do you worship things that you yourselves have carved,

96. "While it is God Who has created you and all that you do?"<sup>10</sup>

97. They (consulted among themselves and) said: "Build him a pyre and throw him into the blazing flames!"

98. So they intended a scheme against him (to destroy him), but We made them the ones brought low.<sup>11</sup>

99. And he said: “Now I am going to my Lord (to quit my homeland purely for His sake, in the full conviction that) He will guide me (to a land where I will be able to worship Him freely).

100. (And he prayed): “My Lord, Grant me (the gift of a child who will be) one of the righteous.”

101. So We gave him the glad tidings of a boy (who was to grow as one) mild and forbearing.

102. Then, when (his son) grew alongside him to the age of striving (for the necessities of life), he said: “O my dear son! I have seen in my dream that I should offer you in sacrifice. So think about this and tell me your view!” He said (unhesitatingly): “O my dear father! Do as you are commanded.<sup>12</sup> You will find me, by God’s will, one of those who show steadfast patience (in obeying God’s commands).”<sup>13</sup>

8. The Prophet Adam, upon him be peace, was the first human being (together with his wife Eve) on the earth and the first Prophet. Though he conveyed God’s Message for the first time, his mission was, in one respect, restricted to his children. However, when the Prophet Noah, upon him be peace, came, humankind had already multiplied and divided into many tribes. So he came to a community that consisted of many divisions, in order to unify them around God’s Message, and he struggled against polytheism and injustices. Despite his efforts, which lasted 950 years, only a few believed in him, while the others were punished by God in the Flood. Humankind began a new life after this event. This shows how refractory and corrupt the people were during Noah’s time and how difficult Noah’s mission was. Had it not been for Noah and his continuous endeavors to reform people, the world would have been destroyed at that time. So all the later generations of both humankind, the jinn and all the other beings in the world are indebted to the Prophet Noah, upon him be peace, because of the continuity of existence in the world. It is because of this that Noah, upon him be peace, deserves and receives greetings with peace, a most honored reputation, and thanks from all the existent beings in the world. The Qur’an uses this kind of greeting for him only. Though it also sends greetings to the Messengers whom it will mention below, it does not mention the phrase *among all beings*.

9. Abraham, upon him be peace, was not physically sick, but the grief that he felt due to his people’s falsehood was preying on his mind and soul. So he was determined to tell them the truth in a convincing way. Once, to avoid participating in their ceremonies, he told them he was unwell and, after they left, he smashed their idols. The people thought that he was really sick, but what he had meant was that he was extremely uneasy because of their worshipping idols.

10. This means that it is God Almighty Who creates us and enables us to do things. He has given us will and power so that we are able to will something and do it. However, it is He Who creates and gives external existence to what we do. Our performing an action does not mean that that action must come about. Were it not for His creation, we could do nothing. We are doers or agents, while God is the Creator. If we had no ability to do something and God did not create our actions, then our having free will would be meaningless and we would have no responsibility for our deeds.

11. For a more detailed account of this event, see *sūrah* 21: 51–70.

12. This explicitly shows that what Abraham, upon him be peace, dreamed as a Prophet was a revealed Divine order.

13. Though the present versions of the Bible record that the son God ordered Abraham to

sacrifice was Isaac (*Genesis*, 22: 2), this son was actually Ishmael, the elder brother of Isaac, upon them both be peace. The Qur'ān describes the boy here with the terms *mildness* and *forbearance* (*sūrah* 37: 101; 21: 85), but presents Isaac as a knowledgeable boy, thus emphasizing he was one with profound knowledge (*sūrah* 15: 53). Isaac was born of Sārah, when she was too old to give birth to a child (*sūrah* 11: 71-72; *Genesis*, 21). Ishmael was born of Hagar and, upon God's command, Abraham, upon him be peace, left them in the place where Makkah is now located. Years later he built the Ka'bah with Ishmael. His attempt to sacrifice Ishmael upon God's order took place in Mina, near Makkah, where sacrifices are offered during the Pilgrimage.

The verse of the Bible (*Genesis*, 22: 2) which states that God ordered Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, upon them both be peace, contradicts several other Bible verses. This verse mentions that when this order was given to Abraham, Isaac was his only son. Yet, according to *Genesis*, 21: 5, when Isaac was born, Abraham was 100 years old; and according to *Genesis*, 16: 16, Ishmael was born when Abraham was 86 years old. So according to the Bible, when Isaac came into the world, Ishmael was a young man of 14 years. This clearly shows that when Abraham was ordered to sacrifice his "only son" he was being ordered to sacrifice Ishmael, upon him be peace. And the Qur'ānic verse that follows

(113) makes it very clear that Isaac was born years after Ishmael, upon them both be peace. So this agreement between the Qur'ān and the Bible – together with their agreement that when God ordered Abraham to sacrifice his son he had only one son – are enough to make the truth plain.

The most compelling piece of non-textual evidence that God ordered Abraham to sacrifice Ishmael, not Isaac, upon them all be peace, is that while this momentous event, the child-sacrifice being replaced with a ram, is celebrated in Islam – for there is evidence that it was celebrated also in pre-Islamic Arabia by the descendants of Ishmael – it has no place among the festivals of the Jews.

In Rosh Hashanah, one of the major religious festivals of the Jews, a Ram horn ("shofar") is blown. But it marks the new year for people, animals, and legal contracts. The Bible refers to it as "The Day of the Blowing of the Shofar" (*Leviticus* 23: 24), and rabbinic literature describes it as "The Day of Judgment" and "The Day of Remembrance." Some midrashic descriptions depict God as sitting upon a throne, while books containing the deeds of all humanity are opened for review, and each person passing in front of Him for evaluation of his or her deeds. The sound of *shofar* is intended to awaken the listener from his or her "slumber" and alert them to the coming judgment. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosh\\_Hashanah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosh_Hashanah))



124. (Remember) when he said to his people: “Will you not keep from disobedience to God in reverence for Him and piety?”

125. “Will you continue to invoke Baʿl<sup>16</sup> (as deity) and forsake the Creator Who

creates everything in the best and most appropriate form and has the ultimate rank of creativity –

126. “God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers?”

14. God never wills that human beings should be offered as a sacrifice, although it is a virtue for human beings to sacrifice themselves for His sake for lawful ends and in lawful ways. There are many instances of wisdom involved in God’s order to the Prophet Abraham, upon him be peace, to offer his son as a sacrifice. Abraham had a very great character endowed with great potential that allowed him to be the origin of a holy line of Prophets. He was very compassionate, generous, and sincerely submitted to God. He was very concerned for the happiness of his people, both in the world and, more particularly, in the Hereafter. However, in order for this potential to be developed, God puts a person, even if that person is a Prophet, through trials. Succeeding in these trials requires that there should not be any obstacles in the heart that prevent one from getting near to God. These obstacles (see *sūrah* 3: 14) may be physical or emotional to another person, children, treasures of gold and silver (hoarded money), branded horses (or, in the modern form, cars), cattle and plantations (or, in the modern form, business empires of all kinds), as well as posts and positions. So true believers in God can feel love for such things only because of their love of God and according to their relation with God. They cannot give their heart to any of them. *God has not made for any man two hearts within his body (one to be assigned for belief in and worship of Him and the other to belief in and worship of others)* (*sūrah* 33: 4). So God tested Abraham with severe commandments and terrible ordeals (such as being thrown into a fire, the destruction of the people of Lot, who was his relative, being obliged to leave his homeland and family, and being ordered to sacrifice his son, Ishmael), all of which he fulfilled thoroughly. *“Indeed I will make you an imām for all people.” He (Abraham) pleaded: “(Will You appoint imāms)*

*also from my offspring?” He (his Lord) answered: “(I will appoint from among those who merit it. But) My covenant does not include the wrongdoers”* (*sūrah* 2: 124).

By unhesitatingly obeying God’s order, both Abraham and Ishmael were greatly rewarded. God made Abraham an imām (leader) for human beings and the father of many great Messengers to come after him. And He rewarded Ishmael by making him the origin of a holy line, which finally gave birth to the greatest of creation, the Prophet Muḥammad, upon him be peace and blessings.

15. Although the Book was given to Moses, due to the fact that his brother, Aaron, upon them both be peace, shared his task (20: 32), the verse mentions the Book as being granted to both of them.

16. “Baʿl” literally means master, lord, or chief. The ancient Semitic peoples called one of their deities by this name and worshipped him together with “his wife,” Ashtaroth. During the period of the Judges, many among the Children of Israel began to worship them: “And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger. They forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtoreths” (*Judges*, 2: 12–13). This deviance re-appeared after the death of the Prophet Solomon, upon him be peace. The Prophet Ilyās, who is also mentioned in the Qurʾān, 6: 85 and thought to be the Biblical Elijah, grew up at the same time, during the reign of King Ahab in Israel who was notorious for his injustices, (1 Kings, 17–21) and King Jehoram in Judah (2 Chronicles, 21). He struggled against this deviance, immoralities, and injustices.

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَانْتَبَهُمْ لَخُضْرُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ  
 ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَتَرَكْنَاهُ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ آلِ يَأْسِينَ  
 ﴿١٣٠﴾ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ أَنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
 ﴿١٣٢﴾ وَإِن لُّوطًا لَّمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ إِذْ نَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ  
 ﴿١٣٤﴾ إِلَّا نَجُورًا فِي الْعَايِرِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ ثُمَّ دَمَرْنَا الْأَكْبَرِينَ  
 ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَأَكْبَرَهُمْ نُوحًا عَلَيْهِمُ مَّضِيبَاتٌ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَيَالِ لَيْلٍ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ  
 ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَإِن يُونُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ إِذْ نَادَىٰ إِلَى الْفُكِّ الْمَشْحُونِ  
 ﴿١٤٠﴾ فَسَاهِرٌ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُذْخَبِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾ فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَهُوَ لَذِئْبٌ  
 ﴿١٤٢﴾ مَبْعُوثٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾ فَتَبَدَّدْنَا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُوَ سَقِيمٌ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَأَلْبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِ  
 ﴿١٤٥﴾ نَجْرَةً مِّنْ يَتْبَلِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ  
 ﴿١٤٧﴾ فَآمَنُوا فَفَرَّغْنَا لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ فَاستَغْفِرُكَ رَبُّكَ النَّاتِ  
 ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَطُمُ الْأُسْتُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلَكَةَ إِنَّا نَا وَهْمٌ سَاهِدُونَ  
 ﴿١٥١﴾ إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ مِنْ أَفْكَهٍ يُكْفَرُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ وَلَدَّ اللَّهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ  
 ﴿١٥٣﴾ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ أَصْطَفَىٰ النَّاتِ عَلَى السَّبِيحِ ﴿١٥٥﴾

to leave the land of sinners and) saved him and his family all together,

135. Except an old woman among those who stayed behind;

136. Then We annihilated the others.

137. Indeed, you pass by them (the ruins of their dwellings) at morning-time (during your travels for trade),

138. And by night. Will you not, then, reason and take heed?

139. And surely Jonah was one of the Messengers.

140. (Remember) when he left like a runaway slave for a ship fully laden.<sup>18</sup>

141. And then he (agreed to) cast lots, and he was one of those who lost;

142. (They threw him into the sea, and) the big fish swallowed him, while he was accused (by his conscience).

143. Had it not been that he was one who always glorified God, (declaring Him absolutely above having any defects and partners),<sup>19</sup>

144. He would certainly have remained in its belly (serving as his grave) until the Day when all will be raised (from the dead).

145. But We caused him to be cast forth on a desert shore, sick as he was;

146. And caused a gourd plant to grow over him.

127. But they denied him, and so they are surely bound to be arraigned (for judgment).

128. Except God's servants, endowed with sincerity in faith and practicing the Religion.

129. And We left for him among later-comers (until the end of time this greeting and remembrance of him and his Message):

130. "Peace be upon Il-Yāsīn."<sup>17</sup>

131. Thus do We reward those devoted to doing good as if seeing God.

132. Surely he was one of Our truly believing servants.

133. And surely Lot was one of the Messengers.

134. (Remember) when We (ordered him



**147.** And We sent him once again to (his people, numbering) a hundred thousand; rather, they tended to increase.

**148.** And they believed in him (this time); and so, (sparing them,) We allowed them to enjoy life for a term allotted to them.

**149.** So ask them (O Messenger,) whether your Lord has daughters while sons are allotted for them?

**150.** Or that We created the angels female and they were witnesses?

**151.** Beware, it is surely one of their fabrications that they say,

**152.** “God has begotten.” Most certainly they are liars.

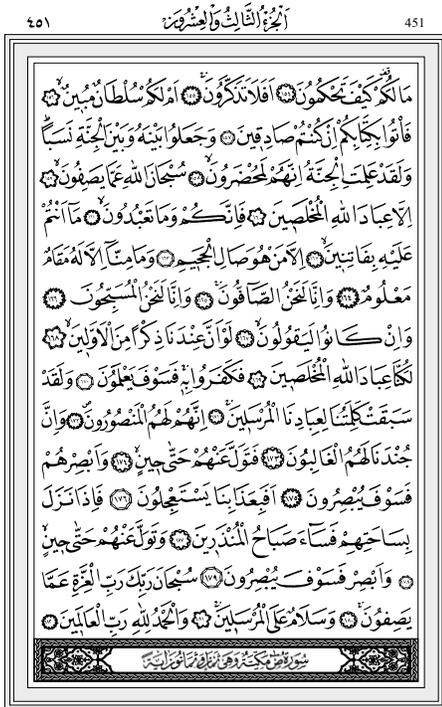
**153.** He has (made gender-discrimination and so) chosen daughters in preference to sons, has He?

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17. It is generally accepted that Ilyās was also pronounced as Il-Yāsīn, or it may be that Il-Yāsīn is another name by which the Prophet Ilyās, upon him be peace, was called.

18. For a detailed explanation of Jonah’s story, see *sūrah* 10, note 20.

19. As a Messenger of God, the Prophet Jonah, upon him peace, always praised and glorified God. In particular, he glorified Him in the belly of the fish. For his glorification in the belly of the fish and its meaning, see *sūrah* 21: 87, note 18.



154. What is the matter with you? How can you judge so?

155. Will you not still reflect and be mindful?

156. Or do you have a clear authority (of evidence)?

157. If so, produce your book (which), if you are truthful in your claim, (must have come from God)!

158. And they have concocted a kin-relationship between Him and the jinn (to excuse their worshipping the jinn), whereas the jinn know quite well that they (are created and sustained by God and) are bound to be arraigned (before Him for judgment).<sup>20</sup>

159. All-Glorified is He, absolutely exalted above such as they attribute to Him.

160. But God's servants endowed with sincerity in faith and practicing the Religion do not do so.

161. For sure, you and those that you worship,

162. Cannot cause any to deviate concerning God,

163. Except those who have willfully adopted the way to the Blazing Flame.

164. (The angels whom they assert to be God's daughters say): "There is none among us but has his duty and position assigned,

165. "And surely we are those ranged in ranks (ever-expecting God's commands);

166. "And most certainly we are the ones glorifying Him (declaring Him to be above having any defects and partners)."

167. They (the polytheists) surely used to say:

168. "If only We had had a Reminder of the like those who lived before us had,

169. "Then we would certainly have been God's servants endowed with sincerity in faith and practicing the Religion."

170. Yet (now the Qur'an has come to them) they disbelieve in it; so they will come to know.

171. Indeed Our word (of promise) has already gone forth in respect of Our servants sent with Our Message (of guidance and warning):

172. That they would surely be helped to victory,
173. And that surely Our host (the host of the true believers), they are certainly the victors.
174. So turn aside from them for a little while, (do not care what they do and say);
175. And watch them and see (to what end their denial will lead them), as they also will see it.
176. Or do they seek to hasten on Our punishment (that it befall them immediately)?
177. But when it descends encompassing them, then evil will be the morning of those who have been warned.
178. And ignore what they say and do for a little while.
179. And watch them and see (what the ultimate end of all people will be), as they also will see it.
180. All-Glorified is your Lord, the Lord of might and glory, exalted above all that they attribute (to Him).
181. And peace be upon the Messengers.
182. And all praise and gratitude are for God, the Lord of the worlds.

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20. As implied in *sūrah* 2: 30, the jinn preceded humankind on the earth and ruled it, so they were all aware of the Divine Message. God's Messenger, upon him be peace and

blessings, was also sent to the jinn. This is why they know well what kind of relations there must be, and what is between God and His creatures.



10. Or do they own the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them? Then let them ascend to the heavens by ropes (and see if they can prevent the Message from being sent to you).
11. They are no more than a routed band of (disunited) parties there awaiting a defeat (as certain as the defeat of the hordes of old times who rejected the Messengers and were utterly abased).
12. Before them, the people of Noah denied (their Messenger), and the Ād, and the Pharaoh with formidable strongholds.
13. And also the Thamūd, and the people of Lot, and the people al-Aykah. Those are the hordes (of old times).
14. Not one of them but denied the Messengers (sent to them), and therefore My retribution was their just, inevitable due.
15. These wait but for a single blast, which will tolerate no delay (to give them respite).
16. Yet, they say: "Our Lord! Hasten on to us our share before the Day of Reckoning!"

1. Like the leading ones among the people of Noah, upon him be peace, who reacted to his call, saying, "*He only wishes to gain superiority over you*" (sūrah 23: 24), the leading polytheists of Makkah claimed that what God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, intended by his call and those who followed him was leadership and high position in Makkah.

2. When 'Umar became Muslim, the leading clique of the Quraysh became furious. They thought that the Messenger, upon him be peace, and those who followed him desired leadership in Makkah, and therefore felt their position was threatened by his call. Led by Abū Jahl, they went to Abū Ṭalib, the Messenger's uncle, and suggested that the Messenger continue to follow his own Religion but give up preaching it. God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, responded to this propos-

al: "O my uncle! I know and call them to such a word that should they pronounce it, not only the other Arabs but other peoples will follow them." Unable to dispute that word, they asked what it was. The Messenger replied: "There is no deity but God." They reacted very strongly: "We have not heard of this in recent ways of faith. This is surely nothing but a concoction" (at-Tirmidhī, "Tafsīr," 39).

3. Although Divine punishments coming in the world cause some to recognize the truth, most of the unbelievers recognize it usually at the moment of death, or when the punishment comes in the form of an overall destruction. However, this recognition is of no use to them, just as their recognition during the final destruction of the world will not benefit them in the least.

اضْبِرْ عَلَى مَا يَقُولُونَ وَأَذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوُدَ ذَا الْأَيْدِ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ  
 ﴿٢٠﴾ إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعِشِيِّ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ ﴿٢١﴾  
 وَالطُّيُورَ مَحْشُورَةً كُلٌّ لَهُ أَوَّابٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهُ وَآتَيْنَاهُ  
 الْحُكْمَةَ وَفَضْلَ الْكَلَامِ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَهَلْ آتَيْنَاكَ نَبَأَ الْخِصْمِ إِذْ تَسَوَّرُوا  
 الْحُرَابَ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَى دَاوُدَ فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ قَالُوا لَا تَنْخَفُضْ حَضَمَانَ  
 بَنِي نَعْمَانَ عَلَى نَعْمَانَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ طَرَفًا وَاهْدِنَا  
 إِلَى سَوَاءِ الصِّرَاطِ إِنَّ هَذَا أَخِي لَهُ تِسْعٌ وَتِسْعُونَ نَعْجَةً وَرَبِّي  
 فَعْبَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فَقَالَ أَكْفَيْنَا بِهَا وَرَبِّي بِالْحَقِّ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ  
 ظَلَمْتَ بِسُؤَالِ بَعْضِكَ إِلَى بَعْضِهِ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ لَيَسْبِقُوهُ  
 بِضُرٍّ هُمْ هُمْ عَلَى بَعْضِ آلِهِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَقَبِلْنَا نَاهِمُ  
 وَظَنَّ دَاوُدُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَّاهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ ﴿٢٦﴾  
 فَغَفَرْنَا لَهُ ذَلِكَ وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِنْدَنَا لَازْوَاجًا مُسْتَسِيمَاتٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ يَا دَاوُدُ  
 إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ  
 وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَ  
 عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ يَوْمَ تُنْفَخُ الْأَسْوَابُ وَالْمُحْسَبَاتُ

ing parties; one party trespassed against the right of the other. So judge between us with truth; do not be unjust; and guide us to the level path.”

23. (One of them explained the case): “This is my brother: he has ninety-nine ewes, and I have but one. Then he said, ‘Make it over to me,’ and he overpowered me in (force of) speech.”

24. David said: “He has undoubtedly wronged you in demanding your single ewe to add to his own ewes. Truly many are the partners in business who trespass against the rights of one another, except such as believe and do good, righteous deeds – and how few they are!” David came to understand that We had tried him, so he appealed to his Lord for forgiveness, and fell down in prostration, and turned to God in contrition.

25. So We forgave him that. Indeed he enjoyed nearness to Us and an excellent place of final return.

26. “O David! We have appointed you a vicegerent in the land (to rule according to Our commandments); so judge among people with the truth, and do not follow personal inclination, lest it leads you astray from the path of God. Surely those who wander astray from God’s path – for them there is a severe punishment because they have forgotten the Day of Reckoning.”<sup>4</sup>

17. Bear patiently all that they say, and remember Our servant David, powerful (in his glorification of God, in knowledge, in kingdom, and in fighting). Surely he was one ever turning to God in penitence.

18. We subdued the mountains to glorify (their Lord) along with him in the afternoon and bright morning;

19. And the birds assembled: all were turned to Him (in devotion and glorification).

20. We strengthened his kingdom, and granted him wisdom and decisive speech (to inform, and convince, and lead).

21. Now, has the report of the litigants come to you, when they climbed over the wall into the royal chamber?

22. When they entered in upon David, and so he was taken aback by them. They said: “Do not be alarmed! (We are) two litigat-



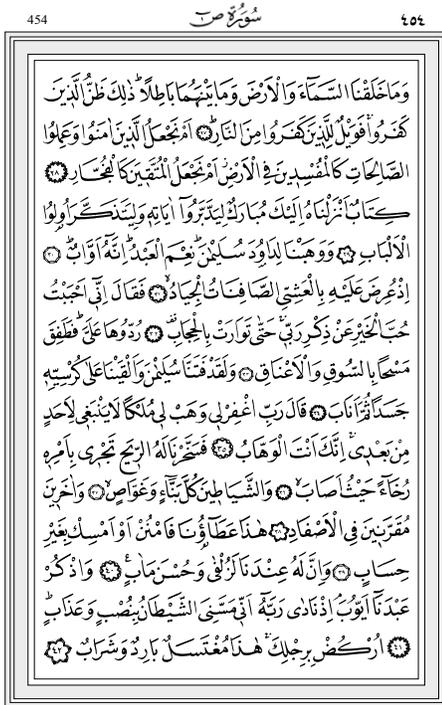
4. The gist of the trial under which God put David must be as follows:

All the Messengers were sent to convey God's Message to people. However, each had a particular mission within this general mission according to the demands of the time and conditions, and was therefore equipped with a special capacity peculiar to him. For example, God appointed the Prophet Abraham a leader (*imām*), David a vicegerent (*khalīfah*), and Solomon a king (*malīk*), upon them all be peace. However, before they were commissioned for such particular duties, each had to pass through a strenuous trial. God tested the Prophet Abraham with severe commandments and terrible ordeals (such as being thrown into a fire, the destruction of the people of Lot, who was his relative, and being ordered to sacrifice his son, Ishmael), and after Abraham fulfilled all these tests thoroughly, He appointed him an *imām*, (one who leads people in all matters). He put the Prophet David to the test mentioned in verses 21–24 in this *sūrah*, and when David succeeded, He appointed him a *khalīfah* (vicegerent: one who judges and governs according to God's commandments). He also tried the Prophet Solomon, as will be mentioned in verse 34 in this *sūrah*; and when Solomon was successful, He made him a king invested with very great power. We should point out that imamate, caliphate (vicegerency), and kingdom are all particular missions within the comprehensive mission of Messengership. We can conclude from this fact that any trial through which a particular Messenger had to pass was particular to the mission for which he had been chosen. So, the trial to which God put the Prophet David, upon him be peace, concerned judging between people.

Whether the litigants who entered the presence of David, upon him be peace, by climbing the high walls of his royal chamber

were angels who appeared in the form of human beings or not, what David thought he had been mistaken about might be his pronouncing a judgment before listening to both sides. When he listened to the one who complained about his brother (brother-in-religion or partner-in-business), either David felt in himself that this man must be truthful or some other sign convinced him that the man was speaking the truth, or perhaps his judgment was based on the compassion which David felt towards him; in any case, David pronounced the judgment before listening to the other side. Then he came to understand that God had tested him and he thought he had made a mistake. Since he was a Messenger ever-turning to God in sincere devotion, he again turned to Him in contrition and asked for forgiveness. God forgave him, which meant that David, upon him be peace, had passed the test and then He appointed David as a vicegerent.

Verse 20 states that God favored David with, in addition to other blessings, the power of speech to clarify all matters distinctly and convince his audience. It is very significant that the one making a complaint about his brother had said that the other had overpowered him in speech (verse 23). So, through this trial, God must have been warning David, upon him be peace, against powerful speech while judging between people. God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, draws our attention to this point: "I am a mortal man like you. You come to me to judge the matters between you. It is possible that some of you are more convincing than the others, and I judge in his favor according to what I hear. (So everyone should speak the truth). Because if I judge in someone's favor as against the right of his brother, let him know that I have assigned for him a brand of Hell's fire" (al-Bukharī, "Shahādah," 27; Muslim, "Aqdiyah," 5).



27. We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in vain (so that people should think themselves at liberty to act each according to his own desires and inclinations). That is the mere conjecture of those who disbelieve. Woe to those who disbelieve because of the Fire!

28. Or (do they think that) We treat those who believe and do good, righteous deeds the same as those who provoke disorder and corruption on earth, or (that) We treat the pious, God-revering ones the same as the shameless, dissolute ones?

29. This is a Book, which We send down to you, full of blessings, so that they (all conscious, responsible beings) may ponder its verses, and that the people of discernment may reflect on it and be mindful.

30. We treated David (who was per-

fectly righteous in his Caliphate) Solomon. How excellent a servant Solomon was! Surely he was one ever-turning (to God) in penitence.<sup>5</sup>

31. Once, in the afternoon, there were brought before him nobly-bred horses (trained for fighting in God's cause, steady when standing, and swift when running).

32. (Having watched them for some time,) he said: "Indeed my love for these horses is (not on their own behalf, but) because they serve for the remembrance of my Lord (and conveying His Name to other lands)." And the horses were hidden by the veil of distance.

33. (He commanded): "Bring them back to me." Then, he rubbed down their legs and their necks.<sup>6</sup>

34. Indeed, We tried Solomon and placed a lifeless body upon his throne. Afterwards, he turned (to God) in contrition.

35. He prayed: "My Lord, forgive me, and bestow on me a kingdom which will not suit anyone after me.<sup>7</sup> Surely You are the All-Bestowing."

36. We (accepted his prayer and) subdued the wind to his service, so that it coursed gently by his command wherever he willed;<sup>8</sup>

37. And of the satans (devils), (We made subservient to him) every builder (on earth) and diver (to extract precious stones from the sea);<sup>9</sup>

38. And others (of the rebellious jinn) linked together in fetters.<sup>10</sup>

39. "This is Our gift, so either bestow (from it), or withhold (from it), without reckoning (that it may diminish or that you will be held to account for it).

40. Surely he enjoyed nearness to Us and an excellent place of final return.

41. And remember Our servant, Job,

when he called out to his Lord: “Surely Satan has caused me to be afflicted with distress and great suffering.”<sup>11</sup>

42. (We told him:) “Strike the ground with your foot: here is cool water to wash with and to drink.”<sup>12</sup>

5. The Qur’ān mentions the basic function or duties of a Messenger in the verse 2: 151 as follows:

*As We have sent among you a Messenger of your own, reciting to you Our Revelations, and purifying you (of false beliefs and doctrines, and sins, and all kinds of uncleanness), and instructing you in the Book and the Wisdom, and instructing you in whatever you do not know.*

The term “imamate” is used in the sense of guiding people to truth in all matters, especially in purely religious ones, and leading them in life; caliphate is used in the sense of judging, particularly among people with the truth; while kingdom is used in the sense of enjoying temporal authority or rulership in the highest degree – these are all included in the duties of Messengership when the time and conditions necessitate them. The imamate does not require either a caliphate or kingdom, nor is every caliph, king or sovereign an *imām* in all matters. Caliphate and kingdom both require people’s resignation and allegiance, however. So neither the caliphate nor the kingdom that is referred to by the Qur’ān is the same as absolutism. It is significant that God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, emigrated to Madīnah after he took the allegiance of the Muslims in Madīnah and there felt the need to renew this allegiance before attempting certain important tasks. In addition, he never neglected to consult with his Companions, the citizens of the Muslim state in his time, in all social and political issues. Islam insists upon the necessity of consultation or an advisory government and freedom of opinion in all social and political matters. In the history of the Children of Israel, the period of founding a government or having caliphs or kings began after or upon the Children of Israel’s demand to have a commander-king to fight against their enemies (*sūrah* 2: 246–247). In

their history, the Prophet Moses was a Messenger-Imām, David was a Messenger-Caliph, and Solomon was a Messenger-King, upon them all be peace.

6. The Prophet Solomon, upon him be peace, was a Prophet-king. But nothing of the world, even those nobly bred horses, kept and trained for fighting in God’s cause, ever prevented him from remembrance of God, because remembrance of God is the most important thing. He loved everything for God’s sake or because of his love for God. So these three verses, which come after the verse that states Solomon was one ever-turning to God in devotion, emphasize Solomon’s deep devotion to God despite his being a powerful king.

7. When we consider the trial by which the Prophet Solomon, upon him be peace, was tried from the perspective of his subsequent prayer and the fact that, as explained in note 4 above, a Messenger is put through a test with respect to the particular aspect of his mission of Messengership, in addition to taking into account a Prophetic Tradition related to that event, we can conclude that the trial through which the Prophet Solomon passed must have been concerned with his kingdom.

The Prophet Abraham, upon him be peace, prayed to God to grant him a son (*sūrah* 37: 100). God accepted his prayer and granted him Ishmael when he was an old man. Then Abraham was tried by being ordered to offer Ishmael in sacrifice, upon them both be peace. When he succeeded in this, God granted him Isaac, upon him be peace, and many grandsons. The Prophet Abraham showed that his desire for a son was due to his desire for the continuation of his mission. Similarly, the Prophet Zachariah, upon him be peace, also prayed for a son (*sūrah* 19: 5–6), and he was also tried by seeing his son, the Prophet John, killed before his

eyes. The greater a favor is, the greater the responsibility and suffering it brings. As pointed out by some, the Prophet Solomon desired his kingdom to continue through his offspring, and as reported from God's Messenger, to have sons who would struggle for God's sake (al-Bukhārī, "Anbiyā," 40). This was, of course, because he desired to earn uninterrupted spiritual rewards through his offspring and so that the Divine Sovereignty in the human realm might continue without lessening. However, God's will was different. How and by whom people should be governed depend on what kind of a government and ruler they deserve as a consequence of their spiritual, moral, and intellectual level in adherence to Islam. So the lifeless body placed upon his throne might have been the body of one of his sons, or of the son whom he desired to succeed him. Whereupon, the Prophet Solomon prayed to God that He might grant him such a kingdom that, through it, he could serve Him to the extent that all his progeny would have served if they had succeeded him, and no one else would be able to serve Him through the kingdom to that degree. Since this meant that there would be agreeable competition in serving God, and since he was perfectly sincere in his prayer – he desired such a kingdom purely for God's service – his prayer was accepted.

8. For similar statements and an explanation, see *sūrah* 21: 81, note 11; *sūrah* 34: 12.

9. See *sūrah* 21: 82, note 12; *sūrah* 34: 13.

10. These fetters must be of a kind peculiar to the jinn.

11. On the suffering of Job and his supplication to God, see *sūrah* 21: 83–84, notes 15–16.

For any event to take place, for a thing to come into and go out of existence, and for a blessing or an affliction to visit a person, there

are two causes: one apparent and visible, material; the other, real and invisible. The former cause relates to the material world with the beings in it and human beings themselves, while the latter relates to God. God allows something good or evil to visit a person either because of that person's belief or unbelief, good or evil intention and deeds, or purely as a blessing or harm for them, either to test them or to make them rise to higher ranks. Like all other apparent, material causes, Satan is also a cause for human beings to do something. Like all other material causes, he also has no creative effect on anything that takes place. So, the Prophet Job's attributing his affliction to Satan as a cause can be seen to be either like the Prophet Moses' qualifying the enmity and fighting which led to someone's death as of Satan's doing, or that Satan and other jinn may actually cause some illnesses in the human body. The second alternative invites medical research.

Another point that should be mentioned here is that although the Prophets are sinless, this does not prevent them from seeing themselves as having faults or lapsing, or from asking God for forgiveness. Since they are extremely sensitive to their duties and their relationship with God, they asked for God's forgiveness much more than other people. God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, says: "I ask for God's forgiveness and turn to Him in repentance (according to al-Bukhārī, "Da'awāt," 3) more than seventy times (or according to Muslim, "Dhikr," 41) a hundred times a day."

12. The Prophet Job, upon him be peace, must have suffered from a skin disease. When he struck the ground with his foot, God caused a spring to gush forth. When he washed himself with it and drank of it, his disease was healed, by God's leave.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَذِكْرَى لَأُولِي  
 الْأَلْبَابِ ۝ وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِغْتًا فَاصْرَبْ بِهِ وَلَا تَحْنُتْ إِنَّا  
 وَجَدْنَاكَ صَابِرًا نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ ۝ وَأذْكُرْ عِبَادَنَا  
 إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ أُولِي الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ ۝ إِنَّا أَخْلَصْنَاهُمْ  
 بِحَسَابَةِ ذِكْرَى الْتَارِ ۝ وَإِنَّهُمْ عِنْدَنَا لَمِنَ الْمُصْطَفَيْنِ  
 الْأَخْيَارِ ۝ وَأذْكُرْ إسماعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ وَكُلٌّ مِنَ  
 الْأَخْيَارِ ۝ هَذَا ذِكْرٌ وَإِنْ لِلتَّعْبِينَ لَمَن مَّاءٌ ۝ حِجَابَاتٍ عَذِيبٍ  
 مُّقْتَصَّعَةٍ لَهُمُ الْآبْوَابُ ۝ مُمْسَكِينَ فِيهَا يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِكُنُوفِهِمْ  
 كَثِيرَةٍ وَشَرَابٍ ۝ وَعِنْدَهُمْ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ أَرْتَابٌ ۝  
 هَذَا مَا تُوْعَدُونَ لِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ۝ إِنَّ هَذَا لَرِزْقُنَا مَا لَهُ مِنْ تَفَاقُحٍ ۝  
 هَذَا وَإِنَّ لِلطَّاغِينَ لَشَرَّ مَآبٍ ۝ حَسْبَتْهُ يَصَلُّونَهَا فَمِنْسُ الْمِهَادِ ۝  
 هَذَا فَلْيَذُوقُوهُ حِسَتَهُ وَعَسَاقٍ ۝ وَالْأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ ذُرْوَعٍ ۝  
 هَذَا فَوْجٌ مُّقْتَصَّعَةٌ مَعَكُمْ لَا مَرْجَا بِهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ صَالُوا النَّارَ ۝  
 ۝ قَالَ أُولَئِكَ لَنْتَعْتَنَّ وَلَا مَرْجَا بَكُمْ أَن تُنصِرُوا فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ ۝ فَانصُرُوا  
 ۝ قَالَ أُولَئِكَ لَنْتَعْتَنَّ وَلَا مَرْجَا بَكُمْ أَن تُنصِرُوا فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ ۝ فَانصُرُوا

43. We granted him his household and the like thereof along with them as a mercy from Us, and as a reminder (with guidance and instruction) for the people of discernment.

44. (We also told him:) “Take in your hand a bundle of rushes and strike with it: do not break your oath.”<sup>13</sup> Surely We found him full of patience and constancy. How excellent a servant! He was surely one ever-turning to God in penitence.

45. And remember Our servants, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, endowed with power (in obedience to God and doing good deeds), and insight (to discern the truth in things and events).

46. We made them perfectly pure and sincere by virtue of a characteristic most pure: their constant remembrance of the Abode (of the Hereafter).

47. They are in Our sight among the perfectly purified, chosen ones, the truly good.

48. And also remember Ishmael and al-Yasa’a (Isaiah),<sup>14</sup> and Dhu’l-Kifl.<sup>15</sup> Every one of them is of the truly good.

49. All this is a remembrance (of the excellence of those We have mentioned, and an instruction for people). For the God-revering, pious there is an excellent abode of return:

50. Gardens of perpetual bliss whose gates are wide-open to them,

51. In which they will recline (on thrones), calling therein for many a fruit and drink.

52. And with them will be pure, chaste-eyed spouses, well-matched, (whose glances are fixed on them only).

53. This is what you are promised for the Day of Reckoning.

54. This is certainly Our provision (for you), with no diminishing (nor end) in it.

55. All this (for the God-revering, pious); but for the rebellious is an evil abode of return:

56. Hell, where they will enter to roast: how evil a cradle!

57. This (then is for them), so let them taste it: boiling water and intensely-cold, dark fluid.

58. And paired with that, another (torment) of a similar nature.

59. “(O rebellious ones!) Here is the crowd of people who rushed blindly into sin in your company (while in the world, and now they will rush into the Fire together with you!)” (The rebellious ones cry out:) “No welcome for them! They will indeed enter the Fire to roast.”

60. They (who had blindly followed) say:

“No! rather for you, there is no welcome for you! It is you who forwarded this for us (from the world!)” Then, how evil a place to abide in!

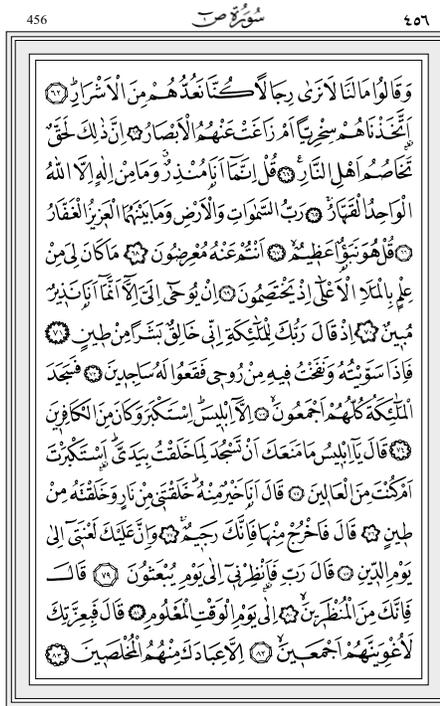
61. And they say (in supplication): “Our Lord! Whoever forwarded this for us, increase him in punishment doubled in the Fire!”

13. While he was ill, the Prophet Job, upon him be peace, swore by God that if God would restore him to health, he would punish his wife with lashes because she had committed an error. God revealed to him that he could fulfill his vow by striking her with a bundle of (as many) rushes (as the amount of the lashes with which he swore to punish her). There is such a rule in the Sharī‘ah: Should the culprit be so ill that there is no reasonable chance of recovery, or if he or she is too old, he or she should be hit only once with a branch with as many twigs as the amount of the lashes with which the culprit should be punished, or with a broom with the

same number of straws, so as to meet the formal requirements of the Law.

14. Al-Yasa‘a, who is also mentioned in *sūrah* 6: 86, is most probably Isaiah, upon him be peace, in the Bible. He succeeded the Prophet Ilyās (Elijah), upon him be peace, and put up a fierce struggle against worshipping the idol Ba‘l in Israel. However, after his death, idol-worship and evils re-appeared in Israel, and this was followed by attacks from the Assyrians. After a series of attacks, the ruthless Assyrian king, Sargon, put an end to the kingdom of Israel in 721 BC.

15. On Dhu‘l-Kifl, see *sūrah* 21: 85, note 17.



62. And (the rebellious ones) say: “What is it with us that we cannot see the men (the poor and weak believers) whom we used to count among the wicked,

63. “Whom we used to take in mockery? Or is it that (they are here with us, but) our eyes have missed them (just as we turned our eyes from them in contempt in the world)?”

64. Such will, in truth, be the mutual wrangling of the people of the Fire.

65. Say: “I am but a warner. There is no deity save God, the One (with no one and nothing like or comparable to Him), the All-Overwhelming (with absolute sway over all that exists).

66. The Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Forgiving.

67. Say: “This (Qur’ān) is a supreme message.

68. “You turn away from it in aversion.

69. “I had no knowledge of the High Assembly (in the heavens) when they were arguing.<sup>16</sup>

70. “I (follow only what is revealed to me and) it is revealed to me that I am but a plain warner.”

71. (Remember) when your Lord said to the angels: “I am creating a mortal (man) out of clay (to set him on the earth as vicegerent).

72. “When I have fashioned him fully and breathed into Him out of My Spirit,<sup>17</sup> then fall down prostrating before him (as a sign of respect for him and his superiority).”

73. So the angels prostrated, all of them together,<sup>18</sup>

74. But *Iblis* did not (in defiance of God’s explicit order to him); he grew arrogant and displayed himself as an unbeliever.

75. (God) said: “O *Iblis*! What prevents you from prostrating before the being whom I have created with My two Hands?<sup>19</sup> Are you too proud (to bow down before any created being in defiance of My command), or are you (of those who think themselves) so high in honor (that they cannot be ordered to prostrate before anyone)?”

76. (*Iblis*) answered: “I am better than him. You have created me from fire and him, You have created from clay.”<sup>20</sup>

77. (God) said: “Then get you down out of it; surely You are one eternally rejected (from My Mercy).

78. And My curse is on you until the Day of Judgment.”

79. He said: “My Lord, grant me respite

till the Day when they are raised (from the dead)!”

80. (God) said: “You are of the ones granted respite,

81. “Until the Day of the Time Appointed.”<sup>21</sup>

82. (*Iblīs*) said: “Then (I swear) by Your Glory, I will certainly cause them all to rebel and go astray,

83. “Except Your servants among them, endowed with sincerity in faith and worshipping You.”

16. This statement emphasizes that the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, had no knowledge of the events that take place in the heavens among the angels or between God and the angels, except by Revelation. For example, he could not have had any knowledge of the things that took place between God, the angels, and *Iblīs* (Satan) concerning the creation and appointment of humankind as vicegerent on the earth, which will be mentioned in the verses to come.

17. On God’s breathing into humankind out of His Spirit, see *sūrah* 15: 29, note 7.

18. On the vicegerency of humankind and the angels’ prostrating before them, see *sūrah* 2: 30–34, notes 30–35.

19. In *sūrah* 36: 71, God Almighty says that He has originated many things and beings with *His Hands*. However, in this verse, He states that He has created humanity with *both of His Hands*. The Hand signifies power. Therefore, mentioning *two Hands* in this verse has two important meanings: one is that God Almighty has created humankind in the perfect form as the best pattern of creation; the other is that humankind has two dimensions in its exist-

tence, spiritual and material. Verse 71 refers to humankind’s material origin (clay), while verse 72 refers to its real value, which lies in the spiritual dimension of its existence.

20. According to *Iblīs*, honor and goodness lie in physical origin or matter. His attitude is typical of materialism and represents a lack of correct understanding. He saw only the material origin of humankind and ignored their spiritual dimension that originated in being breathed into out of God’s Spirit.

The other point to mention here is that *Iblīs* judged God’s order according to his own knowledge and understanding, and opposed His explicit order based on his own judgment. He demonstrated that, out of arrogance, he would fulfill God’s orders only when they conformed with his desire or understanding, not because he believed all of these orders to be truths in themselves, and that they must be obeyed. So are those who act in the same way aware who it is that they follow, and whose pupils they are?

21. This time is the overall destruction of the world, a time until which human beings will continue to bear the responsibility of carrying out God’s orders.

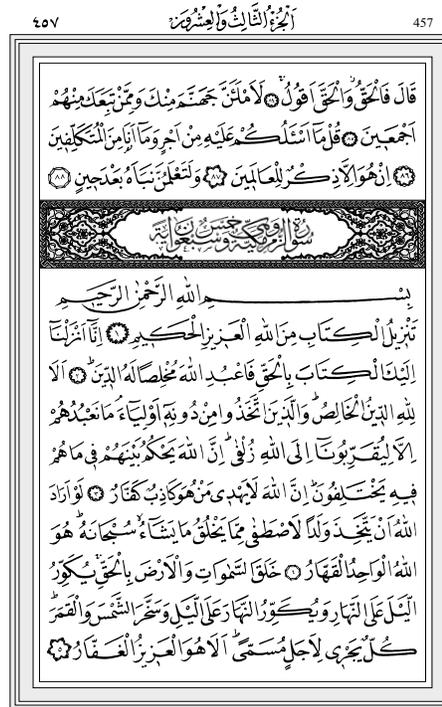
84. (God) said: “(Whatever I do and command is) the truth itself, and the truth I speak:

85. “I will most certainly fill Hell with you (and your kind), and those (of humankind) who follow you, all together.”

86. Say (O Messenger): “I ask of you no wage for this (conveying the Qur’ān to you), and I am not of those who claim to be what they are really not and make fabrications of their own.

87. “This (Qur’ān) is only a Reminder (with guidance and admonishment) for all conscious beings.

88. “You will most certainly come to know of what it informs after a time (as appointed for you).”



SŪRAH 39

AZ-ZUMAR  
(THE COMPANIES)

Makkah Period

Revealed in the mid-Makkan period when the persecutions to the believers had escalated, this *sūrah* of 75 verses derives its name from the word *zumar* (companies) that occurs in verses 71 and 73. It expounds the signs of God’s Oneness in the natural world and emphasizes the absurdity of associating partners with Him. It hints at emigration for the believers who were suffering great difficulties in worshipping God in their homeland. It declares that there can be no reconciliation between believing in God’s Oneness and associating partners with Him. It also reminds us of the other world, where people will see the outcome of their deeds in this world.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. (This is) the Book being sent down in parts from God, the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Wise.
2. We have sent down to you the Book with the truth (embodying it, and with nothing false in it), so worship God, sincere in your faith in Him and practicing the Religion purely for His sake.
3. Beware! it is to God alone that all sincere faith, worship, and obedience are due. Yet, those who take, apart from Him, others (angels, the jinn, or humans) for guardians and confidants (to entrust their affairs to) say: “We worship them for no other reason than they may bring us nearer to God.” God will judge between

them (between those who worship and obey God exclusively and those who associate partners with Him) concerning all on which they differ. God does not guide anyone who is a determined liar and ingrate.

4. Had God willed to take to Himself a child, He could certainly have chosen whatever He willed out of all that He has created. All-Glorified is He (in that He is exalted above having any children). He is God, the One, the All-Overwhelming (with absolute sway over all that exists).

5. He has created the heavens and the

earth with truth (meaningfully, and for a definite purpose, and on solid foundations of truth). He wraps the night around the day, and He wraps the day around the night (until one covers the other completely).<sup>1</sup> And He has made the sun and the moon subservient (to His command), each running its course for a term appointed (by Him). Be aware! He is the All-Glorious with irresistible might (able to punish those who oppose Him), the All-Forgiving (Who forgives those who turn to Him in repentance).

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1. This is a very fine simile, which alludes both to the earth's being rounded and to differences in the times of sunrise and sunset. Like a turban wrapped around the head

until it is completely covered, God wraps lines of night and day around each other round the earth until one covers the other completely.

خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُنَّجَعَلُ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَانزَلَ  
لَكُمْ مِنْ الْأَنْعَامِ شِطَائِينَ زَوْجًا يَخْلُقُكُمْ فِي بُطُونِ  
أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ خَلْقًا مِنْ بَيْنِ خَلْقٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ ثَلَاثٍ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ  
رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاقْبَلُوا نَصْرَهُ إِنَّ كُفْرًا لِلَّهِ  
عَنِّي عَذَابٌ وَلَا يَرْضَى لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ وَإِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ  
وَأِذَا رُءُودَا خَرَى تُرَابِي رَبِّكُمْ مُجِيعٌ كَرِيمٌ فَيَذَرُكُمْ مَتَّكِنُهُمْ  
تَعْمَلُونَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ وَإِذَا مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ مَنَّ اللَّهُ  
رَبُّهُ مُبْدِيگَالِيَهُ فَوَقَدْ إِذَا خَوْلَهُ ضَمَّةٌ مِنْهُ لَيْسَ مَا كَانَ يُدْعَوْنَ  
إِلَيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَجَعَلَ اللَّهُ أَنْدَادًا لِلْبُصَالَةِ مِنْ سَبِيلِهِ قُلْ تَمَتَّعْ  
بِكُفْرِكَ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ إِنَّهُ أَتَمَّنْ هُوَ قَائِمٌ  
أَنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَامًا يَذُورُ الْأَجْرَةَ وَرِزْقًا رَحْمَةً  
رَبِّهِ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَسْكُرُونَ إِنَّمَا  
يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ قُلْ يَا عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا  
رَبَّكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ  
وَاسِعَةٌ إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

6. He has created you from a single human self, and then He has made from it its mate,<sup>2</sup> and He has sent down for you eight in pairs of cattle.<sup>3</sup> He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, one act and phase of creation after another,<sup>4</sup> in three veils of darkness.<sup>5</sup> This is God, your true Lord (Who creates and sustains you): To Him belongs the sovereignty (absolute ownership and dominion of everything). There is no deity but He. How, then, are you turned about (to different kinds of belief)?

7. If you disbelieve in Him (in ingratitude), yet surely God is absolutely independent of you. He is not pleased with ingratitude and unbelief from His servants; whereas if you give thanks (and believe), He is pleased with it from you. And no soul, as bearer of burden, bears (and is made to bear) the burden of another. Then, to your Lord is your return, so that He will make you understand all that you were doing (and call you to account). Surely He has full knowledge of what lies hidden in the bosoms.

8. When an affliction befalls human, he calls upon his Lord turning to Him (in contrition); then when He bestows a favor upon him, he forgets for what he prayed to Him before, and sets up rivals to God, so that he (himself goes astray and) misleads (others) from His way. Say (to such a one): “Enjoy life in your unbelief for a while! You are for sure one of the companions of the Fire.”

9. Is he who worships God devoutly in the watches of the night prostrating and stand-

ing, who fears the Hereafter and hopes for the mercy of his Lord (to be likened to that other)? Say: “Are they ever equal, those who know and those who do not know?”<sup>6</sup> Only the people of discernment will reflect (on the distinction between knowledge and ignorance, and obedience to God and disobedience,) and be mindful.

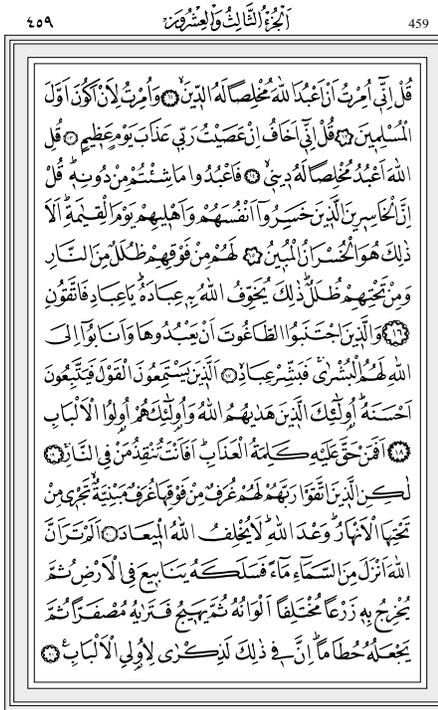
10. Say (quoting Me): “O My servants who believe! Keep from disobedience to your Lord in reverence for Him and piety. For those devoted to doing good in this world, aware that God is seeing them, there is good (by way of recompense). And God’s earth is vast (enabling worship).<sup>7</sup> Those who are patient (persevering in adversity, worshipping God, and refraining from sins) will surely be given their reward without measure.”

2. For an explanation, see *sūrah* 4: 1, note 1.
3. Eight in pairs (see *sūrah* 6: 143–144): two of sheep, two of goats, and, likewise, of camels there are two, and of oxen there are two. The phrase *God “has sent them down”* means that they are among the bounties of God that He has bestowed out of the treasures He maintains. Elsewhere (*sūrah* 15: 21), He states: *There is not a thing but the stores (for its life and sustenance) are with Us, and We do not send it down except in due, determined measure.*
4. *One act and phase of creation after another*, refers to the stages an embryo passes through in the womb. These are explained in *sūrah* 22: 5: *Then (We have created you) from a drop of seminal fluid, then from a clot clinging (to the womb wall), then from a lump in part shaped and in part not shaped, and differentiated and undifferentiated; and in sūrah 23: 14: Then We have created of the fertilized ovum a clot clinging (to the womb wall), and (afterwards in sequence) We have created of the clinging clot, a (chewed) lump, and We have created of the (chewed) lump bones, and We have clothed the bones in flesh. Then We have caused it to grow into another creation.*
5. Three veils of darkness must be the anterior abdominal wall, the uterine wall, and the

amniochorionic membrane. Although there are other interpretations of this statement, the one presented here seems the most logical to modern embryologists from an embryological point of view.

6. Though the verse declares the general truth that knowledge and ignorance cannot be alike, and those who know and those who do not know are never equal, here it draws particular attention to the fact that those who have true knowledge of God and act accordingly, and those who are devoid of knowledge of Him and therefore either disbelieve in Him or associate partners with Him, cannot be equal. Any knowledge based on knowledge of God is true knowledge, and in both worlds, it is beneficial to those who have it. However, anyone who lacks (true) knowledge of God, and cannot find a point of confirmation in their heart through which any knowledge that they obtain from the outer world and their inner world adds to or strengthens their faith, is ignorant. Even if they have absorbed thousands of branches of science, their ignorance is only compounded by that science. (Also see *sūrah* 33: 72, note 37.)

7. This statement exists in the Qur’ān to remind us of the importance of emigration for God’s sake and to encourage the believers toward it, or to prepare their hearts for it. (See *sūrah* 4: 97; *sūrah* 29: 56.)



11. Say: “I am commanded to worship God, sincere in faith in Him and practicing the Religion purely for His sake.

12. “And I am commanded to be the first and foremost in being Muslim (in faith in, and submission to, what I am commanded to convey to you).”

13. Say: “I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the punishment of an awesome Day.”

14. Say: “I worship God, sincere in my faith in Him and practicing the Religion purely for His sake.

15. “(As for those of you who reject my call,) worship then whatever you will apart from Him (you are forewarned of the consequences!)” Say: “Surely the losers are those who will ruin themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection.” Beware! this indeed is the obvious loss.

16. For them will be dark layers of the Fire above them, and dark layers below them. With this does God warn off His servants. O My servants, keep from disobedience to Me in reverence for Me and piety (and so deserve My protection against it).

17. As for those who keep away from false deities and powers of evil (instituting patterns of faith and rule in defiance of God) – away from worshipping them – and turn toward God in penitence, for them are

glad tidings. So give the glad tidings to My servants,

18. Who, when they hear speech, follow the best of it (in the best way possible, and even seek what is better and straighter).<sup>8</sup> Those are the ones whom God has guided, and those are the ones who are people of discernment.

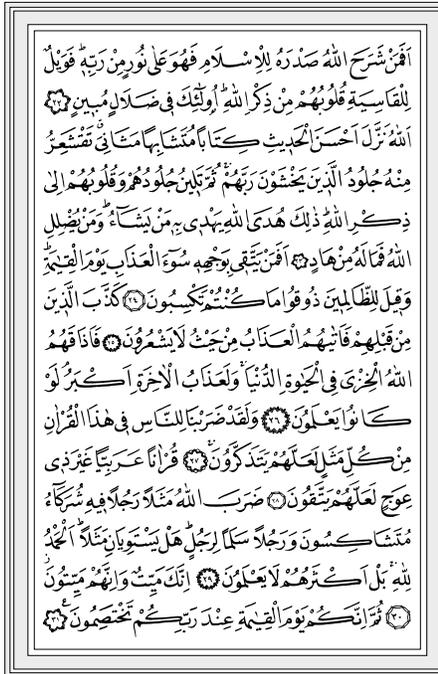
19. Is he, against whom the word of (God’s) punishment has been justified and realized (to be likened to one who will be rewarded with Paradise)? Could you, then, deliver one who is in the Fire?

20. But those who keep from disobedience to God in reverence for Him and piety, for them are lofty mansions built one above another, beneath which rivers flow. (This is) God’s promise. God never fails to fulfill His promise.

21. Have you not considered that God sends down water from the sky, and leads it into springs in the earth to flow therein; then He causes to grow with it produce of various colors; then it withers so that you see it grow yellow; then He makes it break and fade away. In this, for sure, is a reminder for people of discernment.

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8. Humankind, by our primordial nature, seeks what is good and right. When a person encounters what is good and right and what is evil and wrong, they tend to prefer what is good and right. And when one is between what is good and right and what is better or righter, one tends to follow the latter. It is virtuousness to follow what is better or even the best, but one in a congregation or community should not criticize others who follow what is good and right just because they do not pursue what is better and more right.



22. Is he (who derives lessons from God’s acts in the universe and so) whose breast God has expanded to Islam, so that he follows a light from his Lord (is such a one to be likened to one whose heart is closed up to any remembrance of God and therefore to Islam)? So woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of God (and who learn nothing from His signs and Revelations)! Those are lost in obvious error.

23. God sends down in parts the best of the words as a Book fully consistent in itself, and whose statements corroborate, expound and refer to one another. The skins of those who stand in awe of their Lord tingle at (the hearing and understanding of) it. Then, their skins and their hearts come to rest in the Remembrance of God (the Qur’ān). This is God’s guidance, by which He guides whomever He wills. And whoever God leads astray, there is no guide for him.<sup>9</sup>

24. Is he who (thrown into the Fire upon his face with his hands chained around his neck,) tries to guard himself with his face (by trying to keep it away) from the evil punishment on the Day of Resurrection (to be likened to one who will be safe from the punishment that Day)? It will be said to the wrongdoers: “Taste (this Day) what you used to earn (in the world)!”

25. Those before them denied (the Revelation), and so the punishment came upon them without their having perceived from where it came.

26. Thus God made them taste disgrace in the life of this world, but the punishment of the Hereafter is greater. If only they had known!

27. Assuredly We have struck for human-kind in this Qur’ān all kinds of parables and comparisons, so that they may reflect and be mindful.

28. It is a Qur’ān in Arabic with no crookedness (free from any contradiction and anything offensive to truth and righteousness and reason), so that they may keep from disobedience to God in reverence for Him and piety (to deserve His protection).

29. God strikes a parable: a man in the employment of many partners who continuously dispute with one another, and another man employed by one person: are those two equal in likeness? All praise and gratitude are for God (the only Sovereign Lord of the creation). But most people have no knowledge (of the meaning of this truth).<sup>10</sup>

30. You will surely die (one day), and surely they (too) will die.

31. Then, on the Day of Resurrection, you will stand in the Presence of your Lord as litigants.

9. Through its style, recitation, the issues it deals with, its promises, and its threats, the Qur'ān causes the person who reads or listens to it to tremble. It arouses in hearts a deep veneration for both itself and its Author – God the Almighty. In addition to this majesty, it is also so pleasing to all the senses and faculties that it inspires calm and serenity. It satisfies hearts and minds and solves all intellectual and spiritual problems. So, anyone unprejudiced and who has tendency toward belief in God Almighty cannot help but feel struck by the Qur'ān.

Like the Qur'ān and its Author, God's nearest servants – the Prophets and the saints – also have some sort of majesty and grace, each according to their degree. However, their majesty, which first strikes others about them, envelops a welcoming grace. So, everyone feels awe in their first encounter with a Prophet or a saint, and then it is their grace that attracts them. This perception and feeling which is first struck by the Qur'ān, and our satisfaction with it, is a great favor and guidance of God. One who feels no awe or satisfaction in the face of the Qur'ān is the very one who has lost the innate capacity to believe.

10. If all things are not attributed to the Almighty in creation and administration, an infinite number of deities, all essentially opposite, but simultaneously identical, must be recognized. Due to the interrelation of all things and the essential quality of Divinity, their number would increase in proportion to the number of particles and compounds found in creation.

For example, a deity who creates a honeybee or a grape should be able to rule and influence all elements in the universe, as a honeybee or a grape is a miniature of creation. So there is only room for a Single Necessarily Existent One. If things are attributed to themselves, each minute particle would be a deity – a deity having all the Names and Attributes of God Almighty, for having these Names and Attributes is a requirement of being a deity.

A single fruit grown by many people requires as many tools as does growing a tree with abundant fruit. Similarly, the instruments, machines, and factories needed to equip an army would be the same if only a single soldier were to be equipped. The difference is only qualitative, and the difficulty that arises from being produced by many people will make its production almost impossible. So the universe rejects more than one creator and administrator, and its testimony to its Single Creator is more manifest, radiant, clearer, and expressive than its testimony to its own existence. Even if one were to deny the existence of the universe, as the Sophists did, the existence of the One, Who is powerful over all things, cannot be denied.

In short: If innumerable multiple things are not attributed to one source, then, in addition to having to attribute one thing to innumerable multiple things, there would be a multitude of difficulties (as many as there are things) in explaining the matter. So, the apparent, extraordinary ease of creating so many species distributed worldwide must therefore come from the Oneness of their Creator.

32. Who, then, is more in the wrong than he who fabricates falsehood against God, and denies the truth when it comes to him? Is there not in Hell a dwelling for the unbelievers?!

33. As for him who has come with the truth and him who has confirmed it, those are the God-revering, pious ones.

34. For them is whatever they desire in the Presence of their Lord.<sup>11</sup> That is the reward of those devoted to doing good, aware that God is seeing them.

35. For God will blot out from them (even) the worst of what they once did, and pay them their reward in accordance with the best of what they used to do.<sup>12</sup>

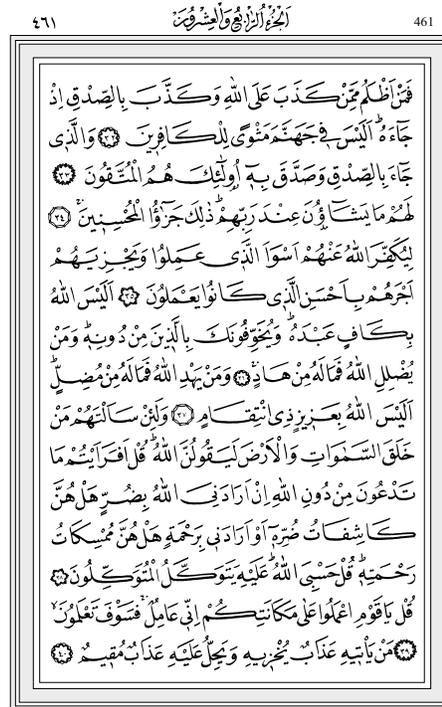
36. Is not God sufficient for His servant? Yet they seek to frighten you with those (whom they deify and worship) apart from God. Whoever God leads astray, there is no guide for him.

37. And whomever God guides, there is no one who can lead him astray. Is not God All-Glorious with irresistible might, Able to Requite?

38. Indeed, if you ask them who has created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say, "God." Say: "Have you, then, ever considered what it is that you invoke apart from God? If God wills some harm for me, are they the ones that can remove His harm (from me), or if He wills for me a mercy, are they the ones that can withhold it?" Say: "God is sufficient for me. In Him

11. For an explanation, see *sūrah* 25: 16, note 5.

12. God will blot out their former unbelief or associating partners with God and reward them according to their best deeds in Islam.

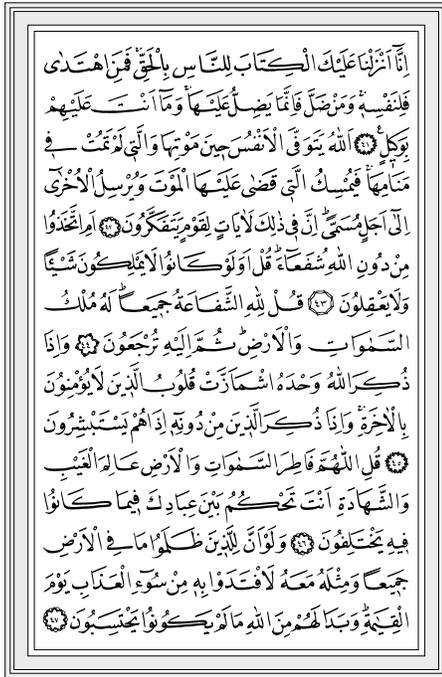


do those who trust (and know the worth and meaning of putting one's trust) put their trust.

39. Say: "O my people! Do all that may be within your power, surely I (too) am doing (the work asked of me). In time, you will come to know

40. "Who they are upon whom (in the world) there will come a punishment that will abase them, and upon whom a lasting punishment will descend (in the Hereafter)."

God will blot out the major sins they may have committed before they attained true piety and righteousness and the consciousness of God's constantly seeing them, and He will reward them for their best deeds that they do thereafter.



41. Surely We have sent down the Book to you with the truth for humankind (embodying the truth, and with no falsehood in it). So, whoever chooses to go right, it is for his own soul's good; and whoever chooses to go astray, goes astray but to its own harm. You are not one appointed as a guardian over them (to assume their responsibility for going right).

42. God takes the spirits at the time of the death of (the souls), and in their sleep those (of the ones) that have not died. Thus He withholds (the spirits of) those for whom He has decreed death, and the rest He sends back (to their bodies to live on) for a term appointed by Him. Surely in that are signs (important lessons) for people who reflect and are mindful.<sup>13</sup>

43. What! (Failing to recognize that God

is the sole Authority over the universe in need of nothing) have they taken to themselves, apart from God, intercessors (whom they suppose capable of intervening for their souls or even in the operation of the universe)? Say: "Why – even though they have no share in the dominion of anything, nor (like idols) any sense or intelligence?"

44. Say: "To God exclusively belongs the whole authority to intercede, (whether He grants any being permission to intercede with Him or not).<sup>14</sup> To Him alone belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. Then, to Him you will be returned."

45. When God as One (and only God) is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter recoil in aversion; but when those (whom they worship) apart from Him are mentioned, they are surely gladdened.

46. Say: "O God, Originator of the heavens and the earth, the Knower of the Unseen (all that lies beyond sense-perception) and the witnessed (the sensed realm)! You it is Who will judge among Your servants concerning that on which they differ."

47. Even if those who do the greatest wrong (by associating partners with God and refusing to believe in the Hereafter) could possess all that is on the earth and its like besides, they would certainly offer it as ransom to escape from the evil punishment on the Day of Resurrection. Something will confront them from God, which they never reckoned.

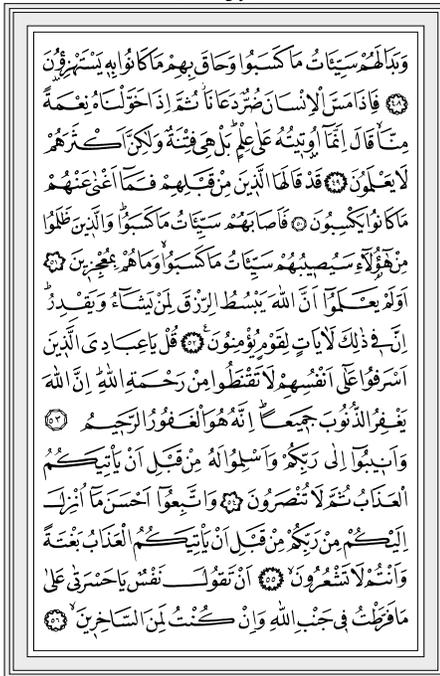
13. This verse draws our attention to a number of important facts, including the following:

- It is not the human spirit but the human soul that dies. The soul (*naʿfs*) is, in one respect, the human being itself and therefore encompasses the spirit; and in another respect, it is the center or mechanism of worldly life. As for the spirit, it is the source of both bodily and spiritual life. It has an existence independent of the body, and it continues to live after death.
- The human soul has various dimensions. These dimensions are mentioned by the scholars as the human spirit, the animal spirit, and the vegetable spirit. The human spirit also has dimensions which are described as the spirit that believes in and worships God (the spirits of the believers) and the spirit common to all people, which thinks, learns, loves, etc.
- Death and sleep are identical in that during both, God takes the spirit. However, at death, God does not return the spirit to the body, thus causing the soul to die; while

during sleep, He takes the spirit, but returns it if He has not ordained death for the soul. So, at death the spirit leaves the body completely, but during sleep it does not leave it completely and therefore continues its relation with the body. If the body still has some degree of animal life during sleep, it is because there is still a relation, however weak it is, between the body and the spirit during sleep.

- Death is when the spirit leaves the body completely and begins another kind of life, which is called the intermediate life (of the grave) between this world and the Hereafter. The conditions of this life are determined by the person's belief and deeds in the world. The spirit still has a relation with its body through the part of it that does not rot under the soil.

14. For a similar meaning of intercession, see *sūrah* 34: 23, note 13. Here there is also a reference to appealing to God to accept our prayers for some of His servants to be placed with Him.



48. The evil deeds they earned (to their account) will become obvious to them, and what they used to mock (God's promised punishment) will overwhelm them.

49. When an affliction befalls human, he calls upon Us (to save him). Then, when We (from sheer grace) have bestowed a favor upon him from Us, he says: "I have been given this only by virtue of a certain knowledge that I have." No, indeed. Rather, this (favor bestowed on human) is a trial, but most of them do not know.

50. Those who lived before them (and adopted the same attitude, and followed a similar way) said it (too);<sup>15</sup> but all that they achieved (in the world) was of no avail to them.

51. The evil results of what they earned

fell upon them. So also will the evil results of what they have earned fall upon these (new generations) that do wrong. And they will never be able to frustrate (Our will).

52. Do they still not know that God enlarges provision for whom He wills, and straitens it (for whom He wills)? Surely in that are signs (of the clear truth) for people who will believe and who will deepen in faith.

53. Say: "(God gives you hope): 'O My servants who have been wasteful (of their God-given opportunities and faculties) against (the good of) their own souls! Do not despair of God's Mercy. Surely God forgives all sins. He is indeed the All-Forgiving, the All-Compassionate.'"<sup>16</sup>

54. Turn to your Lord in penitence and submit to Him wholly before the punishment comes upon you (when it will be too late, and an acknowledgment of faith will no longer avail you); for after (that) you will not be helped.<sup>17</sup>

55. Follow in the best way possible what has been sent down to you from your Lord, before the punishment comes upon you all of a sudden, without your being aware (of its coming);

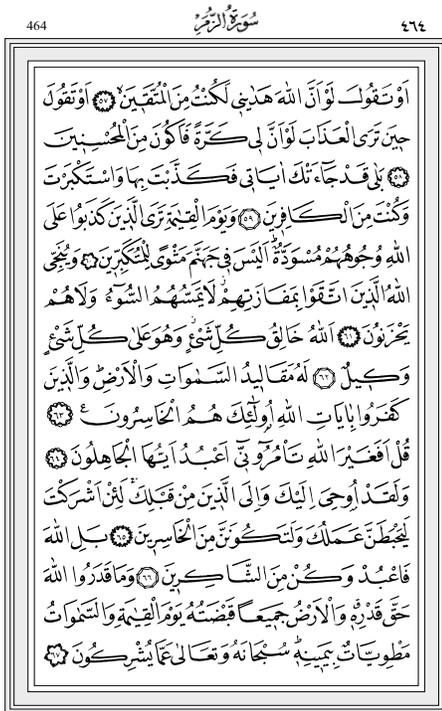
56. Lest any soul should say, "Alas for me for that I have fallen short of my duty to God, and I was indeed among those who used to mock (at the truth)."

15. This is a reference to Korah. See *sūrah* 28: 78, note 17.

16. This verse, first of all, contains great good tidings, in that it declares that there is no unforgivable sin. That is, even if one disbelieves in God or associates partners with Him, or whether one is an atheist or materialist, God forgives him or her provided one repents and comes to belief. Second, God forgives any sinful one He wills, unless one disbelieves in Him (or in any other pillar of faith) or associates partners with Him (4: 48). However, although He can forgive whom He wills, He has made His forgiving dependent on repentance and the mending of one's ways, as will be pointed out in succeeding verses. So this verse, which contains the greatest promise in the Qur'ān, is followed by successive warnings. This is one of the most meaningful examples of the Qur'ānic method of warning and encouraging, and it admonishes people against abandoning themselves to evil ways while instilling confidence in them about God's infinite Compassion.

17. The last two verses establish three essential principles concerning faith:

- God may forgive whom He wills, but in effect, He has made forgiveness dependent on repentance and mending one's ways.
- For eternal salvation, belief and submission are both necessary. There is a difference between being a believer and being a Muslim. There are two aspects to being a Muslim. One is that if one sincerely confirms the essentials of faith, one is a believer and expected to live according to the rules of Islam. A true believer and Muslim is one who sincerely confirms the essentials of faith and fulfills the commandments of Islam. The other aspect is that one is a Muslim according to law if one does not pronounce anything contrary to faith and performs some Islamic acts, such as, in particular, performing the Jumu'ah Prayer in a mosque and paying the Prescribed Purifying Alms (*Zakāh*). Although such a person may be a hypocrite, he or she must be treated as a Muslim by law.
- The punishment mentioned in verse 54 may be either the punishment in the Hereafter or one which will cause repentance to be of avail no longer (*sūrah* 40: 85). When the decisive signs of death appear, or when God's punishment, after many warnings (such as of the kind that came upon many bygone peoples), comes, repentance for unbelief or associating partners with God, and coming to belief, will not be acceptable.



tribution to God with their faces darkened by grief and ignominy. Is there not in Hell a dwelling for those (too) arrogant (for faith)!

61. But God will save (from Hell) those who keep from disobedience to God in reverence for Him and piety, by virtue of what they have achieved (in following God's way). Evil will never touch them, nor will they grieve.<sup>18</sup>

62. God is the Creator of all things, and He is the Guardian (with power of disposition) over all things.

63. His are the keys of (the treasures of) the heavens and the earth. So those who disbelieve in God's Revelations and signs (of the truth) – such are they who are the losers.<sup>19</sup>

64. Say: "(That being the truth) do you still call me to worship other than God, O ignorant ones?"

65. Indeed it has been revealed to you as well as to those (Messengers) sent before you: "Should you associate partners with God, your labor will most certainly come to nothing and you will most certainly be among the losers.

66. Rather, worship God alone, and be among the thankful."<sup>20</sup>

67. They have no true judgment of God, such as His being God requires, and (such is His Power and Sovereignty that) the whole earth will be in His Grasp on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be rolled up in His Right Hand.<sup>21</sup> All-Glorified is He, and absolutely exalted above what they associate with Him.

57. Or (lest it) should say (by way of invalid excuse): "If only God had guided me, I would surely have been among the God-revering, pious!"

58. Or (lest it) should say when it sees the punishment, "If only I had a second chance (to live), so that I could be among those devoted to doing good, aware that God is seeing them!"

59. (But God will answer): "No, indeed! My Revelations and signs (of the truth) did come to you, but you denied them, and grew in arrogance (so as not to confirm them), and you proved yourself to be one of the unbelievers."

60. On the Day of Resurrection, you will see those who fabricated falsehood in at-

18. There are both believers and unbelievers – that is, good and evil people, the righteous and sinful – side by side in the world. Similarly, good and evil are both intrinsic to humankind and exist together. So a true, fruitful education requires not only encouragement, arousing desire, and promises, but also discouragement, warning and threats. This is the way of the Qurʾān. It encourages humankind to do good and promises God’s reward, triumph, and eternal happiness, as well as warning and threatening the punishment of God. As seen in the verses that follow verse 53, the Qurʾān discourages people from sinning with the most powerful statements immediately after making them exuberant with the greatest hope and encouragement.

19. God has two different sets of laws: those that govern the universe, including the aspects of human life independent of humankind (which are God’s signs of the truth, and which we wrongly call the “laws of nature” – these are the subject matter of the natural sciences); and the other being the Religion. Both require obedience. Results for the latter usually are deferred to the Hereafter, while the returns of obedience or disobedience to the former usually come in this life. For example, the reward for patience is success, while the punishment for indolence is privation. Industry brings wealth, and steadfastness brings victory. So being a sincere believing Muslim requires obe-

dience to both of these laws. When Muslims, in addition to their failures in the religious life, neglect to fulfill the requirements of obedience to God’s laws of life and the universe (God’s signs of the truth), they become losers in the world relatively to those unbelievers who have obeyed them. However, those (unbelievers) who reject God’s Revelations (which are also God’s signs of the truth) will be eternal losers, as they will lose in the Hereafter.

20. Whatever we have is a favor from God, so true humanity requires being always thankful to Him. One’s humanity lies in thankfulness for any good one receives, and acknowledgment of one’s defects, failures, errors, and sins, and being repentant of them, trying to improve oneself. In Qurʾānic terminology, unbelief and thanklessness are derived from the same root word. So thanklessness leads to unbelief, while thankfulness gives rise to belief.

21. As it is clear in, *And His is the Sovereignty on the day when the Trumpet is blown, the Knower of the Unseen and the witnessed. He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware* (sūrah 6: 73); the *Grasp* and *Right Hand* allude to God’s absolute power and dominion over the whole universe. God acts in the world from behind the nominal veil of causality out of wisdom, but He will exercise His absolute dominion over the whole universe on the Day of Judgment without any veil.

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَبَقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ  
 إِلَّا مَنْ نَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَىٰ فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ  
 يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَأَشْرَقَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِنُورِ رَبِّهَا وَوُضِعَ  
 الْكِتَابُ وَجِيءَ بِالنَّبِيِّينَ وَالشَّهَادَاتِ وَقَضِيَ بَيْنَهُمُ بِالْحَقِّ  
 وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ  
 أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَسَبِّحُوا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ  
 زُمْرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاؤُهَا فَتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا  
 أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ  
 لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنْ حَسِبْتُمْ كَلِمَةَ الْكُفَّارِ  
 عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ قِيلَ ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبِمَا  
 كَفَرْتُمْ مَسْوَىٰ آلِكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَسَبِّحُوا لِلَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ  
 وَإِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ زُمْرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاؤُهَا فَتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا  
 سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوهَا خَالِدِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي  
 صَدَقَتْ وَعْدُهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَّبِعُوا مِن بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ  
 نَسْتَبِقُوا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَبِعِزَّتِ الْأَسْمَانِ ﴿٧٤﴾

68. The Trumpet will be blown, and so all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will fall dead, except those whom God wills to exempt. Then it will be blown for the second time, and see, they have all stood upright, looking on (in anticipation).<sup>22</sup>

69. And the earth (altered from what it was) will be bright and clearly visible throughout by the Light of its Lord,<sup>23</sup> and the Record (of the deeds of responsible beings endowed with free will) will be laid out, and the Prophets and the Witnesses will be brought forward, and it will be judged among them (conscious, responsible beings) with truth (concerning that on which they used to differ),<sup>24</sup> and they will not be wronged.

70. And every soul will be paid in full

whatever (good or evil) it has done (in the world); and indeed He knows best all that they do.

71. Those who disbelieve (and die unbelievers) will be led to Hell in companies. When they finally arrive there, its doors will immediately be opened and its keepers will ask them: “Did there not come to you Messengers from among you, reciting to you the Revelations of your Lord and warning you of this Day that you were to encounter?” They will answer: “Yes, indeed!” But the word of (God’s) punishment upon the unbelievers<sup>25</sup> is fulfilled.

72. They will be told: “Enter through the doors of Hell, to abide therein.” How evil is the dwelling of those (too) arrogant (to believe).

73. Those who keep from disobedience to their Lord in reverence for Him and piety will be led to Paradise in companies. When they finally arrive there, its doors will be opened (as sheer grace from God), and its keepers will welcome them saying: “Peace be upon you! Well you have fared and are purified (from the foul residues of sin, and delivered from all suffering), so enter it (Paradise) to abide!”

74. And they say: “All praise and gratitude are for God, Who has fulfilled His promise to us, and has made us inheritors of this land (of bliss), so that We may dwell in Paradise as we please!” Then: how excellent is the reward of the doers (of good deeds in obedience and devotion to God)!

22. The Qur'an mentions three results of blowing the Trumpet. (1) *The Trumpet will be blown, and so all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will fall dead, except those whom God wills to exempt* (sūrah 39: 68). (2) *Then it will be blown for a second time, and see, they have all stood upright, looking on* (sūrah 39: 68). (3) *On the Day when the Trumpet is blown, all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will be stricken with shock and terror, except those whom God wills to exempt. All will come to His Presence, utterly humbled* (sūrah 27: 87). *And the Trumpet will be blown, and see, out of the graves they rush forth to their Lord* (sūrah 36: 51).

If we consider the results of blowing the Trumpet, we might conclude that it will be blown three times. However, the second part of this verse says that *it will be blown for the second time, and see, they have all stood upright*, and verse 36: 51 states that upon blowing the Trumpet, *the dead will rush forth to their Lord out of their graves*. We learn from verse 27: 87 that *when the Trumpet is blown, all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will be stricken with shock and terror, except those whom God wills to exempt, and all will come to His Presence, utterly humbled*. So it is understood from verses sūrah 27: 87, sūrah 36: 51 and the second part of this verse (sūrah 39: 68), that the dead will be raised from their graves, most of people will stricken with terror, and all will rush to their Lord upon the same blowing of the Trumpet. In conclusion, we can say that the Trumpet will be blown twice.

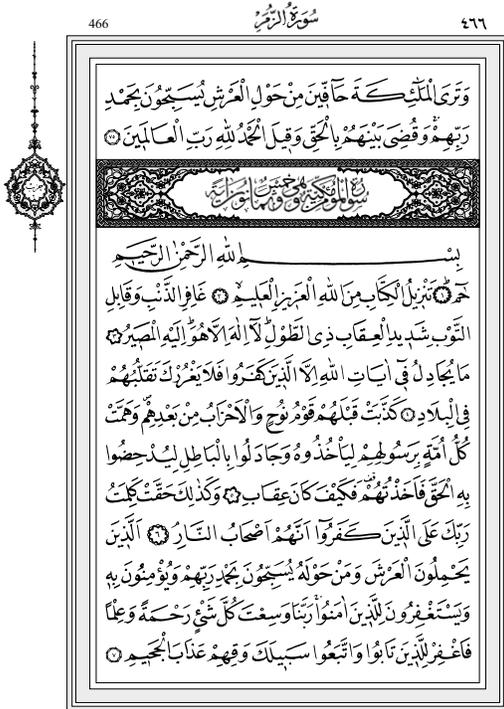
As for those whom God wills to exempt

from falling dead as a result of the blowing of the Trumpet, it is not clear who they will be. However, if we take into account verses sūrah 37: 58-59 and sūrah 44: 56, which state that the believers taste death only once while the unbelievers taste it twice (sūrah 40: 11), they may be the spirits of the believers who have already died. The true knowledge always rests with God, the All-Knowing.

23. On the Day of Resurrection, the earth is changed into another earth, and the heavens also; they all appear before God, the One, the All-Overwhelming (sūrah 14: 48). That is, there will be nothing hidden, all truth will come to be known clearly, and everyone will clearly see the consequences of their deeds.

24. The Prophets will come forward to testify that they conveyed God's Message and explain how their people responded to their call; and some pure and righteous ones (the witnesses) will be brought forward to testify concerning the communication of God's Message by the Prophets and the people's reaction to it. (See sūrah 4: 41; 7: 6.)

25. The *word of punishment* against the unbelievers, which the Qur'an refers to in several of its verses (e.g. 27: 82, 85), is the word the Almighty pronounced when He decreed that humankind would live on the earth: *But those who disbelieve and deny Our signs (the verses of the revealed Book of guidance, as well as the signs in both their inner world and the outer world, establishing My Existence and Unity and other pillars of faith), they will be the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein* (sūrah 2: 39).



Moses, upon him be peace. The *sūrah* is also called *al-Ghāfir* (the All-Forgiving), the Divine Name mentioned in verse 3. It was revealed after *Sūrat az-Zumar* (the preceding *sūrah*) at a time when the Makkan polytheists increased their persecutions against the believers to the point that they were plotting to kill God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings. The *sūrah* reproaches them for their reaction, which was as harsh as the Pharaoh's reaction to Moses, upon him be peace, and reminds both them and the believers of the fact that, however harsh and strong their reaction to the Divine Message might be, the triumph of the believers is inevitable. The *sūrah* also narrates at length how an important believer from among the clan of the Pharaoh, who had hidden his faith, appeared and supported Moses at a very critical point.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. *Hā. Mīm.*
2. (This is) the Book being sent down in parts from God, the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Knowing,
3. The Forgiver of sins, and the Acceptor of repentance; yet severe in retribution, limitless in His bounty. There is no deity but He. To Him is the homecoming.<sup>1</sup>
4. None dispute concerning God's Revelations and signs (in creation, human life, and history) but those who obstinately disbelieve. But let not their strutting about the land in pomp and apparent domination deceive you.
5. Before them, the people of Noah denied (God's Revelations and signs), and so did the communities who came after them (and who have been mentioned in the Qur'an). Every community plotted against the Messenger sent to them, to capture him (then kill or expel him), and they struggled (against God's Message) with

75. And you (O Messenger) will see the angels surrounding the Supreme Throne (of God), glorifying their Lord with His praise. It has been judged among them with truth and justice, and it will be said (by all the people of Paradise): "All praise and gratitude are for God, the Lord of the worlds!"

#### SŪRAH 40

### AL-MU'MIN (THE BELIEVER)

Makkah Period

This *sūrah* of 85 verses takes its name from verse 28 which mentions, from among the clan of the Pharaoh, a distinguished believer who supported the Prophet

falsehood, so as to render the truth void thereby; but then I seized them, and (see) how was My retribution!

6. And thus your Lord's word has proven true against the unbelievers, that surely they are companions of the Fire.

7. Those (angels) who bear the Supreme Throne (of God), and the others around it<sup>2</sup> glorify their Lord with His praise;<sup>3</sup> and they believe in Him (as the Unique Deity,

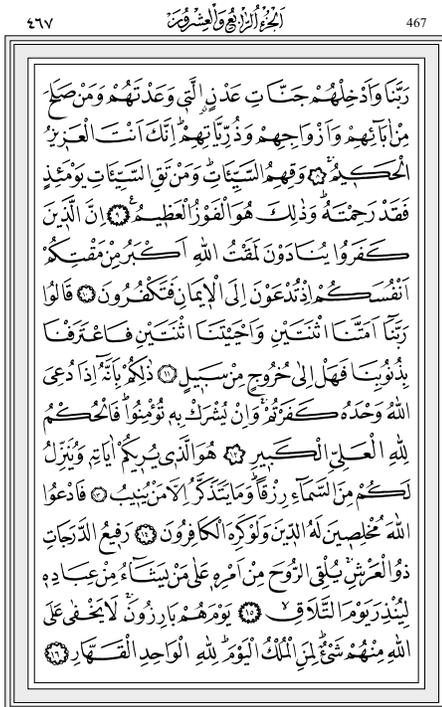
Lord, and Sovereign of all creation), and ask for His forgiveness for those (among His creation) who believe, saying: "Our Lord! You embrace all things with mercy and knowledge (having perfect knowledge of every creature's need, and answering that need with mercy), so forgive those who repent (of their sins) and follow Your way, and protect them from the punishment of the Blazing Flame.

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1. This is a perfectly balanced argument that encourages people to believe and do good, righteous deeds as well as refraining from unbelief or associating partners with God or any transgression. The verse gives great hope by mentioning that God forgives sins and accepts repentance, and thus calls people to repent and mend their ways. It also discourages people from committing any unforgivable sin, such as disbelieving or associating partners with God, unless one repents of it and believes. Then, by mentioning that God is limitless in His bounty and the only God, to Whose Presence all humankind will finally return, it exhorts them to believe and do good, righteous deeds in order that they may receive abundant provision from God (see 39: 61, note 18) in both worlds.

2. On the nature and duties of angels, see *sūrah* 2: 30, note 31; on God's Supreme Throne: *sūrah* 7: 54, note 13; *sūrah* 11: 7, note 2; *sūrah* 17: 42, note 19, and *sūrah* 69: 17, note 8. Bearing the Supreme Throne means, in one respect, carrying out the Divine orders issued from His absolute Sovereignty over the universe. As for those who are around the Supreme Throne mentioned in the verse, they must be the angels who have greater nearness to God in rank.

3. For glorifying God with His praise, see *sūrah* 35: 29, note 11. The verse suggests that those (angels) bearing God's Supreme Throne carry out His orders in such perfection that they prove that God is absolutely above having any defects and partners, and that He is One to Whom praise is absolutely due.



8. “Our Lord! Admit them into the Gardens of perpetual bliss which You have promised them, and those who are righteous from among their forebears, and their spouses, and their offspring. Surely You are the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Wise.

9. “And protect them from (doing) evil deeds (and the consequences thereof on the Day of Judgment). Whoever You protect from evils on that Day, You have surely had mercy on him; and that is the supreme triumph.”

10. As for those who obstinately disbelieve (and die unbelievers), it is proclaimed to them (while they are in Hell): “God’s ‘abhorrence’ of you is greater than your (present) abhorrence of yourselves and each other (because of your being

the cause of the punishment you suffer), for you used to be called to faith but you persistently refused to believe.”<sup>4</sup>

11. They will say: “Our Lord! You have made us die twice, and given us life twice,<sup>5</sup> so (we have become fully convinced of the truth of all that You have informed us of, and) we acknowledge our sins (of unbelief). Is there, then, any way to get out (so that we may believe and do good, righteous deeds)?”

12. “That (your being in Hell) is so because when the One God alone is invoked, you obstinately refuse to believe, but when partners are associated with Him, you believe.<sup>6</sup> Then (whatever you do), the judgment rests with God, the All-Exalted, the All-Great.”

13. He it is Who shows you His signs (in the universe as well as within yourselves, your life, and in history, which demonstrate His Oneness), and sends down provision for you from the heaven. But none reflect and are mindful save those who (being without prejudice) turn to God in penitence.

14. So (O believers,) invoke God alone, sincere in your faith in Him and practicing the Religion purely for His sake, however hateful this may be to the unbelievers.

15. He is exalted above all degrees, Owner of the Supreme Throne. He conveys the Spirit (the life-giving Revelation, from the immaterial realm) of His command to whom He wills of His servants, so as to warn (conscious, responsible beings) of the Day of Meeting (when His servants will meet Him).

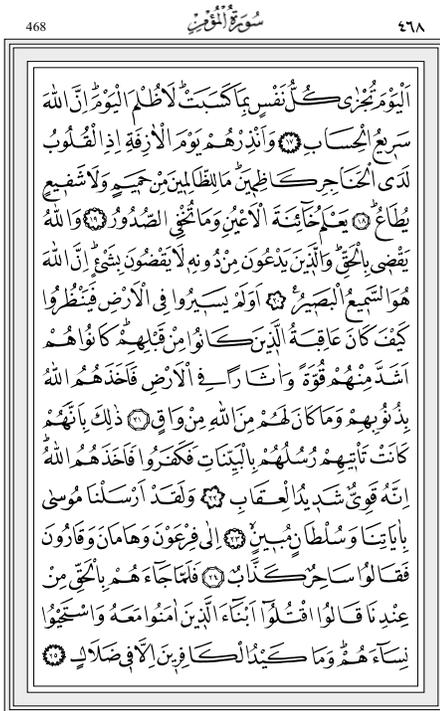
16. The Day when they will come forth (from death), with nothing of them being hidden from God. Whose is the absolute Sovereignty on that Day? It is God’s, the One, the All-Overwhelming (with absolute sway over all that exists).

4. The unbelievers will abhor themselves because it is they, themselves, who caused themselves to suffer the punishment of Hell. However, unbelief or associating partners with God is so great an offense to God, to the whole universe which testifies about God and the other pillars of faith and innumerable believers, from the beginning of conscious life to the Day of Judgment, that it incurs God's "wrath" and "abhorrence," which is much greater than the unbelievers' abhorrence of themselves. So, this verse actually expresses the hideousness of unbelief and of associating partners with God.

5. Death means the detachment of the spirit from the body, or that the body and spirit exist separately from each other. Before everyone comes to the world, the particles that are destined to constitute their body exist in God's Knowledge and are scattered throughout "nature." The Qur'ān calls this condition death (*sūrah* 2: 28; see note 27). Then God gives life to a body in the womb by "breathing" into it its spirit. This is the first instance of giving life. Thereafter, every soul, or the living self composed of the spirit and body, tastes death by God's taking the spirit from the body either by Himself, or by employing the Angel of Death or the aids of this angel (see *sūrah* 32: 11, note 8). God will revive every dead person on the Day of Resurrection. That is, He will restore the bodies according to the conditions of the afterlife and return the spirits to them. This is the second instance of life. The Qur'ān states that the believers taste death only once (*sūrah* 37: 58; *sūrah* 44: 56), so we can

conclude that the believers will die once, but will be given life twice. However, this verse narrates to us that God will cause the people of Hell to die twice and He will revive them twice. So the death and revival mentioned in this verse concerning the people of Hell must be somehow different. When we consider verse 39: 68, which states, *The Trumpet will be blown, and so all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will fall dead, except those whom God wills to exempt. Then it will be blown for the second time, and see, they have all stood upright, looking on (in anticipation)* (see also note 22 on this verse), we can understand that the spirits of the unbelievers will die at the first sound of the Trumpet, and then be revived again to be returned to their restored bodies. In conclusion, the first death they taste is their departure from the world, and the second death is their spiritual death. The believers' spirits will be exempt from this. Therefore, by saying that God causes the people of Hell to die twice, the verse is referring to their departure from the world and their spiritual death during the final destruction of the world, and by His giving them life twice, it is referring to the revival of their spirit and their being raised from the dead on the Resurrection Day. (God knows best.)

6. This means that the excuse that the people of Hell will put forward in Hell (mentioned in the previous verse) is baseless. Their unbelief does not arise from their ignorance of the truth, but from their intentional rejection of it for other reasons.



17. On that Day, every soul will be recompensed for what it has earned; no wrong (will be done to any) on that Day. God is Swift at reckoning.

18. Warn them of the Day that draws near, when the hearts will come right up to the throats, choking them. The wrongdoers will have no intimate friend, nor any intercessor who will be heeded.

19. God knows the treacheries of the eyes and all that the bosoms conceal.

20. God judges with truth, whereas those whom they invoke apart from Him do not judge at all. Surely God is He Who is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.<sup>7</sup>

21. Have they never traveled about the earth, that they may see what was the outcome for those (who obstinately disbelieved in Our signs) before them? They were greater than them in power and in the marks (they left) on the land. Then God seized them for their sins, and they had none to protect them against God.

22. That was because the Messengers sent to them came to them with clear proofs of the truth, but they obstinately disbelieved; and so God seized them. Surely He is All-Strong, Severe in retribution.

23. We surely sent Moses with clear signs from Us (including miracles to support him), and a manifest authority,

24. To the Pharaoh, and Hāmān, and Korah, but they said: “(This man is) a sorcerer, a fraud (who makes fabrications in attribution to God).!”

25. When he brought them the truth from Our Presence (so clearly that they could not deny it), they said: “Kill the sons of those who believe (and keep) along with him, and let live their womenfolk (for further humiliation and suffering).” But the scheming of unbelievers is but bound to fail.

7. In judgment, hearing and seeing are essential. One who can judge justly is expected to see or hear (from reliable sources) everything concerning the case that one is judging. It is only God Who has full sight and hearing of everything. So only He has right to judge,

and only He can judge with perfect justice. Judgment also requires knowledge of right and wrong. Again it is only God Who has full knowledge of everything and therefore full knowledge of right and wrong. So absolute judgment belongs to Him exclusively.

26. The Pharaoh said (to his chiefs): “Let me kill Moses, and let him call upon his Lord! I fear lest he alter your religion (replacing it with his), or lest he provoke disorder in the land.”

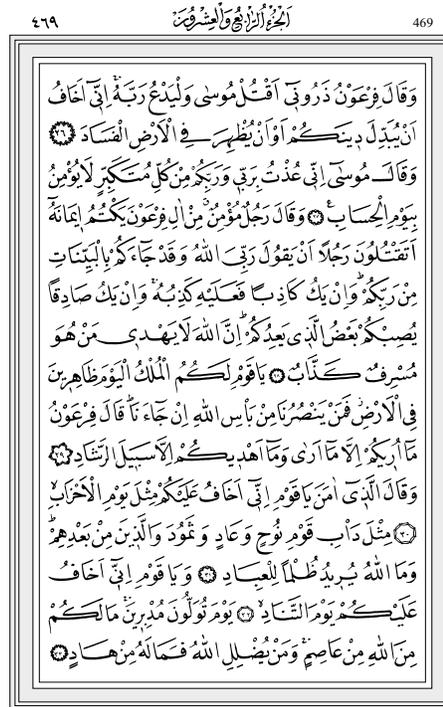
27. Moses said: “Indeed I seek refuge in my Lord, Who is your Lord as well, from every haughty one who disbelieves in the Day of Reckoning.”

28. (At just that moment) a believing man from among the clan (and Government Board) of the Pharaoh, who until then had concealed his faith, (came forward and) said: “Would you kill a man only because he declares, ‘My Lord is God!’, when he has indeed come to you with clear proofs from your Lord? If he be a liar, then his lie will be (reckoned) against him; but if he is true (in his proclamations), then something of what he threatens you with will befall you. Surely God does not guide (either to truth or to any achievement) one who (transgressing all bounds) is wasteful (of his God-given faculties), and deceitful.

29. “O my people! You enjoy the dominion today, being uppermost in the land; but who could help us against the punishment of God, should it come to us?” The Pharaoh said (to his people): “I would show you only what I see (as needing to be done), and I guide you only to the right way (to follow).”

30. But he who believed said: “O my people! I do indeed fear for you the like of the day (of disaster) of the communities (that, before you, also denied the Messengers sent to them);

31. “The like of what befell the people of



Noah, the ‘Ad, and the Thamūd, and others that came after them; and God never wills any wrong for (His) servants.

32. “O my people! I do indeed fear for you the Day of the Summons (the Day when people will vainly be calling out to one another for help, and cursing one another in distress);<sup>8</sup>

33. “The Day when you will (strive in vain desperation) to turn and flee (from the Fire), having none to protect you from (the punishment of) God. Whomever God leads astray, there is no guide.

8 For such and other kinds of calling out between people in the Hereafter, see *sūrah* 7: 44-50; *sūrah* 34: 31-33; *sūrah* 37: 21-33.

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْبَيِّنَاتِ قَدْ لُتِمَ فِي بَيْتِكِ  
 مِمَّا جَاءَكُمْ بِهِ سَخَىٰ إِذْ أَهْلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَنْ نَبْعَثَ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ  
 رَسُولًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُرْتَابٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ الَّذِينَ  
 يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَيْهِمْ كَبُرَتْ مُنَاقَاةُ  
 عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ  
 قَلْبٍ مُنْكَرٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا هَامَانَ ابْنِ لَب  
 صْرَ حَاكِمِي أَلْبَعِ الْأَشْيَابَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَسْبَابَ السَّمَوَاتِ فَاطْلِعِ  
 إِلَيَّ إِلَهَ مُوسَىٰ وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ كَاذِبًا وَكَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَ  
 لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءَ عَمَلِهِ وَصَدَّ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا كَيْدُ  
 فِرْعَوْنَ إِلَّا فِي تَبَابٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ  
 إِنِّي أَخُوفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ سَيْلَ الرَّشَادِ إِنِّي يَأْتِيكُمْ إِنَّمَا  
 هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ  
 الْقَرَارِ ﴿٣٩﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزَىٰ إِلَّا أَجْرَهَا وَمَنْ  
 عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ دُونِ ذِكْرٍ أَوْ يُنْفِي هُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ  
 يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

35. “Those who dispute concerning God’s signs and Revelations without any authority that has reached them. It is grievous and loathsome in the sight of God and those who believe. Thus, God impresses (a seal) on every haughty, tyrant’s heart.”

36. The Pharaoh said: “O Hāmān! Build me a lofty tower so that I may attain the ways,

37. “The ways of (peering into) the skies, and that I may have a look at the God of Moses, though I surely think that he is a liar.” Thus were his evil deeds decked out to be appealing to the Pharaoh, and he was debarred from the (right) way. And the scheme of the Pharaoh ended in nothing but destruction.

38. And the one who believed said (continuing his warnings): “O my people! Follow me so that I may guide you to the way of right guidance.

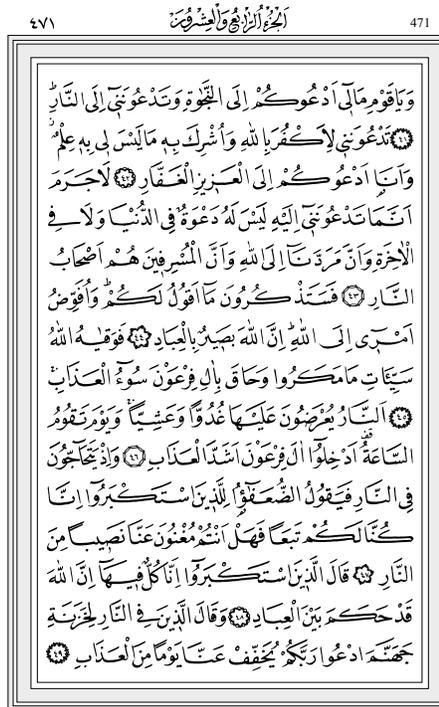
39. “O my people! The life of this world is but a (passing) enjoyment, while the Hereafter – that is indeed the home of permanence.

40. “Whoever does an evil is not recompensed except with the like of it; whereas whoever does good, righteous deeds – whether man or woman – and is a believer, such will enter Paradise, being provided there without measure.

34. “And (reflect that) Joseph brought to you the manifest truths before, but you never ceased to doubt as to what he brought you. But when he finally died, you said that God would no longer send a Messenger after him.<sup>9</sup> Thus God leads astray one who (transgressing all bounds) is wasteful (of his God-given faculties), persistently doubting (without good reason) –

9. That is, the native Egyptians were not sincere in their attitude toward the Messengers. They did not believe in the Prophet Joseph, upon him be peace, during his lifetime, but when he died, at least they seemed, at the cost

of contradicting themselves, to acknowledge his Messengership and paid him so great, extraordinary respect that later generations made this an excuse for their denial of any new Messenger sent by God.



41. "O my people! How is it with me that I call you to salvation when you call me to the Fire!

42. "You call me so that I should disbelieve in God and associate with Him partners about whose partnership I have no sure knowledge; and I call you to the All-Glorious with irresistible might (Able to destroy whoever rebels against Him), the All-Forgiving (Who forgives whoever turns to Him in repentance).

43. "Without doubt you call me but to one who has no title (to be called to) in the world, or in the Hereafter; our return will be to God, and those who (transgressing all bounds) are wasteful (of their God-given faculties) – they will be companions of the Fire.

44. "Soon you will remember all that I now am telling you. As for me, I commit my affair to God (in full submission). Surely God sees the servants well."

45. So God preserved him from the evils they schemed (against him),<sup>10</sup> while a most evil punishment overwhelmed the clan (the court and military aristocracy) of the Pharaoh:

46. The Fire: they are exposed to it morning and evening; and when the Last Hour comes in (and the Judgment is established,

it is ordered): "Admit the clan of the Pharaoh into the severest punishment."<sup>11</sup>

47. See, how they will dispute with each other in the Fire; so the weak ones (who blindly obeyed the leaders of unbelief) will say to those who acted arrogantly and oppressed (others): "Surely we were your followers; now can you therefore rid us of (even) a portion of the Fire?"

48. Those who were arrogant (and oppressed others) will say: "We are all together in this (Fire)! God has indeed judged between the servants (and all must face a reckoning and receive their just deserts)."

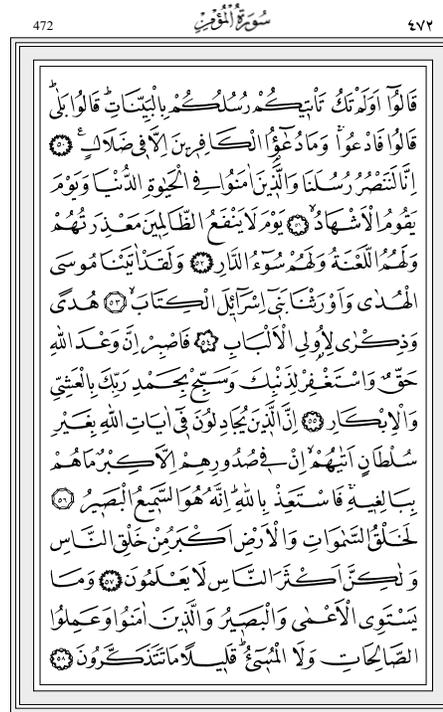
49. Those who are in the Fire will cry to the keepers of Hell: "Call upon your Lord that He may lighten the punishment for us for one day (at least)."<sup>12</sup>

10. As can be understood from the verses, the believer who appeared at a most critical point to support Moses, upon him be peace, against the plots of the Pharaoh must have been a powerful person among the chiefs and governing elite of the Pharaoh. He had successfully concealed his faith. Then, at the time when the Pharaoh was about to order an attempt on the life of Moses he came forward and gave him full support. He acted like an aide to Moses alongside Aaron, upon them both be peace, and presumably because of his status, the Pharaoh could not cause him any harm, as their secret plots came to nothing due to God's help. In the end, the Pharaoh, his governing elite, and the

army drowned in the sea, while Moses, upon him be peace, and his people successfully left Egypt.

11. This verse explicitly establishes that the punishment in the grave, the intermediate world between this and the next, is real. This punishment is also related to burning in the Fire. However, the punishment of the Fire for the Pharaoh and his family in the grave is in the form of being exposed to it in the morning and evening, while in Hell it will be in the form of continuous burning.

12. According to some commentators, "one day" means some little portion of time.



50. (The keepers) will say: “Did not the Messengers sent to you come to you with clear proofs (of the truth)?” They will say, “Yes, indeed.” (The keepers then) will say: “Then call (as you like)!” But the call of unbelievers is bound to be in vain.

51. Most certainly, we help Our Messengers, and those who believe, in the life of this world and on the Day when the Witnesses will stand forth (to testify concerning people’s response to the Messengers)<sup>13</sup> –

52. The Day when their excuses will not avail the wrongdoers, and for them there is curse (they will be eternally excluded from God’s mercy), and for them there is the evil abode.

53. Most certainly, We did grant to Moses the guidance, and We made the Children of Israel inheritors of the Book (after Moses),

54. As guidance (for all to follow in their life), and a reminder (with teaching and admonition) for the people of discernment (among them).

55. So be patient (O Messenger, with whatever they do), for surely God’s promise (that He always helps His Messengers and the believers) is true; and ask forgiveness

for your sins,<sup>14</sup> and glorify your Lord with His praise<sup>15</sup> in the afternoon and morning hours.

56. Those who dispute concerning the signs and Revelations of God without any authority that has reached them,<sup>16</sup> (do so because) in their bosoms is a craving for superiority, which they will not attain. But take refuge in God (from their schemes). Surely He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

57. Surely the creation of the heavens and the earth is something greater than the creation of humankind, but most of humankind do not know (this truth).<sup>17</sup>

58. Not equal are the blind and the seeing, nor (are equal) those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, and the doers of evil. Little do you reflect and be mindful!

13. See *sūrah* 4: 41; *sūrah* 39: 69, note 24.

14. Infallibility is an indispensable attribute of Prophethood. So all the Prophets are infallible in the sense that they do not sin or disobey God's orders. Here, God reminds the believers of an important fact to which we must be attentive on the way to Him. What falls on those who believe in God, and who endeavor to attain the level of ordering their life according to the rules that are established in His Book, is to be patient, ask for His forgiveness for their sins, and as will be stated in the verse, to be occupied with His glorification and praise.

15. On the meaning of glorifying God and praising Him, see *sūrah* 35: 29, note 11.

16. In several other verses, such as verse 35 of this *sūrah*, the Qur'ān draws attention to the fact that those who talk about God's signs and Revelations must have a warrant or authority that has reached them. That is, God's signs and Revelations are matters that concern Him and His Religion. So talking about God requires definite knowledge of Him, which can only be acquired through Revelation and the Messengers. Talking about God's Religion requires expert knowledge about it, and its first and foremost source is, again, God and the Revelation. Therefore, those who dispute about God and His Religion without basing their information on sufficient, expert knowledge from the Qur'ān and God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, are included in the threats found in these verses.

17. This verse has several implications, such as follows:

- Many human beings see their revival in the Hereafter as being impossible. However, their creation is no easier than their revival. More than that, God has created the heavens and the earth, and He will destroy and re-create them on the Day of Resurrection. Their creation is not easier than the creation of humankind. So it is in no way difficult for the One Who has created the heavens and the earth to revive or re-create human beings.
- Humans have no right to assume superiority before God's signs and Revelations. They are completely powerless before God, Who has created the heavens and the earth, so what is expected of them is to submit to Him in awareness of their weakness and the limitless greatness of God. The heavens are full of conscious spiritual beings who are much more powerful than human beings. Despite this, and despite their immense size, the heavens and the earth have willingly submitted to God's orders. What is wrong with humans that they pretend superiority before God's signs and Revelations?
- God has made humankind His vicegerent on the earth and has endowed us with many capabilities so that we can realize great, astonishing achievements. However, the greatest of those achievements are as nothing compared to God's creation of the heavens and the earth with all that are in them. So our achievements must never lead human beings to be boastful and assume superiority in the face of God's signs and Revelations. Rather, we must submit to God's orders and live according to them.

59. The Last Hour is certainly bound to come; there is no doubt in it. Yet, most of humankind do not believe.<sup>18</sup>

60. Your Lord has said: “Pray to Me, (and) I will answer you.”<sup>19</sup> Those who are too haughty to worship Me will enter Hell abased.

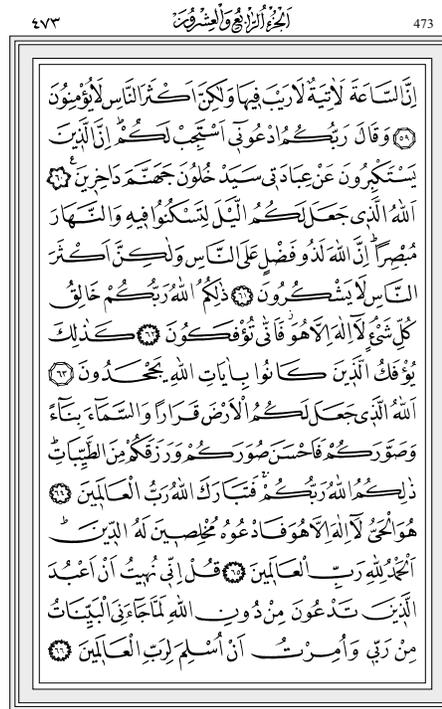
61. God it is Who has made the night for you, that you may rest in it, and the day, clear and sight-giving (to work). Indeed, God is gracious and bountiful for humankind, but most of them do not give thanks.

62. Such is God, your Lord (Who creates you, and maintains and provides for you), the Creator of all things. There is no deity but He. How then are you turned away from the truth (and adopt false deities to worship)?

63. Thus it is: those who obstinately reject God’s signs and Revelations are turned away from the truth.

64. God is He Who has made the earth as a fixed abode, and the heaven as a canopy, and has formed you and perfected your forms, and He provides you with pure, wholesome things. Then Blessed and Supreme is God, the Lord of the worlds.

65. He is the All-Living; there is no deity but He. So pray to Him, being sincere in your faith in Him and practicing the Religion purely for His sake. All praise



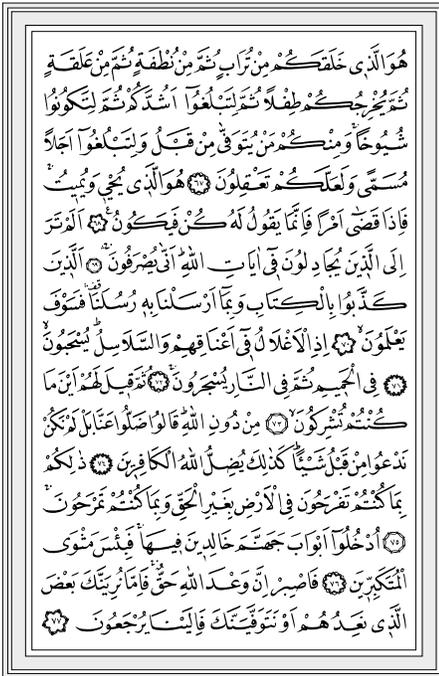
and gratitude are for God, the Lord of the worlds.

66. Say: “I have been forbidden to worship those whom you invoke apart from God when clear proofs (of the truth) have come to me from my Lord, and I have been ordered to submit myself wholly to the Lord of the worlds.”

18. The last two verses imply that good and evil can be distinguished perfectly only in the Hereafter. So, without the Hereafter, neither good nor evil receive the just and full recompense due to them. This is contrary to morality. That is why belief in the Hereafter is one of the most

basic foundations of morality and a sound social life. But only those who believe and therefore can see, or those who have not blinded themselves to the truth, can perceive this.

19. On prayer and God’s answering it, see *sūrah* 25: 77, note 18.



70. They have denied the Book (the Qur'an) and whatever (of guidance and wisdom) We have sent Our Messengers with. So, in time, they will come to know,

71. When the chains are around their necks, and fetters (around their legs). They will be dragged,

72. In the boiling water, then in the Fire they will be burned.

73. Then it is said to them: "Where are those to whom you ascribed Divinity (or Lordship or absolute Sovereignty),

74. "Apart from God? (Where are now those whose help you expected?)" They will say: "They have failed us - or rather, we were not invoking before any (real) thing (which had part in Divinity or Lordship or absolute Sovereignty)." Thus does God lead astray the unbelievers (those who willfully disregard the truth and refuse to believe in it).

75. "That (His leading you astray and your punishment) is because you arrogantly exulted on the earth without (sense of the bounds of) right, and because you were arbitrary in your exulting.

76. "Now enter through the gates of Hell to abide therein. How evil, indeed, is the dwelling of those (too) haughty (to acknowledge the truth)."

77. So, be patient (O Messenger), for surely God's promise is true. Whether We let you witness some of what We have promised them, or whether We cause you to die (before it befalls them), still it is to Us that they will return.

67. He it is Who has created you from earth, then from a drop of (seminal) fluid, then from a clot clinging (to the womb wall), then He brings you forth (into the world) as an infant, then (arranges that) you attain your (age of) full strength, thereafter that you (live long enough to) become old - though there are some of you who are caused to die before (reaching old age) - and that you reach a term appointed by Him, so that you may reason and understand (the truth).

68. He it is Who gives life and causes to die; and when He decrees a thing to be, He does but say to it "Be!" and it is.

69. Have you not considered those who dispute concerning God's signs and Revelations, how they are turned about (to different kinds of belief)?

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ  
 وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ لَمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ وَمَا كَانَ رِسُولٌ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ  
 بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرًا لِلَّهِ فَصِيَ بِالسَّحَابِ  
 وَحَسِرْهُنَّ إِيَّكَ الْبَاطِلُونَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ  
 لَكُمْ الْأَنْعَامَ لِرَبِّكُمْ سَوَاءٌ مِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ۗ وَلكُمْ  
 فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَلِتَبْتَاعُوا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةً فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا  
 وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ ۗ وَيُرِيكَ آيَاتِهِ فَايُّ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ  
 تُنْكِرُونَ ۗ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ  
 عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرًا مِنْهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ قُوَّةً  
 وَأَعْزَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَا آغَى عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ۗ  
 فَكَلَّمْنَا بَعْضَ نَسْلِهِمُ بِاللَّيْلِ فَوَجَّعْنَا أَصْوَابَهُمْ  
 مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ۗ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا  
 بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَحْدَهُ وَكُنْتُمْ نَايِبًا عَنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ  
 كَفَرَ بِكُمْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ إِنَّمَا تَهْتَكُوا فِئْتَانًا مِمَّا أَسْأَلْتُمْ اللَّهَ  
 النَّبِيَّ قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ وَحَسِرْهُنَّ إِيَّكَ الْكَافِرُونَ ۗ

78. Indeed, We sent Messengers before you; among them are those (the exemplary accounts of) whom We have already related to you, and among them are those (the exemplary histories of) whom We have not related to you. It is not for a Messenger to bring forth a miracle except by God's leave. Then, when God's command is issued, it is judged with truth and justice, and those inventors of falsehoods (who associate partners with God and strive to disprove the truth) are brought to loss and ruin.

79. God is He Who has made the cattle (for your service), so that you use some of them for riding – and from them you obtain food.

80. And you have (many other) benefits in them – that you may attain by them some need in your breasts, and you are borne on them (over land) and on ships (over water).<sup>20</sup>

81. He shows you His signs (so that they are manifest to your senses and understanding). Then which of God's signs do you deny?

82. Have they not traveled about the earth that they might see what was the outcome for those before them (who obstinately disbelieved in Our signs)? They were more in numbers than these, and greater in power and the marks (that they left) on the land, but all that they had

earned availed them nothing (in the face of God's displeasure).

83. When their Messengers came to them with manifest truths, they chose to remain in pleasure and pride only in the (narrow, superficial) knowledge they had (about the worldly life and the means to enjoy it), and what they used to mock (God's promised punishment) overwhelmed them.<sup>21</sup>

84. Then when they saw Our mighty punishment, they exclaimed: "We have come to believe in God as One and rejected all that we used to associate (with Him)!"

85. But their faith when they actually saw Our mighty punishment could not avail them: (that is) God's way (of dealing with humankind, a way) which has always been in effect for His servants. And so the unbelievers have lost altogether.

20. The term cattle includes sheep, goats, cows, oxen, and camels. All of them are edible, and camels are also used for riding. They are especially useful for traveling great distances. The females of these animals provide us with milk, while the skin of all can be used. In addition, the wool or hair of some, such as sheep, goats, and camels, is also useful. People benefit from camels as mounts in many ways – such as carrying their goods on them and traveling on them. In the past, camels were also used in battle. Also see *sūrah* 36: 72–73.

21. This verse apparently alludes to modern times. Modern people are content with the

worldly life and spend their whole life in pursuing the means for deriving the greatest possible pleasure from worldly life. They admire accomplishments in science and technology and use them only for the worldly pleasures, in complete ignorance and negligence of the other life. Seeking worldly pleasures causes ruthless competition in using material resources and never-ending conflicts, including world wars. These events are obviously God's mighty punishments. However, it seems that, in being immersed in scientific materialism, modern people do not take lessons from these events.

## SŪRAH 41

FUṢṢILAT  
(DISTINCTLY SPELLED OUT)

Makkah Period

This sūrah of 54 verses was revealed in Makkah after the conversion of Hamzah, the Prophet's uncle, and before the conversion of 'Umar, may God be pleased with them both. It derives its name from the word *fuṣṣilat* in the third verse, which means, "arranged in sequence and distinctly spelled out." It is also called *Hā. Mīm Sajdah*, meaning "the *Hā. Mīm* prostration." It mentions some attributes of the Qur'an and some of the purposes for its revelation. It also describes the nature of Prophethood and Revelation. It draws attention to the proofs of Divine Oneness in the universe, the tragic end of some ancient peoples who denied God's Revelation, and the rewards given to the believers.

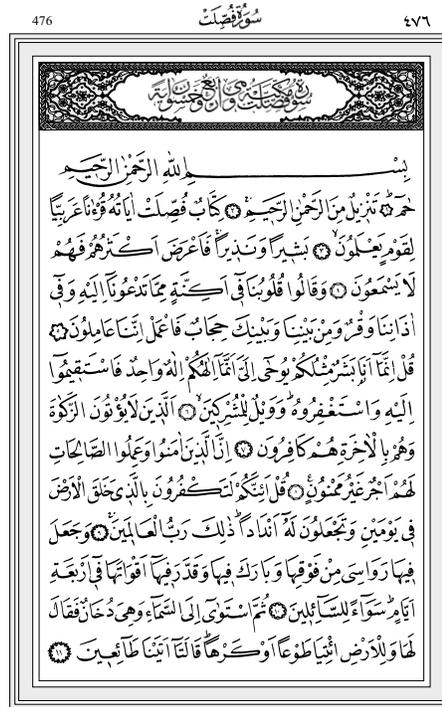
In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. *Hā. Mīm.*

2. (This is) the Book being sent down in parts from the All-Merciful (Who embraces all beings with His Mercy), the All-Compassionate (Who has special mercy for the believers):

3. A Book whose communications have been spelled out distinctly and made clear, and whose verses are in ordered sequence; a Qur'an (Recitation) in Arabic for a people who have knowledge (and so can appreciate excellence in the use of the language).

4. (Being sent) as a bearer of glad tidings (of the recompense for faith and righteousness), and a warner (against the consequences of misguidance).<sup>1</sup> Yet most of them (the Makkah people) turn away, and they do not give ear to it (being inwardly averse, and deaf to its excellence).



5. They say: "Our hearts are wrapped in coverings against what you call us to, and in our ears is heaviness, and between us and you is a veil. So take action (such as is in your power), as we are taking action (such as we wish to take)."

6. Say: "I am but a mortal like you. But it is revealed to me that your God is the One and Only God. So take the straight path to Him (in correct belief and obedience), and ask His forgiveness (for your sins)." Woe to those who associate partners (with Him),

7. Those who do not spend out of their wealth (in alms for the poor and needy), and they are unbelievers in the Hereafter.

8. But those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, surely for them is a reward constant and beyond measure.

9. Say: “Is it that you (associate partners with and therefore) disbelieve in the One Who created the earth in two days,<sup>2</sup> and (on account of that unbelief) set up rivals to Him (as deities, lords, and objects of worship)?” That is the Lord of the worlds.

10. He has set in it (the earth) firm mountains rising above it, and bestowed blessings therein, and determined its provisions

in due measure (to be obtained) in four periods, in a way to meet the vital necessities of all things and beings, that seek their provision from Him.

11. And He directed (His Knowledge, Will, Power, and Favor) to the heaven when it was as a cloud (of gases), and ordered it and the earth, “Come both of you, willingly or unwillingly!” They said: “We have come in willing obedience.”<sup>3</sup>

1. Verses 2-4 mention some attributes of the Qur’ān, as follows:

(1) It cannot be imitated. (2) It is a Book. (3) It was sent down in parts. (4) In addition to His other Attributes, God’s Mercy and Compassion are reflected in the Qur’ān, and therefore it is a mercy for all creation and especially for the believers. (5) Its verses are arranged in sequence without any confusion and distinctly spelled out. (6) It is a Book that is and should be distinctly recited. (7) It is in Arabic and therefore Arabic is an essential aspect of it. (8) Particularly those people who have sufficient knowledge of language can easily discern its aspects as a Book. (9) It gives glad tidings of a bright future and eternal happiness to those who believe and do good, righteous deeds. (10) It warns the misguided against the consequences of their way (Suat Yıldırım, 476).

The Qur’ān being revealed in Arabic is not incompatible with its message being universal. It was in Makkah in the very early period of his mission that God’s Messenger declared that his message was meant for everyone: “O humankind! Surely I am to you all the Messenger of God, of Him to Whom belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth” (sūrah 7: 158); Say: “God: a witness between me and you; and to me is being revealed this Qur’ān so that I may warn you thereby, and whomever it may reach” (sūrah 6: 19).

2. As stated in sūrah 7, note 11, the concept of

day (*yawm*) in the Qur’ān is a relative unit of time. So it may mean here two stages or eras, one referring to the parting of the primeval matter of creation into heaven and earth (sūrah 21: 30), and the other, to the fashioning of the earth and preparing it for life (sūrah 13: 3; sūrah 79: 30-33).

3. Some modern researchers (i.e., Nurbaki, 13-24) understand from this verse the following:

The Qur’ān indicates that there is some difficulty in the co-operation between the earth and sky. As is known, the molecules and atoms in the atmosphere try to escape into space while the earth tries to attract and hold them. For the formation of an atmosphere, the motions that lead to the force of escaping molecules have to be counterbalanced by the gravitational attraction of the earth. This is an almost impossibly difficult condition to fulfill. From the standpoint of geophysics, these extremely difficult conditions require the preservation of three important types of balances: (i) atmospheric temperature, (ii) proportionate gravitational attraction on the part of the earth, and (iii) the non-violation of this balance by various radiant energies arriving from space. The Qur’ān expresses all these facts by the phrases, *Come both of you, willingly or unwillingly!* That the almost impossible conditions have been fulfilled only by God’s Power is indicated by the statement, *They said: “We have come in willing obedience.”*

12. So He fashioned them (the clouds of gaseous elements which then existed in the place of the heaven) seven heavens in two days, and inspired in each heaven its tasks. And We adorned the lowest heaven (the heaven of the world) with lamps (stars), and guard (against every satan who would attempt to steal away information of the Unseen from angels).<sup>4</sup> That is the measured determination of the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Knowing.<sup>5</sup>

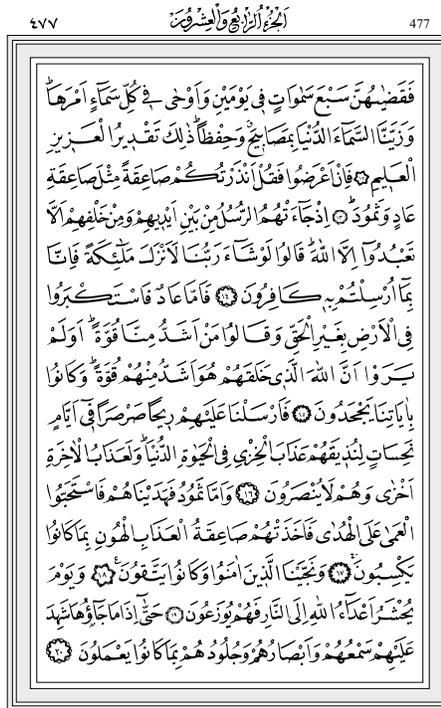
13. If they turn away in aversion, say (to them): “I have warned you of a punishment striking like the lightning (that struck the tribes of) Ād and Thamūd.

14. When the Messengers (sent to each) came to them (with all evidence of truth) from every approach, preaching: “Worship none but God alone!” they said: “Had it been the will of our Lord (to send us Messengers to warn us), He would certainly have sent down angels. So we disbelieve in what (you claim) you have been sent with.”

15. Now, as for the Ād: They acted arrogantly and oppressively in the land against all right, and said: “Who can be superior to us in power?” Did they not see that God, Who created them, is superior to them in power? And they persisted in rejecting Our manifest signs and Revelations.

16. So then We sent upon them a furious windstorm through days of disaster, and so We made them taste the punishment of disgrace in the life of this world, while the punishment of the Hereafter is more humiliating. And they will not be helped (to evade it).

17. As for the (tribe of) Thamūd: We showed them (the straight path of) guidance but they preferred blindness over guidance. So



then the lightning-like punishment of humiliation seized them because of what they had been earning for themselves.

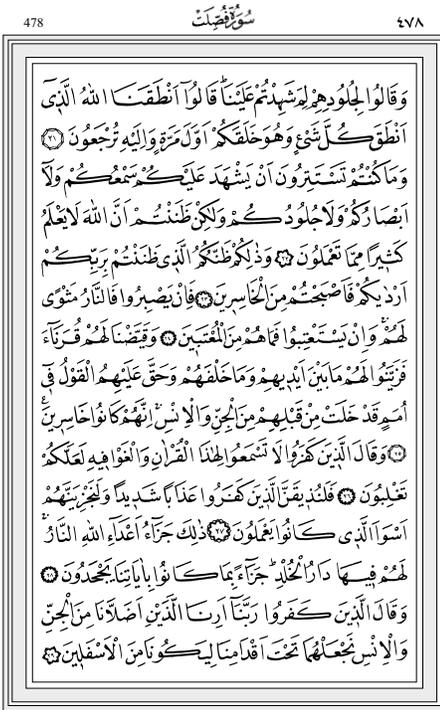
18. And We saved those who believed and who, in awe of God and reverence for Him, habitually avoided sin.

19. And (remind of) the day when the enemies of God will be raised up (from their graves) and gathered for the Fire: they will be driven (to the place of reckoning) in arrays,

20. Until when they reach it, their ears, and their eyes, and their skins will bear witness against them as to all that they did habitually.

4. For an explanation, see *sūrah* 15: 16–18, note 5; *sūrah* 37: 6–7, note 3; and *sūrah* 67: 5, note 4.

5. For the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the meaning of seven heavens, see *sūrah* 2: 29, note 28.



saved from it, or do not ask), still they are not of those who will be shown favor (and saved).

25. (In return for their preferring unbelief and sinfulness over belief and piety) We have assigned them comrades (of satanic disposition, not right-minded) who deck out their past (deeds) and their present (intentions) to be appealing to them. And the word (the sentence of punishment passed) on the communities of the jinn and humankind before them (who were self-righteous in the same way) has also been their due. Surely they are the losers.

21. They will ask their skins, “Why have you borne witness against us?” They will answer: “God Who makes everything speak has made us speak.”<sup>6</sup> It is He Who has created you in the first instance, and to Him you are being brought back.

22. You did not seek to veil yourselves (when sinning) without ever considering that your ears or your eyes or your skins would one day bear witness against you. Moreover, you supposed that God did not know most of what you did habitually.<sup>7</sup>

23. It is that supposition of yours which you entertained about your Lord that has tumbled you down into perdition, and so you have come to be among the losers.

24. If they endure it (or do not endure it), still the Fire will be an everlasting dwelling for them. If they ask for favor (to be

26. Those who disbelieve say: “Do not listen to this Qur’ān, and speak random noise (during its recitation) so that you may prevail over it.”

27. But We will certainly make those who disbelieve taste a severe punishment, and certainly recompense them for the worst of what they keep doing.<sup>8</sup>

28. That is the recompense of God’s enemies – the Fire. Therein they will have the everlasting abode, as a deserving recompense for rejecting Our signs and Revelations obstinately.

29. Those who disbelieve will say (as they enter the Fire): “Our Lord! Show us those of both the jinn and humankind that led us astray, that we may trample them underfoot, and they will be of the most humiliated!”

6. As pointed out in the verse *The abode of the Hereafter is truly alive* (sūrah 29: 64), and as explained in note 4 to sūrah 25: 12, the Qur'ān states that everything in the Abode of Hereafter will be alive. So every part of a human being will bear witness for or against them. The restriction of testifying to the skin in verse 21 is because the skin is the boundary between a living creature and the world around it; it is also the physical interface between the creature and other creatures and the world. Hence, it is the location of all contact, good or bad in kind. If, as here implied, it is also the medium where all such contact is recorded (we know in this life only the extremes of contact

that leave scars on the skin), then the skin is an ideal witness.

7. Saying, “you supposed that God did not know *most of what* you did habitually,” instead of, “you supposed that God did not know *whatever* you did habitually,” means that they believed in God as the Supreme Being with knowledge, but they acted recklessly as if God had no knowledge of most of what they used to do, or that they did not really believe in the all-encompassing nature of God's Knowledge.

8. The worst of what the unbelievers do is certainly unbelief; so first of all, God will punish them for unbelief. The verse aims to strongly discourage the unbelievers.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ  
 الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ  
 الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ لَنْ نُؤْتِيَ بِكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ  
 الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُ أَنفُسُكُمْ  
 وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ نَزَّلْنَا مِنْ غُورِ رَجْوٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَنْ  
 أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنِّي مِنَ  
 الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّذِي  
 هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ  
 حَمِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا يَلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يَلْقَاهَا  
 إِلَّا الْأَذْوَةُ حَظِيظِيمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَإِنَّمَا يَنْزَعُكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ  
 نَسْفٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَمِنْ  
 آيَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ  
 وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ إِن كُنتُمْ  
 إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَإِنِ اسْتَكْبَرُوا فَالَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ  
 يُسْحَبُونَ لَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَمِعُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

30. As for those who say, “Our Lord is God,” and then follow the Straight Path (in their belief, thought, and actions) without deviation, the angels descend upon them from time to time (in the world as protecting comrades, and in the Hereafter with the message): “Do not fear or grieve, but rejoice in the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised.

31. “We are your well-wishing comrades and helpers in the Hereafter, as we have been in the life of the world. You will have therein all that your souls desire, and you will have therein all that you ask for.

9. Since Paradise is a place of absolute purity and those who will enter it will enter fully purified, Paradise will be full of pure blessings with which its residents will be totally content.

10. That is, repel falsehood with the truth; do not give harm in return for harm, and follow

32. “A welcoming gift from the One All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.”<sup>9</sup>

33. Who is better in speech than one who calls to God and does good, righteous deeds, and says: “Surely I am of the Muslims (wholly submitted to Him)?”

34. Goodness and evil can never be equal. Repel evil with what is better (or best).<sup>10</sup>

Then see: the one between whom and you there was enmity has become a bosom friend.

35. And none are ever enabled to attain to it (such great virtue) save those who are patient (in adversities and against the temptations of their souls and Satan), and none are ever enabled to attain to it save those who have a great part in human perfections and virtues.

36. And if a prompting from Satan should stir in you (when carrying out your mission or during worship or in your daily life), seek refuge in God immediately. He is the One Who is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

37. And the night and the day, and the sun and the moon (all the phenomena and objects you see in the universe) are among His signs (guiding to His absolute Oneness). Do not prostrate in adoration of the sun or the moon, but prostrate in adoration of God, Who has created them, if indeed it is Him that you worship.

38. If they are too arrogant (to worship Him alone), it is a fact that those who are in the Presence of your Lord (the angels and His sincere servants among humankind and the jinn), glorify Him alone by night and day and are tireless (therein).

the right way and take the right means to attain a right goal. This is a basic principle of Islamic conduct and of preaching Islam. In addition, a Muslim individual is expected to forgive what has been done to him or her individually, and to respond with what is the best in conduct.

39. And among His signs is this: you see the earth lying low and barren; but when We send down water upon it, it stirs and swells (with life). He Who revives it is certainly the One Who will bring the dead to life. Surely He has full power over everything.

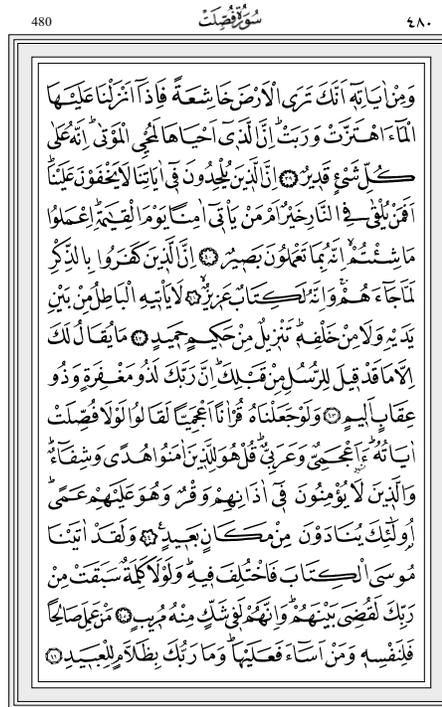
40. Surely those who deviate from the right way concerning Our signs (in nature and life) and Revelations<sup>11</sup> are not hidden from Us. Who is in better state – the one who is thrown into the Fire, or the one who comes secure on the Day of Resurrection? Do what you will, surely He sees well all that you do.

41. Those who disbelieve in this Reminder (the Qur’ān) when it comes to them (are among those who will be thrown into the Fire). For it is surely a glorious, unconquerable Book.

42. Falsehood can never have access to it, whether from before it or from behind it (whether by arguments and attitudes based on modern philosophies, or by attacks from the past based on earlier Scriptures;<sup>12</sup> (it is) the Book being sent down in parts from the One All-Wise, All-Praiseworthy (to Whom all praise and gratitude belong).

43. What is said to you (O Messenger) is but that which was said (by the unbelievers) to the Messengers before you. Your Lord is indeed One Who disposes forgiveness, and Who disposes painful retribution.

44. If We had made it a Qur’ān in a foreign tongue, they (who now reject it) would certainly have said: “If only its communications had been spelled out distinctly and made clear! Why a foreign tongue, and an Arab (to speak it to Arabs)?” Say: “(It is not a Book whose power or purpose is confined by language.) For those who believe, it is a guidance and healing (for their hearts and minds, and all their senses). But as for those who do not believe, in their ears is



heaviness, and it is imperceptible to them. They are (like people who are being) called from far off (so the call does not reach their hearing and sight).

45. Assuredly We granted Moses the Book, and discordant views arose about it (just as your people, O Messenger, say different things concerning the Book We are revealing to you). Had it not been for a decree already issued by your Lord (postponing the final, decisive judgment until an appointed term), it would indeed have been judged between them.<sup>13</sup> They are (nevertheless) in doubting uncertainty about it (about the Qur’ān and their attitude to it).

46. Whoever does good, righteous deeds, it is for his own soul’s good, and whoever does evil, it is to its harm. Your Lord never does the least wrong to His servants.

11. Deviation from the right way concerning God's signs in nature and life can occur in many ways. For example, making any of these signs – the sun, the moon, the stars, or any human being or the jinn – an object of worship, or using them as the means of denying God as the Creator and Ruler of them, as the modern materialistic scientific approach does, are two such ways. Deviation concerning the Revelations or the Divine Scriptures can also occur in numerous ways. Some of these ways are by distorting their meaning, misusing them for worldly benefits, making alterations in them, or interpreting them arbitrarily without being based on sound knowledge.

12. Said Nursi explains it thus:

If you look at the Qur'ān from a sound heart, you will see that its six sides are so brilliant and transparent that no darkness

and misguidance, doubt and suspicion, or deception can penetrate it. Nor is there a fissure through which such things could infiltrate into the sphere of its purity. Above it is the stamp of miraculousness, beneath it proof and evidence, behind it its point of support – pure Divine Revelation, before it happiness in this world and the next, on its right questioning human reason about its truth and ensuring its confirmation, and on its left calling the human conscience to testify to its truth and securing its submission. Inside the Qur'ān is the pure guidance of the All-Merciful One, and outside is the light of faith. (See *The Words*, “The 22<sup>nd</sup> Word,” 321.)

13. The decree in question is that which is found in 2: 36, and 7: 24: *There shall be for you on the earth (where you have already been appointed as vicegerent) a habitation and provision until an appointed time.*

إِلَيْهِ رُدُّ عِلْمِ السَّاعَةِ وَمَا تَخْرُجُ مِنْ شَمَارَاتٍ مِنْ أَكْثَامِهَا  
 وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنْثَىٰ وَلَا تَضْمَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ  
 إِيَّاكُمْ أَتَىٰ مَا تَدَّعَىٰ فَلَوْ لَآ إِذْ نَأَىٰ مَا مَاتْنَا مِنْ شَهِيدٍ ۖ وَصَلَّىٰ  
 عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَظَلُّوا مَا لَمَعُوا مِنْ حَبِصٍ  
 ۖ لَا يَسْمَعُ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَاءِ الْخَيْرِ وَإِنْ مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيُوقِئُ  
 فَهَاطُ ۖ وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْتَهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ صَرَاءٍ مَسَّاهُ  
 لَيَقُولُنَّ هَذَا لِي وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِنْ رُجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ  
 رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْبَىٰ فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا  
 وَلَنَدَّبَنَّهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ۖ وَإِذَا نَعَّمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ  
 أَعْرَضَ وَبَأْجَانِيَةً وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُو دُعَاءٍ عَرِيضٍ ۖ قُلْ  
 أَتَأْتِسْتُمْ بِأَنْ كَانُوا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ شَرًّا كَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ أَصْلَابٍ مِمَّنْ  
 هُوَ فِي شِقَاقِ بَيْتِهِ ۖ سَتَرِيهِمْ أَتَأْتِسْتُمْ فِي الْأَفَاقِ  
 وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَّبِعَنَّهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوْ لَمْ يَكُنْ  
 رَبُّكَ أَتَىٰ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ۖ أَلَا أَنَّهُمْ فِي  
 مِرْيَةٍ مِنْ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ ۖ أَلَا إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُبْطِنٌ ۖ

47. To Him alone is referred the knowledge of the Last Hour. And no fruits emerge from their sheaths, and no female conceives or gives birth, but with His Knowledge. And on the Day He will call out to them, “Where now are those (you alleged and proclaimed as) partners to Me?”, they will surely say, “We proclaim to You that there is none among us who can testify (to that false claim).”

48. And those whom (they made as deities and) invoked before will surely fail them; so they will know for certain that there is no escape for them.

49. Human never tires of asking for (what he presumes is) his own good, but if evil befalls him, then he gives up all hope and loses heart.<sup>14</sup>

50. And assuredly if We (by Our grace) let him taste a mercy from Us after a hardship that has visited him, he certainly says: “This is but my due (and I can dispose it as I please), and I do not consider that the Last Hour will ever come (so that I should be called to account for it). Even if (it should come, and) I should be brought back to my Lord, I will surely find with Him the best (because I judge myself to always be deserving what is the best).” Without doubt, We will make those who disbelieve understand all that they do (and call them to account), and without doubt, We will make them taste a harsh punishment.

51. When We bestow favors upon human, he retreats and draws aside (from his Lord); and when evil befalls him, then he has recourse to long supplications.

52. Say: “Tell me, if it (the Qur’ān) is from God and after (knowing that) you have disbelieved in it, then who is more astray than one who is in wide schism (separating himself from the truth)?”

53. We will show them Our manifest signs (proofs) in the horizons of the universe and within their own selves, until it will become manifest to them that it (the Qur’ān) is indeed the truth.<sup>15</sup> Is it not sufficient (as proof) that your Lord is a witness over all things (just as He is witnessed to by all things)?<sup>16</sup>

54. Beware! They are in (willful) doubt about the meeting with God (because they vainly expect to escape accounting for their deeds, and therefore decline to believe in the Qur’ān). Beware! He is One Who encompasses all things (in His Knowledge and Power).

14. This is typical of one who does not believe in God as the Creator of all good and evil, and in Divine Destiny. Since such persons concentrate on the worldly life in pursuit of its enjoyments and attribute everything to their own knowledge and abilities according to the “law” of cause and effect, when they feel that there is no longer any means to attain something, they become utterly desperate. In contrast, believers never lose hope because they believe that it is God Who also creates the means to attain something and He can always create new means when one fails. Believers also know for certain that God is the Creator of all things, including good and evil, and that evil is an outcome of their own choices. So when they cannot attain something, they either think that they have made a mistake in trying to attain it, or that God does not will them to have it because it is not good for them to attain it.

15. This sentence has several implications, such as follows:

- The polytheists of Makkah will certainly witness that the tidings of the Qur’ān and the Messenger for the future will prove true. Also, all other future events will establish the truth of the Qur’ān and the

call of the Messenger, so that the Makkan unbelievers will confess it.

- The developments of “natural” sciences and the sciences that study human physiology will prove the essentials of Islamic faith, especially God’s Existence and Oneness. So almost all human beings will have to confess the truth of the Qur’ān and the Messengership of the Prophet Muḥammad, upon him be peace and blessings.
  - In addition to sciences, future history, worldwide, will clearly show that the Qur’ān is the truth, and the promise stated in 24: 55 will prove to be true for the believers toward the end of time, as it proved for the believers during the Messenger’s time.
16. That is, God sees, hears and is aware of all things and events. He is also witnessed by all things and events as their Sole Creator, Deity, Lord (Sustainer, Protector), Provider, and Sovereign. In every thing and event there are manifest signs pointing to Him with His Names and Attributes. For one whose heart is not dead or sealed, whose eyes are not blinded, and whose ears are not deafened to the truth because of prejudices, sins, wrongdoing, and arrogance, He is more manifest than anything else.

## SŪRAH 42

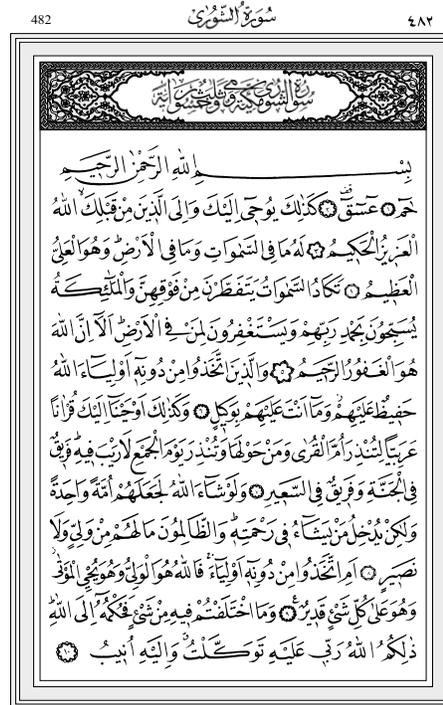
ASH-SHŪRĀ  
(CONSULTATION)

Makkah Period

Revealed in Makkah, this *sūrah* of 53 verses derives its name from the word “consultation” in verse 38. Consultation is one of the most important principles of Islamic social life. This *sūrah* concentrates on Revelation and the fact that all the Messengers came with and preached the same truths. It warns those who resist against them and gives glad tidings to the believers.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. *Ḥā. Mīm.*
2. *‘Ayn. Sīn. Qāf.*
3. Just so, He reveals to you as (He did) to those (whom He chose as Messengers) before you, (being as He is) God, the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Wise.
4. His is whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And He is the All-Exalted, the Supreme.
5. The heavens are all but rent asunder from above them (because of the majesty of Revelation); and the angels glorify their Lord with His praise, and pray for (His establishing a way of guidance for) those on the earth and for forgiveness (of those who follow it). Beware! surely God is He Who is the All-Forgiving, the All-Compassionate.<sup>1</sup>
6. As for those who take for themselves others besides God for guardians and confidants, (to whom they entrust their affairs, thereby associating partners with Him): God is ever watchful over them, (preserving a record of their deeds). You are not a



guardian over them (responsible for their conduct).

7. And just so, (as We revealed these truths to the Messengers before you) We reveal to you a Qur’an (a Recitation) in Arabic so that you may warn the mother-city and all those around it,<sup>2</sup> and warn of the Day of Assembly, about (the coming of) which there is no doubt. One party will be in Paradise, and one party in the Blaze.<sup>3</sup>

8. If God had so willed, He would surely have made them a single community (of the same faith and way of life), but He admits whom He wills into His Mercy. As for the wrongdoers, they have neither a guardian (to protect them), nor a helper.<sup>4</sup>

9. What! have they taken for themselves others beside God for guardians and confidants (to whom they entrust their affairs,

thereby associating partners with Him)? Rather, God is He Who is the true Guardian, and He will revive the dead, and He has full power over everything.

10. “Whatever you differ on, the final judgment about it is with God. Such is God, my Lord: in Him I put my trust, and to Him I turn in devotion.

1. These initial verses concern the Revelation. As a term, it means God’s communication of His Messages to His Prophets and Messengers in a special way, the exact nature of which we cannot know. As will be mentioned in verse 51 in this *sūrah* and as was explained before in *sūrah* 20, note 5, Revelation takes place in three ways. God speaks or communicates a message to a Prophet from behind a veil, or by putting the meaning in the heart of the Prophet (as a special kind of Revelation), or by sending an angel. A Prophet is sure that the one who speaks to him from behind a veil or puts a meaning in his heart is God.

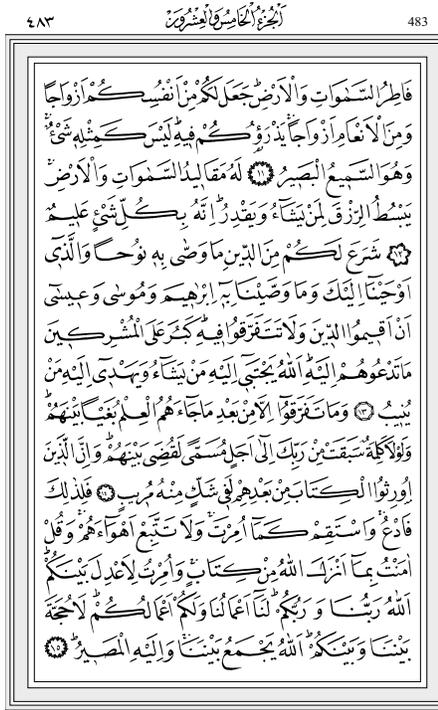
It is because of the weight and majesty of Revelation that the heavens are nearly rent asunder from above while it is being conveyed to the Prophet. Their being nearly rent asunder from above implies that Revelation issues from the “realm” that is more sublime or higher; there are paths along which God’s Revelation is carried, along which the angels move, and the acts of conscious beings ascend to God (*sūrah* 23: 17). The sublimity and height are, of course, not of a material or physical kind. And as explained in *sūrah* 37: 1-3, note 1, some other angels accompanied Archangel Gabriel, who brought the Qur’ān gradually to God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings. Those angels aligned themselves in ranks along the way of Gabriel, upon him be peace, and drove away the devils that tried to grasp something of the Revelation. Some from among them, as the aides of Gabriel, brought Revelations to

the Messenger that was not of the Qur’ān. Muslim scholars call the Revelations that constitute the Qur’ān “the Revelation recited.” The Revelations which they call “the Revelation not recited” and are not included in the Qur’ān, came either to explain the Qur’ān or to lay new commandments and guide the Messenger and the believers in emerging matters. The Sunnah as the verbal declarations, acts, and confirmations of God’s Messenger is based on these Revelations. The Messenger says: “Beware! I have been given the Book and its like together with it” (Abū Dāwūd, “Sunnah,” 5).

2. God’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, was ordered to begin his mission with his nearest relatives (*sūrah* 26: 214), and then to warn all the Makkkan people (in this verse) and all the Arab people (in this verse and 41: 3,) and then all conscious beings (all humankind and the jinn) (*sūrah* 38: 87; *sūrah* 21: 107).

3. The second part of the verse is of the same import as verses 103 and 105 in *Sūrah Hūd*: *That is a day when all humankind will be gathered together.... Among those (gathered together) some are wretched and some happy.*

4. For an explanation, see *sūrah* 5: 48, note 11. In addition, God admits into His Mercy (owns and protects them, especially from eternal punishment) those who are not wrongdoers. As for the wrongdoers (those who deny God or associate partners with Him and commit injustices in life), He excludes them from His Mercy.



11. The Originator of the heavens and the earth (each with particular features and on ordered principles); He has made for you, from your selves, mates, and from the cattle mates (of their own kind): by this means He multiplies you (and the cattle). Nothing whatsoever (is there) like Him.<sup>5</sup> He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

12. His are the keys of (the treasures of) the heavens and the earth. He enlarges provision for whom He wills, and straitens it (for whom He wills). Surely He has full knowledge of everything.

13. Of the Religion (that He made for humankind and revealed through His Messengers throughout history), He has laid down for you as way of life what He willed to Noah, and that which We reveal to you, and what We willed to Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus, (commanding): “Establish the Religion, and do not divide into opposing groups concerning it.”<sup>6</sup> What you call people to is hard and distressful for those who associate partners with God. God chooses whom He wills and brings them together (in faith and in obedience) to Himself, and He guides to Himself whoever turns to Him in devotion.

14. And they (who follow the previous ways) were not divided (into opposing groups) until after the knowledge came to them (of the way they must follow and what that entailed, and only) because of envious rivalry and insolence among themselves. Had it not been for a decree already issued by your Lord, (granting people respite and postponing the final, decisive judgment) until an appointed term, it would indeed have been judged between them. Surely those who (succeeded those

opposing groups and) inherited the Book, are in doubting uncertainty about it.<sup>7</sup>

15. So (O Messenger), call people to that (the way of life God has laid down for you). Pursue what is exactly right (in every matter) as you are commanded (by God). Do not follow their lusts and fancies (who follow other ways, including the followers of the previous Scriptures), and say: “I believe in whatever Book God has sent down; and I am commanded to bring about equity among you (without discrimination according to race, rank by birth, wealth, or power). God is our Lord and your Lord. To us are accounted our deeds, and to you, your deeds: (let there be) no contention between us and you: God will bring us all together (and settle any difference between us and you). To Him is the homecoming.”<sup>8</sup>

5. This short statement emphasizes that God is not of the same kind as those who have been created, and therefore He is beyond all human concepts of Him. So He has no mates and nothing is like Him, nor does He beget, nor is He begotten. Nothing – neither matter, nor space, nor time – can restrict or contain Him. And this is why His Attributes – His Hearing, Seeing, Knowledge, Will, Power, Creating, and so on – are also beyond anything we can conceive.

6. This verse has many implications, such as the following:

- The religion God has made and appointed for humankind during history is one and the same. It has the same essentials of faith, worship, conduct, and morality.
- Among the Prophets God chose some as Messengers, and among the Messengers He chose five as being of a particular degree: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad, upon them all be peace and blessings. He established for each principles of conduct in life, in addition to the pillars of faith, worship, and morality. These principles, which form a way of life (Law), are the same in essence, though there are some differences among them in secondary matters, as we can understand from verse 5: 48 (see that verse and the corresponding note 11). When the Last Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, came, his Law encompassed all the previous Laws with certain changes (in regard to how the Islamic Law treated the previous ones, see *sūrah* 2: 106, note 95).
- In Islamic terminology, the Law is *Shari'ah* and it is used for the practical aspect of the Religion.
- The verse uses the word, *will*, for the Laws ordained for Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, but the verb, *reveal*, for the Last Messenger. *Will* implies strong advice and giving special importance to certain things. So concerning the way of life willed to Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, some matters had special importance according to the time and conditions particular to each. However, the use of *reveal* for the way of life enjoined on the Last Messenger implies that all aspects of it – including those which exist in the Qur'an and those established by the Sunnah of the Messenger – were revealed by God and are of universal importance.
- The verse first mentions the Prophet Noah and continues to talk about the Last Mes-

senger and then the other great Messengers. This is because the Prophet Noah is the first Messenger to whom a comprehensive Law to govern life was willed, and the Last Messenger is the greatest of all and the way of life revealed to him is universal and inclusive of all the previous ones. We see a similar order in 33: 7: *And (remember) when We took from the Prophets their covenant, and from you (O Muḥammad), and from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus the son of Mary. We took from them a solemn covenant.* This verse first mentions all the Prophets, particularly mentioning the five greatest among them beginning with the last one, due to his being the greatest among them and also because God's Religion gained universality with him.

- Preserving and obeying the Law is indispensable for establishing the Religion and preserving it from distortions, changes, and corruptions. The Law has the same meaning for the Religion as the skin has for the human body. The main reason why the Religion lost its originality and purity after the Prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus is that people either ignored or neglected the Law, or changed it, or disobeyed it. Negligence of, or disobedience to, the Law is also one of the basic reasons for the internal divisions among the communities of the Messengers after them and for the deviations witnessed concerning the essentials of faith.

7. This verse mainly concerns the People of the Book, the followers of Moses and Jesus, upon them be peace. Their being in doubt about their Book means that some of them are really in doubt about its being a Divine Book and/or about some passages being really from God, while some others doubt whether it has been preserved and transmitted to them in its originality, and still others have other uncertainties about it. For the decree already issued by God, see *sūrah* 2: 36; *sūrah* 7: 24.

8. This verse is of similar import to verse 3: 64: *Say (to them, O Messenger): "O People of the Book, come to a word common between us and you, that we worship none but God, and associate none as partner with Him, and that none of us take others for Lords, apart from God." If they (still) turn away, then say: "Bear witness that we are Muslims (submitted to Him exclusively)." See the corresponding note 12.*

16. And as for those who contend about God (defying His Lordship or struggling against His Religion) after His call has been accepted (and His Religion recognized as true), their contention is void in their Lord's sight, and (His) wrath (condemnation) is upon them, and for them is a severe punishment.

17. God is He Who has sent down the Book with truth and the Balance, (setting out the truth and what is right in all matters). And for all you know, the Last Hour may well be near.

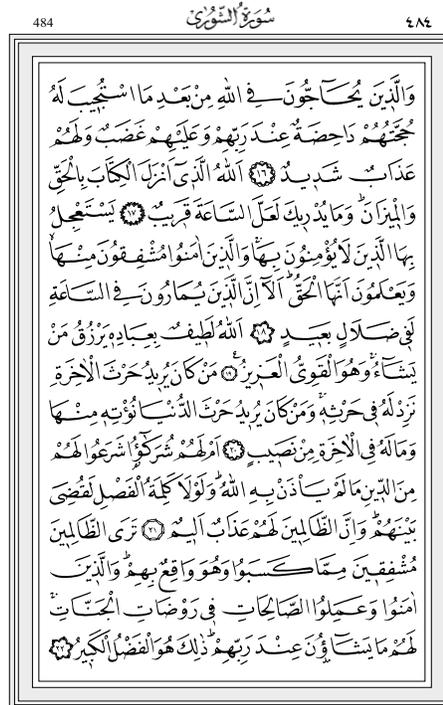
18. Those who do not believe in it (derisively) ask it to be hastened; whereas those who believe hold it in awe, and know that it is true (certain to come). Be aware! those who dispute concerning the Last Hour have indeed gone far astray.

19. God is All-Gracious to His servants. He grants provision to whom He wills (in the manner and degree that He wills); and He is the All-Strong, the All-Glorious with irresistible might.

20. Whoever desires (and strives to gain) the harvest of the Hereafter, We increase him in his harvest; and whoever desires the harvest of the world, We grant him out of that, and he has no portion in the Hereafter.<sup>9</sup>

21. Or do they have partners with God who have prescribed for them in the Religion what God has not allowed (and so they judge and act however they wish)? Had it not been for a decree (already issued by God, postponing the final, decisive judgment) between people, it would

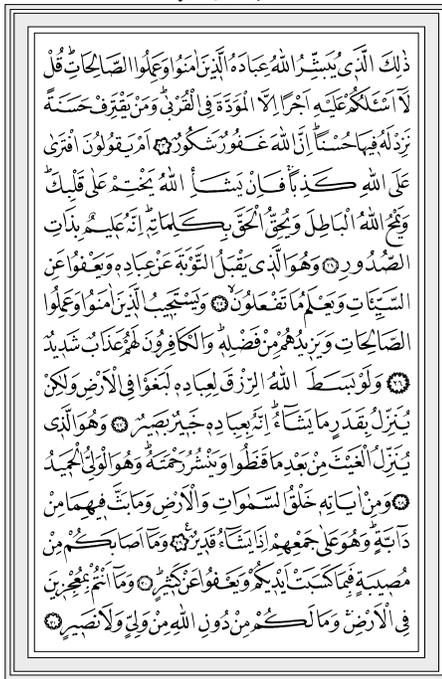
9. The last two verses explain two important principles in the provision of living beings. One is that God creates all living beings and determines their needs and the way in which they are provided for. The other is that He gives those who aim at the Hereafter more than they deserve, but gives those who aim at the world some amount of worldly provisions



indeed have been judged between them. Surely for the wrongdoers there is a painful punishment.

22. You will see the wrongdoers (who presume to lay down a way of life in the name of religion other than God's) full of fear on account of what they have earned, and it will inevitably befall them. As for those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, they will be in the luxuriant meadows of the Gardens. They will have whatever they wish prepared in God's Presence. That indeed is the great favor.

with no portion at all in the Hereafter. This implies that it is not possible for one who is greedy for worldly provisions to obtain everything in the world and feel content with it. So one should not aim for the world, but rather focus on the harvest of the Hereafter, while not neglecting working for one's livelihood (see *sūrah* 28: 77, note 16).



23. That it is of which God gives the glad tidings to His servants who believe and do good, righteous deeds. Say: "I ask of you no wage for it (for conveying God's Religion to you which will bring you this favor), but (I ask of you for) love for my near relatives (on account of my mission)."<sup>10</sup> Whoever scores a good deed, We increase him in good in respect of it. Surely God is All-For-giving, All-Responsive (to gratitude).

24. What! do they say that he (the Messenger) has fabricated a falsehood in attribution to God? If He so wills, He can seal up your heart (so you would not be able to recite to them anything of Revelation. But what you convey to them is the Revelations from Us.) And God blots out falsehood, and affirms the truth to be true by His decrees. Surely, God has full knowledge of what lies hidden in the bosoms.

25. He is the One Who accepts repentance from His servants and excuses evil deeds, and He knows all that you do.

26. He responds with acceptance to (the worship and supplication of) those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, and grants them more out of His bounty (than they asked for). However, as to the unbelievers, for them is a severe punishment.

27. If God were always to provide for (all of) His servants in great abundance, they would certainly have transgressed all bounds on the earth, but He sends it down in due measure as He wills. Surely He is fully aware of His servants, and sees them well.

28. He it is Who sends down the rain useful in all ways to rescue (them) after they have lost all hope, and spreads out His mercy far and wide (to every being). He it is Who is the Guardian, and the All-Praiseworthy.

29. Among His manifest signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and that He has dispersed in both of them living creatures. And He has full power to gather them together when He wills.<sup>11</sup>

30. Whatever affliction befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned,<sup>12</sup> and yet He overlooks many (of the wrongs you do).

31. You cannot frustrate in the earth (God's will). You have, apart from God, neither a guardian (to whom you can entrust your affairs) nor a helper.

10. All love is essentially for God, and all other loves should be on account of Him; and even love for the Messenger is essentially on account of God. Otherwise love for any other being, without considering God or that being's relationship with God, may lead to perdition, like the love of many Christians for Jesus, which has caused them to deify him, and the love of many Shi'ites for 'Ali, which has led many of them, tragically, to disparage the majority of other Companions and his beloved wife, Āishah. The reason why God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, asked his community to love his near relatives, including his household in particular ('Ali, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn – the latter two being his grandsons from Fāṭimah and 'Ali) was because of the great service they and their descendants would provide for Islam until Judgment Day.

11. According to many classical interpreters of

the Qur'ān, such as Mujāhid, and contemporary interpreters, such as Fethullah Gülen, it is more appropriate to understand from this verse that there are corporeal, even conscious creatures like those on the earth in some other parts of the heavens. In the future, humankind may travel as far as those parts, and at any point of the heavens or the earth, they may meet up with those creatures.

12. In principle, everyone gets what they deserve. However, an affliction that befalls a believer because of their sins or faults causes, if the believer repents, that sin to be forgiven and a new door to a new reward to be opened. However, those who suffered the greatest sufferings have been the Prophets and their true successors in serving God's cause; and the afflictions befalling such sinless people cause them to be continuously promoted to higher and higher ranks.



13. When an affliction befalls believers, they show patience; when they are favored with something good, they give thanks to God. In either case they gain reward.

14. For the major sins, see *sūrah* 4: 31, note 11. “Indecent, shameful deeds” generally denote deeds such as fornication, adultery, prostitution, and homosexuality.

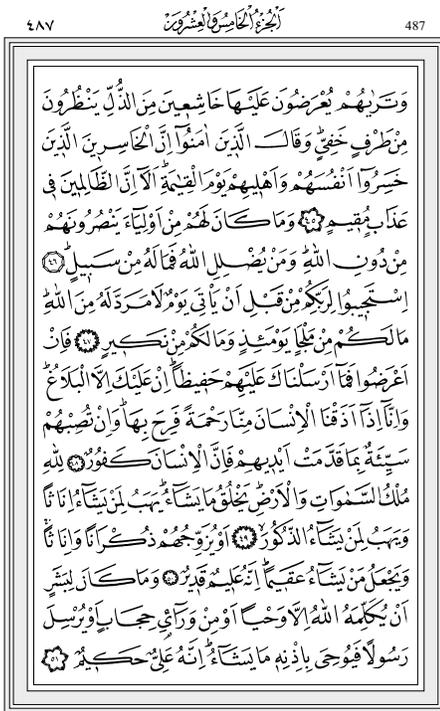
15. Consultation is the first requirement for reaching the right decision. Decisions reached without due reflection or proper consultation usually come to nothing. Individuals who depend only on themselves are disconnected from others and unconcerned with the opinions of others; such people, even if they happen to be geniuses, are at considerable risk of error, as compared to those who exchange opinions and arguments (See *Pearls of Wisdom*, 77-78).

The advisory system is so important in Islam that God praises the first, exemplary Muslim community as a community whose affairs were conducted through consultation. This becomes even clearer when we realize that this first community was led by the Prophet, who never spoke out of caprice or on his own accord, but only spoke about what was revealed to him by God (53: 2-3); God considers consultation so important that He ordered His Messenger to practice it with his Companions (3: 159). Even after the Muslims’ reverse at

the Battle of Uhud (in 625), due to some of the Companions’ disobedience of the Prophet’s orders, God told him to engage in consultation. The Prophet and his rightly-guided successors always followed the principle of consultation.

Consultation settles many affairs among Muslims. Judges who cannot decide cases employ consultation to reach a verdict, based on the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, thus making it similar to *ijtihād* (deducing new laws through reasoning based on the Qur’ān and Sunnah) and *qiyās* (analogy). Furthermore, any punishment of a secondary nature that is not explicitly mentioned in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah can be pronounced after consulting authoritative Muslim jurists.

16. The Qur’ān insists on justice and the equality of rights, and that inviolate values demand equal respect and retaliation. So the Qur’ān allows one to reciprocate any wrong done to one if retaliation is possible (For an explanation, see *sūrah* 2: 178-179, 194, notes 131, 140; *sūrah* 5: 31, 45, notes 6, 10). However, since a person wronged can easily be tempted to exceed the limits in retaliation, in the places where the Qur’ān mentions the permission of retaliation as a legal principle, it also warns against exceeding the limits and draws attention to the beauty and importance of forgiveness, exhorting individuals to forgive any wrongdoing inflicted on them (see *sūrah* 22: 60, note 16).



45. You will see them brought before it (Hell), in fear and humbled by disgrace, and looking around with furtive looks. And those who believe will say: “Those are the real losers who have ruined their own selves and their families on the Resurrection Day.” Be aware: the wrongdoers are in an enduring punishment.

46. And they will surely have no guardians to help them apart from God (only He is the Guardian with power to help His servants, as He wills). Whoever God leads astray, he can no longer have a way (to guidance and eternal happiness).

47. Answer the call of your Lord before there comes to you a Day which God will not remove (from them) and none can prevent Him from bringing it. You will have no refuge on that Day, nor power of denial (of any of your sins or of your identity).

48. But (do not grieve) if they turn away in aversion (from your call, O Messenger): We have not sent you (as a Messenger) so as to be their keeper (to prevent their misdeeds or carry accountability for them). What rests with you is but to convey (God’s Message) fully. Indeed, when We favor human with a taste of mercy, he rejoices in it (without ever thinking to express gratitude to Him Who favored him). But if an evil befalls them because of what their hands have forwarded, surely then human is ungrateful.

49. To God belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He creates whatever He wills. He grants to whom He wills daughters and grants to whom He wills sons.

50. Or He mingles them, both sons and daughters (granted to whom He wills); and He leaves barren whom He wills. Surely He is All-Knowing, All-Powerful.

51. It is not for any mortal that God should speak to him unless it be by Revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger (angel) to reveal, by His leave, whatever He wills (to reveal).<sup>17</sup> Surely He is All-Exalted, All-Wise.

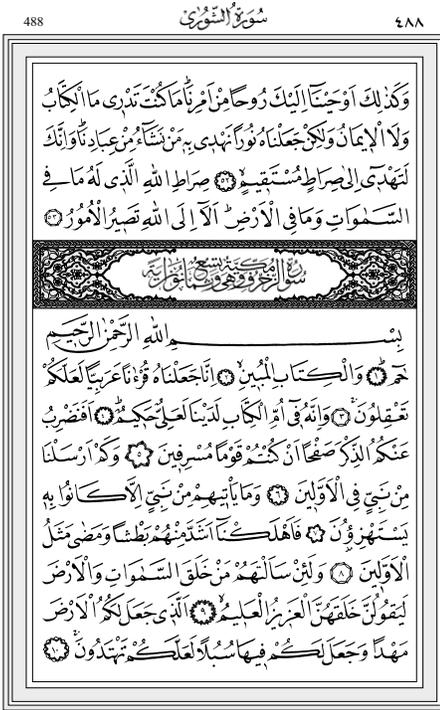
17. Every human being has the potential to be addressed by God. However, in order to use this potential, one has to have attained to a certain degree of spiritual and intellectual purity. The Prophets had the highest degree of this purity. God's special speaking to the Prophets is called *wahy* (Revelation). Revelation occurs in three ways. One is that God suddenly puts the meaning in the Prophet's heart and he knows that this meaning is from God. This is the first way mentioned in the verse as *by Revelation*.

The second way or form is that God speaks to a human being from behind a veil, as He spoke to the Prophet Moses, upon him be peace, in the Valley of Tuwā from behind a tree; or as He did on Mount Sinai, where Moses heard God's speech from behind a veil, the identity of which we do not know. The third way is that God sends an angel to convey His Message to the Prophet. The Qur'ān was re-

vealed to God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, in this way. The archangel Gabriel brought it to him. The Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, saw him and heard his speech.

A person can also receive God's Message in dreams. If a Prophet receives such a message in dream, it is Revelation. An ordinary person can also have true dreams through which he or she can receive some meaning from the Almighty. Such dreams sometimes require interpretation, but sometimes are clear enough not to need an interpretation. The meanings or messages an ordinary believer receives in true dreams are called "glad heralds" according to a Prophetic Tradition (al-Bukhārī, "Ta'bīr," 5).

God also reveals to or inspires in animals (16: 88). This is either an intrinsic, constant knowledge deposited in them, or a constant orientation or direction from God (see Appendix 9).



## SŪRAH 43

AZ-ZUKHRUF  
(ORNAMENTS)

Makkah Period

Consisting of 89 verses, this *sūrah* was revealed in Makkah toward the closing years of the Makkan period, when the polytheists were concocting plots to assassinate the Messenger of God, upon him be peace and blessings. It takes its name from verse 35, where the word *zukhruf* occurs. It concentrates on some of the fundamentals of faith, namely God's Oneness, Divine Messengership, and the afterlife; and it rejects certain false beliefs of ignorance, such as attributing daughters to God. It mentions certain episodes from the life of Prophets Abraham and Moses, upon them be peace, in order to urge polytheists to give up associating partners with God. Finally, it warns them against the end that awaits them in the Hereafter.

In the Name of God, the All-Merciful,  
the All-Compassionate.

1. *Hā. Mīm.*
2. By the Book clear in itself and clearly showing the truth,
3. We have made it a Recitation (a Qur'ān) in Arabic so that you may reason (and understand it and the wisdom in its revelation).
4. Surely it is in the Mother Book with Us, exalted, firm, and decisive.<sup>1</sup>
5. Shall We take away this Reminder from you (and leave you to your own devices), because you are a people wasteful (of your God-given faculties and committing excesses)?
6. How many a Prophet have We sent to convey Our Message among the former peoples.

52. And thus (in the ways mentioned), We have revealed to you a spirit of Our command (the life-giving Message, the Qur'ān). You would not (otherwise) have known what the Book was (with all the knowledge it contains, and the way of life it establishes), and what faith was (as described by the Book, and with all its principles, requirements, and implications). But We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants. And certainly you (by God's guidance) guide (people) to a straight path –

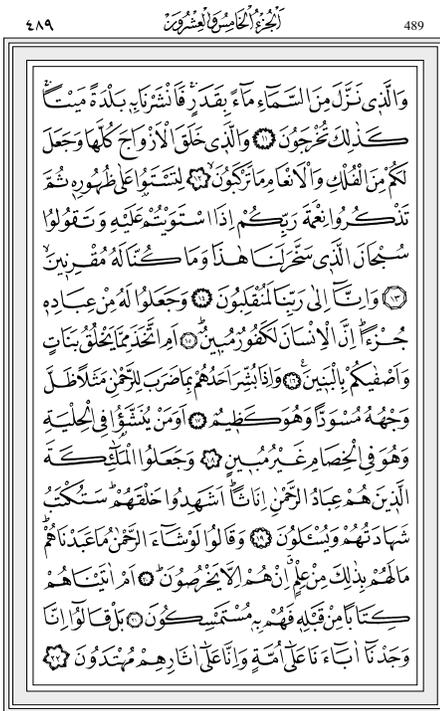
53. The path of God, to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Be aware: all affairs are ultimately referred to God.

7. And there never came to them a Prophet but they mocked him.
8. So We destroyed peoples mightier than these in prowess, and the illustrative accounts of those (destroyed peoples) have already have been related.
9. If you ask them who has created the heavens and the earth, they most certainly say (in answer), “The One All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Knowing, has created them.”
10. He Who has made the earth a cradle for you, and has set on it roads for you so that you may find your way.

1. The Mother Book is also called the Supreme Preserved Tablet (*sūrah* 85: 22; for the nature and meaning of the Supreme Preserved Tablet, see *sūrah* 6: 59, note 13; *sūrah* 13: 39, note 13; *sūrah* 17: 14, note 10). The Qur’ān originally exists in the Mother Book, which exists with God. The Qur’ān is so high and exalted, and so firm and unfathomable in the Mother Book that no one is ever able to reach and understand it. However, God revealed it to the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, as a Book in the Arabic language so that people might be able to read and study it and understand why it has been revealed. That is, the Almighty has a very important and sublime purpose for sending it down as a Book that is comprehensible to human reason, and we must reflect on this purpose and act accordingly. Since the Qur’ān was revealed from the Mother Book, which is in a

form that is infinitely high and impenetrable by human reason, it is described as “The Divine Condescension to the Human Mind.”

Truly, the Qur’ān of miraculous exposition teaches and explains many profound and subtle truths in a way so direct and clear that it is familiar to the general way of seeing things, and does not offend general human sentiments. Nor does it present itself against generally held opinions. Just as one chooses to use appropriate words when addressing a child, so too does the Qur’ān choose a style that is suitable to the level of those whom it addresses, and speaking in allegories, parables, and comparisons, it makes the most difficult Divine truths and mysteries, which even the minds of the most profound philosophers will not otherwise be able to comprehend, understandable by ordinary people, literate or illiterate.



11. And Who sends down water from the sky in a measure; and We raise a dead land to life with it – even so will you be (raised from the dead and) brought forth (from your graves) –

12. And Who has created all the pairs (of all things);<sup>2</sup> and has enabled for you ships and cattle on which you ride,

13. So that you sit secure on their backs, (and) then remember and reflect on the favor of your Lord when you settle securely on them, and say: “All-Glorified is He Who has subjugated this to our use. We were never capable (of accomplishing this by ourselves).

2. For creation in pairs, see *sūrah* 36: 36, note 11.

3. Reciting this statement of praise and glorification when seated on any mount was a

14. “And surely, to our Lord we are indeed bound to return.”<sup>3</sup>

15. Yet they attribute to Him (fatherhood of) some among His servants. Human is indeed ungrateful, obviously.

16. What! has He taken to Himself daughters out of all that He creates, and “honored” you with sons?

17. When any of them is given the news of the birth of what he accepts as appropriate for the All-Merciful, his face darkens, choking with anger.

18. “What! (Am I to have a daughter,) one who is brought up in adornments, and unable to be clear in disputation?”

19. And yet they have judged the angels, who are themselves the servants of the All-Merciful, to be females (whom they judge to be of little value, and yet regard as His daughters). Did they witness their creation? This testimony of theirs will be recorded, and they will be called to account (for this falsehood in the Hereafter).

20. They also say: “If the All-Merciful had so willed, we would not have worshipped them (our deities, including angels).” They have no knowledge whatever of that (the relationship of Divine Will and human will and actions). Indeed, they only judge and speak according to their own fancies and interests.

21. Or did We give them a Book before this (Qur’ān), and so they are holding fast to it (and worshipping their false deities by its authority)?

22. Not at all! (Indeed, their only argument is that) they say: “We have found our forefathers following a certain religion, and we are led in their footsteps.”

practice of the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings,, and therefore is incumbent upon us as a Sunnah act.

23. In just that way, We never sent a warner to a township before you but those of its people who had been lost in the pursuit of pleasures without scruples reacted, saying: “We have found our forefathers following a religion, and we certainly follow in their footsteps.”

24. He (who was sent to warn them) said: “What! even though I have come to you with better guidance<sup>4</sup> than what you have found your forefathers following?” They said: “Surely we are unbelievers in that with which you have been sent.”

25. So then We took Our retribution on them. So look: what was the outcome for those who denied (God’s Messengers)?

26. And (remember) when Abraham (who rejected following the way of his forefathers blindly) said to his father and his people: “I am indeed free of all that you worship.

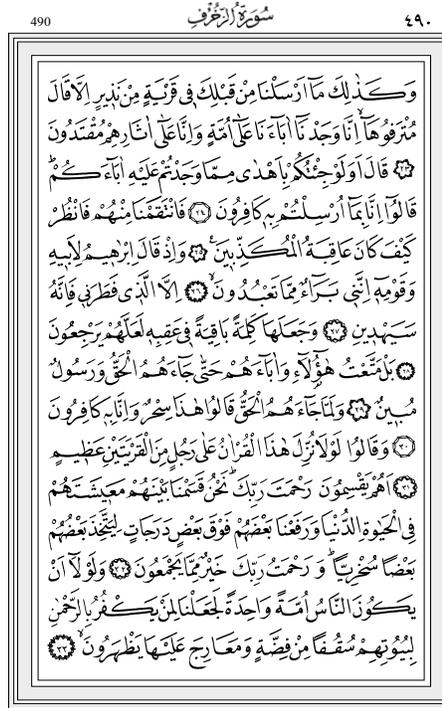
27. “I worship only Him Who has originated me with a unique individuality, and He will guide me (to the truth and to eternal happiness).”

28. And He left it as a Word to endure among those who would come after him, so that they may return (from worshipping false deities to the worship of One God).

29. Indeed I have allowed these (people of Makkah), as I had allowed their forefathers, to enjoy their lives until when the truth and a Messenger came to them, making the truth clear, (and embodying it in every element of his life and character).

30. But now the truth has come to them, they say: “This is sorcery and we are unbelievers in it.”

31. They also say: “If only this Qur’ān had been sent down on a man of leading position of the two (chief) cities!”<sup>5</sup>



32. Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord (so that they may appoint whom they wish as Messenger to receive the Book)? (Moreover, how do they presume to value some above others only because of their wealth or status, when) it is also We Who distribute their means of livelihood among them in the life of this world, and raise some of them above others in degree, so that they may avail themselves of one another’s help? But your Lord’s mercy (in particular Prophethood) is better than what they amass (in this life).

33. And were it not that all people would become one community (around unbelief),<sup>6</sup> We might well have provided for everyone who disbelieves in the All-Merciful roofs of silver for their houses, and (silver) stairways on which to go up,

4. The Religion with which any Messenger came was completely true and the best in guidance, while any religion or faith based on associating partners with God or denial of Him is essentially false and devoid of any guidance. However, there may be some true elements in any false religion or doctrine. So the reason why the warners used *better guidance* was both by way of argumentation and persuasion, as well as referring to those elements of truth that can be found in any religion.

5. This typical objection explains the standards for greatness of people bereft of Divine guidance. According to them, greatness lies in wealth, position, and posts. However, in God's

sight the most honored and greatest are those who are the most advanced in piety and righteousness (*sūrah* 49: 13).

By the chief cities Makkah and Tā'if are meant.

6. This should not be taken to mean that people may realize a peaceful unity in unbelief and lead a peaceful life without any dissension or conflict. The original word for community is *ummah*, which means a community based around a certain belief or doctrine. So what the verse draws our attention to is the danger and possibility of all people tending toward unbelief because of an easy life.

وَلِيُوتِعَهُمْ أَوْبًا وَسُرُرًا عَلَيْهَا يَتَكَبَّرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَزُخْرَفًا  
 وَإِنَّ كُلَّ ذَلِكَ لَمَّا لَتَأْتِيَ الْحَبَوَاتُ الذُّنُوبَ وَالْآخِرَةَ عِنْدَ  
 رَبِّكَ لِلتَّعْبِيرِ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ ذِكْرَ الرَّحْمَنِ يُقِضْ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا  
 فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّونَهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَيَحْسَبُونَ  
 أَنَّهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ نَادَا قَالِ يَا لَيْتَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ  
 جُودًا لَشَرِّقِينَ فَمِنْ أَلْفٍ مِّنْ أَلْفٍ وَقَن تَضَعُ كَعْبُ الْيَوْمِ  
 إِذْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فِي الْمَكَارِمِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ أَقَانَتْ لَشَيْعِ  
 الضُّمَّةِ أَوْ تَهْدَى الْعُمَىٰ وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٩﴾  
 فَمَا نَادَىٰ هَبْنِي يَا قَوْمِي لَعَلِّي مَرْسُومٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ أَوْ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي  
 وَعَدْنَا لَهُمْ فَأَنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّقْتَدِرُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ فَاسْتَجِبْ بِالَّذِي  
 أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَرِجْسٌ  
 لِّكَ وَالْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَسَلِّمْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ  
 قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُّسُلِنَا أَجْعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ آلِهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾  
 وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَكَانَ مِنْ رُّسُلِ  
 رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾



34. And (silver) doors for their houses, and (silver) couches on which to recline,

35. And also adornments of gold (and other jewelry).<sup>7</sup> Yet all this is nothing but a (fleeting) enjoyment of the present, worldly life. And the Hereafter with your Lord is only for the God-revering, pious.

36. Whoever willfully ignores the remembrance of the All-Merciful (and lives as if He did not exist always watching him), We assign to him a devil,<sup>8</sup> who becomes his closest comrade.

37. Such devils certainly bar them from the way (of truth). Yet they think (in themselves) that they are rightly guided.<sup>9</sup>

38. But in the end, when such a one comes to Us (on Judgment Day), he says (to his comrade): “Ah, would that between me and you were the distance of the two easts.<sup>10</sup> How evil a comrade!”

39. “It is of no avail to you at all today (this remorse after death). For you did wrong (in the world), and you will suffer the punishment together.”

40. (Although this is the truth and clear to you, O Messenger,) can you make the deaf hear or guide the blind and him who is lost in obvious error?

41. And whether We take you away from among them, and then We take retribution on them;

42. Or We let you see (in your lifetime) the fulfillment of what We have promised them: (either way) We have full power over them.

43. So hold fast to what is revealed to you. Surely you are on a straight path (in all matters).<sup>11</sup>

44. Indeed, it (the Qur’ān) is a Reminder

for you and for your people, in which lie your honor and happiness (in both worlds). And you (all people) will be questioned (about how it was understood, and how lived).

45. And ask (their true followers about) those of Our Messengers whom We sent before you: Did We ever enable deities to be worshipped apart from the All-Merciful?<sup>12</sup>

46. Assuredly We sent Moses to the Pharaoh and his chiefs with Our clear signs (miracles demonstrating Our being the sole Deity and Lord to be worshipped), and he said: “I am a Messenger of the Lord of the worlds.”

47. But when he came to them with Our clear signs (miracles), they then ridiculed them.

7. Verses 33–35 warn against the fact that luxury may lead people to self-adoration, indulgence in worldly appetites, ingratitude to God, and therefore to unbelief.

8. The devil mentioned in the verse, as in verses *sūrah* 41: 25 and *sūrah* 19: 83, may be of the jinn or humankind. In any case, both human and jinn “devils,” or satanic devils, are always standing close to unbelievers or those who willfully ignore God’s Existence and awareness of whatever they do, living a life according to their own desires. So, the proverb, “Tell me who your friend is, and I will tell you what kind of person you are,” is very apt.

9. Right or true guidance is the guidance of the Qur’ān. So, however rightly-guided those who follow other ways may regard themselves to be, they have in reality strayed far from the truth. The Qur’ān severely warns such people in *sūrah* 18: 103–104: *Say: “Shall We inform you who are the greatest losers in respect of their deeds? Those whose endeavor has been wasted in this world (because it is directed only to this-worldly ends, and so it is bound to be wasted hereafter also) but who themselves reckon that they are doing good.”* (See corresponding note 32.)

10. This phrase is highly typical, and suggests that the earth is sphere. As we know, the point where the sun sets in a hemisphere is in fact

the same point where it rises in another, and so the setting of the sun is a relative fact. What is meant is the distance between the east and the west – the distance which is impossible to cross.

11. These verses came at a time when the believers were extremely weak and unprotected in Makkah, and the leaders of the Quraysh were plotting to assassinate the Messenger of God, upon him be peace and blessings. If the Messenger of God had died, God Almighty would have inflicted total retribution upon the polytheists of Makkah. However, He took him away from among them by letting him emigrate to Madīnah to perfect Islam and complete His favor upon the believers, and He inflicted His retribution upon their most obstinate leaders in the Battle of Badr, letting His most beloved Messenger witness the fulfillment of His promise both to him and others. So, as stated in verse 43, what befalls the believer is always to hold fast to God’s Religion in the footsteps of His Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, in perfect conviction and confidence of its truth and of the absolute Power of God, and to leave to Him the fulfillment of the result.

12. The All-Merciful (*ar-Rahmān*) is the attributive Name that is particular to the Divine Being and exclusive (*sūrah* 1: 1, note 4; *sūrah* 17: 110).

وَمَا نُزِيلُهُمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ إِلَّا هِيَ آكُفٌ مِنْ أُخْتِهَا وَأَخَذْنَا هُمْ  
بِالْعَذَابِ لَعْنَهُمْ يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَقَالُوا يَا أَبَهُ السَّاحِرُ اتَّبِعْنَا  
رَبَّنَا بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَبْدُكَ إِنَّنَا لَمُتَدُونٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ  
الْعَذَابَ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْتَكِبُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَنَادَى فِرْعَوْنُ فِي قَوْمِهِ قَالَ  
يَا قَوْمِ أَلَيْسَ لِي مُلْكُ مِصْرَ وَهَذِهِ الْأَنْهَارُ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِي  
أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ أَمْ أَتَاكُمْ مِنْ هَذَا آيَةٌ الَّتِي هُوَ مَهْمُوتٌ  
وَلَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا ﴿٥٢﴾ فَلَوْلَا أُلْقِيَ عَلَيْهِ آسُورَةٌ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ  
أَوْ حِجَابٍ مَعَ الْفُلُوكِ مُتَمَرِّينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَاسْتَحَفَّتْ قَوْمَهُ  
فَاطَاعُوهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَلَمَّا أَسْمَوْنا  
انْتَفَخْنَا مِنْهُمُ فَانفَرُوا هُمُ الْجَمْعُ بَيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فَجَعَلْنَا هُرْمَةً لَكُمُ  
وَمَثَلًا لِلْآخِرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَكُلَّ ضَرْبٍ مِنْ مَثَلٍ إِذَا قَوْمٌ كَفَرُوا  
مِنْهُ يُصِدُّونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَقَالُوا هَذَا هَيْئًا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُمَا صَاحِبُ  
لَكَ الْإِجْدَالُ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِيمُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا عَجْدٌ  
أَعْمَسْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ مَثَلًا لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ  
لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَلَائِكَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ يَخْلُفُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

48. We displayed to them sign after sign, each greater than the other, and We seized them with (diverse forms of) punishment<sup>13</sup> so that they might turn back (from the way they followed).

49. (Whenever We seized them with a punishment) they would say (to Moses): “O Sorcerer! Pray for us to your Lord by the covenant He has made with you (that He will remove affliction from us if we believe); for we will surely accept the right guidance.”

50. But when We removed the punishment from them, they then broke their promise.

51. The Pharaoh made this proclamation among his people: “O my people! Does not the dominion of Egypt belong to me, as well as these rivers flowing beneath me? Will you not see the truth?”

52. “And, am I not better than this man, who is despicable and can scarcely express himself clearly?”

53. “(If he is true in his claim) why are bracelets of gold not dropped upon him (from the sky), or why do there not come with him angels (to support him in his cause)?”

54. Thus did he make fools of his people and demeaned them, and they obeyed him. Assuredly they were a people given to transgression.<sup>14</sup>

55. So finally when they incurred Our condemnation, We took retribution on them, and We caused them to drown all together.

56. So We made them a thing of the past,

and a precedent (in entering the Fire), and an example to later generations.

57. And when the Son of Mary (Jesus) has been presented as an example (of God’s Power and Oneness, and to refute his being deified by many Christians), your people turn from it in disdain;

58. And they say, “Are our deities better or is he?” They put it to you only for disputation. Indeed, they are a people addicted to contentiousness.<sup>15</sup>

59. Surely he (Jesus) was not other than a servant (worshipping God), whom We favored (with Messengership), and We made him a miraculous example for the Children of Israel (to follow and mend their ways).

60. If We had so willed, We could have made some from among you angels, succeeding each other on the earth.<sup>16</sup>

13. For the kinds of punishment with which God seized the Pharaoh and his people, see *sūrah* 7: 130–133.

14. As can be understood from the verses, the Pharaoh began to really fear the Prophet Moses, upon him be peace, and worried about what would happen. So in order to secure his throne, he sent out heralds among the people to strengthen their obedience to him. He reminded them of his absolute dominion over Egypt, implying that the people led their lives in his land only by his generosity. Thus they could only be his servants. Moreover, he tried to disgrace Moses in their eyes by reminding them that he belonged to an inferior class – the Children of Israel, who had long been serving them. He also claimed that Moses could not express himself clearly, although this was not true. There was no impediment in Moses' speech, as some have thoughtlessly claimed (see *sūrah* 20, note 8; *sūrah* 21: 84, note 15). The Pharaoh fooled his people, and they blindly obeyed him, though for years they had been witnessing the truth clearly. Their obedience was not because they believed in the proclamations of the Pharaoh, but rather because they were a people given to a dissipated life-style and who recognized no rules to guide their behavior. They also feared the Pharaoh, as he could take their lives. So they followed him and shared with him his rebellion against God and his cruel treatment of Moses, upon him be peace, and his followers.

15. Many leading polytheists in Makkah tended to use the fact that Jesus, upon him be peace, was deified by many Christians as a pretext for their polytheism, and their worship of angels, in particular. But when the Qur'ān clarified Jesus' identity, making it clear that he was only a human being who worshipped God, they did not

like this and desired to continue to use the fact that many Christians deified him as an alleged argument for their polytheism. They even said: "We worship angels, while Christians worship a human being. So our deities are better than theirs."

16. This is also stated to refute the deification of angels. The Qur'ān warns that being a human, Jesus, upon him be peace, was able to revive some of the dead and give life to some clay figures, but he did those things by God's permission, and he was a human being who had been created, one responsible for worshipping God, which he did. The polytheists of Makkah thought that only angels could do the extraordinary things that Jesus and other Prophets did with God's permission. In fact, the believers among human beings are more virtuous and exalted in rank than the angels; the distinguished ones among them, such as the Prophets, are greater than the greatest among the angels; and the ordinary ones among the believers are greater than their counterparts among the angels. Human beings have a will, i.e. freedom of choice, which the angels do not possess. So the angels cannot elevate their rank. Thus it was that God willed humankind, not the angels, to inhabit the earth as vicegerents, as a huge grace to humankind, to improve it and live on it according to His Will, and He chose the Prophets from among them. Therefore, there is no need to look for virtue and achievement in other creatures, as it is humankind that has been endowed with the potential to attain the greatest virtues and achievements any created being can attain. And this fact categorically refutes the deification of the angels and the worship of them by human beings.

61. Surely he (Jesus, brought into the world without a father, and granted such miracles as reviving the dead,) is a means to the knowledge of the Last Hour; so do not feel any doubt concerning it, and follow Me (to attain eternal happiness in the other life). This is a straight path.

62. And never let Satan debar you (from the Straight Path). Surely he is a manifest enemy.

63. When Jesus came with manifest truths (and miracles), he said: "I have come to you with the Wisdom (the truths and essentials of faith and good life), and so that I may make clear to you some of what you differ on (matters that require clarification for your good in both worlds). So keep from disobedience to God in reverence for Him and piety, and obey me.

64. "Surely God is He Who is my Lord as well as your Lord, so worship Him (alone). This is a straight path."

65. However, parties (that arose and held differing views concerning him and his teachings) fell into disagreement among themselves. Then woe to those who do the greatest wrong (by corrupting his teachings) because of the punishment of a painful Day.

66. Do they (who persist in unbelief and evil deeds) wait but for the Last Hour – (waiting) that it should come upon them all of a sudden, being unaware and indifferent toward it?

67. Those who are intimate friends (in the world) will be enemies one to another on that Day, except the God-revering, pious. (They will hear:)

وَأَنَّهُ لَعَلَّمُ اللَّسَاعَةَ فَلَا تَمْتَرَنَّ بِهَا وَاتَّبِعُونِ هَذَا صِرَاطًا  
مُسْتَقِيمًا ۖ وَلَا يَصُدُّكُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ  
عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ۝ وَلَمَّا جَاءَ عِيسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ  
بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَلَا يَتَّبِعُونَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي تَخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ  
فَاتَّبِعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا رَسُولَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ  
فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ۝ فَخَلَفَ الْأَخْرَابُ مِنْ  
بَيْنِهِمْ قَوْلُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ آيَاتِنَا ۖ هَلْ  
يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا النَّسَاءَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَعَثَةٌ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۝  
أَلْخَلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ ۝  
يَا عِبَادِ لَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ ۝ الَّذِينَ  
آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ ۝ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ  
وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ تَخْرُجُونَ مِنْ بَيْنِ ظُفُرٍ عَلَيْهِنَّ صِحَافٌ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ  
وَكَوَاكِبٌ وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُ الْأَنْفُسُ وَسَكَدَ الْأَعْيُنُ وَأَنْتُمْ  
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ۝ وَتِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ  
تَعْمَلُونَ ۝ لَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ مِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ۝

68. "O My servants! You will have no fear today, nor will you grieve!

69. "(You) who have believed in My signs and Revelations, and have submitted to Me wholly (as Muslims).

70. "Enter Paradise, you and your (believing) spouses, made contented."

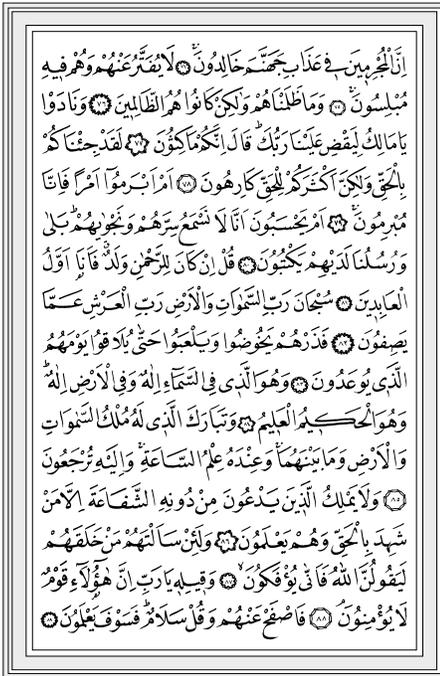
71. Trays of gold and goblets will be passed round them; and there will be therein all that souls desire, and eyes delight in:<sup>17</sup> "And you will abide therein.

72. "That is the Paradise which is made your inheritance<sup>18</sup> in return for what you used to do (in the world).

73. "In it there is for you fruit (of all kinds) in abundance, to eat therefrom."

17. See *sūrah* 41: 31–32, note 9.

18. For inheriting Paradise, see *sūrah* 26: 85, note 19.



74. But the disbelieving criminals will abide in the punishment of Hell.

75. It will not be abated for them, and therein they are in despair (of any mercy and hope of escape).

76. We have not wronged them, but they are the wrongdoers (who ever wronged themselves).

77. They will call out (to the chief keeper of Hell): “O Mālik! Let your Lord make an end of us!” He says: “You are bound to remain (therein)!”

78. We have brought you the truth, assuredly, but most of you are averse to the truth.

79. Or are they settling on some plan (against you, O Messenger)? But We have already settled a “plan” (against them).

80. Or do they think that We do not hear their secrets (that they whisper only to themselves,) and their private counsels? Indeed We do, and Our messengers (angels) are by them, recording.

81. Say: “If the All-Merciful had a child, I would be the first to worship.”

82. All-Glorified is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Supreme Throne,<sup>19</sup> (exalted) above all that they attribute (to Him in ignorance and falsehood).

83. So leave them plunging about in play and amusement until the Day which they have been promised.

84. And He it is Who is God in the heaven (exclusively deserving of worship), and God on the earth (exclusively deserving of worship). He is the All-Wise, the All-Knowing.

85. Blessed and Supreme is He to Whom belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them; and with Him is the knowledge of the Last Hour. And to Him you are on the way to return.

86. Those whom they (deify and then) invoke apart from God have no power and permission to intercede (with God in either world); only those who bear witness to the truth (of God’s absolute Oneness in Divinity, Lordship, and Sovereignty), and who have knowledge (of the truth, will have it).

87. If you ask them who has created them, they will certainly say, “God.” How then are they turned away from the truth and make false claims?

88. (God certainly hears His Messenger when) he says: “O my Lord! Surely those are a people who do not believe.”

89. Yet forbear and pardon them, and (when you go your way,) say, “Peace (be upon you)!” In time, they will come to know.

19. For the Supreme Throne, see *sūrah* 7: 54, note 13.