



THE GRAND QUR'AN

The First Half



*A faithful translation and annotated interpretation
of the first fifteen juz's of God, the Most Merciful's Message*

Waleed Bleyhesh al-Amri
Associate Professor of Translation Studies

1444/2023



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القرآن العظيم
ترجمة معاني النصف الأول

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Endowment for Cherishing the Two Glorious Revelations



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In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful



*O Allah! I am your servant - son of your male servant, son of your female servant - my forelock is in Your Hand—Your Ruling surely will come to pass upon me, Your Judgement upon me is ever fair. I ask You by every one of Your Names; whether you called Yourself by it, revealed it in Your Book, sent it down to any of your creation, or withheld it with You in the knowledge of the Unseen, that You shall **make the Grand Qur'an the spring of my heart, the light in my sight, the soother of my worries and the dispenser of my sorrows.***

(Imām Aḥmad: 4318)



*For those who are turning their gaze anxiously in
the sky looking for the light of truth!*

***Is the one who was dead and We caused him to
come alive and bestowed upon him a light to walk
in among people be like the one who is plunged
in complete darkness; there is no way for him to
emerge out of which? Thus what they used to do
was prettified for the Deniers. (6: 122)***



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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على المبعوث رحمة للعالمين نبينا وحبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين ومن تبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين. أما بعد :

فإن القرآن الكريم كتاب الهداية لجميع البشر قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّذِي هُوَ أَقْوَمُ﴾ (١٠١٤)

أنزله الله تعالى على رسوله الكريم ﷺ ليخاطب الناس به كافة على مختلف أجناسهم واختلاف ألسنتهم والأولائم .. يخاطب عقولهم ويصل إلى قلوبهم ووجدانهم بأسلوب مبین ومعجز، فينبه به تعالى لتلك العقول ويهدي به تلك القلوب إلى صراطه المستقيم، ويخرجها من الظلمات إلى النور، ويسبغ لها سبيل السلام وطرفه في الدنيا والآخرة قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ ۝ يَهْدِي بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ تَهْتَدُونَ ۝﴾ (١١٠-١١١)
وإن هذا القرآن العظيم نزل بلسان عربي مبين، وهو معجز بلفظه ومعناه، نزل للمؤمنين جميعاً فيه شرعهم الحكيم؛ وللناس كافة على وجه العموم لدعوتهم إلى هذا الدين العظيم دين الإسلام توحيداً لله وعبادة له والتزاماً بشرعه الحنيف لإنقاذهم من براثن الشرك والوثنية والعبودية لغير الله تعالى.

فكان لزاماً أن تجتمع الجهود المباركة لترجمة معاني هذا القرآن الكريم قيماً بأوجب الدعوة إلى الله تعالى، وأداء لأمانة تبليغ الرسالة؛ ترجمة صحيحة وموثوقة ودقيقة في كلماتها ومعانيها وما تهدف إليه؛ لأنها تتكلم عن الله تعالى وتوضح شرعه وهدية وطريقه الحق.
من أجل ذلك تصدّى وقف تعظيم الوحيين لهذا الواجب العظيم والأمر الخطير المهم؛ فجاهت هذه الترجمة الكريمة مشروفاً مباركاً من مشاريه، ولقد أكرمنا الله تعالى برجل فذ عالم بمعاني القرآن الكريم وترجماته المتنوعة خبير بها نذر وقته وجهده لخدمة القرآن الكريم بهذا الجانب العظيم، وهو سعادة الدكتور وليد بن بليش العمري (أستاذ اللغات والترجمة المشارك بجامعة طيبة بالمدينة المنورة)؛ إذ وضع خطة فريدة متميزة منضبطة بضوابط هامة سليمة في منهجها وخطواتها ومراجعتها وملتزمة بهدي القرآن الكريم وبيانه من السنة النبوية الصحيحة؛ في وسطية واعتدال وابتغاء مراد الله تعالى في كتابه العظيم.

وإني إذ أقدم لهذا المشروع المبارك فإني أشكر لسعادته هذا الجهد العظيم وهذه المنهجية المميزة الفريدة ولل فريق العلمي والنخبة المباركة من الخبراء والمستشارين والمراجعين لهذه الترجمة الرائدة وأسأل الله تعالى للجميع عظيم الأجر والثواب ومزيد التوفيق والسداد.
وقد تم والله الحمد الانتهاء من نصف القرآن الكريم حتى نهاية سورة الكهف، وأسأل الله تعالى أن يتم هذا الترجمة المميزة على خير ما يراه ويحقق المطلوب.

وختاماً أرفع أسمى آيات الشكر وأعظم عبارات التقدير إلى مقام خادم الحرمين الشريفين الملك سلمان بن عبدالعزيز آل سعود وإلى ولي عهده الأمين صاحب السمو الملكي الأمير محمد بن سلمان بن عبدالعزيز آل سعود على ما يقدمونه من جهود عظيمة في خدمة القرآن الكريم والسنة النبوية المطهرة نشرها وتعليقاً وحكماً وتسليماً، كما أرفع جزيل الشكر وأطيب التقدير إلى صاحب السمو الملكي الأمير فيصل بن سلمان بن عبدالعزيز آل سعود أمير منطقة المدينة المنورة وإلى سمو نائبه صاحب السمو الملكي الأمير سعود بن خالد الفيصل آل سعود على كريم اهتمامها ورعايتها لمشاريع الوقف وبرامجها. والله أسأل أن ينفع بهذا السفر الكريم، وأخردعونا أن الحمد لله رب العالمين..





Foreword

Gratitude be to Allah, the Lord of all beings. May the Peace and Blessings be upon the one who was sent as mercy to all beings, our beloved Prophet Muhammad, and upon his household, all of his Companions and those who follow his way until the Day of Judgement.

The Glorious Qur'an is a Book of guidance to all humans: "Verily this Qur'an guides to what is more straight", (17: 9). Allah sent it to His Noble Messenger (ﷺ) so that he could address all people, regardless of their race, tongue or colour with it; appealing to their minds and reaching out to their hearts in a distinct and inimitable manner. Through it, Allah enlightens minds and guides hearts to His Straight Path; saving them from loss and darkness and delivering them to the light of guidance; unrolling for them the paths of peace and making its ways distinct both in this worldly life and in the Hereafter: "A light has now come to you from Allah and a clear Book, with which Allah guides to the ways of peace those who follow what pleases Him, bringing them from darkness out into light, by His Will, and guiding them to a straight path". (5:15-16)

This Glorious Qur'an was revealed in a clear Arabic tongue. It is miraculous both in word and sense. It came down to the Believers explaining for them their religion and its wise laws. It invites all people to this great religion, the religion of Islam. It constitutes a call to be free from all forms of Association with Allah, to uphold His commandments, and, thus, to save humanity from the ghastly grip of Denial, idol worship and slavery to anything besides Allah. There is, therefore, a great onus upon us to ensure sincere efforts are made to translate this Divine Message by way of calling to Allah and to fulfill the duty of Believers to deliver the Message. Such a translation must be faithful, reliable and precise in its rendition of both words and meanings. This because it represents the Word of Allah, explains His doctrines and lays out the path of the Truth. It is for this reason that the Endowment for Cherishing the Two Glorious Revelations has shouldered the responsibility of being a platform for this worthy endeavour adding it to the list of its long-term projects. Allah has blessed us with a scholar who possesses extensive knowledge in the field of Qur'anic translation – Dr Waleed Bleyhesh al-Amri (Associate Professor of Translation Studies, Taibah University) – who possesses great dedication to serving this Glorious Book. He has set out a well-researched, well-thought out plan for his translation, one that entails all the many stages from translation to revision. The translation you are about to embark upon reading is true to the teachings of the Qur'an and reflects a moderate, unrestricted understanding of its dictates.

As I pen this foreword I extend my sincerest commendations to the author for this great effort and his well-founded methodology. I would also like to thank the team of scholars who helped in revising and editing the translation. I pray to Allah to shower them all with His blessings. I should not fail to mention that this translation of the first half is only the first step in the larger project of translating the whole Qur'an into English under the ambitious title, *The Grand Qur'an*.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the Crown Prince for their great services in the dissemination and teaching of the Glorious Qur'an and the Noble Prophetic Sunnah. I would also like to thank HRH Prince Faisal Ibn Salman Al Saud, governor of the Madinah region, as also the deputy governor, HRH Prince Saud Ibn Khalid al-Faisal Al Saud for their gracious care and concern for the projects and programmes of the Endowment.

May Allah make this worthy tome beneficial!

Prof. 'Imād Zuhayr Ḥāfiẓ

**Secretary-General of the Endowment for Cherishing the Two Glorious Revelations
Imam of Quba Mosque in Madinah**



What is the Qur'an?

The Qur'an is the inimitable, verbatim Word of God, revealed to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as an ever-lasting miracle, ever-present to guide those who seek the Truth and the way to felicity in this life and the great reward of God in the Hereafter. It is Islam's foundational text which encapsulates its message; it is the foremost source of guidance and legislation for Believers. Believers' lives are directed by it and their actions find grounds in it. The tenets of Islam cannot be grasped without a proper understanding of the Qur'an. A great many Muslims learn it by heart, and it is used as a reference book, a book of rules and guidelines, and as an ethical textbook for hundreds of millions the world over. Its authenticity and the binding nature of its dictates are authoritative across the board. Unlike the other previously revealed Scriptures, which underwent major alterations through editing, translations in and out of Greek, Syriac, Hebrew, Latin, Aramaic and Ethiopic, amendments by scribes and religious leaders, loss of some of the books, the Qur'an remains in its Original authentic form as known at the time of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). This is because guardianship of these Books was left to the learned among the people: *"They were entrusted with the protection of the Book of Allah, and they were witnesses to it"*, (4: 44); whereas God Almighty made the pledge to preserve the Quran Himself: *"We have sent down the Reminder 'Qur'an' Ourselves, and We Ourselves will guard it"*, (15: 9).

The word 'Qur'an' relates directly to the act of reading and reciting. In fact, the first word revealed in the Qur'an was the command: *Iqra' (Read!)*. This great word is the key to unlocking the doors of knowledge and enlightenment, emancipating the human mind, and breaking the shackles of ignorance. Through 'reading' the Qur'an humans find their way to the Truth and take their surest steps on the Straight Path that leads to the Pleasure of God and deliverance. Each Qur'anic sura is preceded by the statement *"In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful"*⁽¹⁾, thus one engages in this act of profound reading with the resolution of seeking God's own help and assistance; and who is a better guide than God!

But whatever may be said about the Qur'an, none can say it better than God Himself.

1 With the exception of Sura 9, *al-Tawbah* (Repentance)

What does God say about the Qur'an?

God directly speaks to us through and in the Qur'an which is His final Message to humanity. He urges humans to consider this Message with great attention, read it with deliberation and delve into its deep and multifarious meanings: *"Would they not contemplate the Qur'an; had it been from another 'source' besides Allah, they would have found many a discrepancy in it"*, (4: 82); *"Will they not contemplate the Qur'an? Do they have locks on their hearts?"* (47: 24). To this effect God speaks of the Qur'an in a number of ways:

- The Qur'an is to the heart what the spirit is to the body. It is a beacon of light and guidance: *"We have thus revealed a Spirit to you 'Muhammad' by Our command: you knew neither the Book nor the Faith, but We made it 'the Qur'an' a light, guiding with it whoever We will of Our servants. You are indeed guiding to the straight path"*. (42: 52)
- It is a guidance that is not to be doubted: *"That Book 'the Qur'an' – no doubt – in it is guidance to the Mindful"*. (2: 2)
- *"And those that have been given knowledge will see that what has been sent down to you from your Lord is the Truth, and that it guides to the path of the Noble, the Praiseworthy"*. (34: 6)
- A guidance to uprightness: *"Truly this Qur'an guides toward that which is most upright, and gives glad tidings to the Believers who perform righteous deeds that theirs shall be a great reward"*. (17: 9)
- *"The month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was sent down as guidance for mankind, 'containing' clear indicators of guidance and a criterion 'for distinguishing between right and wrong'"*. (2: 185)
- *"Say 'Muhammad': 'The Holy Spirit 'Angel Gabriel' has brought it 'the Qur'an' down from your Lord with Truth to strengthen those who Believe, and as guidance, and glad tidings to those who submit'"*. (16: 102)
- *"When We sent a group of jinn your way to listen to the Qur'an. Then, upon hearing it, they said 'to one another', 'Listen attentively!'" Then when it was over, they returned to their fellow jinn as warners. They said: "Our people, we have heard a Book which was sent down after Moses, confirming what came before it, guiding to the Truth and to a Straight Path'"*. (46: 29-30)

What does God say about the Qur'an?

- Guidance and a healing! “Say ‘Muhammad’: *“It ‘the Qur’an’ is guidance and healing for those who Believe”*. (41: 44)
- A criterion with which to distinguish between Truth and falsehood: “*Blessed be He Who has revealed the Distinguisher ‘the Qur’an’ to His servant that he may warn the whole world”*. (25: 1)
- A proof and a clear light, a way of deliverance: “*O people, there has come to you a ‘conclusive’ proof from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a Glaring Light ‘the Qur’an’*”. (4: 174)
- “*A light has now come to you from Allah and a clear Book, with which Allah guides to the ways of peace those who follow what pleases Him, bringing them from darkness out into light, by His will, and guiding them to a straight path”*. (5:15-16)
- It is a Truth which bears Truth. A harbinger of good news and warnings which is to be studied with much attention and dedication: “*We sent down the Qur’an with the Truth, and with the Truth it has come down, We sent you ‘Muhammad’ only to give good news and warning; ‘bearing’ a recitation ‘a Qur’an’ that We have revealed gradually so that you may recite it to people slowly and with deliberation. ‘This is why’ We sent it down by stages”*. (17: 105-106)
- A favour to the Believers along with the favour of the Prophet (ﷺ): “*Allah has favoured the Believers when He sent among them a Messenger of their kind; He recites His Signs ‘ayas’ to them, purifies them, and teaches them the Book ‘the Qur’an’ and Wisdom—indeed they were utterly lost before”*. (3: 164)
- It is a blessed Book: “*This is a blessed Book We have sent down”*. (6: 92)
- “*This is a blessed Book We have sent down. So follow it and be Mindful ‘of Allah’, so you may be shown mercy”*. (6:155)
- “*‘This is’ A blessed Book which We have sent down to you ‘Muhammad’ so that they may contemplate its Signs ‘ayas’, and people of reason may pay heed”*. (38: 29)
- It is to be listened to attentively: “*When the Qur’an is recited, listen to it attentively and be silent, so you may be shown mercy”*. (7: 204)

- It is an inimitable miracle of Divine source: “Nor could this Qur'an have been devised by anyone other than Allah. It is a confirmation of what was revealed before it and an explanation of the Scripture – let there be no doubt about it – it is from the Lord of all beings. Or do they say, “He has made it up?” Say ‘Muhammad’, “Then produce a sura like it, and call on anyone you can beside Allah if you are telling the truth””. (10: 37-38)
- “Or do they say: “He ‘Muhammad’ has invented it ‘the Qur’an’ himself,” say: “Then produce ten invented suras like it, and call in whoever you can besides Allah, if you are truthful. If they do not answer you, then you will all know that it is sent down with Allah’s Knowledge, and that there is no god but Him. Then will you submit to Him?” (11: 13-14)
- “Say: “If the whole of mankind and jinn were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support””. (17: 88)
- It explains matters plainly to people: “Alif, Lām, Rā’; these are the Signs ‘ayas’ of the Book that makes things clear”. (12: 1)
- God is its Guardian: “We have sent down the Reminder ‘Qur’an’ Ourselves, and We Ourselves will guard it”. (15: 9)
- There is no crookedness in it. It is totally upright: “All gratitude be to Allah Who has sent down to His servant ‘Muhammad’ the Book ‘the Qur’an’ and has not placed therein any crookedness— ‘He made it’ perfectly upright, to warn of a severe punishment from Him; to give good news to the Believers—who do good—that they will have a fine reward”. (18: 1-2)
- It is a glory to its companions: “We have surely sent down to you a Book ‘the Qur’an’, in which there is glory for you. Will you not then understand?” (21: 10)
- A mighty Book with no falsehood: “Truly it is a mighty Book; which falsehood cannot touch from any front, a Revelation sent down from the Wise One, Worthy of All Praise”. (41: 41-42)
- A noble, well-guarded Book: “Truly it is a noble Qur'an; in a Book well-guarded”. (56: 77-78)

What does God say about the Qur'an?

- It is a weighty Word, even a mountain would crumble had the Qur'an been sent to it: *"If We had sent this Qur'an down to a mountain, you 'Muhammad' would have seen it humbled and split apart in its awe of Allah: We offer people such illustrations so that they may reflect"*. (59: 21)
- *"Truly We shall soon cast upon you a weighty Word"*. (73: 5)
- The most beautiful and consistent of all teachings, whereby those who ponder upon it will rightly shiver: *"Allah has sent down the most beautiful of all teachings: a Book that is consistent and often repeated; that causes the skins of those in awe of their Lord to shiver. Then their skins and their hearts soften at the mention of Allah: such is Allah's Guidance. He guides with it whoever He wills; no one can guide those Allah leaves to stray"*. (39: 23)

The merit of the Qur'an

For Muslims the merit of the Qur'an is indisputable. Indeed, numerous tomes have been penned by Muslim scholars throughout the ages, invariably titling their works *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* (Merits of the Qur'an)⁽¹⁾. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) speaks of the Qur'an thus:

The Book of Allah: in it is news of those who came before you and what will come after you and, judgement regarding your affairs; it is the most serious of matters, no tyrant will cast it aside without Allah destroying him, whoever seeks guidance by any other besides it will be misguided by Allah; it is the enduring rope of Allah, the Wise Mention, and the Straight Path; it will not be swayed by whims, distorted by tongues; the knowledgeable cannot have enough of it, nor will it become cumbersome by repetition and its wonders are never ending; it is the recitation that when the jinn heard it, they could not but say: “*We have heard a wondrous Recitation that leads to guidance*” (72: 1-2); whoever cites it has spoken the Truth, whoever acts by it will be rewarded, whoever judges according to it will pass a fair judgement and whoever invites to it will be guided to a straight path. (al-Tirmidhī: 2906)

There are a number of hadiths (or Prophetic sayings) that encourage Believers to read the Qur'an—reciting it is an act of worship and for which the reciter is generously rewarded. Here are some of the best-known of them:

- 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever reads a letter of the Qur'an receives one *ḥasanah*-reward for it then each reward is multiplied by ten. I shall not say that: “*Alif-lām-mīm*” is one letter. But *alif* is a letter, *lām* is a letter and *mīm* is a letter”. (al-Tirmidhī: 2910)

¹ Of these, for instance, are those by: Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām, al-Ḍarīs al-Bajalī, al-Nasā'ī, al-'Ajalī and Ḍiyā'uddīn al-Maqdisī.

- Abū Umāmah al-Bāhili (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Read the Qur'an for it comes on the Day of Judgement to intercede on behalf of those who associate themselves with it. Read *al-Zahrāwān* (The Two Luminous Suras), *al-Baqarah* and *Āl 'Imrān*, as they come on the Day of Judgement as if they were two clouds, or shades or two flocks of birds, keeping closely together arguing on behalf of the one who owns them”. (Muslim: 1910)
- 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever reads the Qur'an while being accomplished at it will be among the generous obedient messengers ‘the most revered angels’. And the one who reads the Qur'an haltingly and with difficulty will have two rewards”. (Muslim: 798)
- Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The likeness of the Believer who reads the Qur'an is that of a citrus fruit, it both smells and tastes good. Yet the likeness of a Believer who does not read the Qur'an is that of a palm date fruit, it has no smell but its taste is sweet. While the likeness of a hypocrite who reads the Qur'an is that of a basil leaf, it smells good but its taste is bitter. Yet the likeness of the hypocrite who does not read the Qur'an is that of a bitter apple, it has no smell and its taste is bitter”. (al-Bukhārī: 5427)
- Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Prophet said: “One should only be covetous of two people: a man who has been given the Qur'an—he recites it during the night time and during the day time. And a man who has been given wealth—he spends ‘charitably’ out of it during the night time and during the day time”. (Muslim: 815)
- Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Allah has His Own people among people”. They said: “Messenger of Allah! Who are they?” He replied: “‘They are’ the people of the Qur'an—the people of Allah and His closest ‘friends’”. (Ibn Mājah: 215, Aḥmad: 11870)
- 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “It will be said to the companion of the Qur'an ‘on the Day of Judgement’: “Recite and elevate and recite beautifully as you used to do in the worldly life for your station ‘in Paradise’ will coincide with the last aya you recite”. (Aḥmad: 6799)

- Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “No group of people shall gather in one of the houses of Allah ‘a mosque’ reciting and studying the Book of Allah without tranquillity descending upon them, mercy engulfing them, angels encircling them and Allah mentioning them among His audience”. (Muslim: 6863)
- ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Indeed Allah elevates by this Book some people stations ‘above others’, and downgrades with it others”. (Muslim: 817)

Keys to understanding the Qur'an

Although the Qur'an can be seen and read as a 'book', in as much as it is put down in book format, it is not, however, to be thought of as a 'book' that follows the usual rules and maxims of text building and book composition. Rather, the Qur'an urges us to read it with careful attention focusing on its deep and various meanings. The relatively difficult language of the Qur'an, lack of access to mainstream Muslim commentaries (particularly as they are not widely translated into other languages), and inadequate Qur'an translations, among many other reasons, may, however, constitute a barrier blocking the channels of communication between the Qur'an and the reader. Muslims read the Qur'an on a daily or weekly basis and, especially during the month of Ramadan. It should be emphasized here though that a mechanical reading of the Qur'an cannot unravel the meanings underpinning the Qur'anic messages in each sura, and would leave their hidden treasures locked away.

Furthermore, uninitiated readers will find it difficult to read through the Qur'an unless they are equipped with the right keys to understanding it. Some of these are as follows:

- **Key 1:** *The Qur'an is a book of guidance.* God speaks of the guidance of the Qur'an as a life-line and a source of light that dissipates the darkness of doubt and expunges other diseases of the heart: *"Is the one who was dead and We caused him to come alive and bestowed upon him a light to walk in among people be like the one who is plunged in complete darkness; there is no way for him to emerge out of which? Thus what they used to do was prettified for the Deniers!"* (6: 122). The main purpose of the Qur'an is to guide people to eternal bliss and happiness which is gained through adherence to God's commands. To this effect it employs such discursive tools as storytelling, admonition and encouragement in a manner not found in other books.
- **Key 2:** *The Qur'an is first and foremost a constitution of high morals.* It establishes the standards of morality that sound human nature embodies: justice, equality, moral integrity, fair and equitable laws and rulings, and good governance and administration of justice. Through the Qur'an, we find these highlighted, underlined and repeated in different forms and guises. They are projected as the elements which, when strung together, lead to the Pleasure of God.

- Key 3:** *The Qur'an came to us through revelation from God to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Angel Gabriel (جبرائيل) was the conduit of this revelation and it did not happen all at once but went on for an extended period of 23 years. It came gradually and in sections at intermittent stages. This, so as to maintain Allah's guidance, consolidate the Prophet's mission with Godly Signs (ayas), smooth the gradual legislation of the new code of life, and to make the Qur'an easy for the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions to learn by heart.*
- Key 4:** *The expanse of time over which the Qur'an was revealed is traditionally divided into two broad periods, i.e. those of Makkah (86 suras) and Madinah (28 suras). The Makkan period, which lasted for 13 years, saw the tender growth of the seedling of Faith in an extremely harsh environment of ignorance. The ayas revealed during this period talk about: matters of creed, Belief, resurrection and the Day of Judgement, Prophethood, the evil of Denial and Associating other deities in worship with God, the call to return to the pristine creed of Abraham and stories of earlier nations who incurred God's Wrath and met destruction for their rebelliousness against their Prophets. Qur'anic Signs (ayas) kept on coming until it was absolutely clear what Belief and what lack of it exactly entail. In the face of the unrelenting persecution that they were subjected to, the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions had to migrate to Madinah. This move heralded a new definitive phase in the history of Islam, the Prophetic mission, and the nature of the revealed ayas themselves. Here, the earlier themes also carried on, yet with a new emphasis along with the introduction of new laws for the community: rulings that bear on different circumstances, the penal code, religious obligations and how to deal with the People of the Book and the hypocrites. Indeed, a whole way of life was laid out quite distinctly, thus culminating in the final, most perfect Message that came from God: "Today I have perfected your religion for you, finalized My Favour on you and I approve Islam as a religion for you". (5:3) It is very telling that the last aya of the Qur'an that was revealed was: "Be Mindful of a Day on which you shall be returned to Allah and every soul shall be paid in full what it earned—they will not be wronged!" (2: 281)—a person's mission in life is to be prepared for judgement by God, the Most Just of all judges.*

- **Key 5:** *The language of the Qur'an is indeed unique in its style. It is neither prose nor poetry.* Instead, it masterfully employs all what language has to offer to achieve the highest effect on the human psyche. Armstrong (1994, p. 168) describes the effect of the Qur'an on its immediate recipients as follows: "The early biographers of Muhammad constantly described the wonder and shock felt by the Arabs when they heard the Koran for the first time. Many were converted on the spot, believing that God alone could account for the extraordinary beauty of the language. Frequently a convert would describe the experience as a divine invasion that tapped buried yearnings and released a flood of feelings. Muslims like Khalif Umar seem to have experienced a similar unsettling of sensibility, an awakening and a disturbing sense of significance which enabled them to make the painful break with the traditional past. Even those Qurayshis who refused to accept Islam were disturbed by the Koran and found that it lay outside all their familiar categories: it was nothing like the inspiration of the *kāhins* 'soothsayers' or the poets; nor was it like the incantations of a magician. Some stories show powerful Qurayshis who remained steadfastly with the opposition being visibly shaken when they listened to a sura".
- **Key 6:** *The Qur'an mainly deals with three themes: belief, laws and manners.* Each theme comprises an array of interrelated lesser ones that together constitute a complete whole. *Belief* entails how a Believer is to perceive matters such as the Unseen (*al-Ghayb*-what lies beyond the realm of human perception), Paradise, Hellfire, the origin of creation, the essentials of religion, the truth of God's Oneness (Monotheism), the Prophets and what they really stood for, and the Truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur'an. A Muslim is to Believe in these in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah (which, in a sense, is the Prophetic example of how the Qur'an is to be interpreted); they are the credal foundations of Faith. *Laws*, on the other hand, are the practical foundations of Faith on which Islam is built. They revolve around three types of relationship: a person's relationship with God (acts of worship), a person's relationship with other humans (financial dealings, laws of inheritance, communal affairs) and each person's relationship with themselves (those of food and drink and personal conduct). *Manners* abound in the Qur'an. Throughout

its suras, the Qur'an establishes a very high standard code of morality, one that encourages people to strive to embody sterling manners. Indeed, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), whose manners and conduct took their roots in the Qur'an (Muslim: 746), was set by God as a moral example to be emulated by all humans: "*Indeed for you in the Messenger of Allah there is a sterling example*". (33: 21) God praised His Messenger (ﷺ) and extolled his virtuousness by saying: "*Indeed you are of great moral character!*" (68: 4)

- **Key 7:** *Qur'anic suras are of different length, content and unique character.* The length of Qur'anic suras varies significantly: the longest sura in the Qur'an is Sura 2 (*al-Baqarah*) in which there are 286 ayas and the shortest is Sura 108 (*al-Kawthar*) in which there are only 3 ayas. In terms of length, Qur'anic suras fall into four categories: *al-ṭiwāl* (the lengthy) of which there are seven, *al-mi'ūn* (the hundreds-numbered) the ones in which there are more than one hundred ayas, *al-mathānī* (the oft-repeated) in which there are less than a hundred ayas, and *al-mufaṣṣal* (the detailed) which begin with Sura *Qāf* until the end of the Qur'an. These categories follow the order in which they are to be found in the Qur'an with the exception of the opening Sura *al-Fātiḥah* (which is considered as a preface that encompasses the totality of the Qur'anic message).
- **Key 8:** *Overall, there are 114 suras, 6,236 ayas, 77,437 words, and 321,000 letters in the Qur'an.* The first revelation was Sura 96 (*al-'Alaq*) in which there is the command "*Read!*" and the last revelation was Sura 110 (*al-Naṣr*) which foretells the conquest of Makkah and the culmination of the Prophetic mission.
- **Key 9:** *The suras of the Qur'an, and the ayas within them, do not follow the chronological order in which they were revealed; they are ordered as we find them today in the printed muṣḥafs (or written Qur'an copies) at the behest of the Prophet (ﷺ).* This arrangement, however, is unique in terms of the logical and thematic coherence of the content of each sura and how they interrelate with the following and preceding suras. As a whole, they provide a seamless, intellectually engaging read. It is a person's mission in life to ponder over these and try to discover the gems they offer to the curious mind.

- **Key 10:** *Thematic unity in the Qur'an can be found in either one of two aspects.* The first whereby every sura deals with a unique theme right from its beginning to its end. In this respect, Suras *al-Infītār*, *al-Inshiqāq*, and *al-Zalzalah* deal solely with the tribulations of the Day of Judgement. The second type, the more common of the two, is that whereby a sura may deal with more than one theme. Yet no matter how many themes are dealt with in the same sura, one finds a commonality that binds them together to form a complete whole. A certain theme might also be dealt with recurrently throughout a number of Qur'anic suras. Each occurrence of such theme is context-bound and is meant to serve the purpose for which it is mentioned in that particular instance. 'Patience,' is one of these themes. It is dealt with in Makkan and Madinan suras in instances where laws, manners, matters of faith, stories of old, and the call to Believe are spoken of. This no doubt reflects its importance as also the defining nature of how life is projected in the Qur'an, i.e. as an ongoing struggle. The Qur'anic field of knowledge that deals with thematic wholesomeness is known as *ʿIlm al-Munāsabah* (the Science of Relevance). It focuses on how the beginning of the sura sets the essential scene, the connection between the various ayas, how the different thematic units within the sura are relayed and the relation between that sura and the ones preceding and following it.
- **Key 11:** *Historical accounts and stories of old found in the Qur'an are cited as examples to take heed from.* Although one may find snippets of a story told in one place, other events relating to that same story may be found in another place but in more or less detail and presented from a different angle. In order to unlock the full meaning of these accounts they should be read within their immediate context. In this way, the overall purport of the sura most certainly affects the story's interpretation. Sometimes, a complete story is told in full in one place. For example Suras *al-Aʿrāf*, *al-Shuʿarā* and *Yūsuf*, each tells a complete story. Besides, there are three types of stories that are told in the Qur'an. The most common are stories of the Prophets of God. The other two being: accounts of persons and peoples of ancient times (the companions of the cave (*aṣḥāb al-kaḥf*) the companions of the pit of fire (*aṣḥāb al-ukhdūd*), the companions of the Sabbath (*aṣḥāb al-sabt*), the two sons

of Adam (Cain and Abel); and accounts of the events that took place during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), such as the battles the Prophet (ﷺ) waged. Stories in the Qur'an are intended for various purposes among which are: to highlight the bond that exists among the followers of the Truth with each other and those of falsehood with each other throughout different times and circumstances; so that Believers follow the example of their predecessors, especially their steadfastness in the face of relentless opposition; to give concrete examples of how Divine laws and canons came to pass; to prove the Truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and to soothe the hearts of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions. Some stories are repeated in different places in the Qur'an to achieve a number of aims: to highlight the uniqueness of the Qur'an in its ability to tell the same story from a number of different angles without showing any discrepancies; to underline the importance of the story itself and the many lessons that can be drawn from it and to constantly remind people of certain stories that are of particular significance (take for example the various events that took place during Prophet Moses' (ﷺ) lifetime and mission).

- **Key 12:** *Those who were given earlier Divine Scriptures are referred to in the Qur'an with the honorary title, the People of the Book.* The 'People of the Book', namely, the Jews and Christians, and their religious symbols are a recurrent Qur'anic theme, particularly in the Madinan suras. Overall, they are spoken of as nations who have diverged from the correct path. They are constantly reminded of their wrong and are gently called upon to mend their ways. The Qur'anic principle of how to engage in debate with the People of the Book is to be considerate and draw on shared values: *"Do not argue with the People of the Book unless gently, except with those of them who act wrongfully. And say: "We believe in what has been sent down to us and what was sent down to you. Our God and your God is 'the same' One. And to Him we 'fully' submit". (29: 46)*
- **Key 13:** *Each sura in the Qur'an is unique in its own way.* The blueprint of a sura is defined by its theme, employment of discourse, style, markedness of lexis, length of ayas and sound of pauses (with which each aya ends). All of these make up the special character of each sura.

- **Key 14:** *Some would willingly look at the Qur'an through the narrow eyes of 21st century secular values and eventually take issue with certain of its dictates.* Knowing that these so-called values are lacking and, more often than not, detrimental to humans and disastrous to their planet at large, the fact of the matter is that such a Divinely revealed Book of guidance as the Qur'an should be the yardstick against which all these 'values' should be judged. But then, *"Is one who walks with his face stooped down more guided, or one who walks upright upon a Straight Path?"* (67: 22)
- **Key 15:** *The Qur'an is only befittingly interpreted within context.* Each word is to be read within the aya, each aya within the thematic unit, and each thematic unit within the sura in which it occurs if the deep meaning is to be got at. Needless to say, context is of central importance to understanding any given message and no word or string of words should be taken out of context, if it is to be understood properly.
- **Key 16:** *Although we were not among the immediate audience addressed by the Qur'an or players in its stories, we are nonetheless encouraged to take heed from them, and try to bring personal insights drawn from them to bear on our own circumstances.* This obviously comes with the caveat of doing so with full realization of the proper meaning we choose to apply to our lives. In this respect, those with particularly receptive hearts, will usually feel as if what is being recited is meant for them personally.
- **Key 17:** *Finally, the most important of the keys to approaching the Qur'an is that it is to be read contemplatively (cf. 4:82, 38:29, 47:24), with an open heart and a receptive mind. It is a dignified text that remains aloof and will only yield its fruits to those who approach it with the best of intentions. But for those who come to it with their hearts smitten with doubt, it remains insurmountable and its terrains rugged. 'Buts and ifs' will only work as hurdles preventing the reader from getting to the core of the Message.*

The Qur'an known through translation: translating the untranslatable!

The issue of Qur'anic translation is critical. For Muslims, the Qur'an, the inimitable Word of God, is unarguably untranslatable. Therefore, any text other than the Arabic Original – no matter the translation's professed adherence to the original 'spirit' – will necessarily *be a particular interpretation rather than a transparent representation*. One of the most respected Qur'an translators into English, M.M. Pickthall (1930-1999: xiii) sums up the issue in the Introduction to his translation:

The Qur'an cannot be translated. That is the belief of old-fashioned Sheykhs and the view of the present writer. The Book is here rendered almost literally and every effort has been made to choose befitting language. But the result is not the glorious Qur'an, that inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy. It is only an attempt to present the *meaning* of the Qur'an - and peradventure something of the charm - in English. It can never take the place of the Qur'an in Arabic, nor is it meant to do so.

Another translator puts it so:

Briefly, the rhetoric and rhythm of the Arabic of the Koran are so characteristic, so powerful, so highly emotive, that any version whatsoever is bound in the nature of things to be but a poor copy of the glittering splendour of the original... My chief reason for offering this new version of a book which has been 'translated', many times already is that in no previous rendering has a serious attempt been made to imitate, however imperfectly, those rhetorical and rhythmical patterns which are the glory and the sublimity of the Koran. (Arberry: 24-25)

The material form of the Qur'an, its stylistic patterns and their semantically-oriented manifestations, are as critically important as its Message. The Andalusian scholar Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064; al-Aḥkām,

2: 88) has it that: “The opinion of leading scholars is unanimous about the inimitability of the Qur'an. We know for sure that if the Qur'an is translated into another language, or even were its words to be replaced by other Arabic words, such translation would not be inimitable; what is not inimitable is not a Qur'an”. Ibn Ḥazm's unequivocal statement derives from the fact that there are some eleven *ayas* expressly confirming the Arabic revelation of the Qur'an: 12:2, 13:37, 16:103, 20:113, 26:195, 39:28, 41:3, 41:44, 42:7, 43:3, 46:12.

Besides this there are other reasons that challenge the notion of the translatability of the Qur'an. Meaning and form in the Qur'an are intertwined and multi-layered. The language of the Qur'an is extraordinarily vigorous. Its style reaches noteworthy heights, particularly in: affirmations of the Oneness, Uniqueness, and Omnipotence of God, in forceful descriptions of the Day of Judgement, in moralizing passages, and in admonitions against polytheism. It is, to a large measure, revealed in dense and highly allusive, elliptical speech. The great exegete Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) remarks in his commentary:

It is obvious that there is no discourse more eloquent, no wisdom more profound, no speech more sublime, no form of expression more noble, than 'this' clear discourse and speech with which a single man challenged a people at a time when they were acknowledged masters of the art of oratory and rhetoric, poetry and prose, rhyme and soothsaying. It reduced their fancy to folly and demonstrated the inadequacy of their logic... It let them know that the evidence of the Truth of what he 'Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)' said, the proof of the genuineness of his Prophethood, was the *Bayān* (Discourse), the *ḥikmah* (Wisdom), the *Furqān* (Distinguisher which he conveyed to them in a language like their language, in a speech whose meanings conformed to the meanings of their speech. Then he told them all that they were incapable of bringing anything comparable to 'even' a part of 'what he had brought', and that they lacked the power to do this.

In a self-referential assertion of its own uniqueness, the Qur'an describes its effect on Believers in the following manner: *“Allah has sent down the most beautiful of all teachings: a Book that is consistent and often repeated; that causes the skins of those in awe of their Lord to shiver. Then their skins and their hearts soften at the mention of Allah: such is Allah's Guidance. He guides with it whoever He wills; no one can guide those Allah leaves to stray”*. (39: 23). According to many well-accomplished translators, any translation of the Qur'an not only betrays the meaning of the original, but also loses much of its poetic and affective force. Anyone who has read it in the original is forced to admit that this caution is well justified; no translation, however faithful to the meaning, has ever been fully successful or even remotely close. Arabic, when masterfully put to use, is a remarkably terse, rich and forceful language, and the Arabic Qur'an is by turns striking, soaring, vivid, shaking, tender, melodic and breathtaking. It is not surprising, then, that a skilled reciter of the Qur'an can reduce his audience to helpless tears.

The exegetical problem

The untranslatable nature of the Qur'an does not stop at its language and style. There are also interpretational issues that pose serious questions to its translatability. Ibn Kathīr (d. 1372) begins his widely-acclaimed *Tafsīr* (commentary) with an account of the early Muslims' discretion (including the most prominent Companions) with regard to interpreting the Qur'an. Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه), for instance, when asked about the meaning of fruits (*fākihatan*) and *abbā* (grass, pasture, fodder, herbage) (80:31) replied piously: "What sky shades me, and what earth holds me, if I say about Allah's Book that of which I have no knowledge?" Umar's (رضي الله عنه) laconic reply, in turn, was: "We were told not to be pedantic". This pious generation remained extremely cautious about imposing any kind of external reading on the Qur'an, demonstrating an acute awareness of the fraught relationship that exists between the text and its supplementary texts.

The Qur'an itself, after all, was accessible to its immediate community of revelation by virtue of linguistic and contextual proximity. The core message of the Qur'an was available to them and its immediate historical referential and semantic fields were familiar to them. On the other hand, instances of *tafsīr* by the Companions and even by the Prophet (ﷺ) himself are well-documented. It remains that parts of the Qur'an were not always transparent to everyone. Indeed, the honoured Companion Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه), known as *Tarjumān al-Qur'ān* (Interpreter of the Qur'an), said: "The Qur'an has four aspects (*awjuh*): *tafsīr* (exegesis), which the learned know; *al-'arabiyyah* (language) which the Arabs understand; *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* (permitted and forbidden things), of which no one is allowed to be ignorant; and *ta'wīl* (explanation), which only Allah knows". Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān (d. 767), an early Qur'an commentator, further expounds in his *Tafsīr* (1: 27) what is at stake in understanding the Qur'an:

The Qur'an contains references to particular and general things (*khāṣṣ* and *'āmm*), particular references to Believers and particular references to the Associators, and general references to all people; it contains unequivocal and ambiguous passages (*muḥkam* and *mutashābih*), explained and unexplained passages (*mufassar* and *mubham*); it contains allusions and explicit utterances (*iḍmār* and *tamām*); it contains

cohesive devices; abrogating and abrogated ayat (*nāsikh* and *mansūkh*); it contains changes in word order; it contains similar utterances with many different aspects (*ashbāh*); it contains passages that are continued in a different sura; it contains accounts of earlier generations and accounts of what there is in Paradise and Hell; it contains a reference to one particular Denier; it contains commandments, laws, ordinances; it contains parables by which Allah Almighty refers to Himself, parables by which He refers to Deniers and idols, and parables by which He refers to this world, to resurrection and to the world to come; it contains accounts of what is in the hearts of Believers, and accounts of what is in the hearts of Deniers, polemics against the Arabian polytheists, and it contains explanations, and for each explanation there is a 'further' explanation.

Anyone who is to truly understand the Qur'an must be able to recognize multiple levels of interpretation. Added to this is the exegetical overlay that has accumulated through the passage of time. Since its modest beginnings, the *tafsīr* corpus has evolved into a sea of writing that has been expanding for almost the last millennium and a half. On the one hand, the inexhaustibility of God's Word was matched by the inexhaustibility commentators saw in its meaning. On the other hand, every group in the Muslim community has its own corpus of *tafsīr* supporting and justifying its reading. Thus sectarian and doctrinal *tafsīr* has evolved. It is not only the immense volume that makes this literature of interest, but also the pivotal role it has played in shaping and reflecting specific rationalities throughout Islamic history. This became more acute as the spatio-temporal gap separating the text receiver from its original context increased and more meaning-making agents became involved.

This is why more often than not translators resort to *tafsīrs* to understand and, in turn, render certain Qur'anic passages. However, this has proven to be used as a vehicle to juxtapose and superimpose certain ideological leanings and exegetical views thereby clouding further the message of the Qur'an and setting up

added barriers between the reader of the translation and original Arabic Writ. Translators being no more than modern-day readers and, more often than not, adherents of any of the different Islamic schools of thought out there, inevitably find that a relationship of confluence holds between their translations and commentary. On the one hand, there is a great exegetical tradition built around this most sacred Book, which cannot be simply ignored if the end product of a translation is to be of any success. This tradition arose from either different interpretational standpoints or from sincere intentions to make its language, which is shrouded in the veil of time, explicit and penetrable. However, the translator, while drawing on this wealth of scholarly subtexts that run along the prime text should not fall into the trap of making himself captive to them by allowing his translation to become overloaded or the representation to be so permeated by them that it would only be seen through their kaleidoscope. Such awareness, if existent in the first place, is seldom realized in the actual and mentally demanding act of translating. *This long tradition of commentary is not to be ignored altogether but its flow in the final product of the translation has to be filtered through and checked if the original text is to be better represented and subservient translations are to be avoided.*

While carrying out their task, two types of interventions are identifiable in translators' works:

- *Translational intervention:* can take place both within the body of the text and outside it. Examples of translational intervention take shape in the form of: accounting for cultural and linguistic equivalence; compensating for loss; aiding reading; pronouncing pronoun referents; explaining translational choice (as in the case of diverting from certain inherited translation choices); answering for failings in translation.
- *Exegetical intervention:* may materialize in the following examples: further expounding the meanings of certain lexical items; providing the reasons for revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*); explaining a legal ruling; highlighting the relevance between ayas and suras; explaining the ambiguous (*tawdīh al-mubham*); spelling out the inclusive (*tafṣīl al-mujmal*); precisely identifying the unrestricted (*taqyīd al-mutlaq*); pinpointing the generalized (*takhṣīs al-‘āmm*), and adding their own exegetical remarks.

One may yet divide intervention into two further types:

- *random intervention*: involves putting a *tafsīr* in place of a direct translation serving no obvious agenda. Further they can be divided into: (a) necessary transposition dictated by the nature of the Qur'anic text itself as in the case of not being able to actually visualize the meaning and having a mental picture of it. And (b) unnecessary transposition attributed to carelessness or incompetence on the part of the translator.
- *Pre-meditated intervention*: mostly aimed at controlling the text and to manipulate its authority. These either come as part of the translator's strategy; or as a part of his bias (partiality).

No claim is made here whereby the dependency of Qur'an translation on tafsīr is to be undermined or that the two can by any means be prised apart, it is rather to say that we should be all the more aware of the nomenclature and nature of this relationship. This has proven to be of benefit to the current translation in its attempt to raise the standard and to better reflect the sense of the original. Qur'an translators should beware not to let the commentary seep into the translation. The aim must be to let the Qur'an speak for itself as much as possible and to disengage it from subtexts and to check the subtexts in place, that is in annotations but not in the body of the text of translation itself. The aim must be to overcome, as much as possible, the intermediary role of the exegetical corpus - whose importance in understanding the Original is undeniable - in the actual representation of translation.

Positioning the current translation

No translator will ever embark on such a momentous project without realizing the magnitude of his undertaking, his position in the history of humanity *viz-a-viz* their most pressing need for Divine guidance, and where to make a well-calculated stand in the ceaseless flow of previous and concurrent translations of the Qur'an. This is especially so when it comes to English, the now lingua franca of the world of which there are 1.2 billion speakers. Moreover, English is a language which faithfully captures in the folds of its own history the tumultuous relationship that ever existed between Islam and the West at large. Imprints of this history are no more evident than in the act of translating the Qur'an which resulted in more than 120 existing complete English translations. Ziad Elmarsafy makes the case:

Translation is the most political art, all the more so when it involves representing a text held sacred by those with whom relations are not always friendly. The forms of information and varieties of scholarship necessary for the translation of the Qur'an into Western languages ... are driven by the complex ties that bind the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds. (*The Enlightenment Qur'an: the politics of translation and the construction of Islam*, 2014: Preface)

Each translator who has stood behind any of these translations comes with a uniqueness informed by his or her own character, bearing the trappings of their upbringing, education, language mastery, and the religious and political milieus in which they were born and raised. Thus each translation, like a fingerprint, is unique in its own way as much as it is reflective of the personality of its generator.

One has to stress that Qur'anic translation is an extremely dynamic interaction, where Faith is negotiated and identity is presented. Thus, the history of such translation into English, as a case in hand, has ever been marked by waves of deviation: first came ferocious Orientalism, and then came sectarianism, after that rationalism and apologetics, and finally interventionist translations on socio-political grounds. It would be hard to find a translation of the Qur'an which does not carry one or two or even more traces of these global trends. What is more is that, no matter what the circumstances and the

dictates of time might be, these trends still carry on to this very day. However, this does not at all imply that Qur'an translations should not respond to their context and the changing world around them.

As an Associate Professor of Translation Studies who specializes in the critique of Qur'an translations and through my daily work with Qur'an translations for the past 17 years, I have been afforded the vantage point of seeing the subtleties of these translations along with both the advantages and disadvantages of each. Their uniqueness could be either ideational, with translators bringing their own standpoint to bear on the final product of their work, or methodological, in which translators make deliberate choices as to what they see as the most befitting of a number of possible alternatives of rendition. Out of this life-long engagement of thought and practice my resolve to start a new translation came into being. Yet, throughout the current translation, I have made a point of entertaining an informed consultation of all the translations of my predecessors, a legacy which I consider to be the collective genius of some of the best human minds. Needless to say, this translation is 'unique' in as much as it makes deliberate, well-thought choices and decisions of its own.

In this respect, then, the methodology of the current translation can be summed up as follows:

- It represents a safe, mainstream yet non-restrictive understanding of the Message of the Grand Qur'an. The great wealth of Qur'anic commentary that we have inherited through millennia of scholarship, hard study and contemplation is considered with empathy and careful attention. This weighty inheritance is a boon to be consulted with great respect, not a bane bearing the trappings of times of old, which some would consider as unbefitting of modern-day thought patterns. As you read through the translation, you will surely come to realize this and, hopefully, appreciate the work of these great scholars of Islam.
- Each sura is preceded by a brief introduction. This scene-setter is indispensable for anyone who wants to unlock some of the meaning potential of the sura. The rationale behind the name of the sura, its major themes and keys to understanding it are provided. These are meant to be occasionally referred to as one progresses in the reading of the sura if and when the need arises. They will hopefully assist you to calibrate your reading.

- This translation is marked by its ‘faithfulness’: neither too literal nor too free. I have done my utmost to make my translation as reflective of the Original as humanly possible. In the process, neither were extraneous readings juxtaposed with the Original words, nor were any personal or ideational aberrations superimposed in the rendition at hand. My thoughts, if any, are kept to the annotations. This obviously made my task all the more difficult, yet all the more satisfying.
- Every care was taken to make each aya rendition read as a composite whole, i.e. understood independently of its notes. To achieve this aim, given the peculiarity of the diction of the Qur’an which is at times elliptical and terse, I have had to include explanatory brackets in the body of the text itself, but have also tried to keep them as minimal and unobtrusive as possible.
- The annotations supplement the reading: providing the referent of what is being pointed at, shedding more light on meaning by cross-referencing ayas, providing explanatory Prophetic hadiths, further explaining the meaning and expounding on it and, at times, providing insightful thoughts that further understanding and open up the door to contemplation. Notes are also well-documented and rely on the most respected sources of exegesis. Although I intervene so far as choosing what I deem to be the best reading from a wide array of time-honoured Qur’anic explanations, I do not make the presumptuous claim that any of the annotations is totally my own.
- Key Qur’anic themes such as those of Belief (*īmān*) and Denial (*kufr*), worldly life (*al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*) and the Hereafter (*al-ḥayāt al-ākhirah*), Paradise (*al-jannah*) and Hellfire (*al-nār*) and Mindfulness (*al-taqwā*) are discussed in the footnotes. Being the pivotal concepts that they are, they had to be explained clearly to the reader.
- In order to bring out the connectivity and thematic unity of the suras and ayas, I have sought to give the overall theme and key of the sura, thematically grouping ayas in related units, provide unobtrusive aya numbering, and judiciously use punctuation to highlight the intended meaning and indicate the connection between the ayas. All these seek to help the reader appreciate the cohesion and coherence of the Message.

- Given that the language of the translation must try to reflect some of the grandiosity of the language of the Qur'an, the translation is in modern-day, non-banal, idiomatic, educated English. It further minimally employs some well known stylistic features found in many a well-respected Qur'an translation and which some would consider archaic. The overall language is easy to understand to a reader of an appropriate educational background.
- In attempting to Islamize English, use of semantically non-charged, transparent English lexical items for some Islamic terminology: Sign (Aya); Prayer (*salāh*), and Pilgrimage (Hajj), Belief (*Īmān*), Denial (*Kufr*) are deployed with caps to draw attention to their usage beyond the everyday. I have also done away with italics and diacritics for some common terms for which there are no English equivalents: sura and aya. Use of Westernized names for Allah (ﷻ) as God and those of the Prophets (ﷺ), are only given in my prefatory notes.

At surface level, taken at face value, the Qur'an can be striking for some whilst daunting for others, especially to those whose hearts are not possessed of the sweet, blessed Faith. Yet, much of the Quran's beauty and real significance is to be found in what lies beneath. One can only begin to have a feel of this deep meaning once the surface is left behind and one dives deep to explore what intricate mesh of relationships ties with what hits the eyes at first appearance. Such is the life-long quest that has engaged many a celebrated scholar and many a sincere person in search of the Truth: *"Would they not ponder the Qur'an or are there on some hearts their locks!"* (47: 24)

The Quran is an incredibly deep text. Deeper than oceans, indeed God says: *"Say, "If the sea were ink for the Words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like thereof to replenish it"* (18: 109). This depth is indicated, to name but a few, by the relationship that holds each sura with the preceding and following ones, the relevance of each aya to the next, parallel ayas which are similar, or slightly different, and that are to be found in different places, how the same word is strategically deployed along the suras, stories told many times over from different angles, the judicious use of synonymous and near-synonymous words, homographs, dialectical

variations, grammar and syntax as also graphic representations. If at all, this translation only manages to allude to such depth, direct the inquisitive mind to it, but it would be weaving a tall story indeed to say that it has got to its bottom. This can only be found in the many centuries of scholarship that have permeated the past and will continue to do so throughout many future ones.

Finally, it is a tall story, teetering on the sacrilegious, that any mere human is even remotely able to convey the very Word of God in its totality. By translating the untranslatable we are at once engaging in an impossible mission that we fully realize is not going to be carried out to satisfactory completion even before we set about it! But this need not hold us back from engaging in a quest to explore the limits of the ‘translatability’ of the Qur’an and the possibility of compensating for the degrees of loss, great as they are. Yet it has to be stressed that any human endeavour will fall short of accomplishing the task. What one can hope for though, is to get across the purport of the Qur’anic message such that people can pay heed to it. This is a legitimate attempt indeed.

Whatever one was made able to accomplish is a failing human effort. If I have done well then all thanks are due to Allah Who guided me, but if otherwise, then, all failure is due to my shortcomings and the work of the Devil.

Bibliography

In order to understand and ‘interpret’ the Word of God I could not but stand on the shoulders of giants and draw on a wealth of scholarship—an enduring legacy bequeathed to us by the great scholars of Islam. Of these, I frequently consulted the following and whereby in the text named only references are identified for qualification purposes or as windows of opportunity for further study:

Tafsīrs

Muqātil (*Tafsīr Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān*); Ibn Ishāq (*Tafsīr Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq*); Ibn Abī Ḥātim (*al-Tafsīr bi al-Ma’thūr*); al-Ṭabarī (*Jāmi’ al-Bayān fī Ta’wīl Āy al-Qur’ān*); al-Baghawī, (*Ma’ālim al-Tanzīl*); Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah (*al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-‘Azīz*); al-Wāḥidī (*al-Wasīṭ; al-Wajīz* (indicated when referred to)); al-Rāzī (*Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*); Ibn Kathīr (*Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*); al-Qurṭubī (*al-Jāmi’ li Ahkām al-Qur’ān*); al-Alūsī (*Rūḥ al-Ma’ānī fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm wa al-Sab’ al-Mathānī*); al-Biqā’ī, (*Nazm al-Durar fī Tanāsūb al-‘Āyāt wa al-Suwar*); al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī (*al-Durr al-Maṣūn*); al-Qāsimī (*Maḥāsīn al-Ta’wīl*); al-Shinqīṭī (*Aḍwā’ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān bi al-Qur’ān*); al-Sa’dī (*Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān fī Tafsīr Kalām al-Mannān*); Ibn ‘Āshūr (*al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*); Ibn ‘Uthaymīn (*Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*); Rashīd Riḍā (*Tafsīr al-Manār*); al-Maḥallī and al-Suyūṭī (*Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*); Ḥikmat Bashīr (*al-Tafsīr al-Ṣaḥīḥ*); King Fahd Glorious Qur’an Printing Complex (*al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*); Endowment for Cherishing the Two Glorious Revelations (*Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*); al-Durar al-Sanīyyah (*al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*).

Hadīth Compendia

al-Bukhārī (*Ṣaḥīḥ*); Muslim (*Ṣaḥīḥ*); al-Tirmidhī (*Sunan*); Ibn Mājah (*Sunan*); Imām Aḥmad (*Musnad*); al-Ḥākim (*al-Mustadrak*); al-Nasā’ī (*al-Sunan al-Kubrā*); Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan*); Ibn Ḥibbān (*Ṣaḥīḥ*); al-Ṭabarānī (*al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr*); al-Bazzār (*Musnad*); al-Wāḍi’ī (*al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Musnad*).

Qur’anic Vocabulary and Arabic Dictionaries

al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt*); Ibn Qutaybah (*Gharīb al-Qur’ān*); al-Sijistānī (*Gharīb al-Qur’ān*); Ibn Manzūr (*Lisān al-‘Arab*); Ibn Fāris (*Maqāyīs al-Lughah*); al-Jawālīqī, (*al-Mu’arrab*).

Other References

Ibn Taymiyyah (*Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā; al-Zuhd wa al-Wara‘ wa al-‘Ibādah*); Ibn al-Qayyim (*Shifā’ al-‘Alīl; Tarīq al-Hijratayn; Ighāthat al-Lahfān*); al-Ṭahāwī (*Sharḥ Mushkil al-Athār*); Ibn Ḥazm (*al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*); al-Naḥḥās (*al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*); Ibn al-Jawzī (*Zād al-Masīr*); al-Shawkānī (*Nayl al-Awṭār*); Abū al-Baqā’ al-Kafawī (*al-Kulliyāt*); ‘Abdul-Ḥayy al-Faramāwī, *al-Mawsū‘ah al-Qur’āniyyah al-Mutakhaṣṣiṣah* (entry “*taqwā*”); al-Dabl (*Dalīl al-Balāghah al-Qur’āniyyah*); al-Nawawī (*al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalāt al-Qur’ān*).



سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ

al-Fātiḥah
(The Opening)



al-Fātiḥah (The Opening)

Title: due to its merits, this sura has many names. The most well-known is: *al-Fātiḥah* (The Opening) or *Fātiḥat al-Kitāb* (The Opening of the Book; al-Bukhārī: 756, Muslim: 394) because the Qur’an begins with it. Its other names include: *Umm al-Kitāb* (The Mother of the Book; al-Bukhārī: 1165), *Umm al-Qur’ān* (The Mother of the Qur’an; al-Bukhārī: 4704), *al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm* (The Grand Qur’an), *Asās al-Qur’ān* (The Foundation of the Qur’an), *Sūrat al-Ḥamd* (The Sura of Thankfulness). It is also called *al-Sab‘ al-Mathānī* (The Oft-repeated Seven) because it is read in every *rak‘ah*– unit of Prayer. Additionally, it has other names that denote its healing power: *al-Shifā’* (The Cure) and *al-Ruqyah* (The Incantation; al-Bukhārī: 2276).

Merit: this is the greatest, most-often repeated sura in the Qur’an. Abū Sa‘īd Ibn al-Mu‘allā (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to him: “I shall inform you of the greatest sura of the Qur’an before you leave the mosque”. Abū Sa‘īd continues: “He took me by the hand and as he was about to leave the mosque, I said: “Messenger of Allah! You said: “I shall inform you of the greatest sura of the Qur’an”. He said: “*الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ*” (*Gratitude be to Allah the Lord of all beings*). It is *al-Sab‘ al-Mathānī* (The Oft-repeated Seven) and *al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm* (The Grand Qur’an) that I have been given” (al-Bukhārī: 4703). No Prayer will be accepted of those who do not recite The Opening (al-Bukhārī: 756; Muslim: 394). It is also a light that no other Prophet before Muhammad (ﷺ) was given. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “While Gabriel was sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ), he heard a creaking sound from above, lifted his head and said: “This is a Heavenly door. It is opened today and never ever has it been opened before”. Then an angel descended to Earth through it. He ‘Gabriel’ said: “This is an angel who descended to Earth and never ever has he descended before”. The angel greeted them and said: “I bring you glad tidings of two lights that you are given and never have they been given to any Prophet before you: *Fātiḥat al-Kitāb* (The Opening of the Book) and the endings of *al-Baqarah*. You shall never read a letter of any of them without your prayer being answered”. (Muslim: 806) In addition, through this sura communication takes place between Allah and His servants. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Almighty Allah said: “I divided Prayer into two halves between Me and My servant and to

My servant shall be granted all what he asks for”. When the servant says: “*Gratitude be to Allah the Lord of all beings*”, Allah says: “My servant has thanked Me”. When the servant says: “*The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful*”, Allah says: “My servant has praised Me”. When the servant says: “*Owner of the Day of Judgement,*” Allah says: “My servant has glorified Me”. When the servant says: “*‘Only’ You do we worship, and ‘only’ from You do we seek help*”, Allah says: “This is between Me and My servant and to My servant shall be granted what he asks for”. When the servant says: “*Guide us to the straight path; the path of those on whom You have bestowed your Grace, not those on whom ‘is Your’ Wrath nor the misguided*”, Allah says: “This is for My servant and to My servant shall be granted what he asks for”. (Muslim: 395)

Theme: the main theme of *al-Fātiḥah* is that all acts of worship should be dedicated wholly and solely to Almighty God and shall be carried out with total devotion. Additionally, al-Qurtubī (1: 112) is of the opinion that it is called *al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm* because it encapsulates the totality of Qur’anic knowledge: “Praise of Almighty God with the Attributes of His Mightiness and Perfection, the command to worship Him with devotion, confessing that one is unable to carry out worship without seeking Divine help, beseeching God for guidance to the Straight Path, saving one from the ways of the misguided and making clear the final destination of the Deniers”.

Key: the key to understanding *al-Fātiḥah* is to think of it as a form of prayer or supplication, in which Believers begin by extending their thankfulness to Allah and praise to Him, then they tell of their dedication to His worship alone, only to ask Him at the end to guide them to the Straight Path, which leads to the Almighty’s Pleasure, the ultimate goal that one strives to achieve in this life.

﴿1﴾ In the Name of Allah⁽¹⁾, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful⁽²⁾.

﴿2﴾ Gratitude be to Allah the Lord⁽³⁾

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾

- 1 Allah (الله) is God's most unique Name, grandly referred to as *Lafẓ al-Jalālah* (The Word of Majesty). It occurs in the Qur'an 2,697 times in 85 of its 114 suras. Allah is considered the Almighty's Supreme Name (*al-Ism al-A'zam*) by Abū Ḥanīfah (quoted in al-Ṭahāwī, *Sharḥ Mushkil al-Āthār*, 1: 1616). According to the vast majority of scholars Allah is linguistically unique in that it is originally a proper and underived noun (cf. al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awtār*: 1: 18). None other than the Almighty is named by it: "Do you know any other of a Name like His?" (19: 65) In Abrahamic religions, i.e. Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the concept of God basically has the same referent. He is unlimited with regards to knowledge (omniscience), power (omnipotence), existence (omnipresence) and benevolence. However, there are points of departure regarding how each religion perceives God. The most outstanding of which is that Islam Believes in a One and Only God without the slightest form of Association (cf. 3: 64): "Say: He is God, Unique. *God is the Oft-Beseched. *He begot none, nor was He begotten. *None is equal to Him" (Sura *al-Iklās*, Q. 112). Additionally, God in Islam has unique Names and Attributes and in accordance with Muslim belief ('*aqidah*) the Muslim conception of God is not anthropomorphic in the slightest form: "Nothing is like Him; He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing". (42: 11)
- 2 The 'Most Beneficent' and the 'Most Merciful' here stand for the Arabic *ar-Raḥmān* and *ar-Raḥīm*, respectively. They are both intensive forms derived from the noun *raḥmah*, mercy. Whilst they both denote the trait of mercy, semantically, however, they are different; *ar-Raḥmān* is more intensive than *ar-Raḥīm* (cf. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, root: *r ḥ m*). According to exegetes, *ar-Raḥmān's* Mercy encompasses all creatures, whereas *ar-Raḥīm's* is reserved only for Believers (cf. 33:43, al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-Sa'dī). The extent of God's Mercy is highlighted in the following tradition: Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "God has one hundred mercies. He sent down one of them on humans, jinn, animals and venomous creatures. Through it they show mercy to each other, and through it wild beasts show mercy to their young. God has reserved ninety-nine mercies with which He bestows mercy on his servants on the Day of Judgement" (al-Bukhārī: 6000; Muslim: 2752).
- 3 The Arabic *rabb* translated here as 'Lord' is semantically and lexically related to *tarbiyah*, which means to nurture, but with much care and attention (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 2: 381). When used in its absolute form with the definite article, *al-Rabb*, it could only mean God Almighty, Who is the One Who takes care and provides for all beings.

of all beings⁽⁴⁾; ⁽³⁾ The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful; ⁽⁴⁾ Owner of the Day of Judgement⁽⁵⁾. ⁽⁵⁾ 'Only' You do we worship, and 'only' You do we seek help from. ⁽⁶⁾ Guide us to the Straight Path⁽⁶⁾; ⁽⁷⁾ the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace⁽⁷⁾, not those on whom 'is Your' Wrath⁽⁸⁾ nor the misguided⁽⁹⁾.

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٤﴾
 إِلَهِكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٥﴾ أَهْدِنَا
 الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ
 أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
 وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧﴾



- 4 'All beings' here stands for *al-'ālamīn*, usually translated as 'worlds'. It means the Heavens the Earth and all that is within them and all that is between them (cf. 26: 23-24).
- 5 'The Day of Judgement', a translation of *yawm ad-dīn* in this aya, is a recurrent theme in the Qur'an. However, its nomenclature differs according to the effect intended, and whereby it is variously *Yawm ad-Dīn* (the Day of Judgement), *Yawm al-Hisāb* (the Day of Reckoning), *Yawm al-Qiyāmah* (the Day of Resurrection), *al-Wāqī'ah* (the Befalling), *aṭ-Tāmmah* (the Dumbfounding), *aṣ-Ṣākhkhah* (the Deafening), *ar-Rājifah* (the Quaking), *al-Faza' al-Akbar* (the Great Fright) and *al-Hāqqah* (the Real). These many names for one and the same thing, some of which are indeed heart-rending, signify its magnitude and drive home the message: "Be Mindful of a Day on which you shall be returned to Allah". (2: 281)
- 6 *al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* is the road (an Arabicized word after the Latin word *strāta*, i.e. road) which is straight, clear and has no turns or curves (al-Ṭabarī). It is used figuratively in the Qur'an to denote the correct manner in which God is to be worshipped and which leads to His Pleasure. It also denotes being spared torment in the Hereafter (cf. 6: 153).
- 7 Those who know the Truth and follow it: "Whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, then those are among the ones on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace—of the Prophets, the Affirmers of Truth, the martyrs and the pious—indeed the companion of these is well off". (4: 69)
- 8 Those who know the Truth and do not follow it. (al-Ṭabarī)
- 9 Those who are ignorant of the Truth and worship God following only their whims and wishful thinking. (al-Ṭabarī)

سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ

al-Baqarah
(The Cow)



al-Baqarah (The Cow)

Title: the sura is named after the incident of the cow, as related in Ayas 67-74, highlighting the lukewarm response of the Children of Israel to God’s commandments whereby He sought to test their Faith.

Merit: the longest sura in the Grand Qur’an totalling 286 ayas, *al-Baqarah* has a number of merits. Firstly, it is a blessing for the Muslim household. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Do not turn your homes into graveyards, the devil shuns the home in which Sura *al-Baqarah* is recited” (Muslim: 780), and Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Read Sura *al-Baqarah* as owning it is a blessing and abandoning it is a loss, and the sorcerers cannot bear it”. (Muslim: 1910) Secondly, and very importantly, it, along with *Āl ‘Imrān*—together known as ‘*al-Zahrāwān*’ (lit. The Two Luminous Suras) – will come to intercede on behalf of a person who takes them as his own on the Day of Judgement. Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Read the Qur’an for it comes on the Day of Judgement to intercede on behalf of those who associate themselves with it. Read *al-Zahrāwān*, *al-Baqarah* and *Āl ‘Imrān*, as they come on the Day of Judgement as if they were two clouds, or shades or two flocks of birds, keeping close together arguing on behalf of he who owns them”. (Muslim: 1910) *al-Baqarah* also contains some of the most meritorious ayas—the greatest aya in the Qur’an, the Aya of *al-Kursī* (No. 255) and the last two ayas of the sura. ‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Āmir (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever recites the last two ayas of *al-Baqarah*, these will suffice him [as a shield from evil]”. (al-Bukhārī: 5008) The longest aya in the Qur’an, Aya *Ad-Dayn* (No. 282), also occurs in *al-Baqarah*.

Theme: the main message of *al-Baqarah* is that true Believers receive God’s commandments with unequivocal acceptance and submission. *The sura is meant to establish firm Belief that can stand the tests and trials to come in order to prevail over Denial.*

Key: in order to unlock the meaning for this sura one has to take it as a detailed answer from Allah to the Believers’ supplication to guide them to the Straight Path, found at the end of *al-Fātiḥah*—here Allah tells Believers how to find this Straight Path and true, unshakable Belief. The first five ayas capture the essence of the message: that

true guidance is to be found in the Qur'an and that true Believers are those who submit themselves unquestioningly to Allah's Will and have unshakable faith in all that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) came with. The many stories and incidents of disobedience and rebelling against Allah's commands told here are given to highlight what lack of Belief and submission is like. Furthermore, it is a very early Madinan sura, which explains the many references given to the Children of Israel, who then resided in Madinah in their multitudes, and the gentle reminder they were given to the Straight Path of Allah. The sura also includes the admonishing of hypocrites lurking within the newly-formed community, and the introduction of new laws such as fasting during the month of Ramadan, how to perform Hajj and familial matters. Essentially, many new laws for the Muslims and their community at large are introduced in a very considerate manner: and whereby Believers are to obey these with total submission.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

﴿١﴾ *Alif, Lām, Mīm*⁽¹⁾. ﴿٢﴾ That⁽²⁾ Book⁽³⁾ — no doubt — in it is guidance to the Mindful⁽⁴⁾; ﴿٣﴾ who ‘unshakably’

لَمْ يَكُنْ لَكَ كِتَابٌ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى
لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ

- 1 Twenty nine suras in the Qur’an begin with these disjointed letters of the Arabic alphabet (known as *al-hurūf al-muqatta‘ah*). Exegetes, over time, have speculated on their meaning, however, two opinions prevail. Firstly, that they indicate the inimitable nature of the Qur’an, as it is made up of letters from the Arabic alphabet. The Arabs at the time of revelation were the unrivalled masters of the Arabic language and yet when challenged were totally unable to create anything like the Qur’an. This, despite the fact that it heralded a complete overhaul of their socio-religious system, one that threatened their very own way of existence. This challenge to author something like it was delivered by the Qur’an in more than one place (cf. 10: 38, 11: 13, 17: 88). This bears testimony to the inimitable, Divine source of the Qur’an (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr). Secondly, a significant number of the Prophet’s Companions (رضي الله عنهم), including the rightly-guided Caliphs, the Followers and their followers refrained from interpreting them, and since nothing has been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) as to their meaning, we should also follow suit and say: “God knows best”.
- 2 The fact that the demonstrative pronoun *dhālika* (that) rather than *hādhdhā* (this) is employed in this āya to refer to the Book, the Qur’an, underlines its loftiness and most high status. (Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, 1:28)
- 3 This āya contains a pause of *al-mu‘ānaqah* (congruence) and, thus, has two alternative readings. In the Uthmanic codex this type of pause is symbolized by a pair of triangular shaped dots. If one is to pause at the first position one is not to pause at the second and vice versa. Under no circumstances is one to stop at both as the meaning would be seriously altered. In this position, if we pause at the first indication, the āya could be read as: “*This Book in which there is no doubt, containing guidance to the Mindful*”, in which emphasis is laid on the infallible Divine origin of the Qur’an and, thus, no one is to doubt it (cf. 41:42). Stopping at the second indication gives rise to the reading represented in the translation above, which emphasizes that the Qur’an is a Book of Guidance (cf. 17: 9).
- 4 *At-Taqwā*, translated here and throughout this rendition as Mindfulness, is a central Qur’anic concept. It means being aware of God and watchful of Him in all our deeds and intentions; acts of the heart. This constant vigilance nurtures within a deep sense of sincerity and relatedness to God, thus eschewing worldly temptations and distractions which sway one from the real goal in life and the purpose of existence: namely, to worship God alone. Etymologically, it is derived from the verb *ittaqa*, i.e. placing protection between oneself and what can cause harm. The overall meaning

Believe in the Unseen⁽⁵⁾, keep up the Prayer⁽⁶⁾ and give out of what We have provided for them; ⁽⁴⁾ who Believe in what is sent down to you 'Muhammad' and what was sent down before you⁽⁷⁾, and have firm faith in the Hereafter. ⁽⁵⁾ These are guided by their Lord, and these are the successful⁽⁸⁾.

يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمِمَّا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَالْآخِرَةَ هُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَأُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥﴾

⁽⁶⁾ Indeed the Deniers⁽⁹⁾, whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not Believe⁽¹⁰⁾.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦﴾

is to be vigilant and aware of God at all times in order that His Punishment is avoided. (For more information see: Abdul-Ḥayy al-Faramāwī, *al-Mawṣū'ah al-Qur'āniyyah al-Mutakhaṣṣiṣah*, entry "taqwā", pp. 734-737.)

- 5 'The Unseen' is *al-Ghayb*, i.e. what lies beyond the realm of perception and is only known through revelation. It is what people, particularly the materialistically oriented, find hard to Believe in, and includes, *inter alia*, the angels, life after death, Hellfire and Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 6 'Keeping up the Prayer', *iqāmat aṣ-ṣalāh*, entails performing it punctually and devoutly, observing the manner set forth by the Prophet (ﷺ), who said: "Pray as you have seen me Pray". (al-Bukhārī: 631)
- 7 That is to Believe in what Muhammad (ﷺ) came with from God and what the Messengers came with before him without differentiation among them or Denial of what they came with.
- 8 'The successful', *al-muflīḥūn*, are those who succeed in attaining what they wish for, namely, to be guided by God, and avoid the evil of what they fear. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Ashūr)
- 9 The noun *kufir* is derived from the root verb '*kafara*', i.e. 'to cover' (Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*), by extension it entails 'covering up the truth' (al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*) which is an integral part of the purport of the Qur'anic term. *al-Ladhīna kafarū*, literally, those who Deny is usually translated as disbelievers or unbelievers. However, 'disbelieving', in essence, is denial of what the Prophet (ﷺ) came with or a part of it (cf. al-Sa'dī). Thus, the choice of the term Deniers throughout this translation. Deniers are those who staunchly, heedlessly and shamelessly cover up the Truth. They are widely set apart from the Believers who willingly and devoutly open up to it and embrace it; they come at the other end of the divide.
- 10 Those who Denied the Truth with which Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) came, out of arrogance and transgression, will never Believe because of their

﴿7﴾ Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and over their eyes there is a veil—theirs is a grievous Punishment⁽¹¹⁾.

﴿8﴾ Some people say: “We Believe in Allah and in the Last Day”, while, in fact, they do not Believe⁽¹²⁾. ﴿9﴾ They seek to deceive Allah⁽¹³⁾ and the Believers—they only deceive themselves, not realizing it⁽¹⁴⁾. ﴿10﴾ In their hearts there is disease and thus ‘because of it’ Allah has increased their disease⁽¹⁵⁾. Theirs is a painful Punishment for their ‘persistent’ lying. ﴿11﴾ When it is said to them: “Do not sow corruption in the land”, they say: “We are only but reformers”. ﴿12﴾ Nay! They are the corruptors but they do not realize it! ﴿13﴾ When it is said to them: “Believe as the ‘other’ people have Believed”, they say:

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾
 وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ
 الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ
 وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَمَا يُخَادِعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ
 وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ
 اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا
 يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي
 الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾ إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ
 هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَٰكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾
 وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا كَمَا ءَامَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا

stubbornness and intransigence. But, if they mend their ways and reach deep into their hearts, they could possibly open up to Belief (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 16: 584-589, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifā’ al-‘Alīl*, 91).

- 11 ‘*Adhāb*, translated here as ‘Punishment’, means that they are condemned to painful suffering in Hellfire (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Sa’dī).
- 12 These are the hypocrites or *al-munāfiqūn* (63: 1), whose hidden truth, Denial, is in contrast to what they show to people, i.e. Belief. The fact of their matter is told here quite lucidly (Ayas 8-20), exposing their pretence so that people make no mistake about them. They are a third party, somewhere between Believers (spoken of in Ayas 1-5) and Deniers (spoken of in Ayas 6-7) (cf. Ibn Kathīr).
- 13 Cf. 58: 18.
- 14 Cf. 4: 142.
- 15 Cf. 9:125. They were stricken with cancerous doubt. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī)

“Should we Believe as the feeble-minded¹⁶ have Believed?” Indeed they are the feeble-minded but they know not. ¹⁴ When they meet those who Believe, they say: “We Believe!”, but when they are alone with their devils¹⁷, they say: “Surely we are with you. We are but mocking”. ¹⁵ Allah mocks¹⁸ them and slackens the reins for them to wander aimlessly in their blindness¹⁹. ¹⁶ These are the ones who traded in guidance for loss. Their trade did not flourish nor were they guided. ¹⁷ Their similitude is that of one who kindles a fire; as soon as it casts light on what is around him, Allah takes away their light leaving them in ‘utter’ darkness²⁰, unable to see²¹;

أَتُؤْمِنُ كَمَا ءَامَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ ۖ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ
السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَإِذَا الْقَوَا
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ
شَيْطَانِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ
مُسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ
فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ
أَشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ
وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي
أَشْتَقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ
اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

- 16 *al-Sufahā'*, translated here as ‘the feeble-minded’, is an adjective for the noun *safah* (feeble-mindedness). *Safah* indicates a person’s inability to distinguish between what is good and what is not. Thus, a person of this nature, unwittingly, inflicts harm on himself. The hypocrites are saying that the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) were not able to discern what is good for themselves and consequently they Believed. Little did they know that they are the feeble-minded (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 17 Their leaders in this evil. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 18 God mocks them by making their squalid condition look good to them. On the Day of Judgement, God will give them light just like that of the Believers, then when they walk in it, God will snatch it away from them leaving them desolate in complete darkness. Great is their despair after hope! Cf. 57:14. (al-Sa‘dī)
- 19 *Ṭughyān*, lit. transgression and exceeding the limits. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, 41; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, 321)
- 20 *Zulumāt*, is an intensive plural form of *zalmā'* or *zulmah*, i.e. darkness. These are the darkness of doubt and that of Denial (cf. Ibn Kathīr).
- 21 The illuminating fire here denotes Belief, which dissipates darkness; their nominal Belief did them as much good as a transitory source of light does in utter darkness. (Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿18﴾ deaf, dumb, and blind, they will not find their way back⁽²²⁾.
 ﴿19﴾ Or like a downpour from the sky, in which there is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears from thunderclaps⁽²³⁾, fearing death—Allah is surrounding⁽²⁴⁾ the Deniers. ﴿20﴾ The lightning⁽²⁵⁾ almost snatches away their sight; whenever it flashes they walk in its light and when the light goes, they stand still⁽²⁶⁾. If Allah so willed, He could have taken away their hearing and their sight—Allah is Able over everything.

﴿21﴾ People! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you might be Mindful⁽²⁷⁾.
 ﴿22﴾ He Who made the land a carpet⁽²⁸⁾ and the sky a roof⁽²⁹⁾ for you,

صُمُّ بُكْرٌ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ
 مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَّجْعَلُونَ
 أَصْبِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ مِنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ
 الْمَوْتِ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ
 يَخْطِفُ أَبْصَرَهُمْ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشَوْا فِيهِ
 وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ
 بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَرِهِمْ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
 شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

يَتَّيَّبُهَا النَّاسُ أَعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ
 وَالْآلِيَّتَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ الَّذِي
 جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فُرْشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً

22 Cf. 22: 46 and 63:3.

23 Their admonition in the Qur'an and how it reveals their truth are akin to deafening thunderclaps penetrating their eardrums. (al-Ṭabarī)

24 Almighty God knows all too well the affairs of the hypocrites and He has utter control over them to dispose of them as He wishes; they can neither deceive Him nor escape His Punishment (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

25 The glaring light of the Qur'an. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn 'Atīyyah, Ibn Kathīr)

26 The parable of the heavy downpour is another way, along with the illuminating fire, of vividly describing the tumultuous psychological state the hypocrites had to live through in the midst of Believers to whom the Qur'an was being sent down telling them of the Truth of their hidden enemies. Enemies who are repeatedly, and in the strongest of terms, censured and called to listen to the voice of reason.

27 Being heedful of your Creator and Provider.

28 Stretched out, easy to walk on like a carpet. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr)

29 Cf. 21: 32.

and sent water down from the sky and grew with it 'all sorts of' produce as provisions for you. Therefore, 'knowing this,' do not set up 'rivalling' equals for Him⁽³⁰⁾. ﴿23﴾ And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down to Our servant⁽³¹⁾, come up with a single sura⁽³²⁾ like it, and call 'for your aid' your witnesses⁽³³⁾ apart from Allah, if only you were truthful. ﴿24﴾ But if you will not do it – and you will never 'ever' do it – be Mindful of the Fire, the fuel of which is people and stones⁽³⁴⁾, that has been prepared for the Deniers. ﴿25﴾ Give glad tidings to those who Believe and do good deeds that theirs are Gardens⁽³⁵⁾ under which rivers flow; whenever they are provided with a fruit from it, they would say: "This is what we have been provided with before!⁽³⁶⁾" They have been provided with it resembling each other⁽³⁷⁾.

وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهٖ مُتَشَبِهُونَ

30 Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that he asked the Prophet (ﷺ): "What is the gravest of all sins?" He (ﷺ) replied: "That you take 'as god' a rival equal to Allah when it is He Who created you". (al-Bukhārī: 4477, Muslim: 86)

31 The referent of 'Our servant', is Muhammad (ﷺ) to whom the Qur'an was sent down.

32 Sura is a Qur'anic chapter.

33 Your aides and partners who would readily interpose for you. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

34 Cf. 21: 98.

35 *al-Jannah* or Paradise the plural of which is *Jannāt* as in this aya.

36 There is an element of a renewed and pleasant surprise involved here.

37 The fruits of Paradise look like those found in this worldly life, but their taste is different. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Qurtubī)

For them in it are purified⁽³⁸⁾ spouses—they will abide therein forever.

﴿26﴾ Allah does not shy away from giving even a gnat⁽³⁹⁾ as an example or even less than it⁽⁴⁰⁾. Those who Believe will know that it is the Truth from their Lord, but those who Deny will say: “What need does Allah have for this example!” He ‘Allah’ misguides with it ‘this example’ a great number of people and guides with it a great number of people⁽⁴¹⁾. But He only misguides the Transgressors⁽⁴²⁾; ﴿27﴾ those who break the covenant of Allah⁽⁴³⁾ after it has been set as binding, sever what Allah ordained to be joined, and sow corruption in the land. These are, indeed, the Losers. ﴿28﴾ How could you Deny Allah, while you were dead and He made you alive; He then will take your lives,

وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا
بِعُوضَةٍ فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ
أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا
يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا
وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ الَّذِينَ
يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ
وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ
فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾
كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ ءَمَوَاتًا
فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ

38 Pure and clean, both bodily and spiritually. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī)

39 Such an insignificant creature can be used to present to people evidence of the truthfulness of the Message. Besides the Qur’an and its Signs (Ayas) no matter how small or belittled the evidence is, it is still enough proof for those who seek the Truth with open hearts.

40 The expression used here is *fa mā fawqahā*, which literally means: ‘or what is above it’, i.e. either smaller or larger in size. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Atīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

41 Cf. 9: 124-125.

42 *al-Fāsiqūn*, derived from the noun *fisq*, are those who overstep the limits that God has demarcated for people. *Fisq* is a manifestation of Denial (cf. 74: 31).

43 Cf. 2: 84-85 and 5: 12-13 and 70.

then bring you to life again, and after that you will be returned to Him again?⁽⁴⁴⁾ ⁽²⁹⁾ He is the One Who created for you all that there is in Earth, then made for⁽⁴⁵⁾ the sky and formed it into seven skies. He has knowledge of everything⁽⁴⁶⁾.

⁽³⁰⁾ 'Mention Muhammad'⁽⁴⁷⁾ When your Lord said to the angels: "I shall instate a successor⁽⁴⁸⁾ on Earth!" They said: "Will you instate in it one who sows corruption and sheds blood, whereas we 'incessantly' glorify You in gratitude to You and exalt You?"⁽⁴⁹⁾ He said: "I know that which you do not".

ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾
هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا
ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ
سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي
الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ
فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ
وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

- 44 These are the cycles of life and death that humans go through: seeds in the loins of men, creation and birth, death, being brought to life at resurrection and being held accountable for one's deeds. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Ashūr, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 45 This translation of the Divine Attribute *Istawā* follows after al-Wāhīdī in *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī and Ibn 'Uthaymīn. Alternatively, it could mean that Almighty God rose to the sky in a manner befitting Him only, which in al-Baghawī's opinion is the interpretation given by Ibn 'Abbās (ﷺ) and most of the exegetes of his generation.
- 46 This aya is further expounded in Ayas 41: 9-12.
- 47 Abū al-Baqā' al-Kafawī (*al-Kullīyyāt*, p. 69) says: "Whenever 'the particle' *idh* is mentioned in the Qur'an it implies 'the command' 'mention!' That is, mention 'Muhammad' to them 'the ones to whom the Qur'an is being recited' or recall in your mind... most exegetes agree to this".
- 48 *Khalīfah* is derived from *khalafa* which denotes standing in place of someone else (Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 2: 210; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, p. 294). Here, it means someone who comes after another and takes his place; these are mankind, Adam and his progeny, who successively take over each other's place, generation after generation, until the Day of Judgement. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 49 Abū Dharr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked: "What is the best utterance?" He replied: "Whatever Allah chose for His angels and servants: "*Subhān Allāh wa bi-ḥamdih* (Glorified be Allah and 'we do this' in gratitude to Him)". (Muslim: 2731)

﴿31﴾ He taught Adam all the names 'of things', then showed them to the angels and said: "Tell Me the names of these, if only you were truthful!" ﴿32﴾ They said: "Glorified may You be! We have no knowledge but what You have taught us. You are All-Knowing, All-Wise". ﴿33﴾ He said: "Adam! Tell them their names". When he told them their names, He said: "Did I not instruct you that I know what is hidden in the Heavens and the Earth?—and I know what you make public and what you hide"⁽⁵⁰⁾.

﴿34﴾ 'Mention Muhammad' When We said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam!"⁽⁵¹⁾; they bowed down except Iblīs⁽⁵²⁾; he refused, became arrogant⁽⁵³⁾ and was one of the Deniers. ﴿35﴾ We said: "Adam! Dwell yourself and your wife in the Garden⁽⁵⁴⁾ and eat thereof

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٢﴾ قَالَ يَتْلُمُ أَنْبِئُهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالسَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَقُلْنَا يَتْلُمُ أَنْبِئُهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالسَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

- 50 This quiz was posed to the angels, the closest to God of His creation, to prove to them, by practical example, the Truth of God's All-Encompassing Knowledge, and, in turn, the Wisdom of His Choice. It is also a concrete manifestation of God's infinite Justice, which allows for questioning by even the most obedient of His subjects, the angels. This Most Able of Sovereigns answers their concerns.
- 51 The command to the angels to bow down to Adam is an act of worship to God and reverence to Adam who was honoured by God Himself. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 52 Iblīs is Satan. Etymologically, *iblis* comes from *iblas*, i.e. having no hope in good things, grief and sadness caused by utter despair. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, p. 23; al-İṣḫāhānī, *al-Mufradāt*, p. 143)
- 53 His arrogance is spelled out elsewhere in the Qur'an; 7: 12, 38: 76, 15: 33.
- 54 This Garden is Paradise, the very Heavenly abode of eternal bliss. (al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 4: 347, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr)

'bountifully' aplenty wherever you wish, but do not come near this tree, or 'else' you will be from among the wrongful". ﴿36﴾ Satan tripped them into it⁽⁵⁵⁾ and drove them out from where they were⁽⁵⁶⁾; We said: "Go down, as enemies to each other. In Earth will be your dwelling and livelihood for a given time⁽⁵⁷⁾". ﴿37﴾ Adam received a few words⁽⁵⁸⁾ from His Lord, and He forgave him; He is the All-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. ﴿38﴾ We said⁽⁵⁹⁾: "Go down all of you⁽⁶⁰⁾, whenever guidance comes to you from Me whoever follows it will have neither fear nor will they grieve. ﴿39﴾ As for those who Deny and disbelieve in our Signs these are the company of the Fire; forever they will abide therein⁽⁶¹⁾."

رَعَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونُوا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَتَلَقَىٰ آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٣٨﴾ قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

55 How he managed to do this is told in more detail in 7: 20-22.

56 The great blessing of dwelling in Paradise.

57 Until the Day of Judgement. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

58 These *kalimāt* or 'words', or supplication, are provided in 7: 23: "They 'both' said: "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers".

59 What follows is the original covenant: to follow the path of guidance shown to them by God's Messengers. Those who Believe in the Message will lead a life of felicity but those who Deny will meet Hellfire as their final destination.

60 The addressees were Adam, Eve and Satan. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr)

61 The episode of Adam's creation and his encounter with Satan are spelled out in detail in 20:116-123.

﴿40﴾ Children of Israel!⁽⁶²⁾ Remember My favour which I conferred on you, and fulfil 'your obligations to' My pledge and I will honour 'My obligations to' your pledge⁽⁶³⁾; and fear none but Me. ﴿41﴾ Believe in what I have sent down confirming what you have⁽⁶⁴⁾, do not be the first to Deny it, do not trade my Signs⁽⁶⁵⁾ for a pittance⁽⁶⁶⁾ and be Mindful of Me, ﴿42﴾ do not mix up Truth with falsehood, and do not suppress the Truth while you are aware of it, ﴿43﴾ keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms and bow down 'in Prayer' with those who bow down⁽⁶⁷⁾.

يٰۤاِسْرٰٓءِيْلَ اذْكُرْ اَنْعَمْتُ عَلٰىكُمْ
 وَاَوْفُوْا بِعَهْدِيْ اَوْفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَاِيْتِيْ فَاَرْهَبُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾
 وَاِمْۤاٰنًا بِمَا اَنْزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا
 اَوَّلَ كٰفِرٍۭ بِهٖ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوْا بِآيٰتِيْ ثَمَنًا
 قَلِيْلًا وَاِيْتِيْ فَاَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَلَا تَلْسِزُوْا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَطْلِ
 وَتَكْتُمُوْا الْحَقَّ وَاَنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَاَقِيْمُوْا
 الصَّلٰوةَ وَاَتُوْا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَرْكَعُوْا مَعَ
 الرَّكْعِيْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾

- 62 Israel is Prophet Jacob (ﷺ). The use of the epithet 'Children of Israel' for the Israelites is meant to act as a reminder to them to follow in the footsteps of the Patriarch from whom they are directly descended.
- 63 God's pledge to the Children of Israel and theirs to Him are given in 5: 12. This mutual pledge is related as: if the Children of Israel keep up the Prayer, give charity, Believe in and support the Prophets, and spend in the cause of God, God will, in return, expiate their sins and admit them to the Gardens through which rivers flow, i.e. Paradise.
- 64 God is inviting the Children of Israel to Believe in the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad's (ﷺ) Message in fulfilment of their pledge to Him (cf. 7: 156-157, in which the Children of Israel are enjoined to Believe in the gentile Prophet whom they find mentioned in the Torah). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 65 The Torah in which there is mention of the Messengership of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).
- 66 Their leaders used to reap shares from their devoted folk's wealth. Hence, they tried to hide the Truth about Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) fearing that they would lose these gratuities.
- 67 This is an invitation from God to the Children of Israel to join the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions and become Believers performing acts of worship accordingly (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿44﴾ How could you enjoin people to do what is right and forget "about it" yourselves, while you read the Book⁽⁶⁸⁾; have you no sense? ﴿45﴾ Seek help in patience and Prayer⁽⁶⁹⁾; indeed they are hard save for the dedicated⁽⁷⁰⁾. ﴿46﴾ Those who firmly Believe that they will be meeting their Lord and that they are returning to Him.

﴿44﴾ أَنَا أَمْرُوتِ النَّاسِ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنَسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾
 وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

﴿47﴾ Children of Israel! Remember My favour which I conferred on you and that I privileged you over other peoples⁽⁷¹⁾. ﴿48﴾ Be cautious of a Day⁽⁷²⁾ on which no soul will be of use to another soul, neither intercession⁽⁷³⁾ nor ransom will be accepted from it, and they⁽⁷⁴⁾ will not be helped.

يَبْنَئِ إِسْرَائِيلَ بَلْ أَذْكَرُوا نِعْمَتِي الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَأَنْقُضُوا يَوْمَئِذٍ مَا كُنْتُمْ يَحْزِرُونَ عَنْ نَفْسِكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَعَةً وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

Furthermore, al-Wāhidī is of the opinion that the command to "bow down with those who bow down" is specifically mentioned to denote performing congregational, obligatory Prayers.

68 The Torah.

69 The commentary widely-known as *al-Jalālayn* has it that this command is addressed to: "The Children of Israel who were hampered from Belief out of greed and love of vainglory. They are commanded to seek help in patience, i.e. fasting, which dents wantonness, and Prayer because it leads to humbleness and expels haughtiness".

70 The 'dedicated' (*al-khāshī'īn*) are those who are humble in obedience to God, fearful of His Punishment, Believing in His promise and warning. (al-Ṭabarī)

71 In their time, God gave them certain privileges over other peoples; Prophets, revealed Books and kingship (cf. 5: 20). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

72 The Day of Judgement.

73 On the Day of Judgement no intercession on behalf of a Denier will be accepted, but it will be accepted for a Believer given that God permits it. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

74 The Deniers.

﴿49﴾ 'Remember' When We saved you from the people of Pharaoh who subjected you to the worst of suffering—they slaughtered your sons and kept your womenfolk alive—surely, this was a great tribulation from your Lord. ﴿50﴾ 'Remember' When We split the sea for you, delivered you, and drowned the people of Pharaoh before your eyes⁽⁷⁵⁾. ﴿51﴾ And 'remember' when We appointed forty nights for Moses⁽⁷⁶⁾, and then when he was away you took up 'worshipping' the calf—you were unjust⁽⁷⁷⁾. ﴿52﴾ Then We forgave you so that you might be thankful⁽⁷⁸⁾. ﴿53﴾ 'Remember' When we gave Moses the Book and the Distinguisher⁽⁷⁹⁾, so that you might be guided. ﴿54﴾ 'Remember' When Moses said to his people: "My people, you have done yourselves injustice by taking the calf 'as an idol'. Repent to your Originator! Kill yourselves⁽⁸⁰⁾;

وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكُمْ مِنَ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يَدَّبْحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمْ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ أَخَذْنَا الْعَجَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِمَّن بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ اذْكُرُوا مَا كُنتُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ بَارِيكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ

75 Cf. 26: 61-66.

76 The meeting place where Moses was to receive the Torah is specified elsewhere in the Qur'an; 20: 80.

77 Associating any other with God in worship is a grave injustice (cf. 31: 13).

78 For more details on these episodes cf. 7: 138-155.

79 Mujāhid and al-Rabi' Ibn Anas are of the opinion that the Book is the same as the *Furqān* (the Distinguisher) that distinguishes Truth from falsehood; the Torah is the *Furqān* in this aya. (Ibn Abū Ḥātim)

80 The same form of punishment is mentioned in Exodus 32:15-35. By the Prophet's (ﷺ) permission (al-Bukhārī: 3274), Muslims are allowed to mention these Biblical accounts or the so-called *isrā'iliyyāt* (or apocryphal sources ascribed to the Children of Israel) but they are not to rely on them.

that will be best for you with your Maker; that He may forgive you. Surely, He is the All-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. ﴿55﴾ ‘Remember’ When you said: “Moses! We will not Believe in you unless we see Allah before our own eyes”. Suddenly, the thunderbolt struck you while you were beholding. ﴿56﴾ Then We resurrected you after your death⁽⁸¹⁾, so that you might be thankful. ﴿57﴾ We shaded you with the clouds⁽⁸²⁾ and sent down to you the manna and quails⁽⁸³⁾. Eat from the good things that We provided for you. They⁽⁸⁴⁾ did not commit injustice against Us, but they did themselves the injustice.

ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِنْدَٰ رَبِّكُمْ فَتَابَ
عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا
يَمُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَىٰ اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً
فَأَخَذْنَاكُم بِالصَّعِقَةِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾
ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُم مِّن بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا
عَلَيْكُمْ الْمَنَّٰنَ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلًّا مِّن تَحْتِهَا
مَآرِزٌ لَّكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلٰكِن كَانُوا
أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

- 81 When the punishment of the thunderbolt struck them, they died, then God brought them back to life so that they might become grateful to Him. (al-Ṭabarī)
- 82 This is an account of sparing the Israelites the glare of the sun whilst they were lost in the wilderness. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abū Ḥātim)
- 83 In Arabic, *al-mann* and *al-salwā*, respectively. They both have linguistic roots in Arabic; *al-mann* means that which is God-given without effort, while *al-salwā* means that in which one finds consolation and comfort. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 84 Rhetorical shifts (known as *uslub al-iltifāt*) from, for instance as in this aya, the second person plural pronoun ‘you’ into the third person plural pronoun ‘they’ is very common in the Qur’anic discourse. This well-known and well-researched linguistic feature is employed to serve a number of rhetorical purposes. In this instance, it is meant to announce that enumeration of the Israelites’ repeated offenses has come to an end and that talk is directed to other nations so that they may take heed and not fall into the same trap (cf. al-Qāsimī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Dabī, *Dalīl al-Balāghah al-Qur’āniyyah*, p. 39).

﴿58﴾ ‘Remember’ When We said: “Enter this town⁽⁸⁵⁾ and eat from it wherever you like plentifully; and enter through the gate prostrating ‘in thankfulness’ and say: “*ḥiṭṭah!*”⁽⁸⁶⁾, and We shall forgive you your sins and We shall increase ‘the reward of’ those who do good”.
 ﴿59﴾ The wrongdoers among them substituted what was said to them for something else, and We sent down on the wrongdoers a plague⁽⁸⁷⁾ from the sky for exceeding the limits. ﴿60﴾ ‘Remember’ When Moses prayed ‘earnestly’ for water for his people. We said: “Strike the rock with your staff”; twelve springs gushed out from it. Every people⁽⁸⁸⁾ knew their own fountain. “Eat and drink from what Allah has provided for you and do not stalk the land corrupting”. ﴿61﴾ ‘Remember’ When you said: “Moses, we will not bear with you for one type of food.

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا
 حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَاَدْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا
 وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطَايَاكُمْ
 وَسَيَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ
 ظَلَمُوا قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى
 الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا
 يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ * وَإِذْ اسْتَسْقَى مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ
 فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ
 مِنْهُ اثْنَا عَشَرَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ
 مَشْرِبَهُمْ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا
 فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَى
 لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَى طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ

85 This Divine command to the Children of Israel to ‘enter’ the town is explained in 7: 161 as ‘reside’ in the town, i.e. Jerusalem.

86 That is ‘forgiveness’; they were asked to seek forgiveness. The word is derived from *ḥaṭṭa*, i.e. to put down a burden (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’an*, p. 50; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 2: 13), but they subtly twisted their tongues to mean ‘barley’, *ḥiṭṭah* (al-Bukhārī: 4641, cf. particularly al-‘Asqalānī’s comment).

87 *Rijz*, i.e. torment and tumult. (Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 2: 489; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, p. 341)

88 Each one of the twelve tribes of the Children of Israel (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

Ask your Lord to bring out for us from what the earth grows: herbs, cucumber, garlic⁽⁸⁹⁾, lentils and onions. He said: “Would you exchange what is better for that which is worse? Go down to ‘just’ any town, for there will be yours what you asked for”. Humiliation and indignity were stamped on them, and they deserved the Wrath of Allah, all because they used to Deny Allah’s Signs and kill the Prophets unjustifiably, this is because they defied and took to ‘habitually’ exceeding the limits.

﴿62﴾ Certainly, the Believers, the Jews, the Christians and the Sabians whoever Believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good among them, theirs will be their reward from their Lord, they will have neither fear nor will they grieve⁽⁹⁰⁾. ﴿63﴾ ‘Remember’ When We took your pledge⁽⁹¹⁾, and raised the mountain⁽⁹²⁾ above

فَأَنذَرْنَا لَنَارَبِّكَ يُخْرِجُ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنْبِئُ
الْأَرْضُ مِنْ بَقَائِهَا وَقَوَامِهَا وَعَدَسِيهَا
وَبَصَلِيهَا قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ
بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ أَهبطوا مِصْرَ قَالَيْنَ لَكُمْ مَا
سَأَلْتُمْ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ
وَبَاءَ وَبَعْضَ مِمَّنْ أَتَىٰ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا
يَكْفُرُونَ بِتَابِئَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ يَغْتَرِبُونَ
الْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّالِيْنَ
وَالصَّالِيْنَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَإِذْ
أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ

89 According to some authorities *fūmihā*, translated here as garlic, also means wheat. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 51; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 367)

90 This applies to those who came before Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent. Thereafter, whoever seeks a religion other than Islam will find it not accepted from him and in the Hereafter he will be among the Losers (3: 85) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Ashūr). Furthermore, Ibn ‘Ashūr opines that this aya is meant to show these people that the Door to God is easy to arrive at and that seeking refuge with Him is not beyond their reach, but they have to Believe and do good deeds..

91 Cf. 2: 83-85.

92 *Aṭ-ṭūr* is of Syriac origin (al-Jawāliqī, *al-Mu’arrab*, p. 435) and whilst it means any mountain, it could also mean a certain mountain or a mountain covered with greenery. (al-Ṭabarī)

you⁽⁹³⁾; “Hold fast to what We have given you and bear in mind what came into it, so that you might be Mindful”.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Then you turned away after that. Had it not been for Allah’s favour and Mercy, you would have been among the Losers.⁽⁶⁵⁾ You know ‘what befell’ those of you who transgressed on the Sabbath⁽⁹⁴⁾. We said to them: “Be apes, despised!”⁽⁶⁶⁾ We made it ‘this town’ a ‘severe’ lesson to those of its time and those that came after it, and an admonishment to the Mindful.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ ‘Remember’ When Moses said to his people: “Surely Allah commands you to slaughter a cow”⁽⁹⁵⁾. They said: “Are you deriding us?” He said: “*I seek refuge by Allah, that I should be an ignoramus!*”⁽⁹⁶⁾ ⁽⁶⁸⁾ They said: “Pray to your Lord to tell us ‘clearly’ what it is”. He said: “He says: “It is a cow not too old, neither is it too young, but somewhere in the middle. So do what you are being commanded to!”

خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ
ذَلِكَ فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ
مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ
أَعْتَدُوا مِنْكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْتُمْ لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً
خَاسِيَةً ﴿٦٥﴾ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ لَكُمْ آيَةً لِمَا بَيْنَ
يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلَفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ
أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقْرَةً قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُرُوطًا قَالَ
أَعُودُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالُوا
أَنْعِ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بَيْنَ لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ
إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَأَفَارِضٌ وَلَا يَكْرَهُ عَوَانُ بَيْتٍ
ذَلِكَ فَافْعَلُوا مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

93 This is further underlined in 7: 171.

94 The details of this town’s story are given in 7: 163-165.

95 Moses asked them to slaughter a cow without being specific about it. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

96 ‘I seek refuge by Allah’ is a literal translation for the Arabic expression (*a’ūdhu bi Allāh*) which, depending on the context, as in this case, is meant to express a strong feeling of aversion to something, i.e. that they accused him of an act befitting only the ignorant, let alone a Messenger of God.

﴿69﴾ They said: “Pray to your Lord to tell us what its colour is”. He said: “He says: “It is a yellow cow, bright is its colour, pleasing to the beholders”. ﴿70﴾ They said: “Pray to your Lord to tell us what exactly it is; all cows look alike to us. At this we shall, Allah willing, be guided”. ﴿71﴾ He said: “He says: “It is a cow neither humbled by tilling the earth, nor by watering plants; unblemished, and its colour is untainted””. They said: “Now you have come with the Truth!” They slaughtered it—barely did they do so. ﴿72﴾ ‘Remember’ When you killed a soul and disputed over it⁽⁹⁷⁾. Allah reveals what you were bent on hiding. ﴿73﴾ We said: “Strike him ‘the victim’ with a piece of it ‘the cow’⁽⁹⁸⁾”. It is in this manner

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَاءُ فَاقِعٌ لَوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ الْتَّظِيرِ ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشَبَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَّا ذَلُولٌ تُثِيرُ الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَّا شِيَةَ فِيهَا قَالُوا الْفَنَ جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ فَذَبَحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَإِذ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادَّارَأْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَقُلْنَا أَصْرَبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا

97 This aya concludes the episode of the cow and the debate surrounding it. Commentators agree that the details given here provide a foregrounding of how Moses' people argued with him in what had been Divinely ordained. al-Biqā'ī is of the opinion that the episode is divided into two sections by way of drawing attention to two separate favours. Firstly, the favour of forgiveness for being reluctant to obey what is Divinely ordained. Secondly, the favour of revealing the killer by way of a miracle. On the other hand, al-Biqā'ī also sees that attention is being drawn to the fact that there is an issue of admonishment here. Firstly, they are being admonished for not being polite enough with their Prophet by accusing him of 'deriding' them, and not being observant enough of God's commands. Secondly, they are being reproached for killing an inviolable, sacrosanct soul, and the evil such an act incurs. al-Biqā'ī then concludes that this instance of foregrounding is, consequently, more relevant to the preceding and numerous violations. Thereby, the theme of reproach is still being continued here.

98 It is reported that having been hit with a piece of the cow, the victim came back to life and pointed his killer out. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

that Allah brings to life the dead and shows you His Signs so that you might think⁽⁹⁹⁾. ﴿74﴾ ‘Yet’ After that your hearts became akin to rocks or ‘even’ harder; truly among rocks some from which rivers gush forth, some crack and water seeps through, and some come tumbling down in fear of Allah—Allah is not heedless of what you do.

﴿75﴾ Do you ‘Believers’ then hope that they will Believe in you⁽¹⁰⁰⁾, when a party of them used to hear the words of Allah⁽¹⁰¹⁾ and distort them even after they had fully comprehended them and fully realizing what they were doing? ﴿76﴾ When they meet up with the Believers, they say: “We Believe!”, but when they are alone with each other, they say:

كَذَلِكَ يُحَى اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَسْقَى فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾

* أَقْضَمُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يَلْمِزُوكَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ قَالُوا

99 In this way, they were invited to think over their actions and to be more heedful, obeying God more willingly. (al-Ṭabarī, Sa‘ dī)

100 That is to listen to you and Believe in what you call them to (al-Ṭabarī). This is the reason behind recounting, in detail, the Israelites’ numerous violations in the previous ayas. The residents of Madinah, who made up the majority of the Believing community at the time, had lived alongside the Jews for a very long time and came to regard them as their moral superiors, having the Book and the knowledge that they lacked. These views were also shared further afield by other illiterate Arab pagans, who only had a most rudimentary knowledge of the religion of Abraham (ﷺ). The Israelites were so imprinted in the Arab psyche that nothing but telling their truth in great detail would actually make the Believers fully comprehend the actual reality. It is, in a way, establishing Faith on a clean slate (but not exactly from scratch as we will be told shortly of the relatedness of Islam to the Abrahamic creed), and correcting collective societal misconceptions.

101 The Torah. (al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*; Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr)

“Do you tell them what Allah has blessed you with the knowledge of which⁽¹⁰²⁾ so that they might use it in argument against you before your Lord; have you no sense? ﴿77﴾ Did they not know that Allah is in on what they hide and what they reveal? ﴿78﴾ Some of them are unlettered⁽¹⁰³⁾, ‘they’ do not know the Book only wishfully⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ thinking—they only guess. ﴿79﴾ Woe betides those who write the Book⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ with their own hands, then say: “This is from Allah!”, so that they may exchange it for a pittance. Woe betides them for what their hands have written, and woe betides them for what they earn. ﴿80﴾ They say: “The Fire will not touch us except for a limited number of days”⁽¹⁰⁶⁾. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Have you ‘got’ a promise from Allah? For Allah never breaks His promise. Or do you say about Allah that of which you have no knowledge?”

أَتَحَدِّثُونَهُمْ بِمَا فَتَحَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَاجُّوكُمْ بِهِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ أَوَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَمَنْهُمْ أُمِّيُّونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا الْأَمَانِيَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيُسْتَرُوا بِهِ ثُمَّ قَلِيلًا فَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَقَالُوا لَنْ نَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَةً قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ عَهْدَهُ ۗ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

102 That their Book tells of the advent of a Messenger who is described in much detail (cf. 2:89). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah)

103 This describes the stance of a third category of Madinan Jews with regards to the Message of Muhammad (ﷺ); namely, the ill-educated who follow what their minds tell them of what their Scripture says. The first two being the learned who willingly twist the words of God even after they have fully comprehended them, and the hypocrites who when they meet Muslims pay them lip service. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī)

104 They concoct false wishes. God has given examples of such falsity in 2: 111 and 4: 123.

105 What they claim to be their Scripture. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

106 They were so audacious because of this claim. (al-Sa‘dī)

﴿81﴾ Nay, but whoever commits a foul deed and is surrounded by his sin⁽¹⁰⁷⁾, will be 'among' the company of the Fire, forever they abide therein. ﴿82﴾ 'But' Those who Believe and do good deeds are the company of Paradise, forever they abide therein.

﴿83﴾ 'Mention' When We took the pledge of the Children of Israel that: you should worship none but Allah; be kind to your parents, relatives, orphans and the needy; speak nicely to people; and keep up Prayer and give out the prescribed alms; then you turned away – save a few of you – paying no heed. ﴿84﴾ 'Remember' When We took your pledge that: you should not shed one another's blood and that you should not expel one another out of your lands; then you vowed bearing witness to it! ﴿85﴾ After 'all' this, here you are killing one another and driving a group of you out of their lands, rallying against them unjustly and out of aggression. 'But' When they come to you as captives, you ransom them, while driving them out 'in the first place' is forbidden for you. Do you Believe in parts of the Book and Deny others?⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨١﴾
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ
إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ
حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ
ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ
مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ
دِمَاءَكُمْ وَلَا تَخْرُجُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ
ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْشَهُدُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ
هَؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَخْرُجُونَ
فَرِيقًا مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِهِمْ تَظَاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِم
بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَإِن يَأْتُواكُمْ أُسْرَىٰ
تَفْدُوهُمْ وَهُمْ هُمْ مَحْرُورٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ
أَقْتَرُمْ مَثَلًا بَعْضُ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ

107 *Ahāṭat bihi khaṭī'atuhu* 'surrounded by his sin', is, in other words, immersed in sin.

108 There were three Jewish tribes who allied themselves with the two paganistic Arab tribes of Madinah before Islam, falling, thus, into two

What then will be the punishment of who does this, but abasement in this worldly life, and in the Hereafter they will be consigned to the harshest of Punishments? Allah is not unaware of what you commit. ﴿86﴾ Those are the ones who exchanged the Hereafter for this worldly life⁽¹⁰⁹⁾; because of this their Punishment will not be alleviated nor will they be aided.

﴿87﴾ We gave Moses the Book⁽¹¹⁰⁾ and sent Messengers after him in succession⁽¹¹¹⁾; and gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear evidences⁽¹¹²⁾ and aided him with the Holy Spirit⁽¹¹³⁾. Is it not so that whenever a Messenger comes to you with

فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَرَوْا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ فَلَا يَخَفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ

rivalling parties. On the one hand, there were the Jewish Banū Qaynuqā‘ the allies of the Arab tribe of al-Khazraj and, on the other, there were Banū al-Naḍīr and Banū Qurayzah who took sides with the Arab tribe of al-Aws. In their infamous prolonged feuds, the Jewish clans fought alongside their allies against their brethren knowing what the Torah says about killing one another and driving one another out of the land. Even when arms were laid aside, they would ransom one another. Thus this Divine admonition. (al-Sa‘dī)

109 *al-Ḥayāt al-Dunyā*, translated as worldly life, literally means, the lower/close/nearly life, in comparison with *al-Ḥayāt al-Ākhirah* (lit. the last/final/ultimate life), i.e. the Hereafter. This comparison is always present in the Qur’an. Whereas living merely for this lowly, worldly-life is strongly condemned, seeking the reward of the loftier Hereafter is, by contrast, highly commended.

110 The Torah.

111 Cf. 5: 44.

112 These are the miracles that Jesus performed (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī), which are spelled out in 3: 49 and 5: 110.

113 *Rūḥ al-Qudus* (lit. the Sanctified Spirit) is Angel Gabriel (جبرائيل). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

what you do not like, you become disdainful, Denying some 'of them' and killing others? ⁸⁸ They said: "Our hearts are encased"⁽¹¹⁴⁾. Nay but Allah Damned them for their Denial, so little do they Believe. ⁸⁹ When a Book⁽¹¹⁵⁾ came to them from Allah confirming what they already have; 'while' before it they used to invoke "Divine" assistance⁽¹¹⁶⁾ over those who Deny, still when what they knew came to them, they Denied it. Allah's Damnation is on the Deniers. ⁹⁰ Meagre is the price for which they sold themselves that they Deny what Allah sent down out of envy that Allah should send this favour on whomever He wills among His servants. They have thus deserved Wrath upon Wrath⁽¹¹⁷⁾—the Deniers' is a humiliating Punishment.

بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰ أَنفُسُكُمْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِقْنَا
كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِقْنَا تَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا
غُلْفٌ ۚ بَل لَّعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَّا
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ
عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُوا مِن
قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَمَّا
جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾ بِسْمَا الشُّرُوبِ ۚ أَنفُسُهُمْ
أَن يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ بَغْيًا ۖ أَن يُنَزَّلَ اللَّهُ
مِن فَضْلِهِ ۚ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَاءُ مِّن عِبَادِهِ ۗ
فَبَأَوْ بِعَضْبٍ عَلَىٰ عَضْبٍ ۖ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ
عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٩٠﴾

114 *Ghulf*, wrapped in a cover, alternatively means "uncircumcised", a term which is often used in the Bible: Leviticus 26: 41, Jeremiah 9: 26, Ezekiel 44: 7.

115 The Qur'an.

116 The Jews used to seek victory over the Arabs in expectance of the coming Prophet whom they knew of from the Torah. They knew that his coming was imminent, so, at times of war and fighting, they would pray: "O God! Send this Prophet about whom we find in the Torah so that our enemies may suffer and be killed at his hands". When God sent Muhammad (ﷺ) and they realized that he was not one of them, they Denied him out of envy of the Arabs of whom the Prophet was one. Yet, they knew all too well that he was the one mentioned in the Torah. (al-Ṭabarī)

117 They deserved God's double Wrath firstly for their earlier rebelliousness and then for Denying Muhammad (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah)

﴿91﴾ When it is said to them: “Believe in what Allah has sent down”⁽¹¹⁸⁾, they say: “We ‘only’ Believe in what has been sent down to us”. And they Deny what came after it⁽¹¹⁹⁾ when it is, indeed, the Truth confirming what is already with them. Say ‘to them’: “Why would you then kill the Prophets of Allah earlier, if you are ‘truly’ Believers?”⁽¹²⁰⁾

﴿92﴾ Indeed Moses came to you with clear evidences⁽¹²¹⁾, then you took ‘to worshipping’ the calf⁽¹²²⁾ after him⁽¹²³⁾—you are indeed unjust.

﴿93﴾ ‘Remember’ When We took your pledge and raised the mountain above you: “Hold fast to what We have given you and be heedful!” They said: “We listen and we disobey”. The ‘love of the’ calf was made to seep into their hearts because of their Denial. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Vile it is what your Belief commands you to do, if you were truly Believers”.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا تَوْمِنُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَهُمْ قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ اللَّهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ * وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَسْمِعُوا قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَشْرَبُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ لِيَسْمَأَيَا مَرْكُم بِهِ إِيْمَانُكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

118 The Qur’an.

119 What was revealed after the Torah.

120 This rhetorical question is meant to emphasize how flagrantly in the wrong they were, claiming that they were fulfilling the dictates of the Torah, while unjustly killing their Prophets (cf. NT: Matthew 23:37) when, in fact, these Prophets only came to them with a confirmation of the Torah, which itself forbids killing God’s Messengers. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’adī)

121 Moses’ miracles. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

122 Cf. 2: 51.

123 While he was away.

﴿94﴾ Say: “If the Last Abode⁽¹²⁴⁾ with Allah was yours exclusively of all the people⁽¹²⁵⁾, then wish for death, if you were truly sincere”.
 ﴿95﴾ For sure they will not ever wish for it, for what their hands have sent forth⁽¹²⁶⁾; Allah is fully aware of the evildoers. ﴿96﴾ You are sure to find them the keenest on a life⁽¹²⁷⁾ of all people, even more so than the Associators⁽¹²⁸⁾. Each of them wishes he could live a thousand years; ‘but’ that ‘he lives such a long life’ will not budge him away from Punishment—Allah is All-Seeing of what they do.

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَلَنْ يَتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمْت أَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾
 وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاتِهِمْ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُرْحَبٍ حَرْجِهِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ إِنَّ يُعَمَّرُ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

﴿97﴾ Say whoever is an enemy to Gabriel⁽¹²⁹⁾ when he brought it ‘the

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ

124 al-Jannah (Paradise).

125 Reference is made here to the false belief that only either the Jews or the Christians will enter Paradise; cf. 2: 111 below.

126 They are in fear of what they have done and dread that the sins they have committed will be accounted for on the Day of Reckoning. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭṭiyah)

127 The Qur’an uses the unqualified *ḥayāt*, life, to emphasize their keenness on being alive and their aversion to death, irrespective of the quality of the life that they are so eager to lead (cf. al-Tawḥīdī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

128 Although they are told of life after death and what awaits the real servants of God in their Scriptures, they are keener on living longer in this life than even those who do not Believe in the Hereafter, i.e. *al-Mushrikīn*, those who Associate other deities in worship of God, i.e. the idolaters who were not privileged with a revealed Scripture). (Ibn ‘Uthaymīn)

129 Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “The Jews came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and they said: “Abū al-Qāsim, we will ask you about five things, if you tell us about them we will know that you are a Prophet and we will follow you”. ‘After asking about four things’, They said: “There only remains one matter, if you tell us about it, we will swear allegiance to you and that is: no Prophet was ever sent without him assigned an angel who brings him the news, who

Qur'an down to your heart with Allah's permission⁽¹³⁰⁾; confirming what preceded it⁽¹³¹⁾, guidance and glad tidings to the Believers. ⁹⁸ Whoever is an enemy to Allah, His angels, Messengers, Gabriel and Michael, then Allah is an enemy to the Deniers. ⁹⁹ We have sent down to you clear Signs⁽¹³²⁾, none rebuffs them except the rebellious. ¹⁰⁰ Incredulous it is that whenever they make a pledge, a group of them cast it away—indeed most of them do not Believe. ¹⁰¹ When a Messenger from Allah⁽¹³³⁾ came confirming what was with them, a group of those who were given the Book threw the Book of Allah behind their backs as if they did not know 'better'. ¹⁰² 'Instead' They followed what the devils used to recite during Solomon's reign⁽¹³⁴⁾.

عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾ مَنْ كَانَتْ عَدَاؤًا لِلَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا إِلَّا الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ أَوْ كَلَّمَآءَ عَاهِدُوا عَهْدًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَفَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ بَلَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَأَتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكٍ سُلَيْمَانَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

is yours? He (ﷺ) replied: "Gabriel, may peace be upon him". They said: "Gabriel! He who comes with war, fighting and torment! He is our enemy! If you said Michael who comes with mercy, plantation and rain, we would have Believed in you". "Allah then revealed this aya". (al-Tirmidhī: 2117, Imām Aḥmad: 2483)

- 130 Gabriel did not bring the Qur'an down of his own accord but was sent by God Himself. This is reason enough to reject their poor excuse.
- 131 That it confirmed what is in their Scripture was enough evidence for them, had their hearts been more accepting of the Truth.
- 132 The Qur'an contains enough Signs for those who really seek Guidance. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)
- 133 Muhammad (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 134 These are the magical incantations that the devils used to mumble during the time of Solomon (ﷺ). After his death, the devils brought them out to people claiming that Solomon owed his great powers to them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

Solomon did not Deny⁽¹³⁵⁾ but the devils did, teaching people magic; and 'they also followed' what was brought down to the two angels, Hārūt and Mārūt, in Babylon. The two would not teach anyone 'magic' unless they say: "Be warned! We are but a test 'of Faith', do not, then, Deny!" They learn from them that with which they cause divisions between a man and his wife⁽¹³⁶⁾; 'yet' they will not harm anyone with it unless Allah wills. They only learn that with which they harm themselves and is of no use to them. They know that whoever buys this has no share in the Hereafter. Wretched it is what they sold themselves for, if only but they 'truly' knew. ﴿103﴾ Had they Believed and were Mindful, their reward from Allah would have been better 'for them', if only but they 'truly' knew.

وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمٰنُ وَاٰلِهٖنَّ السَّيْطٰنِ
 كَفَرُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ النَّاسَ السَّحْرَ وَاَنْزَلَ
 عَلٰى الْمَلٰٓئِكِیْنَ یٰۤاِبٰرٰهٖمَ هٰرُوْتَ وَاَمْرُوْتَ وَاَمَّا
 یٰۤعِیْمٰنُ مِنْ اٰحَدٍ حَتّٰی یَقُوْلَ اٰتَمَّا نَحْنُ
 فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ فَيَتَعَلَّمُوْنَ مِنْهُمَا
 مَا یُفْرِقُوْنَ بَیْهٖ بَیْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَرَوْجِهٖٓ وَاَمَّا هُمُ
 بِضَآرَتِیْنَ بَیْهٖ مِنْ اَحَدٍ اِلَّا یَاۤذِبُ اللّٰهُ
 وَیَتَعَلَّمُوْنَ مَا یُضُرُّهُمُ وَلَا یَنْفَعُهُمْ وَاَلْقٰ
 عَلِمُوْا لَمَنْ اشْتَرٰهُ مَا لَهُ فِی الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنْ
 حَاقٍ وَّلَیْسَ مَا شَرَوْا بَیْهٖ اَنْفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوْا
 یَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۳﴾ وَاَلَوْ اَنْهَرُّوْا اَمْنًا وَاَتَّقُوا لَمَتُّوْهُ
 مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ خَیْرٌ لَّوْ كَانُوْا یَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۴﴾

135 Engagement in magic is an act of Denial, because it defies God's will and its sheer foulness flies in the face of true Belief. Such a practice is not becoming of a most-dignified Prophet of God, as claimed by some here (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

136 Causing domestic discord is singled out here because of its gravity, carrying as it does the seed of social decay. Jābir Ibn 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Satan sets his throne upon water and sends out his troops. The closest to him will be the person who causes the most sedition. One of them will come to him and report: "I did this and that". Satan will reply: "You did nothing!" Then another will come forward and say: "I did not leave him 'the husband' until I caused him to leave his wife". Then Satan draws him close and says: "Well done you!" (Muslim: 2813)

﴿104﴾ Believers! Do not say: “*Rā’inā*”, but say: “*Unẓurnā*”⁽¹³⁷⁾, and listen⁽¹³⁸⁾; the Deniers’ is a painful Punishment. ﴿105﴾ The Deniers among the people of the Book and the Associators do not wish that any good comes down to you from your Lord; Allah specifically favours whomever He wills with His Mercy—Allah is the Owner of bountiful Grace⁽¹³⁹⁾. ﴿106﴾ Whatever Sign⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We replace it with one which is better or equal to it. Did you not know that Allah has power over everything? ﴿107﴾ Did you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth⁽¹⁴¹⁾, and that you have no ally or helper⁽¹⁴²⁾ besides Allah?

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا رِعْسًا وَقُولُوا
 أَنْظَرْنَا وَأَسْمَعُوا وَلَكِنْ فَرِينَ عَذَابٍ
 أَلِيمٍ ﴿١٠٤﴾ مَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ
 الْكِتَابِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 مِنْ خَيْرٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَصُّ
 بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ
 الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٠٥﴾ مَا تَسْخَعُ مِنْ ءَايَةٍ أَوْ نَسِيهَا
 نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ
 عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمَ أَنَّ
 اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ
 مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾

137 One word for seeking the Prophet’s permission, i.e. *rā’inā* (bear with us), is replaced by another, i.e. *unẓurnā* (grant us repose), as *rā’inā* can be twisted and used derogatorily to mean something inappropriate (from *ru’ūnah*, foolishness). The Qur’an (4: 46) explains how the Jews of Madinah used to address the Prophet by subtly twisting their tongues when uttering *rā’inā* to mean: “You are foolish” (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī).

138 Believers are commanded to listen to the Prophet (ﷺ) with the pure intention of obedience. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah)

139 Cf. 4: 113.

140 Aya.

141 Since God is the Sovereign Owner of all creation, He has the undisputed right to make lawful or unlawful whatever He wills (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī). Thus, He abrogates certain rulings and replaces them with others, but being infinitely Fair and Wise, He replaces these with the likes of them or even better ones.

142 None has the power to confer goodness and drive away harm except Almighty God. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī)

﴿108﴾ Or do you want to ask of your Messenger something similar to what Moses was asked before⁽¹⁴³⁾; whoever replaces Belief with Denial, indeed has strayed from the right path. ﴿109﴾ Many among the people of the Book wish that they could turn you away from your Belief into Denial out of selfish envy after the Truth has become clear to them. Forgive and overlook until Allah comes with His command⁽¹⁴⁴⁾; indeed Allah has power over everything. ﴿110﴾ Keep up the Prayer and give out the prescribed alms. Whatever good you send forth for yourselves, you will find it with Allah⁽¹⁴⁵⁾; indeed Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.

﴿111﴾ They said: “None will enter Paradise but those who are Jews or Christians”. Those are their ‘vain’ wishes. Say to them: “Produce your proof if you are truthful!” ﴿112﴾ Nay! Whoever submits his face⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ to Allah and is a doer of good,

أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَسْأَلُوا رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سَأَلَ
 مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ
 فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْ
 أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُمْ مِن بَعْدِ
 إِيمَانِكُمْ فَقَارًا حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ
 أَنفُسِهِمْ ۗ بَعْدَ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ ۗ
 فَاعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرٍ ۗ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَأَقِيمُوا
 الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ
 مِن خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
 بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَن كَانَ
 هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرَىٰ ۗ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ ۗ قُلْ هَاتُوا
 بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١١١﴾ بَلَىٰ
 ۗ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ

143 These questions are not asked to gain insight and wisdom but are rather intended to emphasize the Prophet’s powerlessness. Examples of these are detailed in 4: 153 and 17: 89-93.

144 To bring about His ruling regarding them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

145 Believers are commanded to turn their attention away from these squabbles and concentrate on matters that are more rewarding and ascertaining of Faith. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

146 That is devoting oneself wholly to God. The face is synecdochically mentioned in place of the whole self because it is the most dignified of all human body parts. (al-Ṭabarī)

he will have his reward with his Lord; they will have neither fear nor will they grieve. ⁽¹¹³⁾ The Jews said: “The Christians have no ground”⁽¹⁴⁷⁾; the Christians said: “The Jews have no ground”; even though they read the Book⁽¹⁴⁸⁾. The same was said by those who have no knowledge; Allah will judge between them concerning what they dispute over, on the Day of Judgement.

⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Who is more unjust than one who prohibits mentioning Allah’s Name in places of worship dedicated to Him and who strives hard for their desolation?⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ These are not to enter them ‘places of worship’ except in a state of fear⁽¹⁵⁰⁾. Theirs in the worldly life is disgrace and theirs in the Hereafter a great Punishment.

فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتْ
النَّصْرَىٰ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَقَالَتِ النَّصْرَىٰ لَيْسَتْ
الْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ
كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ
فَاللَّهُ يَكْفُرُ بِهُمْ يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي كَفَرُوا
فِيهِ يُحْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذَكَّرَ
فِيهَا أَسْمُهُ وَاسْتَعَىٰ فِي خُرَابِهَا أَوْلِيَّاتِكَ مَا كَانَ
لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾

147 That is, their religion is baseless. Ibn Abū Hātim documents in his *Tafsīr* that Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “When the Christians of Najrān came to the Messenger of God (ﷺ), the rabbis met them and both parties disputed in the Messenger’s (ﷺ) presence. Rāfi‘ Ibn Ḥuraymilah ‘a Jewish rabbi’ said: “You ‘Christians’ have no ground whatsoever!” He Denied Jesus and the Evangel! A Najranian said: “You have no ground whatsoever!” He Denied both the Prophethood of Moses and the Torah!”

148 Each party reads their respective revealed Books, i.e. the Torah, which foretells the good news of the coming of Jesus (ﷺ) and the Evangel which tells them the truth about Moses (ﷺ) and the Torah. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr)

149 al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr and Ibn ‘Āshūr are of the opinion that the ones who are meant by this are the pagans of Makkah who drove the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions from the Sanctuary and dedicated it to idol worshipping: thus, the ‘desolation’ of the place of worship (*masjid*). Some Qur’anic ayas (8: 34 and 48: 25) allude to the actions of the pagans regarding prohibiting Muslims from worshipping God in the same terms.

150 God decrees here that the just punishment of those who commit such a vile act is that they will only enter places of worship in a state of fear and trepidation expecting Divine justice will be exacted on them or that the Believers will seize them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿115﴾ To Allah belongs the East and the West, wherever you turn, you will find Allah’s Face—Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Knowing⁽¹⁵¹⁾.
 ﴿116﴾ They said: “Allah has taken to Himself a child”⁽¹⁵²⁾. *Glory be to Him!*⁽¹⁵³⁾ Nay! But all that is in the Heavens and Earth are His, they are all submitting to Him⁽¹⁵⁴⁾. ﴿117﴾ ‘He is’ The ‘Masterful’ Originator of the Heavens and Earth, when He decrees something He says only: “Be!”⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ and it is.

وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَشَرَ وَجْهَ
 اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ
 وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهُ ۗ بَلْ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ
 وَالْاَرْضِ كُلُّ لَهٗ رَقِيبٌ ﴿١١٦﴾ يَدْبِعُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
 وَالْاَرْضِ وَاِذَا قَضٰى اَمْرًا فَاِنَّمَا يَقُوْلُ لَهٗ
 كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿١١٧﴾

- 151 This is by way of consolation to the Believers who had been persecuted and prevented from performing their right to worship—that the whole world belongs to God and one can find Him wherever one turns.
- 152 This claim is made by the Jews when they said that Ezra was the son of God, the Christians when they said that Jesus was the son of God (cf. 9: 30) and the Arab pagans who claimed that the angels were God’s daughters (cf. 16: 57 and 43: 19) (Ibn Kathīr). The claim that God has a son - or offspring - is rebuffed as horribly macabre recurrently in the Qur’an (cf. 10-68-69, 4:171 and 25: 1-2), because a son is his father’s like and equal. Such qualities are not becoming of Almighty God, the Absolute Sovereign, for whom no one can be alike (cf. 6: 100-101).
- 153 *Subhānahu* (lit. *Glorified be Him!*) is used here as an emotionally charged interjection that highlights how unbecoming what they claim of God is.
- 154 *Qānitūn*, translated here as ‘submitting’, has the much wider meaning that all of God’s creation, particularly those endowed with free will, are servants of His, over whom He has total control and that they are all subject to Divine canons and rules of existence (being ever needful, getting old and dying) whether they are willing to admit them or not. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 155 God’s Absolute Power is highlighted here. The realization of His Will and His Ability to create are carried out by this two-lettered command, (*Be!*) (cf. 3: 47 and 59, 19: 34-35, 36: 81-82). The Possessor of such power has no need for procreation (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

﴿118﴾ Those who have no knowledge⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ also said: “If only Allah would talk to us or a Sign would come to us”. The same was said by those who came before them; their hearts are alike⁽¹⁵⁷⁾. We have made the Signs clear to those who firmly Believe⁽¹⁵⁸⁾.

﴿119﴾ We have sent you ‘Muhammad’ with the Truth, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner; and you will not be asked about the company of Hellfire.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾

﴿120﴾ Neither the Jews nor the Christians will ever be pleased with you unless you follow their religion⁽¹⁶⁰⁾; say: “It is Guidance from Allah that is the ‘true’ Guidance”.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلَا يُكَلِّمُنَا اللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ تَشَابَهَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَا تُسْأَلُ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٩﴾

وَلَنْ تَرْضَى عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَى حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ إِنْ هَدَىٰ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ هَادٍ

156 These are Arab pagans, elsewhere called ‘the illiterates’ (cf. 3: 20). (Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

157 The hearts of the Deniers of the Message are alike. The three examples of acts of Denial, spelled out in Ayas 114-119, i.e. persecuting Believers and denying them their right of worship, claiming that God has an offspring and toyingly asking their Prophets for proofs and miracles without seriously intending to Believe in them (for more of this cf. 6: 124, 17: 90-93), are meant to show that Deniers, old and new, ignorant or having a revealed Book that should guide them to the Truth, are one and the same. Their driving forces and motives are similar (cf. 51: 52-53).

158 If a person’s heart is smitten with the disease of Denial it shows through their actions irrespective of all other considerations. Conversely, those who open up their hearts to the Truth will find ample evidence for it.

159 That is: You, Prophet, will not be responsible for what becomes of them after you have delivered the Message to them (cf. 3: 20-21). God is consoling Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and assuring him of the Truthfulness of his Message in the face of the fierce war he and his followers were facing on all these fronts.

160 Because every party sees itself as the sole possessor of the Truth. Thus, they did not open up to the Truth and follow God’s Guidance.

If you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, there will not be a guardian or protector for you from Allah. ﴿121﴾ Those to whom We have given the Book recite it as it should be recited⁽¹⁶¹⁾; these Believe in it, however those who Deny it are the losers.

﴿122﴾ Children of Israel! Remember My Favour which I blessed you with and that I privileged you with over all people⁽¹⁶²⁾. ﴿123﴾ Be Mindful of a Day on which no soul will be of use to another⁽¹⁶³⁾; neither ransom will be accepted from it⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ nor intercession of use to it⁽¹⁶⁵⁾, and they 'the Deniers' will not be helped⁽¹⁶⁶⁾.

﴿124﴾ 'Mention Muhammad'⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ When Ibrāhīm 'Abraham' was tested by his Lord by certain

وَلِينَ اتَّبَعَتْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وِليٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٢١﴾
الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ ۗ وَأُولَئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

يٰٓبَنِي إِسْرٰٓءِيْلَ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتِي الَّتِي اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ وَاِنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلٰى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ وَاَتَقُوا يَوْمَآ لَا تَجْزٰٓى نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَّلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَّلَا تَنْفَعُهَا شَفَعَةٌ وَّلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

* وَإِذْ اٰتٰٓى اِبْرٰٓهِيْمَ رَبُّهُ

161 The People of the Book are encouraged to follow their original uncorrupted Books unquestioningly without Denying all or parts of them, particularly those aspects that speak about the coming of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. 5: 68, 7: 157, 28: 52-53).

162 Cf. 5: 20, 44: 32.

163 Cf. 31: 33.

164 Cf. 3: 91, 5: 36, 6: 70 and 57: 15.

165 Cf. 26: 100-101, 74: 48. The rejection of intercession on the Day of Judgement only applies to Deniers. It will be accepted on behalf of a Believer provided God grants such permission and He is pleased with the person on behalf of whom it takes place (cf. 53: 26; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

166 No one will be able to save them from God's Punishment (cf. 36: 25-26, 46: 28 and 53: 26; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

167 Of a related nature to what precedes this. What comes next is the accurate account of the origin and reality of the Abrahamic creed and, by extension, so-called 'Abrahamic religions'.

words⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ which he fulfilled. He ‘The Lord’ said: “I will make you a leader⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ to humanity”. He ‘Ibrāhīm’ said: “And my posterity ‘too’?” He said: “My promise does not include the unjust”.^{﴿125﴾} ‘Mention Muhammad’ And when We made the House⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ a repeatedly-visited, safe haven for people—and make Ibrāhīm’s standing-stone⁽¹⁷¹⁾ a place for Prayer. We commanded Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘il ‘Ishmael’: “That you should purify⁽¹⁷²⁾ My House

بِكَيْمَتٍ فَأَتَيْنَهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا
قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنْتَهِ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾
وَأَدْجَعْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا
مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنْ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ

- 168 The Lord assigned some tasks and commandments for Abraham (ﷺ) to carry out, which he did dutifully without hesitation or delay (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). Exemplary of which is the following commandment to Abraham and Ishmael to set the foundations of the Ka‘bah and to make ready the Holy Sanctuary in Bakkah (Makkah) for God’s worship.
- 169 God rewarded Abraham (ﷺ) for his devoutness by granting him the highest of all honours, making him an *Imām* (leader) to all humanity and an example to be followed by those who seek God’s Pleasure.
- 170 The Holy Sanctuary in Makkah (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī); the central symbol of pristine Faith.
- 171 *Maqām Ibrāhīm* is the stone on which Abraham (ﷺ) stood while building the Ka‘bah. The commandment here enjoins Believers to Pray at that place; it is an everlasting Sign and evidence to all people of the relatedness of the religion of Islam to Abraham’s creed, *Islām*, the most pristine of all religions. Jābir Ibn ‘Abdīllah (رضي الله عنه) narrated in a lengthy Ḥadīth that the Prophet (ﷺ): “Headed to *maqām Ibrāhīm* and recited the aya: “...and make *Ibrāhīm*’s standing-stone a place for Prayer”. He (ﷺ) placed himself behind the *maqām* making it come between himself and the Ka‘bah. ‘And then he Prayed two *rak‘ahs*’ reading in the first: *qul huwa Allāh-u aḥad* (“Say: He is God, Unique.”) and in the second: *qul yā ayyuha al-kāfirūn* (“Say: You Deniers!”). (Muslim: 1218)
- 172 They were commanded to purify it from all sorts of impurities, physical and spiritual, such as idols, and to build it with pure intention, devoting it wholly to God. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

for those who circumambulate, and those who keep retreat⁽¹⁷³⁾, those who bow down and prostrate themselves ‘in Prayer’^{﴿126﴾} ‘Mention Muhammad’ When Ibrāhīm said: “My Lord! Make this town⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ safe and provide its people with ‘all sorts of’ produce⁽¹⁷⁵⁾, ‘especially’ those of them who Believe in Allah and the Last Day”. He ‘Allah’ said: “As for those who Deny, I will make them enjoy a little⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ and then force them into the Punishment of Hellfire—miserable is their destination!”^{﴿127﴾} ‘Mention Muhammad’ While Ibrāhīm and Ismā’il were raising the foundations of the House⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ ‘they prayed’: “Our Lord, accept ‘this’ from us; You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing”⁽¹⁷⁸⁾.

لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ
إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ
أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُ
إِلَى عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ
إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا
تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٢٧﴾

173 *al-‘ākiḫīn* are those who dedicate part of their time to worship, shunning engagement in worldly affairs during this time.

174 Bakkah/Makkah. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

175 Cf. 28: 57. Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Ibrāhīm sanctified Makkah and prayed for it and I sanctified Madinah as much as Ibrāhīm sanctified Makkah, and I prayed for it ‘a blessing in its produce measuring instruments of ‘*mudd* and *ṣā’* twice as much as Ibrāhīm asked for Makkah”. (al-Bukhārī: 2129)

176 Granted that even the Deniers will also be provided for by God in this life, but theirs is only a transitory enjoyment which, no matter how great it might seem, is dwarfed by comparison to the everlasting provision and reward for Believers in Paradise (cf. 31: 23-24, 47: 12; al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī).

177 Ibn ‘Aṭīyah relates in his *Tafsīr* the consensus that *al-Bayt* (The House) here is the Ka‘bah itself. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī)

178 They chanted this supplication while building the Ka‘bah (cf. al-Bukhārī: 3364).

﴿128﴾ “Our Lord make us wholly submitting⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ to you and from our posterity a nation wholly submitted to you, show⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ us our rites⁽¹⁸¹⁾ and accept our repentance; You are the All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”. ﴿129﴾ “Our Lord send them⁽¹⁸²⁾ a Messenger⁽¹⁸³⁾ from among them to recite Your Signs⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ to them, teach them the Book⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ and Wisdom⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ and purify⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ them; You are the All-Prevailing, the All-Wise”. ﴿130﴾ None would forsake the creed of Ibrāhīm⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ except one who fools himself.

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً
مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
الَّذِي تُبِّئُ بِالْحَقِّ وَتَبْعَثُ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا
مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَمَنْ يَرْغَبْ عَن مِّلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
إِلَّا مَن سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ

179 *Muslimayn* (dual form of *muslim*), i.e. both of us totally submitted to God. Total submission to God and devotion to Him in worship is the basic meaning of *Islām*. All Prophets were ‘Muslim’ in as much as they were wholly devoted to God and sincerely submitted to Him in worship according to their own respective creeds. Needless to say, after Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent to mankind no other religion except Islam is accepted from anyone (cf. 3: 85).

180 Guide and teach us how to perform our rites correctly.

181 These are the rites of Hajj in particular. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

182 The submitting nation from among the posterity of Abraham and Ishmael.

183 The Messenger is Muhammad (ﷺ). This is further explained in 62: 2. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Atīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī)

184 Ayas of the Qur’an (lit. Signs).

185 Teach them the interpretation and rulings of the Qur’an. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

186 Exegetes differed as to the exact meaning of *ḥikmah*, translated here as Wisdom, but al-Ṭabarī concludes that it means knowledge of God’s commands which are not known except by the explanation of the Messenger (ﷺ). That is the Prophet’s (ﷺ) Sunnah and oral traditions, Hadiths.

187 Make them more devout to God and free from Associating others in worship with Him. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Atīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī)

188 The ‘creed of Ibrāhīm’, *millata Ibrāhīm*, known as *ḥanīfiyyah*, is the most primordial, pristine, uncorrupted precursor to all heavenly-revealed religions. The Qur’an underlines Islam’s close relation to it in various places: 2: 35, 4: 125, 6: 161 and 16: 123.

We have chosen him in the worldly life and in the Hereafter⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ he is one of the Righteous⁽¹⁹⁰⁾. ﴿131﴾ ‘Because’ As soon as His Lord said to him: “submit!”⁽¹⁹¹⁾ he said: “I submit to the Lord of all beings”. ﴿132﴾ With this Ibrāhīm and Ya‘qūb ‘Jacob’⁽¹⁹²⁾ enjoined their sons: “My sons! Allah has chosen this religion for you, so die not without being devoutly submitted”. ﴿133﴾ Or were you⁽¹⁹³⁾ present when death came upon Ya‘qūb? When he said to his sons: “What will you worship after me?” They said: “We will worship your God and the God of your forefathers, Ibrāhīm, Ismā‘īl⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ and Ishāq ‘Isaac’, a One ‘and only’ God; we have submitted to Him”. ﴿134﴾ That nation passed away; it earned what it has earned and yours is what you earn. You will not be answerable for what they used to do⁽¹⁹⁵⁾.

وَلَقَدْ أَصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ
لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْمِعْ قَالَ
أَسْمَعْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ وَوَصَّى بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ
بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبَ يٰبَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمْ
الْدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٣﴾
أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتَ إِذْ
قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ
إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٤﴾
تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا
كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تَمْتَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

189 The lofty status in which Prophet Abraham (ﷺ) is held in the Qur’an and the relatedness of Islam with his creed is further expounded in: 16: 12-123.

190 *Aṣ-Ṣāliḥūn* are God’s Prophets and Messengers, who hold the highest ranks in Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

191 Unconditional submission and utter surrender to God’s Will capture the essence of *ḥanīfiyyah*. This word (*Islām*) was bequeathed to Abraham’s posterity forever so that they might remain true to it (cf. 43: 26-28).

192 Jacob, the forefather of the Israelites, also known as Israel, was the son of Isaac, Abraham’s son. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

193 The direct addressees were the Jews of Madinah who Denied Prophet Muhammad’s (ﷺ) Messengership. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

194 Ishmael was actually Jacob’s paternal uncle. They counted him among Jacob’s ‘fathers’ out of respect.

195 Although the People of the Book are reminded of the true faith of their patriarchs, they are also cautioned not to be boastful about it and to do

﴿135﴾ They said: “Become Jews or Christian, and you will be guided”. Say: “Nay, but ‘we follow’ the creed of Ibrāhīm, rightly oriented⁽¹⁹⁶⁾, and he was not one of the Associators”. ﴿136﴾ Say: “We Believe in Allah, and what came down to us, and what came down to Ibrāhīm, Ismā‘il, Ishāq ‘Isaac’, Ya‘qūb ‘Jacob’ and the Tribes⁽¹⁹⁷⁾, and what Musā and ‘Isā ‘Jesus’ were given, and what the Prophets were given from their Lord⁽¹⁹⁸⁾. We do not distinguish between any of them⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ and we are ‘ever’ submitting⁽²⁰⁰⁾ to Him”.

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾
قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ
إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ
النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ
وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

some soul searching by asking themselves the difficult question of how far removed they are from the essence of real surrender to God’s Will (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

- 196 This is the translation of *ḥanīf*. *Ḥanīfiyyah* is the religion of Ibrāhīm. The basic semantic meaning of the root *h-n-f* is inclination towards uprightness and eschewing crookedness (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘an*; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-Arīb*). Abraham, who is the example set for humanity for those who seek to find the right path of God (cf. 2: 124), was neither a Jew nor a Christian (cf. 3: 67).
- 197 *al-Asbāt*, the Tribes, are the Prophets from among the twelve sons of Jacob, i.e. Yūsuf (Joseph) and his brothers, twelve men in all and their posterity, particularly the Prophets, who held on to their path. *Sibī* means grandson (al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*), and here they are taken to be branches of the same tree.
- 198 This is the ultimate declaration of the Truth of the Faith of Muslims—they Believe in the Truthfulness of earlier Prophets and Messages in their pristine, uncorrupted forms without favouring one over another.
- 199 The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Prophets are half-brothers. Their mothers are different but their religion is the same”. (al-Bukhārī: 3211)
- 200 *Muslimūn*, meaning submitted to God alone, both internally and outwardly, and being totally devoted to His worship and subservient to His Will. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿137﴾ 'So' If they Believe in what you have Believed in, then they have become guided, but if they turn away then they are in an opposing league 'to yours'. Allah will suffice you 'for defence' against them—He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. ﴿138﴾ This is the colour⁽²⁰¹⁾ of Allah; whose colouring is better than that of Allah? We are 'ever' worshipping Him. ﴿139﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Do you argue with us regarding Allah, when He is our Lord and yours. Ours are our deeds and yours are your deeds⁽²⁰²⁾. We are 'ever' devoted to Him". ﴿140﴾ Or do you 'yet' claim that Ibrāhīm, Ismā'īl, Ishāq, Ya'qūb and the Tribes were either Jews or Christians?⁽²⁰³⁾ Say: "Are you more knowledgeable or Allah?"⁽²⁰⁴⁾ No one is more unfair than him who suppresses a testimony that he has from Allah⁽²⁰⁵⁾. Allah is not unaware of what you commit".

فَإِنِ آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا
وَأَن تَوَلَّوْا فَلَنَمَاهُرْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ
اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣٧﴾ صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ
أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ
عَبِيدُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ قُلِ اتَّخَذْتُنَا فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا
وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلَنَا أَعْمَلْنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلُكُمْ
وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى قُلِ
ءَأَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ أَظْهَرُ مِمَّنْ كَتَبَ
شَهَادَةَ عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِعَفِيفٍ عَمَّا
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

- 201 *Şibghah* etymologically means the 'colour' in which the servants of God are dyed. It is the religion of God, i.e. *Islām*, the rightly-oriented religion of Abraham (ﷺ). It is so called because religious devoutness shows on the person as much as a dye of a cloth shows on it (cf. al-Baghawī).
- 202 Every party will only be held accountable for their own deeds. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 203 Both Judaism and Christianity were founded after the demise of these noble Prophets. How, then, can anyone claim that these Prophets were followers of their own religion? The ones who adhere more closely to their core Faith have indeed more of a claim to them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 204 Cf. 3: 65-68.
- 205 The suppressed testimony alluded to here is either about the true nature of the religion of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn 'Āshūr), or mention of the truthfulness of the Messengership of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that they find in their Books (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

﴿141﴾ That nation passed away; it earned what it has earned and yours is what you earn. You will not be answerable for what they used to do”.

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَآلَكُمْ مِمَّا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤١﴾

﴿142﴾ The feeble-minded people⁽²⁰⁶⁾ will say: “What turned them away from the direction of Prayer⁽²⁰⁷⁾ they used to face?” Say: “To Allah belongs the East and the West⁽²⁰⁸⁾. He guides whom He wills to a straight path”⁽²⁰⁹⁾.

* سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّاهُمْ عَن قِبْلَتِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٤٢﴾

206 The seismic shift of the change in the direction of Prayer from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah in Makkah is dealt with in detail in Ayas 142-150 here. During their very early Madinan days, Muslims used to face Jerusalem for Prayers in compliance with the People of the Book of Madinah, namely the Jews; this by way of placating and winning them over. Here, God is setting the scene for the criticism that was to be expected by announcing to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions that those who oppose this move are foolhardy and 'feeble-minded'. The whole truth of this trying affair is laid out before the Believers so that they know what is to come - difficulty and opposition – and that they will, thus, be prepared and stay firm.

207 *Qiblah* is the Islamic term for the direction Muslims face in their Prayers. As to the reason behind the revelation of this aya, al-Barā' Ibn 'Āzib (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “The Prophet (ﷺ) Prayed towards the direction of Jerusalem for sixteen or seventeen months, but he was inclined towards Praying to the direction of the Ka'bah. Then Allah sent down: “*We have certainly seen you turning your face 'anxiously' in the sky. We shall turn you to a direction of Prayer that you shall be satisfied with. Turn then your face to the Sanctified Mosque*” (2: 144). He then turned towards the Ka'bah, and the feeble-minded, 'the Prophet's (ﷺ) detractors', said: “What turned them away from the direction of Prayer they used to face?”” (al-Bukhārī: 399, Muslim: 525) This move marked a practical declaration of the relation of Islam to the Abrahamic creed (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Sa'dī) a return to the pristine religion of God, i.e. *Islām*. At the same time, it represented a practical announcement of Islam's break from other religions: a timely statement of intent given the essential reality that has just been given about the Truthfulness of the Abrahamic creed in the preceding ayas.

208 No direction is out of the realm of His dominion. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

209 That is guiding the Believers to the same direction of Prayer which Abraham (رضي الله عنه) used to face. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿143﴾ Thus We have made you a middle nation⁽²¹⁰⁾, so that you may be witnesses over people and the Messenger be a witness over you⁽²¹¹⁾. We have made you face the direction of Prayer you used to, so that We may know he who follows the Messenger from he who turns back on his heels⁽²¹²⁾. Indeed it⁽²¹³⁾ is heavy except for those who are guided by Allah. Allah was not to render your Belief⁽²¹⁴⁾ in vain; indeed Allah is Ever-Kind, Ever-Merciful to people. ﴿144﴾ We have certainly seen you turning your face 'anxiously' in the sky⁽²¹⁵⁾. We shall turn you to a direction of Prayer that you shall be satisfied with. Turn then your face

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا
شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ
شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا
إِلَّا لِتَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى
عَقْبَيْهِ ۗ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ
هَدَى اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ ۗ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرُءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾ قَدْ نَرَى
تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً
تَرْضَاهَا ۗ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ

- 210 *Ummatan wasaṭan* (lit. a middle nation) means just and fair, taking a middle way or path of moderation in life and not inclining towards any of the extremes that border on danger (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn 'Āshūr). Also see: 3: 110.
- 211 One interpretation of this aya is that this moderate Believing nation, will bear witness on the Day of Judgement that the Prophets and Messengers of God delivered their Messages dutifully to their nations (cf. Ibn Mājah: 4284, Imām Aḥmad: 11575). Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) will, in turn, bear witness that his nation has spoken the Truth (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī, al-Sa'dī).
- 212 A true Believer will abide by the Prophet's commands without qualms.
- 213 The change of *qiblah*.
- 214 *Īmān* (Belief) here means Prayer which was observed in obedience of the Messenger (ﷺ) by facing the first *qiblah* (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī). Naturally, the Believers, although unquestioningly obeying God's command, heavy as it was, were worried about the fate of their earlier Prayers. So God, the Ever-Kind, assures them here that these are safeguarded with Him.
- 215 The Prophet (ﷺ) was anxiously awaiting the command to change the *qiblah*. For this he used to look up at the sky expectantly. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

to the Sanctified Mosque⁽²¹⁶⁾. Wherever you 'Believers' are, turn your faces towards it. Indeed those who have been given the Book know for sure that this is the Truth from their Lord⁽²¹⁷⁾—Allah is not unaware of what they do. ﴿145﴾ Surely if you bring to the people of the Book every Sign, they will not follow your direction of Prayer, neither will you follow their direction of Prayer. None of you will follow each other's direction of Prayer. Surely if you follow their whims after the knowledge that came to you, indeed then you are one of the wrongdoers. ﴿146﴾ Those to whom We have given the Book know it⁽²¹⁸⁾ as much as they know their own children—indeed a party of them suppresses the Truth knowingly. ﴿147﴾ The Truth is from your Lord, so be not one of the doubtful. ﴿148﴾ Each have their own direction to follow, then engage in a race for good deeds. Wherever you might be, Allah will bring⁽²¹⁹⁾ you all—indeed Allah has power over everything⁽²²⁰⁾.

شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ
فَوَلُّوْا وُجُوْهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنْهٗ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَمَا
اَللّٰهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَلِيْنَ اَتَيْتَ
اُولٰٓئِكَ اَلْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوْا قِبَلَتَكَ
وَمَا اَنْتَ بِتٰبِعٍ قِبَلَتِهِمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتٰبِعٍ
قِبَلَةَ بَعْضٍ وَلِيْنَ اَتْبَعَتْ اَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ اِنَّكَ اِذَا لَمِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٤٥﴾
الَّذِيْنَ اَتَيْتَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُوْنَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُوْنَ
اَبْنَآءَهُمْ وَإِنْ فَرِيقًا مِنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُوْنَ الْحَقَّ
وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُوْنَنَّ
مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِيْنَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَلِكُلِّ وُجْهَةٌ هُوَ
مُوَلِّیْهَا فَاَسْتَقِمْ وَاْتَقِمْ كَمَا تَبِیَّنَّا اِنَّ
مَّا تَكُوْنُوْنَ اٰتٰتٍ
بِكُوْرٍ اَللّٰهُ جَمِیْعًا اِنَّ اَللّٰهَ عَلٰی كُلِّ شَیْءٍ قَدِیْرٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾

216 *al-Masjid al-Harām* of Makkah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

217 Jews and Christians have it in their Books that this is the correct direction of Prayer as it is written in their Books as a sign of Muhammad's (ﷺ) Prophethood. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Atīyah, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

218 That the Ka'bah is the correct direction of Prayer. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

219 Gather.

220 Cf. 5: 48.

﴿149﴾ Wherever you 'Muhammad' set out 'on a journey' from, turn your face towards the Sanctified Mosque; this certainly is the Truth from your Lord—Allah is not unaware of what you do.

﴿150﴾ Wherever you set out from 'Muhammad' turn your face towards the Sanctified Mosque⁽²²¹⁾; wherever you 'Believers' might be, turn your faces towards it⁽²²²⁾, this in order that people would have no argument against you⁽²²³⁾, barring those who are unfair—fear them not but fear Me, so that I may perfect My Favour on you⁽²²⁴⁾ and so that you may be guided⁽²²⁵⁾.

﴿151﴾ This 'favour' is like 'that of' sending among you a Messenger⁽²²⁶⁾ from your own who recites Our Signs to you, purifies you,

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ قَوْلٍ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ وَإِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ
عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ قَوْلٍ
وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا
كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ
لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ
فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَمَنَّوْا عَلَيَّكُمْ
وَالْعَلَّامُ بِمَعْمَدِكُمْ ﴿١٥٠﴾

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ
آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ

221 In the face of all the hue and cry that surrounded this new bold move, God here again assures His Messenger of the binding nature of this command (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm ad-Durar*).

222 Wherever you might be in the world, face the Ka'bah for Prayers. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

223 One of the reasons for the change of *qiblah* was so that the Jews would have no ground to argue against Believers for denouncing them; in other words, when the Muslims had initially followed their direction of Prayer. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

224 By making you stand out from all other nations with revelation of the best of religions, Islam, and making you face the Ka'bah in Makkah, the original direction of Prayers set forth in Abraham's pristine creed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr).

225 Being guided by God in this life is the fruit of one's obedience to Him.

226 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). This is in response to Abraham's (ﷺ) Prayer, cf. 2: 129. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurtubī, al-Sa'dī)

teaches you the Book and Wisdom⁽²²⁷⁾, and teaches you that which you did not know⁽²²⁸⁾. ﴿152﴾ Remember Me⁽²²⁹⁾ and I shall remember You⁽²³⁰⁾; be grateful to Me and do not Deny Me.

﴿153﴾ You who Believe, seek help in patience and Prayer—indeed Allah is with⁽²³¹⁾ the patient. ﴿154﴾ Say not about those who are killed in the path of Allah⁽²³²⁾: “dead”; nay, they are alive but you perceive it not⁽²³³⁾. ﴿155﴾ We shall test⁽²³⁴⁾ you with some fear, hunger and dwindling financial resources, souls and crops—deliver good tidings to those who are patient. ﴿156﴾ Those who when struck by a calamity say: “Verily to Allah we belong and to Him we shall return”⁽²³⁵⁾.

وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ فَادْكُرُوا إِنِّي أَذْكُرُكُمْ
وَأَشْكُرُ لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ
وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَلَا تَقُولُوا
لِمَن يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمُوتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ
وَلَكِن لَّا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ
مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالصَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾
الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ مُّصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ
وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

227 The Book (*al-Kitāb*) and Wisdom (*al-Hikmah*) are the Qur'an and Sunnah respectively. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

228 News of that which they had no means of knowing, e.g.: the Unseen (*al-Ghayb*), and specifically, past and future events. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn 'Āshūr)

229 Believers are encouraged to engage in the great form of worship of remembrance (*dhikr*) by way of thanking God for these favours.

230 God laudably mentions and showers with favour those who remember and mention Him.

231 Here is evidence of God's particular Companionship, *ma'īyah*, with the Believers; leading to His guidance and support.

232 *Fī sabīl Allāh* (lit. in the path of God) means by striking a path that is in accordance with God's ordinances. Here are meant those who met their death on the battlefield in His cause.

233 Cf. 3: 169-171.

234 As much as there are rewards and favours for Belief, there are also hardships and trials.

235 This remembrance, *dhikr, innā li-Allāh wa innā ilayhi rāji'un*, is at once enormous and profound (cf. Muslim: 218).

﴿157﴾ On those are Prayers⁽²³⁶⁾ from their Lord and Mercy—those are the truly guided.

﴿158﴾ Certainly *Ṣafā* and *Marwah*⁽²³⁷⁾ are among the Symbols⁽²³⁸⁾ of Allah—whoever proceeds for the House in pilgrimage or lesser pilgrimage⁽²³⁹⁾, there is no blame for him to circulate⁽²⁴⁰⁾ between them—'for' whoever does good voluntarily, Allah is indeed Thankful and All-Knowing.

﴿159﴾ Indeed those who suppress what We brought down of clear Signs and Guidance, after We have expounded them to people in the Book—Allah Damns⁽²⁴¹⁾ them and they are damned by those who damn⁽²⁴²⁾;

أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ
وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

﴿١٥٨﴾ إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ
الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ
بِهِمَا وَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ
عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٩﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ مَا أَنزَلْنَا مِن
الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّ لِلنَّاسِ
فِي الْكِتَابِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ
اللَّعُونُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

236 God's Prayers upon the Believers is praise of them and blessing them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

237 The two small mounts in the Sanctified Mosque, between which people circulate when they perform *sa'y* Hajj or '*umrah*).

238 *Sha'ā'ir* (lit. symbols) is the plural of *Sha'īrah*, which denotes everything that God made as a Sign for His worship (cf. al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb* al-Qur'an, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). These two symbols are further emblematic of the relation of Islam to the creed of Abraham (ﷺ). They are mentioned in the narration of the building of the Ka'bah. Further, they are mentioned here just after hardship and trial have been talked of as a reminder of the test of Hagar's faith between these two mounts (cf. al-Rāzī).

239 '*Umrah* (lesser pilgrimage).

240 According to 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها), the Anṣār Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) had qualms before the revelation of this aya about circulating between the two mounts (al-Bukhārī: 4495; Muslim: 1277). Further, the aya was revealed before the Muslims had gained control over Makkah and while pagans freely performed their rites in the Sanctuary.

241 *al-La'n* is casting and driving away from God's Mercy. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Shinqīṭī)

242 These are detailed in Aya 161 below: the angels and all humans. (al-Shinqīṭī)

﴿160﴾ except those who repent and undo the harm and explain 'Allah's revealed Signs and Guidance'—those I shall forgive them, for I am the Forgiver, the Most Merciful. ﴿161﴾ Those who Deny⁽²⁴³⁾ and die Denying, on them is Allah's, the angels' and all humans' damnation; ﴿162﴾ forever they last in it⁽²⁴⁴⁾—their Punishment will not be lightened neither will they have respite. ﴿163﴾ Your God is one God, indeed He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

﴿164﴾ Verily in the creation of the Heavens and Earth; the alternation of night and day; the vessels that run in the sea 'laden' with what benefits people; the water that Allah causes to fall from the sky to enliven the earth with it after its death and disperses therein every moving creature; the dispensing of the winds; and the harnessed clouds between the sky and Earth are Signs⁽²⁴⁵⁾ for the heedful.

﴿165﴾ There are people who take 'for themselves' rivals to Allah⁽²⁴⁶⁾,

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنُّوا فَأُولَٰئِكَ
 أَنْوَبَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٠﴾ إِنَّ
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا أُولَٰئِكَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾
 خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ
 وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ وَاللَّهُ كَرِيمٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
 إِلَٰهُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٣﴾

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافِ
 اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ
 بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
 مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا
 مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ
 الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
 يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ
 دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا

243 Those who go on covering up the Truth until they meet their deaths.

244 Damnation and the Fire.

245 There are two types of Signs that lead to Belief: Qur'anic Signs, ayas, and Cosmic Signs. The Signs detailed here as evidence to God's existence are indeed cosmic.

246 After living through and experiencing firsthand all these clear Signs, some people still take to worshipping false deities besides God.

whom they love as much as they love Allah—'but' the Believers are stauncher in their love for Allah⁽²⁴⁷⁾ 'more than anything else'. Should the Transgressors 'come to' see 'the Day' when they 'actually' see Punishment⁽²⁴⁸⁾—'they would realize' that all power belongs to Allah and that the Punishment of Allah is severe indeed. ^{﴿166﴾} Then those who were followed⁽²⁴⁹⁾ shall disown those who followed, 'when' they saw the Punishment and all means⁽²⁵⁰⁾ were cut off from them. ^{﴿167﴾} Those who followed shall say: "Should we have another round, we will disown them as they disowned us"⁽²⁵¹⁾; thus Allah shows them their deeds as remorse 'for them'—they shall not be let out from the Fire.

^{﴿168﴾} O people, eat of what is there in Earth, lawful and good⁽²⁵²⁾, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan⁽²⁵³⁾, indeed he is an open enemy to you.

يُحِبُّوهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿١٦٥﴾ إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا لَوْ أَنَّا كُنَّا نَدْرِكُهُمْ لَتَرْجِفُنَّهُمْ فَمَا تَتَّبَعُنَا إِذْ تَبَرَّأْنَا مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿١٦٧﴾

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ كُلُّوْا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ إِنَّهُ رَكُومٌ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾

247 As compared to these idolaters' love for their gods.

248 As a result of Divine Judgement after Resurrection.

249 Those who were taken as gods besides God (cf. 18: 19: 81-82, 29: 25, and 34: 31-33). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

250 Of salvation and deliverance (cf. 6: 94). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

251 Cf. 6: 27-28 and 26: 91-102.

252 These are the two conditions regarding the food that people are allowed to consume: lawful (unlawful foods will be explained shortly in Aya 173) and beneficial, not harmful (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

253 Who makes people deem lawful or unlawful what is not (cf. 6: 140-142).

﴿169﴾ Indeed he only bids you to ‘commit’ what is wicked and sinful, and that you should say of Allah what you have no knowledge of⁽²⁵⁴⁾. ﴿170﴾ Should they be told: “Follow what Allah sent down”⁽²⁵⁵⁾, they would say: “Nay, we would only follow that which we found our fathers doing”⁽²⁵⁶⁾; ‘Would they’ Even if their fathers were mindless of everything, nor were they guided? ﴿171﴾ The similitude of those who Deny is that of one who howls at that which does not hear anything except the calling and yelling⁽²⁵⁷⁾—dumb, deaf, blind, they have no sense⁽²⁵⁸⁾. ﴿172﴾ O Believers, eat of the good things⁽²⁵⁹⁾ which We provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if you indeed worship Him ‘alone’. ﴿173﴾ Indeed He ‘Allah’ made unlawful for you carrion, blood⁽²⁶⁰⁾, swine flesh, and what was intended ‘as sacrifice’ for others besides Allah; ‘yet’ whoever is forced ‘by

إِتْمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوِّ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَفَاءَنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءُنَا أَوْ لَوْ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ وَمِثْلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمِثْلِ الَّذِينَ يَنْبَغُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دَعَاءَ وَنِدَاءَ صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْى فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧١﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ إِنْ تَحَارَبْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ كُمْ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالْدَّمَ وَالْحَمَّ الْخِزْيِيرَ وَمَا أَهْلٌ بِهِ لغيرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ أَضْطَرَّ

254 Falsely claiming that God made one thing or another either lawful or unlawful (cf. 7: 27-28, 33-33, 16: 114-116).

255 Divine revelation. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

256 Cf. 5: 103-104, 31: 20-21 and 37: 69-70.

257 Like mindless animals that do not discern what is being said to them. They only recognize shouting and yelling voices—they hear but do not listen.

258 Their senses are not tuned to Divine admonition.

259 *Tayyibāt*, healthy and wholesome (cf. 5: 87-88 and 23: 51).

260 What is unlawful is flowing blood but not the blood captured in vessels after slaughter, cf. 6: 145. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī)

necessity²⁶¹ – neither transgressing⁽²⁶¹⁾ nor going to excess⁽²⁶²⁾ – he is not guilty of sin—certainly Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿174﴾ Indeed those who suppress what Allah sent down in the Book and trade it off for a meagre price, these eat nothing but fire in their bellies; and on the Day of Resurrection Allah will not speak to them, nor will He purify⁽²⁶³⁾ them—theirs is a painful Punishment. ﴿175﴾ Those are the ones who traded off guidance for loss, and Punishment for Forgiveness—incredulous is their endurance in the Fire!⁽²⁶⁴⁾

﴿176﴾ That is because Allah sent down the Book with Truth, and those who differ upon the Book are in extreme disagreement⁽²⁶⁵⁾.

﴿177﴾ It is not sincere piety⁽²⁶⁶⁾

عَدْرَبَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٧٣﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيُسْتَرُونَ بِهِ تَمَنَّا قَلِيلًا أُولَئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٤﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهُدَى وَالْعَذَابَ بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ فَمَا أَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ ﴿١٧٥﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ نَزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿١٧٦﴾

* لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ

261 By eating any of these without being in such a circumstance where one is hard pressed into it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī).

262 Even in pressing circumstances, eating more than what is absolutely necessary (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī).

263 Absolve them of their sins.

264 God is mocking their ignorance of the severe Punishment that awaits them in the Hereafter when they will only experience the most excruciating pain and sufferance (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah).

265 With the Truth. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

266 The comparison here is made between nominal piety which is shallow and superficial as opposed to sincere, heart-earned piety which is deep and life defining. Here, God gives examples of what constitutes sincere piety (*birr*) in His Eye, prominent among which are acts of the heart; these are a truer translation of the Belief that resides in the heart. Aya 177 also comes as a

that you should turn your faces towards the East and the West, but sincere piety 'is attained by' he who: Believes in Allah, the Last Day⁽²⁶⁷⁾, the angels, the Book and the Prophets; gives away money – dear to one's heart – to kinfolk, orphans, the destitute, the stranded⁽²⁶⁸⁾, beggars, and by way of 'freeing' necks⁽²⁶⁹⁾; keeps up the Prayer and gives out the prescribed alms⁽²⁷⁰⁾; those who fulfil the pledges they make, persevere in times of hardship and vicissitude, and during toughness⁽²⁷¹⁾; these are the ones who are truthful, these are the ones who are truly Mindful.

أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ
وَلَكِنَّ الْآيَةَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ
عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ
وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ
إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ
وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾

prelude paving the way to the laws (Divine *prescriptions* for the Believing community) that are introduced in Ayas 178-209: retribution, distribution of inheritance, fasting, fighting, fair financial dealings and Hajj. All these laws are hard for people whose piety is not genuine but rather feigned. For those who have entered into the sphere of Faith wholly and wholeheartedly (Aya 209), however, this is not so.

267 That comes after Resurrection.

268 The Qur'an uses the expression 'the son of the road' (*ibn al-sabīl*), for those who are left without means whilst travelling, being away from home, and those who can extend a helping hand in such times of need.

269 Manumitting slaves from bondage and/or ransoming those to be executed for unintentional manslaughter by donating blood money.

270 That is Zakah.

271 The meaning of *al-ba'sā'* is not specified in this aya and can be varyingly translated according to the stand the translator takes. al-Shinqīṭī gives reference to Aya 33:18, and opines here that it means heated or ardent fighting in battle (cf. also al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿178﴾ O Believers, retribution⁽²⁷²⁾ for the murdered is prescribed for you: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. Whoever is pardoned by a brother⁽²⁷³⁾ 'of the dead', let it⁽²⁷⁴⁾ be sought with lenience, and given courteously. This is an alleviation and mercy from your Lord; whoever aggresses⁽²⁷⁵⁾ after this 'settlement' will have a painful Punishment. ﴿179﴾ Verily there is a life⁽²⁷⁶⁾ for you in retribution, you people of reason, so that you may be Mindful.

﴿180﴾ It is prescribed for you that when death approaches one of you, and that he would leave behind a good wealth, he should bequeath of it to his parents and relatives equitably⁽²⁷⁷⁾. This is an obligation on the Mindful.

﴿181﴾ Whoever alters it⁽²⁷⁸⁾ after hearing it, then those who alter it will bear the burden of this sin. Indeed Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كِتَابٌ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَصَاصُ
فِي الْقَتْلِ ۗ الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنثَىٰ
بِالْأُنثَىٰ ۚ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَاتِّبَاعٌ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ وَإِذَا إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ
مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۚ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ
فَهُوَ عَدَابُ اللَّهِ ۗ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيٰوةٌ
يٰۤاُولِيَ الْاَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٧٩﴾

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِنِ
تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةَ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهُ
بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ فَإِنَّمَا إِثْمُهُ عَلَى الذَّيْبِ
يُبَدِّلُونَهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨١﴾

272 *Qisās*, translated here as retribution, is exacting justice on one who commits a crime in a manner equal to the crime committed. In the Qur'an it is associated with either murder or causing bodily harm. The person who commits such a crime is punished in like manner: killing or injury and, thus, an eye for an eye.

273 The living relative who takes charge of the victim's affairs. Usually the brother.

274 Blood money. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Sa'dī)

275 By harming the murderer.

276 This exacting of due justice on murderers works as a deterrent and guarantees the whole society a peaceful and equitable way of existence.

277 The distribution of inheritance should be fair and even.

278 The will of the deceased.

﴿182﴾ Whoever fears a swerving from the right path or sin on the part of the testator⁽²⁷⁹⁾, and he settles matters between them⁽²⁸⁰⁾, he will be committing no sin. Indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿183﴾ O Believers, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed on those who came before you, so that you might be Mindful. ﴿184﴾ 'It lasts' For days numbered⁽²⁸¹⁾; but whoever of you is ill or on a journey, 'should make up for the missed days by fasting' equally on other days. For those who can bear it⁽²⁸²⁾, they can compensate by providing for the needy; whoever does good voluntarily⁽²⁸³⁾, it is better for him, but fasting is better for you, if you only knew. ﴿185﴾ The month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an

فَمَنْ خَافَ مِنْ مُوسٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ إِتْمَانًا فَاصْلَحَ
بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٨٢﴾

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ
كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾ أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ كَانَ
مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامِهِ
أُخْرَى وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ
مِسْكِينٍ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَإِنْ
تَصَوْمُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٤﴾
شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ

279 Ensuring that the testator is neither intentionally nor unintentionally unfair or inequitable by giving out to a non-legal inheritor more than a third of the total inheritance (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

280 By making just and fair adjustments to the will such that disputes are avoided (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

281 The days of the month of Ramadan. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

282 This license is said to have been in force during the earlier days of Islam but was abrogated by the next aya which limits it to the ill and travelling. The ruling that remains is: "Whom of you witnesses the month let him fast it". (Cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, p. 26.)

283 By giving the needy more than the quantity stipulated by jurists as compensation for leaving out days of mandatory fasting, or feeding more than one person. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr)

was sent down⁽²⁸⁴⁾ as guidance for mankind, 'containing' clear indicators of guidance and a criterion 'for distinguishing between right and wrong'. Whoever of you witnesses the month let him fast it; 'but' whoever of you is ailing or on a journey, 'should make up for the missed days by fasting' equally on other days—Allah seeks ease not hardship for you, so that you may complete the 'prescribed' number of days, and Glorify⁽²⁸⁵⁾ Allah in thankfulness for His Guidance of you, this so that you might be thankful. ^{﴿186﴾} Should My servants ask you about Me, I am⁽²⁸⁶⁾ near. I answer the Prayer of the one who prays. Let them 'then' respond to Me and Believe in Me so that they might be guided. ^{﴿187﴾} It is lawful for you to be intimate with your wives on nights of fasting; they are a cover 'of modesty' for you and you are a cover for them. Allah knows that you used to betray yourselves⁽²⁸⁷⁾,

هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ
فَمَن شَهِدَ مِّنْكُمْ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ
وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ
مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ
وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ
وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾ وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ
عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ
إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ أَحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ
الْصِيَامِ الزَّوْفُ إِلَىٰ نِسَائِكُم مَّا لَبَسْتُمْ
لَكُمْ وَانْتُم بِأَسْنَانِكُمْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ
كُنتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ

284 This either means that the Qur'an was sent down from the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*) to the Lowest Heaven (*al-Samā' al-Dunyā*) on the Night of Decree (*Laylat al-Qadr*) during the month of Ramadan (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurṭubī); or that the start of the revelation of the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) began on the Night of Decree (cf. Ibn Ishāq, Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr*, Ibn 'Ashūr, Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

285 By saying the *Takbīr* of Eid (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

286 God takes on the answer directly to His servants without the need for intercession. God's nearness means that one need not raise one's voice or ask for intercession for God to hear one's Prayers and answer them.

287 'Betraying' themselves by flouting an earlier observance whereby they were not intimate with their wives during the whole month of Ramadan (cf. al-Bukhārī: 4508).

'yet' He accepted your repentance and forgave you. Now you may lie down with them and seek what Allah wrote for you⁽²⁸⁸⁾. Eat and drink until the white thread of dawn⁽²⁸⁹⁾ can be discerned from the black thread 'of night'⁽²⁹⁰⁾; then you have to carry on fasting until night-time. Do not lie down with them while you confine yourselves⁽²⁹¹⁾ to mosques—these are the boundaries of Allah, steer away from them. Like so Allah explains His Signs to people, that they might be Mindful.

﴿188﴾ Do not devour each other's property unlawfully, nor offer them to the rulers⁽²⁹²⁾, so that you may eat up a portion of the property of others sinfully, knowingly. ﴿189﴾ They ask you about the crescents⁽²⁹³⁾; say: "They are indicators of timings for people and Pilgrimage". It is not sincere piety that you approach houses from the back⁽²⁹⁴⁾,

فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ قَالَتَن نَبَشْرُوهَن
وَأَسْتَعُو مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا
حَتَّىٰ يَبْدَأَ لَكُمْ الْحَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْحَيْطِ
الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتَمُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى
الْأَيْلِ وَلَا تَبَشْرُوهَن وَأَنْتُمْ عَلَيْكُمُونَ فِي
الْمَسْجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ
يَبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿188﴾

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَطْلِ
وَتَدُلُّوهُهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِيَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا
مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْأَشْرِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿189﴾
* يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِئُ
لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحُجَّجِ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ
مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا

288 Namely, children. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

289 The light of dawn.

290 Cf. al-Bukhārī: 1954 and Muslim: 1100.

291 *I'tikāf* is confining oneself to a mosque for a certain period of time with the intention of getting closer to God and dedicating oneself to His worship.

292 Offer bribes to those who rule in cases of litigation, i.e. judges. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

293 The phases of the moon and how, unlike the sun, it changes with the passage of time. The answer came that through these changes and phases people would be able to know the times of fasting, Hajj, women's periods of waiting, etc. (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

294 It was an Arab habit, except for the Quraysh, during the period before Islam to enter their houses from the back after donning the *iḥrām* for

but sincere piety is that who is Mindful. Approach the houses from their 'front' doors⁽²⁹⁵⁾ and be Mindful of Allah, so that you may be successful.

﴿190﴾ Fight in the path of Allah those who fight you and do not transgress⁽²⁹⁶⁾—surely Allah likes not the transgressors. ﴿191﴾ Kill them wherever you find them⁽²⁹⁷⁾, and drive them out from where they drove you out⁽²⁹⁸⁾—surely trial⁽²⁹⁹⁾ is more grievous than killing. Do not fight them in the Sacred Mosque until they fight you in it, and if they fight you, kill them; this is the 'just' requital of the Deniers. ﴿192﴾ 'But' If they desist, then Allah is surely All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْ أَتَقَىٰ ۖ وَأَتُوا الْبَيْتَ
مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا وَأَتَفَوْا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٨٩﴾

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ
وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١٩٠﴾
وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَا تَجْرَهُمْ
مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوهُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ
وَلَا تَقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّىٰ يَقَاتِلُوكُمْ
فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩١﴾
فَإِنْ أَنتَهُوا ۖ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٢﴾

'umrah or Hajj thinking that this was an act of obedience. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

- 295 This is by way of inducing them to break with groundless old habits, and embrace a whole new perspective regarding what a true relationship with God is supposed to be. A reminder of what sincere piety (*birr*) really is; not outward and contrived but rather inward and sincere (cf. 2: 177).
- 296 Do not overlook the rulings prescribed for fighting. Among these are not killing or harming women, children, the elderly and those who did not aid, by any means, the fight against the Believers. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 297 The Deniers who raised arms against the Believers. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 298 The land, Makkah, from which the Muslims had been expelled. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 299 *Fitnah* comes from the root *f-t-n* which means to test and try; the pagans of Makkah subjected the Muslims to the harshest treatment and, at times, outright torture to drive them, and whoever might be tempted to join them, away from Islam.

﴿193﴾ Fight them until there is no trial⁽³⁰⁰⁾, and the religion becomes sincerely Allah's own. If they desist, only the wrongdoers shall be transgressed against. ﴿194﴾ The sacrosanct month⁽³⁰¹⁾ is by way of 'replacement for' the sacrosanct month⁽³⁰²⁾; 'violation of' what is prohibited is repayable. Whoever transgresses against you, transgress against them as much as they did and be Mindful of Allah and know that Allah is with the Mindful.

﴿195﴾ Spend in the path of Allah⁽³⁰³⁾, do not throw yourselves into 'utter' ruin⁽³⁰⁴⁾, and perfect 'your deeds'—surely Allah likes those who perfect.

﴿196﴾ Fulfil Pilgrimage and lesser pilgrimage⁽³⁰⁵⁾ perfectly⁽³⁰⁶⁾ for Allah, but if you are impeded⁽³⁰⁷⁾

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ
فَإِنْ اُنْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ عَلَيَّ وَاللَّامِنِينَ ﴿١٩٣﴾ الشَّهْرُ
الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَتُ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنْ
اَعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اَعْتَدَى
عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْمَلُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ
الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ وَانْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا
بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٩٥﴾

وَاتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ

300 Forcing Muslims out of their religion.

301 *al-Ashhur al-Hurum*, lit. the sacrosanct months, in which it was agreed that no fighting was permissible: namely, al-Muḥarram, Rajab, Dhū al-Qi'dah, Dhū al-Hijjah.

302 According to al-Sa'dī this has two meanings. Firstly, if they fight you during a sacrosanct month then fight them back (cf. also al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*). Secondly, God rewarded His Prophet (ﷺ) for not fighting during the sacrosanct month of Dhū al-Qi'dah in the sixth year of Hijrah when he wanted to perform 'umrah but was turned away by the pagans, by enabling him to perform it (in what is known as 'Umrat al-Qaḍā') during the same month of the following year (cf. al-Ṭabarī).

303 Raise the necessary funds to prepare for such a just fight (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

304 By not making the necessary preparations (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

305 'Umrah.

306 Upholding and closely observing the rites of these two great forms of worship.

307 If your journey was prevented by an enemy or an illness, or by whatever forceful reason.

then 'slaughter' whatever offering is affordable⁽³⁰⁸⁾. Do not shave your heads⁽³⁰⁹⁾ until the offerings reach their allotted location 'of slaughter'; 'yet' whoever of you is ill or suffers from his head⁽³¹⁰⁾, let him compensate for it by fasting, giving charity, or slaughtering 'for Allah'. If you feel secure⁽³¹¹⁾, then those who enjoy 'a repose'⁽³¹²⁾ from minor pilgrimage until Pilgrimage, 'they are to compensate by sacrificing' whatever offering is affordable; 'but' whoever could not 'afford an offering', let him fast three days during Hajj and seven when you return⁽³¹³⁾: these are ten complete.

فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَخْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ
الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ ۚ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِّن
رَأْسِهِ ۖ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِّن صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ ۚ فَإِذَا
أَمِنْتُمْ ۖ فَمَن تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ ۖ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ
مِن الْهَدْيِ ۖ فَمَن لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامٌ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ۖ فِي
الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ ۚ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ

- 308 *al-Hady*, lit. sacrificial animals gifted to God. The term is limited to those animals intended for slaughter during Hajj or 'umrah. Otherwise, they are called *udhiyah*, simply sacrifice.
- 309 Shaving the head is prohibited for those who embark upon Hajj or 'umrah. This is why it is used here to mean that: you will not relieve yourselves of the prohibitions of these rites. That is until you sacrifice the *hady*. The place of slaughter for those who were cut short would be the spot they managed to reach, but for those who completed their rites it would be within the sanctified (*haram*) area of Makkah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Shinqīṭī).
- 310 Those who are inflicted with head ailments, like a rash or lice, are allowed to shave their heads, or shorten their hair while still in a state of *ihrām*, given that they make up for it by fasting three days, feeding six of the poor (each with half a *ṣā'*), or sacrificing a goat for the poor of the Sanctified Mosque (cf. al-Bukhārī (1214), Muslim (1201), al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī).
- 311 If hindrances no longer exist.
- 312 A relaxation period extending from the time of performing 'umrah – during the months of Hajj – until the coming of the Hajj days, in which one enjoys what is forbidden for those in a state of *ihrām*.
- 313 To your homes.

This ‘ruling applies’ to those whose family⁽³¹⁴⁾ do not reside around⁽³¹⁵⁾ the Sanctified Mosque—be Mindful of Allah and know that Allah’s Punishment is severe. ^{﴿197﴾} Hajj is ‘due during’ known months⁽³¹⁶⁾ and whoever takes on himself to perform Hajj, let him hold back from intimate acts, sinning and quarrelling; whatever good you do Allah knows about it. Provide for yourselves⁽³¹⁷⁾, indeed the best provision is Mindfulness, so be Mindful of Me, you people of reason. ^{﴿198﴾} You will not be sinning should you seek bounty⁽³¹⁸⁾ from your Lord, and as you press on ‘returning’ from ‘Arafāt, mention Allah⁽³¹⁹⁾ at the Inviolable Symbol⁽³²⁰⁾ and mention Him as He guided you; for indeed before it⁽³²¹⁾ you were truly astray.

ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٩٦﴾
الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَعْلُومَةٌ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ
الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفْتٍ وَلَا فُسُوقٍ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي
الْحَجِّ وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمَهُ اللَّهُ
وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُونِ
يَأْتُوا بِالْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٧﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ
أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَإِذَا
أَفَضْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ
عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ وَاذْكُرُوهُ
كَمَا هَدَيْتُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ
لَمِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿١٩٨﴾

314 That is, the pilgrims’ places of permanent residence.

315 These are either the ones who reside within the radius of the Sanctified Mosque at a distance in which Prayers are not shortened (*qasr*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī), or, in particular, only those who are residents of the sanctified area (*haram*) surrounding the Mosque (cf. Ibn ‘Uthaymīn).

316 These are Shawwal, Dhū al-Qi’dah, and the first ten days of Dhū al-Ḥijjah.

317 The reason for this aya’s revelation is as mentioned by Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه): “The people of Yemen used to come for Hajj without providing themselves with supplies, saying: “We are the Reliant ‘on God’”. But when they reached Makkah they used to solicit provisions from people”. (al-Bukhārī: 1523)

318 By trading. (Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

319 Engage in *dhikr*, Prayers and Praying.

320 *al-Mash‘ar al-Ḥarām* is Muzdalifah. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa’dī)

321 God’s Guidance of you to the correct Abrahamic rites of Hajj. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿199﴾ Then set forth⁽³²²⁾ from where people set forth, and seek Allah's forgiveness⁽³²³⁾—indeed He is the All-Pardoning, Most Merciful. ﴿200﴾ When you are done with your devotional rites mention Allah as much as you mention your fathers⁽³²⁴⁾ even more passionately. Some people would say: “Our Lord give us in this worldly life”, having no share in the Hereafter; ﴿201﴾ “yet” some of them⁽³²⁵⁾ say: “Our Lord, give us what is good in this worldly life and what is good in the Hereafter, and spare us the Punishment of the Fire”⁽³²⁶⁾. ﴿202﴾ Those⁽³²⁷⁾ are the ones who have a share of what they earned⁽³²⁸⁾; surely Allah is swift in reckoning⁽³²⁹⁾.

ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاصَ النَّاسُ
وَأَسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٩﴾
فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ
كَذِكْرِكُمْ آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا
فَمَنْ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي
الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ ﴿٢٠٠﴾
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا
حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا
عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٠١﴾ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ
مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٠٢﴾

322 The addressees are the Quraysh who, known as *al-hums*, held back from going to ‘Arafāt and instead remained in Muzdalifah. Being the guardians and the tenders of the Holy Sanctuary they considered themselves a station above others, but after the advent of Islam, this command remedied the situation (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī).

323 That is *istighfār* (seeking forgiveness) for any shortcomings during the performance of Hajj.

324 The Arabs were, particularly at that juncture in history, very fond of talking without end at almost any social interaction, about the chivalric and heroic deeds of their forefathers.

325 These are the ones who are well-guided.

326 This supplication (*Rabbanā ātinā fī al-dunyā ḥasanah wa fī al-ākhirati ḥasanah wa qinā ‘adhāb an-nār*) contains all that is good and desirable by humans. Hence why, as found in al-Bukhārī (6389) and Muslim (2690), it is the supplication prayed most often by the Prophet (ﷺ).

327 The ones who supplicate with this Prayer. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

328 The good deeds that they did.

329 Repayment. (Ibn ‘Uthaymīn)

﴿203﴾ Mention Allah in 'these' numbered days⁽³³⁰⁾; whoever hastens 'departure' in two days⁽³³¹⁾ will not be sinning, and whoever stays behind⁽³³²⁾ will not be sinning, for those who were Mindful⁽³³³⁾— be Mindful of Allah and know that you will be gathered unto Him.

﴿204﴾ Of people are those⁽³³⁴⁾ whose talk about this worldly life⁽³³⁵⁾ you are drawn to, calling Allah to bear witness to what is in his heart, while he is the bitterest of adversaries⁽³³⁶⁾. ﴿205﴾ When he turns away 'from you' he sets about the land to sow corruption and devastate tillage and progeny⁽³³⁷⁾— surely Allah likes not corruption.

﴿٢٠٣﴾ وَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْرَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْرَ عَلَيْهِ لِمَنْ أَتَقَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۖ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٠٤﴾

﴿٢٠٤﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ ﴿٢٠٥﴾ وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾

330 People are encouraged to mention God in the form of *Takbīr* abundantly during the days of *Tashrīq*: 11, 12 and 13 of Dhū al-Ḥijjah (al-Qurṭubī notes that exegetes unanimously agree on this).

331 That is before the sun sets on the second day, 12 Dhū al-Ḥijjah. (al-Wāhidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Sa‘dī)

332 To depart on the next day.

333 During their Hajj. (al-Ṭabarī)

334 With their eloquent talk, the hypocrites (cf. 63: 1-4), whose Faith is insincere, had won the Prophet’s (ﷺ) attention (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). The moral here is that it is not sweet talk and hollow words that define a real Believer but rather sincerity and selfless actions that lead to such a lofty status.

335 With regards to worldly matters.

336 ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The worst of men in the Sight of Allah is the bitter adversary” (al-Bukhārī: 3178, Muslim: 58). This is one of the four traits of a sheer hypocrite. The other three being: telling lies, breaking promises and betraying pledges (cf. al-Bukhārī: 2457, Muslim: 2668).

337 Crops and offspring. Sowing corruption in the land by spreading Denial, acts of rebelliousness against God and injustice will surely cause disruption in the balance of life and may bring about God’s punishment of withholding rain, the source of the very element of life, water, thus causing ruin and death (cf. 7: 96 and 30: 41). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿206﴾ When it is said to him: “Be Mindful of Allah!” Sinful conceit gets the better of him—will Hellfire not be enough for him! Indeed it is the worst of beds.

﴿207﴾ ‘While’ Among people are those who sell themselves⁽³³⁸⁾ seeking the Pleasure of Allah—indeed Allah is Most Kind to His servants.

﴿208﴾ O Believers, enter into Submission wholly⁽³³⁹⁾ and do not follow the footsteps of Satan—indeed he is for you an open enemy. ﴿209﴾ Shall you slip⁽³⁴⁰⁾ after clear evidences have come to you, then know that Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿210﴾ Do they expect ‘nothing’ but that Allah comes to them in shadows of clouds along with the angels; ‘lo!’ the affair is settled and to Allah all affairs are returned⁽³⁴¹⁾.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَيْسَ الْأَمْهَادُ ﴿٢٠٦﴾
وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠٧﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا آذْخُلُوا فِي السَّلَامِ كَأَفْئَةٍ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٠٨﴾ فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْكُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٩﴾ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ مِنَ الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٢١٠﴾

338 Give away their lives.

339 Embrace Islam to the fullest, following all its commandments wholeheartedly (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abū Ḥātim, Ibn Kathīr). The word employed here is *silm* rather than *islām*. The meaning of *silm* is to make peace, submit and unrestrainedly surrender to the Will of God, all of which captures the underlying and essential meaning of *islām* (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qurʾān*; al-İşfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).

340 The imagery of losing one’s footing and firm step, shows in a concrete way how it looks to backslide from the right path while knowing it.

341 On the Day of Judgement God comes in the shadows of clouds to pass judgement on His creation. He condemns to Hellfire those who slip away from the path that He has clearly shown through His Books and Messengers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Saʿdī, Ibn ʿĀshūr).

﴿211﴾ Ask the Children of Israel how many a clear Sign We have given them! But whoever exchanges the bounty of Allah "for Denial"⁽³⁴²⁾ after it came to him, "will come to know" that Allah is severe in Punishment.

﴿212﴾ The worldly life is prettified for the Deniers; they ridicule those who Believe; "but" the Mindful are indeed above them on the Day of Judgement⁽³⁴³⁾—Allah showers with favours whom He wills without account⁽³⁴⁴⁾. ﴿213﴾ Mankind was one nation⁽³⁴⁵⁾, then Allah sent the Prophets bearing good tidings and cautioning, and He sent down with them the Book⁽³⁴⁶⁾ with Truth so as to arbitrate between people in what they dispute over. It⁽³⁴⁷⁾ was only disputed over by those to whom it was given after the clear Signs came to them, out of contravention one against the other.

سَلَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كِرَاءَ آيَاتِهِمْ مِنْ آيَاتِهِ يَبْتِغُونَهَا وَفِي ذَلِكَ لَعْنَةٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُجَادِلُونَ ﴿٢١١﴾
 يُبَدِّلُ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢١٢﴾
 زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢١٣﴾
 كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ

342 Cf. 14: 28-29.

343 Cf. 83: 29-36.

344 The Mindful will be entered into Paradise; the greatest 'favour' from God (cf. 7: 49). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī, Ibn 'Ashūr)

345 Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "The time between Adam and Noah was ten centuries. Throughout these, people were on the right path of God, but then they started disputing 'over matters of faith'. So, God sent Prophets bearing glad tidings and cautioning". (al-Hākim, *al-Mustadrak*: 2:546, cf. also al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī, al-Shinqīṭī)

346 Revealed Scriptures which contain Truthful news and fair commands. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Sa'adī)

347 The Truth as found in their respective Scriptures (cf. Ibn 'Atīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī). The plight of humans, especially those who lack true sincerity and thereby humbleness, is such that the more knowledge they possess, the more haughty and disputatious they become.

But Allah leads the Believers to the Truth, which they disputed over, with His Will—Allah guides those He wills to a straight path. ﴿214﴾ Or you think that you will enter Paradise without the example of those who came before⁽³⁴⁸⁾ comes to pass you! They were touched by turmoil and affliction, and fiercely shaken⁽³⁴⁹⁾, until the Prophet⁽³⁵⁰⁾ and those who Believed with him exclaim: “When is Allah’s victory?”—verily Allah’s victory is ever near.

﴿215﴾ They ask you ‘Muhammad’ what they should spend⁽³⁵¹⁾; say: “Whatever good⁽³⁵²⁾ you spend ‘is to be’ on your parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, and the stranded”—whatever good you do Allah knows about it. ﴿216﴾ Fighting is prescribed for you, as much as you hate it; might you hate a thing which is good for you and might you love a thing which is evil for you—Allah knows and you do not know.

فَهَدَىٰ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَا اٰخْتَلَفُوْا فِيْهِ
 مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ وَاللّٰهُ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَاءُ اِلَىٰ
 صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٢١٤﴾ اَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ اَنْ تَدْخُلُوْا
 الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَّثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
 مَسَّهُمُ الْاَسَآءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَرُوْلُوا حَتَّىٰ يَقُوْلَ
 الرَّسُوْلُ وَالَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا مَعَهُ مَتَىٰ نَصْرُ اللّٰهِ
 اَلَا اِنَّ نَصْرَ اللّٰهِ قَرِيْبٌ ﴿٢١٥﴾

يَسْأَلُوْنَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُوْنَ ۗ قُلْ مَا اَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ
 حَيْرٍ فَلِلّٰهِ وَالَّذِيْنَ وَالَّآٰلِ الْاَقْرَبِيْنَ وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسْكِيْنَ
 وَاٰبِى السَّبِيْلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ مِنْ حَيْرٍ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ
 بِهٖ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢١٦﴾ كَتَبَ عَلَیْكُمْ الْقِتَالَ وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ
 لَّكُمْ وَعَسٰى اَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ
 لَّكُمْ وَعَسٰى اَنْ تُحِبُّوْا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ
 لَّكُمْ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢١٦﴾

348 True Believers in earlier God-revealed religions. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

349 The road to Paradise is not paved with roses. As with all great destinations, it can only be reached through difficulty (cf. 3: 142, 29: 2-3).

350 Any of the previous Prophets.

351 They ask what, how much and in what way should they spend in the cause of God (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī). Ayas 215-220 list some of the hardships and trials that the Believers were to face: spending their money, fighting enemies, abstaining from intoxicants and gambling, and dealing carefully with the wealth of those whom they had guardianship over.

352 Money earned from lawful means.

﴿217﴾ They⁽³⁵³⁾ ask you about the sacrosanct month ‘whether there is’ fighting during it! Say: “Fighting in it is grave”; ‘but’ turning ‘people’ away from the path of Allah, Denying Him and ‘preventing access to’ the Sanctified Mosque, and driving its people away from it are graver before Allah—surely trial⁽³⁵⁴⁾ is more grievous than killing. They will keep on fighting you until they turn you back from your religion, if they could. Whoever of you reneges on his religion and dies Denying, the deeds of these are nullified in this worldly life and in the Hereafter—these are the company of the Fire, forever they abide therein. ﴿218﴾ Those who Believe and those who migrated and fought in the cause of Allah; these are ‘rightly’ hopeful of Allah’s Mercy—Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿219﴾ They ask you about intoxicants and gambling; say: “There is a great sin in both, and ‘some’ benefits to people”, but their sin is greater than their benefit⁽³⁵⁵⁾.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يَقْتُلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُم عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَعُوا وَمَن يَرْتَدِدْ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فِمَتَّ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢١٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢١٨﴾ *يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنْتَفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَّفْعِهِمَا

353 The Deniers asked this question intending to scorn the Prophet (ﷺ) for what they saw as breaking an oath when a group of Believers unknowingly killed a Denier during a sacrosanct month (cf. al-Wāhidī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Nasā’ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 8803).

354 These trials and tribulations (*fitnah*) that the Deniers subjected the Believers to are far graver than unknowingly killing a single Denier during a sacrosanct month (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

355 ‘Benefits’ are mentioned only way of preparing the then newly-formed Muslim community for the total prohibition of intoxicants and gambling which was to come (cf. 5: 90-91).

They ask you what they should spend⁽³⁵⁶⁾; say: “the surplus⁽³⁵⁷⁾”. Like so Allah makes clear to you the Signs so that you may contemplate, ⁽²²⁰⁾ this worldly life and the Hereafter. They ask you about orphans⁽³⁵⁸⁾; say: “Nurturing them is best⁽³⁵⁹⁾, and that you should intermix with them; they are your brothers”. Allah knows those who reform and those who corrupt⁽³⁶⁰⁾. Had He willed, He would have made it onerous⁽³⁶¹⁾ on you—surely Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

﴿221﴾ Do not marry Associating females unless they Believe; indeed a Believing slave female is better than an Associator⁽³⁶²⁾, though you might like her.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَكَذَلِكَ
يُبينُ اللهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١٩﴾
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الَّتِي تَمْسَى قُلِ
إِصْلَاحٌ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ نَحَاظُوهُمْ فَاخْوَانُكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللهُ
لَاعْتَبَرْتُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٠﴾

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَ وَلَأَمَةٌ
مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكَةٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ

356 In God’s cause.

357 *al-‘Afw* is what is more than necessary to sustain you. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

358 That is looking after orphans’ affairs, especially their money (cf. 4: 10). So, God willed that a Muslim’s duty towards orphans in that person’s custody is, firstly, to have their best interests in mind. Knowing that not mixing orphans’ and a custodian’s money is a difficult task (cf. Abū Dāwūd: 2871, Aḥmad: 3002) given the latter pays for the former’s living expenses from it, God gave permission for this but with a forewarning that the guardian should be Mindful of Him in this regard.

359 Taking care of orphans’ inheritances and looking after them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī)

360 Regarding the affairs of orphans and their finances.

361 By making taking care of orphans’ finances particularly tough in not allowing their guardians to mix their money with that of their custodians. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

362 The Arabic term is *mushrik*, meaning one who associates other deities with God in worship.

Do not marry 'your women' to Associators; indeed a Believing slave male is better than an Associator, though you might like him. These invite to Fire, and Allah invites to Paradise and forgiveness by His permission, and He makes His Signs clear to people so that they may remember. ﴿222﴾ They ask you about menstruation; say: "It is harm⁽³⁶³⁾". So keep away from women during menstruation⁽³⁶⁴⁾, and do not approach them⁽³⁶⁵⁾ until they become purified⁽³⁶⁶⁾. When they purify themselves⁽³⁶⁷⁾ come to them from where Allah has instructed you⁽³⁶⁸⁾. Verily Allah likes those who repeatedly repent and those who purify themselves. ﴿223﴾ Your women are cultivating fields for you⁽³⁶⁹⁾, so come to your cultivating fields the way you want⁽³⁷⁰⁾,

وَلَا تُنكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَعْفَرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيُبَيِّنُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٢٢﴾ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذَىٰ فَأَعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهَرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ ﴿٢٢٣﴾ نِسَاءُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَأَتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّىٰ شِئْتُمْ

363 This is a literal translation for the word used, namely, *adhā*. It could also mean something which is hateful as it causes discomfort (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abū Ḥātim).

364 When asked by the Muslims, who saw the Jews of Madinah avoiding their women completely during menstruation, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Do everything except intercourse". (Muslim: 302)

365 Sexually in the vagina. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

366 That is until their periods end. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

367 By washing themselves. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

368 Have vaginal intercourse with them in a state of purity. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

369 In as much as you sow your seeds into their wombs in expectance of yield. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

370 In whatever position, given that intercourse takes place in the vagina. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

and send 'something good' ahead for yourselves⁽³⁷¹⁾; and be Mindful of Allah and know that you will meet Him—and give glad tidings to the Believers.

﴿224﴾ Do not make your oaths in the Name of Allah a hindrance from you doing good⁽³⁷²⁾, being Mindful and amending affairs between people—verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿225﴾ Allah will not hold you accountable for careless swearing 'by Him'⁽³⁷³⁾, but He will hold you accountable for what your hearts have earned⁽³⁷⁴⁾—Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing. ﴿226﴾ Those who vow against their women, there shall be a waiting period of four months⁽³⁷⁵⁾. But if they go back 'on their oath', then Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَقَدِّمُوا لِنَفْسِكُمْ وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلْقَوُهُ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٢٤﴾

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْضَةً لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَتُصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٥﴾ لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٦﴾ لِلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ تَرِيصٌ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ فَإِنْ فَاءُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٧﴾

371 Do good deeds that will be of use to you in the Hereafter. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

372 That is, do not make your oaths in God's Name not to do something which is enjoined and commendable stop you from doing it because you fear that you will be breaking that oath. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

373 Unintentionally saying: "Yes, by God", or: "No, by God". (al-Bukhārī: 6663)

374 That is, a person intentionally lies and yet swears by God that he is telling the truth. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

375 This is the act of *ilā'*; vowing not to have intercourse with one's wife with the purpose of punishing her. Four months is the maximum time limit allowed for this state of affairs to go on. Otherwise, the husband who took such a vow needs to either get things back to normal, in which case he does not need to make up for breaking his vow and is forgiven by God, or else he should conclude the divorce and no longer hurt his wife (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿227﴾ But if they are resolved on divorce, then Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿228﴾ Divorced women must wait for three courses⁽³⁷⁶⁾. It is unlawful for them to conceal what Allah created in their wombs⁽³⁷⁷⁾, if 'truly' they Believe in Allah and the Hereafter. Their husbands have more right to take them back if they 'truly' mean to mend matters⁽³⁷⁸⁾. For them 'women' is as much as there is 'expected' of them⁽³⁷⁹⁾, as per what is 'socially' agreed⁽³⁸⁰⁾; men have a degree above them⁽³⁸¹⁾—verily Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿229﴾ Divorce is for two times⁽³⁸²⁾;

وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٧﴾
 وَالْمَطْلَقَاتُ يَرِيضْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ
 وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ
 إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَبُعُولَتَهُنَّ
 أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَلَهُنَّ
 مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ
 دَرَجَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٨﴾ الطَّلَاقُ مَرَّتَيْنِ

376 *Thalāthata qurū'* is either three menstrual cycles, or three clean intervals after menstruation before a divorced woman can remarry. This is so as to ensure that no pregnancy has taken place. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

377 That is to conceal pregnancy during their waiting period (*'iddah*), with the intention of concluding the divorce.

378 Should they wish to reconcile. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

379 Their rights and duties are the same as men's. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

380 The word *ma'rūf*, lit. the known, translated here as socially agreed, is recurrent over the next few ayas that deal with marital affairs. Social norms that are in agreement with Islamic laws come to bear on settling disputes of marriage and marital life, but the judgement of this is left for people of good reason and thorough knowledge, given that they intend to safeguard the sanctity of this bond.

381 al-Shinqīṭī is of the opinion that this is explained by Aya 4: 34: "*Men are in charge of women, because Allah favoured one over the other and of the money they men spend*".

382 A man is only allowed to divorce his wife and then take her back twice. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

either hold them in agreeably⁽³⁸³⁾ or let 'them' go gracefully. It is unlawful to you 'men' to take back anything of what you gave them 'your wives'⁽³⁸⁴⁾, unless they 'husband and wife' fear not upholding Allah's boundaries⁽³⁸⁵⁾; but if you⁽³⁸⁶⁾ fear that they would not uphold Allah's boundaries, she would not be sinning in 'choosing' whatever she redeems herself for⁽³⁸⁷⁾. These are the boundaries of Allah—whoever oversteps the boundaries of Allah is among the transgressors. ﴿230﴾ But if he divorces her⁽³⁸⁸⁾, she becomes unlawful for him unless she marries another husband. If he⁽³⁸⁹⁾ 'then' divorces her, they will not be sinning to go back 'to each other'⁽³⁹⁰⁾; should they know that they would uphold Allah's boundaries.

فَأَمْسَاكُمْ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٍ بِإِحْسَنٍ وَلَا يَجِلُّ
لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ
يَخَافَا إِلَّا بُقِيمًا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ إِلَّا
بُقِيمًا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ
بِهِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ
حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣٠﴾ فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا
فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ حَتَّى تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ فَإِنْ
طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ طَلَّقَا
أَنْ يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ

383 By being kind and nice to them, in accordance with agreed social norms, whilst they are under your roofs.

384 Dowry and gifts.

385 Here *hudūd Allāh* (God's boundaries) means His commands regarding marital rights. A wife who seeks divorce because she does not feel affectionate towards, or just hates, her husband, in turn, alienates him by not fulfilling his rights, can, thus, compensate him for this. In this way, he is allowed to take the money in exchange for conceding to her demand for divorce (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīfī).

386 The ones who are brought to pass judgement on the case.

387 That is giving the husband an agreed sum of the money she received from him as dowry or gifts, in order to make him divorce her.

388 For a third time. (al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

389 The other husband.

390 Going back to her earlier husband if the divorce from her subsequent husband is sealed.

These are the boundaries of Allah, which He makes clear to those who know. ﴿231﴾ If you divorce women ‘revocably’ and they complete their time⁽³⁹¹⁾, either hold them in agreeably or let them go agreeably. Do not hold them in⁽³⁹²⁾ by way of hurt to transgress ‘against them’⁽³⁹³⁾; whoever does that will be doing himself injustice. Do not ridicule the Signs of Allah and remember the bounty of Allah and the Book and Wisdom that He sent down to you to caution you with; be Mindful of Allah and know that Allah Knows everything. ﴿232﴾ If you divorce women ‘revocably’ and they complete their time, do not ‘you guardians’ forbid them to reunite with their husbands, should they agree between themselves in keeping with what is ‘socially’ acceptable. With this are admonished those who Believe in Allah and the Last Day; this is more dignified for you and purer—Allah Knows and you do not know.

وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣١﴾
 وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَّغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ
 بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ
 ضِرَارًا لِّتَعْتَدُوا وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ
 نَفْسَهُ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوعًا وَادْكُرُوا
 نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ
 وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
 بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣٢﴾ وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَّغْنَ
 أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ
 إِذَا تَرَاضَوْا بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ذَلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَنْ
 كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ
 لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٣﴾

391 Waiting period ('iddah) as explained in the previous ayas.

392 Deciding to keep the wife and not conclude divorce.

393 To harm them by prolonging an agonizing waiting period, holding them back from marrying other husbands or forcing them into seeking separation and, in the process, financially compensating the current husband for it. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

﴿233﴾ Mothers⁽³⁹⁴⁾ should nurse their infants for two complete years, 'this is' for those who wish to fulfil 'the complete term of' nursing. The one to whom the child was born⁽³⁹⁵⁾, has to provide for them and clothe them, in keeping with what is 'socially' acceptable; no soul should bear a burden that is beyond its capability. No mother should be made to suffer using her infant, nor should a father. The same is incumbent on the 'father's' heir⁽³⁹⁶⁾. Should they 'the father and mother' seek weaning 'the infant', in agreement and by consultation between them, there is no sin on them⁽³⁹⁷⁾. If you want to hire a wet nurse for your infants, then there is no sin on you if you pay what you agree on, in keeping with what is socially acceptable—be Mindful of Allah, and know that Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.

﴿234﴾ Those of you who pass away leaving behind wives, let them 'the widows' remain waiting for four months and ten days.

﴿وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ ۗ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُنْعَمَ ۗ وَالرِّضَاعُ عَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ ۖ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ لَا تُكَلِّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَا تَضَارُّ وَاوِلَادَهُ يَوْلَاهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَالِدَيْهِ ۚ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ ۚ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنِ تِرَاضٍ مِمَّنْهُمَا لِتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا ۚ وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْتَرْضِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَاءً يُتَيْمَمُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْمَلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لِيَسْبِرَ لَكُمْ أَوْلَادُكُمْ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ مِنكُم مَّن لَّا يَرْجُونَ زَوْجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا ۗ﴾

394 The majority of the rightly-guided predecessors are of the opinion that 'mothers' here means divorced mothers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abū Ḥātim, Ibn 'Āshūr).

395 The father.

396 In case of the father's death, the person who takes over responsibility after him has to provide for the nursing mother in the same way. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

397 That is if they come to an agreement to wean the infant before the two-year period of nursing has finished. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

When they finish their term⁽³⁹⁸⁾, you are not to blame for what they 'choose to' do with themselves, in keeping with what is acceptable⁽³⁹⁹⁾—Allah is Knowledgeable of what you do. ﴿235﴾ You will not be sinning should you allude to a marriage proposal to women⁽⁴⁰⁰⁾, or that you keep this to yourselves⁽⁴⁰¹⁾. Allah knows that you will keep on thinking about them, but do not promise them secretly, unless you say what is acceptable⁽⁴⁰²⁾, and do not tie the knot of marriage during the waiting period, 'but wait' until the term has elapsed. Know that Allah knows what you tell yourselves and be cautious of Him—know that Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing. ﴿236﴾ You will not be sinning should you divorce women whom you did not touch 'yet' nor committed yourselves to by stating a sum 'of dowry'. Bestow on them, the well-off according to his means and the poor according to his means, in keeping with what is 'socially'

فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٥﴾ وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَوْ أَكْتُمْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَلِيمَ اللَّهِ أَنَّكُمْ سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ وَالْكِينَ لَا تَوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا وَلَا تَعْرُضُوا عَقْدَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابَ أَجَلَهُ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُوٌّ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣٦﴾ لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمَوْسِعِ قَدَرَهُ وَعَلَى الْمَقْتَرِ قَدَرَهُ وَمَتَّعَا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

398 This waiting period is known as *'iddah*. During these four months and ten days the widow is not to remarry. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīfī)

399 A social norm that entails keeping within the dictates of Islam.

400 The widowed and irrevocably divorced.

401 Having the intention.

402 That is, only an implication of marriage is acceptable during the waiting period but not a direct statement of marriage intent.

acceptable⁽⁴⁰³⁾—this is a duty on the well-doers. ⁽²³⁷⁾ If you divorce them before touching them, but you committed yourselves to paying a sum ‘of dowry’ to them⁽⁴⁰⁴⁾, ‘pay them’ half of what you committed yourselves to, unless they ‘the wives’ waive ‘the due sum’ or in whose hand the marriage knot⁽⁴⁰⁵⁾ is waives ‘it’. That you should waive is closer to Mindfulness, and do not overlook kindness among yourselves—verily Allah is All-Seeing of what you do. ⁽²³⁸⁾ Observe the Prayers⁽⁴⁰⁶⁾ – and ‘especially’ the middle Prayer⁽⁴⁰⁷⁾ – and rise for Allah ‘consistently’ devoutly.

حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٣٦﴾ وَإِنْ طَلَقْتُمْوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَرْصَفْ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوا الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ عَقْدَةُ الرِّكَاحِ وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى وَلَا تَنْسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِنْ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٧﴾ حَفِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقَوْمُوا لِلَّهِ قَنِينًا ﴿٢٣٨﴾

- 403 By way of consolation, it is a duty on the husband who divorces a woman before marriage is consummated, by getting in bed with her, or before a certain sum of money as dowry has been stated, to give her a present which would, according to social norm, make it up to her. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 404 This is the ruling regarding divorce that takes place before coupling has taken place between the divorcees, but in which the husband has already committed himself to paying a certain amount as a dowry, thus showing his firm intention of marriage. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 405 The wife’s representative.
- 406 The five mandatory daily Prayers (*al-Ṣalawāt al-khams*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). Prayers are mentioned in the midst of marital affair rulings, because of the hurtful and hard feelings divorce can leave in its wake. Hence, people are reminded of the Hereafter—by virtue of being vigilant in their Prayers. Their observance of these rulings and whereby they should not ‘overlook kindness’ among themselves is made surer by this reminder of accountability. Prayer in another aya is a deterrent against overindulgence: “Verily Prayer admonishes against vileness and loathsome acts” (29: 45), (cf. al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 407 The third, middle Prayer; namely, *ṣalāt al-‘aṣr*. This aya shows how particularly meritorious this Prayer is. (al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*)

﴿239﴾ But if you become fearful⁽⁴⁰⁸⁾, then ‘perform Prayers whether you are’ on foot or mounted, yet when your fears ease, mention Allah as He taught you that which you had no knowledge of. ﴿240﴾ Those of you who pass away leaving behind wives, let them ‘state in a will for their wives a maintenance for a year without expelling them ‘from their homes’⁽⁴⁰⁹⁾, but if they leave ‘their homes’ you are not to blame for what they ‘choose to’ do with themselves, in keeping with what is acceptable—surely Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

﴿241﴾ ‘Likewise’ for the divorced women a maintenance ‘is due’ in keeping with what is ‘socially’ agreed—this is a duty on the Mindful. ﴿242﴾ Like so, Allah explains to you His Signs⁽⁴¹⁰⁾ so that you might become aware ‘of them’.

﴿243﴾ Have you not seen those who fled their homelands in their thousands in fear of death,

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرَجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا وَصِيَّةً لِأَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَتَاعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ مِنْ مَّعْرُوفٍ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٠﴾ وَلِلْمُطَلَّقاتِ مَتَعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٤١﴾ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٤٢﴾

* أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ

408 Of an imminent danger, enemies and the like, which would be cause enough for you not to perform Prayers in the given strict manner (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

409 The majority of exegetes are of the opinion that the ruling of this aya was abrogated by Aya 2: 234: “Those of you who pass away leaving behind wives, let them ‘the widows’ remain waiting for four months and ten days”. (al-Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

410 In such a way, the ayas clearly spell out rulings and regulations so that people become fully aware of them and apply them in their lives. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

whereupon Allah said to them: “Die!” Then He brought them back to life⁽⁴¹¹⁾. Indeed Allah is bountiful to people, but most of them are thankless. ﴿244﴾ Fight ‘then Believers’ in the path of Allah and know that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿245﴾ Would there be one who loans Allah a comely loan⁽⁴¹²⁾, so that Allah would multiply it for him manifold—Allah tightens and loosens⁽⁴¹³⁾, and unto Him you shall return.

﴿246﴾ Have you not seen the notables among the Children of Israel, after ‘the time of’ Moses, when they said to a Prophet of theirs: “Point out a king for us so that we may fight in the path of Allah”. He said to them: “Would you then – should fighting be prescribed for you – not fight?”

فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٤٤﴾ وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٥﴾ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يقرضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيضَعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْصُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٤٦﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلَأِ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّهِمْ إِنَّهُ لَمَلِكٌ نَقَلْتَلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَتَبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا

411 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), and Believers at large, are told, in a very subtle, edifying manner, of the story of a certain people who, because of fear of annihilation, fled their town in droves, thus thinking that they would outdo God’s Will. In order to show them that they could not escape His Judgement and make them realize His bountiful favours, God took their lives to show them that He is capable of bringing about their worst fears, only then to give them their lives back again.

412 *al-Qard al-hasan* is spending in the cause of Allah in expectation of nothing but His reward. As much as Believers are encouraged to fight in the path of God and are strongly reminded that they cannot escape death, they are also encouraged to spend out of their wealth, not expecting any return in the process, to arm fighting Believers (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). They are equally and strongly reminded that it is God alone Who makes people rich or poor (cf. 2: 261-262).

413 Making people rich or poor. (al-Ṭabarī)

They said: “Why would we not fight in the path of Allah when we were expelled from our lands and ‘bereft of’ our children⁽⁴¹⁴⁾?” When fighting was mandated upon them, they took to their heels, except a few—Allah is surely All-Knowing of the unjust. ⁽²⁴⁷⁾ ‘At that’ Their Prophet said to them: “Allah has pointed out Tālūt⁽⁴¹⁵⁾ as a king for you”. They said: “How come he becomes a king over us when we are more deserving of kingship than him; he ‘even’ has no vast wealth?” He said: “Allah has favoured him above you and made him deeply knowledgeable and physically imposing”. Allah grants kingship to whomever He wills—verily Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. ⁽²⁴⁸⁾ Their Prophet said to them: “The sign of his ‘rightful’ kingship is that the chest⁽⁴¹⁶⁾ comes to you and in it there is tranquillity from your Lord and remnant ‘relics’⁽⁴¹⁷⁾ of what was left by the house of Moses and the house of Hārūn ‘Aaron’, carried by angels. Surely this is ‘enough as’ a sign for you, that is if you are ‘true’ Believers”.

قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَاءِنَا فَلَمَّا
كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
مِّنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٤٦﴾ وَقَالَ
لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ
طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ
الْمَلِكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمَلِكِ
مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يَأْتِ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً
فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مَلَكَهُ
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٧﴾ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ
نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ
التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ
تَحْمِلُهَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِن فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً
لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٤٨﴾

414 Their women and children were taken captive by the enemy. (al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

415 Believed to be the Biblical King Saul.

416 *At-Tābūt* is said to be the Ark of the Covenant.

417 These are believed to be Moses’ (ﷺ) staff and some broken Tablets. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī)

﴿249﴾ When Ṭālūt pulled ahead with the soldiers, he said to them: “Allah will test you with a river. Whoever drinks of it is not one of mine. But whoever does not taste it, is of mine, excepting one who scoops a handful”. They drank ‘their fill’ of it but a few of them. When he crossed it, along with those who Believed with him, they said: “We have no power today against Jālūt⁽⁴¹⁸⁾ and his soldiers”. ‘But’ Those who are sure that they will be meeting Allah said: “How many a time has a small company vanquished a multitudinous one with Allah’s permission! Verily Allah is with the steadfast”. ﴿250﴾ When they made themselves seen to Jālūt and his soldiers, they said: “Our Lord! Pour steadfastness on us, make firm our feet⁽⁴¹⁹⁾ and grant us victory over the Denying people”. ﴿251﴾ They defeated them with Allah’s permission; Dāwūd ‘David’ killed Jālūt and Allah gave him kingship and Wisdom⁽⁴²⁰⁾ and taught him of whatever He willed⁽⁴²¹⁾. Had it not been for people pushing each other

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ
 اللَّهُ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ
 مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا
 مَنْ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ
 إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ
 بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ
 أَنَّهُم مُّكَلَّفُوا اللَّهَ كَرَمٍ مِنْ فَتَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ
 غَلَبَتْ فِتْنَةَ كَثِيرَةٍ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
 مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٤٩﴾ وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ
 وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا
 وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ
 الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾ فَهَرَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ
 اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَءَاتَاهُ
 اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ
 وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ

418 Believed to be the Biblical Goliath.

419 Make us stand firm.

420 Prophethood. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

421 All sorts of knowledge and how to make body armour (cf. 21: 80).
 (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

‘back and forth’⁽⁴²²⁾, the land would have gone to ruins. But Allah is Favourable to all beings. ⁽²⁵²⁾ These are the Signs of Allah, We recite them for you with Truth—indeed you are ‘one’ of the Messengers. ⁽²⁵³⁾ Those Messengers, We favoured some of them above others: among them are some to whom Allah spoke ‘directly’⁽⁴²³⁾; and some of them He raised by degrees⁽⁴²⁴⁾. We granted Jesus, son of Mary, the clear evidences⁽⁴²⁵⁾, and bolstered him with the Holy Spirit⁽⁴²⁶⁾. Had Allah willed, those who came after them⁽⁴²⁷⁾ would not have fought among each other, after the clear evidences⁽⁴²⁸⁾ that came to them. But they differed; some of them Believed while some of them Denied. Had Allah willed, they would not have fought among each other, But Allah does what He wills.

لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٥٢﴾ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ تَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٢٥٣﴾ * تِلْكَ الْأَرْسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّن كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ ۗ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلْنَا الَّذِينَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ مِّن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَٰكِنِ اخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ ءَامَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَفَرَ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلْنَا وَلَٰكِنِ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿٢٥٤﴾

422 That people are engaged in an eternal struggle between right and wrong, good and evil, is known as *sunnat al-mudāfa‘ah*, lit. the canon of scuffle. God would not let evil prevail entirely without it being constantly challenged, otherwise Earth would become a ruinous, non-habitable planet (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

423 God spoke directly to Moses (ﷺ) (cf. 4: 164).

424 They were raised in rank to higher levels than the others just like Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

425 Miracles and the Evangel. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

426 Archangel Gabriel (ﷺ).

427 Succeeding generations.

428 God’s Signs: miracles and Divine Writs, which are cause enough for them all to Believe.

﴿254﴾ You who Believe! Spend of what We provided for you before a Day comes, when there will not be trading, nor bonds or intercession⁽⁴²⁹⁾—indeed the Deniers are the unjust ones. ﴿255﴾⁽⁴³⁰⁾ Allah, there is no god but Him⁽⁴³¹⁾, the Ever-Living⁽⁴³²⁾, the All-Sufficient⁽⁴³³⁾; neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him⁽⁴³⁴⁾; to Him belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth⁽⁴³⁵⁾.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ
مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا حِئْلٌ
وَلَا شَفَعَةٌ ۗ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٥٤﴾
اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ
سِنَةٌ ۗ وَلَا نَوْمٌ ۗ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ ۗ

- 429 The Day of Judgement on which no money, connections, or power of persuasion will avail a wrongdoer; only Divine Justice prevails. Cf. 2:48 and 2:122.
- 430 This aya is known as *Āyat al-Kursī*, lit. Aya of the Footstool. It is the single greatest aya in the Grand Qur'an. Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) once asked him: "Abū al-Mundhir, do you know which one of the ayas of the Book of Allah is the greatest?"... I said: (*Allah, there is no god but Him, the Ever-Living, the All-Sufficient*). He beat my chest and said: "By Allah, may knowledge be joyous to you Abū al-Mundhir!" (Muslim: 810) It is considered thus because it details the Attributes and Divine Characteristics of the God Who is truly worthy of worship: unlimited with regards to knowledge (omniscience), power (omnipotence), and existence (omnipresence). Any god would have to fulfil all these criteria to be truly worthy of worship. Among the virtues of this aya is that whoever recites it before going to sleep, will find that no devil comes near him until he wakes up. Rather, he is safeguarded in God's guardianship (cf. al-Bukhārī: 2311).
- 431 There is no god worthy of worship except Allah/God.
- 432 His Life is the perfect Life: it was not preceded by non-existence nor will it be followed by annihilation (cf. 25: 58). It entails all the characteristics of perfection. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 433 Self-sufficient; He is free from want of help or assistance. He is also in charge of the affairs of all others besides Him. Without Him, they will all go to ruin (cf. 30: 25). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 434 Dozing off and falling asleep are but normal to all creation that are inherently frail, but they are unbecoming of God, the Ever-Living Sustainer of the universe.
- 435 He is the Sole and Real Owner of the universe: thus, none is worthy of worship except Him. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

Who is it, that is 'so daring' to intercede with Him without His permission!⁽⁴³⁶⁾ He knows what is there in front of them and what is there behind them⁽⁴³⁷⁾, but they know nothing of His Knowledge, except what He wills. His Footstool⁽⁴³⁸⁾ encompasses the Heavens and Earth, and He is not taxed by maintaining them⁽⁴³⁹⁾— He is the Most High, the Most Great. ⁽²⁵⁶⁾ There is no coercion in religion⁽⁴⁴⁰⁾; guidance has been set 'clearly' apart from error. Whoever renounces false idols⁽⁴⁴¹⁾

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٢٥٦﴾ لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ

- 436 He is not like any sovereign with whom people, especially an inner circle of close aides and relatives, dare to intercede, relying on his need of them. Instead, God is free from need of help or assistance.
- 437 He is in full knowledge of the past, present and future of all His creations. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 438 According to Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه), *al-Kursī* is 'the Footstool', is where Allah's Feet are put, without likening Him to any of His creation; "Nothing is like Him; He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing". (42: 11) It is a separate creation to the 'Arsh, the Throne, and is smaller in size. al-Qurṭubī commenting on *al-Kursī* says in his *Tafsīr*: "Prophetic narrations bear evidence that *al-Kursī* is a great creation in front of the Throne and the Throne is greater than it".
- 439 God Almighty's power and capability are inexhaustible.
- 440 This is a great Islamic principle whereby no one is to be coerced to Believe. Instead, both right and wrong have been clearly demarcated for those of good reason to see. The choice of which to follow is left to the person, but the duty of the Believers is to make sure that people know what is right and what is wrong. Ibn 'Āshūr (*al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, 2: 499) opines that this aya immediately follows *Āyat al-Kursī* for good reason. He has it that: "...all that the previous aya contains of the clear proofs of the Oneness and Greatness of the Creator, and the purgation of Godliness from all the impurities that other nations plagued it with, would surely lead those of good reason to accept this religion 'Islam', whose precepts and dictates are quite clear and upright, willingly, without coercion or compulsion".
- 441 *Aṭ-Ṭāghūt* is everything with regards to which people exceed proportionate limits be it worshipped, followed or obeyed. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

and Believes in Allah, has 'indeed' held tight to the surest of ties⁽⁴⁴²⁾; there is no undoing it—Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿257﴾ Allah is the Ally of the Believers; He delivers them from darkness into light⁽⁴⁴³⁾. 'But' Those who Deny, the allies of whom are the false idols; they take them out of light into darkness⁽⁴⁴⁴⁾—these are the company of the Fire, therein they abide forever.

﴿258﴾ ⁽⁴⁴⁵⁾Have you not seen the one⁽⁴⁴⁶⁾ who argued with Ibrāhīm about his Lord, 'only but' that Allah gave him kingship⁽⁴⁴⁷⁾.

وَيُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى
لَا انفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٦﴾
اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ
إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ
الظَّالِمُونَ يُخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى
الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٥٧﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ
أَن آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ

442 A metaphorical tie (or handle) that gives grip to the rope that leads to Allah, i.e. Islam (cf. al-Bukhārī: 3813, Muslim: 2484).

443 The one whose Ally is none but the Almighty God Himself, is helped, supported and guided by Him. He enables that person to walk further and further on the surest road to certitude leaving behind the darkness of loss and breaking through the veils of doubts and vain desires (for which in the original Qur'anic Arabic the intensive plural *zulumāt* (lit. multiple darknesses) is applied. The light of Belief and certainty will become manifest to him, he will be given the empowering faculty of discernment, he will ever-elevate to the highest ranks of Belief, and his heart will see for real the Truth of things (cf. 47: 17). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī, Ibn 'Ashūr, al-Shinqīṭī)

444 The greatest ally of the misguided is none other than Satan himself. He will throw them into the bottomless pit of loss, draw them step by step into Denial and misguidedness until the clouds of darkness thicken around them to the extent that they will see nothing beyond, especially the light of Belief and its evident signs (cf. 4: 116-121, 24: 39-40). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī, Ibn 'Ashūr)

445 Ayas 258-260 give tangible examples of how God delivers the Believers from darkness into light (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr). Such examples fall very much in line with this sura's main theme: to establish firm Belief.

446 He is said to be the Biblical King Nimrod.

447 Such is the nature of despots when gone unchallenged for extended periods of time, they become so megalomaniac that they think that they are God Himself. The Qur'an also speaks of Pharaoh who said to his people: "I am your Lord, Most High" (79: 24).

When Ibrāhīm said: “My Lord is the One Who gives life and causes death”. He said: “I give life and cause death!”⁽⁴⁴⁸⁾ Then Ibrāhīm said: “Then verily Allah brings the sun out from the East; bring it ‘you’ out from the West!” The Denier was dumbstruck—surely Allah does not guide⁽⁴⁴⁹⁾ the unjust ones. ⁽⁴⁵⁰⁾ Or like the one who came upon a town deserted and gone to rack and ruin; he said ‘wondering’: “How will Allah restore this to life after its death!” Allah made him die for a hundred years then He brought him back. He ‘Allah’ said: “How much ‘time’ did you stay?” He said ‘guessing’: “A day or part of it!” He ‘Allah’ said: “Nay, but you stayed for a hundred years. Look then at your food and drink it has not become putrid. ‘But’ Look at your donkey – We will make you a Sign to people – see the bones how We splice them together and clothe them with flesh”. When he was sure, he said: “I know ‘for certain’ that Allah is Able over everything”.

إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ
قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ
الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي
الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٥٨﴾ أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى
قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى
يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ
مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ
قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ
مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ
يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ
آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَانظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ
نُنشِرُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ
لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٥٩﴾

448 Citing his power over people’s fates and lives (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

449 God does not aid with His guidance those whose hearts are bent on Denial. Were they really in search of the Truth, God would surely have led them to the right path. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

450 The previous episode demonstrated God’s Lordship (*Ulūhiyyah*) but this and the next one show His ability to resurrect (*ba’th*) His creation as also prove that God alone is “the One Who gives life and causes death”. (Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿260﴾ 'Or' When Ibrāhīm said: "My Lord, show me how you bring the dead to life". He 'Allah' said: "Did you not Believe!" He said: "Beyond doubt! But that so that my heart will be reassured"⁽⁴⁵¹⁾. "To this he was replied" "Take you then four birds, hold them to you (and cut them to pieces⁽⁴⁵²⁾), then, on every mountain, put a portion of them. Then call them and they will come hurrying to you. And know that Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise".

﴿261﴾ ⁽⁴⁵³⁾The similitude of those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah, is that of a grain 'when planted, out of' which sprouts seven ears; in every ear there are one hundred grains—Allah multiplies for whom

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ ۗ قَالَ أُولَٰئِكَ تُؤْمِنُونَ ۖ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيُظْمِنَ قَلْبِي ۖ قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْأً ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٦١﴾

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةُ حَبًّا ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُضْعَفُ لِمَنْ

451 The Patriarch of Prophets, Abraham, had no doubt whatsoever in his mind about God's ability to resurrect the dead. This is what the Prophet (ﷺ) implied by saying: "We are more likely to doubt than Ibrāhīm" (al-Bukhārī: 4537, Muslim: 151), when he heard that people said Abraham doubted. Scholars are of the opinion that Abraham wanted to reach the highest rank of knowledge, the so-called 'concrete certitude' (*haqq al-yaqīn*), which comes with actually seeing and living through an experience (cf. al-Wāhidi, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Ashūr). Ibn al-Qayyim has it that: "Knowledge is of three ranks: firm knowledge (*'ilm al-yaqīn*) which comes with receiving news: then, what is being told becomes evident to the sight and heart and knowledge becomes exact knowledge (*'ayn al-yaqīn*), and when it is touched and felt it becomes concrete certitude (*haqq al-yaqīn*) (*Madārīj al-Sālikīn*, 1: 469). So Abraham, the beloved of God, knowing that God was likely to grant him his wish, wanted to actually see resurrection in action.

452 In accordance with al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī citing many scholars.

453 Spending in the cause of God in the manner and decorum detailed below is one of the greatest signs that a person truly Believes in resurrection and the Hereafter. Had he not firmly Believed, he would not have spent his livelihood thus (cf. al-Tawhīdī). Such a call to engaging in charity sums up the moral behind stories of resurrection and not living only for this world.

He wishes⁽⁴⁵⁴⁾, Allah is All-Encompassing⁽⁴⁵⁵⁾, All-Knowing.⁽²⁶²⁾ Those who 'sincerely' spend their wealth and do not thereafter mar what they spend with taunts and hurt⁽⁴⁵⁶⁾; theirs is their 'great' reward with their Lord—they will have neither fear nor will they grieve.⁽²⁶³⁾ Kind words and forgiveness⁽⁴⁵⁷⁾, is better than a charity which is followed by hurt—Allah is Free of Need, All-Forbearing.⁽²⁶⁴⁾ You who Believe, do not render your charity void with taunts and hurt, like the one who spends his wealth to show off to people, while Believing not in Allah and the Last Day. His similitude is of a smooth rock on which there is dust, when heavy downpour hits it, it is left bare⁽⁴⁵⁸⁾; they can hold in naught of what they have earned⁽⁴⁵⁹⁾—Allah does not guide those who Deny⁽⁴⁶⁰⁾.

يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَسِعَ عَلَيْهِمُ ﴿٢٦١﴾ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ
 أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَذَكَّرُونَ مَا
 أَنْفَقُوا مَتَا وَلَا آذَى لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ
 وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٦٢﴾ * قَوْلٌ
 مَعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ
 يَتَّبِعَهَا آذَىٰ وَاللَّهُ عَنِّي حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٣﴾ يَأْتِيهَا
 الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يُبْطَلُوا صَدَقَتِهِمْ بِالْمَنِّ
 وَالْآذَىٰ كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِثَاءَ النَّاسِ
 وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ
 صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ
 صَلْدًا لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا
 وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦٤﴾

454 This is due to the fact that spenders do not all have the same degree of sincerity. What they spend also differs in quality and usefulness and how much a charity is needed also determines its worth. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

455 *Wāsi'*, lit. outspread; that is His Generosity is outspread and wide open and no one should think that such a plentiful reward is an exaggeration. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

456 They give charity out willingly, without constantly reminding people and badgering them about it and, thus, hurting them psychologically.

457 People of benevolence are enjoined to be patient and speak kindly to those who seek assistance from them overlooking the discomfort they might have been caused in the process.

458 Soilless and barren, unable to grow plants.

459 Their insincere spending 'in good faith', with which they thought they earned reward, will be blown to nothingness. They will have no harvest to reap in the Hereafter.

460 Due to their insincerity.

﴿265﴾ And the similitude of those who spend their wealth seeking the Pleasure of Allah and believing firmly 'in His reward', is that of a garden on a mound⁽⁴⁶¹⁾ 'when' touched by a downpour, it gives its yield twofold; if no heavy rain falls on it, then a 'mere' drizzle 'would suffice'—Allah is All-Seeing of what you do. ﴿266﴾⁽⁴⁶²⁾ Would one of you wish to have a garden of palm trees and grapevines, through which rivers flow; in it he has all sorts of crops. He gets hit by old age while having 'only but' feeble descendants⁽⁴⁶³⁾, then it 'the garden' gets struck by a whirlwind in which there is fire, and it gets burned up.

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمُ ابْتِغَاءَ
مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيتًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ
جَنَّةٍ يَّرْوَاهُ آبُهَا وَأَيْلُهَا أَكْثَرُ
ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلَّ وَاللَّهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٦٥﴾ أَيُّوَدُ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن
تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ
وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَةٌ ضِعْفًا
فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ

- 461 Gardens, farms and thickets that are on elevated ground are more fertile than lower placed ones due to the fact that their rich soil mostly remains intact, not being depleted or swept away by running water or streams; such gardens are also more exposed to the wind which results in easier pollination and are much more exposed to the sun, the source of light. This is the analogy God draws of the charity of the sincere. No matter how much it is, it grows and prospers. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 462 Here is a third parable demonstrating the three states of givers: the Deniers, the sincere Believers, and those who Believe, but who follow their charity by taunting and hurting the recipient’s feelings, thus rendering their charity ‘void’ (2: 246) (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). They give out in charity and gain tremendous reward for it but it gets hit by the devastating whirlwind of tormenting the needy and burns all down to dust. When it is time to reap the harvest of the wealth spent in ‘good’ deeds, a time when it is most needed, then that owner being too old and infirm and his dependents very young and helpless, just like this imaginary garden, will find it swept away overnight with nothing but sorrow left. On the Day of Judgement they come to their Lord having earned nothing for their charity (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 463 The father’s dependents are in much need of this garden. However, being weak and helpless, they cannot restore it to its former glory, especially now that their father is old and infirm. Their state is a desperate one.

Thus Allah expounds the Signs for you so that you might contemplate. ⁴²⁶⁷ You who Believe, spend out of the best of what you have earned and what We brought out of earth for you⁽⁴⁶⁴⁾; and do not aim for the worthless of it to spend 'in charity', while you 'yourselves' would not take it unless 'disdainfully' with closed eyes—know that Allah is Free of Need, All-Praiseworthy. ⁴²⁶⁸ Satan promises⁽⁴⁶⁵⁾ you poverty, and incites you to immorality⁽⁴⁶⁶⁾. And Allah promises you forgiveness by Him and abundance—verily Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. ⁴²⁶⁹ He 'Allah' gives wisdom⁽⁴⁶⁷⁾ to whoever He wishes; whoever is given wisdom, has been endowed with plentiful goodness—none will contemplate except those of good reason. ⁴²⁷⁰ Whatever 'charity' you spend or vow⁽⁴⁶⁸⁾ you make,

كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَنِّي حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢٦٨﴾ الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدْكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٩﴾ يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٧٠﴾ وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ نَفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُمْ مِنْ نَذْرٍ

464 Crops and minerals (gold, silver and the like). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'īdī)

465 Intimidates people with poverty if they spend their money in charity. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'īdī)

466 *al-fahshā'* signifies all bad and immoral deeds. Ibn al-Qayyim says: "Exegetes unanimously agree that *al-fahshā'* here means *miserliness*" (*Tarīq al-Hijratayn*, p. 375).

467 Spending in the cause of God, seeing the rewards that are in store for those who engage in such charitable acts, is practical wisdom. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'īdī)

468 *Nadhr* is vowing to make obligatory for oneself that which is not, usually in return for a Godly favour. For example, by feeding a number of destitutes at the time of one's marriage.

Allah knows about it—the wrongdoers have no aides⁽⁴⁶⁹⁾. ﴿271﴾ Should you make your charity public, all well and good it is ‘indeed’, but that should you conceal it and give it to the poor is better for you⁽⁴⁷⁰⁾ and ‘Allah’ will atone some of your sins ‘for it’—Allah is Knowledgeable of what you do. ﴿272﴾⁽⁴⁷¹⁾ It is not

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهُ ۗ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿٢٧١﴾ إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَيَعْتَمَّا هِيَ ۗ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۗ وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٧٢﴾ * لَيْسَ

- 469 Those who withhold from giving out what is due, fulfilling their vows, or whose spending and vows are in contradiction to what pleases God, will not be spared His Punishment. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)
- 470 Observing secrecy while giving out voluntary, non-prescribed charity, in particular (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah), to the poor is better than making it public because it ensures the recipient’s dignity is maintained and is closer to sincerity on the part of the giver (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). Among the seven categories of people who will be sheltered under the Shade of God’s Throne, on the Day of Judgement, when there will be no other shade except it, is: “... a man who gives out a charity making it secret, so much so that his left hand would not know how much ‘or what’ his right hand spent”. (al-Bukhārī: 1423, Muslim: 1031)
- 471 Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) explains this aya as follows: “He ‘The Prophet (ﷺ)’ used to command us not to give out charity except to Muslims until this aya was revealed. After it, he commanded us to give charity to whoever asks for it, no matter what religion they follow” (Ibn Abū Ḥātim). He further explains that the reason behind this aya’s revelation was that Muslims were of two minds about giving out charity to their Denying relatives and when they asked the Prophet (ﷺ), he gave them permission and this aya was revealed (al-Bazzār: 5042, al-Ṭabarānī: 12403, al-Wāḍi‘ī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Musnad*: 630). Asmā’ bint Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنها) was visited by her Denying mother, during a truce with the Quraysh. She sought the Prophet’s permission to give charity to her mother and he allowed her (al-Bukhārī: 5979, Muslim: 1003). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “A man said: “I shall give out a charity this night!” He went out with it and put it in the hand of a prostitute. When the morning came people started talking ‘wondrously’ saying: “A charity was given to a prostitute!” The man said: “Thank you God, a prostitute! I shall give out a charity!” He went out with it and put it in the hand of a rich man. When the morning came people started talking ‘wondrously’ saying: “A charity was given to a rich man!” The man said: “Thank you God, a rich man! I shall give out a charity!” He went out with

‘incumbent’ for you ‘Prophet’ to guide them⁽⁴⁷²⁾, but Allah guides whoever He wills. Whatever good you spend is for your ‘own’ selves. You ‘should not’ spend except seeking Allah’s Face⁽⁴⁷³⁾. Whatever good you spend will be paid back fully to you, and you will not be wronged⁽⁴⁷⁴⁾. ﴿273﴾ ‘Give out’ To the poor who are wholly wrapped up in the path of Allah⁽⁴⁷⁵⁾; ‘as’ they cannot move about the land.

عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي
مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَا يُنْفِكُوهُ
وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا
تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُؤْتِ الْيَتِيمَ وَأَنْتُمْ
لَا تَنْظُمُونَ ﴿٢٧٣﴾ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَحْصَرُوا
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ

it and put it in the hand of a burglar. When the morning came people started talking ‘wondrously’ saying: “A charity was given to a burglar!” The man said: “Thank you God, a prostitute, a rich man and a burglar!” Then he was approached and it was said to him: “As for your charity, it has been accepted; the prostitute might use it to give up her profession, the rich man might reflect and take to giving out of his wealth and the burglar might give up his thieving”. (Muslim: 1022). The morality behind the aya is such as to encourage Believers to spend in charity sincerely and in good faith, seeking only God’s pleasure no matter who the recipient of that charity is.

- 472 The Prophet’s mission was to guide people to the right path of God. Guidance here does not denote that of directing people to or showing them the right path (*hidāyat al-irshād*), but rather that of making them actually follow that path (*hidāyat al-tawfīq*). This kind of guidance is left to God alone. (Cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa‘dī)
- 473 You are the ones who will actually benefit from it, first and foremost, should you be truly sincere and seek only God’s Pleasure, aiming to enter Paradise to actually see God’s Most Beautiful Face, which is the greatest Bounty ever. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 474 Neither cheated nor defrauded and you will be rewarded for it precisely. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 475 Although honest charity can be given to anyone, the most deserving of it are Believers who are poor as a result of their having dedicated themselves to the worship of God and, as a result, are held back from earning their livelihoods (al-Rāzī, al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Some great exegetes are of the opinion that these are the ones who are caught up fighting in the cause of God and, thus, cannot be left to engage in other worldly matters (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ṭarīq al-Hijratayn*, p. 377, al-Sa‘dī).

The ignorant thinks them well-off because of their reticence⁽⁴⁷⁶⁾; you will know them by their signs—they do not beg of people importunately. Whatever good you spend, Allah is All-Knowing of it. ⁽²⁷⁴⁾ Those who spend their wealth ‘in charity’ by night and day, secretly and openly, theirs will be their reward from their Lord, they will have neither fear nor will they grieve⁽⁴⁷⁷⁾.

يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ
تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ
إِلْحَاقًا وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٧٤﴾ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ
وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٤﴾

⁽²⁷⁵⁾ ‘While’ Those who devour usury⁽⁴⁷⁸⁾ will only rise up in a way similar to he who is touched by the devil⁽⁴⁷⁹⁾. That for saying: “Trade and usury are the same”; Allah has made trade lawful, and He made usury unlawful. Whoever gets a warning from His Lord and detests⁽⁴⁸⁰⁾, for him what is gone is gone,

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا
يَقُومُ الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا
وَإَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ
مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَاتَّهَىٰ فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ

476 Holding back from begging.

477 They will be saved from trepidation of the future and sorrow over the past, i.e. they will attain what they desire and be spared from what they apprehend. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

478 *Ribā*, a recurrent theme in the Qur’an, is a financial transaction in which the lender loans money out and in return gets the principal capital plus interest. Whereas giving out money in charity is strongly encouraged, as seen in these ayas, usury is considered one of the seven cardinal sins (*al-sab‘ al-mūbiqāt*) in Islam, because it cuts against the grain of the true Believing spirit as expounded in the Qur’an; essentially, it entails exploitation of the economically vulnerable by the strong and resourceful.

479 The image given here, of a person possessed by the devil staggering while standing and walking unsteadily as they are resurrected for the Day of Judgement, is meant to repulse people from such transactions. It is also a just requital because it mimics their insatiable lust for money in this life making them declare lawful what is not, thus twisting the laws ordained by God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

480 Halts dealing in such a transaction.

and Allah will decide His case⁽⁴⁸¹⁾. Whoever backtracks⁽⁴⁸²⁾, these are the company of the Fire, therein they abide forever⁽⁴⁸³⁾. ﴿276﴾ Allah extirpates usury⁽⁴⁸⁴⁾ and fosters⁽⁴⁸⁵⁾ charities—Allah likes not every tenacious Denier, ‘wonted’ committer of sins. ﴿277﴾ Those who Believe, do good deeds, keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms, theirs will be ‘justly’ their reward from their Lord, they will have neither fear nor will they grieve⁽⁴⁸⁶⁾. ﴿278﴾ You who Believe, be Mindful of Allah and relinquish what is left of ‘outstanding’ usury⁽⁴⁸⁷⁾, if you are ‘really’ Believers.

وَأْمُرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٧٦﴾ يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُزِيلُ الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٢٧٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٨﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٧٩﴾

481 Judging by his intentions and motives. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Baghawī)

482 Goes back to dealing in usury knowing how sinful it is. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Baghawī)

483 Rebellious, sinning Believers will not stay in Hellfire indefinitely. Instead, they will abide in it for a very long period of time and for as long as it takes to cleanse them of their sins. (Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Sa‘dī)

484 One way to interpret this is that God would not bless or prosper the money gained through such an immoral transaction (cf. 30: 39). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

485 *Yurbī* (lit. to grow and cultivate translated here as foster) is semantically related to *ribā* (usury; originally meaning ‘increase’). It is used strategically here by way of correcting this misnomer, showing what blessed investment, which is likely to grow and flourish, really is: namely, charity (cf. 2: 245). Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever gives in charity the equal of a date ‘of palm’ from a good source – Allah only accepts what is good – Allah will receive it with His Right Hand. Then He will nurture it for him as much as one of you cares for his young foal, until it becomes as big as a mountain”. (al-Bukhārī: 1410) Charity is described in the Qur’an as a trade with God that will not go to ruin (cf. 35: 29).

486 Cf. 2: 274 above.

487 The remaining usurious interest due on transactions conducted before usury was declared unlawful. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

﴿279﴾ But if you do not do so, then be warned of a war by Allah and His Messenger. But if you give ‘usury’ up, ‘duly’ yours is your principal ‘capital’—you will not do wrong nor will you be wronged⁽⁴⁸⁸⁾. ﴿280﴾ But if he ‘the indebted’ is ‘financially’ constrained, then ‘grant him’ a deferral until a time of ease ‘for him’. But that you shall remit ‘the debt as’ charity is better for you, if only but you knew⁽⁴⁸⁹⁾. ﴿281﴾ Be Mindful of a Day on which you shall be returned to Allah and every soul shall be paid in full what it earned—they will not be wronged.

﴿282﴾ ⁽⁴⁹⁰⁾ You who Believe, when you enter into a debt ‘agreement’ for a specified term, then write it down; and let a scribe, write it down between you even-handedly. Let no scribe refuse writing as Allah has taught him⁽⁴⁹¹⁾;

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
وَإِنْ نُبِئْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ زُجُومٌ مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ
وَلَا تَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٢٧٩﴾ وَإِنْ كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ
فَنظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ وَأَنْ تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨٠﴾ وَاتَّقُوا
يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ
نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨١﴾

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدِينٍ إِلَىٰ
أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَالْكِتُوبَةُ بَيْنَكُمْ
كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ أَنْ
يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ

488 Not doing wrong by receiving interest and not being wronged against by preserving your principal capital in full. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘adī)

489 Abū Qatādah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever is hopeful that Allah will spare him the hardships of the Day of Judgement, then let him grant deferral to a constrained debtor, or relieve him ‘altogether’”. (Muslim: 1563)

490 This is known as *āyat ad-Dayn*, the aya of Debt, and it is the longest aya in the Qur’an. It rounds off and explains, just in as much detail, the preceding discourse about financial dealings: charity – encouraging Believers to be ever-ready to help the needy and come to their aid; usury – warning them against exploiting people’s weaknesses; and now debt – ensuring that it is minutely written down and sealed off (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

491 Being learned is a great favour from God.

let him write and let the one who owes the right⁽⁴⁹²⁾ dictate; and let him be Mindful of Allah, his Lord, and not hold in any of it⁽⁴⁹³⁾. But if the one who owes the right is incompetent⁽⁴⁹⁴⁾, weak⁽⁴⁹⁵⁾, or cannot dictate⁽⁴⁹⁶⁾, then let his agent⁽⁴⁹⁷⁾ dictate fairly. Call in to witness 'the agreement' two of your men-folk; but if not two men then 'be it' one man and two women whom you approve of as witnesses; perchance one of them 'women' slips up, the other would remind her. Let no witnesses refuse when asked 'to bear witness'. Do not be weary of writing it⁽⁴⁹⁸⁾ down, be it small or large, marking its specified term. This⁽⁴⁹⁹⁾ is fairer before Allah, surer for upholding testimony⁽⁵⁰⁰⁾, and more likely to eliminate doubtfulness; unless that it is an immediate trade 'transaction' that you run among yourselves;

فَلْيَكْتُبْ وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا يَبْخَسْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمْلَ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَسْتَشْهِدُ شَاهِدَيْنِ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا وَلَا تَسْمَعُوا أَنْ تَكْتُمُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشُّهَدَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ

492 The debtor, to underline his full awareness and commitment to settle the debt. (al-Sa'dī)

493 That is not confessing the whole sum of the debt.

494 The great student of Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه), Mujāhid (quoted in al-Ṭabarī), is of the opinion that *al-safīh* here is one who is not informed enough to know how to dictate such a legal deed in the correct manner.

495 Young or frail. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

496 Unable to articulate because of a temporal or permanent impairment. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

497 The one in charge of his affairs. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

498 The agreement.

499 Writing debts down.

500 That you should not doubt the truthfulness of a testimony. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

then you will not be guilty of sin that you do not write it down, yet bring in those who bear witness when you engage in trade; let no harm come to ʿ or be caused by ʿ either scribe or witness, should you do this, then this is transgression on your part; be Mindful of Allah; Allah teaches you—Allah is All-Knowing of everything. ﴿283﴾ If you are on a journey, and you cannot find a scribe, then pledges⁽⁵⁰¹⁾ ʿ should be handed in; ʿ but ʿ if you trust each other⁽⁵⁰²⁾, let the one who is trusted fulfil his trust and be Mindful of Allah, his Lord. Do not withhold testimony⁽⁵⁰³⁾; whoever withholds it, then his heart is sinful—Allah is All-Knowing of what you do.

﴿284﴾ To Allah belongs all that is in the Heavens and Earth. Should you reveal what lurks within your souls⁽⁵⁰⁴⁾ or hide it, Allah will hold you accountable for it⁽⁵⁰⁵⁾;

فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا ۗ وَأَشْهَدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ ۚ وَإِنْ تَفَعَّلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فَسُوقٌ بِكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٣﴾ * وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهْنَ مَقْبُوضَهُ ۗ فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي أُؤْتِمِنَ أَمَدَّتَهُ ۖ وَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ ۗ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٤﴾

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَإِنْ تُبَدُّوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوا بِحَسْبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ

501 A deposit of personal property as security for the debt which is liable to forfeiture in the event of default (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Saʿdī).

502 That is both parties trust each other enough not to write a deed, bring witnesses, or exchange bonds.

503 In a scenario where the indebted fails to honour his word and denies the debt, anyone who witnessed the deal has to come forward and speak the truth.

504 The thoughts that go on in one's mind.

505 God favoured the Believing community by not holding them to account for the thoughts that go on in their minds, unless they put them into action. Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allah will not hold my nation accountable for internal dialogue, 'the thoughts that go on in their minds', unless they speak it out or bring it into action". (al-Bukhārī: 2528; Muslim: 127)

He then absolves whom He wishes and Punishes whom He wishes—surely Allah is Able over everything. ﴿285﴾ (506) The Messenger Believes in what was sent down to him by His Lord as do the Believers; they all Believe in Allah, His angels, Books, Messengers – “We make no distinction between His Messengers” ‘they say’ – and they say: “We listen and we obey. Your forgiveness, our Lord ‘we beseech’; to you is ‘our’ return”. ﴿286﴾ Allah would not charge a soul with that which it cannot bear; to it belongs what it earned and against it is held what it has committed.

فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٨٥﴾ ءَأَمِنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِن رَّبِّهِ ۚ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ ءَأَمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ ۚ وَكُتُبِهِ ۚ وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ لَأَنفَرُوا بَيْنَ أَجْنَاسٍ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۚ غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨٦﴾ لَا يَكْفُرُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا أَوْسَعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ

- 506 About the virtue of these two last ayas of *al-Baqarah*, Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “While Gabriel was sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ), he heard a creaking sound from above, lifted his head and said: “This is a Heavenly door. It has been opened today and never ever has it been opened before”. Then an angel descended to Earth through it. He ‘Gabriel’ said: “This is an angel who has descended to Earth and never ever has he descended before”. The angel greeted them and said: “I bring you glad tidings of two lights that you are given and never have they been given to any Prophet before you: *Fātiḥat al-Kitāb* ‘The Opening of the Book’ and the endings of *al-Baqarah*. You shall never recite a letter of any of them without your Prayer being answered”. (Muslim: 806) Also ‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Āmir (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever recites the last two ayas of *al-Baqarah*, they will suffice him ‘as a shield from the evil’.” (al-Bukhārī: 5008) ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “When the Messenger of Allah ascended to heaven on the nocturnal journey, he was made to reach the Lote Tree of Extremity (*Sidrat al-Muntahā*)... The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was given three things: the five obligatory Prayers, the endings of *al-Baqarah* and whoever does not Associate anything with Allah of His creation will be absolved from even the thrusters, ‘major sins that thrust people in Hellfire’”. (Muslim: 173) As a whole, these two ayas constitute a declaration of unshakable Faith. The kind of Faith Islam nurtures as evident in *al-Baqarah*.

'We pray to you' "Our Lord, do not charge us for what we forgot or erred 'in doing'; our Lord, do not lay on us what is burdensome as you did unto those who came before us; our Lord, do not burden us with that which we have no power over; forgive us, absolve us and have mercy on us. You are our Ally; make us prevail over the Denying people".

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا
وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحْمِلْنَا مَا
لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا
وَأَرْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٨٦﴾





سُورَةُ آلِ عِمْرَانَ

Āl 'Imrān

(The Family of 'Imrān)



Āl ‘Imrān (The Family of ‘Imrān)

Title: it takes its name from the Family of ‘Imrān, who, along with the House of Ibrāhīm (mentioned in Aya 33), are cited as moral, virtuous paragons chosen by Allah because of their devotion to His worship. They are to be emulated by all humans.

Merit: the meritorious status of this sura is on a par with that of *al-Baqarah*. In fact, they are both known as *al-Zahrāwān* (lit. The Two Luminous Suras). These two suras will, along with the rest of the Qur’anic, come to intercede on behalf of the one who claims them as his own on the Day of Judgement; yet they are set apart from the other suras of the Qur’an. An-Nawwās Ibn Sam‘ān (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The Qur’an, along with the people who used to adhere to its commandments, will be brought on the Day of Judgement, with *al-Baqarah* and *Āl ‘Imrān* at the front... as if they were two dark clouds, or two shades between them is light, or two huge flocks of birds, flying closely together arguing on behalf of he who owns them”. (Muslim: 805)

Theme: the main theme of this sura is to further nurture the Believing spirit and bring it to maturity. It encourages holding fast to the teachings and dictates of Islam, by proving Allah’s Oneness with Signs and evidences. All this is coupled with a refutation of the doubts cast on Islam and its precepts.

Key: the sura is an answer to the Believers’ Prayer, found at the very end of *al-Baqarah*; to prevail over the Deniers. It begins with the ultimate declaration of Faith, “*Allah, there is no god but Him*”, which constitutes the same words found in the Qur’an’s greatest aya, the Aya of *al-Kursī*; the very word over which the epic battle of Belief and Denial is fought. Here, Belief and Denial come head to head in the battles of words and arguments against the People of the Book, and that of taking up arms against the Arab pagans. In both confrontations, Belief emerges victorious and establishes itself firmly on the world stage. In order to win this victory, Believers are repeatedly and strongly encouraged to remain steadfast and be Mindful.

The overall milieu in which *al-Baqarah* is set carries over here and is expounded upon with further illustrations and more details. In the same vein, it takes the early Madinan period as the background against

which it plays out its themes and characters: the People of the Book, the Deniers, the Battles of Badr and Uḥud, building the desired Muslim character and introducing new laws for the community. Moreover, it is useful to realize that the reason for the revelation of a number of passages of *Āl 'Imrān* is to refute and rebut the arguments of the learned Arabian Christians, better known as the Christians of Najrān, who came to Madinah to debate with the Prophet (ﷺ) regarding matters related to Faith. The Jews of Madinah are also addressed at length.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

﴿١﴾ *Alif, Lām, Mīm*⁽¹⁾. ﴿٢﴾ Allah, there is no god but Him, the Ever-Living, the All-Sufficient⁽²⁾. ﴿٣﴾ He sent down to you ‘Muhammad’ the Book⁽³⁾ with the Truth confirming what came before it; He ‘also’ sent down⁽⁴⁾ the Torah and the Evangel⁽⁵⁾ ﴿٤﴾ earlier as guidance for people and He sent down the Distinguisher⁽⁶⁾.

الرَّ ۙ لِلّٰهِ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّوْمُ ﴿٢﴾ نَزَّلَ
عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
وَاَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْاِنْجِيلَ ﴿٣﴾ مِنْ قَبْلُ هٰدِيَ
لِلنَّاسِ وَاَنْزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ ﴿٤﴾

- 1 These disjointed letters are meant as a challenge to those who argue with the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers regarding the Truthfulness of the Message, as they highlight the Qur’an’s inimitable nature (cf. 2: 1).
- 2 Cf. 2: 255. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Allah’s Greatest Names are found in these two ayas: “Your God is one God. There is no god but him — *ar-Rahmān* (the Most Beneficent), *ar-Rahīm* (the Most Merciful)” (2: 163) and: “The beginning of *Āl ‘Imrān*: “*Alif, Lām, Mīm. Allah, there is no god but Him, al-Ḥayy* (the Ever-Living), *al-Qayyūm* (the All-Sufficient)””. (al-Tirmidhī: 3478)
- 3 The Qur’an.
- 4 The difference between *nazzala* ‘sent down’ which is mentioned with regards to the Book of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and *anzala*, also translated here as ‘sent down’, which is said with regards to the Torah and the Evangel, is that the first, *nazzala* signifies that the action took place in installments over a long period of time whilst the second, *anzala*, happened once and as a whole (cf. al-Ṭabarī).
- 5 *al-Injīl* (Evangel; Gospel) is the Arabic name for the Book that was given to Jesus (ﷺ). It is mentioned in the Qur’an as one of the Scriptures that were revealed by God; the others being: the *Ṣuḥuf* (Scrolls) of Abraham and Moses (87: 19), *al-Zabūr* - possibly the Psalms (4: 163, 17:55) - that were given to Prophet David, *al-Tawrāt* (the Torah), and the Qur’an itself, alternatively referred to as *al-Kitāb*, the Book. *al-Injīl*, in Islam, is not to be identified with the extant biblical ‘New Testament’; rather it is believed, as told in the Qur’an, to have been revealed to Prophet Jesus (ﷺ) as a whole (cf. 5: 46). It is also believed to have either been lost or corrupted beyond recognition. Needless to say, the same goes for the Torah, to a great extent.
- 6 Ibn Taymiyyah says: “The word *al-furqān* signifies that which separates Truth from falsehood. To illustrate, take as example the Signs with which the Prophets were sent: Moses’ serpent, white hand and the splitting of the

Indeed those who Deny the Signs⁽⁷⁾ of Allah will have a severe Punishment—Allah is All-Prevailing, capable of vengeance⁽⁸⁾.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ
وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ ﴿٧﴾

⁽⁵⁾ Indeed nothing, neither in Earth nor in the Heavens, is hidden from Allah. ⁽⁶⁾ He is the One Who forms you in ‘your mothers’ wombs as He wills—there is no god but Him, the All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَى عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٥﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ

⁽⁷⁾ He is the One Who sent down the Book to you ‘Muhammad’; among its Signs⁽⁹⁾ are those which are impregnable⁽¹⁰⁾ – these are the

sea, etc. By extension, the Qur’an is a *furqān* because it is a great Sign of the Prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ). It is also a *furqān* in that it sets apart Truth from falsehood, as mentioned in: “*Glorified is He Who sent al-Furqān (the Distinguisher/Qur’an) to His servant*”. (25:1) This is why a number of scholars opine that *al-furqān* here ‘Aya 3:4’ is the Qur’an itself. The word *al-furqān* further means God’s victory to His Prophets and Believing servants and the vanquishing of their enemies, because, with this support, God separates His allies from His enemies: “...*the day of furqān (the Battle of Uḥud) when the two parties met...*” (8:41). (Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 27:227) al-Zamakhsharī (1:336), al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī (*al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, 3:22-23) and al-Qāsimī (2: 255) also opine that *al-furqān* is another epithet of the Qur’an used here to further highlight its high standing. The Qur’an is referred to as *al-Furqān* in this instance to set the scene for the confrontation that unfolds in this sura (cf. the ‘Key’ in the Introduction to this sura), and to underline the prevalence of Belief over Denial, which are set widely apart in and by the Qur’an.

7 Revelations.

8 *Dhū intiqām* (revenge, vengeance, retribution), is not an absolute Attribute or Name of Almighty God, but it is bound by limitation to certain instances of rebellion against the Almighty’s will (Ibn ‘Uthaymīn). Hence why I have chosen here not to capitalize it as I always do with other Divine Names or Attributes.

9 Ayas, Qur’anic verses.

10 *Muḥkamāt*, lit. closely-knit. The meaning of all such Qur’anic ayas is distinct and clear, free from doubt and uncertainty. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

foundation of the Book⁽¹¹⁾ – and others which are equivocal⁽¹²⁾. Those in whose hearts is deviance follow the equivocal ‘portions’ of it, seeking ‘to cause’ quandary and aim for ‘manipulating’ its interpretation—none knows its ‘true’ interpretation except Allah⁽¹³⁾. Those who are firm in knowledge⁽¹⁴⁾ say: “We Believe in it; all of it comes from our Lord”—none will contemplate ‘this’ except the people of sound reason. ﴿8﴾ ‘Those of firm knowledge pray:’ “Our Lord, do not cause our hearts to swerve⁽¹⁵⁾ after You have guided us and grant us a mercy from Your own—You are indeed the Munificent Giver;

هُنَّ اُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَاخْرُ مُتَشَدِّهَاتٌ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ
 فِي قُلُوْبِهِمْ رَيْعٌ فَيَتَّبِعُوْنَ مَا تَشَبَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ
 الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَاْوِيْلِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَاْوِيْلَهُ اِلَّا
 اللّٰهُ وَالرَّاسِخُوْنَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُوْلُوْنَ ءَاَمَنَّا بِهِ ۗ
 كُلُّ مَرْءٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ اِلَّا اُولُوْ
 الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾ رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْ قُلُوْبَنَا بَعْدَ اِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا
 وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ﴿٨﴾

- 11 *Umm al-Kitāb*, lit. the Mother of the Book, i.e. the great majority of the Qur’an’s ayas and on which a true understanding of it is built. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 12 *Mutashābihāt*, lit. similar, and whereby the meaning of some Qur’anic ayas is unclear to some or most people. Interpretation of these, however, is known by referring to those ayas that are impregnable, *muḥkamāt*. Yet, as said in the aya itself, there still remain some whose meaning is only known by Allah.
- 13 Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) says: “The Qur’an has four aspects (*awjuh*): *tafsīr* (exegesis), which the learned know; *al-‘arabiyyah* (the language) which ‘well-versed’ Arabs understand; *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* (permitted and forbidden things), of which no one is allowed to be ignorant of; and *al-ta’wīl* (interpretation), which only God knows”. (Muqātil, *Tafsīr Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān*, 1:27)
- 14 People of true knowledge are lauded here with the worthy epithet “*al-rāsikhūna fī al-‘ilm*”, the well-grounded in knowledge. Unlike others, they know enough and are so humble as to say: “God knows best!”
- 15 Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) said that: “The Prophet (ﷺ) used to pray most by saying: “O He Who changes hearts, make my heart firm in Your religion” (*yā Muqallib al-qulūb, thabbit qalbī ‘alā dīnika*). When she asked him the reason for this, he (ﷺ) replied, saying: “Umm Salamah, know that every human’s heart is between two Fingers of Allah’s. Whoever He wills, He makes steadfast, and Whoever He wills He causes to deviate”. (al-Tirmidhī: 3522)

﴿9﴾ our Lord, You will surely gather 'all' people on a Day⁽¹⁶⁾ in which there is no doubt—verily Allah does not break His appointment”.

﴿10﴾ Those who Deny, nothing – neither their wealth nor their children – will spare them from Allah—those are fuel for the Fire. ﴿11﴾ ‘Just’ like the habitual ways of the people of Pharaoh and those ‘who came’ before them⁽¹⁷⁾; they Denied our Signs and Allah seized them ‘in Punishment’ for their sins—indeed Allah is severe in Punishment.

﴿12﴾ Say to the Deniers: “You shall be overpowered⁽¹⁸⁾ and herded to Hellfire—indeed it is the worst of beds. ﴿13﴾ There is a Sign⁽¹⁹⁾ for you in two parties who met ‘in battle’: one fights in the cause of Allah, ‘while’ the other is Denying. They ‘the Believers’ saw them ‘the Deniers’ twice their number before their own eyes.

رَبَّنَا اِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ اِنَّ اِلٰهًا لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿٩﴾

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَنْ نُّغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ اَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا اَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنْ اِلٰهِ شَيْئًا وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ وُقُوْدُ النَّارِ ﴿١٠﴾ كَذٰبِ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَاَلَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَّبُوْا بٰيٰتِنَا فَاَخَذْنَاهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ وَاَللّٰهُ سَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١١﴾

قُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا سَعٰبَةٌ وَّخَشْرَةٌ اِلٰى جَهَنَّمَ وِبَسَّ الْمِهَادِ ﴿١٢﴾ قَدْ كٰنَتْ لَكُمْ اٰيَةٌ فِيْ فِعْتِيْنِ التَّقَاتِ فَاِنَّهُ تَقَاتِلُ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَاُخْرٰى كَافِرَةٌ يَّرَوْنَهَا مِمَّا رَآى الْعَيْنُ

16 The Day of Judgement.

17 These are cited here as an example of how the laws and canons of God make the days of victory and defeat alternate between Believers and Deniers; a fact mentioned later in Aya 137. The example of Pharaoh, the mightiest of all Deniers, who fought against the frailest of Believers, the people of Moses, heartens the early Believing community of Madinah, who, by worldly measures, were always the weaker side in their early confrontations. The aya that follows gives them the good news of a Godly promise of victory.

18 Beaten in battle by the Believers (cf. 58: 21, 40: 51). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

19 The Battle of Badr is evidence enough of God’s fulfilment of His promise to the Believers that they will defeat the Deniers.

Allah supports with His victory whoever He wills—indeed in this there is insight to the people of reason⁽²⁰⁾.

﴿14﴾ Prettified for mankind are objects of desire⁽²¹⁾: women, children, hoards upon hoards of gold and silver, fine⁽²²⁾ steeds, cattle and ploughing grounds; these are the pleasures of this worldly life, but with Allah lies the best of returns. ﴿15﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “Shall I tell you what is better than this? For the Mindful with their Lord are Gardens under which rivers flow, in which they eternally abide; for them in these are purified spouses, and Pleasure⁽²³⁾ from Allah—Allah is All-Seeing of ‘His’ servants.

وَاللّٰهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصْرِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّاُولِي الْاَبْصٰرِ ﴿١٣﴾
 زَيْنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوٰتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ
 وَالْبَنِيْنَ وَالْقَنَاطِرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ
 وَالْفِئَصَةِ وَالْحَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْاَنْعَامِ
 وَالْحَرْثِ ذٰلِكَ مَتَعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللّٰهُ
 عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَتَابِ ﴿١٤﴾ * قُلْ اُوۡنِيۡتُكُمْ
 بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ ذٰلِكُمْ لِلَّذِيۡنَ اتَّقَوْۤا عِنۡدَ رَبِّهِمْ
 جَنَّٰتٌ تَجْرِيۡ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيۡنَ
 فِيۡهَا وَاَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ
 وَاللّٰهُ بَصِيۡرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿١٥﴾

- 20 The Believers were made to realize prior to locking swords with the Deniers that the latter’s forces were actually double their own numbers and, by purely worldly standards, this meant that the party so much less in number would eventually be defeated. Yet, Divine Wisdom made them see this with their own eyes in such a way as to only further strengthen their Faith; they were totally dependent upon God for assistance and knew for sure that victory comes only from Him. (Ibn Kathīr)
- 21 It is human nature to desire such things as are alluring. Yet the next two ayas explain that true Faith requires resisting worldly temptations, putting them second to seeking God’s Pleasure, and devoting oneself to God. For all this, the reward is eternal joy and bliss.
- 22 *Musawwamah*, marked by their beauty. (al-Baghawī)
- 23 Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Allah Almighty will call the people of Paradise: ‘People of Paradise!’ They will reply: ‘All pleasure is Yours our Lord, yes!’” He says: “Are you satisfied?” They reply: “Why wouldn’t we be when You gave us what You did not give any other of your creation!” He says: “I shall give you ‘yet’ better than that!” They reply: “Lord! What is better than that?” He says: “I bestow My Pleasure upon you and I shall never be Displeased with you again”.” (al-Bukhārī: 6549, Muslim: 2829)

﴿16﴾ They are the ones who say: “Our Lord, indeed we have Believed! Forgive us our sins, and spare us the torment of Hellfire”.
 ﴿17﴾ “They are” The forbearing, the truthful, the utterly devout, the ‘charitably’ spending, and the ‘persistently’ asking for forgiveness in the late-night hours⁽²⁴⁾. ﴿18﴾ Allah bears witness that there is no god but Him⁽²⁵⁾; the angels and the people of knowledge ‘bear witness to that too and that’ He is the upholder of justice. There is no god but Him, the All-Prevailing the All-Wise.

﴿19﴾ The religion with Allah is *Islam*⁽²⁶⁾. The ones who were given the Book only differed after ‘true’ knowledge came to them, out of transgression among themselves. Whoever Denies Allah’s Signs, then Allah is swift in reckoning. ﴿20﴾ If they argue with you ‘Muhammad’, say: “I have devoutly submitted my face⁽²⁷⁾

الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اٰتِنَا اٰمَنًا فَاعْفِرْ
 لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا
 وَارْحَمْنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٦﴾
 وَالصّٰدِقِيْنَ وَالْقٰنِتِيْنَ وَالْمُنْفِقِيْنَ وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِيْنَ
 بِالْاَسْحٰرِ ﴿١٧﴾ شَهِدَ اللّٰهُ اَنَّهُ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ
 وَالْمَلٰئِكَةُ وَاُولُو الْعِلْمِ قٰمِيْمًا بِالْقِسْطِ
 لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿١٨﴾

اِنَّ الدِّيْنَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ الْاِسْلَامُ وَمَا اٰخْتَلَفَ
 الْاٰلِيْنَ اَوْ لُوْا الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
 جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ
 بِآيٰتِ اللّٰهِ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩﴾
 فَاِنْ حَاجُّوْكَ فَقُلْ اَسْمَعْتُ وَاُطِيعُ

24 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Our Lord, glory be His, descends every night to the lowest Heaven, when only the last third of it remains, and He says: “Would there be one who supplicates to Me so that I may answer him? Would there be one who asks of Me so that I may give him? Would there be one who seeks My forgiveness so that I may forgive him?””. (al-Bukhārī: 1145, Muslim: 758)

25 Testifying to the Oneness of God is the perfect epitome of Belief.

26 Cf. 3:85. Ibn Taymiyyah (*Jāmi‘ al-Masā’il*, 6:220) says: “Islam is surrender to Allah alone. It conveys two meanings: yielding and surrender, and devoting one’s surrender to Allah alone”.

27 The ‘face’ is used metonymically to mean a person’s whole self. It is chosen to represent the whole here because it is the most dignified part of the human body.

to Allah along with those who follow me”. Say to those who were given the Book and the illiterates⁽²⁸⁾: “Do you devoutly submit?” If they devoutly submit then they are guided, but if they turn away, then you are tasked with nothing more than delivering ‘the Message’ and Allah is indeed All-Seeing of ‘His’ servants.

لِلَّهِ وَمَنْ اتَّبَعَهُ وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَاللَّذِينَ فِي سُلُوكِهِمْ اِسْمَاءٌ اَمْسِمُوهُمْ فَاِنْ اَسْمَاؤُهُمْ اَهْتَدَوْا وَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاتِّمَّا عَلَيَّكَ الْبَلٰغُ وَاللّٰهُ بِصِرِّهِمْ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠﴾

﴿21﴾ Those who Deny Allah’s Signs, kill the Prophets unjustifiably⁽²⁹⁾ and kill those people who enjoy justice; give them tidings⁽³⁰⁾ of a painful Punishment. ﴿22﴾ These are the ones whose deeds in this worldly life and in the Hereafter will come to nothing—they will have no helpers. ﴿23﴾ Have you ‘Muhammad’ not seen these who were given a portion of the Book⁽³¹⁾, when called to the Book of Allah for judgement among them, a party of them turn their backs ‘to it’ unheeding.

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَكْفُرُوْنَ بِآيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَيَقْتُلُوْنَ الَّذِيْنَ بَعَثْنَا فِيْهِمْ رِسٰلًا لِّعَلَّ هُمْ يَحْذَرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ حَبِطَتْ اَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآٰخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَّاصِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ الَّذِيْنَ تَرٰ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوْا نَصِيْبًا مِّنَ الْكِتٰبِ يُدْعَوْنَ اِلَى الْكِتٰبِ اِلٰلّٰهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَرِيْقًا مِّنْهُمْ يَبْغُوْنَ وَفَرِيْقًا مِّنْهُمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾

- 28 *al-Ummiyyūn*, the Arab idolaters, who had neither a guiding Book nor any grasp of reading and writing, except very few of them. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 101)
- 29 Prophets, who are chosen by God from among the seething sea of humanity and set as examples for the rest, can never be killed on proper, justifiable grounds. However, *bi ghayr haqq* (unjustifiably) is mentioned here to further highlight the repulsiveness of such a hideous act and that it is carried out carelessly and unreservedly (Ibn ‘Āshūr). According to the New Testament, Jesus said: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee” (Matthew xxiii, 37). See also Matthew xxiii, 34-35, Luke xi, 51, both of which refer to the murder of Zachariah.
- 30 *Bashshir-hum*, literally means ‘give them good tidings’, and is used here rhetorically by way of mocking them. (Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 31 Reference here is being made to the Torah.

﴿24﴾ This is for their saying: “The Fire will only touch us for a few days”—what they used to fabricate in their religion⁽³²⁾ has deceived them. ﴿25﴾ How ‘would their state be’ when We gather them on a Day⁽³³⁾ in which there is no doubt; every soul shall be requited what it earned in full, and they shall not be wronged.

﴿26﴾ Say: “O Allah, Owner of kingship. You accord kingship to whom You will and wrench⁽³⁴⁾ kingship away from whom You will. You honour whom You will and you disgrace whom You will. In your Hand is all good, You are Able over everything”. ﴿27﴾ “You merge night into day and You merge day into night. You cause the living to come out of the dead and You cause the dead to come out of the living. And You shower with favours whom You will without account”.

ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ قَالُوْا لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ اِلاَّ اَيَّامًا
مَّعْدُوٰدَاتٍ وَّعَرَّهْمُ فِيْ دِيْنِهِمْ مَا كَانُوْا
يَقْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَكَيْفَ اِذَا جَمَعْنَاهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ
فِيْهِ وَّوُفِّيْتَ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ
لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾

قُلِ اللّٰهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ
تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعْزِزُ مَنْ
تَشَاءُ وَتُذَلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِیَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ اِنَّكَ عَلٰی
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ تُوَلِّجُ الْاَيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ
وَتُوَلِّجُ النَّهَارَ فِي الْاَيْلِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ
الْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَتَرْزُقُ مَنْ
تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢٧﴾

32 Such as falsely saying that they will only enter Fire, as Punishment for their sins, for a few days and then they will be entered into Paradise.

33 The Day of Judgement.

34 This image, evoked by the verb ‘tanzi‘u’, is that of forcefully tearing away something precious from the tight bear hug of someone holding to it dearly. It is a very fitting image of how those in power are attached to their thrones and never succumb to leaving them. Yet God’s overpowering Will comes between them.

﴿28﴾ No Believers shall take the Deniers as allies⁽³⁵⁾ rather than the Believers. Whoever does this, he has nothing to do with Allah⁽³⁶⁾; except when you seek refuge from them⁽³⁷⁾. Allah warns you ‘to beware’ of Himself—to Allah shall be the ‘final’ return. ﴿29﴾ Should you hide what lurks in your chests⁽³⁸⁾ or reveal it, Allah knows it and He knows what is in the Heavens and Earth—indeed Allah is Able over everything. ﴿30﴾ On the Day in which every soul shall find all the good that it did ‘made’ available ‘for it’; ‘but’ every foul ‘deed’ that it has committed, it wishes it would be at a great distance from it ‘the foul deed’; Allah warns you ‘to beware’ of Himself—Allah is Most Compassionate to ‘His’ servants.

لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَاتَةَ وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ. وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨﴾
 قُلْ إِنْ تَخَفُوا مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ أَوْ بُدُّوا يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ. وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٣٠﴾

35 *Yattakhidh awliyā’*, ‘take as helpers and aides those whom are held dear, cherished and supported. Deniers are not to be taken as *awliyā’* over and above the Believers (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa’dī). Commenting on his translation of 4:139, Muhammad Asad in his Qur’an translation has this to say: “However, the term ... *awliyā’*... does not indicate, in this context, merely political alliances. More than anything else, it obviously alludes to a ‘moral alliance’ with the deniers of the Truth: that is to say, to an adoption of their way of life in preference to the way of life of the Believers, in the hope of being ‘honoured’, or accepted as equals, by the former. Since an imitation of the way of life of confirmed unbelievers must obviously conflict with the moral principles demanded by true Faith, it unavoidably leads to a gradual abandonment of those principles”.

36 God disowns those who do such a thing.
 37 Fearing infliction of harm by the Deniers, Muslims are given license here to placate the Deniers with their tongues, yet their hearts are to remain firm in Faith. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, al-Sa’dī)
 38 The truth that your hearts hide with regards to your relationship with the Deniers. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿31﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "If you 'really' love Allah then follow me⁽³⁹⁾ and Allah shall love you and forgive your sins—Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful". ﴿32﴾ Say: "Obey Allah and the Messenger, but if they take to their heels, then Allah likes not the Deniers".

﴿33﴾ Allah chose 'for honour' Adam, Noah, the House of Ibrāhīm and the Family of 'Imrān over 'and above' all people⁽⁴⁰⁾. ﴿34﴾ A line of descent, they take after each other—Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿35﴾ 'Mention' When the woman⁽⁴¹⁾ of 'Imrān said: "My Lord, I have vowed what is in my belly⁽⁴²⁾ entirely 'dedicated' for You⁽⁴³⁾, so accept 'it' from me. You are the All-Hearing, All-Knowing⁽⁴⁴⁾".

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

﴿٣٣﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٦﴾

39 The true sign of one's love for Allah is to follow Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and adhere to his teachings and Sunnah.

40 Here, God mentions those whom He honours as they show people the way to His love (Riḍā): Adam whom He created with His own Hands, blew his soul into him, made the angels prostrate themselves to him, taught him the names of everything, and made him father of humanity; Prophet Noah (ﷺ) whom He honoured by making him the first bearer of His Message to humanity and made his posterity remain where all other bloodlines vanished; Prophet Abraham (ﷺ), the beloved of God, and his descendants among whom is a great number of Prophets, including Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ); the Family of 'Imrān: 'Imrān and his wife, their daughter Mary and her son Jesus (ﷺ), who is one of the greatest Prophets of humanity. (al-Ṭabarānī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

41 His wife.

42 Womb.

43 The carried child is to be dedicated to the worship of Allah and is to spend an entire life tending places of worship. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr)

44 Of the truthfulness of my intentions.

﴿36﴾ When she delivered her⁽⁴⁵⁾, she said: “My Lord, I have delivered her a female – Allah knew best what she delivered – and a male is not like a female⁽⁴⁶⁾. I name her Maryam ‘Mary’ and I ask for her and her posterity refuge with You from the outcast⁽⁴⁷⁾ Satan”⁽⁴⁸⁾. ﴿37﴾ Then her Lord accepted her cherishingly, made her blossom handsomely, and entrusted her to ‘the charge of’ Zakariyyā ‘Zachariah’⁽⁴⁹⁾. Whenever Zakariyyā entered the sanctum upon her, he found her provided for. He said: “Maryam, where did you get this from?” She said: “It is from Allah. Indeed Allah provides for whomever He wishes without account”.

فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ اِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا اُنْثٰى وَاَللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ وَلَئِن كَادَ لَا اُنْثِي وَاِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَاِنِّي اُحْسِبُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُوْلٍ حَسَنٍ وَاَنْذَبَهَا نَسًا وَاَحْسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا كَرِيْمًا الْمِحْرَابِ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَمْرُؤُا اِنِّ لِكَ هٰذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

﴿38﴾ There ‘and then’⁽⁵⁰⁾ Zakariyyā prayed to his Lord ‘saying’: “My Lord grant me a righteous posterity, You are All-Hearing of prayers”.

هٰذَا لِكَيْ دَعَا كَرِيْمًا رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً اِنَّكَ سَمِيْعُ الدُّعَاِ ﴿٣٨﴾

- 45 The baby girl.
- 46 She said this apologetically because she had wished for a male child rather than a female one because males in her culture were better suited for the purpose she intended, namely, to look after a temple. But God had His own plans for the baby girl.
- 47 *Ar-Rajīm*, lit. one who is ejected. Satan is so named because he was thrown out of Paradise.
- 48 God answered her prayers. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Every newborn child is touched by the devil and they start off by wailing because of this touch, except Maryam and her son”. (al-Bukhārī: 3231, Muslim: 2366)
- 49 Cf. 44. That Zachariah, the great servant of God, was made Mary’s guardian and mentor is one of the signs that God accepted her mother’s pledge to Him. (Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 50 Upon this Zachariah’s hopes were revived. Seeing that Mary was provided with fruits out of their season, he wished for fruits of his loins out of season; him being old and his wife being infertile.

﴿39﴾ The angels called him while he was Praying in the sanctum saying that: “Allah gives you the good news of Yaḥyā⁽⁵¹⁾, a believer in a Word from Allah⁽⁵²⁾, a master, ‘utterly’ chaste⁽⁵³⁾ and a Prophet among the virtuous ‘Prophets’”.

﴿40﴾ He ‘Zakariyyā’ said: “My Lord, how can I have a boy when old age has overcome me and my wife is barren?” He⁽⁵⁴⁾ said: “Thus Allah does what He wills”. ﴿41﴾ He ‘Zakariyyā’ said: “My Lord, make me a sign for this”. He said: “Your sign is that you would not talk to people for three days except using gestures—mention your Lord abundantly and glorify ‘Him’⁽⁵⁵⁾ late and early ‘in the day’”.

﴿42﴾ ‘Mention’ When the angels said: “Maryam, Allah picked you, purified⁽⁵⁶⁾ you and favoured you over the women of the world”.

فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيَى مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَكُونُ لِي عُلْمٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ آيَةُ آيَاتِكَ آلَا تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمْرًا وَادْكُرُّ رَبَّكَ كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعُشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَرِ ﴿٤١﴾

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَمْرُؤُا إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

51 As a son.

52 The ‘Word of Allah’ is Jesus who was conceived by God’s Word and command. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

53 *Ḥaṣūr*, lit. withholder, living ascetically and abstaining from sins and staying aloof from the desires of the flesh. (Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah)

54 It is not specified who this reply came from. It is perceivable, however, that God communicated with him through the conduit of an angel. It is also worth noting here that Zachariah did not address the angel or ask him for anything but rather, being fully cognizant that God is ever near and answering of Prayers, directed his Prayers to God and not the intermediary.

55 *Sabbih*, lit. glorify ‘your Lord’, is to extol, exalt and venerate God. He was commanded to dedicate himself to God at all times.

56 That God made her purity inherent to her and known to her immediate community was for the very good reason to preempt any aspersions that would be cast on her when the time came for her delivery of Jesus. (Riḍā)

﴿43﴾ “Maryam, devote yourself ‘obediently’ to your Lord, prostrate and bow down along with those who bow down ‘in Prayer’”⁽⁵⁷⁾. ﴿44﴾ These are some accounts of the unknown⁽⁵⁸⁾, We reveal them to you. You were not with them when they threw their pens⁽⁵⁹⁾ as to who would take charge of Maryam. You were not with them when they disputed.

يَمْرَمَ أَقْبَىٰ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَسْجُدِي وَأَرْكَعِي
مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ
إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُلْقُونَ أَقْلَمَهُمْ
أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ
يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

﴿45﴾ When the angels said: “Maryam, Allah gives you the good news of a word from Him⁽⁶⁰⁾; his name is the Messiah, ‘Īsā, son of Maryam; honourable in the worldly life and the Hereafter, and among those drawn near⁽⁶¹⁾”. ﴿46﴾ “He talks to people while in the cradle⁽⁶²⁾, and as a grown man⁽⁶³⁾; and he is one of the righteous”.

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ
بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾
وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

- 57 In return for honouring her over all other women, Mary is told to devote herself to God. (al-Sa‘dī)
- 58 *al-Ghayb*, lit. the Unseen, what is beyond the reach of perception. Such stories, in the manner and detail told here, were not known to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his community. This is a Sign from God signifying that Muhammad (ﷺ) conveyed nothing of his own and that all was inspired by God; the accounts of Mary and her mother, Zachariah, John and Jesus given here are different from the narratives prevalent at the time. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 59 *Yulqūna aqlāmahum*, lit. to throw their pens. It was their habit at the time to draw lots by casting reeds, which were sharpened and used as pens.
- 60 Jesus was not conceived by any human act of procreation but rather, like Adam, through God’s commanding Word: Be! Thus he is called “the Word of God”. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 61 *al-Muqarrabīn*, lit. the drawn near, are the select few who are close to God.
- 62 He was made able to talk in the very early suckling age as a Sign to Mary’s people (cf. 19: 29-33).
- 63 After attaining Messengership, to call them to God.

﴿47﴾ She said: “My Lord, how can I have a child⁽⁶⁴⁾, while no human ‘has ever’ touched⁽⁶⁵⁾ me?” He⁽⁶⁶⁾ said: “Thus Allah creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says: “Be!” and it is”.
 ﴿48﴾ “He ‘Allah’ teaches him the book⁽⁶⁷⁾, wisdom⁽⁶⁸⁾, the Torah and the Evangel”.
 ﴿49﴾ “A Messenger to the Children of Israel ‘announcing to them’ that: “I have come to you with a Sign⁽⁶⁹⁾ from your Lord that: I form for you the like of the shape of a bird from clay and blow ‘my breath’ into it and it becomes a ‘living’ bird with Allah’s permission; I cure the born blind, the leper and bring the dead to life with Allah’s permission; I tell you of what you eat and what you store in your homes⁽⁷⁰⁾—indeed in these ‘miracles’ is a Sign for you if only you were Believers””.

قَالَتْ رَبِّ اَنۡىۤ يَكُوۡنُ لِىۤ وَوَلَدٌ لِّمَنۡ سَمِىۤىۡ بِبَتۡرَٔ
 قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ اَللّٰهُ يَخۡلُقۡ مَا يَشَآءُ اِذَا قَضٰى اَمۡرًا
 فَاِنۡمَآ يَقُوۡلُ لَهُ رُكۡنٌ فَيَكُوۡنُ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَيُعَلِّمُهٗ الْكِتٰبَ
 وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوۡرٰتَہٗ وَالۡاِنۡجِيۡلَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَرَسُوۡلًا
 اِلٰىۤ اَبۡنِىۡۤ اِمۡرَءٍ يٰۤاِىۤ قَدۡ جِئۡتُكُمۡ بِبَآيَةِ
 تَرۡسٍ رَّبِّكُمۡ اَنۡىۤ اَخۡلَقَ لَكُمۡ مِّنَ الطَّيۡنِ
 كَهَيۡئَةِ الطَّيۡرِ فَاَنۡفُخۡ فِيۡهٖ فَيَكُوۡنُ طَيۡرًا يٰۤاِذۡنِ
 اَللّٰهِ وَاُنۡبِئِىۡۤ اَلۡاَكۡمَمَہٗ وَالۡاَبۡرِصَ وَاُحۡىِ
 الْمَوۡتَۙ اِذۡنِ اَللّٰهِ وَاُنۡبِئۡكُمۡ بِمَا تَاۡكُلُوۡنَ وَمَا
 تَدۡخُرُوۡنَ فِىۡ بُيُوۡتِكُمۡ اِنَّ فِىۡ ذٰلِكَ لَآيٰةً لَّكُمۡ
 اِنۡ كُنۡتُمۡ مُّؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ﴿٤٩﴾

64 *Walad* is child irrespective of gender. al-Biqā‘ī (*Naẓm al-Durar*, 4: 400) explains that Mary, unlike Zachariah who said: “*ghulam*-boy”, said so incredulously because, understandably, she was of a mind that conceiving a child without a meeting between a man and a woman was simply impossible.

65 Mary only managed to allude, quite euphemistically, to sex. This is a concrete example of her exemplary upbringing—‘handsome blossoming’.

66 The angel who was used as a conduit of communication between God and Mary.

67 How to read and write. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

68 Made wise and discerning.

69 The following miraculous, supernatural acts are Signs of his Truthfulness. ‘Sign’ is used here as a generic noun in the singular form although the Signs told here are more than one. (cf. al-Rāzī)

70 Even this seemingly simple act defies human capacity and is an indicator of a person’s extraordinary capability. It could have been meant to address a wider audience who might just show up and ask for a ‘casual’ sign, and after receiving it would be more receptive to the Message.

﴿50﴾ “And I have come to confirm what came before me of the Torah, and that I shall make lawful to you some of what was forbidden for you. I came to you with a Sign from your Lord, so be Mindful of Allah and obey me”.

﴿51﴾ “Allah is verily my Lord and yours, so worship Him—this is a straight path⁽⁷¹⁾”.

﴿52﴾ When ‘Īsā sensed⁽⁷²⁾ their⁽⁷³⁾ ‘ardent’ Denial, he said: “Who are my helpers ‘in the way’ to Allah?”⁽⁷⁴⁾ The disciples⁽⁷⁵⁾ said: “We are the helpers of ‘the way of’ Allah. We Believe in Allah. And bear witness that we are devoutly surrendered⁽⁷⁶⁾ ‘to Him’”. ﴿53﴾ “Our Lord, we have Believed in what you have brought down⁽⁷⁷⁾ and we have followed the Messenger, so write us down among the witnesses⁽⁷⁸⁾”.

وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيَّنَّ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ
وَلِأَحِلَّ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَأَطِيعُوا ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ
هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾

* فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عِيسَىٰ مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ
مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ
نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْهَدُ بِأَنَّ
مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ رَبَّنَا ءِمْتَابِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ
وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

71 He charted out the way to God’s Pleasure clearly to them.

72 *Aḥassa*, translated literally here, means realized. (al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 52)

73 The Deniers among the Children of Israel.

74 Those who are willing to help him carry out the mission.

75 *al-Hawāriyyūn* (sig. *hawārī*) are Jesus’ closest companions. The term was later applied to all those who are close followers of Prophets. It is said that they were so called, among other things, because they used to ‘*yuḥawwirūna*’ (to whiten) robes and other garments, i.e. bleach whites through washing as a sign of their purity. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p.464)

76 *Muslimūn*, lit. Muslims.

77 The Evangel.

78 Those who testify to the Truthfulness of the Messages coming from God.

﴿54﴾ They plotted and Allah planned—Allah is verily the best of planners⁽⁷⁹⁾. ﴿55﴾ When Allah said: “‘Isā, I shall bring your term ‘on Earth’ to an end, elevate you to Me⁽⁸⁰⁾, purify you from those who Denied⁽⁸¹⁾ and make those who follow you ‘prevail’ over those who Deny until the Day of Judgement⁽⁸²⁾. Then your ‘humans’ return will be to Me and I shall judge between you over that which you used to differ”. ﴿56﴾ “As to those who Denied⁽⁸³⁾, I shall Punish them severely in this worldly life, and in the Hereafter, they shall have no helpers”. ﴿57﴾ “As to those who Believed, and did good deeds, He⁽⁸⁴⁾ shall pay them their rewards in full—Allah likes not the wrongdoers”.

وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾
 إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنِي مَرْيَمَ كَفَرُوا وَجَاعَلُ
 الْآيَاتِ وَمُطَهِّرُهُكَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَجَاعَلُ
 الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى
 يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأَحْكُمُ
 بَيْنَكُمْ فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فَأَمَّا
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَاَعِدْهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فِي
 الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾
 وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
 فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَجِبُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

79 The Deniers among the Children of Israel schemed to kill Jesus (ﷺ) but God had other plans: He prevented them from seizing Jesus and instead facilitated that they seized a look-alike without their realizing it (cf. 4: 157-159). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr)

80 He was raised, both body and soul, to the Heavens. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, 4: 323, Ibn ‘Uthaymīn)

81 Save you from the evil of the Deniers. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāsiṭī, Ibn Kathīr)

82 This is a promise from God that true Believers who follow the Message and the path of the Prophets shall always have the upper hand. It is also a glad tidings from God to Jesus (ﷺ) whereby people of high aspirations care not only for what is immediate to them but also for generations to come. (al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, 4: 421)

83 The ones who refused to accept Jesus’ Message.

84 Notice the pronoun shift in this instance. The shift between the first and third person pronouns is meant to signify loftiness and authority. (al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, 3: 216)

﴿58﴾ This⁽⁸⁵⁾ 'is what' We recite to you as Signs and 'a testimony to the Truthfulness' of the Wise Reminder⁽⁸⁶⁾.

ذَٰلِكَ نَتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ
الْحَكِيمِ ﴿٥٨﴾

﴿59﴾ Indeed the example of 'Īsā with Allah is like that of Adam; He created him from dust and said: "Be!" and he was".⁽⁶⁰⁾ 'This is' The Truth 'coming' from your Lord, so be not one of the doubters.
﴿61﴾ Whoever argues with you regarding him⁽⁸⁷⁾ after the knowledge that came to you, say 'to them': "Come along and let us call our children and yours, our women and yours and ourselves and yours and then pray earnestly that Allah brings down His Damnation upon the liars".⁽⁶²⁾ This is indeed the true narration; there is no god 'whatsoever' but Allah—indeed Allah is the All-Prevailing, All-Wise.⁽⁶³⁾ But if they take to their heels, then Allah knows well the corrupters.

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ
خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٥٩﴾
الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُنَ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾
فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ
فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا
وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ
فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ إِنَّا هَدَيْنَا
لَهُوَ الْقَصَصُ الْحَقُّ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ
بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾

﴿64﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "People of the Book⁽⁸⁸⁾, come to a common word⁽⁸⁹⁾ between us and you,

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ
سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ

85 These stories of old were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to prove to people, particularly those who argued with him with regards to these matters, the Truthfulness of his Message and the Qur'an.
86 *al-Dhikr al-Hakīm*, lit. the sagacious mention, is the Qur'an.
87 Jesus (ﷺ). (al-Wāhidī)
88 The Jews and the Christians.
89 *Kalimatīn sawā'*, a standard, equal footing, mutually agreed upon word, i.e. the unadulterated Monotheistic declaration of Faith: "There is no god but God". Here all three parties, Muslims, Jews and Christians, are asked to jointly declare it while 'truly' Believing it. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāsiṭī, Ibn Kathīr)

that we will not worship anything besides Allah; do not Associate anything with Him⁽⁹⁰⁾; do not take each other as Lords besides Allah⁽⁹¹⁾. If they take to their heels, then say 'Believers': "Bear you witness that we are devoutly surrendered⁽⁹²⁾ 'to Him'".⁽⁶⁵⁾ "People of the Book, why do you argue regarding Ibrāhīm⁽⁹³⁾, while 'both' the Torah and the Evangel were only sent down 'long' after him?⁽⁹⁴⁾ Do you have no reason?"⁽⁶⁶⁾ "Here you are; you have argued about that of which you have knowledge, 'but' why would you argue about that of which you have no knowledge⁽⁹⁵⁾? Allah knows and you do not know".

الْاَتَّعْبُدِ اِلَّا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكْ بِهٖ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ
بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا اَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا
فَقُولُوْا اَشْهَدُوْا بِاَنَّا مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ يٰۤاَهْلَ
الْكِتٰبِ لِمَ تُحَاجُّوْنَ فِىْ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمَا اُنزِلَتْ
التَّوْرَةُ وَالْاِنْجِيْلُ اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖۙ اَفَلَا
تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ هٰٓءَانَتُمْ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ حٰجَجْتُمْ فِىْمَا
كُفِرْتُمْ بِهٖۙ عِلْمٌ فَتِمَّ تُحَاجُّوْنَ فِىْمَا لَيْسَ
لَكُمْ بِهٖۙ عِلْمٌ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾

90 Hold them as gods besides God.

91 Who are worshipped besides God.

92 *Muslimūn*, lit. Muslims. The ones who totally surrender and devote themselves to God are the true Believers. True Belief is based on the foundation of worshipping God alone without claiming false deities besides Him, and following the example of the Prophet (ﷺ). Note that Muslims, just like Jesus' disciples before, were required to declare to the Deniers that they are "devoutly surrendered/ submitted" to God—they do not put their desires, whims, status, wealth or families before God's worship: "Say: *"If your parents, children, brothers, spouses, clans, hard earned money, a trade for which you fear damage, and homes that you adore are favoured to you over Allah, His Messenger, and striving in His cause, then lie in waiting until Allah brings His Command to pass—Allah guides not the transgressors"* (9: 24).

93 Both the Jews and the Christians claimed Abraham as their own. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

94 That is after Abraham's time. All their arguments about Abraham were based on apocryphal stories and not solid, authentic accounts.

95 Regarding Abraham's true Faith. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurtubī)

﴿67﴾ Ibrāhīm was neither a Jew nor was he a Christian, but he was rightly oriented⁽⁹⁶⁾, devoutly surrendered⁽⁹⁷⁾ and was not among the Associators. ﴿68﴾ Indeed those who can claim Ibrāhīm most are those who ‘truly’ followed him, ‘as well as’ this Prophet and the Believers⁽⁹⁸⁾—Allah is the Ally of the Believers.

﴿69﴾ A faction of the People of the Book would love to mislead you—‘but’ they only mislead themselves without realizing it. ﴿70﴾ “People of the Book, why do you Deny Allah’s Signs, while you bear witness ‘to their Truth’?⁽⁹⁹⁾” ﴿71﴾ “People of the Book, why do you confuse Truth with falsehood, and suppress the Truth knowingly?”⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

مَا كَانَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلٰكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُّسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾
 اِنْ اَوْلٰى النَّاسِ بِاِبْرٰهِيْمَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْهُ وَهٰذَا السَّبِيْحُ وَالَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا وَاللّٰهُ وَاٰلِهٖ الْمَوْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾

وَدَّتْ طٰٓئِفَةٌ مِّنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ لَوِ يُضِلُّوْكُمْ وَمَا يُضِلُّوْنَ اِلَّا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ يٰٓاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُوْنَ بِآيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَاَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ يٰٓاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لِمَ تَتْلُوْنَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْفُرُوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ وَاَنْتُمْ تَعْمٰوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾

- 96 *Hanīf*, is a very rich term but basically it means a pristine Believer. The basic semantic meaning of the root *h-n-f* is inclination towards uprightness and eschewing crookedness.
- 97 *Musliman*, lit. Muslim. The theme of true Belief (*Islām*) is carried on here.
- 98 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Believing community around him, have more right to Abraham than any other nation, because they are the ones who truly follow his path unwaveringly. A true follower of the religion of Abraham is a truthful Monotheist; he worships God alone without the slightest form of Association (polytheism).
- 99 Here they are reproached for publicly Denying the Truth with which Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) came to them, while they have it written in their Books but hide it from people.
- 100 In Ayas 64, 65, 66, 70 and 71 those who were given the Scripture are enticingly called by the honorific epithet, ‘People of the Book’, and gently implored to listen to reason.

﴿72﴾ A faction of the People of the Book ‘connivingly’ said: “Believe in what was sent down to the Believers early in the day, and then Deny it at the end of it⁽¹⁰¹⁾. So that they ‘Believers’ may retract”⁽¹⁰²⁾. ﴿73﴾ “And confide only in those who follow your religion⁽¹⁰³⁾—Say ‘Muhammad’: “‘True’ Guidance is surely the guidance of Allah”⁽¹⁰⁴⁾—lest that anyone would be given the like of what you were given, or that they should use it as an argument against you in front of your Lord”⁽¹⁰⁵⁾. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Grace⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ is in the Hand of Allah, He bestows it unto whomever He wills—Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing”.

وَقَالَتْ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ ءَامَنُوا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ عَلَيَّ الْيَتِيمَ ءَامَنُوا وَجْهَ النَّهَارِ وَكَفَرُوا ءَاخِرَهُ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا لِمَن تَبِعَ دِينَكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْهُدَىٰ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ أَن يُوَفَّىٰ أَحَدٌ مِّمَّا أُوتِيتُمْ أَوْ يُجَازِكُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَسِعَ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴿٧٣﴾

101 At a later time in the day.

102 This is a privileged glimpse given to the Prophet (ﷺ) by God into the ways and wiles of his antagonists. In order to sow the seed of doubt in the minds of Believers, they hatched the plot of claiming to embrace Faith after giving the matter some thought, only to disclaim it as untrue shortly thereafter, seemingly as a result of much consideration and insider knowledge. They hoped that this would cause some Believers to waver on the ground that they would see these so-called knowledgeable people abandon the religion in such a way. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

103 They took a pledge to reveal their secrets and the Truth of what their Books really say only to those who follow their way and religion.

104 This is the reply to the Believers’ detractors: guidance is in the Hand of God, and whatever you do will be of no avail if He does not wish it to happen (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr). This parenthetical interjection is meant to emphasize that their mischievous efforts and devious plans will be thwarted prematurely, even before they have the chance to bring them into action. (al-ALūsī)

105 They fear that people, if taught what their Books really say, would be on an equal footing with them in terms of knowledge, so they hid it, fearing either to lose this advantageous privilege or that it be used in argument against them. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

106 Guidance to Belief and the Straight Path. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

﴿74﴾ He singles out for His Mercy whomever He wills—great is Allah’s Grace!

يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٤﴾

﴿75﴾ Of the People of the Book are those whom if you entrust with hoards ‘of wealth’⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ they would restore it back to you, and ‘there are however’ of them others whom if entrusted with a ‘single’ dinar they would not restore it back to you unless you run after them ‘for it’. This ‘they do’ because they say: “We will not be held accountable for what we do to the illiterates⁽¹⁰⁸⁾”. They ascribe ‘such’ fabrications to Allah willingly! ﴿76﴾ Nay but ‘better are’ those who honour their pledge and are Mindful—Allah loves the Mindful.

* وَمِنَ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَن إِن تَأْمَنَّهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ مِّنَ إِن تَأْمَنَّهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَا يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا ذَلِكَ يَأْتِيهِمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ بَلَىٰ مَن أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ وَاتَّقَىٰ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

﴿77﴾ Those who trade off Allah’s pledge and their oaths⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ for a pittance, will have nothing to claim in the Hereafter and Allah will not talk to them; neither will He look at them nor purify them⁽¹¹⁰⁾— theirs is a painful Punishment.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ بَشَّرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأِيمَانِهِمْ تَمَنَّا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

107 *Qinṭār*, is a huge amount of money, the exact measure of which is subject to debate. (al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, 1: 88; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 1: 28)

108 *al-Ummiyūn*, the Arabs, who had no grasp of reading and writing, except a very few. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 101)

109 This pledge and oath is explained in Aya 81 below; that is, to Believe in the Prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) and support him. Yet the ruling applies to all those who break their binding oaths to gain what is not rightly theirs (cf. *Riḍā*).

110 Absolve their sins.

﴿78﴾ A party of them twist their tongues with the Book⁽¹¹¹⁾ so that you may think it 'part' of the Book; it is not 'part' of the Book! And they say: "It is from Allah!" But it is not from Allah! They ascribe such fabrications to Allah advertently! ﴿79﴾ It is not 'possible' for a human, to whom Allah gives the Book, 'sound' judgement and Prophethood, to then say to people: "Be my servants instead of Allah"⁽¹¹²⁾. But 'he would say': "Be godly, because of the Book you teach and because of your 'diligent' study 'of it'". ﴿80﴾ He would not bid you to take the angels and the Prophets as Lords⁽¹¹³⁾. Would he order you into Denial after you have become devoutly submitted 'Believers'?

﴿81﴾ 'Mention' When Allah took the oath of 'all' the Prophets⁽¹¹⁴⁾:

وَأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفِرِيقًا يُلوِّنُونَ السِّتْرَ بِأَلْسِنَتِهِم بِالْكِتَابِ
لِيَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ
الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ
وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ
اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَ وَالنَّبُوءَةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ
لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ
كُونُوا رَبَّاتِنِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ
الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَا
يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ
أَزْوَاجًا أَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْكَفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ
مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

وَأِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ

111 The Book meant here is the Torah. "Twist their tongues with the Book", means they distort it by either muddling the pronunciation of its words or manipulating and misinterpreting its meaning. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'īdī)

112 al-Bayhaqī in *al-Dalā'il* (quoted in *al-Tafsīr al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2:43) documents that Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Abū Rāfi' al-Qarazī said: "When the learned Jews and Christians came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he called them to Islam, they replied: "Do you Muhammad want us to worship you just like the Christians worship Jesus, son of Mary?"... The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I seek refuge by Allah that I shall call to the worship of any other besides Him. This is not what He sent me for!"

113 Worshipped besides God.

114 Ibn 'Aṭīyyah (1: 463) says: "It is possible that this oath was taken at the time the offspring of Adam were taken out of his back as breaths 'cf. 7: 172', or taken from each Prophet at the time of his mission".

“For the Book and Wisdom I granted you, when a Messenger⁽¹¹⁵⁾ comes to you confirming what you have, you should Believe in him and support him”. ‘Allah’ Said: “Do you affirm and take My solemn pledge for it?” They ‘the Prophets’ said: “We approve”. He ‘Allah’ said: “Then bear witness⁽¹¹⁶⁾ and I bear witness with you ‘to this’”. ⁽⁸²⁾ Whoever takes to his heels after this ‘solemn pledge’, then these are the transgressors.

⁽⁸³⁾ Would they seek other than the religion of Allah while to Him devoutly submitted whoever is on Earth and the Heavens willingly and unwillingly—and to Him they shall return?

لَمَّا آتَيْنٰكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ ۗ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ ۗ قَالَ ؕ اَقْرَبْتُمْ وَاَحَدْتُمْ عَلٰى ذٰلِكُمْ اِصْرِي ۗ قَالُوْا اَقْرَبْنَا قَالٍ فَاَشْهَدُوْا وَاَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَمَنْ تَوَلَّى بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ فَاُوْلٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾

اَفَغَيَّرَ دِيْنَ اللّٰهِ يَبْعُوْنَ ۗ وَلَهُمْ اَسْمَآءٌ مِّنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَاِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾

115 al-Wāhidī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Taymiyyah (*al-Zuhd wa al-Wara’ wa al-‘Ibādah*, p. 157) are of the opinion that this Messenger is Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Alternatively, but less plausibly, because unlike Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) most Prophets were sent for a specific nation and only for a specified period of time, it could mean that each and every Prophet was made to take a solemn oath, and in turn bid his followers to Believe in and support any Prophet that comes with the like of what they have. The theme carries on from earlier ayas highlighting that although the People of the Book were fully aware of the Truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), because he was specifically mentioned in their books, they nonetheless hid the Truth for ulterior motives fearing to lose their privileged status. The Qur’an brings the scenario to a close as follows: “Those who follow the illiterate ‘gentile’ Prophet whom they find written in the Torah and the Evangel; he calls them to what is virtuous and warns them against vile deeds, makes lawful to them good things and forbids for them what is impure, and relieves them from their burdens and shackles. Those who Believe in him, bolster and support him and follow the Light that came with him, these are the Successful” (7: 157).

116 This pledge is to be honoured not only by the Prophets but, by extension, their followers too. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Sa’idī)

﴿84﴾ Say 'Muhammad⁽¹¹⁷⁾': "We Believe in Allah; what was sent down to us; what was sent down to Ibrāhīm 'Abraham', Ismā'il 'Ishmael', Ishāq 'Isaac', Ya'qūb 'Jacob' and the Tribes⁽¹¹⁸⁾; and what was given to Mūsā 'Moses', 'Īsā 'Jesus' and the Prophets from their Lord, we make no distinction between them and to Him we are devoutly submitted".

﴿85﴾ Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam⁽¹¹⁹⁾, it will not be accepted from him and in the Hereafter he is one of the Losers.

﴿86﴾ How would Allah guide 'those' people who Denied after their Belief? They had borne witness that the Messenger⁽¹²⁰⁾ is true and clear evidences had come to them—Allah does not guide the unjust people.

قُلْ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ ر_Mُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَشَهِدُوا أَنَّ الرَّسُولَ حَقٌّ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

117 The main addressee is Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) but his followers are included by default. Hence, the plural form of the verbs in the dictated declaration.

118 *al-Asbāt* are the different tribes of the Children of Israel who are the offspring of the twelve sons of Jacob, in other words, Israel. (Ibn Kathīr)

119 'Islam' here, which may very well carry traces of its linguistic meaning, surrender/submission, is the religion of Muhammad (ﷺ). It is the final, most perfect Message that came from God: "Today 'the day of 'Arafāt' I have finalized your religion for you, perfected My Favour on you and I approve Islam as a religion for you" (5:3). The next aya, 3: 86, in which the to-be-followed 'Messenger' is again evoked, further underlines this. al-Biqā'ī (*Naẓm al-Durar*, 475) says: "...islām 'the lexical term and its derivatives' is mentioned repeatedly here 'in these thematically related ayas' because it falls within the bounds of the solemn pledge that was taken for the to-be-followed Messenger 'who was always to come'—he is to be followed with total surrender 'unconditionally'".

120 Muhammad (ﷺ). The epithet 'Messenger' reverberates the one mentioned in Aya 81 above.

﴿87﴾ The requital of those is that the damnation of Allah, the angels and all humans is on them.⁽¹²¹⁾

﴿88﴾ Forever they reside therein 'Hellfire'; their punishment will not be lightened nor will they be given respite. ﴿89﴾ Except those who repent⁽¹²²⁾ afterwards and make amends, then Allah is certainly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.⁽¹²³⁾

﴿90﴾ Those who Denied after their Belief and then increased in Denial, their repentance will not be accepted⁽¹²⁴⁾—those are the misguided.

أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ أَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ
يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ تَمُرُّ أَرْجُلُهُمْ
عُرْفًا لَنْ يُقْبَلَ تَوْبَتُهُمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الضَّالُّونَ ﴿٩٠﴾

- 121 This severe requital is meant to further underline the significance of Islam, the accepted religion in God's Sight, on the one hand, and the gravity of renouncing it, on the other. (al-Rāzī).
- 122 *At-Tawbah*, lit. repentance, is not only to feel regret for something one has done, but also to acknowledge the sinfulness of one's past action or conduct by showing sincere remorse and undertaking to reform in the future. It comprises both feeling sorry for one's sins and committing to not fall into them again.
- 123 According to Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) the reason for the revelation of Ayas 86-89 is that: "A man of the Anṣār professed Islam then he renounced it and became a Denier again. Then he felt sorry and sent to his folks to ask the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) if he could revert to Islam. They went to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said: "So-and-so has repented and he asks if he can come back to Islam". Then the ayas: "How will Allah guide those who Denied after their Belief?" until: "All-Forgiving, Most Merciful", were revealed. He was sent after and became Muslim again". (al-Nasā'ī: 4068, Aḥmad: 2218, Ibn Ḥibbān: 4477, al-Ḥākim: 8092)
- 124 As for those who renounce Islam and, by time, grow stauncher in Denial until the hour of death befalls them, their extemporaneous, spur-of-the-moment repentance will not be accepted (cf. 4: 17-18). Had this repentance been made earlier and more sincerely, it could have been accepted (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī). Ibn Taymiyyah says that this is the opinion of the majority of scholars (*Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 1: 202).

﴿91﴾ Those who Deny and die as Deniers, 'as much as' Earth's fill of gold will not be accepted from any of them⁽¹²⁵⁾, even if he were to ransom himself with it—for those is a painful Punishment and they will have no helpers.

﴿92﴾ You 'Believers' will not gain 'the reward of' sincere piety⁽¹²⁶⁾ until you spend out of that which you love. Whatever you spend, Allah knows about it very well.

﴿93﴾ All food was lawful for the Children of Israel except what Israel 'Jacob' made unlawful for

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَرَاءُ فَلَنْ
يُقْبَلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمْ مِلءُ الْأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَلَوْ
أَقْتَدَى بِهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ وَمَا لَهُمْ
مَنْ تَصِيرِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ لَنْ تَسَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا
مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ ۚ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٢﴾

*كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حَلَالًا لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَائِيلُ

125 Cf. 5:36 and 57:15. Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "On the Day of Judgement, Almighty Allah poses a question to the one who is being tormented the least among the denizens of Hellfire: "If you possess all that the Earth holds, would you ransom yourself with it?" He says: "Yes!" Then Allah says: "I wanted from you much less than that—that you do not Associate any other 'in worship' with Me, but you were bent on Associating with Me!" (al-Bukhārī: 6557, Muslim: 2805)

126 *al-Birr* is sincere piety which leads to great bounty, God's Grace and Paradise. Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Adhere to Truthfulness '*aṣ-ṣidq*' for it leads to sincere piety '*al-birr*', and sincere piety leads to Paradise". (al-Bukhārī: 6094, Muslim: 2607) *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, based on the opinion of the great Qur'an exegetes – Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās, 'Aṭā', Mujāhid, 'Amr Ibn Maẓmūn and As-Suddī – actually has it that *al-birr* is Paradise itself in this instance. al-Qurṭubī says that rationalization of this opinion is such that it means: "You will not attain the reward of sincere piety until...". By contrast to the fate of the Deniers whose good deeds in this world, whatever these might be, will be of no avail to them, Believers are encouraged to choose for spending the best of theirs in order to be admitted into God's great Grace of Paradise. Sincere piety and its reward, Paradise, is only attained when one prevails over one's self, loves God more than anything else and is willing to sacrifice everything in His cause.

himself⁽¹²⁷⁾ before the Torah was sent down. Say 'Muhammad': "Bring the Torah and recite it if you are truthful!"⁽¹²⁸⁾ ⁽⁹⁴⁾ Whoever fabricates lies against Allah after this, then those are the Unjust.

عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ ۗ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرَةُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا
بِالتَّوْرَةِ فَآتَوْهَا ۖ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾
فَمَنْ أَفْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكِبْرَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

127 After establishing Islam as the religion to be followed, the argument with the People of the Book continues here. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “A group of Jews came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said to him: “Abū al-Qāsim, tell us about a few things none but a real Prophet knows about”. Among the questions they asked was: “What food did Israel make unlawful for himself before the Torah was revealed?” He replied: “I ask you by Allah Who sent down the Torah to Moses, do you not know that Israel became very ill and his illness dragged on for a long time then he vowed that he would make unlawful for himself the drink and food he loved most should Allah cure him? The best food for him was camel meat and the drink he loved most was camel milk”. They said: “By Allah you are correct!”” (Aḥmad: 2471; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*: 13012)

128 Saʿdī comments: “This is in answer to the Jews who claimed that abrogation is not lawful. They Denied the Messengership of Jesus and Muhammad (ﷺ) on this basis because they came with laws and doctrines different from those found in the Torah. So it is only fair to use their own Scripture in argument against them; this whereby the ruling that all types of food were lawful for the Children of Israel except what he made unlawful to himself and to which his children followed suit, that is before the Torah was sent down to Moses. But when the Torah was sent down, it made unlawful to them other types of food besides those made unlawful earlier by Israel. ‘Thus the ruling that all food was lawful to them was abrogated by the Torah itself.’ Then Allah commanded his Messenger (ﷺ) to ask them to bring the Torah and recite it if they persisted in denying”. (Cf. also al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ighāthat al-Lahfān*, 2:321) In his translation of this aya Muhammad Asad has the following annotation: “This is a reference to the unwarranted Jewish belief that the Mosaic food restrictions were an eternal law decreed by God. As against this claim, the Qur’an stresses that no food restrictions had been imposed before the time of Moses and, secondly, that the restrictions arising from the Mosaic Law were imposed on the Children of Israel alone. To claim that they represent an eternal divine law is described here as “*inventing lies about God*””. This is further proof to the Children of Israel that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who utters nothing out of desire and is inspired by God Himself, was Truthful and confirmed what was in their Book. So the onus of Believing in him lies on them as he was also at the end of the road that their forefather, Abraham (cf. 2: 133), whom they claim as their own and profess to follow his doctrine, had lain down.

﴿95﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Allah has stated the Truth! Hence follow the creed of Ibrāhīm⁽¹²⁹⁾, who was rightly oriented⁽¹³⁰⁾ and he was not among the Associators.

قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

﴿96﴾ The first House 'of worship'⁽¹³¹⁾ laid down for mankind is the one in Bakkah⁽¹³²⁾, blessed and 'a beacon of' guidance⁽¹³³⁾ for all beings.

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾ فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

﴿97﴾ In it 'the House' there are clear Signs: Ibrāhīm's climbing-stone⁽¹³⁴⁾,

129 The creed of Ibrāhīm, *millata Ibrāhīm*, is the most primordial precursor to Islam, the religion with which Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent. The Qur'an states this in various places: 2: 35, 4: 125, 6: 161 and 16: 123.

130 *Hanīf* is a pristine Believer. The basic semantic meaning of the root *h-n-f* is inclination towards uprightness and eschewing crookedness.

131 Allusion here is made to the Jews' objection to the change in the direction of Prayer from Jerusalem to Makkah (cf. 2: 142). Muhammad Asad has this footnote: "The mention, in this context, of the Temple in Mecca - that is, the Ka'bah - arises from the fact that it is the direction of prayer (*qiblah*) stipulated in the Qur'an. Since the prototype of the Ka'bah was built by Abraham and Ishmael (see 2:125 ff.) - and is, therefore, much older than the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem - its establishment as the *qiblah* of the followers of the Qur'an does not only not imply any break with the Abraham tradition (on which, ultimately, the whole Bible rests), but, on the contrary, re-establishes direct contact with that Patriarch".

132 Another name of Makkah. Arab lexicographers rationalized this naming relying on the rules of the Arabic language (cf. among others al-Farāhīdī's *al-'Ayn*, al-Azharī's *Tahdhīb al-Lughah*, Ibn Fāris's *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). Archaeologists have it that it is an ancient name for Makkah (Barbara Ann Kipfer (2000) *Encyclopaedic dictionary of archaeology*. Springer, p. 342). Unlike in 48:24 where the then, and still, current name of the city, Makkah, was used, the ancient name of the city, Bakkah, is, in a sense, used here to drive home the message of the antiquity of the House and by extension the Islamic Monotheistic Message itself, which takes after the Abrahamic creed in its pristine state.

133 Of this, is that people direct themselves towards it in Prayer and head for it for 'umrah and Hajj. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhīdī, Ibn Kathīr)

134 *Maqām Ibrāhīm* is the stone on which Abraham (ﷺ) stood while building the Ka'bah. It is an everlasting Sign and evidence to all people of the relationship of Islam to Abraham's creed.

and whoever enters it becomes safe⁽¹³⁵⁾. Pilgrimage to the House is ‘a duty’ owed to Allah by all people—‘especially’ those who have the means to undertake it. But those who Deny⁽¹³⁶⁾, ‘should know that’ Allah is in no need of creation.

﴿98﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “People of the Book, why do you Deny Allah’s Signs, ‘while you know that’ Allah is witness to all that you do? ﴿99﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “People of the Book, why do you turn away those who have Believed from the path of Allah⁽¹³⁷⁾; seeking to make it crooked while you are witnesses?⁽¹³⁸⁾ Allah is never unaware of what you do!

وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تُصَدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مِن ۖ ءَأَمَنَ تَبِعُونَهَا عَٰجَازًا وَأَنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءُ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

135 Cf. 29: 67, 106: 3-4. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that on the day of the liberation of Makkah the Prophet (ﷺ) declared: “This town was sanctified by Allah when He created the Heavens and Earth and for this it is sanctified until the Day of Judgement. It was not ever allowed for anyone before me to fight in it. Fighting ‘in it’ was only allowed for me for part of a day. ‘I repeat’ It is sanctified for its sanctification by Allah until the Day of Judgement. Its thorn ‘branches’ shall not be torn down ‘for fodder’, its game ‘/prey’ shall not be scared off, lost belongings in it should not be forfeited unless announced and its saplings shall not be cut down”. (al-Bukhārī: 1834, Muslim: 3189) These minor acts are categorically stated as forbidden, what then to say of something as grave as harming a human soul in the Sanctuary.

136 That Hajj is obligatory.

137 Cf. 3: 72.

138 They are chastised for cooking up schemes to deviate people from the Straight Path while being fully aware and secretly bearing witness to the Truth which is mentioned in their Books. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

﴿100﴾ You who Believe, if you obey a party of those who were given the Book, they will turn you back into Deniers after you have Believed. ﴿101﴾ 'But' How 'is it possible that' you will Deny while the Signs⁽¹³⁹⁾ of Allah are recited to you and 'while' His Messenger is in your midst? Whoever holds tight to Allah⁽¹⁴⁰⁾, then he is guided to a Straight Path.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تُطِيعُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ يَرُدُّوكُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُسَلِّىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ وَفِيكُمْ رَسُولُهُ وَمَن يَعْتَصِم بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

﴿102﴾ You who Believe, be Mindful of Allah as He should be heeded and die not without being devoutly submitted⁽¹⁴¹⁾. ﴿103﴾ Hold tightly to the rope of Allah⁽¹⁴²⁾ all together, do not get splintered and remember Allah's favour on you when you were enemies and He made your hearts join then you became brothers by His Grace; you were on the brink of a pit of Fire and He saved you from it⁽¹⁴³⁾—

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ ؕ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُم بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا

139 Qur'anic ayas.

140 By holding tight to the surest of ties (*al-'urwatu al-wuthqā*) mentioned in 2: 256, i.e. Islam. Holding tight to *al-'urwatu al-wuthqā* is the surest way of deliverance even long after the Prophet's (ﷺ) demise. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet said: "I leave behind me two things. You will not go astray as long as you adhere to them: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah. They will not separate until they come to the Basin 'in the Hereafter'" (Mālik: 32)

141 *Muslimūn*, as Muslims.

142 A symbol of the Straight Path (cf. 6: 153) that leads to deliverance, Islam (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Zayd Ibn Arqam (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I'll leave with you behind me two grave matters. The first is the Book of Almighty Allah. It is the rope of Allah; whoever follows it is guided and whoever does not has gone astray". (Muslim: 2408)

143 After the Battle of Ḥunayn the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed his Anṣār Companions by saying: "Have I not found you: lost and Allah guided you

thus Allah makes clear His Signs so that you might be guided. ﴿104﴾ Let there be among you a legion calling for goodness; enjoining virtue and advising against what is unacceptable—those are the successful⁽¹⁴⁴⁾. ﴿105﴾ Be not like those who became riven apart and fell into disagreement after clear evidences came to them—for those is a great Punishment. ﴿106﴾ On the Day⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ when some faces are illumined and others are darkened⁽¹⁴⁶⁾; as for those whose faces become dark ‘it is said’: “Did you Deny after you became Believers? Taste then the Punishment of your Denial”. ﴿107﴾ As for those whose faces become illumined, they will be ‘admitted’ in Allah’s Mercy⁽¹⁴⁷⁾, forever they reside therein. ﴿108﴾ Those are the Signs of Allah, We truthfully recite them to you ‘Muhammad’; Allah wants not that injustice ‘befall’ any of the creation. ﴿109﴾ To Allah belongs all what is in the Heavens and Earth, and to Allah all affairs shall be returned.

كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ءَايٰتِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ اُمَّةٌ يَدْعُوْنَ اِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَاْمُرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاُوْلٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ تَفَرَّقُوْا وَاخْتَلَفُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنٰتُ وَاُوْلٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾ يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوْهُ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوْهُ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اَسْوَدَتْ وُجُوْهُهُمْ اَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ اِيْمَانِكُمْ فَذُوْقُوْا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اَبْيَضَتْ وُجُوْهُهُمْ فَمِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ تِلْكَ ءَايٰتُ اللّٰهِ تَتْلُوْهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا اللّٰهُ يُرِيْدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وِلَلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ تُرْجَعُ الْاُمُوْرُ ﴿١٠٩﴾

by me? Destitute and Allah made you well-to-do by me? Divided and Allah united you by me?” (Muslim: 1061)

144 ‘The successful’, *al-muflihūn*, are those who succeed in attaining what they wish for; to be guided by God, and avoiding the evil of what they fear.

145 The Day of Judgement.

146 Cf. 10: 26-27, 75: 22-24 and 80: 40.

147 Paradise. (Ibn ‘Uthaymīn)

﴿110﴾ You⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ are indeed the best nation the world has seen⁽¹⁴⁹⁾: you enjoin virtue, advise against what is unacceptable and Believe in Allah. Had the People of the Book Believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are 'some' Believers, but most of them are Transgressors. ﴿111﴾ They will not harm you except by hurting you 'verbally' and if they fight you, they will take to their heels 'in flight'; then they would not be helped.⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ ﴿112﴾ Stamped on them is indignity wherever they are found. They are only spared 'this' by a rope from Allah and a rope from people⁽¹⁵¹⁾. They have incurred Allah's Wrath, and degradation⁽¹⁵²⁾ was stamped on them; this is for their Denial in Allah's Signs and killing the Prophets unjustifiably; this is for their rebelling and aggression⁽¹⁵³⁾.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ
لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ
الْفٰسِقُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ لَنْ يَضُرُّكُمْ إِلَّا أَذًى
وَإِنْ يَفْتَلِكُ كُمْ يَوْلُوكُمْ لِأَدْبَارِهِمْ
لَا يُضِرُّونَ ﴿١١١﴾ ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلِيلَةُ
مَا تَقْفُوا إِلَّا بِحَبْلٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ
وَبَاءَ وَبِعَصَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْمَسْكَنَةُ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كٰفِرُونَ بِآيَاتِ
اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا
عَصَوُوا وَأَنَّهُمْ يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

148 The nation of Muhammad (ﷺ).

149 *Ukhrijat lil-nās*, lit. brought forth to mankind.

150 This fact is mentioned here in lieu of their transgression, and with which the previous aya ended. (al-Tawhīdī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

151 That is by means of a peace pact and/or defence alliance following the laws of God, or by the authority of people.

152 Whereas they might be spared from humiliation by others, indignity, which springs from within, being as it is engrained in the person's consciousness, is not intermittent.

153 This fate was imposed on them by God, in part, in fulfilment of the Divine promise to Punish them severely, as found in 3:21.

﴿113﴾ They are not ‘all’ alike⁽¹⁵⁴⁾, there are among the People of the Book a legion, upright, reciting the Signs⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ of Allah throughout the night⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ and they prostrate ‘in Prayer’⁽¹⁵⁷⁾. ﴿114﴾ They Believe in Allah and the Last Day, enjoin virtue and advise against what is unacceptable and rush forth to do good—those are among the Righteous. ﴿115﴾ Whatever good they do they will not be denied it—Allah knows best the Mindful.

﴿113﴾ لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ ءَانَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسَدُّونَ فِي الْحَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ مِنْ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَن يُكْفَرُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾

﴿116﴾ Indeed neither the Deniers’ wealth nor their children will avail them against Allah—those are the company of the Fire, therein they abide forever. ﴿117﴾ The example of what they spend ‘charitably’ in this worldly life, is that of a howling ‘gusty’ wind which hits the crop of ‘certain’ people who wronged themselves and it decimates it ‘all’—Allah did not wrong them but they wronged themselves.

﴿116﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾ مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكَتَهُ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَٰكِنْ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾

154 Reference is made here to those of the People of the Book who sincerely Believed in the Messengership of Muhammad (ﷺ), followed him and devoutly adhered to the dictates of his religion. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

155 Qur’anic ayas.

156 Reciting the Qur’an at night is a sign of their devoutness. At night one’s heart becomes more sincere and undivided as one retreats to the deepest recesses of one’s own home veiled from the eyes of others. (al-Nawawī, al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Hamalat al-Qur’ān, p. 63)

157 That is, they perform Prayers. Although prostration is only part of Prayer, it is used synecdochally. It is singled out because it is that part of Prayer that most demonstrates devotion and humility. Indeed, it is a becoming symbol of devout submission, i.e. Islam.

﴿118﴾ You who Believe, do not take as 'intimate' confidants⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ anyone who is not of your own: they will stop at nothing to cause you destruction; they wish you hardship; hatred reeks from their mouths⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ but what their breasts conceal is 'much' greater. We have explained the signs⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ clearly for you, if only you are perceptive⁽¹⁶¹⁾. ﴿119﴾ Here you are, you love them but they do not love you; you Believe in the whole Book⁽¹⁶²⁾; "but" when they meet you they say: "We Believe!" yet when they are alone they bite their fingertips out of rage 'at you'. Say 'Muhammad': "Die of your rage"; Allah knows what lurks in the chests! ﴿120﴾ Should a good thing come your way, they become saddened by it, and it elates them if a calamity befalls you. But if you forbear and are

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بَطَانَةً مِّن دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأُولُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُونًا مَّا عِنْتُمْ قَد بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَد بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ هَآئِنْتُمْ ءَوْلَآءُ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتَوَمُّونَ بِالْكِتَابِ كُلِّهٖ ؕ وَإِذَآ الْقَوْمُ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَآ خَلَوْا عَضُّوْا عَلَیْكُمْ الْاَنَامِلَ مِمِّنَ الْعَیْطِ قُلْ مُؤْمِنُوْا بِعَیْظِكُمْؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِیْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿١١٩﴾ اِنَّ تَمَسَّسَكُمْ حَسَنَةٌۢ لَّسُوْءِهِمْ وَاِنْ تُصِیْبَكُمْ سَیِّئَةٌۢ یُّفْرَحُوْا بِهَا

158 *Biṭānah* is used to denote someone's, especially an important person's, inner circle, who not only know all the insider information and secrets but also influence that person's opinion and are, at times, delegated some of the authority. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "There is not a Prophet sent or a ruler installed by Allah without him having two inner circles: *biṭānah* (an inner circle) bidding and encouraging him to virtue and *biṭānah* bidding and encouraging him to evil. Whoever is spared is only saved by Allah's Grace". (al-Bukhārī: 7198)

159 No matter how hard they try to keep their true feelings secret, their tongues, slips or otherwise, prove otherwise.

160 The signs that lay bare these people's truths and reveal what they hide.

161 Muslims are encouraged to be perceptive to the tell-tale signs that, more often than not, reveal the reality of matters (cf. 2: 273). (al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Ashūr)

162 All Divinely-revealed Books. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

Mindful you will not be harmed in the least by their guile—Allah encompasses⁽¹⁶³⁾ what they do.

وَإِنْ تَصَبَّرُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَصْرُوكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾

﴿121﴾ ‘Recall Muhammad’ when you set off from your household at dawn, appointing the Believers their fighting positions—Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

وَإِذْ عَدَوْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقَاعِدَ
لِلْقِتَالِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢١﴾ إِذْ هَمَّتْ
طَّائِفَتَانِ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ تَفْشَلَا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّهُمَا وَعَلَى
اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

﴿122﴾ Then two groups of your own were about to falter⁽¹⁶⁴⁾, ‘but’ Allah, their Ally ‘made them remain firm’—in Allah let the Believers put their trust.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾

﴿123﴾ Indeed Allah made you ‘emerge’ victorious in Badr⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ when you were scorned⁽¹⁶⁷⁾—be Mindful of Allah so that you may be thankful. ﴿124﴾ Then you ‘Muhammad’ said to the Believers: “Would it not suffice you that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand angels sent down ‘from the sky’?”

وَلَقَدْ فَتَرْنَا لِلَّهِ يَدًا وَأَنْشُرْنَا لَكَ إِذْ لَمْ فَتَقْ وَاللَّهُ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
أَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُمَدِّدَ رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آفِ
مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُنَزَّلِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

163 God knows all about their stratagems. He records it and they will be held accountable. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa’dī)

164 *Tafshal*, lit. fail; lose footing; these are the tribes of Banū Salimah and Banū al-Ḥārith.

165 After mentioning in the previous aya that holding one’s ground patiently and being Mindful of Allah is a means of victory over one’s enemies, God tacitly now reminds the Believers of the reason for their setback in the Battle of Uḥud. Essentially, the archers became impatient and left the positions that had been appointed for them by the Prophet (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī)

166 Now the telling turns to the great Battle of Badr to cite as an example of how Mindfulness and holding one’s ground (Aya 125) wins battles.

167 *Adhillah*, they were the weaker party, derided because they were lesser in number and armament than their enemy.

﴿125﴾ Indeed 'this would suffice'! Yet if you hold out and are Mindful, and should they 'your enemies' hasten to charge 'in full force' against you, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels, clearly marked.

﴿126﴾ Allah wanted this to be nothing more than good news to you so that your hearts become comforted, but 'truly' victory is to be found nowhere but with Allah, the All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿127﴾ 'This was so' To fell a flank⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ of those who Deny and to smite⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ them, so that they would draw back crestfallen. ﴿128﴾ You 'Muhammad' have no control to mention over this matter; might He relent towards them or Punish them 'as' they are indeed Unjust. ﴿129﴾ 'Indeed' To Allah belongs all that is in the Heavens and Earth, He forgives whoever He wills and Punishes whoever He wills—indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿130﴾ You who Believe, do not devour usury multiplied many times over⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ and be Mindful of Allah,

بَلَىٰ إِن تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّن فَوْرِهِمْ هَذَا يُمْدِدْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ لَكُمْ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُكُم بِهِ ۗ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١٢٦﴾ لِيَقْطَعَ طَرَفًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْ يَكْبِتَهُمْ فَيَنْقَلِبُوا خَائِبِينَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَعْفُرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٩﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا مُّضَاعَفَةً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ

168 An image that depicts a number of them being struck down.

169 *Yakbita* is a very strongly emotive word; to smite, to depress. Indeed, the whole aya employs words that are highly charged, standing out from other likely alternatives in Arabic. Any attempt at an equivalent rendition in English will inevitably fall short of what is ideally portrayed.

170 al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr mention in their commentaries the manner in which usurious financial transactions were repeatedly multiplied. That

so that you may be successful.⁽¹⁷¹⁾
 ﴿131﴾ Beware of the Fire that was prepared for the Deniers; ﴿132﴾ obey Allah and the Messenger so that you may be given mercy; ﴿133﴾ and rush forth to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden as wide as the Heavens and Earth prepared for the Mindful.

﴿134﴾ Those who spend at times of prosperity and adversity⁽¹⁷²⁾, restrain 'their' anger⁽¹⁷³⁾ and pardon 'other' people—Allah loves good doers; ﴿135﴾ the ones who upon committing a 'gravely' vile deed or doing themselves an injustice⁽¹⁷⁴⁾, they remember Allah and implore 'Him' for forgiveness for their sins – and who else would forgive sins besides Allah⁽¹⁷⁵⁾—;

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَأَتَقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ
 لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَارْتَبِعُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ * وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن
 رَبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ
 أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ
 وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ
 وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا
 فَحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ
 فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ
 إِلَّا اللَّهُ

is, when the date of settlement arrived the lender would give the debtor the choice to either make an immediate payment or to delay the date of payment with an increase in the amount due. In this way, because of some debtors' lack of resources, delays would be granted many times over and, thus, the original amount of the loan would be blown out of proportion.

171 The issue of the socially abhorred, detrimental financial transaction, namely usury, is taken up here again (cf. *al-Baqarah*: 275-278 which talk about usury at great length and in the severest of terms) to further underline the sound foundations on which God intended to build the newly formed Believing community. Here it is mentioned to drive home the message that prevailing over one's greed, among other things listed here (Ayas 130-136), is a means to victory, thus subtly hinting at the greediness of the archers who left their positions to get their share of the spoils of war in the Battle of Uhud (cf. *Riḍā*). To be really Mindful, and as a result victorious, is to pay heed to these commandments (cf. *al-Sa'ādī*).

172 At times of abundance and scarcity.

173 The image here is of 'swallowing one's anger', *kazm al-ghayz*.

174 By committing less grievous sins.

175 Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "There is not a Muslim who commits a sin, then performs ablution, Prays two *rak'ahs* and asks

they do not persist in committing what they do knowingly⁽¹⁷⁶⁾. ﴿136﴾ For those the reward is forgiveness from their Lord and Gardens under which rivers flow; forever they abide therein—great indeed is the reward of workers.

﴿137﴾ The laws⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ have come to pass before you, so walk the land and behold the end of the Disbelievers. ﴿138﴾ This is a clarification⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ to people, a guidance and an admonishment to the Mindful. ﴿139﴾ 'So' Do not feel helpless and sorrowful while indeed yours is the upper hand⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ if you are 'truly' Believers. ﴿140﴾ If a wound⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ touches you, indeed an equal wound has touched the clan⁽¹⁸¹⁾.

وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوْا عَلٰٓى مَا فَعَلُوْا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٣٦﴾
 اُوْلٰٓئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّاتٌ
 تَجْرٰى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهَارُ خَالِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا وَعَمَّ
 اَجْرُ الْعَمَلِيْنَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

فَدَخَلْتَ مِنْ قِبَلِكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ
 فَانظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَدِّبِيْنَ ﴿١٣٨﴾
 هٰذَا بَيٰٓانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَهُدٰى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ
 لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ وَلَا تَهِنُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا اَنْتُمْ
 الْاَغْلٰوْنَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ اِنْ يَمَسُّكُمْ
 قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِّثْلُهٗ

Allah for forgiveness without Allah forgiving him”. "...the ones who upon committing a 'gravely' vile deed or doing themselves an injustice..." (3:135), and: "Whoever commits a misdeed or does himself an injustice, then he asks Allah for forgiveness, he will find Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (4: 110). (Abū Dāwūd: 1521, al-Tirmidhī: 406, Ibn Mājah: 1395)

176 They realize that what they did is sinful, and that they are liable to Punishment if they do not mend their ways. Repentance is mandatory on them, and God accepts such repentance. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr)

177 Those Divine laws and canons which stipulate that victory and defeat take turns and are ever interchangeable between Believers and Deniers. In this way, the reins are slackened for the Deniers to further lure them into the trap of their annihilation and the deliverance of the Believers is assured after putting them to the test. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

178 The Qur'an, of which the preceding ayas are part. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

179 *al-A'lawn*, those who are superior.

180 Suffered a blow, in the Battle of Uhūd.

181 *al-Qawm*, the other side who tasted bitter defeat during the Battle of Badr.

Those are the days⁽¹⁸²⁾ We rotate them between people so that Allah would take the measure of those who ‘truly’ Believe⁽¹⁸³⁾ and choose martyrs⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ from among you—Allah does not love the unjust. ^{﴿141﴾} And ‘so that’ Allah may purge the Believers and wipe out the Deniers.⁽¹⁸⁵⁾

^{﴿142﴾} Or you thought that you would enter Paradise without Allah making known those who fought ‘in His cause’ and those who are steadfast. ^{﴿143﴾} You ‘Believers’ were wishing for death before you met it; there you saw it with your own eyes!⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ ^{﴿144﴾} Muhammad is no more than a Messenger who comes in a line of Messengers⁽¹⁸⁷⁾,

وَتِلْكَ الْاَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَيَعْلَمُ
اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَيَتَّخِذُ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَآءَ
وَاللّٰهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٤١﴾ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ
اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَيَمْحَقَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٤٢﴾

اَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ اَنْ تَدْخُلُوْا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللّٰهُ
الَّذِيْنَ جَهِدُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمِ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٤٣﴾
وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ تَلْقَوْهُ
فَقَدْ رَاَيْتُمْوْهُ وَاَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ
اِلَّا رَسُوْلٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ الرُّسُلُ

182 This is the nature of time.

183 *Li ya ‘lama Allāh*, lit. “so that Allah may know”. A literal translation would cut against the grain of the correct Muslim Belief that Allah is Omniscient. According to scholars, it is in this instance ‘ilm zuhūr or ‘ilm shahādah; the kind of knowledge that enables one to bear witness confidently. This not only entails that the witness knows things for a fact but also that enough conclusive evidence is found and known.

184 Thus God grants the lofty status of martyrdom ‘shahādah’ to some of His servants.

185 God consoles the Believers here for their setback in the Battle of Uḥud and tells them the Wisdom behind it. This, after the reasons behind it were spelled out in the previous ayas along with the remedy. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Ashūr)

186 This is a reminder to the Believers, who missed the Battle of Badr, of their talk about wishing to meet the enemy and be struck down by them when they saw the great status the martyrs of that battle attained. It is said somewhat reprovingly to highlight that, while the Battle of Uḥud is being alluded to here, solid intentions and steadfastness, not mere fancy talk, are what actually win battles. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

187 Messengers are nothing more than human. The laws of nature apply to them too.

should he die or be killed, would you 'then' turn on your heels?⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ Whoever turns his heels, he would not scathe Allah in the least. Allah will reward the thankful⁽¹⁸⁹⁾. ﴿145﴾ No soul will die without Allah's permission, 'theirs is' a preordained precise timing⁽¹⁹⁰⁾. Whoever wants the reward of the worldly life, We will give him from it; and whoever wants the reward of the Hereafter, We will give him from it; We will reward the Thankful.

﴿146﴾ 'Like' Many a Prophet with whom a great many of the godly fought, they did not lose heart at what befell them in the cause of Allah, neither did they weaken nor cower down⁽¹⁹¹⁾—Allah loves the steadfast. ﴿147﴾ Their only say was that: "Our Lord, absolve us of our sins and our 'reckless' excesses, make firm our feet⁽¹⁹²⁾ and grant us victory over the Denying people"⁽¹⁹³⁾.

أَفَايُن مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ
وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَبْصُرَ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا
وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ اللّٰكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ
لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كِتَابًا
مُّؤَجَّلًا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا
وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَسَيَجْزِي
اللّٰكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

وَكَايُن مِّن نَّبِيِّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِيثُونَ كَثِيرٌ
فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا
وَمَا اسْتَكْبَرُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَمَا كَانَ
قَوْلُهُمْ إِلَّا أَن قَالُوا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا
فِي أَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ
الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

188 This smacks of the faltering position that some Muslims, lurking in the ranks of whom were hypocrites, took when it was rumoured at one time during the Battle of Uḥud that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) had met his death.

189 Those who realize God's bounties on them and show practical thankfulness in striving for His cause. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

190 This fact is stated by way of encouraging the Believers to fight in Allah's cause.

191 Submit to their enemy.

192 Make us stand firm.

193 This Prayer is very similar to that of the godly soldiers who fought with Saul against Goliath (cf. 2: 250). True Believers, although realizing the difficulty of the circumstance they are put in, summon their courage to face the situation relying on God and Praying to Him to make them stand firm.

﴿148﴾ Allah gave them the reward of the worldly life and the most fine⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ reward of the Hereafter—Allah loves good doers.

فَاتَهُمُ اللَّهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحَسَنَ ثَوَابِ
الْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

﴿149﴾ You who Believe, if you obey the Deniers⁽¹⁹⁵⁾, they would surely 'cause you to' turn on your heels and you would revert as losers.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا يُرَدُّوكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ
فَتَنقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ بَلِ اللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ

﴿150﴾ Nay but Allah is your Ally—He is the best of helpers.

وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ سَأَلْتَنِي فِي قُلُوبِ

﴿151﴾ We will cast fright in the hearts of the Deniers for Associating with Allah that for which He made no authority⁽¹⁹⁶⁾. Their resort is Fire; dire indeed is the domicile of the Wrongdoers.

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا
بِاللَّهِ مَا لَهُ يَنْزِيلٌ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَأْوَهُمُ
النَّارُ وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾

﴿152﴾ Allah was true to His promise when you put them to death⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ with His permission, until you wavered, quarrelled over the matter and disobeyed, 'only' after 'Allah' showed you what you love⁽¹⁹⁸⁾. Among you are those who seek this worldly life and among you are those who

وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ
تَحْسَبُونَهُم بِأَذْنِهِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ
وَتَنَزَّعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِمَّا بَعَدَ
مَا أَرَاكُمْ مَا تُحِبُّونَ مِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا
وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ

194 Winning God's Pleasure and eternal bliss in the Heavenly abode of Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

195 When the Prophet (ﷺ) was rumoured dead, some Believers, as mayhem spread in their ranks, were understandably in search of assuagement. Hence, they lent their ears to some who were in actuality Denying hypocrites who volunteered 'consultation'.

196 The idols they worshiped besides God without having plausible reason to justify such deification.

197 The Qur'anic lexical term *tahussūnahum* is unique. In a sense, it is semantically related to 'sensing' whereby when one is killed, one loses one's sense of perception (cf. al-Shinqīṭī).

198 Victory after the Deniers rout from the battle-ground. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).

seek the Hereafter⁽¹⁹⁹⁾. Then He turned you away from them⁽²⁰⁰⁾ to test you. 'But now' He forgave you—Allah is bountiful to the Believers.⁽²⁰¹⁾ ﴿153﴾ When you took flight, heeding no one while the Messenger was calling you 'back to battle' from behind you. Then He rewarded you 'a greater' distress on top of 'your' distress, so that you may not grieve for what you missed or what befell you—Allah is Knowledgeable of what you do.⁽²⁰²⁾

يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ * إِذْ نَضَعُدُونَ وَلَا تَأْوَبْتِ عَلَى أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أُخْرَاكُمْ فَأَتَابَكُمْ عَمَّا بَعِمْتُمْ لِيُجَازِلَكُمْ عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا مَا أَصَابَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

- 199 The first party are the archers who left their positions to collect the spoils, while the latter are those who remained at their posts. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)
- 200 When their hearts turned away from obeying the Messenger (ﷺ), they were made to forget about their enemy and take due guard against them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Sa'adī, Ibn 'Ashūr)
- 201 This is a synopsis of the events of the Battle of Uḥud, where succinctly put: 1) God fulfilled His promise of victory to the Believers and made them run down and kill their enemy; 2) yet, when they saw that their desired goal, victory, was accomplished some of the archers lost conviction upon seeing that the spoils of war were being collected; 3) so, they disputed with their leader, who was of the opinion that they remained put as they had been bid by the Prophet (ﷺ); 4) when they broke rank and left their positions, the enemy, who had been lying low in hiding, bore down on them; 5) thereafter a commotion ensued and the archers fled. The rest of the account carries on in the next aya.
- 202 The Believers were greatly distressed at losing ground in the battle and taking flight in the face of their enemy, but a greater concern that made them forget this one was now in store for them. At this very difficult juncture, news of the rumoured death of the Prophet (ﷺ), whom they loved more than anything in this world, hit them. They soon forgot the loot they missed out on and the defeat that had been inflicted on them. Thus, God soothed and comforted them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'adī). This is a prime example of post trauma group therapy, which was rounded off by the soothing feeling of sleepiness as in the next aya. It is human nature to brood over one's woes and easily forget about the many blessings that they are couched in. Such blessings are only appreciated when they are lost.

﴿154﴾ Then He descended on you after distress comforting sleepiness engulfing a group of you⁽²⁰³⁾, and another group⁽²⁰⁴⁾ of you were ‘very’ concerned about themselves, they think of Allah that which is not true; thoughts of ignorance⁽²⁰⁵⁾. They say: “Do we have a say in this affair?” Say ‘Muhammad’: “The whole affair belongs to Allah”⁽²⁰⁶⁾. They hide in their hearts what they do not reveal to you. They say: “Had we had a say in this, we would not have been killed here”. Say: “Had you been in your homes, those who were decreed to be killed would have made their way to their mowing down ‘places’. ‘You were led to come’ So that Allah would test what lurks in your chests and put what is in your hearts to trial—Allah is Knowledgeable of what the hearts hold.

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمَنَةً نَعَّاسًا
يَعْتَسِي طَائِفَةٌ مِنْكُمْ وَطَائِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ
أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ
يَقُولُونَ هَلْ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ قُلْ
إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلَّهِ يُخْمُونَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ مَا لَا
يُبْدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ
مَا قُتِلْنَا هَهُنَا قُلْ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لَبَرَزَ
الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ إِلَى مَضَاجِعِهِمْ
وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ
مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٥٤﴾

203 The real Believers.

204 In other words, the hypocrites (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). Those who were so consumed by their thoughts of the state they found themselves in. They were too tense and anxious to feel such a comforting, subtle sleepiness. In essence, their hearts were not pure enough to receive the blessing.

205 *al-Jāhiliyyah*, the age of ignorance; the life the Arab pagans lead before the advent of Islam in which their perceptions about God were, to say the least, muddled. Here, seeing the Believers take the blows, they thought that God would not come to their help: “*Nay but you thought that the Prophet and Believers would never go back to their homes, and that ‘thought’ was to take hold of your hearts; you caught the evil thought—indeed you are people laid to waste*” (48:12).

206 The infinitely Wise God Almighty disposes of matters as He wills.

﴿155﴾ Those who fled on the day when the two hosts met 'did so because' Satan had entrapped them owing to some sins 'they committed', but Allah forgave them—Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing.

﴿156﴾ You who Believe, do not be like those who Denied and said to their brothers⁽²⁰⁷⁾ when they⁽²⁰⁸⁾ set about travelling 'in trade' or on a raid⁽²⁰⁹⁾: "Had they been with us, they would not have died or gotten killed"⁽²¹⁰⁾. Thus Allah makes their hearts remorse-stricken; Allah 'alone' gives life and causes death—Allah is All-Seeing of what you do. ﴿157﴾ If you are killed in the cause of Allah or 'yet' died, 'be sure that' forgiveness from Allah and mercy are better than what they hoard.⁽²¹¹⁾ ﴿158﴾ Whether you die or get killed certainly to Allah you shall be rallied⁽²¹²⁾.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَمَى الْجَمْعَانِ
إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا
وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٥﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
وَقَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ إِذَا ضَرَبُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ كَانُوا
غَزَى لَوْ كُنَّا عِنْدَنَا مَا مَاتُوا وَمَا قُتِلُوا
لِيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكْ حَسْرَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ
يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٥٦﴾
وَلَئِنْ قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ مِتُّمْ لَمَعْفَرَةٌ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ وَلَئِنْ
مُتُّمْ أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ لَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

207 Their brethren with whom they find a certain bond.

208 The latter.

209 *Ghuzzan* is the plural of *ghāzī*, the one who sets out on a fighting foray. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, p. 114, al-Sijjānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, p. 354)

210 Here God makes the Believers privy to this devilishly inspired soliloquy of lament and deep regret of the Deniers/hypocrites at the misfortune that hit their so-called brothers. Without God, the lives they led were utterly inconsolable! A Believer should know for certain that all matters, including life and death, are in the Hands of God alone.

211 The reward with God for those who dedicate themselves to His cause is, by far, better than any worldly gain.

212 For Reckoning.

﴿159﴾ By Allah’s Mercy you ‘Muhammad’ relented⁽²¹³⁾ to them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted⁽²¹⁴⁾, they would have disbanded from around you. Pardon them and pray for forgiveness for them and seek their counsel in affairs⁽²¹⁵⁾. If you are resolved then put your trust in Allah⁽²¹⁶⁾—Allah loves those who put their trust in Him. ﴿160﴾ If Allah helps you, then there is no one to defeat you; if He forsakes you, who would then help you thereafter? In Allah let the Believers put their trust.

فِيمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيَكْفُرُوا بِكَ لَافْتَضُوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَسَأَوْنَهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴿١٥٩﴾
 إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ يَخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

﴿161﴾ No Prophet ever misappropriates⁽²¹⁷⁾, whoever

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكْتَسِبَ

- 213 In the wake of the Battle of Uḥud, the Prophet (ﷺ) was, by God’s Grace, made to show leniency to the Believers who disobeyed his commands.
- 214 *Ghalīz al-qalb*, lit. thick-hearted.
- 215 The principle of *shurā*, consultation/deliberation, is a cornerstone of the Islamic community. One of the greatest traits of the Believing community is that: “...their affairs are deliberated among them...”. (42: 38)
- 216 The final decision, after deliberations, is left to the leader of the community.
- 217 *Yaghull* is to stealthily, illegally seize possession of something; in this instance, spoils of war in particular. Exegetes differed upon the reason for the revelation of this aya. One opinion by the great exegetes al-Kalbi and Muqātil, found in al-Baghawī’s *Tafsīr*, puts it in context. They have it that the aya was revealed with regards to: “the spoils of the Battle of Uḥud. When the archers left their positions to seize some of the loot, they thought: “We fear that the Prophet will say: “Whatever one takes is his”, and he may not divide the loot ‘among his Companions’ like he did at the Battle of Badr”. They then abandoned their positions and got their hands busy with the loot. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to them: “Did I not command you not to leave your positions until I said so?” They replied: “We left the rest of our brothers stationed in their positions!” He (ﷺ) said: “No! But you thought that we would seize possession of it and not give you your share!” Thus this aya was revealed”.

misappropriates 'something' comes with that which he misappropriated on the Day of Judgement⁽²¹⁸⁾; then every soul shall be requited what it earned—they shall not be wronged. ﴿162﴾ Would the one who pursues Allah's Pleasure be like the one who is blighted with Displeasure from Allah; his is Hellfire as a resort—dire indeed is the destination. ﴿163﴾ They 'both parties' are of 'varying' degrees before Allah⁽²¹⁹⁾—Allah is All-Seeing of what they do. ﴿164﴾ Allah has favoured the Believers when He sent among them a Messenger of their kind⁽²²⁰⁾; He recites His Signs⁽²²¹⁾ to them, purifies them, and teaches them the Book and Wisdom⁽²²²⁾—indeed they were utterly lost before.

وَمَنْ يَغْلُلْ يَأْتِ بِمَا غَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾
أَفَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ كَمَنْ بَاءَ بِسَخَطٍ مِّنَ
اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦٢﴾ هُمْ
دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾
لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ
رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ
وَيُرَكِّبُهُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٦٤﴾

218 Abū Ḥumayd al-Sā'idī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "By Allah none of you wrongfully appropriates part of it 'collected mandatory alms' without him meeting Allah on the Day of Judgement carrying it. And I shall know everyone of you who meets Allah carrying a camel grunting, a cow lowing or a goat bleating..." (al-Bukhārī: 6979, Muslim: 1832). al-Qurtubī (4: 256) comments: "He comes carrying it 'illegally appropriated effects' on his back and neck, tormented by its weight, horrified by its atrocious sound, and berated by making his dishonesty known to all people..."

219 Those who seek God's Pleasure and those who deserve His Displeasure are not of one and the same grade; some are better than others while others are worse than others. Any certain grade is won by a person's deeds, whether good or bad. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

220 That is a human being, just as much as they are, and where there is a human connection and mutual understanding at all levels of familiarity (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Tafsīr Āyāt Ashkalat*, 1: 226-227, Ibn Kathīr). God could have sent them an angel as Messenger but the nature of that creation would have come in the way of communication and the safe delivery of the Message (cf. 17: 95).

221 Ayas.

222 The Qur'an and the Sunnah.

﴿165﴾ Would you whenever a calamity befalls you⁽²²³⁾ – when you have inflicted twice as much of it⁽²²⁴⁾ – say: “Where does this come from?”⁽²²⁵⁾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “You brought this upon yourselves!” Indeed Allah is Able over everything. ﴿166﴾ What befell you on the day when the two hosts met with Allah’s permission, so that He makes known the ‘real’ Believers, ﴿167﴾ and those who pretend⁽²²⁶⁾. It was said to them: “Come and fight in the cause of Allah, or ‘at least’ push back⁽²²⁷⁾”. They said: “Had we any knowledge of a fighting, we would have followed you”⁽²²⁸⁾. They were on that day closer to Denial than Belief. They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts—Allah knows best what they hide. ﴿168﴾ Those who remained behind and said to their brothers: “Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed”. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Ward off death from yourselves, if you are speaking the truth!”

أَوَلَمَّا أَصَبْتُمْ مُمْسِبَةً قَدْ أَصَبْتُمْ مَتَابِعَهَا
 قُلْتُمْ أَنَّى هَذَا قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ يَوْمَ
 الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾
 وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا قَاتِلُوا
 فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ ادْفَعُوا قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالَ
 لَا تَبَعْنَاكُمْ هُمْ لِلْكَفْرِ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ
 لِلْإِيمَانِ يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
 وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا
 لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قُتِلُوا قُلْ
 فَادْرَأُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
 صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

223 Seventy Muslims were killed in the setback during the Battle of Uḥud. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

224 That is when they routed their enemy in the Battle of Badr killing seventy men and taking another seventy prisoners. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

225 They incredulously asked the reason behind this setback. Then their answer came.

226 *al-ladhīna nāfaquū*, the hypocrites lurking within the Believing community.

227 Defend yourselves.

228 Their lame excuse being that they did not think the Believers would actually engage the Deniers in battle. They claimed that they saw battle as only a remote possibility. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

﴿169﴾ Do not think that those who got killed in the cause of Allah⁽²²⁹⁾ are dead. Nay but they are alive with their Lord 'being handsomely' provided for⁽²³⁰⁾.

﴿170﴾ Delighted with what Allah gave them from His Grace and are cheerful 'in anticipation' for those who did not yet join them; that behind them they⁽²³¹⁾ will have no fear nor will they feel sorrowful; they are cheerfully anticipant of Bounty and Grace from Allah and that Allah casts aside not the reward of the Believers.

﴿172﴾ Those who responded to 'the call of' Allah and the Messenger after they have been deeply wounded⁽²³²⁾; of whom these who do well and are Mindful, theirs is a great reward.

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا
بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ فَرِحِينَ بِمَا
ءَاتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ
لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ * يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةِ مَنِ
اللَّهُ وَفَضْلٍ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ
الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقُوا ۗ أَجْرٌ
عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٢﴾

229 Martyrs.

230 Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "When your brothers were struck down in the Battle of Badr, Allah placed their souls in the 'abdominal' cavities of green fowls, they drink from the rivers of Paradise, eat from its fruits and come back at the end of the day to repose in chandeliers hung in the Shadow of the 'Majestic' Throne. For all of this, they 'the martyred Believers' said: "Who would tell our brothers about us; that we are in Paradise being handsomely provided for so that they may not give up fighting in the cause of Allah or cower in war?" Allah Almighty said: "I will tell them on your behalf". Then He revealed: "Do not think that those who got killed in the cause of Allah are dead. Nay but they are alive with their Lord 'being handsomely' provided for". (Abū Dāwūd: 2520, Aḥmad: 2388; another version is found in Muslim: 1887)

231 The latter.

232 Those of the Believers who did the Prophet's (ﷺ) bidding and chased after the retreating Makkan army until they reached the outpost of Ḥamrā' al-Asad, on the outskirts of Madinah. These Believers had been deeply wounded and bruised in the Battle of Uḥud. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿173﴾ Those who ‘when’ people said to them: “People have regrouped for you, so fear them”⁽²³³⁾, their Belief ‘only’ grew firmer and they said: “Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers”⁽²³⁴⁾.
 ﴿174﴾ They returned with Grace and Bounty from Allah⁽²³⁵⁾, touched not by harm; they followed Allah’s Pleasure⁽²³⁶⁾—Allah is of a Great Bounty. ﴿175﴾ It is indeed Satan sowing fear of his allies⁽²³⁷⁾. Do not fear them but fear Me, if you are ‘true’ Believers.

﴿176﴾ Let not ‘Muhammad’ those who rush forth towards Denial grieve you⁽²³⁸⁾; they would not harm Allah in the least. Allah wants not a share for them in the Hereafter and theirs is a great Punishment.

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ﴿١٧٣﴾ فَأَنْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةِ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَّمْ يَمَسَّ مِنْهُمْ سُوءٌ وَاتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾ إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَآءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا مِنِّي إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

وَلَا يَخْزِيكَ الَّذِينَ يَسْءُرُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَن يَصْرِوْاَ اللَّهُ شَيْئًا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَلَّا يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حِطًّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾

- 233 The Deniers’ army, under the leadership of Abū Sufyān, were reported to be bracing themselves for another attack. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 234 This pronouncement is one of the greatest forms of *Dhikr* (remembrance) during times of hardship. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “*Hasbunā Allāh wa ni‘ma al-Wakīl* (Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers), was said by Ibrāhīm (رضي الله عنه) when he was thrown in the fire and was said by Muhammad (ﷺ) when it was said: “*People have regrouped for you, so fear them*”, their Belief ‘only’ grew firmer and they said: “*Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers*.”” (al-Bukhārī: 4563)
- 235 Their obedience to God and His Messenger (ﷺ) and their pursuit of the enemy won them great rewards upon their return.
- 236 They did what leads to the Pleasure of God and won it. (al-Ṭabarī)
- 237 The allies of the Devil are the warring Deniers. Satan uses them to intimidate Believers. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 238 The adversity that overcame the Believers showed the real mettle of the hypocrites, who found the time opportune to lay bare their true colours. This is in stark contrast to the stance of the real Believers who did not loiter in responding to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) bidding.

﴿177﴾ Those who exchanged Belief for Denial would not harm Allah in the least and theirs is a painful Punishment. ﴿178﴾ Let not those who Deny think that the rein We give them⁽²³⁹⁾ is better for them. We only give them allowance so that they would accumulate sins; theirs is a humiliating Punishment.

﴿179﴾ Allah would not have left the Believers as you were, until He sorted out the bad from the good⁽²⁴⁰⁾. Allah would have not revealed the Unseen to you, but He chooses from His Messengers whoever He wishes⁽²⁴¹⁾, so Believe in Allah and His Messengers. If you Believe and are Mindful then yours is a great reward. ﴿180﴾ Let not those who are miserly⁽²⁴²⁾ with what Allah has 'bountifully' bestowed on them from His Grace think that this is better for them.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا
 اللَّهَ شَيْئًا ۖ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٧﴾ وَلَا يَخْسَبَنَّ
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۖ إِنَّمَا نَمَلِي لَهُمْ خَيْرًا ۖ لَّا نَفْسُهُمْ إِنَّمَا
 نَمَلِي لَهُمْ لِيَزَادُوا إِثْمًا ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾
 مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ
 حَتَّىٰ يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ
 لِيُزِيلَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْتَبِيٰ مِنْ
 رُسُلِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۖ فَتَأْمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ وَإِن
 تَوَّابُونَ ۖ فَتَقَرَّبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِحَسَنَاتِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
 لَذُو فَضْلٍ لِّبَعِيدٍ ﴿١٧٩﴾ وَلَا يَخْسَبَنَّ
 الَّذِينَ يَخْتَلُونَ بِمَاءِ أَنْهَامُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
 هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُمْ

239 The fact that God does not quicken their punishment and seize them for their misdeeds (cf. Ayas 196-197 below).

240 In its formative days, the early Believing community was not as clearly differentiated as one might think; hypocrites were living in its midst pretending to be Believers and lying low wishing for the worst to come upon the real Believers. In order to separate the wheat from the chaff, God decreed the calamity that befell the Believers in the Battle of Uḥud; this, so the hypocrites could be told apart (cf. al-Rāzī).

241 God chooses from among His Messengers those whom He entrusts with some knowledge of the Unseen (*al-Ghayb*). In this instance, He told Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) who the hypocrites really were so that he may be on guard against them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*)

242 Believers are encouraged to spend out of their wealth as much as they are encouraged to put their own lives on the line in God's cause.

Nay, but it is evil for them; they will be collared 'around their necks' with what they withheld on the Day of Judgement. For Allah is the inheritance of the Heavens and Earth—Allah is Knowledgeable of what you do.

بَلْ هُوَ سَرٌّ لَّهُمْ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخُلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٨٠﴾

﴿181﴾ Allah heard the saying of those who said⁽²⁴³⁾: “Allah is poor and we are rich”⁽²⁴⁴⁾. We will record what they said and their killing of the Prophets unjustifiably⁽²⁴⁵⁾, and We will say: “Taste you the torment of burning!”^{﴿182﴾} That ‘torment’ is because of what your hands sent forth⁽²⁴⁶⁾—Allah certainly does not deal ‘with His’ servants unfairly.^{﴿183﴾} Those who said: “Allah took our pledge not to Believe in any Messenger unless he gives us a sacrificial offering ‘to be’ consumed by fire”⁽²⁴⁷⁾.

لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ
وَحُمْنٌ أَغْنِيَهُ سَتَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَتْلَهُمُ
الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلُ دُوقُوا عَذَابَ
الْحَرِيقِ ﴿١٨١﴾ ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيكُمْ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ﴿١٨٢﴾ الَّذِينَ
قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عٰهَدَ إِلَيْنَا آلَاؤُْمَنَ لِرَسُولٍ
حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِينَا يُقْرَبَانِ تَأْكُلُهُ النَّارُ

243 Now that the lessons from the setback in the Battle of Uḥud have all been thrashed out, argumentation with the Jews of Madinah once more picks up.

244 al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī reports that when the Jews of Madinah heard the previous ayas, which encourage Believers to spend in the cause of God, they said: “If He ‘God’ asks people to spend in His cause to achieve His goals, then He must be a wretched pauper!” (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurṭubī, al-Rāzī)

245 Cf. Aya 21.

246 What they committed.

247 Muhammad Asad has the following comment in his translation: “... in other words, unless he conforms to Mosaic Law, which prescribes burnt offerings as an essential part of divine services. Although this aspect of the Law had been left in abeyance ever since the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, the Jews of post-Talmudic times were convinced that the Messiah promised to them would restore the Mosaic rites in their entirety; and so they refused to accept as a prophet anyone who did not conform to the Law of the Torah in every detail”.

Say 'Muhammad': "Many a Messenger before me came to you⁽²⁴⁸⁾ with clear evidences, and with what you 'just' said. Why did you kill them if only you are truthful? ﴿184﴾ If they call you a liar, then many a Messenger before you were called liars; 'even though' they came 'to them' with clear evidences, the 'Sacred' Writs and the Luminous Book⁽²⁴⁹⁾.

﴿185﴾ Every soul shall taste death⁽²⁵⁰⁾ and you will be paid your rewards in full on the Day of Judgement; whoever is dragged away⁽²⁵¹⁾ from Hellfire and entered into Paradise, then he is a winner—life is nothing but an illusory enjoyment.

قُلْ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّن قَبْلِي بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
وَالَّذِي قُلْتُمْ فَلِمَ قَتَلْتُمُوهُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٨٤﴾ فَإِن كَذَّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ
رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ جَاءُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ
وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ﴿١٨٥﴾

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ
أَجْرَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَن زُحِرَ عَنِ
النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا
الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَمَتَعُ الْعُرُورِ ﴿١٨٥﴾

248 To your ancestors.

249 The Sacred Writs *al-Zubur* (lit. books, sing. *zabūr*) and *al-Kitāb al-Munīr* (the Luminous Book) refer to the Heavenly revealed Books.

250 Although mention of this fact here can be construed as a way of alleviating the suffering and hurt the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers endured from their enemies' hands and tongues (al-Ṭabarī). In Ibn 'Āshūr's considered opinion it is further meant to soothe the pain that the Believers found at losing their brothers in battle, on the one hand, and on the other, refutes the narrative of the hypocrites who said that their brothers would not have been killed had they not come out of their homes for battle.

251 The scene being painted here is graphic. The word *zuḥẓiḥa* embodies its meaning within its own phonic makeup; drawing its form and throwing its shadow in the process. Hellfire as found here possesses a gravitational power, dragging to it whoever and whatever gets near. Any person who is caught within its radius is in need of someone to drag him (*yu-zuḥẓiḥ-uḥu*) away little by little, in order to set him free from its energy sapping pull. Whoever is to be dragged away from its radius, freed from the tentacles of its gravity and admitted to Paradise has made it. This is a powerful and full coloured depiction of helplessness, of vehemently tugging, pulling and dragging in order to reach safe haven.

﴿186﴾ You shall be tested in your wealth and yourselves⁽²⁵²⁾ and you will hear much that is hurtful from those who were given the Book before you and the Associators⁽²⁵³⁾, but if you remain steadfast and are Mindful, then that is real fortitude.

﴿186﴾ لَسْتَبْلَوْنَ فِيْ اَمْوَالِكُمْ وَاَنْفُسِكُمْ
وَلَتَسْمَعْنَ مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ
مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا اَدٰى كَثِيْرًا
وَ اِنْ تَصْبِرُوْا وَتَتَّقُوْا فَاِنَّ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ
الْاُمُوْر ﴿١٨٦﴾

﴿187﴾ ‘Mention’ When Allah took the pledge of those who were given the Book that you should make it plain to people rather than suppress it⁽²⁵⁴⁾; they tossed it behind their backs and traded it off for a pittance—miserable indeed is what they buy.

﴿187﴾ وَاِذْ اَخَذَ اللّٰهُ مِيْثَاقَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ
لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوْنَهُ فَنَبَذُوْهُ وَّرَآءَ
ظُهُورِهِمْ وَاَشْتَرُوْا بِهٖ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا فَبِئْسَ
مَا يَشْتَرُوْنَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَفْرَحُوْنَ
بِمَا اَتَوْا وَيُحِبُّوْنَ اَنْ يُحْمَدُوْا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوْا
فَلَا تَحْسَبْتَهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٨٨﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَ الْاَرْضِ ۗ وَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿١٨٩﴾

﴿188﴾ Do not think that those who delight in their actions⁽²⁵⁵⁾ and are pleased with unwarranted praise⁽²⁵⁶⁾, are at a ‘great’ distance from Punishment—theirs is a painful Punishment. ﴿189﴾ To Allah belongs the ownership of the Heavens and Earth—Allah is Able over everything.

252 Cf. 2:155.

253 The Arab pagans.

254 The Divine Book.

255 Full of conceit over their evil-doing.

256 Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrates that the reason for the revelation of this aya was such that: “Some hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) would stay behind when he used to set out on forays, and they were pleased with this. Upon his return, they would forge excuses and swear to them. They even loved to be praised for what they did not do ‘i.e. being Believers and part of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) army’. Thus this aya was revealed”. (al-Bukhārī: 4567, Muslim: 2777)

﴿190﴾ Indeed there are in the creation of the Heavens and Earth and the alternation of night and day Signs⁽²⁵⁷⁾ for people of reason. ﴿191﴾ Those who mention Allah 'while' standing, sitting and 'lying' on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the Heavens and Earth 'declaring': "Our Lord, You did not create 'all of' this in vain. Glorified be You, shield us from the torment of Fire; ﴿192﴾ Our Lord, disgraced indeed is the one You commit to Hellfire; there are no helpers for the evildoers; ﴿193﴾ Our Lord, we heard a caller⁽²⁵⁸⁾, summoning to Belief, saying: "Believe in your Lord!" and we Believed, so our Lord forgive us our sins and expunge our misdeeds, and bring our lives to termination 'joining us' with the Righteous;

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافِ
الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٠﴾ الَّذِينَ
يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَفُجُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ
وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا تُسَبِّحُكَ فَقِينَا
عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩١﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَن تُدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ
أَخْرَجْتَهُ، وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن أَنْصَارٍ ﴿١٩٢﴾ رَبَّنَا
إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ
ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا
وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَقَّتْ مَعَ الْآبِرَارِ ﴿١٩٣﴾

257 These are so-called cosmic Signs (*āyāt kawniyyah*). They, along with the Qur'anic Signs (*āyāt Qur'āniyyah*), work together to prove to Believers the Truth of the Message and thus strengthen their Faith. Believers are encouraged to think about these Signs and use their reason when considering them (cf. Riḍā). Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "I slept once over at 'my aunt' Maymūnah's 'the Prophet's wife' home, while the Prophet was there, in order to see how he Prays at night. He (ﷺ) talked with his wife for a while and then slept. When there remained only the last third of the night, or a part of it, he woke and sat up, looked at the sky and recited: "Indeed there are in the creation of the Heavens and Earth and the alternation of night and day Signs for people of reason". He then performed ablution, rinsed his mouth with *siwāk* 'a twig' and Prayed eleven *rak'ahs*. When Bilāl called for Prayer, he (ﷺ) performed two *rak'ahs*, went out and led people in the Fajr Prayer". (al-Bukhārī: 7452)

258 Muhammad (ﷺ). (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

﴿194﴾ Our Lord, bestow on us what You promised us through your Messengers and do not disgrace us on the Day of Judgement—indeed You never break Your promise”.

﴿195﴾ Their Lord responded to them that: “I shall never render useless the deeds of any doer of you, male or female; you are each other’s other part⁽²⁵⁹⁾. Those who migrated, were expelled from their lands, persecuted in My cause, fought and got killed, I shall expunge their misdeeds and admit them into Gardens under which rivers flow”; a reward from Allah—indeed with Allah is the best of rewards.

﴿196﴾ Do not be deceived by the revelling⁽²⁶⁰⁾ of those who Deny in the land; ﴿197﴾ “this is but” a passing enjoyment, then their resort is Hellfire—ghastly indeed is this bed! ﴿198﴾ But those who are Mindful of their Lord, theirs are Gardens under which rivers flow, eternally they abide therein; a domicile coming from Allah—what is with Allah is best for the Righteous. ﴿199﴾ Indeed there are among the People of the Book those who Believe in Allah,

رَبَّنَا وَآتِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَىٰ رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿١٩٤﴾
فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ
عَمَلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنثَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ
مِّنْ بَعْضٍ فَأَلَّيْنِ هَاجِرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ
دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُودُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَتَلُوا وَقُتِلُوا
لَا كُفْرَانَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَا دُخْلَنَّهُمْ
جَنَّتِ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا
مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ ﴿١٩٥﴾

لَا يَغُرُّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي
الْبِلَادِ ﴿١٩٦﴾ مَتَّعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ
وَبئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿١٩٧﴾ لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا
رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نَزَّلْنَا مِنْ عِنْدِ
اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِلْآبِرَارِ ﴿١٩٨﴾ وَإِنَّ
مَنْ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ

259 Both men and women are born of each other and are looked upon equally. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

260 By the fact that the Deniers were living unchecked, enjoying complete freedom of movement and all that life has to offer (cf. Aya 178 above).

what has been sent down to you⁽²⁶¹⁾ and what had been sent down to them, humbling themselves before Allah and do not trade off the Signs of Allah for a pittance; for those is their reward with their Lord—Allah is swift in reckoning. ﴿200﴾ You who Believe, be forbearing⁽²⁶²⁾, remain firm⁽²⁶³⁾, guard your lands⁽²⁶⁴⁾ and be Mindful of Allah so that you may be successful⁽²⁶⁵⁾.

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ خَشِيعَاتٍ
لِلَّهِ لَا يَشْتُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩٩﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا أَصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾



261 The Qur'an. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

262 Be patient in the face of life's trials and tribulations. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

263 When you face your enemy in battle. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

264 *Rābiṭū* from *ribāṭ*, i.e. the fact of 'tying up' one's war steed at outposts to protect the borders from enemy attack. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Sa'dī)

265 This aya sums up the keys for being victorious which are repeated throughout *Āl 'Imrān*. It is given in answer to the Believer's Prayer to God to make them prevail over the Deniers found at the very end of *al-Baqarah*. (Cf. 'Key' in the Introduction to this sura.)

سُورَةُ النِّسَاءِ

al-Nisā'
(Women)



al-Nisā' (Women)

Title: *al-Nisā'* (in Muslim: 772, 800 and 1617; al-Bukhārī: 5055) makes many references to womenfolk, covering their rights and other domestic rulings in detail, along with inheritance matters and how to administer the affairs of any dependents. The details regarding these matters are sufficiently extensive for it to be known as *al-Nisā' al-Kubrā* (the more detailed *al-Nisā'*), whereas Sura *al-Ṭalāq* is known as *al-Nisā' al-Quṣrā* (the less detailed *al-Nisā'*) (cf. al-Bukhārī: 4909). It is important to note that the title *Women* is both an emblematic and concrete token of the sura's ideational central theme. That women were, to say the least, downtrodden and ill-treated in Arabian societies before the advent of Islam is well-known, and that they are given such great rights here is a manifest declaration of a break away from the then prevalent habit of treating them like commodities. The title, and by extension these new laws, symbolize the establishment of a well-demarcated community, one that is worlds apart from the heaving bosom of ignorance and darkness that surrounded it. Essentially, it is a firmly disciplined community built upon Mindfulness, piety and justice for all.

Merit: 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever owns the first seven suras of the Qur'an '*al-sab' al-uwal*' is truly learned" (Aḥmad: 24575). Wāthilah Ibn al-Asqa' (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I was given the seven lengthy suras '*al-sab' al-ṭiwāl*' in lieu of the Torah" (Aḥmad: 24575). 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) said: "There are five ayas in *al-Nisā'* that I would not replace for the world. And I know for certain that those of knowledge would not pass by them without recognizing them. 'They are': "*If you 'Believers' avoid the major ones 'of the sins' that you are warned against, We will absolve you of your 'lesser' misdeeds and We will have you enter a Noble Entrance 'Paradise'*" (4: 31); "*Verily Allah does not deal 'anyone' unjustly as much as a mote's weight; if it is a 'one' good deed done, then He multiplies it and grants from His own 'additionally' a great reward*" (4: 40); "*Allah does not forgive that He is Associated with, but He forgives what is lesser than that for whoever He wills*" (4: 48); "*Had they – when they wronged themselves – come to you and sought Allah's forgiveness and the Messenger sought forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful*" (4: 64); and, "*Whoever commits an ill deed or wrongs himself, then seeks forgiveness from Allah shall find Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful*" (4: 110). (al-Ṭabarānī: 9069; al-Ḥākim: 3194)

Theme: this is the third Madinan sura in a row, establishing and strengthening sincere Faith (*īmān*) in *al-Baqarah* and *Āl 'Imrān* respectively, and now cultivating and nurturing Mindfulness (*taqwā*), through daily practice at home. *al-Nisa*'s purpose is to safeguard the sanctity of the basic building block of society, and to establish a fair and equitable, wholesome, Mindful community of Believers. It opens with the very call to humans to be Mindful of God Who created them all from one, thus standing them on equal ground. Mindfulness, very much like charity, begins at home, and the test of true Mindfulness can only be attained through overcoming one's own weaknesses, fears and trepidations.

Key: set against the backdrop of the early formative days of the Believing community, *al-Nisā'* charts out a well-defined identity for the community, one that affirms boundaries. The basic foundational principles are stated and reiterated throughout this sura: 1) The community is to be built upon the bulwarks of its inner sanctity; a pious observance of Mindfulness, which is the overruling principle underlying each and every action carried out by the individual members of the community, as also the absolute upholding of justice, and complete obedience of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), who is the head of this community. 2) The line is clearly drawn between sincere Belief and its opposites; those who profess Islam and are living among Deniers have to migrate to Madinah to preserve their faith and strengthen the ranks of Believers around their leader. 3) The enemy latent within the community, namely the hypocrites, need to be exposed and told apart so that Believers are aware of their dangerous stratagems - incessant conniving and morale dampening - on the one hand, and whereby they are offered the opportunity to see reason and align themselves with the Believers wholeheartedly. 4) Believers are encouraged to fight for what they stand for. Furthermore, given this community will inevitably come to blows with the surrounding forces that do not condone of the way of life the Muslims now publicly practice, war protocols and rules of engagement are clearly demarcated. 5) The People of the Book's beliefs must be rebutted so as to counter their argumentative prowess, and dispossess them of their claim to moral superiority. In this way, the ground on which the Faith stands was to be affirmed.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

﴿1﴾ O people, be Mindful of your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it He created its mate⁽¹⁾, and from both of them He dispersed scores of men and women⁽²⁾; be Mindful of Allah, by Whom you appeal to each other⁽³⁾ and 'honour' the wombs⁽⁴⁾—verily Allah is Watchful over you.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ
وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا
وِنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١﴾

﴿2﴾ 'Guardians!' Give out to the orphans their money, do not exchange the bad for the good⁽⁵⁾, and do not devour their money along with yours—indeed this is a heinous sin. ﴿3﴾ If you fear you will not be fair to 'your' orphan

وَأُولُو الْيَتَامَىٰ أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْحَيْثُ بِالطَّيِّبِ
وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَمْوَالِكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حُوبًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٢﴾
وَأَنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَقْسُطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ

- 1 Adam, the single soul, and Eve its mate (ﷺ) (cf. 8: 98; 9: 189; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī). That all people are the offspring of the same parents provides all the more reason for them to show leniency and compassion towards each other (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 2 "Among His signs is that He created you from dust. Then, behold, you are human beings ranging far and wide" (30:20).
- 3 Knowing how great God is in the heart of the entreated, the addresser would say: "I implore you by Allah (*as'aluka bi Allāh*) to do this or that". The God Who is glorified in this way should also be heeded with equal homage (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī). Alternatively, it means: "By Whom you 'solemnly' bind each other 'in your dealings and transactions'". (Cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*: 32: 113)
- 4 *al-Arḥām*, lit. the wombs, metonymically means relations of kinship. These relations are to be surrounded with care. They are to be safeguarded not severed. People's rights, especially those of kith and kin, are to be honoured as much as God's own rights (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī), and hence why they are mentioned in conjunction with honouring the Almighty's Name.
- 5 Do not choose the most valuable property belonging to the orphans under your care and confiscate it as your own, leaving the less worthy of it to them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'adī)

'prospective wives'⁽⁶⁾, then marry 'instead' whoever you like of women: two, three and four. But if you fear that you will not be fair 'in your treatment of all your wives' then one 'is enough' or those that your right hands possess⁽⁷⁾—this is prescribed lest you commit injustice.⁽⁴⁾ Give women their dowry willingly as a right 'of theirs', but if they allow you some of it contentedly then eat it pleasurably with good cheer.⁽⁵⁾ Do not hand over to the feeble-minded your money which Allah made as sustenance for you; 'yet' spend on them from it, clothe them and speak to them gently.⁽⁶⁾ Test the orphans⁽⁸⁾, so that when they reach maturity – if you perceive them discerning – give them their money. Do not hastily devour or squander it fearing that they should 'in time' grow up. Whoever of you is well off,

فَأَنْكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مِمَّنِّي وَتَلَّتْ وَرُبِعٌ
فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ
ذَلِكَ أَذَىٰ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَأَتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدَقَاتِهِنَّ
نِحْلَةً فَإِنْ طِبَّنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِّنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُوهُ
هَنِيئًا مَّرِيئًا ﴿٥﴾ وَلَا تُوَفُّوا السَّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي
جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَمًا وَارْزُقُوهُنَّ فِيهَا وَالْكُسُوفُهَا وَقُولُوا
لَهُنَّ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا ﴿٦﴾ وَأَبْتَلُوا أَيْتَانِي حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا
الْبِكَاحَ فَإِنْ ءَانَسْتُمْ مِنْهُمُ رَشَدًا فَأَدْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ
أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوهَا إِسْرَافًا وَبِدَارًا أَنْ يَكْبُرُوا

- 6 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said that: "This aya came down regarding any man under whom there is an orphan girl for whom he is both guardian and inheritor, while she has money and with no one to argue in her favour. This guardian is enjoined not to marry her for her money, nor is he to beat or molest her in the process. In this respect, Allah says: "Should you fear that you would not be fair to 'your' orphan 'prospective wives', then marry 'instead' whoever you like of women". That is, He, the Almighty, is saying: "These I made lawful for you, and leave out those that you may be unfair to". (Muslim: 3018; al-Bukhārī: 4573)
- 7 The bondswomen that you own. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)
- 8 Take measure of those orphans over whom you are guardian so as to ascertain that they are discerning enough to be given their money and will not squander it due to lack of mental maturity. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī)

let him forbear 'in dignity'; whoever of you is needy let him eat off 'of it' proportionately⁹. Should you hand over their money to them, let there be witnesses to bear this—Allah is sufficient as Reckoner.

﴿7﴾ To men 'rightly' belongs a share in the 'inheritance' left behind by the parents and 'bequeathing' relatives, and 'like so' to women 'rightly' belongs a share in the 'inheritance' left behind by the parents and 'near' relatives, be it large or small¹⁰—a share ordained 'by Allah'¹¹. ﴿8﴾ If, at the time of the division 'of inheritance', 'other' relatives¹², orphans and the needy attend, then give them some of it, and speak to them gently. ﴿9﴾ Let those who fear 'future harm' for their helpless posterity when they leave them behind 'as orphans after

وَمَنْ كَانَ عَيْتًا فَلْيَسْتَعْفِفْ وَمَنْ كَانَ فَقِيرًا فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِذَا دَفَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فَأَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا ﴿٧﴾

لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا ﴿٨﴾ وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُولُو الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينُ فَأَازِفُوهُمْ مِنْهُ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ﴿٩﴾ وَلِيخَشِ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكَوْا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّةً ضِعَفًا خَافُوا عَلَيْهِمْ

9 In proportion with what is socially agreed as enough to meet the poor guardian's necessary need, without excess. (Ibn 'Āshūr, Ibn 'Uthaymīn)

10 No matter how small or large the bequeathed sum to the inheriting relatives might be, both males and females have their due rights in it (cf. al-Ṭabarī). This is a revocation of the practice that was common in Arabia before the advent of Islam, known as the age of ignorance when women and younger boys were barred from inheritance. This with the justification that they do not ride horses that need to be dearly cared for, provide for those in need of assistance, ward off enemies, nor give out of their money to dependents (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Jazā'irī).

11 This 'ordained share' is detailed in Ayas 11-12 below.

12 Those relatives who have no lawful share in the inheritance. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

their death', be Mindful of Allah, and 'only' say what is fair⁽¹³⁾.
 ﴿10﴾ Those who devour the money of orphans unjustly, only consume fire in their bellies—they will experience a Fiery Furnace⁽¹⁴⁾.

﴿11﴾ Allah advises⁽¹⁵⁾ you regarding 'your inheritance to' your children: a male should have the equal share of two females;

فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٩﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا ﴿١٠﴾

يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثِيَّاتِ ﴿١١﴾

- 13 In the same way as any parent seeks to ensure just treatment of their offspring after their death, any guardian of orphans will do well to remember this and treat those entrusted to them with care and kindness. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 14 *Sa'ir* is another name for Hellfire (cf. al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Beware of the seven most cardinal sins: Associating other deities with Allah, sorcery, annihilating a sacrosanct soul without having the right to, devouring usury, consuming an orphan's money, fleeing in battle, and accusing chaste, pure in heart, Believing women 'of lewdness'". (Cf. al-Bukhārī, 6857; Muslim, 89)
- 15 *al-Waṣiyyah* (lit. advice) is to strongly suggest a way of going about things for another person. 'Advice' from God, on the other hand, is a command, a dictate, that must be carried out. Furthermore, 'advice' also underlines the significance of the matter at hand and the great care taken by the person so advising (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). Given how crucial all this is, God makes a point of 'dictating' the division of inheritance Himself. No one besides the All-Knowing, All-Fair Creator is more knowledgeable of human nature and more capable of a just judgement regarding this very complex, emotionally charged, divisive matter. The reason behind this aya's revelation, as in al-Bukhārī (4577) and Muslim (1616), is the hadith that Jābir Ibn 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "The widow of Sa'd Ibn al-Rabī' came to the Prophet (ﷺ) accompanied by their two daughters. She said: "Messenger of Allah, these are the two daughters of Sa'd Ibn al-Rabī', their father met his death as martyr with you in the Battle of Uḥud. Their uncle took their money, leaving nothing for them. Being destitute, they will not find husbands!" He 'the Prophet (ﷺ)' said: "Allah shall judge their case!" Then the Aya of Inheritance (*āyat al-Mirāth*) came down. At this, the Prophet (ﷺ) sent for their uncle to come to him. 'When he came', he 'the Prophet (ﷺ)' said to him: "Give the daughters of Sa'd two thirds and another eighth to their mother, then what is left is yours"".

'but' if they are a 'number' of women more than two⁽¹⁶⁾, then theirs is two thirds of what he 'the parent' leaves 'behind'; if she is only one, then she should have half of it; and to his parents for each one a sixth of what he leaves, that is if he has children; but if he has no children and his parents inherit him, then to his mother belongs a third⁽¹⁷⁾; 'but' if he has siblings, then his mother receives a sixth; 'that is all' after a bequest he made 'is fulfilled'⁽¹⁸⁾ and a debt 'of his is paid off'. Among your parents and your children you do not know who are more beneficial to you⁽¹⁹⁾; a division from Allah—verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

فَإِنْ كُنَّ نِسَاءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ وَوَلَدٌ فَإِن لَّمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَوَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَةٌ رَّبَوَاهُ فَلَهُمُ الثُّلُثُ فَإِن كَانَتْ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ فَلِأُمَّهِ السُّدُسُ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ ؕ ءَابَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفَعًا فَرِيضَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَلَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١١﴾

- 16 That is in a scenario whereby the offspring of the deceased are only females and more than two. If there are two daughters they are to be given two thirds because the Prophet (ﷺ) gave the two daughters of Sa'd Ibn al-Rabi' two thirds, (al-Sa' dī points to this).
- 17 The remainder is for the father. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 18 The bequeathed amount should, in all cases, not exceed a third of the inheritance, (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī). Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه) said: "I was taken seriously ill and the Prophet (ﷺ) came to visit me, and I said to him: "Prophet of Allah, I am going to leave behind me 'considerable' wealth, and only one daughter; shall I give out two thirds of it and leave a third 'for her'?" He replied: "No". Then I said: "Then may I give out a half and leave her the other?" He said: "No". Then I said: "Then may I will a third and leave the other two thirds for her?" He said: "A third 'you may give out', yet 'even' one third is too much"". (al-Bukhārī: 5659; Muslim: 1628). Furthermore, a person who legally inherits does not need to be included in the will. Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī (رضي الله عنه) said: "I heard the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) say during the Farewell Sermon: "Allah, Almighty, gave every owner of right their right, there is no will for an inheritor"". (Cf. al-Tirmidhī: 2020; Abū Dāwūd: 2870; Ibn Mājah: 2713)
- 19 Since you do not know who is going to be of a greater use to you in your life and after your death, do not favour anyone over the others and act by God's division of inheritance, which is the more just and equitable. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

﴿12﴾ (20) To you belongs half of what your spouses⁽²¹⁾ leave behind, 'that is' if they do not have children; but if they have children then yours is a quarter of what they leave behind, 'that is all' after 'fulfilling' a bequest they made and 'paying their' debt. Their 'widows'' is a quarter of what you 'men' leave behind, if you do not have children; 'but' if you have children, theirs is an eighth of what you leave behind, 'that is all' after 'fulfilling' a bequest you made and 'paying your' debt. If he is a childless parentless man⁽²²⁾, or 'be her' a woman, and he has a brother or sister, then each one receives a sixth; 'but' if they are more than that, then they share a third, 'that is all' after 'fulfilling' a bequest made and 'paying' a debt; 'given that this bequest or debt' is not detrimental 'to an inheritor'⁽²³⁾.

وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ
 إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ
 لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمْ الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتْنَ مِنْ
 بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِيَنَّ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ
 وَلَهُنَّ الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتُمْ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ
 لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ
 فَلَهُنَّ الثُّمُنُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ
 تُوصُونَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ رَجُلٌ
 يُورَثُ كَلِلاً أَوْ امْرَأَةً وَوَلَّهُ أَخٌ أَوْ أُخْتُ
 فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ فَإِنْ كَانُوا
 أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فِي
 الثُّلُثِ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصَى بِهَا
 أَوْ دَيْنٍ غَيْرِ مُضَارٍّ

20 Whilst the previous aya details the shares of inheritance of blood relatives (*al-wirāthah bi al-nasab*), this one explains the shares of those related through marriage (*al-wirāthah bi al-muṣāharah*). (Abū Ḥayyān)

21 Wives.

22 A person who has no living children or parents is known as *kalālah* (from *iklīl*, wreath, as his brothers and sisters surround him like a wreath surrounds the head). Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: "I was the last person to see 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) and I heard him say: "Mine is the final word! *al-kalālah* is the person who has neither children nor parents". (Ibn Abū Ḥātim; its chain of narrators was deemed authentic by Aḥmad Shākir in *'Umdat al-Tafsīr*).

23 al-Rāzi in his *Tafsīr* says: "A will can be detrimental to inheritors in a number of ways: 1) whereby the testator bequeaths more than a third of the money; 2) whereby he/she bequeaths all their money to non-relatives; 3) whereby he/she falsely declares a debt to preclude heirs from the

‘This is’ An advice⁽²⁴⁾ from Allah—Allah is All-Knowing, All-Forbearing. ﴿13﴾ Those⁽²⁵⁾ are the boundaries of Allah, whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger will be admitted into Gardens under which rivers flow—indeed that is the great triumph. ﴿14﴾ Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, and flouts His boundaries, will be admitted into a Fire, forever he abides therein—his is a humiliating Punishment.

﴿15﴾ Those of your women, who commit vice⁽²⁶⁾, seek four witnesses from among you to testify against them; if they testify then confine them in ‘their’ houses until death claims them, or ‘else’ Allah may make a’n other’ way for them⁽²⁷⁾.

وَصِيَّةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾
تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَن يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرَى
مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَن يَعَصِ
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ
نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿١٤﴾

وَالَّتِي يَأْتِيَنَّ الْفَحِشَةَ مِنْ نِّسَائِكُمْ
فَأَسْتَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنكُمْ فَإِن
شَهِدُوا فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوتِ حَتَّى
يَتَوَفَّاهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُنَّ
سَبِيلًا ﴿١٥﴾

inheritance; 4) whereby the testator declares that a debt due to him/her was settled while it was not; 5) whereby someone sells something valuable for a pittance, or buys some worthless item and pays dearly for it with the intention of depriving heirs of the money; 6) whereby the testator bequeaths a third of the wealth not with pure intention but rather to lessen the share of the inheritors”.

24 A binding commandment which you have to comply with. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

25 All of the aforementioned rulings and dictates. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

26 *al-Fāḥishah*, vice: alluded to here is adultery/fornication (cf. al-Sam’ānī).

27 This aya and the next, which deal with the ruling regarding adultery, are unanimously deemed abrogated (Ibn al-Jawzī, *Nawāsikh al-Qur’ān*). The abrogating aya is: “*The fornicator and the fornicatress flog each of them a hundred lashes*”. (24: 2) ‘Ubādah Ibn al-Sāmit (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Take it from me, take it from me! Allah has made a way for them. If an unmarried man fornicates with an unmarried woman, then ‘their penalty is’ a hundred lashes ‘each’. If a married man commits adultery with

﴿16﴾ Any two of you who engage in it 'vice', offend them both⁽²⁸⁾, but if they repent and mend their ways, then turn away from them—verily Allah is surely All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿17﴾ Repentance is due by Allah for those who commit evil out of ignorance⁽²⁹⁾ then hasten to repent⁽³⁰⁾. From these Allah accepts their repentance—Allah is surely All-Knowing, All-Wise.

وَالَّذَانِ يَأْتِيَنِهَا مِنْكُمْ فَقَادُوا هُمَا فَإِنَّ تَابًا وَأَصْلَحًا فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾

a married woman, 'their penalty is' a hundred lashes 'each' and stoning". (Muslim: 1690). To prove that such a gravity occurred four witnesses of required legal competence have to come forward and testify that they saw with their own eyes the accused actually engage in intercourse, with the private parts not only meeting but where insertion actually took place.

That this ruling comes immediately after the laws of inheritance have been elaborated, highlights how greatly unscrupulous adultery is, because it wreaks havoc on familial relationships on which major rights and responsibilities are based. Besides this, women who have been given all their rights and been treated with utmost respect in the previous ayas as also in forthcoming ones, are warned, in the strongest of terms, against marital treachery and betrayal of trust (cf. al-Shawkānī).

- 28 By speaking harshly to them and verbally reproaching them so that they realize the immorality of their actions. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa'adī)
- 29 That is *jahālah*, i.e. inability to fully realize the serious consequences of one's actions, despite knowing that such acts are forbidden. Every act of disobedience is *jahālah* (ignorance/carelessness/lack of good judgement) whether intended or not. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'adī)
- 30 God, the Most Merciful, accepts a person's *tawbah* (repentance) as long as he is alive and before seeing death with his own eyes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī). 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allah accepts the repentance of a servant, as long as he is not gurgling 'while suffering the throes of death'". (al-Tirmidhī: 3537; Ibn Mājah: 4253; Aḥmad: 6160) There are five conditions for accepting a person's repentance: 1) sincerity and seeking only God's Pleasure; 2) regretting having committed sins; 3) abandoning sins; 4) having the true intention of not committing sins in the future, and 5) committing to repentance prior to death's arrival (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

﴿18﴾ 'Whereas' Repentance is not 'due' for those who carry on committing 'many a grave' evil, until death comes upon one of them, whence he says: "Now I repent!" Nor is it 'due' for those who die Denying—for those We have prepared a painful Punishment.

وَلَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ اللَّهَ وَلَا الَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا أُولَٰئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٨﴾

﴿19﴾ ⁽³¹⁾ You who Believe, it is not allowed for you to inherit women hatefully⁽³²⁾. Do not 'neither' impound them forcibly to win back some of what you offered them⁽³³⁾, unless they commit a flagrant vice⁽³⁴⁾. Keep company with them agreeably⁽³⁵⁾; if you come to dislike them, then it may be you dislike a thing and Allah endows it with good plenty⁽³⁶⁾.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَن تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلوهُنَّ لَتَدْهُمُوهُنَّ بِبَعْضِ مَا ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَن يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِن كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰ أَن تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾

- 31 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) says that the reason behind this aya's revelation had to do with Arab practice during the age of ignorance whereby: "When a man dies, his close male relatives claimed more of a right to his wife than her own family. If they wished, they could marry her 'to one of them', or marry her off to anybody, or hold her back from marriage". (al-Bukhārī: 4579)
- 32 The fact of the matter is that these women hate what is being done to them and are forced into it, against their will. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)
- 33 Men are also enjoined not to make life hard for their wives. They are not to force them to ransom themselves with a part of the dowry, gifts or any other rights they received from their husbands so that they may divorce them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)
- 34 Such as proven adultery not just an accusation. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī, al-Jazā'irī)
- 35 That a person associates with his wife agreeably means that he speaks kindly to her, does not hurt her or frown in her face, deals with her generously, makes himself pleasing to her and provides for her according to societal norms. (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī) 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The best of you are the best to their wives and I am the best of you to my wives". (al-Tirmidhī: 3895)
- 36 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "A Believing husband should not feel averse to his Believing wife. If he dislikes a certain trait of hers, he may like another". (Muslim: 1469)

﴿20﴾ If you wish to exchange one wife for another –and you have given one of them a hundredweight⁽³⁷⁾ 'in dowry' – then take not 'back' any part of it—would you take it falsely and with blatant sin! ﴿21﴾ How 'ever' would you take it 'back' when each one of you 'both' intimated⁽³⁸⁾ yourselves with each other, and they 'women' held you to a solemn pledge!⁽³⁹⁾

﴿22﴾ Do not marry women whom your fathers had previously married, excepting those in aforesaid⁽⁴⁰⁾—indeed this is a vice and a foulness of an evil path. ﴿23﴾ Unlawful for you 'Believers in marriage' are: your mothers, daughters, sisters, maternal aunts, paternal aunts, daughters of your brothers, daughters of your sisters⁽⁴¹⁾,

وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَسْبِغَ الرَّجُلَ زَوْجَ مَكَانِ زَوْجٍ
وَأَتَيْتُمْ أَحَدَهُنَّ قَطْرًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ
شَيْئًا أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بُهْتَانًا وَإِذَا مُمِيتَا
وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ
إِلَى بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذَنَّ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿٢١﴾

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُمْ
مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ
فَاحِشَةً وَمَقْتًا وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٢٢﴾ حُرِّمَتْ
عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ
وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُ
الْأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الْأُخْتِ

37 Used here in place of *qinṭār* (i.e. a unit of measure akin to a hundredweight) which is a large amount of something, usually a pricey item like gold or silver. Needless to say, this ruling also applies to smaller amounts of dowry (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

38 *Afḍā* is to engage in acts of intimacy which are sexual in nature (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī).

39 This 'solemn pledge' is the marriage contract which stipulates their rights and bases the relationship on the principle to: "...either hold them in agreeably or let 'them' go gracefully". (2:229) (Cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī) Such a breakup which is based on harassing the wife to give up some of her rights and/or return back some of the dowry is far from 'graceful'!

40 During the age of ignorance. In other words, before the advent of Islam and what took place before this ruling was revealed. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

41 The women who are unlawful for a man to marry through lineage (*nasab*) are his: mother (including his maternal and paternal grandmothers), daughters (including the daughters of his children and their daughters), sisters (including half sisters from the father's or the mother's side), paternal

your mothers who nursed you, your sisters through nursing⁽⁴²⁾, mothers of your wives⁽⁴³⁾, those girls who are brought up under your care – the daughters of your wives whom you have been intimate with – but if you were not intimate with them 'their mothers' then you would not be guilty of sinning 'should you marry them'⁽⁴⁴⁾, the wives of your sons who are from your 'own' loins⁽⁴⁵⁾, and that you shall marry two sisters at the same time excepting those in aforesaid—indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَأُمَّهَاتِكُمُ اللَّاتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتِكُمْ
مِنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ
وَرَبَائِبِكُمُ اللَّاتِي فِي حُجُورِكُمْ مِّنْ
نِّسَائِكُمُ اللَّاتِي دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَإِن لَّمْ
تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَاحْتِلَامِ أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِّنْ
أَصْلَابِكُمْ وَأَن تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ
إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
عَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾

aunts (including the sisters of grandfathers), maternal aunts (including the sisters of grandmothers), and paternal and maternal nieces (including their daughters) (cf. *al-Taḥfīr al-Muyassar*).

42 That is milk mothers and sisters. The Prophet (ﷺ) made unlawful in marriage women through breastfeeding (*raḍā'ah*) as much as those who are unlawful through lineage (*nasab*) (cf. Muslim: 1445).

43 Such women are always unlawful, regardless of whether marriage to their daughters was consummated through sexual intercourse or not (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr). Such scenarios, as also those that follow, are unlawful because of *muṣāharah* (marriage).

All of this aims at purifying the Believing household. Categorically stating what constitutes unlawful marriages is a sure path to calm hearts and ensures stable relationships. It does not take much imagination to realize how fraught with emotion and unsettled households would be if marriages to such very close relatives were made legal.

44 In the case of the daughters of wives who are brought up in one's household (*al-rabā'ib*), it is unlawful to marry any of them if one has had sexual relations with the mother, but if not, one is allowed to marry any of them once marriage to their mothers is terminated. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

45 The wives (*ḥalā'il*, lit. legals/lawfuls) of your own sons who are the fruits of your own loins, whether their marriage was consummated through sexual intercourse or not, are unlawful for you. This ruling does not apply to adopted or claimed sons. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

﴿24﴾ 'It is unlawful for you also to marry' Married women, save those whom your right hands possess⁽⁴⁶⁾; this is the ordainment of Allah for you 'so defy it not'. Yet it is lawful for you 'to marry' all besides these given that you should desire chastity⁽⁴⁷⁾ with your money not licentiousness. Whoever of these 'women' you enjoy, then give them their 'bridal' dues as an obligation. You will not be sinning should you mutually agree to what is 'to be offered' after 'fulfilling' this obligation⁽⁴⁸⁾—verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

﴿25﴾ Whoever of you has not the means to marry free Believing women, then 'let him take a wife' from among what you own of your Believing maids⁽⁴⁹⁾;

* وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ
 أَيْمَانُكُمْ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأُحِلَّ لَكُمْ
 مَا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ إِنْ تَبَتَّغُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ مُحْصِنِينَ
 عَيْرَ مُسْلِفِينَ فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ
 فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 فِي مَا تَرَضَيْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْفَرِيضَةِ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ
 مِنْكُمْ طَوْلًا أَنْ يَنْكِحَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ
 الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ فَمِنْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِنْ
 فِتْيَانِكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

46 These are female captives of war. It has to be made sure, however, that those of them who had husbands are not pregnant before marriage is consummated. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

47 To shelter and save yourselves and your wives from falling into lewdness. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa' dī)

48 The husband and wife can agree between themselves to increase the dowry, decrease it, waive it altogether or postpone it; that is after the woman's due has been fully acknowledged and committed to. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

49 Such a man, who has no financial means to marry a free Believing woman, is allowed to marry a slave Believing woman should he fear distress from restraining his bodily needs. Given this allowance, he need not feel qualms about this union on the basis of the reality of the woman's true Belief, which God only knows about, or her social standing because all people are born equal, being the descendants of the same parents, and whereby Believers are Muslim brothers and sisters. This marriage is also solidified by basing it on vows of chastity, handing over the woman's dues to her, her

Allah knows best 'the state of' your Belief, you are each other's other part. Wed them then with the permission of their folk and give them their dues as per what is socially-agreed; 'marry those of whom who seek' joining 'together' under 'holy' matrimony not 'those of whom' seeking open love or secret lovers. But if they marry and commit a vice⁽⁵⁰⁾, then their punishment is half of that of free married women. This 'marriage permission' is for those who fear distress⁽⁵¹⁾ from among you, but if you forbear it is better for you⁽⁵²⁾— Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿26﴾ 'By this⁽⁵³⁾' Allah wants to explain to you, guide you to the laws⁽⁵⁴⁾ of those who came before you and redeem you— Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِكُمْ بَعْضُكُم مِّن بَعْضٍ
فَإِنْ كُحُواْ بِأَيْدِي أَهْلِيهِنَّ وَأُوهُنَّ أَجْرَهُنَّ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ مُخَصَّنَاتٍ غَيْرِ مُسْلِفَاتٍ
وَلَا مُتَّخِذَاتِ أَخْدَانٍ فَإِذَا أُحْصِنَ فَإِنَّ أَتَيْنَ
بِفِجْشَةٍ فَعَلَيْهِنَّ نِصْفُ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْصَنَاتِ
مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ الْعَنَتَ مِنْكُمْ
وَأَنْ تَصْبِرُواْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ
رِجْسَ الَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَيَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

knowledge that she should remain faithful on pain of punishment, and that their marriage is declared and approved of by her owner.

- 50 Commit adultery.
- 51 *al-ʿAnat* is extreme hardship and distress due to restraining one's self from fulfilling sexual needs.
- 52 Although such a hard pressed man is allowed to marry a slave Believing woman, it is better for him to control his urges and forbear, because such a scenario could lead to his children being enslaved by the mother's owner, or even she being sold off, which would lead to greater distress and heartbreak (cf. Ibn ʿĀshūr).
- 53 The detailing of these rules and prohibitions.
- 54 *Sunan* (sing. *sumnah*) are the laws, course and the followed path (cf. al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, al-Kafawī, *al-Kulliyāt*). "The laws of those who came before you," is the most laudable course that earlier honourable Prophets of God (ﷺ) and their rightly-guided followers took in life (cf. 42: 13; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Saʿdī).

﴿27﴾ Allah wants to redeem you, but those who follow 'their' lusts want you to greatly deviate far away 'from the right course'⁽⁵⁵⁾.

﴿28﴾ Allah wants to lighten your load⁽⁵⁶⁾—indeed humans are but created weak!

﴿29﴾ You who Believe, do not devour each other's property unlawfully⁽⁵⁷⁾ – unless you engage in mutually agreed trade⁽⁵⁸⁾ – and do not kill yourselves⁽⁵⁹⁾—verily Allah is Most Merciful to you.

﴿30﴾ Whoever of you commits this⁽⁶⁰⁾ out of transgression and injustice, We will make him suffer a Fire—indeed that is easy for Allah⁽⁶¹⁾.

وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الشَّهَوَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا
مِيلًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٧﴾ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ
وَخَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ضَعِيفًا ﴿٢٨﴾

يَتَّيِبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ
بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً
عَن تَرَاضٍ مِّنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَنْ
يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ عَدْوَانًا وَظُلْمًا فَسَوْفَ نُصَلِّيهِ
نَارًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾

55 Those who are ungodly try hard to make the Believers follow their path and relinquish that of God's, so that they will stand on an equal, immoral, footing. So, disarm them of their moral authority to guide or berate them for their corruption (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).

56 The 'load' is God's commandments and prohibitions. Allowing hard-pressed Believers to marry bondage women is one such manifestation of how God lightens the load of Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī). The overall rule is that Allah, the All-Knowing Knows how weak humans are and: "*has placed no hardship for you 'Believers' in the religion*". (22: 78)

57 The matter of money, with which people secure their needs, and the way to obtaining it is mentioned here to show that those who are in pressing need, to get married for instance, can do so through legitimate means only, i.e. labour and trade, not by misappropriation or by shedding blood (cf. al-Tawḥīdī).

58 Trade is based on mutual consent. This is why it is a lawful act. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Trade has to be mutually agreed". (Ibn Ḥibbān: 4967)

59 Do not annihilate your own souls (through suicide or extreme negligence) or those of others. God says: "*Do not kill the soul that Allah has made sacrosanct, except having a right to*". (17: 33) 'Yourselves' entails all other Believers because whoever kills any of his brethren is killing himself—religious brotherhood makes them one and the same (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'adī).

60 Usurping people's money and killing them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

61 This is a reminder that nothing is hard for God; He is Able over everything and none can escape His justice.

﴿31﴾ If you 'Believers' avoid the major ones 'of the sins' that you are warned against, We will absolve you of your 'lesser' misdeeds and We will have you enter a Noble Entrance⁽⁶²⁾.

إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نَكْفُرْ
عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلْكُمْ مُدْخَلًا
كَرِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾

﴿32﴾ Do not harbour covetous desires for what Allah favoured some of you with over the others⁽⁶³⁾, to men belongs a share of what they earned and to women belongs a share of what they earned⁽⁶⁴⁾; ask Allah for His favours⁽⁶⁵⁾—indeed Allah

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى
بَعْضٍ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا
وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبْنَ وَسَأَلُوا
اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ

62 Paradise. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

63 Believers are warned against envy and wishing for what others are favoured with just as much as they are warned against usurping others' money and shedding their blood. This is an act of the heart ('amal al-qalb), with which one attains inner peace. Thus a real Believer's outward actions become a truthful reflection of his inward thoughts. (al-Rāzī, al-Tawhīdī, Ibn 'Ashūr)

64 The reason for revelation is as narrated by Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه): "A woman came to the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) and said: "Prophet of Allah! A man gets twice the share of a woman 'in inheritance'. A man's testimony equals that of two women 'in a court of justice'. Is it so that if a woman does a good deed, it will be considered a half of a good deed 'hasanah'?" Allah then revealed: "...to men belongs a share of what they earned and to women belongs a share of what they earned". (Cf. Ibn Abū Hātim; documented by al-Diyā' in *al-Aḥādīth al-Mukhtārah* and its chain of narrators was deemed authentic by Aḥmad Shākir in *'Umdat al-Tafsīr*). A person need not be eaten by worry and brooding over what he/she is missing out on. God, the Most Generous of all givers, keeps an immaculate register (20: 52) of a person's good deeds for him/her, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant they are, and rewards him/her for them bountifully: "Whoever does a mote's weight of good, he will come to see it". (99: 7)

65 This is a reminder and a call for people, particularly the less favoured, to get out of their shell of self remorse and meet the world armed with a sincere prayer and a heart full of hope and faith in God. One can open up the doors to God's favours through supplicating to Him; asking Him earnestly and repeatedly for whatever one is hopeful of. It is conditional that the person

has knowledge of everything. ﴿33﴾⁽⁶⁶⁾ To everyone there are the closest of kin 'who inherit' from what the parents and relatives have left behind; those with whom you have solemn pledges⁽⁶⁷⁾, give them their share—Allah is indeed witnessing everything.

﴿34﴾ Men are in charge of women⁽⁶⁸⁾, because Allah favoured one over the other and of the money they 'men' spend. Pious, devout wives are 'trustworthy' keepers of what is hidden⁽⁶⁹⁾

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٣٣﴾
وَلِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مَوْلَىٰ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ
وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَالَّذِينَ عَقَدْتُمْ أَيْمَانَكُمْ
فَاتُّوهُمْ نَصِيحُهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ﴿٣٣﴾

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ
بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ
أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَأَلْصَقَ لِحَدِّكَ حَفِظْتُمْ
لِلْغَيْبِ

who supplicates to God does so with good faith and firm belief that God will respond to him. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Ask Allah while you firmly believe that He will respond to you. And know that Allah does not respond to an inattentive, wandering heart". (al-Tirmidhī: 3479)

66 This drives the message home that all those who are favoured with wealth already have their next of kin to inherit them, so none need harbour ill thoughts about receiving their share of wealth after relatives die (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr).

67 Literally, those with whom your right hands have ties; those with whom you have *hilf*, i.e. an alliance (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). Before Islam, the Arabs used to repeat the following mantra when they wanted to forge an alliance with someone: "Your blood is my blood, your destruction is my destruction, your revenge is my revenge, your war is my war, your peace is my peace, and you inherit me and I inherit you". (Cf. al-Jazā'irī)

The majority of scholars are of the opinion that the ruling of this aya is abrogated by Aya 8: 75 (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Nawāsikh al-Qur'ān*). Besides this, after the advent of Islam, alliances between any two parties which are not inclusive of the rest of the community are not permissible (cf. Muslim: 2530).

68 The Qur'anic word employed here is *qawwāmūn*, which entails taking care of the affairs of those whom one is in charge of. This is the ordainment of God, the Wise Creator Who knows best the nature of humans, and whereby order can be established in the house by the man assuming the rule of head caretaker.

69 Such wives are completely trustworthy in not betraying their husbands behind their backs both in terms of their chastity and with regards to dealing with their husband's property and other affairs. They are guided to this by the Grace of God, or else humans are but created weak (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). A wife possessing these noble characteristics is to be cherished and held in honour by her husband (cf. al-Jazā'irī).

by Allah's protection 'and guidance'. As for those 'wives' of whom you fear 'disdainfulness and' rebelliousness, caution them 'first', 'but if they persist' abandon them in bed and 'if they further persist' hit them 'lightly'⁽⁷⁰⁾. But if they obey you, seek not a means 'to transgress' against them⁽⁷¹⁾—indeed Allah is verily Most High, Most Grand.

بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّي تَخَافُونَ نُشُورَهُنَّ
فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ
وَأَصْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنِ اطَّعْتَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا
عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾

⁷⁰ This is a complete, three-step behaviour management recipe for waywardness, drawn up by the All-Wise Creator of humans. A husband who notices signs of rebelliousness in his wife, which is sure to disturb order in the house, may take the following steps: 1) reason with his wife, but if she refuses to heed the warning; 2) he can take the passive and practical measure of abstaining from sexual relations with her. 3) Should this also fail, the husband is given permission to use a corporal measure, but scholars are unanimous that this 'hitting' should not be *mubarriḥ* (physically painful; cf. Muslim: 1218). The reason behind this Divine license to apply such measures, even though some think them extreme, is to preserve family ties, especially when children are involved. It also comes within the context of appointing the head of the family (the husband), and preserving the rights of women and ensuring that they receive a fair hearing (an arbiter from her side) should the disagreement escalate and no longer be contained within the bounds of the household. Equally, the husband is strongly reminded not to transgress against his wife should she mend her ways, and that God, the Most High, Most Grand, is Higher and Mightier than he.

One also cannot pass by this particularly and hotly debated issue without pointing to 'Ā'ishā's (رضي الله عنها) Hadith which says: "Never has the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) ever hit anything with his hand, nor a woman, nor a servant, except when he was fighting in the path of Allah" (al-Bukhārī: 3149; Muslim: 1057). Believers need only to bear this example in mind at times of marital fissures, knowing that the Messenger of God (ﷺ) is our perfect role model did not ever hit a wife of his: "*Indeed, you have in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful example for those who hope for Allah and the Last Day, and remember Allah much*" (33: 21).

⁷¹ Do not blame them for their refractory behaviour, or dwell on their shortcomings. Furthermore, you have no permission to beat them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿35﴾ If you fear that they 'husband and wife' are in dissention⁽⁷²⁾, then nominate an arbiter from his folk and an arbiter from her folk. If they 'sincerely' want to reconcile, Allah will join them in harmony—indeed Allah is All-Knowing, Most Knowledgeable.

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا
مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ
يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

﴿36﴾ (73) Worship Allah 'alone' and Associate none with Him⁽⁷⁴⁾, and be beneficent to your parents⁽⁷⁵⁾, to relatives, to orphans, to the needy, to the close 'relative' neighbour, to the adjoining neighbour⁽⁷⁶⁾,

*وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا
وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ

72 Whereby their disagreements cannot be resolved and the situation could lead to divorce. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

73 This is known as the Aya of the Ten Rights (*al-huqūq al-'ashrah*), i.e. those of: God, parents, relatives, orphans, the destitute, relative neighbours, close neighbours, close companions, the stranded (*ibn al-sabīl*), and one's slaves. A Believer's benevolence should not be limited to the bounds of his household, but should include all those around him (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Tawḥīdī). It is only through extended benevolence that a community can achieve real social harmony. For this reason Islam values and cherishes benevolence (cf. 2: 83, 2: 195).

74 The worship of God alone without any form of Association is the fountainhead of all good (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Tawḥīdī). The Prophet (ﷺ) said to Mu'ādh (رضي الله عنه): "Do you know what the right of God on people is?" He replied: "Allah and His Messenger know best!" He (ﷺ) said: "That they should worship Him and never Associate anything with Him". He (ﷺ) then asked: "Do you know what is the right of people on God if they do that? That He would not Punish them". (al-Bukhārī, 6267; Muslim, 30)

75 To highlight the significance of being kind, considerate and a good company to one's parents, God, in many occurrences in the Qur'an (cf. 2: 83, 17: 23 along with this aya) instructs people to be benevolent to their parents (*birr al-wālidayn*) immediately after enjoining them to worship Him alone. Are they not the cause of one's own existence and one's first benefactors after God?

76 Respectively, the neighbour with whom you have family relations (*al-jār dhī al-qurbā*) and those whose homes are close to yours but who are not

to the companion at your side⁽⁷⁷⁾, the stranded⁽⁷⁸⁾ and those whom your right hands possess⁽⁷⁹⁾— verily Allah does not like any who is proud and boastful⁽⁸⁰⁾;

وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ﴿٣٦﴾

one's own relatives (*al-jār al-junub*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'ādī). Neighbours in Islam have a great right. One very famous Prophetic saying is narrated by 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) whereby the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Gabriel would always emphasize the right of the neighbour until I thought he would ask for giving him a share of the inheritance!" (al-Bukhārī: 6015; Muslim: 2625) Neighbours are of three types: one who has three rights, one who has two rights and one who has one right. The one who has three rights is the Muslim relative neighbour; he has the rights of Islam, relationship and neighbourhood. The one who has two rights is the Muslim non-relative neighbour; he has the rights of both Islam and neighbourhood. The one who has one right is the non-Muslim neighbour; he has the right of neighbourhood (cf. Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa al-Ḥikam*, 1: 138).

- 77 *al-sāhib bi al-janb* is a person's constant companion, like one's wife and travel companions. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'ādī)
- 78 *Ibn al-sabīl* (lit. the son of the road) is the wayfarer, especially the one who is left without means to provide for himself.
- 79 *Mā malakat aymānukum* are one's male and female slaves. This point is emphasized and elaborated in numerous traditions, in which the Prophet is quoted as urging considerate and sometimes even equal treatment for slaves, denouncing cruelty, harshness, or even discourtesy, and recommending the liberation of slaves; here are a few: "Your brothers, your helpers, Allah brought them under your hands. Any of you who has a brother under his hand let him feed him from the food he 'the master' eats and clothe him from the clothes he wears. Do not burden them with what they cannot bear. If you charge them with a task, help them", (al-Bukhārī: 30, Muslim: 1661). "When his slave brings him his food, if he 'the master' would not let him share his company, then 'at least' let him share a morsel or two of it with him. He 'the slave' did the hard work of preparing it." (al-Bukhārī: 2557) "To the slave 'give' his food and clothes, and do not overburden him with what he cannot bear." (Muslim: 1662) "It is enough as sin that a man withholds the sustenance of the day from those he owns." (Muslim: 996)
- 80 Magnanimous people who observe such acts of kindness and extend them to others are urged not to be boastful about them. It was a habit of the Arabs at the time to gleefully mention their good deeds and charitable acts. (al-Tawḥīdī)

﴿37﴾ those who are miserly, encourage people to miserliness⁽⁸¹⁾, and hide what Allah gave them of His Bounty⁽⁸²⁾. We have prepared a humiliating Punishment for the 'faithless' Deniers; ﴿38﴾ those who spend their money 'in charity only' to show off to people and do not 'in sincerity' Believe in Allah and the Last Day⁽⁸³⁾—whoever is a fellow of Satan, then sordid indeed is the fellowship. ﴿39﴾ What irks them should they 'just' Believe in Allah and the Last Day, and spend out of Allah's provisions for them! Indeed Allah is All-Knowing about them.

الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ
وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَاءَ تِلْهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ﴿٣٧﴾
وَالَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ
وَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَنْ
يَكُنِ الشَّيْطَانُ لَهُ قَرِينًا قَرِيبًا ﴿٣٨﴾
وَمَاذَا عَلَيْهِمْ لَوْ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِهِمْ
عَلِيمًا ﴿٣٩﴾

81 Benevolence to people inevitably entails spending out of one's own money.

82 Fearing that people will ask them for financial help or blame them for their greediness, misers try their best to hide God's bountiful favours on them. These are called 'Deniers'! The Qur'an gravely warns against miserliness (cf. 3: 92 and 180, 9: 75-77, 47: 38, 59: 9, 64: 16, 92: 8-11). Lack of generosity is caused by lack of sincere Faith and trust in God, the Ever-Able Sustainer, Who took it upon Himself to provide for all His creatures.

Greediness and money hoarding disrupts the flow of income and aggravates the reversal of fortune of the down-trodden segments of society, who will harbour ill-feelings and grudges towards the more affluent in the community. At any opportunity, these feelings will boil and escalate into outright violence and the disruption of calm and life. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Be warned of miserliness: it caused those who came before you to shed one another's blood; it caused those who came before you to abandon one another 'severing relationships of kin'; it caused those who came before you to desecrate the sacred". (al-Albāni, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb*: 2603)

83 Such people fall within the sphere of hypocrisy, and the sincerity of their Faith is in doubt. They are the companions of Satan, who enjoins ungodly acts and drives those who fall under his command away from acts of virtue. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿40﴾ ⁽⁸⁴⁾Verily Allah does not deal 'anyone' unjustly as much as a mote's weight⁽⁸⁵⁾; if it is a 'one' good deed done, then He multiplies it and grants from His own 'additionally' a great reward. ﴿41﴾ ⁽⁸⁶⁾How 'will they fare', when we bring forward a witness from every nation,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِن تَكَ
حَسَنَةً يُضْعِفْهَا وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا
عَظِيمًا ﴿٤١﴾ كَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ

- 84 There is great hope of salvation in this aya. Both the great exegetical Companions Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنهما) are of the view that this aya is one of a few that are better than all that the sun shines on (cf. al-Jazā'irī). 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) said: "There are five ayas in *al-Nisā'* that I would not replace for the world. And I know for certain that those of knowledge would not pass by them without recognizing them. 'They are': "If you 'Believers' avoid the major ones 'of the sins' that you are warned against, We will absolve you of your 'lesser' misdeeds and We will have you enter a Noble Entrance 'Paradise'," (4: 31); "Verily Allah does not deal 'anyone' unjustly as much as a mote's weight; if it is a 'one' good deed done, then He multiplies it and grants from His own 'additionally' a great reward," (4: 40); "Allah does not forgive that He is Associated with, but He forgives what is lesser than that for whoever He wills," (4: 48); "Had they – when they wronged themselves – come to you and sought Allah's forgiveness and the Messenger sought forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful," (4: 64); and, "Whoever commits an ill deed or wrongs himself, then seeks forgiveness from Allah shall find Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful," (4: 110) (al-Ṭabarānī: 9069; al-Hākim: 3194). A number of Qur'anic ayas underline the fact that God will not deny people the least amount of the good they do and that He accounts for the most seemingly insignificant of deeds (cf. 21: 47, 31: 16, 99: 6-8). 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "None who bears the weight of a mustard seed of faith in his heart will enter Hell". (Muslim: 91)
- 85 *Dharrah*, often translated as atom, is a very small and insignificant amount. It is said to mean young ants, weightless things, a speck of dust that the air lifts easily and/or those minute particles that can be seen when a beam of light penetrates through gaps (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'Arūs*).
- 86 That God does not wrong anyone by the smallest amount, entails that He brings witnesses to testify either for or against those who are held to account on the Day of Judgement. These witnesses are no less than the most honourable Prophets that God sent to each nation to show them His Straight Path that leads to His Pleasure (cf. al-Rāzī).

and We bring you 'Muhammad' as witness against these⁽⁸⁷⁾! ﴿42﴾ On that Day, those who Denied and rebelled against the Messenger wish to be levelled to the ground; they will not be able to hide a word from Allah⁽⁸⁸⁾.

﴿43﴾ ⁽⁸⁹⁾You who Believe! Do not come near Prayers while intoxicated 'but wait' until you realize what you are saying⁽⁹⁰⁾ or 'places of Prayer' in a state of ceremonial impurity⁽⁹¹⁾, unless passing through, until you bathe⁽⁹²⁾. 'But' If you are ill⁽⁹³⁾,

وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٤٢﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ
يُودُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَعَصُوا الرَّسُولَ لَوْ تُسَوَّىٰ
بِهِمُ الْأَرْضُ وَلَا يَكْتُمُونَ اللَّهَ حَدِيثًا ﴿٤٣﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْرُبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ
سُكَرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا
إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ
مَرْضَىٰ

87 Your nation.

88 They wish they could just vanish because they know that they will be held accountable for all their past actions and they can say nothing but the truth on that Day (cf. 36: 65; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr al-Sa'dī).

89 After describing how grave standing between the Hands of God on the Day of Judgement will be, and that only those who are pure in heart will be spared His Punishment, now the ayas refer to the best observance in standing between the Hands of God in this worldly life, during Prayers. It requires total devotion and untainted purity. (al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*)

90 This ruling is abrogated by the aya that forbids consuming intoxicants altogether: "Indeed intoxicants, gambling, 'setting up' altars 'for idols' and divining arrows are obnoxiously vile – Satan's own doing, so shun them; may you prosper". (5: 90) (Cf. al-Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*; al-Zuhrī, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*) This aya was revealed within the context of building the then emerging community, getting them ready for the total ban that was to follow.

91 *Janābah* (ceremonial impurity), that state which follows after having sex or discharge of sperm because of arousal.

92 While in a state of ceremonial impurity, one is allowed to pass through a place of Prayer but not stay in it, unless *ghusl* (washing) is performed. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

93 An illness which hinders people from using water. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

travelling, or any of you goes to a low place⁽⁹⁴⁾ 'to relieve himself', or touched women⁽⁹⁵⁾ and you cannot find water then seek clean earth, wiping your faces and your hands with it⁽⁹⁶⁾—indeed Allah is Most Pardoning, All-Forgiving.

﴿44﴾ Have you 'Muhammad' not seen those who were given a share of the Book, they purchase misguidedness and want you 'Believers' to swerve off the path 'of guidance'! ﴿45﴾ Allah knows best your enemies—certainly Allah is sufficient 'for you' as Ally; Allah is sufficient as Supporter. ﴿46﴾ Among the Jews are those who distort discourse from its 'proper' position; they say: "We listen and we disobey", "listen 'to us', 'may' you not be told!"⁽⁹⁷⁾ and "rā'inā";

أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ
أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا
صَعِدًا طَيِّبًا فَأَمَسَ خُوفُ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا غَفُورًا ﴿٤٣﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِنَ الْكِتَابِ
يَشْتَرُونَ الضَّلَالَةَ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَضَلُّوا
السَّبِيلَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِأَعْدَائِكُمْ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَلِيًّا
وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ نَصِيرًا ﴿٤٥﴾ مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا
يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ
سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ غَيْرَ مُسْمِعٍ وَرَاعَيْنَا

94 *al-Ghā'it* originally means a depression in the land or ground lower than the surrounding area. When relieving themselves by urinating or excreting, Arabs of the time used to seek a low place in order to be hidden from the view of others. Later, the meaning was metonymically extended to mean the act of relieving one's self. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*)

95 This could figuratively mean having sexual contact with them or literally just touching them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Jurists are of different opinions on this but the great Companion exegete, known as the interpreter of the Qur'an, Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) opines that it is a metonym for sexual intercourse used euphemistically (cf. Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*).

96 That is perform the act of dry ablution or *tayammum*.

97 They play on words. It could be that they are saying that a person of your status cannot be told to listen in spite of himself (cf. Muḥyī ad-Dīn Darwīsh, *I'rāb al-Qur'ān wa Bayānuhu*), or they pray that he (رضي الله عنه) becomes deaf or even dies so that he loses his sense of hearing (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

twisting their tongues and stabbing at 'your' Religion. Had they said; "we listen and we obey", "listen 'only'" and "*unzurnā*"⁽⁹⁸⁾ it would have been better for them and more upright. But Allah damned them for their Denial; little do they Believe.

﴿47﴾ You who were given the Book, Believe in what We sent down⁽⁹⁹⁾ confirming the truth of what you have, 'that is' before we deface some countenances and twist them towards the rear, or We Damn them like we Damned the companions of the Sabbath⁽¹⁰⁰⁾—indeed the Command of Allah always comes to pass. ﴿48﴾ Allah does not forgive that He is Associated with, but He forgives what is lesser than that for whoever He wills. Whoever Associates with Allah perpetrates an egregious sin.

﴿49﴾ Have you 'Muhammad' not seen those who glorify themselves!⁽¹⁰¹⁾

لِيَأْتِيَ بِالْبَسِيطَةِ وَطَعْنَا فِي الدِّينِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا
سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ وَأَنْظُرْنَا لَكَانَ خَيْرًا
لَّهُمْ وَأَقْوَمَ وَلَكِنْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٤٦﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ آمِنُؤَامِنًا تَزَلْنَا
مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَطْمِسَ
وُجُوهًا فَتَرُدَّهَا عَلَى أَدْبَارِهَا أَوْ نَلْعَنَهُمْ كَمَا
لَعَنَّا أَصْحَابَ السَّبْتِ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ
مَفْعُولًا ﴿٤٧﴾ إِنْ أَلَّ اللَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرَ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ
وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ
بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ أَفْرَضَ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٤٨﴾

لَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزُكُّونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ

98 One word for seeking the Prophet's permission, i.e. *rā'inā* (lend us your ear), is replaced by another, i.e. *unzurnā* (bear with us), as *rā'inā* could be twisted and used derogatorily to mean something else which is inappropriate (from *ru'ūnah*, foolishness). Some of the Madinan Jews used to address the Prophet (ﷺ) by subtly twisting their tongues when uttering *rā'inā* to mean: "You are foolish!" (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

99 The religion of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur'an (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

100 The details of this story are given in 7: 163-165.

101 These are the Jews who like to think of themselves as 'chosen' or a cut above the rest. They say: "We are the children of Allah and His beloved!" (5: 18); "The Fire will not touch us except for a limited number of days!" (2: 80). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, al-Sa'dī)

Nay but Allah glorifies whoever He wishes⁽¹⁰²⁾—they will not be wronged 'even by the measure of' a hair on a date seed⁽¹⁰³⁾.
 ﴿50﴾ See how they fabricate lies against Allah—enough for this 'to be' as flagrant sin!⁽¹⁰⁴⁾
 ﴿51﴾ Have you 'Muhammad' not seen those who were given a share of the Book believing in 'all sorts of' idols⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ and false gods⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ and say about those who Deny: "These are more guided in their ways than those who Believe!"⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

بَلِ اللَّهِ يُرِيكُم مِّنْ بَشَرٍ لَّا يَظُنُّونَ فِتْيَانًا
 أَنظُرْ كَيْفَ يَقْتُرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذْبَ وَكَفَى
 بِهِ إِتْمَانًا مَّيْمِنًا ﴿٥٠﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
 نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْحَيَاتِ
 وَالطُّغُوتِ وَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَؤُلَاءِ
 أَهْدَىٰ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا سَبِيلًا ﴿٥١﴾

- 102 God is the One Who really knows the truth of matters, and thus He lauds whoever is deserving of His creation: "Do not glorify yourselves; He knows best those who are 'truly' Mindful", (53: 32). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)
- 103 That is to say as much as a hair's breadth.
- 104 By glorifying themselves in such a manner and claiming honour falsely. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)
- 105 *al-Jibt* is a word used for all sorts of false and groundless things and everything that is worshipped besides God. (al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)
- 106 *al-Ṭāghūt* taken from *ṭughyān*, i.e. transgression and wrongdoing. All that transgresses against God. Anyone who condones being worshipped besides God is a *ṭāghūt*. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)
- 107 The reason for the revelation of this aya is narrated by Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) whereby: "When 'the Jewish scholar' Ka'b Ibn al-Ashraf came to Makkah, the Quraysh asked him: "You are the best of the people of Madinah and their master. Aren't you?" He replied: "Yes!" They then said: "What do you think of this sonless outcast 'alluding to the Most Noble Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)' claiming that he is better than us when we are the custodians of pilgrims and the caretakers of the House of God!" He said: "You are indeed better than him!" Then the following ayas were revealed: "Indeed, your hater is the one cut off", (108: 3) and: "Have you 'Muhammad' not seen those who were given a share of the Book believing in 'all sorts of' idols and false gods and say about those who Deny: "These are more guided in their ways than those who Believe!*"Those are the ones whom Allah Damned—whoever Allah Damns will find no helper""'. (al-Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 11707; Ibn Ḥibbān: 6572)

﴿52﴾ Those are the ones whom Allah Damned—whoever Allah Damns will find no helper. ﴿53﴾ (108) Or do they have a share in the kingship 'of Allah'? Had they, they would not give 'other' people 'of it as much as' a groove on a date seed! ﴿54﴾ Or do they envy 'other' people for the bounties Allah granted them? (109) 'But then' (110) We did grant the House of Abraham the Book and Wisdom (111), and We granted them a great kingship (112). ﴿55﴾ Among them are those who Believe in him 'Muhammad and/or the Qur'an' and those who look the other way (113)—Hell suffices for a blazing fire! ﴿56﴾ Those who Deny Our Signs, We will have them scorched by a Fire; whenever their skins are burned away, We replace them with other skins to make them taste the Punishment 'anew'—indeed Allah is Most Prevailing, All-Wise.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يَلْعَنِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ مَجْدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴿٥٣﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِنَ الْمُلْكِ فَإِذَا لَا يُؤْتُونَ النَّاسَ نَقِيرًا ﴿٥٤﴾ أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَى مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ فَقَدْ آتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مُلْكًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٥٥﴾ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ آمَنَ بِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ صَدَّ عَنْهُ وَكَفَى بِجَهَنَّمَ سَعِيرًا ﴿٥٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَوْفَ نُضِلُّهُمْ نَارًا كَمَا نُضِلُّهُمْ جُلُودَهُمْ بَدَلًا لَتَهُمْ جُلُودًا أُخْرَىٰ لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٥٧﴾

108 Those who willingly subscribe to such outright lies and fabrications are consumed by deep set greed and lack of goodwill. Naturally, they want no good to come by others (cf. al-Rāzī).

109 That Prophethood came to Muhammad (ﷺ), a non-Jew. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

110 God reminds them of His favours to their forefathers. The One, the Most Generous, Who is the sole Owner of kingship, can shower with favour whoever He wills and without asking permission from anybody, especially those who claim a right to it.

111 All that was revealed to them besides the Scriptures. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

112 Like that of Solomon's (ﷺ).

113 *Ṣadda* 'an either means they turned their own faces away from it, or prevented others from setting their sights on it. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

﴿57﴾ Those who Believe and do good deeds, We will admit them into Gardens under which rivers flow, forever they abide therein; there they will have purified spouses and We will admit them into shadowy shade⁽¹¹⁴⁾.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
أَبْدًا لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَوْجٌ مَطَهَّرٌ وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًّا
ظَلِيلًا ﴿٥٧﴾

﴿58﴾ ⁽¹¹⁵⁾Indeed Allah commands you that you should hand over trusts⁽¹¹⁶⁾ to their "rightful" owners and should you judge among people⁽¹¹⁷⁾, judge fairly. Exalted indeed is what Allah exhorts you to—verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. ﴿59﴾ You who Believe obey Allah, obey the Messenger and those who are in charge among you⁽¹¹⁸⁾.

* إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا
وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعْمًا بِعِظْمِكُمْ بِهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا
بَصِيرًا ﴿٥٨﴾ تَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا
الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

- 114 *Zill zalil* means an everlasting shade which the sun does not dissipate; a shade in which no biting cold, sultry heat, glaring light, gusty wind or heat wave passes through. (Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Iḥfāhānī, *al-Mufradāt*; al-Kafawī, *al-Kulliyāt*)
- 115 To be trustworthy and fair are two great traits that all Believers need to carry. This is, in a way, an allusion to those who did not pass fair judgement when they declared that Deniers are more guided than Believers; they betrayed their trust (cf. al-Rāzī, *Riḍā*).
- 116 Believers are instructed to give back what they have been entrusted with to its rightful owners: whole and without delay. (Ibn Kathīr, *al-Sa'dī*)
- 117 Judge with fairness among disputants.
- 118 As much as those who are in charge (*ulī al-amr*) are instructed to be fair and equitable and to uphold justice, those who receive their judgement are encouraged to obey (al-Rāzī, al-Tawḥīdī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Believers are told to obey those who are put in charge of their affairs given that what they tell them to do or follow is in accordance with the precepts of Islam, as detailed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and is fair and equitable: "No one of the creation is ever to be obeyed in sinning against the Creator. Obeying only applies to what is deemed acceptable". (Muslim: 1840, cf.

'But' Should you dispute over a matter, then refer it to Allah and the Messenger, that is if you 'truly' Believe in Allah and the Last Day; that is better and of a more desirable end⁽¹¹⁹⁾.

﴿60﴾ Have you 'Muhammad' not seen those who falsely claim that they Believe⁽¹²⁰⁾ in what was sent down to you and what was sent down before you⁽¹²¹⁾; 'yet still' they want to resort to false gods⁽¹²²⁾ to adjudicate 'their disputes', when they were commanded to reject it⁽¹²³⁾—Satan wants to swerve them far off the path 'of guidance'. ﴿61﴾ When it is said to them: "Come to what Allah has sent down and to the Messenger!" you see the hypocrites turn away from you with fervour.

فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٥٩﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَحَاكَمُوا إِلَى الطَّاغُوتِ وَقَدْ أُمِرُوا أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ ۗ وَيُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ صَلَائِلًا بَعِيدًا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْكَ صُدُودًا ﴿٦١﴾

also al-Bukhārī: 7145) 'Ubādah Ibn al-Ṣāmit (رضي الله عنه) said: "We swore an oath of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that we should listen and obey under all circumstances whether we like it or not, that we will not defy those who are in charge of us, and that we stand for what is right wherever we might be and never fear blame to carry out what Allah commands". (al-Bukhārī: 7199, Muslim: 1840)

119 Rebelling against commands and unruly behaviour cuts against the grain of social order.

120 The hypocrites whose hearts are diseased.

121 The Qur'an and earlier Scriptures, respectively.

122 According to 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) this aya was revealed with regards to a group of the Aslam tribe, who professed Islam, then went to Abū Zurārah al-Aslamī, the soothsayer, to settle a dispute. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

123 Judgement which is not in accordance with what God sent down to His Messenger (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿62﴾ How 'then will they fare' when disaster strikes them because of what their hands sent forth, and 'then' they 'will' come to you⁽¹²⁴⁾ swearing by Allah: "We only meant to do good and set matters straight!" ﴿63﴾ Those are the ones about whom Allah knows what lurks in their hearts, so turn away from them⁽¹²⁵⁾, warn them and say to them profound words about themselves⁽¹²⁶⁾. ﴿64﴾ We only sent Prophets to be obeyed, by Allah's permission. Had they – when they wronged themselves – come to you and sought Allah's forgiveness and the Messenger sought forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿65﴾ Nay by your Lord! They will not truly Believe until they seek your judgement in their disputes and then they find no scruples in them from your judgement and they give in totally.

﴿66﴾ Had We ordained they kill themselves or abandon their lands, they would 'surely' not have done so;

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا أَصَبْتَهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ جَاءَهُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا أَنْ يَقُولُوا إِنَّ آيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ وَتَوَفَّىٰكَ اللَّهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَعِظْهُمْ وَقُلْ لَهُمْ فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًا نَّيْبًا ﴿٦٢﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿٦٣﴾ فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٦٤﴾

124 At times of hardship they know only too well to whom they should resort; the one who possesses the truth and is able to alleviate their affliction by praying to the True God.

125 That is, do not take measures to punish them for their insincerity. As long as they did not make manifest the Denial that they are really bent on, there is no way against them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Jazā'irī).

126 *Qawl balīgh* is penetrating speech that reaches people's hearts because of its frankness and persuasiveness. For it to be so, it has to be true and to the point. (Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)

except for a few of them⁽¹²⁷⁾. But should they do what they are commanded to, it would be better for them and a stronger confirmation of their Faith⁽¹²⁸⁾.

﴿67﴾ Then We would have given them a great reward from Our own; ﴿68﴾ and would have guided them to a Straight Path.

﴿69﴾ Whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, then those are among the ones on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace—of the Prophets, the Affirmers of Truth, the martyrs and the pious⁽¹²⁹⁾—

إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَتَوَّانَهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ
 بِهِ لَٰكِن خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيثًا ﴿٦٦﴾
 وَإِذَا لَاتَبَدَّلْنَا لَهُم مِّن لَّدُنَّا جَزَاءً عَظِيمًا ﴿٦٧﴾
 وَلَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٦٨﴾ وَمَن يُطِيعِ
 اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنعَمَ
 اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ
 وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

127 God, who would not charge a soul with more than it can bear (2: 286), is not tasking them with an Augean task such as killing themselves or deserting their homes to test their Faith. Rather, He is asking them to perform a much simpler act of obedience, whereby they resort to the judgement of the Messenger (ﷺ), which is very crucial to affirming his leadership of the community and to their unequivocal approval of it. Yet their Faith is so shaky that they cannot find it in themselves to follow the ordinances of God, no matter or how unburdening they are how much is at stake.

128 The result of obedience is increase in Faith: Faith (*Īmān*) increases with obedience and decreases with rebelliousness (cf. al-Jazā'iri).

129 *al-Ṣiddiqīn* (the Affirmers of the Truth) are those whose truthfulness and affirmation of Truth are no less than perfect; they realized the Truth and confirmed it with certitude in their hearts, stuck to it and embodied it with their words and actions. *al-Shuhadā'* (the martyrs) are those killed in the path of God to make His word stand above everything else. *al-Ṣāliḥīn* (the pious) are those whose outward actions are a truthful manifestation of their inner Truth (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

When reciting *al-Fātiḥah*, the opening sura of the Qur'an, in every unit (*rak'ah*) of their five mandatory daily Prayers, Believers are asking God Almighty to lead them to the way of these on whom He bestowed His Grace. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "Never was there a Prophet who falls 'terminally' ill without him given the choice to 'either be healed and given more time in' this worldly life or 'taken by death to' the Hereafter". "During the illness from which he passed away, he (ﷺ) suffered severe hoarseness and I heard him say: "...among the ones

indeed the companion of these is well off. ﴿70﴾ That is the Favour⁽¹³⁰⁾ of Allah—sufficient is Allah “indeed” as All-Knower.

﴿71﴾ ⁽¹³¹⁾You who Believe take your “necessary” precautions and charge forward in “separate” groups or as a whole. ﴿72﴾ “And know that” Indeed among you will be those⁽¹³²⁾ who drag their feet⁽¹³³⁾ and when a disaster strikes you⁽¹³⁴⁾, he says: “Allah has blessed me that I was not there with them”. ﴿73﴾ But should a favour⁽¹³⁵⁾ from Allah come your way, he – as if there is no affection between you!⁽¹³⁶⁾ – would certainly say:

وَحَسَنَ أَوْلِيَّكَ رَفِيقًا ﴿٦٩﴾ ذَلِكَ الْفَضْلُ
مِنَ اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ عَلِيمًا ﴿٧٠﴾

يَتَأَيَّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا خُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ
فَأَنْفِرُوا ثُبَاتٍ أَوْ أَنْفِرُوا جَمِيعًا ﴿٧١﴾ وَإِنَّ مِنْكُمْ
لَمَنْ لَيَبْطِئَنَّ فَإِنْ أَصَابَكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا قَدْ
أَعْرَأَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا إِذْ لَوْ أَكُنْ مَعَهُمْ شَاهِدًا ﴿٧٢﴾
وَلَيْنِ أَصَابَكُمْ فَضْلٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ لَيَقُولُنَّ

on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace—of the Prophets, the Affirmers of Truth, the martyrs and the pious”. I knew then that he had been given the choice “between life and death””. (al-Bukhārī: 4586)

- 130 The rewards of obeying God and His Messenger (ﷺ) are plentiful both in this worldly life and in the Hereafter, not least being raised to the lofty status of Prophets and their worthy companions in Paradise. The virtue of obedience is all too obvious for a community in the making.
- 131 The command to rebel against one’s lethargy, prevail over one’s self and engage in the ultimate act of heroism of fighting in the cause of God, the toughest of all commands, which could lead to loss of life and martyrdom, comes just after the ayas that detail the advantages and rewards of obeying the commands of God and His Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. al-Tawhīdī, al-Rāzī).
- 132 The hypocrites. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 133 *Yubatti’anna* because of a hidden object (*al-maḥfūl al-mustatir*) entails both slowing down one’s own pace as well as encouraging others to do the same. (al-İşfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*; al-Kafawī, *al-Kulliyāt*)
- 134 Being defeated or killed by your enemies. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 135 Winning victory over your enemies. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)
- 136 *Mawaddah* (affection) comes as a result of a sense of belonging to a group. In such a scenario, the insincere will speak from their hearts and reveal their innermost thoughts in spite of the outwardly ‘affectionate’ relationship that binds them with Believers. All pretence of affection wonderously abandons them in that moment of truth (cf. al-Zamahsharī, al-Baidāwī).

“Alas, had I been with them I would have won a great deal!”

﴿74﴾ Let those who trade this worldly life for the Hereafter fight in the path of Allah. Whoever fights in the path of Allah and is killed or attains victory We will reward him greatly⁽¹³⁷⁾. ﴿75﴾ Why would you ‘ever’ not fight in the path of Allah, and ‘for the sake of’ the victimized men, women and youngsters who say: “Our Lord, forge for us a way out of this town⁽¹³⁸⁾ whose dwellers are wrongful and find us from Your side an ally, find us from Your side a helper”. ﴿76﴾ Those who Believe fight in the path of Allah, whereas those who Deny fight in the path of false idols. Fight then the allies of Satan—indeed the machinations of Satan are frail.

﴿77﴾ Have you ‘Muhammad’ not seen those to whom it was said: “Hold back your hands⁽¹³⁹⁾,

كَأَن لَّمْ تَكُن بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُ مَوَدَّةٌ بَلَيْتَنِي
 كُنْتُ مَعَهُمْ فَأَفُورٌ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧٤﴾
 * فَأَيُّ قِتْلٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يَشْرُونَ
 الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ يُقْتَلْ فِي
 سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيُقْتَلْ أَوْ يَغْلِبْ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ
 أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧٥﴾ وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي
 سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ
 وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ
 الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَل لَّنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَل
 لَّنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا ﴿٧٦﴾ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ
 فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ
 الظَّالِمِينَ فَقاتِلُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّ كَيْدَ
 الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا ﴿٧٧﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ قِيلَ لَهُمْ كُفُّوا أَيْدِيَكُمْ

137 Whatever the result of the fight might be, given that the sincere in heart strove in the cause of God, whether they won or lost, they will surely be handsomely rewarded.

138 Makkah, which was then still in the grip of idol worshippers who fiercely pitted themselves against the emerging Faith and sought all means to destroy this fledgling Believing community. These are the Believers who could not migrate to Madinah. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

139 At the beginning they were asked to refrain from fighting their Denying enemies (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). Because they were not ready or in possession of the means to so prevail, they were asked instead to first engage in a self disciplinary regime to prevail over their own weaknesses, by keeping up Prayers and dutifully giving out the prescribed alms.

keep up the Prayer and give out the prescribed alms”; and when fighting was prescribed for them, a party of them feared people as much as Allah is feared or even more. They said: “Our Lord, why did You prescribe fighting for us? Would You not delay it for a short while?” Say ‘Muhammad’: “The enjoyment of the worldly life is ‘but so’ little. But the Hereafter is better for the Mindful; you will not be wronged ‘even by the measure of’ a hair on a date seed”.¹⁴⁰ “Wherever you might be, death will catch up with you; even if you are in fortified towers!” When good ‘fortune’ comes their way, they say: “This is from Allah”, but when a misfortune befalls them, they say: “This is from you ‘Muhammad’!”¹⁴¹ Say ‘Muhammad’: “All ‘good and bad fortune’ is from Allah”. What is wrong with these people, they can hardly grasp what is said ‘to them’!¹⁴² Whatever good comes your way is from Allah¹⁴¹ and whatever is bad comes from your own¹⁴².

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ فَامَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ إِذَا فُرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَخْشَوْنَ النَّاسَ كَخَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَشَدَّ خَشْيَةً وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لِمَ كَتَبْتَ عَلَيْنَا الْقِتَالَ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنَا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ قُلْ مَتَّعَ اللَّهُ دُونَكُمْ لَوْلَا أَلَّخِرْتُمْ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنْ اتَّقَىٰ وَلَا تُظَاهَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿٧٧﴾ إِنَّمَا تَكُونُونَ يَدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّسَيَّدَةٍ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قُلْ كُلُّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا ﴿٧٨﴾ مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنَ نَفْسِكَ ﴿٧٩﴾

140 Implying that the Prophet (ﷺ) had nothing whatsoever to do with the good that came their way. When they hit a rough patch, however, they hastened to point their fingers of blame at him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). The same was said to Prophets Moses (131 :7) (ﷺ) and Ṣāliḥ (47 :27) (ﷺ). Because of their insincere Belief and hidden Denial they think of the Prophets, who they view with unsettling apprehension, as bad omens who augured ill for them.

141 As a blessing and a favour from God. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

142 As a result of a sin that was committed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). “Whatever calamity befalls you is from your hands doing; ‘but’ He overlooks many another ‘of your sins’”. (42: 30)

We sent you to people as a Messenger 'no more'⁽¹⁴³⁾—sufficient is Allah 'indeed' as Witness.

﴿80﴾ Whoever obeys the Messenger obeys Allah⁽¹⁴⁴⁾, whereas those who turn away, We have not sent you 'Muhammad' as overseer over them⁽¹⁴⁵⁾. ﴿81﴾ They⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ say: "We obey!" But when they emerge from your place, a section of them nurture in the dead of the night something contrary to what you said⁽¹⁴⁷⁾. Allah keeps record of what they nurture, so turn away from them⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٧٩﴾

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّى
فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا ﴿٨٠﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ
طَاعَةٌ فَإِذَا بَرَزُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ بَيَّتَ طَائِفَةٌ
مِنْهُمْ غَيْبًا لَدَى تَقْوَى وَاللَّهُ يَكْتُبُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ
فَاعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ

143 The Prophet's (ﷺ) mission was solely to deliver the Message that God entrusted him with (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī). Whether it is really Believed in or not is known by God Who witnesses everything and rewards or punishes accordingly. Thus, the Prophet (ﷺ) cannot hold people to account over what is hidden from him.

144 Obeying the infallible Prophet (ﷺ) is tantamount to obeying God Almighty Himself Who entrusted him with the delivery of His Message. Whatever the Messenger (ﷺ) bids is by the bidding of God, for he says nothing out of his own accord but every word he utters is revealed to him by God (cf. 53: 3-4; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Tawhīdī, Ibn 'Ashūr). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever obeys me obeys Allah. Whoever disobeys me disobeys Allah". (al-Bukhārī: 7137, Muslim: 1835)

145 You are only tasked with delivering the Message, not to holding them accountable for their disobedience.

146 The hypocrites. (al-Wāhīdī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah)

147 After having paid the Prophet (ﷺ) lip service and left him, a group of them convene later in the evening (*bayyāta*) and deliberate among themselves resolving to contravene the Prophet's bidding (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).

148 They are in reality no more than a distraction from the main purpose of building a solid community out of the numerous individual Believers. The hypocrites were staunch in their stance and efforts to convince them otherwise was an unnecessary waste of time, especially as the danger they

and put your trust in Allah—sufficient is Allah 'indeed' as Trustee. ﴿82﴾ Would they not contemplate the Qur'an; had it been from another 'source' besides Allah, they would have found many a discrepancy in it!⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ ﴿83﴾ When comforting or unsettling news comes to them, they would 'hasten to' spread it out 'widely'⁽¹⁵⁰⁾. Had they referred it to the Messenger and those in charge among them, those of them who are discerning of the truth of matters would have 'really' found it out⁽¹⁵¹⁾. Had it not been for Allah's Grace and his Mercy on you 'Believers'⁽¹⁵²⁾, you would have followed Satan, except for a few.

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٨١﴾
 أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ
 عِنْدَ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٨٢﴾
 وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوِ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ
 وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ
 لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْلَا
 فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ
 الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨٣﴾

presented was not imminent, even if it had to be held in check. So the Prophet (ﷺ) is told not to busy his thoughts with them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). God, the All-Sufficient Helper, will take care of this matter.

- 149 The hypocrites will not ponder upon the Qur'an which is abundant enough as evidence of the Divine source of Muhammad's (ﷺ) Messengership, and reason enough for them to follow his orders. Orders that are for the best interests of the whole community. They simply cannot see this glaring Truth because their discerning faculty is clouded by cancerous doubt; there are locks on their hearts (47: 24).
- 150 These are the blabbers, a fifth column, within the ranks who are only too eager to spread whatever news comes their way aiming to stir up unrest. Talk is still of the behaviour of the insincere in times of war. Letting the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers in on all of this is by way of boosting their immunity against such disheartening guiles.
- 151 When one receives news in times of turbulence, the best action is to relay it confidentially to the commander and/or those in a position of responsibility. Those of sound judgement among these realize the truth behind it and act accordingly.
- 152 By guiding you to the best course of action (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿84﴾ Fight then 'Muhammad' in the path of Allah – you are tasked with no one but yourself – and hearten the Believers 'to fight'; may Allah curb the might of the Deniers—Allah is indeed Mightier and severer in inflicting punishment.

فَقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا تُكَلِّفُ إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ
وَحَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْفِ بِأَسْ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاللَّهُ أَشَدُّ بِأَسْ وَأَشَدُّ
تَنْكِيلًا ﴿٨٤﴾

﴿85﴾ Whoever intercedes for a good cause will have a share of it⁽¹⁵³⁾, whereas whoever intercedes for an evil cause will have a portion of it—verily Allah is Keeper over everything.

مَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفَعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ
نَصِيبٌ مِّنْهَا وَمَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفَعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَكُنْ
لَهُ كِفْلٌ مِّنْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا ﴿٨٥﴾
وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا
أَوْ رُدُّوهَا ﴿٨٦﴾

﴿86﴾ ⁽¹⁵⁴⁾When you are offered a greeting then salute back with a better greeting or 'at least' return it back 'in the same measure'⁽¹⁵⁵⁾—

153 The person who helps others in time of need, will be rewarded handsomely for his good efforts (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Abū Musā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) said: "When someone in need comes to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) or when he was asked for something, he would announce 'to his Companions': "Intervene and you will be rewarded!" (al-Bukhārī: 1432) Yet the person who knowingly extends a helping hand to someone who intends evil is considered a partner in that misdeed and thus will reap a portion of that evil harvest (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). "Help one another in piety and Mindfulness; and do not help one another in sin and transgression." (5: 2)

154 In this context, this obviously refers to an offer of peace by people with whom the Believers are at war as well as to individual people who, while possibly belonging to the enemy, have, to all outward appearances, peaceful intentions and could very well be Believers. This is in accordance with the Qur'anic injunctions: "If they incline to peace, you should incline to it as well" (8:61), and "If they hold back 'from fighting', only the wrongdoers shall be transgressed against". (2:193) (cf. al-Rāzī, Asad; also see Ayas 90, 91 and particularly 94 below.) The greeting of Islam is that of Peace (Salām). This is further explained in Aya 94 below.

155 'Imrān Ibn al-Ḥuṣayn (رضي الله عنه) said: "A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: "Assalāmu 'alaykum 'Peace be upon you"". He was replied to 'by the same greeting' and sat down. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Ten 'ḥasanahs'". Then another one came and said: "Assalāmu 'alaykum wa raḥmatu Allāh 'Peace

verily Allah is Reckoner of everything. ^{﴿87﴾} Allah, there is no god but Him, will gather you 'all' on the Day of Judgement, in which there is no doubt; whose speech is more truthful than Allah's!

^{﴿88﴾} What is with you regarding the hypocrites 'that you divide into' two 'opposing' groups!⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ But Allah debased them because of what they earned. Do you wish to guide those whom Allah has sent astray?—whoever Allah sends astray, you will not find a way for him. ^{﴿89﴾} They desire that you 'Believers' Deny and then you will be 'their' equals. Do not take any of them as allies, until they migrate in the path of Allah⁽¹⁵⁷⁾.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا ﴿٨٦﴾ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُجَمِّعُكُمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حَدِيثًا ﴿٨٧﴾

* فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِتْنَةٍ وَاللَّهُ أَرَدْتَهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَهْدُوا مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿٨٨﴾ وَدُّوا أَنْ تُكْفَرُوا كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُوا سَوَاءً فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ﴿٨٩﴾

be upon you and Allah's Mercy””. He was replied to 'by the same greeting' and sat down. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Twenty *ḥasanahs*”. Then another one came and said: “*Assalāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatu Allāh wa barakātuhu* ‘Peace be upon you and Allah's Mercy and His Blessings’”. He was replied to 'by the same greeting' and sat down. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Thirty *ḥasanahs*”. (Abū Dāwūd: 5195, al-Tirmidhī: 2689, Aḥmad: 19948) The more courteous the reply, the more the reward one receives for it. The form of greeting that was ordained by God is: *Assalāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatu Allāh* ‘Peace be upon you and Allah's Mercy’ (cf. al-Bukhārī: 6227).

- 156 *Fi'atayn* two different parties who show their backs to each other, but who unite when consolidation is needed (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Believers differed among themselves regarding the hypocrites: a group declared them Denying, while another was of the opinion that they were not Denying. The fact of the matter, however, was that God debased them (*arkasahum*, lit. turned them upside down) turning them into outright Deniers as a result of their own hands doing; doubting, rebelling and plotting against Believers (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 157 For a form of reconciliation to happen with the Believers, the 'hypocrites' have to redeem themselves by nurturing sincere intentions of becoming true Believers as well as making a physical move from Denial and its environs into Belief and its environs. Only then are Believers allowed to relent towards them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

But if they turn away, then take them and kill them wherever you find them, and take neither an ally nor a helper from among them⁽¹⁵⁸⁾. ﴿90﴾ Except those 'of them' who reach out 'in refuge' to people with whom you have a 'peace' pact⁽¹⁵⁹⁾; or those who come to you with their hearts heavy⁽¹⁶⁰⁾: should they fight you or fight their own people! Had Allah willed, He would have set them on you and they would have fought you. But if they keep their distance, withhold from fighting you and wave you peace, then Allah has made no 'justifiable' means for you against them. ﴿91﴾ You 'Believers' will find other ones⁽¹⁶¹⁾ who want to feel safe from you and their 'own' people; whenever they are sent back to temptation⁽¹⁶²⁾,

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ وِلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٩٠﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ إِلَى قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ أَوْ جَاءُوكُمْ حَصِرَتْ صُدُورُهُمْ أَنْ يَقْتُلُوكُمْ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوا قَوْمَهُمْ ۗ وَلَا سَاءَ اللَّهُ لَسَاطِمَهُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَلَقَاتِلُوكُمْ إِنْ ائْتَرُوكُمْ فَلَمَّ يَقتُلُوكُمْ ۖ وَالْقَوَا إِلَىٰ كُمْ بِالسَّلَامِ ۖ فَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩١﴾ سَتَجِدُونَ ءآخِرِينَ يَرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَأْمَنُوكُمْ وَيَأْمَنُوا قَوْمَهُمْ كُلِّ مَا رُدُّوْا إِلَى الْفِتْنَةِ

- 158 Since they undoubtedly made their enmity clear, despite the repeated and peaceful moves the Believers made towards them, they are to be considered as warring enemies and where the rules of war apply.
- 159 Believers are encouraged to honour their pledges. If a party with which Believers have a peace treaty accepts those who come to them seeking refuge, then, by extension, the treaty includes them as well (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).
- 160 *Ḥaṣirat ṣudūruhum*; they are greatly perturbed and this dilemma is overweighing them.
- 161 Unlike the group who sincerely want peace, this group is more cunning and deceitful. To ensure their safety, they play both the Believers, by outwardly showing themselves as Believers, and their own Denying people by following their heathen ways (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).
- 162 *Fitnah* (trial) here is Denial. Originally it means trying and testing, which, in turn, is derived from the verb *fatana*, i.e. to throw gold in a fire to test its mettle (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*).

they are 'readily' shoved into it. If they do not keep their distance, wave you peace, and hold back their hands then take them and kill them wherever you find them—these against whom We have made for you clearly evident authority.

أُرْكِسُوا فِيهَا فَإِن لَّمْ يَبْعَثْ لَكُمْ وَيُلْقُوا
إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ وَيَكْفُرُوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَخُذُوهُمْ
وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ جَعَلْنَا
لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٩١﴾

﴿92﴾ (163) A Believer may never kill a 'fellow' Believer, except by mistake⁽¹⁶⁴⁾. Whoever kills a Believer by mistake, then 'the onus on him is' manumitting a Believing slave and handing over blood money to his family, unless they forgo it as an act of charity. If he 'the deceased' belongs to a people who are your enemies⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ —

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَن يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَاً
وَمَن قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَاً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ
مُّؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُّسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا
أَن بَصَدَّ قَوْمًا فَإِن كَانَ مِنَ قَوْمٍ عَدُوِّكُمْ

That is, they readily fall into Denial when given the least opportunity. Not only that, but when faced with any test of Faith, they flounder deeper into Denial, as the word *urkisū* (shoved into) entails (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

163 Whereas the previous ayas deal with scenarios in which killing those who only pretend to be Faithful is allowed and under what circumstances, Ayas 92-94 turn to set the boundaries for killing a Believer, inadvertently or otherwise. Since He (ﷻ) prescribed fighting for the Believing community, God spells out the protocols of engaging in fights that could lead to loss of life; what is allowed, under what conditions and what is not (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, Riḍā).

164 Inadvertent manslaughter.

165 *Kuffār ḥarbiyyah*, i.e. warring, hostile Deniers. They are not to be given blood money because the deceased in actuality belongs more to the Believing community than to these, and lest they use the money as a resource for fighting Believers. However, in honour of the pledge, and knowing that the money would not be used against Believers, if the person killed is from a side with which Believers have a peace treaty (*mu'āhadūn*), they are to be given the blood money as will be said shortly (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

yet he was a Believer – then ‘the onus on the killer is’ manumitting a Believing slave. But if he belongs to a people with whom you have a ‘peace’ pact, then ‘the onus on him is’ handing over blood money to his fellows and manumitting a Believing slave. Whoever cannot find ‘a means to manumitting a Believing slave’⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ then ‘the onus on him is’ fasting two consecutive months, as a penance from Allah—verily Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.^{﴿93﴾} Whoever kills a Believer intentionally, then his punishment is Hellfire, forever he abides therein⁽¹⁶⁷⁾; Allah is Wrathful with him, Damns him and prepares for him mighty Punishment.^{﴿94﴾} You who Believe, when you set about ‘the land fighting’ in the path of Allah be sure and say not to any who offers you peace⁽¹⁶⁸⁾: “You are not a Believer!”

وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةً وَإِنْ
كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ
فَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ
مُّؤْمِنَةٍ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ
مُتَّابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٩٣﴾ وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا
مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا
وَعَذَابُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعْنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ
عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٤﴾ يٰۤأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا
وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ ءَلَقِيَ إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ
لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا

166 This covers a situation when the killer cannot find a Believing slave or raise the necessary funds to free one. He is to fast every day of these two months without a break; this is a punishment for not being cautious enough (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

167 *Khālidan* (residing forever) here is said to mean for an indefinitely extended period of time. None who has the least amount of *Imān* (Faith) in his heart will reside in Hellfire forever (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). God forgives all sins except that He is Associated with in worship (4: 48).

168 This is a person who withholds from fighting and declares that he is a Believer (cf. al-Ṭabarī, *al-Muyassar*). al-Rāzī says: “Exegetes are unanimous that this aya was revealed with regards to a group of Believers who met some people who declared themselves Muslim. They killed them claiming that they only declared Faith out of fear and to ward off death”.

hoping for fleeting worldly gains⁽¹⁶⁹⁾, but with Allah are plentiful windfalls. Thus you 'yourselves' were before Allah favoured you⁽¹⁷⁰⁾, so be sure—indeed Allah is fully aware of what you do.

تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ
 اللَّهُ مَعَانِيَ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ كُنتُمْ
 مِنْ قَبْلُ فَمَتَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿٩٤﴾

﴿95﴾ They are not equal: those of the Believers who are staying back – except those with hindrances⁽¹⁷¹⁾ – and those who strive in the path of Allah with their money and lives. Allah favours those who strive with their money and lives over the inert by a rank⁽¹⁷²⁾ –

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرَ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ
 وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ
 فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى
 الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ۚ

- 169 The spoils of war in this case.
- 170 God reminds the Believers, now a strong community capable of asserting its presence in the face of belligerence, of how they themselves were when they used to hide their Faith amidst hostile Denying communities (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 171 al-Barā’ Ibn ‘Āzib (رضي الله عنه) said about the revelation of this aya: “When: “They are not equal: those of the Believers who are staying back – except those with hindrances – and those who strive in the path of Allah”, came down the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Call so-and-so scribe to me”. The scribe came carrying the inkpot and the tablet (or shoulder blade), and the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: “Write: “They are not equal...”. ‘Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm (رضي الله عنه) said: “Messenger of Allah, I am blind!” Then: ‘except those with hindrances’, was revealed”. (al-Bukhārī: 459, Muslim: 1898). Those people who fall behind and do not join the ranks of fighting Believers are exempted given the validity of their excuses and the sincerity of their hearts (cf. al-Jazā’irī). Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh al-Anṣārī (رضي الله عنه) said: “We were with the Prophet (ﷺ) in a foray and he (ﷺ) said: “Indeed in Madinah are now men who are with you ‘by their hearts’ no matter what distance you cover or valley you cross. They were held back by illness””, (cf. Muslim: 1911, al-Bukhārī: 2684).
- 172 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever Believes in Allah and His Messenger, keeps up the Prayers and fasts Ramadan, Allah guarantees that He will admit him into Paradise, whether he migrates in the path of Allah, or remains still in the land where he was born”. Those who

'but' to both Allah promises what is most pleasing⁽¹⁷³⁾; Allah favours those who strive over the staying back with a great reward: ﴿96﴾ 'lofty' ranks 'conferred' by Him, and forgiveness and mercy⁽¹⁷⁴⁾—verily Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿97﴾ ⁽¹⁷⁵⁾Those who wronged themselves, as the angels take their souls, they say 'to them':

وَكَلَّا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ
عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ دَرَجَاتٍ مِنْهُ
وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٩٦﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الْغَالِبِينَ
أَنفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا

were with him said: “Messenger of Allah, shall we tell this ‘happy news’ to people!” He (ﷺ) said: “There are one hundred ranks in Paradise which Allah prepared for those who strive in His path. The distance between one rank and the next is like that between heaven and Earth. When you pray to Allah ‘for Paradise’ ask Him for *al-Firdaws*... it is the highest ‘rank’ in Paradise, above it is the Most Merciful’s Throne, and the rivers of Paradise gush forth from it”. (al-Bukhārī: 7423, Muslim: 1884)

173 That is Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

174 These are spelled out in the following ayas: “*You who Believe! Shall I direct you to a commerce that will save you from a painful Punishment: *that you Believe in Allah and His Messenger and strive in the path of Allah with your money and your souls? That is better for you, if you but knew. *He will forgive you your sins and cause you to enter Gardens under which rivers flow, and goodly dwellings in the Paradise of Eternity—that is the great triumph!*” (61: 10-12)

175 ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) explains the reason behind this aya’s revelation as: “Some Muslims were among the Associators increasing their multitudes against the Messenger of Allah in battle. An arrow comes and hits one of them and he dies, or he gets hit by a sword and perishes. Upon this Allah sent down: “*Those who wronged themselves, as the angels take their souls...*” (al-Bukhārī: 7085). Such people ‘wronged themselves’ by doing what was not in their best interests, nor in the best interests of the then emerging community of Believers. Staying in the midst of the Deniers, they helped increase the Deniers’ numbers at a time when the Believers needed to bolster their numbers in readiness for battle in that very defining juncture in Islam’s history. Additionally, not having a really valid excuse to remain in the land of the ungodly, they were naturally unable to declare their Faith and practise it openly. Indeed, they might have had to pay lip service to the Deniers. In order to justify their lack of positive action, they concocted lame excuses (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

“What was this ‘misery that’ you were in!” They reply: “We were victimized in the land!” They ‘the angels’ say: “Was not Allah’s land wide enough for you to migrate in?”⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ The ‘final’ resort of these is Hellfire—awful indeed is the destination! ⁽⁹⁸⁾ Exempted ‘from this are’ the victimized men, women and youngsters who have no means ‘of escape’ nor could they find a way ‘out’⁽¹⁷⁷⁾. ⁽⁹⁹⁾ These Allah may well pardon them—verily Allah is All-Pardoning, Most Forgiving. ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Whoever migrates in the path of Allah will find many a safe haven and a breakthrough. Whoever sets out from his home migrating to Allah and His Messenger – but death catches up with him – his reward is securely assured by Allah⁽¹⁷⁸⁾—verily Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.

فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضَ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً فَهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا قَالُوا لَيْتَ مَاؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿٩٨﴾
إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٩﴾
قَالُوا لَيْتَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَعْفُو عَنْهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفْوًا عَفْوًا ﴿١٠٠﴾ * وَمَنْ يَهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرْعًا كَثِيرًا وَسِعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٠٠﴾

176 “My Believing servants! My land is indeed vast, so worship Me ‘and Me alone’.” (29: 56)

177 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said that: “The Prophet (ﷺ) used ‘at times’ to pray earnestly after saying: “Allah listens to who thanks Him ‘*sami‘a Allāhu li man ḥamidah*’”, in the last *rak‘ah* of the ‘Ishā’ Prayer, saying: ‘O Allah, salvage ‘Ayyāsh Ibn Abū Rabī‘ah. O Allah, salvage al-Walīd Ibn al-Walīd. O Allah, salvage Salamah Ibn Hishām. O Allah, salvage the victimized Believers. O Allah, toughen your infliction on Muḍar ‘the residents of Makkah and its environs, who were mainly Qurayshites’. O Allah, blight them with severe droughts like those during the time of ‘Prophet’ Joseph’”, (al-Bukhārī: 6393, Muslim: 675). The Prophet (ﷺ) named these specifically because he knew how sincere in their Faith they were, and how unable they were of fleeing Makkah. These individuals are in sharp contrast to the ones spoken of here who lacked real sincerity and thus deserved harsh chastisement (see Aya 89 above).

178 Knowing the true nature of his intentions, God will grant him the reward of a person who actually reached his desired destination. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

﴿101﴾ When you 'Believers' set about the land 'travelling'⁽¹⁷⁹⁾, you will not be sinning by shortening the Prayer⁽¹⁸⁰⁾, should you fear that the Deniers will try you⁽¹⁸¹⁾—indeed the Deniers are but an open enemy to you.

﴿102﴾ When you 'Muhammad' are among them 'on a campaign' and you call them to rise for Prayer,⁽¹⁸²⁾

وَإِذَا صَرَيْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٠١﴾ وَإِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ

179 That is travel in general (cf. 73: 20, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī) or, more specifically in this instance, either the one involved in migrating or fighting in the path of God (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

180 *Qaṣr al-ṣalāh*, not in the way it is usually shortened while travelling during normal, peaceful times, but here expressed in times of fear in particular. That is, what is meant is shortening the manner of Prayer (*qaṣr kayfiyyat al-ṣalāh*) (cf. Ibn Kathīr who quotes Mujāhid, al-Ḍaḥḥāk and al-Suddī who are of this opinion). al-Shinqīṭī (*Aḍwā' al-Bayān*: 1/248) further explains: "Shortening the manner of Prayer (*qaṣr kayfiyyat al-ṣalāh*) denotes what is most permissible therein which is not allowed during Praying peacefully. For example: some of them join the Imām in Prayer for one *rak'ah*, then the Imām 'upon finishing the first *rak'ah*' remains standing and another group joins him and he Prays with them the second *rak'ah*; also they can Pray only by gesturing 'the usual moves of Prayer' on their mounts or feet and without facing the direction of Prayer '*al-qiblah*'".

181 *Yaftinakum* (lit. to try and test you), that is standing between you and seeking to prevent you from carrying out your religious duties properly. Potentially, then, by attacking you while you are busy performing Prayer (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Shinqīṭī).

182 This is the manner in which *ṣalāt al-khawf* (Prayer in danger) is performed. Abū 'Ayyāsh al-Zuraqī (رضي الله عنه) said: "We were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in 'Uṣfān 'the town near Makkah', when the Deniers faced us... standing between us and the direction of Prayer (*qiblah*). They 'the Deniers' said to themselves: "We caught up with them at an opportune time and shall take them by surprise! Prayer is approaching and it is dearer to them than their own children and lives!" Upon this Gabriel (جبرئيل) came down with these ayas: "*When you 'Muhammad' are among them 'on a campaign' and you call them to rise for Prayer...*". When it was time for Prayer, the Messenger (ﷺ) commanded them 'his Companions' to take up their arms. We stood behind him in two rows. When he bowed down we all bowed down, and when he straightened up we all straightened up. Then, he prostrated along with the row that was closest to him and the other row

let a section of them rise with you⁽¹⁸³⁾ holding on to their arms⁽¹⁸⁴⁾. When they prostrate, let them withdraw 'to be on guard' behind you⁽¹⁸⁵⁾, and let another section, who did not Pray, come and Pray with you⁽¹⁸⁶⁾;

فَلْتَقُمْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ مَّعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا
أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا فَلْيَكُونُوا مِن
وَّرَائِكُمْ وَلَتَأْتِ طَائِفَةٌ أُخْرَىٰ لَمْ يُصَلُّوا
فَلْيُصَلُّوا مَعَكَ

remained standing guarding them. When they were done with prostrating and rose up, the others 'who were on guard' prostrated where they were. Then they switched positions 'the ones in the back row coming to the front and the ones in the front row going behind to guard them'. Then he (ﷺ) bowed down 'after rising for the second *rak'ah*' and they all bowed down, then they all straightened up. Then he prostrated along with the row that was closest to him and the other row remained standing on guard. When he sat 'for *Tashahhud*' the ones on guard, prostrated and joined them 'for *Tashahhud*'. Then he (ﷺ) greeted off Prayer '*salām*' and left". Abū 'Ayyāsh adds: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) Prayed like this twice: once in 'Uṣfān and once in the lands of Banī Sulaym" (Aḥmad: 16630; al-Ṭabarānī: 5132; al-Dāraquṭnī: 2/200). This is one manner of the Prayer in danger (cf. also the Hadīth of Jābir Ibn 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه), Muslim: 840), the other, which is similar to the method mentioned in this aya, is the one whereby the Prophet (ﷺ) Prayed during the sortie of the Day of Dhāt al-Riqā'. This was carried out as follows: "A section formed a row with him 'in Prayer'. The other section faced the enemy. He (ﷺ) Prayed with the ones with him one *rak'ah*, then 'upon commencing the second *rak'ah*' he remained standing, and they 'the section that was Praying with him' completed their Prayer and went off to face the enemy. Then the second section 'which was guarding them at first' came and joined him and completed with him the *rak'ah* that was remaining of his Prayer. He, then remained seated 'during *Tashahhud*' and waited for them while they Prayed their second *rak'ah* and he greeted off Prayer '*salām*' with them". (al-Bukhārī: 4129; Muslim: 842; see also al-Bukhārī: 942; Muslim: 839)

- 183 The other section of the army shall remain on guard.
- 184 There are two different opinions as to which of the two sections the command to hold on to their arms applies (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah). Some state that these are the section who are Praying given that the weapons they took were light enough not to hinder them from Praying properly. Others, for obvious reasons, state that the ones meant here are the ones on guard.
- 185 Once the group who Prayed with the Prophet (ﷺ) first had finished Praying the first *rak'ah*, they were to stand on guard behind the other group. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)
- 186 The second group, who were on guard first, were to join the Prophet (ﷺ) in Prayer. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

and let them be on guard and hold on to their arms. The Deniers dearly wish that you be heedless of your arms and your belongings, for then they would swoop headlong on you. You will not be sinning should you be troubled by 'heavy' rain or are ill that you lay aside your arms, 'but' be on your guard—indeed Allah has prepared for the Deniers a humiliating Punishment. ¹⁰³ When you finish Praying mention Allah standing, sitting and 'lying' on your sides⁽¹⁸⁷⁾. And when you feel safe then keep up the Prayer 'as it should be'; indeed Prayer is mandated on Believers at specified timings. ¹⁰⁴ Be relentless⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ in pursuing the clan⁽¹⁸⁹⁾, if you feel pain they also feel pain as much as you do⁽¹⁹⁰⁾, 'but' you rightfully hope from Allah what they do not hope for⁽¹⁹¹⁾—verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

وَلْيَأْخُذُوا حِذْرَهُمْ وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ وَذَٰلِكُمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا
كُفْرًا وَلَوْ تَعَفَّوْنَ عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ
فَيَحْمِلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِثْلَهُ وَحَدَّةً وَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ كَانَتْ بِكُمْ آذَانٌ مِّنْ مَّطَرٍ
أَوْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ أَنْ تَضَعُوا أَسْلِحَتَكُمْ
وَخُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ
عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا
اللَّهَ فِيمَا وَفَعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ فَإِذَا
أَطْمَأْنَنْتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ
كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا ﴿١٠٤﴾
وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ إِنْ تَكُونُوا
تَأْمِنُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْمِنُونَ كَمَا تَأْمِنُونَ
وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٠٤﴾

187 Believers are enjoined to remember God and mention Him at all times, because it nurtures vigilance of Him in their hearts and draws them nearer to Him. This is even more so in times of trouble and fighting because such remembrance helps boost spiritual strength which is more important than relying on material power alone (cf. al-Jazā'irī).

188 Although a number of ayas in this sura urge Believers to fight in the path of God, they also urge them to be cautious. This caution is not to be mistaken with, nor is it a license to be overly careful to the extent that Believers slacken or proceed with heavy feet (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

189 Your enemy.

190 Cf. 3:140: "If a wound touches you, indeed an equal wound has touched the clan".

191 The most generous reward of God. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿105﴾ (192) We have indeed sent down the Book to you 'Muhammad' with the Truth⁽¹⁹³⁾ so that you may judge among people with that which Allah has shown you. Do not be an advocate for the treacherous⁽¹⁹⁴⁾. ﴿106﴾ Seek forgiveness from Allah—verily Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿107﴾ Do not argue on behalf of those who betray themselves⁽¹⁹⁵⁾—indeed Allah loves not who is an unwavering betrayer, committed sinner. ﴿108﴾ They try to hide 'their wickedness' from people, but try not to hide from Allah, while indeed He is with them when they nurture in the dead of night speech⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ which He approves not—verily Allah is encompassing⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ of what they do.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ
بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَكُنْ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ حَصِيمًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَلَا تُجَادِلْ عَنِ
الَّذِينَ يَخْتَلُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
مَنْ كَانَتْ حَوَافِدًا أُثِيمًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ بَشَتْ خُفُونَ مِنَ
النَّاسِ وَلَا يَشْتِخَفُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ
إِذْ يُبَيِّتُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَى مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا ﴿١٠٨﴾

- 192 One's judgement, even with one's own enemies, should be fair and in accordance with the ruling of God in His Book, the Qur'an; those who belong to one's own religion and are on one's side should not be favoured over the other side in legal proceedings (cf. al-Rāzī). God's precious religion should be protected from inside by upholding justice under all circumstances, as much as it should be protected from outside threats (cf. Riḍā).
- 193 The Qur'an is the Truth from God; it contains the Truth, tells the Truth and comes with justice. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 194 *al-Khā'inīn* are those who claim as theirs what is not. Alternatively, they deny what others have by right. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)
- 195 *Yakhtānūn anfusahum*: they betray their own persons by intentionally being treacherous (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī). This command is not exclusive to the Prophet (ﷺ), but it entails all those who follow the commands of God; traitors are to be found everywhere throughout time. Although he is the most perfect and just of all humans, the Prophet (ﷺ) is addressed here so as to heighten the effect of the warning against this trait, a trait which is common among rulers, they being human (cf. Riḍā).
- 196 Such as forging a defence that vindicates the culprit and incriminates the innocent. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Sa'dī)
- 197 God knows all about their stratagems. He keeps a record of everything and they will eventually be held accountable. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Sa'dī)

﴿109﴾ Here you are, you have argued on their behalf in this worldly life⁽¹⁹⁸⁾, who then would argue with Allah on their behalf on the Day of Judgement; who would be their agent?

هَآأَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ جَدَلْتُمْ عَنْهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا فَمَنْ يُجَادِلُ اللَّهَ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
أَمْ مَنْ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلاً ﴿١٠٩﴾

﴿110﴾ Whoever commits an ill deed⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ or wrongs himself⁽²⁰⁰⁾, then seeks forgiveness from Allah shall find Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿111﴾ Whoever earns a sin, then he earns it 'only' against himself⁽²⁰¹⁾—verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. ﴿112﴾ Whoever earns a misdeed or a sin⁽²⁰²⁾, then hurls it at an innocent person, then he has shouldered a grievous forgery and a flagrant sin. ﴿113﴾ Had it not been for Allah's Grace⁽²⁰³⁾ on you 'Muhammad', and His Mercy a section of them would have misled you, but they only mislead themselves,

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ
يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١١٠﴾
وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُ بِهِ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١١١﴾ وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ
خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا ثُمَّ يَرْمِ بِهِ بَرِيئًا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلَ
بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُبِينًا ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ
عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ رُلَّهَمْتَ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ
أَنْ يَضِلُّوكَ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ

198 In other words: "Assuming that you Believers argue on their behalf in this worldly life...". (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

199 *Sū'* includes, as in this instance, all sins both major and minor. It is called *sū'* (lit. ill/bad/unpleasant) because it is a bad deed which rebounds back on the committer with a punishment that he will not be pleased with. (al-Sa'adī, Ibn 'Ashūr)

200 By earning what he deserves God's Punishment for, such as sinning and Associating with God. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'adī)

201 "No burdened soul will bear the burden of another: even if a heavily laden soul should cry for help, none of its load will be carried, not even by a close relative." (35: 18)

202 *Khaṭī'ah* is an unintended misdeed, while *ithm* is an intended one. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, al-'Askarī; al-Furūq al-Lughawīyah)

203 By exposing the traitors to the Prophet (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Sa'adī)

and they will not harm you in the least. Allah sent down to you the Book and Wisdom⁽²⁰⁴⁾, and taught you that which you did not know⁽²⁰⁵⁾—indeed the Grace of Allah on you is great.

﴿114﴾ There is no good in much of their secret talk⁽²⁰⁶⁾, except for him who bids for charity⁽²⁰⁷⁾, or virtue⁽²⁰⁸⁾, or reconciliation between people. Whoever does this seeking ‘only’ the Pleasure of Allah, then We will grant him a great reward. ﴿115﴾ Whoever takes sides against the Messenger, only after guidance was made clear to him, and follows a path different to that of the Believers, We will lead him ‘all alone’ towards what he headed for⁽²⁰⁹⁾ and We will scorch him in Hellfire—awful indeed is the destination.

وَمَا يَضُرُّوكَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٣﴾

* لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَن يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِن بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ ۗ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿١١٥﴾

204 The Sunnah and knowledge of the intricacies of the rulings of Islam. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa‘dī)

205 Cf. 28: 86; 29: 48; 42: 52, and 93: 7.

206 Such stratagems are a direct result of confidential counsels (*najwā*) carried out behind closed doors at the dead of night. Plotting and scheming in private is a characteristic of the insincere of Faith and who never express such evil thoughts in public (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

207 *Sadaqah* is giving out, extending to people useful things such as money, knowledge, kindness (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī).

208 *al-Ma‘rūf* is all that is good and encouraged by God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī).

209 If he chooses to follow that path, then God will abandon him and leave him out there all on his own. “We turn their hearts and eyes away” from the truth as they refused to Believe at first, leaving them to wander blindly in their defiance”. (6: 110); “When they went astray, God left their hearts to stray.” (61: 5)

﴿116﴾ Allah does not forgive that He is Associated with, but He forgives what is lesser than that for whoever He wills. Whoever Associates with Allah has indeed strayed far away 'from the right path'. ﴿117﴾ They invoke none besides Him but females⁽²¹⁰⁾; they only pray to a rebelliously defiant Devil⁽²¹¹⁾; ﴿118﴾ Allah Damned⁽²¹²⁾ him, and he retorted: "I shall surely take to myself from Your servants my due share⁽²¹³⁾!" ﴿119﴾ "I shall surely mislead them, make them ever vainly wishful⁽²¹⁴⁾,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١١٦﴾ إِنْ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنْتَا وَإِنْ يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانَ مَرِيدًا ﴿١١٧﴾ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَقَالَ لَا تَخْذَرْتِ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا ﴿١١٨﴾ وَلَا ضَلَّتْهُمْ وَلَا مَتَّبَعَتْهُمْ

- 210 The most well-known idols the Arabs worshipped in the age of ignorance were goddesses with female names, like: *al-Lāt*, *al-'Uzzā*, *Manāt* (53: 19-20), which is curious given that female inferiority was engrained in the then Arab psyche (16: 58-59). This contradiction is pointed out here, using their own logic against them.
- 211 They only worship false idols because Satan has tricked them into this (cf. 71: 23; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).
- 212 *La'anahu* expelled and shut him off from His Mercy. "He said: "Be gone from it 'Paradise'; you are truly an outcast. *My Damnation is upon you until the Day of Reckoning*." (38: 77-78)
- 213 Take to himself followers from among Adam's offspring. He will make them do his bidding spreading corruption and deviation from the Godly path in this worldly life, but which will eventually lead them to Hellfire in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī). This was his vow in the wake of God's Damnation of him: "He 'Satan' said: "Then, by Your Glory, I shall lead them all astray, *except the 'truly' devoted servants of Yours among them*." (38: 82-83)
- 214 Satan whispers hollow promises to his followers. He engages them in an everlasting chase of illusory mirages of hope for better things to come and realization of wishes. He never intends to fulfill his promises even if he has the means to, because this would mean losing his power over them: "As for the Deniers, their deeds are like a mirage in a barren desert, which the thirsty perceive as water, but when he comes upon it, he finds it to be nothing." (24: 39)

and I shall command them to cut off the ears of livestock⁽²¹⁵⁾, and I shall command them to alter the creation of Allah!⁽²¹⁶⁾” Whoever takes Satan as a patron instead of Allah, has indeed suffered a tremendous loss. ⁽¹²⁰⁾ He promises them and makes them ever vainly wishful; Satan promises them nothing but delusion⁽²¹⁷⁾. ⁽¹²¹⁾ The resort of those is Hellfire; they will find no escape therefrom. ⁽¹²²⁾ Whereas those who Believe and do good deeds, He will admit them into Gardens, under which rivers flow, forever they abide therein. ‘This is’ The true promise of Allah, and whose word is more truthful than Allah’s!

وَلَا مَرْتَهُمْ فَلَيَبْتَئِكُنَّ آءَادَانَ الْأَنْعَامِ
وَلَا مَرْتَهُمْ فَلَيَغَيِّرُنَّ خَلْقَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ
يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ
خَسِرَ خُسْرًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١١٩﴾ يَعِدُهُمْ
وَيُمَتِّعُهُمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا
عُرْوًا ﴿١٢٠﴾ أَؤَلَيْكَ مَاؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ
عِنَهَا مَجِيصًا ﴿١٢١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَعَدَّ
اللَّهُ حَقًّا وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا ﴿١٢٢﴾

215 It was a custom of Arab idolaters to cut off the ears of cattle as a sign that such were dedicated to their gods, making them unlawful to eat; they called such cattle *baḥīrah*. All of which is contrary to God’s commandment that made the eating of cattle lawful (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa’dī). So doing, they followed the path of Satan not that of God.

216 This could be outwardly with regards to appearance, and inwardly with regards to the innate state of creation (*fiṭrah*, cf. 30: 30, 91: 10): from serving God alone to Association, from certitude to doubt and from following God’s guidance to turning away from it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī).

217 “Satan will say ‘to his followers on the Day or Judgement’ after the matter has been settled: “Indeed Allah has made you a true promise and I too made you a promise, but I broke my promise. I did not have any authority over you. I only called you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me but blame yourselves. I cannot salvage you, nor can you salvage me. Indeed, I denounce your previous Association of me with Allah ‘in worship’. Surely the wrongdoers will suffer a painful punishment.” (14: 22)

﴿123﴾ It⁽²¹⁸⁾ is neither after your 'Believers' wishes nor is it after the wishes of the People of the Book⁽²¹⁹⁾; whoever does evil will be requited for it⁽²²⁰⁾—he would never find besides Allah an ally or helper. ﴿124﴾ Whoever does 'all one can' of 'various' good deeds – whether male or female⁽²²¹⁾ – while Believing, those will enter Paradise and will not be wronged 'as much as the measure of' a groove on a date seed!

﴿125﴾ Whose religion is better than he who 'devoutly' submits his face to Allah, while perfecting 'his deeds' and following the creed of Ibrāhīm 'Abraham', the rightly oriented⁽²²²⁾

لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيَّتِكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِيَّةِ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
 مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَمَنْ
 يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ
 وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ
 وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا ﴿١٢٤﴾ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا
 مِمَّنْ أَسَاءَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ
 مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا

- 218 Salvation and attaining good things in both this life and the life to come (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī), is earned through firm, unwavering Belief in God, worshiping Him in accordance with the dictates of Islam and following the rightly-oriented creed of Abraham, not through wishful thinking.
- 219 "They said: "None will enter Paradise but those who are Jews or Christians". Those are their 'vain' wishes. Say to them: "Produce your proof if you are truthful!" (2: 111)
- 220 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said: "When: "...whoever does evil will be requited for it" was revealed, it came down hard on Muslims. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Try your best! Whatever befalls a Muslim expiates his sins; every calamity he stumbles upon or thorn that pricks him". (Muslim: 2574)
- 221 Islam makes no distinction between men and women in matters of faith. Nor is there any distinction in what they are commanded to carry out.
- 222 The creed of Ibrāhīm, *millata Ibrāhīm*, known as *al-Hanīfiyyah*, is the most primordial, pristine, uncorrupted precursor to all heavenly-revealed religions. However, the Qur'an particularly underlines Islam's close relation to it in various places: 2: 35, 4: 125, 6: 161 and 16: 123. "None would forsake the creed of Ibrāhīm except one who fools himself. We have chosen him in the worldly life and in the Hereafter he is one of the Righteous." (2: 130) 'Rightly oriented' is *hanīf*. The basic semantic meaning of the root *h-n-f* is inclination towards uprightness and eschewing crookedness (cf. Ibn

—indeed Allah took Ibrāhīm as a close friend⁽²²³⁾. ﴿126﴾ To Allah belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth—Allah encompasses everything⁽²²⁴⁾.

﴿127﴾ ⁽²²⁵⁾ And they seek your counsel⁽²²⁶⁾ pertaining women,

وَأَخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطًا ﴿١٢٦﴾

وَيَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي النِّسَاءِ

Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-Arīb*). Abraham, the example set for humanity for those who seek to find the right path of God (cf. 2: 124), was neither a Jew nor a Christian (cf. 3: 67).

223 *Khalīl* from *khullah* which is the highest state, of untainted love (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Ibn Taymiyyah (*al-'Ubūdiyyah*, p. 107) has it that: “*Khullah* is the epitome of perfect love, which entails perfection of servitude ‘to the Lord’ from the servant, and from the Lord, Glory be to Him, the perfection of Lordship for His servants whom He loves and is loved by them”. God Almighty, the Sole Owner of the Heavens and Earth, does not need the friendship of anyone, let alone a mere mortal, but He bestowed this lofty status on Ibrāhīm as an accolade for his perfect servitude (cf. al-Tawhīdī, al-Rāzī).

224 Nothing is ever hidden from Him. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

225 The subject of the best course of conduct to pursue with regards to the weaker segments of society, as well as other related subjects touched upon at the beginning of the sura, is taken up again here so as to expunge certain societal habits and practices that were prevalent before the advent of Islam. A Believing household has to be built on preserving the dignity and ensuring the full rights of all its parties, lest any lack of respect for these leads to discord and disunion, and where the more helpless members of the family (and society at large) are the most affected. Being the basic building block of a strong, close-knit society, the family’s wholesomeness has to be preserved at all costs.

226 ‘Urwah Ibn al-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) asked ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) about the following aya: “*Should you fear that you would not be fair to ‘your’ orphan ‘prospective wives’, then marry ‘instead’ whoever you like of women: two, three and four*”. (4: 3) She replied: “My nephew! This is regarding an orphaned girl who is under the care of her guardian and shares her money. He then likes her for her beauty and money and intends to marry her but without giving her her full dues or as much as she would normally be given by another suitor. These guardians are prohibited from marrying these orphans without giving them their dues in full, or even matching the maximum customary amount. Else they are enjoined to marry whoever they like of other women instead”. ‘Urwah (رضي الله عنه) adds that ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) continued: “After that people

say 'Muhammad': "Allah decrees to you with their regard and 'regarding' what is recited for you in the Book in 'the affairs of' orphaned women, to whom you give not what is ordained for them, and you want/want not to marry them⁽²²⁷⁾, and 'with matters of' helpless children: that you should uphold justice absolutely in the affairs of orphans⁽²²⁸⁾— whatever good you do, verily Allah Knows all about it.

قَالَ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِيهِنَّ وَمَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ
فِي الْكِتَابِ فِي يَتِمَىٰ الْمَسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا تُوْتُوهُنَّ
مَا كُتِبَ لَهُنَّ وَرَغِبُونَ أَن تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ
وَالْمُسْتَضَعْفِينَ مِنَ الْوَالِدِينَ وَأَن تَقُومُوا
لِلْيَتَامَىٰ بِالْقِسْطِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ كَانَ بِهِ عَلِيمًا ﴿١٢٧﴾

came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) seeking his counsel 'yet further' regarding this matter, and Allah, Glory be His, revealed: "And they seek your counsel, say 'Muhammad': "Allah decrees to you with their regard and 'regarding' what is recited for you in the Book in 'the affairs of' orphaned women, to whom you give not what is ordained for them, and you want/want not to marry them". 'She carries on: "What Allah meant by what is recited for them in the Book is the previous aya (4: 3) in which He says: "If you fear you will not be fair to 'your' orphan 'prospective wives', then marry 'instead' whoever you like of women". She adds: "What is said in this current aya, "...and you want to marry them", is that feeling of aversion 'yarghab 'an' to marrying an orphaned girl under one's care if she has no money or beauty, or wanting to 'yarghab fī' marry the one who has beauty and money, and whereby the guardian has to uphold justice 'to both by securing them their full rights"' (Muslim: 3018; al-Bukhārī: 3494)

227 *Targhabūna* (third-person singular masculine verb: *yarghab*) takes on either one of two particles with oppositional (*mutadāddah*) meanings and, thus, could mean either: *yarghab 'an*, feeling averse to something, or *yarghab fī*, desiring something. As alluded to in 'Urwah Ibn al-Zubayr's (رضي الله عنه) hadith above, in the first case, the guardian who feels averse to 'yarghab 'an' marrying an orphaned girl under his care is warned against holding back the rights that were 'ordained' by God for her. These rights include the right to their inheritance, to marry another person for fear of losing control over their money, or to the full amount of their dowry. By comparison, in a scenario that he desires to 'yarghab fī' marry her, he needs to give her the dowry in full. Believers are commanded to uphold justice in all the affairs of orphans. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

228 Who are also to be given their inheritance in full. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿128﴾ If a woman fears 'disdainfulness and' rebelliousness from her husband, there is no blame for them both to come to a settlement; reconciliation is better⁽²²⁹⁾. 'Given that' Extreme care for self interest is ever close to your souls, 'it is better still' that 'people's' extend generosity and are Mindful⁽²³⁰⁾—verily Allah is fully aware of what you do. ﴿129﴾ You 'men' would not be equally fair to 'your' women, despite your best efforts⁽²³¹⁾. So do not lean all the way through 'to one wife' and leave her 'the other one' hanging. That you conciliate and are Mindful, then surely Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿130﴾ 'Yet' Should they depart each other, then Allah will 'generously' provide for each of them out of His abundance⁽²³²⁾—verily Allah is Most Abundant, Most Wise.

وَإِنْ أَمْرًا خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُورًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا
صُلْحًا وَأُصْلِحَ خَيْرٌ وَأُخْضِرَتِ الْأَنْفُسُ
الشَّخَّ وَإِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ
تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ الْنِسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا
كُلَّ الْمِيلِ فِتْرَوهَا كَالْمَعْلُوقَةِ وَإِنْ
تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا
رَحِيمًا ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَإِنْ يَتَفَرَّقَا يُغْنِ اللَّهُ كُلَّامِنْ
سَعَتِهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ وَسِعًا كَرِيمًا ﴿١٣٠﴾

229 That is, coming to a mutual agreement that ensures their relationship continues. This is better than breaking up.

230 It is quite understandable that self-interest is innate to human nature. This makes giving up on some of one's rights very difficult, yet it is better still that both parties extend generosity to each other in order to reach a common, agreeable ground (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn). Men are especially reminded of this and whereby they must be Mindful of God and fair to their wives (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

231 This provides yet another window into human nature. A man who has more than one wife will inevitably prefer, in his own heart, one over another. However, men are reminded to be Mindful of God and to be moderate and treat their wives on an equal footing. Having said this, it is mandatory for a man to be absolutely even-handed in securing each wife her given marital rights, or else he will do better taking on only one wife: "But should you fear that you would not be fair 'in your treatment of all your wives' then one 'is enough'". (4: 3)

232 Sa'ah here is abundant Godly provisions or another spouse. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿131﴾⁽²³³⁾ To Allah belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth; indeed We have advised⁽²³⁴⁾ those who were given the Book before you 'Believers' and you to be Mindful of Allah; but if you Deny then 'still' to Allah belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth—verily Allah is Free of Need, All-Praiseworthy⁽²³⁵⁾. ﴿132﴾ To Allah belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth—sufficient is Allah 'indeed' as Trustee⁽²³⁶⁾. ﴿133﴾ Should He wish to, He would do away with you people and come up with others⁽²³⁷⁾—verily Allah is Able over that. ﴿134﴾ Whoever seeks the reward of this worldly life,

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَنِيًّا حَمِيدًا ﴿١٣١﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٣٢﴾ إِنْ يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ وَيَأْتِ بِآخَرِينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ قَدِيرًا ﴿١٣٣﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا

233 That God is the Omnipotent, Sole Owner of the dominions of the Heavens and Earth is repeated three times in this central thematic unit (Ayas 131-134). This is a strong reminder to all people not to be heedless of His 'advice' and commandments, but rather to be Mindful of Him (Riḍā). In other words, His commandments are not to be taken lightly.

234 Cf. note on Aya 4: 11 above.

235 "And Moses said: "Even if you, together with everybody else in Earth, Deny then Allah is Free of Need, All-Praiseworthy" (14: 8); "That was because their Messengers used to come to them with clear proofs, but they said: "How can humans be our guides?" So they persisted in Denial and turned away. Allah is not in need "of them"—Allah is Free of Need, All-Praiseworthy." (64: 6)

236 *Wakīl* (al-Wakīl) is one of the most Beautiful Names of God Almighty. It means, particularly in this instance, the Sustainer of the Universe, its Preserver, the Dispenser of its affairs with His Knowledge and Ability, and the Witness of everything, Glory be His. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). This Name entails that God Almighty is Most Trustworthy, the Dependable Advocate of perfect resolution.

237 Such replacements will be more heedful of commandments: "If you turn away, He will replace you with other people. And they will not be like you." (47: 38)

then 'know that' with Allah is 'both' the reward of this worldly life and the Hereafter⁽²³⁸⁾—verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

﴿135﴾ (239) You who Believe, be 'staunch' upholders of absolute justice; witnesses for 'the sake of' Allah⁽²⁴⁰⁾ even against yourselves or your parents and relatives. Whether he is rich or poor, Allah has more of a right to them both⁽²⁴¹⁾. Then follow not your 'whims and' desires not to act justly⁽²⁴²⁾. But should you twist 'your tongues'⁽²⁴³⁾ or abstain 'from testifying',

فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ ثَوَابُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴿١٣٥﴾

*يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ
شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ
وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ
بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدُوا وَإِنْ
تَلَّوْا أَوْ تَعْرَضُوا

- 238 People who are heedless of God are too eager to gain that which is worldly and think not of the life to come. Here, God reminds them that it is with Him that the wins and gains of not only this worldly life but also that of the Hereafter lie. All the more reason, then, for them to pay Him heed (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). "Some people would say: "Our Lord give us in this worldly life", having no share in the Hereafter; *yet" some of them say: "Our Lord, give us what is good in this worldly life and what is good in the Hereafter, and spare us the Punishment of the Fire". *Those are the ones who have a share of what they earned; surely Allah is swift in reckoning." (2: 200-202)
- 239 Here, the theme of upholding justice absolutely, no matter what the odds might be, is reiterated. This reinforces the main principles on which the Believing community is built: justice to all which is akin to Mindfulness (underlined in the previous group of Ayas 131-134).
- 240 Giving testimony should only be meant to please God alone; not to show off or brag. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 241 When testifying, the rich should not be favoured for his wealth nor the poor in consideration of his condition. A Believer needs only to give his upright testimony and leave the rest to God, the Creator and Dispenser of affairs. He knows best. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 242 "You who Believe, stand firm for Allah and uphold just testimony. Do not let 'your' enmity for 'some other' people lead you to injustice. Be just! That is closer to Mindfulness. And be Mindful of Allah. Surely Allah is well aware of what you do." (5: 8)
- 243 Distorting facts while testifying. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

then indeed Allah is fully aware of what you do. ﴿136﴾ (244) You who Believe, Believe 'unwaveringly' in Allah, His Messenger, the Book that He sent down 'piecemeal' to His Messenger⁽²⁴⁵⁾, and the Book⁽²⁴⁶⁾ He sent down 'in full' before. Whoever Denies Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day, then he has indeed strayed far away 'from the right path'. ﴿137﴾ Those who Believed then Denied, then Believed then Denied, then 'further' increased in Denial, Allah will never forgive them, nor guide their way⁽²⁴⁷⁾.

﴿138﴾ (248) Give the hypocrites the tidings that theirs is a painful Punishment; ﴿139﴾ these who take the Deniers as allies rather than the Believers⁽²⁴⁹⁾. Do they seek

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٣٦﴾
يَتَّيْبُهُا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
وَٱلْكِتَآبِ ٱلَّذِى نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ وَٱلْكِتَآبِ
ٱلَّذِى أَنْزَلَ مِن قَبْلُ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ
وَمَلَآئِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْآخِرِ
فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٣٧﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ ءَادُوا
كُفْرًا لَّمْ يَكُنِ ٱللَّهُ لِيُغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيُهْدِيَهُمْ
سَبِيلًا ﴿١٣٨﴾

بَشِّرِ ٱلْمُنَافِقِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣٩﴾
ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَّخِذُونَ ٱلْكُفْرِينَ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِن دُونِ
ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ءَاتَبَتُوهُنَّ

244 The most significant testimony is the one held towards God, i.e., the declaration of Faith. The uprightness of all other testimonies springs from this fountainhead of true, unshakeable Belief (al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr).

245 The Qur'an. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

246 *Kitāb* (sing.) here is a generic noun which entails all the Holy Scriptures that were revealed by God prior to the Qur'an. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

247 God will not overlook or forgive their misdeeds because of their ardent Denial, which represents the most insurmountable block to His Godly leniency. Denial in itself is a punishment which will not be lifted until the doomed meets his death without being given the chance to repent (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). They willingly chose the path of loss, so God left them to it (cf. 4:115 above).

248 In what follows (Ayas 138-147) the hypocrites are further exposed for what they are. They are told to make a final stand and align themselves unequivocally with the Believing community.

249 Cf. note on Aya 2: 28.

honour⁽²⁵⁰⁾ with them? Then to Allah belongs all honour⁽²⁵¹⁾. ﴿140﴾ He sent down 'in' the Book⁽²⁵²⁾ to you that should you hear the Signs of Allah being Denied or ridiculed 'by some', then remain not with them unless they engage in a conversation other than that. 'If you still stay with them' Then you are 'just' like them—indeed Allah will gather the hypocrites and the Deniers in Hellfire altogether. ﴿141﴾ These 'hypocrites' who lie low in wait for you; should you be granted victory from Allah, would say: "Were we not with you?⁽²⁵³⁾" 'Conversely' should the Deniers have a share 'of victory over you', they would say: "Did we not enwrap you 'in our aid' and shield you from the Believers?⁽²⁵⁴⁾" Allah will judge

عندهمُ الْعِزَّةَ فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٣٩﴾ وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتَ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ وَإِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٤٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَرْتَضُونَ بِكُمْ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فَتْحٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَسْتَحِذْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْنَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ

250 *al-Izzah* is a state of being shielded against defeat and standing aloof from humiliation. (Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyis al-Lughah*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)

251 Dignity and honour can only be found with God, the All-Powerful, Supreme Ruler over all His creation. "Whoever desires honour, then all honour is Allah's own" (35: 10); "They 'the hypocrites' say: "When we return back to Madinah, the more honoured shall evict the more humiliated from it!" "In fact 'To Allah 'truly' belongs honour, and to His Messenger and to the Believers, but the hypocrites know not." (63: 8)

252 The Qur'an; as in Aya 6: 68: "And when you see those who engage in vain discussion about Our Signs, turn away from them till they engage in other discourse. If Satan should cause you to forget, then once you have remembered, sit not in the company of wrongdoers". (Ibn 'Uthaymīn)

253 Cf. Aya 72 above.

254 They greatly aided and abetted the Deniers: spreading rumours, acting as decoys, discouraging Believers, spying, and employing all manner of devious wiles and ploys to demoralize the Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

among you 'both parties'⁽²⁵⁵⁾ on the Day of Judgement—Allah will surely not give the Deniers a way 'to prevail' over the Believers⁽²⁵⁶⁾.
 ﴿142﴾ Indeed the hypocrites seek to deceive Allah, 'but in reality' He Deceives them; when they rise up for Prayer, they rise sluggishly⁽²⁵⁷⁾ 'only' showing off to people and little do they 'truly' mention⁽²⁵⁸⁾ Allah. ﴿143﴾ They are wavering⁽²⁵⁹⁾; neither 'belonging' to these nor to these—whoever is misguided by Allah, you will surely find no way 'out' for him.

بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤٢﴾ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كُسَالَى يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٤٣﴾ مُدْبِدِينَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ لَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَلَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤٣﴾

- 255 God, the Most Just of all judges, will make known by His verdict those who are sincere and those who are not. He will admit the former to Paradise and consign the latter to Hellfire (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 256 God will not grant the Deniers leave to have an absolute upper hand over the Believers; to completely rout and eradicate them. There will always, throughout all times, be a group of Believers who will be victorious by virtue of their true and unshakable Belief. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 257 God is sharing a tell-tale sign of their insincerity, lack of will and lethargic action in carrying out His biddings. This is by way of ‘deceiving’ them and drawing Believers’ attention to their deception.
- 258 This pertains to their engagement in *dhikr* (remembrance) during Prayers; they do not mention God with their tongues, their hearts and body parts are not humbled, and their minds are wandering. This is because what is topmost in their minds is not Pleasure of God, but rather an intent to please other mortals. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 259 The hypocrites live in a state of perpetual quandary and constant perplexity. They are stricken with doubt and always experiencing a state of dilemma: “*In their hearts there is disease and thus* ‘because of it’ *Allah has increased their disease*”. (2:10) ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The example of the hypocrites is that of a sheep, which comes in the middle of two herds; this time it joins this herd and shortly after it joins the other”. (Muslim: 2784) For a fuller description of the squalid, worry-stung lives they lead see 2: 8-20.

﴿144﴾ You who Believe, take not the Deniers as allies rather than the Believers, do you want to give Allah clearly evident authority against you?⁽²⁶⁰⁾ ﴿145﴾ Indeed the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire—you will never find them a helper. ﴿146﴾ Except those who repent, mend 'their ways', hold fast to Allah and purify their religion, then these are with the Believers—indeed Allah will grant the Believers a great reward. ﴿147﴾ Of what use to Allah is your Punishment, if you are thankful and Believe—verily Allah is Thankful, All-Knowing.

﴿148﴾ Allah likes not speaking of evil openly⁽²⁶¹⁾ except for one who is wronged⁽²⁶²⁾—verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿149﴾ Whether you declare what is good or conceal it, or pardon an evil, then Allah is All-Pardoning, Most Able⁽²⁶³⁾.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْكَافِرِينَ
أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أُرِيدُونَ أَنْ
تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا ﴿١٤٤﴾ إِنَّ
الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَجَةِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ
لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴿١٤٥﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا
وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِ اللَّهُ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٤٦﴾ مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ
بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ وَءَامَنْتُمْ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٧﴾

*لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوِّهِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ
إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٨﴾
إِنْ تَبَدُّوا خَيْرًا أَوْ لَخِفُوا أَوْ تَعَفُّوا عَنْ سُوِّهِ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا قَدِيرًا ﴿١٤٩﴾

260 *Sultān* is a false-cut justification for God to punish you. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

261 *al-Sū'* is everything which is hurtful and unpleasant (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*); 'speaking evil' is swearing, foul mouthing, being profane, hurling accusations, slandering, backbiting, etc. (cf. al-Jazā'irī). Having exposed the hypocrites at length in this sura already, God draws the Believers' attention so that they hold their peace and are careful not to speak evil to them openly (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

262 A person who is aggrieved or done wrong by may, with the caveat as in the next aya, vent his grievance by supplicating against his aggressor or complaining to others about him, but he may not fabricate lies to win sympathy. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

263 This is mainly addressed to the one who is wronged (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). This is a very subtle call for them to have good things topmost in their minds

﴿150﴾ Those who Deny Allah and His Messengers and want to separate between Allah and His Messengers saying: “We Believe in some and Deny some”, wishing to strike a middle road in between!⁽²⁶⁴⁾ ﴿151﴾ Those are the Deniers truly— We have prepared ‘an ever present’ humiliating Punishment for the Deniers. ﴿152﴾ ‘But’ Those who Believe in Allah and His Messengers and do not separate between any of them, He will grant them their rewards— indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ
 أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ
 بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ
 يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٥٠﴾ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
 الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا
 مُهِينًا ﴿١٥١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
 وَلَمْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ أُولَئِكَ سَوْفَ
 يُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرَهُمُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٥٢﴾

﴿153﴾⁽²⁶⁵⁾ The People of the Book ask you ‘Muhammad’ to send down to them a Book from the sky!⁽²⁶⁶⁾

يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ تُنزِّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا
 مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ

and to think positively. For this reason ‘good’ is brought to the foreground and ‘evil’ is relegated to the background. Although the previous aya only talks of ‘evil’; a change of perspective is much needed in situations where emotions run high. What is more, people are encouraged to pardon an injury and remember that God, Who is Most Able to punish a wrong done towards Him, is also All-Pardoning.

264 Thinking that such a ‘compromise’ would put them on the road that leads to God’s Pleasure and salvation. Had they really Believed in some Messengers of God and listened to them with due care and attention, they would naturally have Believed in the rest of the Messengers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

265 The following three passages (Ayas 153-170) provide the leader of the community, the Messenger of God (ﷺ), with the necessary certainty, through repeated assurances (in particular passage ending ayas: 162, 166 and 170) about the authenticity of his mission. His Messengership is the bulwark, the centre of gravity, which is the source of strength that the whole community draws on and builds its legitimacy around.

266 In order to believe in him, they asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to send down a Book from the sky, in whole and written in a heavenly hand just like the tablets

Indeed they had asked Moses what is even more than that, they said: “Show us Allah before our own eyes!⁽²⁶⁷⁾” so the thunderbolt struck them⁽²⁶⁸⁾ for their wrongdoing. Then they took ‘to worshipping’ the calf⁽²⁶⁹⁾ ‘only’ after clear evidences⁽²⁷⁰⁾ came to them but We forgave that⁽²⁷¹⁾ and We gave Moses clearly evident authority⁽²⁷²⁾. ﴿154﴾ We raised the mountain above them⁽²⁷³⁾ to ‘make them honour’ their pledge and We said to them: “Enter through the gate prostrating”⁽²⁷⁴⁾, and We said to them: “Do not transgress on the Sabbath”⁽²⁷⁵⁾, and We took from them a tough⁽²⁷⁶⁾ pledge.

فَقَدَسَأَلُوا مُوسَىٰ أَكْبَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَقَالُوا أَرَنَا اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ بِظُهُورِهِمْ ثُمَّ أَخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ أَلْبَيْتًا فَعَمَقْنَا عَنْ ذَلِكَ وَإَاتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ سُلْطَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِثْقَلِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لَا تَعْدُوا فِي السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿١٥٤﴾

of the Torah. This was just a ruse, a smoke-screen meant to draw attention away from their lack of will to respond to the call of Belief (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

267 *Jahrah* is clearly apparent; the origin of *jahr* is exposing by bringing something into light (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). This demand and all of the other Israelite infringements mentioned here are detailed in Sura *al-Baqarah*, especially Ayas 50-66. (For this one cf. Aya 2: 55.)

268 Cf. 2: 55-56.

269 Cf. 2: 51.

270 The miracles that Moses (ﷺ) was made able to perform before their own eyes. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

271 Cf. 2: 54.

272 “Indeed We gave Moses nine clear signs. Ask ‘Muhammad’ the Children of Israel.” (17: 101)

273 Cf. 2: 63.

274 Cf. 2: 58.

275 The details of story are given in 7: 163-165.

276 *Ghalīz* is rugged and rough, the opposite of smooth (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).

﴿155﴾ 'Damned they were'⁽²⁷⁷⁾ Because of their reneging on their pledge, Denying Allah's Signs, killing the Prophets unjustifiably⁽²⁷⁸⁾ and saying: "Our hearts are encrusted"⁽²⁷⁹⁾, nay but Allah sealed them because of their Denial—little do they Believe. ﴿156﴾ 'And' Because of their Denial, their grossly vile slander against Maryam 'Mary'⁽²⁸⁰⁾; ﴿157﴾ and their saying 'boastfully': "We have killed the Messiah, 'Īsā 'Jesus', son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allah", they neither killed him nor did they crucify him, but it was only made to appear like so to them⁽²⁸¹⁾. Indeed those who differed regarding him are 'extremely' doubtful about him; they have no 'real' knowledge about him; they are only following guesses. Certainly they did not kill him, ﴿158﴾ but Allah raised him up unto Himself⁽²⁸²⁾—indeed Allah is Most Prevailing, All-Wise.

فِيمَا نَقَضَهُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَكَفَرِهِمْ بِبَيْتِ اللَّهِ وَقَتْلَهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بَغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَلْ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٥٥﴾ وَيَكْفُرُهُمْ قَوْلُهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ بُهْتَانًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَٰكِن شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا ﴿١٥٧﴾ بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٥٨﴾

277 Cf. 2: 88, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr.

278 Cf. note on 2: 21.

279 Cf. 2: 88.

280 Accusing her of fornication; cf. 19: 28.

281 One interpretation of *shubbiḥ lahum* (He/it was only made to appear like so to them) is that another person was made to assume his likeness, so they mistook him for Jesus (ﷺ) (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī).

282 He ascended to Heaven (cf. 3: 55; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿159﴾ 'Yet' Everyone of the People of the Book, none excepted, will absolutely Believe in him 'Jesus' before his death⁽²⁸³⁾, and on the Day of Judgement, he 'Jesus' will be a witness against them. ﴿160﴾ Because of the wrongdoing of the Jews, We have made unlawful for them good 'provisions' that had been made lawful to them⁽²⁸⁴⁾, and because of their frequently repeated turning 'many' away from the path of Allah⁽²⁸⁵⁾. ﴿161﴾ And 'because of' their taking usury when they were forbidden from it, and their devouring people's money wrongfully—indeed We have prepared for the Deniers among them 'an ever present' painful Punishment. ﴿162﴾ But those who are firm in knowledge among them⁽²⁸⁶⁾ and the Believers Believe in what was sent down to you 'Muhammad' and what was sent down before you;

وَإِن مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا لِيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ
مَوْتِهِ ۖ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٥٩﴾
فَيُظَاهِرُ مِنَّا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَمًا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَاتٍ
أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ﴿١٦٠﴾
وَأَخَذَهُمُ الرِّبَا وَقَدْ نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ
أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْبُطْلِ ۚ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ
مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦١﴾ لَكِنِ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ
مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا
أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ

283 The prevalent interpretation of this is that all the People of the Book, even the Jews, will come to Believe in Jesus' Messengership, his neither being 'an impostor' nor 'the son of God', when he descends to Earth from Heaven at the end of time (cf. al-Bukhārī: 3448; Muslim: 155; al-Ṭabarī; Ibn Kathīr).

284 For more details cf. 6: 146.

285 They never spared any effort in driving people away from the path of God: lying about God, distorting and concealing parts of the Scriptures and Denying Prophets Jesus and Muhammad (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

286 Not all the Jews were the same but the godly among their learned are excluded as per this aya. Their true knowledge led them to be among the ranks of Believers who Believed in the Prophet's (ﷺ) Messengership and those of all the Messengers that preceded him and all of the Holy Scriptures (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

and those who 'dutifully' keep up Prayers, give out the prescribed alms⁽²⁸⁷⁾, and are 'sincere' Believers in Allah and the Last Day; those We will grant them a great reward.

﴿163﴾ We have sent revelation to you 'Muhammad, just' like⁽²⁸⁸⁾ We sent revelation to Nūḥ 'Noah' and the Prophets after him. We 'also' sent revelation to Ibrāhīm 'Abraham', Ismā'il 'Ishmael', Ishāq 'Isaac', Ya'qūb 'Jacob', the Tribes⁽²⁸⁹⁾, 'Īsā 'Jesus', Ayyūb 'Job', Yūnus 'Jonah', Hārūn 'Aaron', Sulaymān 'Solomon' and We granted Dāwūd 'David' a Sacred Writ⁽²⁹⁰⁾.

وَالْمُفِيْمِيْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَالْمُوْتُوْبَ الرَّكَّوَةَ
وَالْمُوْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ اُولٰٓئِكَ سَنُوْتِيْهِمْ
اَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿١٦٣﴾

﴿١٦٣﴾ اِنَّا اَوْحَيْنَا اِلَيْكَ كَمَا اَوْحَيْنَا اِلَى نُوْحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّنَ
مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ؕ وَاَوْحَيْنَا اِلَى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْمٰعِيْلَ
وَاِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ وَاِلَى اَسْبٰطِ وَعِيْسَى
وَاَيُّوْبَ وَيُوْسُفَ وَهٰرُوْنَ وَسُلَيْمٰنَ وَاٰتَيْنَا
دَاوُدَ زَبُوْرًا ﴿١٦٣﴾

- 287 Keeping up Prayers (*iqāmat al-ṣalāh*) and giving out prescribed alms (*itā' al-zakāh*) are observable manifestations of one's Belief. In contrast to the hypocrites who rise up to Prayers sluggishly (cf. 4: 142 above), sincere Believers do so willingly, devoutly and without delay.
- 288 This is a direct reply to the Jews of Madinah regarding their demand (4: 153 above) from the Prophet (ﷺ) to send them down from the sky a Book, in full, written in a heavenly hand. That the majority of these Messengers of God (ﷺ), did not receive Books as described in the demand, and their Messengerships were not rebuffed, is highlighted here to underline their lack of sincere intention. They were only arguing for the sake of argument and to cast aspersions (al-Rāzī).
- 289 *al-Asbāt* are the Prophets among Jacob's descendants (cf. al-Sa'dī). They were called *asbāt* because everyone of them was a *sibt*, who weighed in good qualities that of a whole tribe (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).
- 290 *al-Zabūr* is the Book revealed to Prophet David (ﷺ) (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Originally *al-zabūr* is every book that contains wisdom (*zabur* for plural, 3: 184), a Sacred Writ.

﴿164﴾ 'These in addition to' Messengers We have narrated to you 'Muhammad' and Messengers We have not narrated to you; and 'indeed' Allah certainly spoke to Moses directly⁽²⁹¹⁾. ﴿165﴾ 'These' Messengers 'were sent as' deliverers of glad tidings and warnings⁽²⁹²⁾, so that people would have no pretext against Allah after the Messengers 'coming to them'⁽²⁹³⁾—verily Allah is Most Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿166﴾ 'Nay' But 'in spite of the Deniers'⁽²⁹⁴⁾ Allah 'Himself' bears witness to what He sent down to you – He sent it with His Knowledge – and the angels bear witness 'to it' too—sufficient is Allah 'indeed' as Witness.

وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ
مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا ﴿١٦٥﴾ رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ
لِيَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٦٦﴾ لَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَشْهَدُ
بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ أَنْزَلَهُ بِعِلْمِهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ
يَشْهَدُونَ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٦٧﴾

- 291 Use of the absolute object (*al-maf'ul al-muṭlaq*), *kallama taklīmān*, is meant to impart certainty to the occurrence of the actual 'speaking'; God addressed Moses directly, in a manner befitting His Glory, without a medium, in words that he heard and understood (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Uthaymīn). "And when he 'Moses' came upon it, he was called from the right bank of the valley, at the blessed site, from the tree: "Moses! Truly I am Allah, the Lord of all-beings!" (28:30) This was a very special privilege imparted to Moses (ﷺ).
- 292 Messengers are sent by God to give people the good news of felicity and prosperity in this life and the Hereafter for those who obey Him and follow His commandments, and to warn them against His Punishment if they rebel (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī).
- 293 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "None likes to pardon more than Allah. This is why He sent down the Book and dispatched Messengers". (Muslim: 2760) When they find themselves in a tight corner, people always resort to scapegoating. "Had We destroyed them through punishment before this Messenger came, they would have said: "Our Lord, if only You had sent us a Messenger, we could have followed Your revelations before we suffered humiliation and disgrace!" (20: 134)
- 294 Cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī.

﴿167﴾ Those who Denied and turned 'people' away from the path of Allah, they have indeed strayed far away 'from the right path'. ﴿168﴾ Those who Denied and dealt unjustly, Allah will not forgive them, or guide them to the way 'of truth'; ﴿169﴾ except the way to Hellfire⁽²⁹⁵⁾; forever they abide therein—indeed that is easy for Allah. ﴿170﴾ O people, surely the Messenger 'Muhammad' has come to you with the truth from your Lord, so Believe 'in him' for your own good⁽²⁹⁶⁾. But if you Deny, then to Allah belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth—verily Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
 قَدْ ضَلُّوا ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٦٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 وَظَلَمُوا لَئِن كُنِ اللَّهُ يَتَغَفَّرُ لَهُمْ وَلَا يَهْدِيَهُمْ
 طَرِيقًا ﴿١٦٨﴾ إِلَّا طَرِيقَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
 أَبَدًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿١٦٩﴾ يَأْتِيهَا
 النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَهُمُ الرُّسُولُ بِالْحَقِّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ
 فَتَأْمَنُوا خَيْرَ الْكُفْرِ وَإِن تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ
 مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا
 حَكِيمًا ﴿١٧٠﴾

﴿171﴾ People of the Book⁽²⁹⁷⁾, do not take an extremely hard line on your religion⁽²⁹⁸⁾ and say nothing

يَأْتَاهُمُ الْكِتَابُ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا

295 "We turn their hearts and eyes away 'from the Truth' as they refused to Believe at first, leaving them to wander blindly in their defiance." (6: 110)

296 "Whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a Believer, We will surely bless them with a good life, and We will certainly reward them according to the best of their deeds." (16: 97)

297 This passage is addressed to the fourth major category of the Arabian community, the Christians, who did not exist in large concentrations in the vicinity of Madinah, hence the delay in their mention until now (cf. their argumentation with the Prophet ﷺ) which is a major theme of Sura *Al 'Imrān*). Their beliefs, along with those of the Jews, the idolaters and the hypocrites, had to be dealt with in a clear-cut manner, both for their and the Believer's benefits. The Believing community had to build its relationships with its bordering neighbours on a well-defined set of terms, Divinely-revealed instructions as to where everyone stood regarding matters of creed and Faith.

298 "They have taken their rabbis and monks as well as the Messiah, son of Maryam, as Lords besides Allah, even though they were commanded

about Allah except the truth; the Messiah, 'Isā son of Maryam is no more than a Messenger of Allah⁽²⁹⁹⁾, and His word⁽³⁰⁰⁾ that He cast to Maryam, and a soul from Him⁽³⁰¹⁾. Believe then in Allah and His Messengers, and say not: "Three"⁽³⁰²⁾. Desist 'from saying this' for your own good; indeed Allah is none but one God,

عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقُّ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى
ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى
مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ فَآمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةً إِنَّهُوَ خَيْرُ الْكُفْرِ إِنَّمَا
اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ

to worship none but the One God. There is no god 'worthy of worship' except Him. Glorified is He above 'all' what they Associate 'with Him'!" (9: 31)

- 299 "The Messiah, son of Maryam, was only a Messenger; other Messengers had come and gone before him; his mother was a virtuous woman; both ate food 'like other mortals'. See how clear We make these Signs for them; see how deluded they are." (5: 75) 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Do not be excessive in praising me as much as the Christians go into raptures about the son of Maryam. I am no more than His servant. So say: "The Servant of Allah and His Messenger". (al-Bukhārī: 3445)
- 300 He was created by the word, 'Be!', that the Archangel Gabriel delivered to Mary (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). "Indeed the example of 'Isā with Allah is like that of Adam; He created him from dust and said: "Be!" and he was." (3: 59)
- 301 That is, Jesus's spirit was created by God (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). al-Baghawī, in his interpretation of this aya, says: "He 'Jesus' is a soul just like any other soul but Allah added him to Himself "a soul from Him" to honour him". al-Shawkānī is also of this opinion. Commenting on this aya, al-Alūsī has it that: "Because Jesus was created by a blow 'of air', not by a drop 'of sperm', he was called a 'soul'." In other words, this stresses the purely human nature of Jesus and refutes the belief in his divinity. The Qur'an makes clear that Jesus is just like all other human beings, whose spirit was created by God.
- 302 The claim that there are three Gods. "They certainly Deny, those who say: "Truly Allah is the third of three", while there is no god save the one God. If they desist not from what they say, a painful Punishment will befall those among them who Deny." (5: 73).

far exalted is He above having a child⁽³⁰³⁾. To Him 'Allah' belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth—sufficient is Allah as Keeper. ﴿172﴾ The Messiah would not disdain to be a servant of Allah, nor would the drawn-near angels. Whoever disdains from worshipping Him and becomes arrogant, He will rally them all to Him 'on the Day of Judgement'. ﴿173﴾ As for those who Believe and do good deeds, He will grant them their rewards in full and will give them more from His Grace, but those who disdained and became arrogant, He will consign them to a painful Punishment—they will never find an ally or helper besides Allah. ﴿174﴾ O people, there has come to you a 'conclusive' proof⁽³⁰⁴⁾ from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a Glaring Light⁽³⁰⁵⁾. ﴿175﴾ As for those who Believe in Allah and hold fast to Him, He will admit them into a Mercy and Grace⁽³⁰⁶⁾ from Him, and will guide them to a Straight Path.

سُبْحٰنَهُۥٓ اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ لَهُۥ وَلَدٌ لَّهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللّٰهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٧٢﴾
لَنْ يَّمْتَنِعَكَ الْمَسِيْحُ اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ عَبْدًا
لِّلّٰهِ وَلَا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُوْنَ وَمَنْ يَّمْتَنِعْ
عَنْ عِبَادَتِيْهِ وَيَسْتَكْبِرْ فَسَيَحْشُرُهُمْ
اِلَيْهِ جَمِيْعًا ﴿١٧٣﴾ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوْا
الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَيُوْفِّيهِمْ اُجُوْرَهُمْ وَيَزِيْدُهُمْ
مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖٓ ؕ وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اَسْتَكْفَرُوْا
وَأَسْتَكْبَرُوْا فَبِعَذَابِنَا اِلَيْمًا وَلَا
يَجِدُوْنَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وٰلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿١٧٤﴾
يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهٰنٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ
وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْكِتٰبَ نُوْرًا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿١٧٥﴾ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَاَعْتَصَمُوْا بِهٖٓ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِيْ
رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وِفْضَلٍ وَّيُهْدِيْهِمْ اِلَيْهِ صِرَاطًا
مُّسْتَقِيْمًا ﴿١٧٥﴾

303 "Say: He is God, Unique. *God is the Oft-Beseeded. *He begot none, nor was He begotten. *None is equal to Him." (Sura al-Ikhlās, 112: 1-4) "Allah is 'The Originator of the Heavens and Earth. How could He have children when He has no mate? He created all things and has 'perfect' knowledge of everything." (6: 101)

304 People have been given enough evidence that should guide them to the truth. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

305 The Qur'an which should guide people to the Straight Path if they only walk in its light. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

306 Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿176﴾ (307) And they seek your counsel, say 'Muhammad': "Allah decrees to you regarding 'the inheritance from' a childless parentless person; if a man dies and he has no children and he has a sister, then to her belongs half of what he leaves behind; 'in turn' he inherits her if she has no children; if there are two 'sisters' then theirs is two thirds of what he leaves behind; if there are 'a number of' brothers and sisters, then a male should have the equal share of two females". Thus Allah explains to you lest that you stray—Allah is All-Knowing of everything.

يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي الْكَلَالَةِ
 إِنْ أَمْرٌ وَأَهْلَكَ لَيْسَ لَهُ وُلْدٌ وَلَا أُوَاحِدٌ فَأَهْلُهَا
 نِصْفٌ مَّا تَرَكَ وَهُوَ يَرِثُهَا إِنْ لَرَّيْكَنَ لَهَا وُلْدٌ
 فَإِنْ كَانَ ثَلَاثَتِ نِسَاءٍ فَلَهُمَا الثُّلُثَانِ مِمَّا تَرَكَ
 وَإِنْ كَانُوا إِخْوَةً رِجَالًا وَنِسَاءً فَلِلَّذَكَرِ مِثْلُ
 حَظِّ الْأُنثِيَّاتِ ۗ يَعْنِيَنَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَضَلُّوا
 وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾



307 The legal setting of the very charged issue of inheritance is revisited in the sura's conclusion so as to sum up and highlight its importance in setting apart the new order which the community should follow as distinct from earlier heathen practices. 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) said: "The issue of most importance that I leave behind is that of *al-kalālah* 'a person with no living parents and who is without children'. I have never asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with regards to an issue more than this, and he has never been rougher with me with regards to an issue more than this. He 'eventually' poked my chest with his finger and said: "'Umar! Is not the aya of summer 'which was revealed in summer-time' at the end of *al-Nisā* enough 'as a ruling' for you?" (Muslim: 567)

Moreover, this aya can be seen as a prelude to the next sura which carries on explaining the laws and rules for the Believing community, in yet greater detail.



سُورَةُ الْمَائِدَةِ

al-Mā'idah
(The Table Laid)



al-Mā'idah (The Table Laid)

Title: *al-Mā'idah* (as found in al-Bukhārī: 347, Muslim: 368, Imām Aḥmad: 25547, al-Nasā'ī: 11073, al-Ḥākim: 3210) is titled after the heavenly feast which the disciples of 'Īsā (ﷺ) asked him for as comforting proof of the Truthfulness of his Messengership. Having established their sincerity, he obliged them by praying to God on their behalf (cf. 5: 112-115). The adverse circumstances, stiff opposition and fierce enmity which this exemplary earlier community of true Believers faced smack of those which the later Believers endured during their identity consolidating Madinan days. It is a tacit way of assuring the Believers that God's support and help is ever close at hand when they remain sincere and stand their ground, rallying around their leader. The feast is a tangible and reassuring Sign from God. Its essence is a delightfully hearty, comforting proof and an everlasting cause of hope; it is meant to be a constant reminder of sincere Belief and how it always fares against all odds.

Merit: 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever owns the first seven suras of the Qur'an '*al-sab' al-uwal*' is truly learned" (Imām Aḥmad: 24575). Wāthilah Ibn al-Asqa' (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I was given the seven lengthy suras '*al-sab' al-tiwāl*' in lieu of the Torah" (Imām Aḥmad: 24575). It is the last revealed sura of the Qur'an; Jubayr Ibn Nufayr narrated that 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "Jubayr, are you reading *al-Mā'idah*? I said: "Yes". She then said: "Know then that it is the last sura of the Qur'an that was revealed. So whatever you find lawful in it is conclusively lawful, but whatever you find unlawful in it is conclusively unlawful" (Aḥmad: 25547, al-Nasā'ī: 11073, al-Ḥākim: 3210; 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) also states the same: cf. al-Tirmidhī: 3063, al-Ḥākim: 3211, al-Bayhaqī: 13979). One of the distinctive characteristics of this sura is that it is the most detailed with regards to Islamic laws and regulations. al-Tawḥīdī (4/157) has it that *al-Mā'idah*: "...contains 18 laws that no other sura mentions". Ibn 'Āshūr (6/72) adds: "This sura details numerous laws, which leads to the conclusion that it came down to round up the laws of Islam".

Theme: the laws, the rules of how to deal with others, the deviance of earlier nations, the stories of the struggle between good and evil and the reminder of the Day of Judgement are all meant to educate the rebellious human nature into willingly accepting what is right and good; the story of Cain and Abel, Adam's sons, is the embodiment of this purely human struggle.

Key: *al-Mā'idah* carries on from the sura that precedes it, *al-Nisā'*. However the differences are significant: whereas *al-Nisā'* is community founding and identity forming, *al-Mā'idah* is identity affirming and community solidifying; whereas *al-Nisā'* begins with the call "O People!" addressing human nature to be Mindful of God, *al-Mā'idah* begins with "O Believers!" appealing in its own right to the Believing spirit to honour its obligations to God and man. The members of the community are called on as 'Believers', no less than 16 times throughout this sura so as to cement their bond around a defining *imān* (Sincere Faith). Inasmuch as the many laws in *al-Nisā'* were meant to announce the birth of a new community, the set of laws detailed in *al-Mā'idah* are meant as ever abiding regulations for a Believing community which, once and for all, is ready to stand the test of time.

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

﴿1﴾ You who Believe, honour obligations⁽¹⁾. Livestock⁽²⁾ 'consuming' has been made lawful to you, except what is recited to you⁽³⁾. You should not pronounce hunting lawful while you are in a state of sanctity⁽⁴⁾—indeed Allah decrees

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَوفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ
بِهَيْمَةَ الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُنْتَلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ
مُجْلَىٰ الصَّيْدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْزِي

- 1 *al-'Uqūd* (lit. contracts) are the pledges that one has with God and other human beings (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī). They denote solemn undertakings or engagements involving more than one party. This opening command is a strong reminder to the Believers of their binding obligations and is meant to put them in the right frame of mind to receive the commandments that are to come. Belief is a 'contract' between God and the Believers and it has to be honoured.

Alternatively, these first two ayas can also be understood within the context of what is known as '*umrat al-qaḍā'*' (the '*umrah*' of recompense) (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*, 1/59), which took place in the sacrosanct month of Dhū al-Qi'dah on the year that followed the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah (the stipulates of which are probably the 'obligations' alluded to in this aya). As per the treaty, the Prophet (ﷺ) along with the Muslims were turned back from performing '*umrah*', only to be given license to perform it the following year. The Prophet (ﷺ) was accompanied on it by a 2,000 strong contingent of lightly armed well-built men, a fact which was pointed out to the Deniers. The call for self-restraint to curb aggression out of 'resentment' particularly in a sacrosanct month, not harming those who are also performing the rites, whilst probably not Muslim but nevertheless peaceful, as well as the 'garlanded' offerings, a pilgrimage practice that existed before Islam, lead to this reading. Yet it has to be stressed that these two ayas cannot be circumscribed by any historical reference but rather have timeless, general import as is the case with all Qur'anic ayas.

- 2 The Qur'anic term used here is *bahīmat al-an'ām*. The word *bahīmah* refers to creatures which cannot speak and/or cannot be understood, while *al-an'ām* is a collective denomination for such edible grazing animals as camel, cows, goats and sheep (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*).
- 3 That is the forbidden food explained in Aya 3 below. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 4 *Hurum*, in a state of sanctity, means whether you are donning *ihrām* to perform Hajj or '*umrah*', or whether you are within the inviolable precincts, the *ḥaram* area (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

whatever He wants⁽⁵⁾. ⁽²⁾ You who Believe,⁽⁶⁾ do not pronounce lawful 'violation of the sanctity of: Allah's Symbols⁽⁷⁾, the sacrosanct month⁽⁸⁾, gifted offerings⁽⁹⁾, garlanded sacrifices⁽¹⁰⁾, those heading for the Sanctified House who seek favour⁽¹¹⁾ and pleasure from their Lord; 'however' when you come out of *iḥrām* then you 'may' hunt. Do not let resentment

مَا يُرِيدُ ۗ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَحِلُّوا
شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ
وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا ءَأَمِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَتَّبِعُونَ
فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا

- 5 A Believer's duty is to listen and obey whatever God's command is: "It is not for a Believer – man or woman – when Allah and His Messenger decree a matter to have any other choice in the matter. Indeed, whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has clearly gone far astray" (33: 36). The ethos of Sincere Faith, which is lead by the heart, is being evoked here.
- 6 These are some of the obligations of the Believers towards God and man.
- 7 *Sha'ā'ir* (lit. symbols) is the plural of *sha'īrah*, which denotes everything that God made as a sign for His worship. Particularly, they also mean the rites and duties of Hajj (cf. al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). The command here warns against the violation of God's laws and any irreverence of Divinely ordained rites, including those of Hajj (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 8 *al-Shahr al-ḥarām* is any of the four sacrosanct months (*Dhū al-Qi'dah*, *Dhū al-Hijjah*, *al-Muḥarram* and *Rajab*, cf. al-Bukhārī: 4662, Muslim: 1679): "Indeed, the number of months ordained by Allah is twelve—in Allah's Record since the day He created the Heavens and the Earth—of which four are sacrosanct. That is the Right Way. So do not wrong one another during these months" (9: 36). The command here is not to start a fight, nor to transgress and commit sinful deeds during these months (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 9 *al-Hady*, lit. sacrificial animals gifted to God. The term is limited to those animals intended for slaughter during Hajj or 'umrah.
- 10 *al-Qalā'id* are *hady* (gifted offerings) which are collared around the neck. Garlands of bark, taken from the trees of the inviolable precinct of Makkah, (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*) were put around the necks of unaccompanied offerings: hence, they were safe to roam and graze freely (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*).
- 11 *Faql* here means gains from lawful trade. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

for the folk who had turned you away from the Sanctified Mosque tempt you into aggression and band together in sincere piety⁽¹²⁾ and Mindfulness, but do not band together unjustly and out of aggression and Be Mindful of Allah—indeed Allah is severe in Punishment.

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ اَنْ صَدُّوْكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ اَنْ تَعْتَدُوْا وَتَعَاوَنُوْا عَلٰى الْبِرِّ وَالْتَقَوْا ۗ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوْا عَلٰى الْاِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوٰنِ ۗ وَاَتَقُوا اللّٰهَ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢﴾

﴿3﴾ (13)Forbidden for you is carrion⁽¹⁴⁾, 'spilled' blood⁽¹⁵⁾, the flesh of swine, what was offered 'as sacrifice' to others besides Allah⁽¹⁶⁾,

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ اَلْمَيْتَةُ وَالدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيْرِ وَمَا اَهْلٌ بِغَيْرِ اللّٰهِ بِهِ ؕ

12 Cf. note on Aya 3: 92.

13 What follows are the types of forbidden livestock which may not be taken as food; the exception mentioned in Aya 1 above (cf. al-Rāzī). This aya can be understood in light of this: "O Believers, eat of the good things which We provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if you indeed worship Him 'alone'. *Indeed He 'Allah' made unlawful for you carrion, blood, swine flesh, and what was intended 'as sacrifice' for others than Allah; 'yet' whoever is forced 'by necessity' - neither transgressing nor going to excess - he is not guilty of sin—certainly Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (2: 172-173).

14 *al-Maytah* (lit. the 'meat of' dead 'animals'). The ruling here does not include dead sea creatures consumed as food. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ), when asked about performing *wuḍū'* from sea water, replied: "Its water is purifying '*tahūr*' and its dead '*maytah*' is lawful" (Mālik: 45, Abū Dāwūd: 83, al-Tirmidhī: 69).

15 What is unlawful is running blood but not the blood captured in vessels after slaughter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīfī): "Say 'Muhammad': "I do not find in what has been revealed to me anything forbidden to eat except carrion, running blood, swine's flesh - which is impure - or a sinful offering in the name of any other than Allah. But if someone is compelled by necessity - neither driven by desire nor exceeding immediate need - then surely your Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (6: 145). This aya was revealed prior to the more detailed 5:3 here wherein God 'perfected' the religion for Believers.

16 *Uhilla li-ghayr Allāh-i bih-i* is any sacrificial offering over which any name other than Allah's has been invoked (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

the strangled⁽¹⁷⁾, the battered, the fallen, the rammed, what is mangled by beasts of prey – except those ‘of these’ that you slaughter ‘before their dying’⁽¹⁸⁾ – what is slaughtered at the altars of idols, and that you allot shares ‘of meat’ by drawing lots⁽¹⁹⁾; ‘all of’ that is a serious contravention⁽²⁰⁾. Today⁽²¹⁾ the Deniers have despaired

وَالْمُنْخَفَقَةَ وَالْمَوْفُوذَةَ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةَ وَالنَّطِيحَةَ
وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبْعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ
عَلَى النَّصَبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَمِ ذَٰلِكُمْ
فَسَقَّ الْيَوْمَ يَاسِيسٌ

- 17 The following five categories of animals are unlawful to eat because they expired for specific reasons: *al-munkhaniqah* is the one that perishes because of insufficient oxygen intake, either as a result of strangulation or suffocation; *al-mawqūdḥah* is killed by hitting with a heavy, blunt object; *al-mutaraddiyah* is the one that falls to death from an elevated place; *al-naṭīḥah* is the one that perishes because of ramming and/or butting; *mā akala al-sab'* is that which meets death as a result of being bitten by a carnivore (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'ādī).
- 18 This exception applies specifically to animals which meet death for certain reasons; should one catch it before it gasps its last breath and one runs the blade through its neck and spills its blood while there is still life in it (*dhakāh shar'īyyah*), then it is lawful to eat (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'ādī).
- 19 This was an Arab habit before Islam. It is called *al-istiḡṣām bi al-azlām* (lit. divining by casting lots), whereby they had three lots (flat marked pieces of wood) dedicated for divinations. On each there was written either: “My Lord commanded me”, “My Lord forbade me”, or nothing at all. A person would abide by what the lot told him, but if he drew the empty one, he recast again until he drew either one of the other two (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'ādī). Essentially here, they are forbidden to eat meat that has been divided by casting lots or other means of fallacious divination (cf. al-Jazā'irī).
- 20 *Fisq* is serious infringement of God's laws. The word is derived from the imagery of a palm date coming out of its protective covering (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Rebellious against God's ordained laws exposes one in the same way as an uncovered palm date is exposed to the elements.
- 21 The day spoken of here is that of 'Arafah during the Prophet's (ﷺ) Farewell Pilgrimage (*hajjat al-wadā'*) in the tenth year of Hijrah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'ādī) after the great conquest of Makkah and its fall to the

of 'undermining' your religion, so fear them not but fear Me⁽²²⁾; today I have perfected your religion for you⁽²³⁾, finalized My Favour on you and I approve Islam as a religion for you⁽²⁴⁾. 'But' Whoever is forced by wasting hunger 'to eat of what is forbidden', not swayed by sin⁽²⁵⁾, then Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَحْشَوْهُمْ
وَأَخْشَوْنَ الْيَوْمَ أَمْكَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ
عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا
فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَحْمَصَةٍ غَيْرَ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

Believers, and which is known as the greatest conquest (*al-fath al-a'zam*). Seeing the huge numbers of Believers around the Prophet (ﷺ) on that day, their strength and the solidity of their faith, the Deniers realized, to their great dismay, that Islam as a religion was a reality they had to live with and that it would not be unravelled given the perfection of its laws.

- 22 Now that Believers have seen how strong they are, at last having the upper hand against their enemy, they are told to turn a new page in their history. They are to have no fear in applying the laws of God or in staunchly adhering to them as they were revealed without the slightest alteration.
- 23 That is by making them perform the final pillar of Islam, Hajj, which they were unable to perform before (cf. Ibn Rajab, *Laṭā'if al-Ma'ārif*, p. 279; Ibn 'Āshūr). Now that the community was ready to receive these rulings, which were either incomplete or not in place before, God has finalized, with full explanation, their religion.
- 24 This is the crowning statement of the whole sura. Ṭāriq Ibn Shihāb (رضي الله عنه) said: "A Jewish man went to 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) and said: "Leader of Believers, there is an aya in your Book which you recite, had it been revealed to us Jews, we would have dedicated the day on which it was revealed for festivities". 'Umar replied: "Which aya?" The Jew said: "... today I have perfected your religion for you, finalized My Favour on you and I approve Islam as a religion for you". 'Umar then said: "Indeed I know the day on which it was revealed and the place in which it was revealed. It came down to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in 'Arafāt on a Friday" (al-Bukhārī: 45, Muslim: 2017).
- 25 The forbidden categories stated above can be consumed in such a scenario whereby a person is compelled by overbearing necessity. He should not be irreverent or careless of the matter, and should only eat the necessary amount to repel danger to life (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿4﴾ (26) They 'the Believers' ask you 'Muhammad' about what is lawful for them 'to eat'; say: "Lawful for you are 'all' good provisions⁽²⁷⁾, and what 'is caught by' the hunting animals⁽²⁸⁾ that you trained according to what Allah taught you; then eat of what they catch for you⁽²⁹⁾ and mention Allah's Name over it; and be Mindful of Allah—Indeed Allah is swift in reckoning". ﴿5﴾ Today 'all' good provisions are made lawful for you; and the food of the People of the Book is lawful for you⁽³⁰⁾, and your food is lawful for them⁽³¹⁾.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا أَحَلَّ لَهُمْ قُلْ أَحَلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ
وَمَا عَلَّمْتُمْ مِنَ الْحَوَائِجِ مُكَلِّبِينَ تَعْلَمُونَ هُنَّ
مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ اللَّهُ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا أَمْسَكَنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ
الْحِسَابِ ﴿٥﴾ الْيَوْمَ أَحَلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَطَعَامُ
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَلَلٌ لَكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حَلَلٌ لَهُمْ

- 26 Since what is forbidden as food is explained in the previous passage, it is only appropriate to explain what is lawful in answer to the Believers' query. (al-Shawkānī)
- 27 *al-Ṭayyibāt* is all food which is useful and enjoyable causing no harm to the body or the intellect. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 28 *al-Jawāriḥ* (plural of *jāriḥa*) are animals and birds of prey such as dogs and falcons. The word originates from *ijtirah* which means to acquire something. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)
- 29 'Adiyy Ibn Ḥātim al-Ṭā'iyy (ؓ) said he said to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "Messenger of Allah, I set my dog on a prey and mention Allah's Name (*tasmiyah*)". He replied: "When you set your dog and mention Allah's Name and he catches, kills and eats, then do not eat of the prey because he caught it for himself". Then I said: "Sometimes I set my dog on a prey and he gets joined by another dog 'which is not mine' and I do not know which one of them caught it". He answered: "Then do not eat it because you mentioned Allah's Name for your dog not the other". (al-Bukhārī: 5486, Muslim: 1929)
- 30 The People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb* / *alladhīna ūtū-l-kitāb*) of all nations are closer to and share a degree of commonality with the Believers because they are originally monotheistic, unlike the outright Associators, which makes eating their food and marrying their women lawful (Riḍā). This relationship is to be maintained, not severed.
- 31 Believers can feed them from their food. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

Chaste Believing women and chaste women of those who were given the Book before you 'are lawful to you' given that you hand over their dues to them, joining 'together with them' under 'holy' matrimony not seeking open love⁽³²⁾ or secret lovers⁽³³⁾. Whoever rejects Belief then his deeds have come to naught and in the Hereafter he shall be one of the losers.

وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْنَهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسْفِحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦﴾

﴿6﴾⁽³⁴⁾ You who Believe, when you rise up for Prayer wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe your heads, and 'wash' your feet up to the ankles. If you are in a state of ceremonial impurity⁽³⁵⁾ then purify yourselves⁽³⁶⁾; 'but' if you are ill⁽³⁷⁾, travelling, or any of you comes from a low place⁽³⁸⁾ 'to relieve himself',

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ

32 *Ghayr musāfiḥīn* not acting as wanton fornicators who know no limits. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Baghawī, al-Sa'dī)

33 *Muttakhidhī akhdān* not taking them to be mistresses and paramours with whom you lie down in secret. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Baghawī, al-Sa'dī)

34 All the rulings mentioned in this sura are part of the perfection of Islam.

35 *Janābah* (ceremonial impurity) is that state which follows after having sexual intercourse or discharge of sperm because of arousal.

36 *Fa-ṭṭahharū* means to wash yourselves. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

37 An illness which hinders people from using water. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

38 *al-Ghā'it* originally means a depression in the land or ground lower than the surrounding area. Arabs of the time when needing to relieve themselves by urinating or excreting used to seek a low place in order to be hidden from the eyes of others. Later, the meaning was metonymically extended to mean the act of relieving one's self. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*)

or touched women³⁹) and you could not find water then seek clean earth, wiping with it your faces and your hands⁴⁰; Allah wants not to burden you, but He wants to purify⁴¹) you and perfect His favour on you⁴²) that you may be thankful.

﴿7﴾ (43) And remember Allah's favour⁴⁴) on you and the pledge⁴⁵) by which He bound you when you said: "We listen and we obey"—be Mindful of Allah, indeed Allah knows best what the chests hide.

أَوَلَمْ تَسْتَمِئْ لِلنِّسَاءِ فَلَمَّا تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا
صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ
مِنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ
وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ
عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦﴾

وَأذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمِيثَاقَهُ
الَّذِي وَاتَّقُمْ بِهِ إِذْ قُلْتُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٧﴾

- 39 This could figuratively mean having sexual contact with them or literally merely touching them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Jurists hold different opinions on this, but the great Companion exegete, known as the interpreter of the Qur'an, Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) opines that it is a euphemism for sexual intercourse (cf. Ibn al-'Arabī, *Ahkām al-Qur'an*, Ibn Abū Ḥātim, Jaṣṣāṣ, *Ahkām al-Qur'an*).
- 40 That is perform the act of dry ablution or *tayammum*.
- 41 Both bodily and spiritually. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 42 By making His laws clear and easy. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 43 This passage which strongly reminds the Believers of their binding pledge with God, including that of respecting His ordained laws, is central to the Believing community. The coming passages which talk about the 'pledges' God had with earlier nations and how they reneged on them are illustrative examples that are meant to drive the message home (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 44 Remembering God's countless favours and our sincere gratitude to Him make it easier for those of Sincere Faith to follow His commands (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn).
- 45 To Believe in His Messenger (ﷺ) follow and support him, uphold His religion and deliver the Message to other people (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). 'Ubādah Ibn al-Ṣāmit (رضي الله عنه) said: "We swore an oath of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that we should listen and obey under all circumstances whether we liked it or not, that we would not defy those in charge of us, and that we would stand for what is right wherever we might be and never fear blame to carry out what Allah commanded" (al-Bukhārī: 7199, Muslim: 1840).

﴿8﴾ You who Believe, be firmly upright⁽⁴⁶⁾ for Allah, witnesses of justice, and do not let your resentment for 'some' people hold you back from being just; be just, that is closer to Mindfulness. Be Mindful of Allah—Allah is indeed Knowledgeable of what you do.

﴿9﴾ Allah has promised those who 'truly' Believe and do good deeds forgiveness and a great reward.

﴿10﴾ As for those who Deny and reject our Signs, then these are the companions of the Raging Fire⁽⁴⁷⁾.

﴿11﴾ You who Believe remember Allah's favour on you, when some people intended to raise their hands against you and He held their hands back from 'harming' you and be Mindful of Allah—on Allah let the Believers rely.

﴿12﴾ Indeed Allah had taken the pledge of the Children of Israel and We appointed twelve chieftains⁽⁴⁸⁾ from among them. 'Then' Allah⁽⁴⁹⁾ said: "I am with you!

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ
شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ
قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ ءَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾
وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ
الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٠﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَذْكُرُوا
نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ ءَانٍ يَبْسُطُوا
إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَعَلَىٰ اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾

* وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ
وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا
وَقَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ

46 *Qawwāmūn li Allāh* is to be ardent upholders of God's rights, not seeking fame or worldly gain. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

47 *al-Jahīm* (lit. raging fire) is Hellfire.

48 *Naqīb* is the head of a clan. They were charged with taking the oaths of those for whom they were responsible such that they would listen to and obey God's commandments. They were also required to guide and encourage Believers to adhere to these commandments. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

49 The shift from the first person to the third person pronoun, appending God's Most High Name, Allah, to the statement of the pledge that follows in its exact wording is meant to underline the solemnity of its purport and the gravity of its dishonoring

If you keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms, Believe in My Messengers and strongly support them⁽⁵⁰⁾, and loan Allah a comely loan⁽⁵¹⁾, I shall atone you of your sins and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow. Whoever of you Denies after this, then he has lost the right path”.⁽¹³⁾ Because of their renegeing on their pledge We Damned them and caused their hearts to harden⁽⁵²⁾; they distort discourse from its ‘proper’ position⁽⁵³⁾ and forgot a portion of what they were reminded⁽⁵⁴⁾.

لَيْتَ أَقَمْتُمْ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَيْتُمُ الزَّكَاةَ
وَأَمَنْتُمْ بِرُسُلِي وَعَزَّرْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَقْرَضْتُمْ
اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْكُمْ
سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ
مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿١٣﴾
فِيمَا نَقَضْتُمْ بَيْتَاقَهُمْ لَعْنَاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا
قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ
مَوَاضِعِهِ ۚ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ ۗ

50 ‘Azzara is to strongly support them against their enemies. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

51 *al-Qarḍ al-ḥasan* is spending in the cause of God in expectation of nothing but His reward (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “*Would there be one who loans Allah a comely loan, so that Allah would multiply it for him manifold—Allah tightens and loosens, and unto Him you shall return*” (2: 245).

52 *Qulūbuhum qāsiyah* means that they were made hard-hearted and heedless to admonition. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

53 *Yuharrifūna al-kalima ‘an mawāḍi’ih*; they distort the purport of God’s revealed words (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). The description employed here of how the Jews distorted the purport of their Scriptures is a very delicate one. *Yuharrifu* means to slant, to skew and to steer something away from its direction. Moreover, al-Rāzī makes a distinction between *yuharrifūna al-kalima ‘an mawāḍi’ih* (distort discourse from its ‘proper’ position) as found in this aya and *yuharrifūna al-kalima min ba’di mawāḍi’ih* (distort discourse from its ‘fully-known proper’ position) as found in Aya 41 below. al-Rāzī holds it that the first means they distorted the purport and misinterpreted the Words of God; whereas the second means that they both distorted the Words of God and physically removed them from their Scriptures.

The Qur’an details some examples of forms through which this ‘distortion’ takes shape.

54 God’s revelation to them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

You 'Muhammad' will always unearth a treacherous act of theirs, except few of them. So forgive and pardon them—indeed Allah loves the good doers⁽⁵⁵⁾.
 ﴿14﴾ And from those who declare themselves Christians⁽⁵⁶⁾ We had taken their pledge but they forgot a portion of what they were reminded; then We incited enmity and hatred among them until the Day of Judgement⁽⁵⁷⁾—indeed Allah will 'come' to tell them of what they had been crafting.

﴿15﴾ People of the Book, here is Our Messenger coming to you to reveal⁽⁵⁸⁾ to you much of what you used to hide of the Book and overlooks much⁽⁵⁹⁾—indeed there has come to you a Light from Allah and a clarifying Book⁽⁶⁰⁾;
 ﴿16﴾ by it Allah guides those who follow His Pleasure to the path of peace⁽⁶¹⁾ and delivers them

وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِبَةٍ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
 مِنْهُمْ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاصْفَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
 يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا
 إِنَّا نَصْرِي أَخذْنَا مِيثَاقَهُمْ فَنَسُوا حَظًّا
 مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ
 وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَسَوْفَ
 يُنَبِّئُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا
 يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ
 تُخْفُونَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَعُوذُونَ بِكثِيرٍ
 قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ
 مُبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾ يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ
 رِضْوَانَهُ وَسُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُمُ

55 *al-Muhsinīn* are those who overlook any harm done to them and pardon those who injured them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

56 *Naṣārā* in a sense means those who stick up for the Truth (*yaṣūrūna al-ḥaqq*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). The nomenclature is highlighted here to underline the contradiction between their words and deeds (al-Baghawī).

57 The ever-raging conflict and sectarian violence among Christians is God inflicted.

58 *Yubayyinu* (lit. to explain).

59 That is those segments of earlier scriptures which are of no particular use anymore. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

60 The Qur'an. (Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

61 *Subul al-salām* are the laws of Islam which lead those who Believe to deliverance and peace in this life and the Hereafter until they are safely admitted into Paradise, the Home of Peace (*Dār al-Salām*: cf. 10: 25). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī)

from utter darkness into light with His permission; He guides them to a Straight Path⁽⁶²⁾.

﴿17﴾⁽⁶³⁾ Deniers indeed are those who say: “Allah is the Messiah, son of Maryam”. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Who had it in his power to have withheld Allah from annihilating the Messiah son of Maryam and his mother, and ‘for that matter’ all that exists on Earth! To Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth and all there is between them, He creates whatever He wills—Allah is indeed Able over everything. ﴿18﴾ The Jews and Christians said: “We are the children of Allah and His beloved”. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Why then would He Punish you for your sins?” Nay, but you are indeed humans like the rest of them that He created; He forgives whomever He wills and Punishes whomever He wills—

مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ
وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٧﴾
لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ
الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ
مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحَ
ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
جَمِيعًا وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى
نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبُّونَهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ
بِذُنُوبِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ
يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

62 This aya is central for understanding much of what is to come. The Qur'an being a Light, a Clarifying Book and the last revealed Scripture to humanity will set about detailing laws which lead people to the path of peace and delivers them from utter darkness into light. In the process it 'reveals' some laws found in earlier Scriptures, which were either lost or distorted beyond recognition, and overlooks many such other laws that were abrogated by those of Islam. This is meant to prove to people, the People of the Book in particular, the Truthfulness of Islam and to guide them via its Messenger (ﷺ) to God's Pleasure, the path of peace and to the Straight Path.

63 The self-assuring claims of the People of the Book are debunked in this passage. This brings them back to reality with a hard-hitting logic whereby they are made to see sense, purify their Faith and join the ranks of Believers.

to Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth and all there is between them, and to Him will be the 'final' Return. ^{﴿19﴾} People of the Book, here is Our Messenger coming to you after a long interval has lapsed⁶⁴ since the last Messenger, lest you say: "There never came to us a harbinger of good news nor any warner!" There has come to you 'now' a harbinger of good news and a warner—Allah is Able over everything.

﴿20﴾ ⁶⁵ Mention Muhammad' When Moses said to his people: "My people, remember Allah's favour on you when He made amongst you Prophets and kings⁶⁶

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
وَأَيُّهُ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٩﴾ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ
رَسُولُنَا يَبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَى فِتْنَةٍ مِّنَ الرَّسُولِ أَن
تَقُولُوا مَا جَاءَنَا مِن بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ
بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَتَقَوَّمُوا أَدْرُؤُوا نِعْمَةَ
اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلْ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا

64 The first and only Prophet of God that was sent to humanity after Jesus (ﷺ) was Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. al-Bukhārī: 3442, Muslim: 2365). 'Iyād Ibn Ḥimār al-Mujāshī'ī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said in one of his sermons: "Indeed my Lord has commanded me to tell you something which you do not know about which He told me today. 'Allah, glory be His said: '... 'I created all My servants rightly-oriented 'to the true religion', then the devils came and swerved them away from their religion; they made unlawful for them what I made lawful and bade them to Associate with Me that for which I made no authority'. 'The Messenger (ﷺ) continued' "Then Allah looked at the dwellers of Earth and He held them all in disfavour, Arabs and non-Arabs, except some remaining few of the People of the Book and He said: 'I sent you to try you and try by you and I sent down to you a Book that will not be washed with water; you read it awake and asleep...'" (Muslim: 2865).

65 The following passage intertextually follows the 'mentions' series found in *al-Baqarah* (e.g. 2:40-43; 87-96) which list the recurrent flouting of the Israelites of their pledge with God. This one here tells of how they reneged on their pledge to 'strongly support' the Messenger of God found in Aya 5:12 above.

66 *Mulūk* (lit. kings) could have a number of meanings here. Among these are: 1) they were made masters served on by others (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī);

and He gave you that which He had not given any humans "besides you". ²¹ "My people, enter the sacred land⁽⁶⁷⁾ that Allah has decreed for you and do not turn back on your heels for then you will be the losers." ²² They said: "Moses, there are mighty people in it. We will not enter it until they come out of it and only then shall we enter". ²³ Two 'Allah-' fearing men – whom Allah favoured⁽⁶⁸⁾ – said: "Enter you the gate upon them! Shall you 'only' enter it, you will surely have the upper hand. Put your trust in Allah if only you are 'truly' Believers". ²⁴ They said: "Moses, we shall not enter it as long as they are in it. Go then you and your Lord and fight, we are staying put here". ²⁵ He said: "My Lord, surely I am master of none except myself and my brother. Set us then apart from the transgressing people".

وَأَتاكم مآلهم يُؤت أحداً من العالمين ﴿٢٠﴾
يَقوموا أَدْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي
كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْتدُّوا عَلَىٰ آدْبَارِكُمْ
فَتَقْبَلُوا خِيبَةً ﴿٢١﴾ قَالُوا يَمْوَسَىٰ إِنَّ
فِيهَا قَوْمًا جَبَّارِينَ وَإِنَّا لَنَنَدْخُلُهَا حَتَّىٰ
يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِن يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِنَّا
أَدْخُلُون ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَ رَجُلَانِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ
يَخَافُونَ أَعْمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا
أَدْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْبَابَ فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوهُ
فَأَلْكُمُ عَلَيْهِمُ وَعَلَىٰ اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِن
كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالُوا يَمْوَسَىٰ إِنَّا
لَنَنَدْخُلُهَا أَبَدًا مَا دَامُوا فِيهَا فَاذْهَبْ
أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَدِيتَ لَنَا هُنَا قَاعِدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾
قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَأَخِي فَافْرُقْ
بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

2) some were really made as sovereigns who ruled over people (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah); 3) they were granted their freedom, owning their own destiny, free from slavery to other people (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī). One has to keep in mind that this interaction between Moses (ﷺ) and his people came immediately after they were delivered by God from the tyranny of Pharaoh and his people. This fact is reflected in their reaction to Moses' admonition, as will be discussed shortly.

67 *al-Arḍ al-muqaddasah* is Jerusalem according to Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī and al-Shinqīṭī in *al-Adhb al-Namīr* (1/111).

68 God favoured these two individuals by guiding them to obedience and fear of Him. Thus, they were able to stand up for the Truth (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿26﴾ He 'Allah' said: "It is then forbidden for them for forty years⁽⁶⁹⁾. They shall be lost 'wandering' in the land. Be grieved⁽⁷⁰⁾ not for the transgressing people".

قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً يَتِيهُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

﴿27﴾ Recite for them 'Muhammad' the notable news of the two sons of Adam⁽⁷¹⁾

وَأْتَلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ ابْنَيْ آدَمَ

- 69 God, the Most Wise, decreed that they should be lost in the land for a period of 40 years as punishment for their shaky, wavering Faith. This is the generation of Israelites that accompanied Moses (ﷺ) in their exodus from Egypt, where they were subjected to the 'worst of suffering' (*sū' al-'adhāb*: 2: 49) so much so that they lost their dignity and were accustomed to humiliation and cowardice. The result of these decades of humiliation and suffering was their stance, as related in this passage, that when asked to only muster up whatever courage they had left and make a push for the city's gate thereby giving them victory, they had nothing left to do even that much. Their attitude is all the more striking in light of the fact that they had very recently seen, and lived through, the most norm-defying of miracles (the splitting of the sea being the most obvious) and were in the assuring company of the great Prophet who was decisively instrumental in their deliverance. Such a generation would never carry out God's command and, therefore, they had to be replaced with a new and better one that was not at home with servitude. This new generation had to be raised in the wild, strong and free, away from oppression and lack of self dignity (cf. al-Sa'dī as well).
- 70 Naturally, the Messenger of God (ﷺ), who was sent only as a "mercy to all-beings" (21: 107), would be saddened by those who stubbornly rebuffed his repeated calls, being aware of the awfully grim fate that awaited them. Knowing how hard this came down on His Messenger (ﷺ), God repeatedly reminded him of not falling prey to sadness on account of their ardent Denial.
- 71 This story (believed to be that of Cain and Abel, or Qābīl and Habīl (cf. Ibn Kathīr and al-Shinqīṭī)) encapsulates the all too familiar human struggle between good and evil. While numerous lessons can be drawn from this story, it all boils down to the fact that when a person is so weak as not be able to prevail over their own self then this only leads to wickedness, not the least of which is committing murder, and in the end to regret and sorrow. The moral of the story can indeed be expanded beyond the singular into the collective and remains ever relevant.

truthfully⁽⁷²⁾ when they each made out an offering, it was accepted from one but not the other. He 'the latter' said: "I shall willingly kill you!" He 'the former' replied: "Indeed Allah accepts only from the Mindful".^{﴿28﴾} "If you raise your hand to kill me, I shall not raise my hand to kill you; I fear Allah, the Lord of all-beings."^{﴿29﴾} "I want you to be burdened with my sin⁽⁷³⁾ and your sin, then you become one of companions of the Fire; that is the 'just' requital of the wrongdoers."^{﴿30﴾} His 'evil whispering' self lured him into killing his brother; he killed him and he became one of the losers⁽⁷⁴⁾.^{﴿31﴾} Then Allah sent a raven scratching the ground to show him how to hide his brother's 'naked' corpse⁽⁷⁵⁾. He then said: "Woe is me! Was I so unable as to not be like this raven and hide my brother's 'naked' corpse!" He only then became 'deeply' remorseful.

بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقْبِلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا
وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ
قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ لَئِن
بَسَطَ إِلَٰهَ يَدِكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ
يَدِيَ إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ تَبْوَأَيْتُمْنِي وَأَنتُمْ
فَتَكُونَ مِنَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ
أَخِيهِ فَتَتَلَّهُ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾
فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهُ
كَيْفَ يُوَارِي سَوْءَ أَخِيهِ قَالَ يُوَابِلِحِي
أَعَجَزْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَذَا الْغُرَابِ
فَأُوَارِي سَوْءَ أَخِي فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

72 *Bi al-ḥaqq* exactly as it happened without addition, deletion or alteration. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

73 The grave sin of killing. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*)

74 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "No soul ever gets killed unjustifiably, unless the early son of Adam shoulders some of the burden of its blood, for he was the first human to spill blood 'on Earth'". (al-Bukhārī: 3335, Muslim: 1677)

75 It is said that this raven was rummaging through the ground to bury another of its kind. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa'dī)

﴿32﴾⁽⁷⁶⁾ For this reason We decreed for the Children of Israel that whoever kills a person – unless for killing another or spreading corruption in the land – it shall be as if he killed all people and whoever saves a life then it is as if he gave life to all people. Indeed our Messengers came to them with clear evidences, and then many of them still committed excesses⁽⁷⁷⁾ in the land.

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّا كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

76 Given the millennia that separate this episode of Adam's two direct descendants and the setting down of Jewish laws, what, then, is the coherence between Ayas 31 and 32? Specifically, how was the story of Cain and Abel causative to the law passed to the Children of Israel? The relevance of this aya is better grasped with reference to Aya 15 above: "People of the Book, here is Our Messenger coming to you to reveal to you much of what you used to hide and overlooks much—indeed there has come to you a Light and a clarifying Book". A similar wording of this aya (5: 32; with the notable exception that the Qur'an talks about all humans and not just Israelites,) is found in the Talmud (particularly in the Mishnah which is known as the Oral Law) in a comment on Genesis 4:10 when it is said that God spoke admonishingly to Cain for killing his brother. The exact statement is: "Therefore but a single person was created in the world, to teach that if any man has caused a single life to perish from Israel, he is deemed by Scripture as if he had caused a whole world to perish; and anyone who saves a single soul from Israel, he is deemed by Scripture as if he had saved a whole world" (Mishnah, Sanhedrin, 4:5; emphasis added). Clearly what is being brought to the fore here, which brings out the connection between the story of Cain and Abel and the Children of Israel, is textual *par excellence*. They 'committed excesses' in shedding blood and committing sins and thus this legal stipulation of theirs, which they willingly overlooked or distorted from its proper position, was 'revealed' in the Qur'an, which is 'a Light and a Clarifying Book'.

One other point that needs to be clarified here and in light of the above is the applicability of this law to Muslims. The fact that this verse was 'revealed' as an aya of the Qur'an and not 'overlooked' for being irrelevant, given the overruling nature of the Islamic law, God's last revealed canon, underlines its universal validity. The stern punishment in the next aya (5: 33) follows from the grave nature of murder which is highlighted in this aya.

77 *Musrifūn* (lit. wasteful) means unreservedly committing gravely vile deeds. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿33﴾ (78) Indeed the 'only just' recompense for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and walk the land spreading corruption is that they should be relentlessly⁽⁷⁹⁾ killed, crucified⁽⁸⁰⁾, their hands and feet be cut off on alternate sides⁽⁸¹⁾ or they should be exiled from the land⁽⁸²⁾. That is disgrace for them in the worldly life, and in the Hereafter theirs is a great Punishment.

إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُجَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خِلْفٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

78 This passage, which legalizes and regulates judicious killing, deals especially with those who disrupt peace in society and willingly and wastefully destroy the lives and livelihoods of others. It is well known that this aya details the penal code for such acts as highway robbery and banditry (cf. al-Sa'dī), known in Islamic law as *ḥadd al-ḥirābah* (lit. the penal code of waging war). Such heinous violations of God's laws and the rights of others are taken as waging war against God and His Messenger, because they brazenly breach religious teachings.

The particle *aw* (or) denotes that those in charge of the rule of law may choose from these detailed forms of punishment whatever they deem befitting, given the seriousness of the crime and the circumstances surrounding it, to make an example of the perpetrators so that no one will think of following their example (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī).

79 This word, 'relentlessly', is used to compensate for the hyperbolic form (*ṣiḡhat al-mubālagħah*) in which these types of punishment come, i.e. *yūqattalū* (killed), *yūṣallabū* (crucified), *tuqattā'a* (cut off). The form employed here underlines the sternness with which these punishments are to be carried out (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

80 *Yūṣallabū* means crucified either prior to their killing or after their killing. It is a corrective measure that displays them as examples for others. (Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī)

81 *Min khilāf* that is the culprit's right hand along with his left foot or vice versa; but not two limbs on the same side. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Uthaymīn)

82 *Yunfaw min al-arḍ* is to be expelled from his country of residence to another (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī); or expelled from the country where he committed his crime (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurtubī, Ibn 'Uthaymīn); or that he be incarcerated (cf. al-Ṭabarī).

﴿34﴾ Except those who repent before you overpower them, then know that Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

﴿35﴾ ⁽⁸³⁾You who Believe, be Mindful of Allah, seek the means 'to be nearer' to Him⁽⁸⁴⁾ and strive in His path, that you may be successful. ﴿36﴾ Indeed those who Deny if they have in their possession all that the Earth holds and double the measure, so that they would ransom themselves with it, it will not be accepted from them—theirs is a painful Punishment⁽⁸⁵⁾. ﴿37﴾ They want to come out of the Fire and never will they ever come out of it—theirs is an ever-lasting Punishment.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا
إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لَوْ أَنَّ لَهُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ
مَعَهُ لَيَفْتَدُوا بِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ
الْقِيَامَةِ مَا تَقْبَلُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾
يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُخْرَجُوا مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا هُمْ
بِخَارِجِينَ مِنْهَا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٣٧﴾

83 This passage is parenthetical, separating the two thematically related passages that precede and follow it and whereby both deal with the severe punishment incumbent on aggression against others (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). To be encouraged to carry out these penalties, hard as they, Believers have to be reminded of the wider issues involved: being Mindful of God and seeking His Pleasure through submission to His will, as well as the severe Punishment that God promises the Deniers who rebel against His will. Should perpetrators sincerely repent, however, and make amends, they are to be pardoned (cf. *al-Tafsir al-Muyassar*): thus, the judicious employment of God's Most Elevated Attributes – “All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” – in both instances.

84 *Ibtaghū ilayhi al-wasīlah* is to do one's absolute best and seek out the ways and means to be closer to Godliness; by doing what pleases God Almighty. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

85 “Those who Deny and die as Deniers, ‘as much as’ Earth’s fill of gold will not be accepted from them, even if they were to ransom themselves with it—for those is a painful Punishment and they will have no helpers.” (3: 91; 13:18 and 39:47)

﴿38﴾ The male thief and the female thief⁽⁸⁶⁾ cut off their hands in retribution for what they earned; a 'deterrent' chastisement⁽⁸⁷⁾ from Allah—Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿39﴾ Whoever repents after his wrongdoing and makes amends then Allah relents towards him—indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿40﴾ Did you⁽⁸⁸⁾ not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth, He Punishes whoever He wills and forgives whoever He wills—Allah is verily Able over everything.

﴿41﴾ ⁽⁸⁹⁾O Messenger do not be

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا
جَزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَمَن تَابَ مِن بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ
وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ
مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُعَذِّبُ مَن
يَشَاءُ وَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ *

- 86 That the female thief (*al-sāriqah*) is specifically mentioned here and is meant to leave no doubt in the minds of the receivers that the ruling applies to both sexes without discrimination. It comes from the fact that the Arabs at the time of revelation shunned women and deliberately excluded them from such grave documents of legalization and did not strictly apply their penal codes to them (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 87 *Nakāl* is penalization which is set as an example for others. Originally the word *nakala* means to prevent; it is called *nakāl* because it deters both the one who is punished from carrying out the crime at a subsequent time as also others from doing it. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*)
- 88 The addressee here is singular. It could mean the Prophet (ﷺ) and by the same token anyone who is legally competent (*mukallaf*) or the person who thinks lightly of theft and other such felonies (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Qurṭubī, al-Baghawī).
- 89 This passage and the few following ones deal with the dialectical relationship that holds between the Qur'an, the final, overruling Book of God and the earlier ones. It establishes that those who were given the Book before Islam are better off either following the doctrines of the Qur'an or reinstating their own respective Scriptures in their pristine, uncorrupted conditions and devoutly acting and ruling by them. al-Barā' Ibn 'Āzib (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: "The Prophet (ﷺ) passed by a Jew whose face was blackened 'with charcoal' and who had been flogged. Seeing this, the Prophet (ﷺ) invited the Jews and asked them: "Is this the penalty of the adulterer that

grieved by those who rush forth to Denial of those who said “We Believe” ‘only’ with their tongues, while their hearts Believe not; and among the Jews are those who eagerly listen to falsities and readily lend their ears to other people who did not come to you⁹⁰, they distort discourse from

لَا يَحْزَنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا سَمَّعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ سَمَّعُونَ لِقَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتَوْكَ بِحَرْفٍ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ

you find in your Book?” They replied: “Yes”. Then he (ﷺ) summoned a learned man of theirs and said to him: “I ask you by Allah Who sent the Torah down to Moses, is this the penalty of the adulterer that you find in your Book?” He replied: “No! Had you not appealed to me in such a manner I would not have told you. The penalty that we find in our Book is stoning, but it became common in our people of high social standing and then when we caught them we used to release them. However, when we caught the beggarly in the act, we would apply the penalty ‘of stoning’ on them. Then we said let’s convene and agree on a penalty that can be applied on both the notables and the beggarly equally and so we agreed to replace stoning by blackening the face and flogging”. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “O Allah, I shall be the first to restore Your command, when they buried it”. Then he (ﷺ) ordered the adulterer to be stoned. Then Allah sent down: “O Messenger do not be grieved by those who rush forth to Denial... If you are given ‘the like of’ this take it.” They ‘their scholars’ used to say: “Go to Muhammad, and if he orders you to blacken the face and flog, then do it. But if he orders you to stone, then be wary”. Then Allah sent down: “Whoever does not judge by what Allah sent down then those are the Deniers” (5:44); “Whoever does not judge by what Allah sent down then those are the wrongdoers” (5: 45); “Whoever does not judge by what Allah sent down then those are the transgressors” (5:47). All of these were revealed regarding the Deniers” (Muslim: 1700).

90 They attentively heed the words of warning of other conniving men of religion who were so averse that they did not even make the effort to go to the Prophet (ﷺ) to hear what he had to say, in spite of the long period he spent in Madinah (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

The description of the insincere who eagerly and willfully lend their ears to falsities is a prime example of the social concept known as confirmation bias which highlights the tendency to search for, interpret and favour, information that affirms one’s prior beliefs and biases. To highlight how truly biased these people were, the Qur’an repeatedly employs the hyperbolic form (*siġhat al-mubālagħah*) *sammā’ūna* (eagerly listen to) which befittingly expresses the intensity of their aversion to the words of God’s Messenger (ﷺ).

its 'fully-known proper' position. They say: "If you are given this 'judgement' take it, but if you are not given 'the like of' it be on your guard. Whoever Allah wants to trip 'into misguidance' you can do nothing for him against Allah. Those are the ones whom Allah did not want to purify their hearts, theirs is disgrace in the worldly life and theirs in the Hereafter is a great Punishment. ﴿42﴾ They eagerly listen to falsities and wantonly devour illicit earnings⁽⁹¹⁾; if they come to you then either judge between them or deny them 'judgement'⁽⁹²⁾. Should you turn away from them, they will not harm you in the least, 'but' if you judge between them, then judge in fairness⁽⁹³⁾—Allah likes those who are fair 'in judgement'.

مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوَاضِعِهِ يَقُولُونَ إِنْ أُوتِينَا هَذَا فَخَذُوهُ وَإِن لَّمْ تُوْتُوهُ فَاحْذَرُوا وَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئاً أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُطَهِّرْ قُلُوبَهُمْ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾ سَمِعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ أَكْثَرُونَ لِلسُّحْتِ فَإِن جَاءُوكَ فَأَحْكُم بَيْنَهُم فَأَعْرَضْ عَنْهُمْ وَإِن تُعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ فَلَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ شَيْئاً وَإِن حَكَمْتَ فَأَحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

91 *al-Suht* means all the money which is appropriated through illegal and devious means. *Suht* originally means eradication, as 'dirty money' never prospers (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). Those who are bent on legalizing money earned through illegal means will have a vested interest in not listening to the truth about its illegality.

92 The Prophet (ﷺ) had a choice to either pass his verdict in their case or withhold it since he was told by God that they would only carry out what confirms their bias.

93 *al-Qist* is the passing of fair judgement. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Those who pass fair judgement (*al-muqsiṭīn*) are placed on pulpits of light with Allah; on the Right Side of the Most Merciful – and both His Hands are Right Hands. These are the ones who are fair in their judgement and with their household and whatever they are in charge of". (Muslim: 1827)

﴿43﴾ But how would they seek your judgement while they 'already' have the Torah which contains Allah's judgement, and they after that turn their backs 'to it'⁽⁹⁴⁾; nay but these are not Believing.

﴿44﴾ Indeed We have sent down the Torah in which there is guidance and light; by it the Prophets who 'devoutly' submitted, the godly⁽⁹⁵⁾, and the rabbis judge among the Jews because they were entrusted with preserving the Book of Allah and that they were witnesses to it. So do not fear people but fear Me and do not trade my Signs for a pittance⁽⁹⁶⁾—whoever does not judge by what Allah sent down then those are the Deniers.

وَكَيْفَ يُحْكُمْونَا وَعِنْدَهُمُ التَّوْرَةُ فِيهَا حُكْمُ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّونَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَا أُولَئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يُحْكَمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَأَخْشَوْنَ اللَّهَ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

- 94 This further underlines their insincerity; how could Muhammad (ﷺ) (the addressee commencing Aya 41) be hopeful that they would resort to and abide by his code of law when they were irreverent of the very code of law (the Torah) they outwardly and to all appearances subscribed to!
- 95 *al-Rabbāniyyūn* (sing. *rabbānī*) are men of encyclopaedic knowledge both religious and worldly. This includes the wise scholar, the Mindful jurispudent, the reforming teacher and the person who enjoins others to uphold the lesser teachings of religion as much as the major ones (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).
- 96 Those who were entrusted with preserving the Book of God, the Torah, at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) are especially cautioned not to make fear of influential people nor following their vain desires and greed put them off from fulfilling their task of safeguarding it against alteration and distortion (cf. Ibn 'Ādil). The guardians of Divine law should bear the fear of God first and foremost in their minds and not that of fellow men. They should pronounce the judgement of God as found in His Writ irrespective of the status or influence of the person who is affected by it. Nor are they to be swayed by bribes and worldly gains (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿45﴾ And We decreed⁽⁹⁷⁾ for them in it that: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth and that wounds are reciprocated; whoever forgoes 'his right' out of charity then that would be an atonement 'of sins' for him⁽⁹⁸⁾— whoever does not judge by what Allah sent down then those are the wrongdoers⁽⁹⁹⁾.

وَكَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنَّ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ
وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ وَالْأُذُنَ
بِالْأُذُنِ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ قِصَاصًا
فَمَن تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَّهُ
وَمَن لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

﴿46﴾ And in their steps⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ We sent 'Isā 'Jesus', son of Maryam, confirming that which preceded him of the Torah⁽¹⁰¹⁾ and We granted him the Evangel in which there is guidance and light and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah and guidance and admonishment to the Mindful⁽¹⁰²⁾.

وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَى آثَارِهِم بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا
لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ
فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ
التَّوْرَةِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

97 This aya alludes to the law known as *lex talionis* (law of retaliation/ reciprocal justice) which states that justice should be carried out: '*ayin tachat 'ayin*, "an eye for an eye", as told in the Torah (Exodus xxi, 24) but which was distorted from its proper, fully-known position. Here the Qur'an 'reveals' and re-establishes this principle and warns against distorting it.

98 A person who is injured should not be driven by vindictiveness and the desire to exact revenge. This spirit of forgiveness is not only encouraged by God but is also generously rewarded for (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr).

99 *al-Zālimūn* also means the unjust. Those who judge between people with rulings other than those of God will inevitably do wrong to one of the two arbitrating parties.

100 That is in the steps of the "Prophets who 'devoutly' submitted" (5: 44). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

101 *Muṣaddiq* is in one sense bearing out the Torah and its laws especially those that were not abrogated by the Evangel that he was given. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

102 Mindfulness (*taqwā*) is the main driver behind engagement in pious deeds. People will carry out acts of worship according to the degree of their Mindfulness; the more they have of it, the more devout they are and the firmer their Belief in God's revelations (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

﴿47﴾ Let the people of the Evangel judge according to what Allah sent down in it—whoever does not judge by what Allah sent down, then those are the 'real' transgressors.

وَلِيَحْكُمُ أَهْلَ الْإِنجِيلِ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

﴿48﴾ And We sent down to you 'Muhammad' the Book with the Truth⁽¹⁰³⁾, confirming that which preceded it of the Book⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ and a 'supreme' authority over⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ it. Judge then between them with what Allah sent down and do not follow their desires over the Truth that came to you. To each of you 'nations' we have given a 'different' law and way 'of life'; had Allah wished, He could have made you into one nation but He wants to test you by what He gave you⁽¹⁰⁶⁾. Then vie in a race to good deeds,

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا
بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ
فَأَحْكُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ
عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ
شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ
أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَٰكِن لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ
فَأَسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ ﴿٤٨﴾

103 The Qur'an was Truthfully sent down bearing nothing but the Truth (*bi al-ḥaqq*) (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Abū Ḥayyān, Riḍā). "We have sent it 'the Qur'an' down in Truth, and with the Truth it has come down" (17: 105).

104 *al-Kitāb* is a generic noun for all previous Divinely revealed Scriptures.

105 *Muḥaymin* is encompassing the laws and dictates found in earlier Scriptures; establishing those which are still valid and overruling those which are not. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

106 This aya occurring in this final sura of the Qur'an sets the course for peaceful coexistence in the community. A fact borne out by millennia of example setting, whereby non-Muslim societies (known as *dhimmiyyūn*) lived and prospered in peace amidst largely Muslim communities and states.

Principally, although the law (*shir'ah*) and way of life (*minhāj*) are different, the Divinely ordained religion is, in essence, the same. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I, amongst all people, have more of a right to Jesus, son of Maryam, both in this life and the Hereafter! Prophets are half brothers. Their mothers are different but their religion is the same" (al-Bukhārī: 3443, Muslim: 2365). God Almighty, to Whom all people are returned, will be the Judge between the different nations.

to Allah you shall all return and then He will tell you 'the Truth' of what you used to differ over. Hence judge between them with what Allah sent down and do not follow their desires and beware of them lest they tempt you away from some of what Allah sent down to you. But if they turn away, know you then that Allah wants to afflict them with some of their sins—indeed a great many people are transgressors. Is it so that they desire the ruling of ignorance⁽¹⁰⁷⁾; 'but' who gives a better ruling than Allah to those of firm faith⁽¹⁰⁸⁾!

﴿51﴾ (109) You who Believe, do not take the Jews and Christians as allies; they are the allies of one another. Whoever of you takes them as allies then he is one of

إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَأَنْ أَحْكَمُ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَأَحْذَرُهَا أَنْ يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُصِيبَهُمْ بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ وَإِنْ كَثُرَ مِنْ النَّاسِ لَفَتَنُوكُمْ ﴿٥٠﴾ أَفَحُكْمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْعُونَ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

* يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ

107 Those who do not submit to the ruling of God and His Messenger (ﷺ) are only opting for the ruling of ignorance (*hukm al-jāhiliyyah*) itself; nothing but groundless laws set by people following their vain desires and basing them not on any of the Books of God which are light and guidance to people.

108 Those of firm Faith (*yūqīnūna*), which is free from imperfection, will be led by their sincere Faith to seek out and abide by none but the ruling of God. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

109 This passage along with the next two beginning with the call: “*You who Believe*”, chart out another dimension for the Believing community, besides unquestioningly adhering to the rule of God, i.e. how to relate to others who oppose their religion. Having seen the hostility of the People of the Book towards the Messenger (ﷺ) and their stiff resistance to his Message and for the many ways in which they tried to defy Islam and steer it away from its course, Believers are told to not take these as *awliyā'* (lit. allies). *Wilāyah* (lit. alliance) is “built upon harmony and agreement...”, both of which are non-existent in such a relationship (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

them⁽¹¹⁰⁾—indeed Allah does not guide the wrongdoers. ⁽⁵²⁾ You 'Muhammad' see those in whose hearts is disease⁽¹¹¹⁾ 'eagerly' rush to 'align themselves with' them. They say: "We fear that the cycle will turn against us!" Then may Allah bring victory or an affair⁽¹¹²⁾ from His Own that they will become regretful for what they secretly harboured. ⁽⁵³⁾ 'Upon that' The Believers will say: "Are these 'really' the ones who swore by Allah with their most solemn oaths that they were 'in all honesty' with you?"⁽¹¹³⁾ Their deeds were rendered void, and they became losers⁽¹¹⁴⁾.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ You who Believe, whoever of you renounces his religion⁽¹¹⁵⁾, then Allah will 'soon enough'

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ يُسْرِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَى أَنْ نُصِيبَ نَادِيَهُ فَعَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ وَأَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ فَيُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا أَسْرُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَن يَرْتَدَّ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ

- 110 Whoever aligns himself with them, aids them against the Believers and opts for their religion over Islam is one of them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 7/194, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 111 The hypocrites whose faith is insincere. (Ibn 'Uthaymīn)
- 112 In the likely case that God grants His sincere servants victory over their enemies or that He should cause an affliction to befall their detractors, these feigned 'precautionary measures' of the hypocrites will turn into regrets. (al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 113 Upon seeing how deeply regretful and sorrowful the hypocrites will be when the pathetic charade that they maintained is blown apart, the Believers will ask this question wonderingly. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qurṭubī)
- 114 Besides earning the Wrath of God and having their thin cover blown, all what they bargained for and threw their weight behind came to nothing. Thus, the magnitude of their loss.
- 115 Flouting the commandment of not aligning one's self with the enemies of the Believers is considered a renouncement of religion.

bring forth 'in your stead' people whom He Loves and they 'truly' love Him, lenient to the Believers, stern towards the Deniers, they strive hard in the path of Allah fearing no reproach from anyone who reproaches; that is the Grace of Allah, He grants it to whoever He wishes—Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.

Indeed your 'true' ally is none but Allah, His Messenger and the Believers; they keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms and 'humbly' prostrate 'themselves'⁽¹¹⁶⁾.⁵⁵ Whoever takes Allah, His Messenger and the Believers as allies then the party of Allah are ever-victorious.

⁵⁷ (117) You who Believe, do not take those who playfully take your religion as 'an object of' mockery and scorn among those who were given the Book before you and the Deniers as allies—be Mindful of Allah if only you were 'truly' Believers.

بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
أَعَزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن
يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٥﴾ إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ
وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ
الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا
دِينَكُمْ هُزُوعًا وَلَعِبًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكَافِرَ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا
مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

116 "The Believers, both men and women, are allies of one another. They enjoin good and forbid evil, keep up Prayer and give out the prescribed alms, and obey Allah and His Messenger. It is they who will be shown Allah's Mercy. Surely Allah is Almighty, All-Wise." (9: 71)

117 In the face of deeply set opposition and profound hostility, the bar of counterargument is raised over the next few ayas up to Aya 81. It leaves no doubt in the minds of the addressee as to where each party stands; what is spoken of here is justification enough for not taking them as allies besides the Believers.

﴿58﴾ When you call for Prayer⁽¹¹⁸⁾ they playfully take it 'as an object of' mockery and scorn. That because they are people who do not reason⁽¹¹⁹⁾. ﴿59﴾ Say: "People of the Book, do you begrudge us only because we Believed in Allah, what was sent to us and what was sent before and 'hold' that most of you are transgressors? ﴿60﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Shall I tell you of a worse case before Allah? Those whom Allah Damned, became Wrathful with, and who He turned some of them into apes, swine and worshippers of 'false' idols. These are in a worse position and are further away from the right path"⁽¹²⁰⁾. ﴿61﴾ When they come to you they say: "We Believe!" While 'in fact' they entered with Denial 'in their hearts', and 'truly' they have come out with it⁽¹²¹⁾—Allah knows most what they used to hide.

﴿62﴾ You see 'Muhammad' many of them rushing into sin, aggression and devouring illicit earnings—sordid indeed is what they are used to committing.

وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ أَخَذُوا بِهَا هُزُوا وَلَعِبًا
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿58﴾ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ
الْكِتَابِ هَلْ تَنْصُمُونَ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَنْ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ
وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلُ وَإِنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ
فَلْسِفُونَ ﴿59﴾ قُلْ هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِشَرِّ مِمَّنْ ذَلِكُمْ مَثُوبَةً
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَن لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَعَظِبَ عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلَ
مِنْهُمْ الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ وَعَبَدَ الطُّغُوتِ أُولَئِكَ
شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَأَضَلُّ عَن سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴿60﴾ وَإِذَا
جَاءَ وَكُرِّقَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَقَدْ دَخَلُوا بِالْكَفْرِ وَهُمْ قَدْ
خَرَجُوا بِهِ ءَالَهُ أَغْلِبُوا مَا كَانُوا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿61﴾

وَتَرَى كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْإِثْمِ
وَالْعُدُونِ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ السُّعْتَةُ لَيْسَ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿62﴾

118 *al-Salāh* (Prayer) is singled out because it is the most outwardly distinctive feature that defines the Believing community and sets it apart from the rest.

119 Taking those who attend to Prayer for laughing stock just shows how ignorant these people were; either they just could not grasp the essence of devotional worship (cf. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Sa'dī*), or they were so taken away by antipathy that they derided what they knew was real.

120 These home truths cum historical allusions are brought up here in rebuttal of the opposition and to bring them to see reason (cf. Ibn Jazarī).

121 For an example of this stratagem, cf. 3: 72.

﴿63﴾ Would not the godly and the rabbis admonish them against speaking sinfully and devouring illicit earnings? Sordid indeed is what they are used to doing⁽¹²²⁾. ﴿64﴾ The Jews said: “The Hand of Allah is shackled!”⁽¹²³⁾ May their ‘own’ hands be shackled and Damned they are for their saying. Nay but His Hands are ‘widely’ outstretched; He spends as He wills⁽¹²⁴⁾.

لَوْلَا يَنْهَدُهُمُ الرَّبُّ رَبَّنَا عَنْ قَوْلِهِمُ
الْإِثْمَ وَأَعْلَانِهِمُ السُّحْتَ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا
يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ
أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلَعْنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ
يُنْفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ

122 There is a subtle difference between the two verbs used in Ayas 62 and 63, translated as ‘committing’ and ‘doing’, respectively. The employment of each is very becoming of the case at hand. The first *ya'mal* (lit. to do) is said of the actions of the ordinary folk whose ‘doing’ is usually spurred by instinct and is not much thought-out. Whereas *ya'sna* (lit. to do) in the latter aya is said of the men of letters among them. The ‘makings’ of the educated who are leaders of society, contrary to the former, are usually deliberate and well-thought-out beyond the mundane and expected (cf. al-‘Askari, *al-Furūq al-Lughawiyah*).

123 By this, they metaphorically accused Almighty God, Glory be His, of meanness, close-fistedness and parsimony, meaning that He withholds His benevolence from them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4/412-413, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). This utterance echoes their equally macabre saying in 3: 181: “*Allah is poor and we are rich*”. This is yet another example highlighting how audacious they had become in their rebelliousness against God, not only by their sinful actions and their flouting of His law but more seriously by slandering and speaking profanely against His Most Exalted Self. For this, they deservedly earned His Wrath and Damnation.

124 People, especially the less religiously devout, will easily deny the innumerable bounties that God bestowed on them and will only look at what He withheld from them out of His infinite Wisdom, or the affliction that was made to befall them: “*And He has granted you all that you asked Him for. If you tried to count Allah’s Blessings, you would never be able to number them. Indeed humankind is truly unfair, totally ungrateful*” (14: 34). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “*Verily the Right Hand of Allah is full and spending cannot diminish it. It incessantly exudes day and night. Might you ponder all that He spent since He created*

Surely what was sent to you 'Muhammad' from your Lord will increase many of them in rebellion and Denial⁽¹²⁵⁾. We have cast enmity and hatred⁽¹²⁶⁾ among them until the Day of Judgement; whenever they flame the fire of war, Allah extinguishes it⁽¹²⁷⁾; they walk the land sowing corruption—Allah Loves not the corruptors.

﴿65﴾ (128) Had the People of the Book 'truly' Believed and were Mindful, We would have surely absolved them of their misdeeds and admitted them into the Gardens of bliss⁽¹²⁹⁾;

وَلَا يَرِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا وَالْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ
إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ كَلِمًا أَوْ قَدُورًا نَارًا لِلْحَرْبِ
أُطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا وَاللَّهُ
لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا
لَكَفَّرْنَا عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأَدْخَلْنَاهُمْ
جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٦٥﴾

the Heavens and Earth, then 'know that' that did not decrease 'ought' of what His Right Hand holds" (al-Bukhārī: 7419, Muslim: 993).

- 125 Their hearts, being so permeated with disease, will only interpret God's most luminous Signs that were revealed to His Messenger as confirmation of their doubts: "Whenever a sura is revealed, some of them ask 'mockingly': 'Which of you has this increased in Faith?' As for the Believers, it has increased them in Faith and they rejoice. *But as for those with sickness in their hearts, it has increased them only in wickedness upon their wickedness, and they die as Deniers" (9: 124-125); "Say, 'Muhammad': 'It 'the Qur'an' is a guide and a healing to the Believers. As for those who Deny, there is deafness in their ears and blindness to it 'in their hearts'" (41:44).
- 126 "Their 'the Jews' malice for each other is intense: you think they are united, yet their hearts are divided" (59:14). Compare with 5: 15 above.
- 127 As a result of their internal division and lack of unity they failed to prevail over their enemies. Whenever they intended to wage war their efforts were frustrated and they could not join ranks or rally forces; God wanted them to fail (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Wajīz, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 128 The crux of the matter and the essence of the difference is that the People of the Book were not humble enough to be able to see the Truth and purify their Faith, with the notable exception of those mentioned in Ayas 82-83 below. The Messenger of God (ﷺ) is urged to starkly lay this fact bare for them. This passage sums up much of the above.
- 129 Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

﴿66﴾ and had they upheld the Torah and the Evangel and what was sent down to them from their Lord, they would have eaten 'blissfully' from above them and from under their feet⁽¹³⁰⁾; among them there is an upright⁽¹³¹⁾ nation, yet many of them are vile indeed for what they commit. ﴿67﴾ O Messenger, convey what came down to you from your Lord 'fully'⁽¹³²⁾, but if you do not do 'that', then you would have failed to deliver His Message; Allah will 'certainly' shield you from people—surely Allah does not guide the Denying people⁽¹³³⁾.

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ لَأَكَلُوا مِن فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِن تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ مِّنْهُمْ أُمَّةٌ مُّقْتَصِدَةٌ ۗ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾
 *يَأْتِيهَا الرِّسُولُ بِلَغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۗ وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

- 130 God will bless those who devoutly follow His doctrines with plentiful provisions, rain and all sorts of produce which grows because of it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī). This is a lasting promise of God's: "Had the people of the towns Believed and been Mindful, We would surely have opened unto them blessings from Heaven and Earth" (7: 96); "I 'Noah' said, "Ask forgiveness of your Lord: He is Ever-Forgiving. *He will send down abundant rain from the sky for you; *and He will support you with wealth and children, and make for you gardens and rivers". (71: 10-12).
- 131 *Muqtaṣidah* carrying out their duties without adding to or overlooking what is asked of them (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī). The word relates to *iqtiṣād* which is a state of being moderate, not going to extremes (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Kafawī, *al-Kulliyāt*).
- 132 The Prophet (ﷺ) is urged to deliver the Message in full without holding any of it back out of fear of people or other worldly considerations (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "Whoever tells you that Muhammad (ﷺ) held back any part of what came down to him, then he surely lies 'to you'. 'How so when' Allah says: "O Messenger, deliver what came down to you from your Lord 'fully'..." (al-Bukhārī: 4612).
- 133 "Truly those for whom the Word of your Lord has come due will not Believe, *even if every Sign were to come to them—until they see the painful Punishment" (10: 96-97).

﴿68﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "People of the Book! You stand on no 'solid' ground unless you uphold the Torah and the Evangel and what was sent down to you from your Lord; verily what was sent down to you 'Muhammad' from your Lord will 'only' increase many of them in rebellion and Denial⁽¹³⁴⁾, so do not be grieved for the Denying people.

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ تُقِيمُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ وَلَيَبْذُرَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

﴿69﴾ Certainly, the Believers⁽¹³⁵⁾, the Jews, the Sabians and the Christians whoever 'truly' Believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good among them, they will have neither fear nor will they grieve⁽¹³⁶⁾.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئُونَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

134 This sad fact is reasserted here after its first mention in 5: 64 above, so that the deliverer of the Message is prepared for their reaction, and so that it does not come any harder for him (ﷺ).

135 Among the followers of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

136 This aya is almost a verbatim replica of Aya 2: 62. This applies to those who came before Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent. Thereafter, whoever seeks a religion other than Islam it will not be accepted from him and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers (2: 85), (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr). "The religion with Allah is Islam. The ones who were given the Book only differed after 'true' knowledge came to them, out of transgression among themselves. Whoever Denies Allah's Signs, then Allah is swift in reckoning. *If they argue with you 'Muhammad', say: "I have devoutly submitted my face to Allah along with those who follow me". Say to those who were given the Book and the illiterates: "Do you devoutly submit?" If they devoutly submit then they are guided, but if they turn away, then you are tasked with nothing more than delivering 'the Message' and Allah is indeed All-Seeing of 'His' servants" (3: 19-20). Furthermore, Ibn 'Āshūr opines that this aya is meant to show these people that the Door to God is easy to arrive at and that seeking refuge with Him is not beyond their reach, but they have to Believe, align themselves with the Believers and do good deeds.

﴿70﴾ Indeed, We took the pledge of the Children of Israel⁽¹³⁷⁾ and We sent them Messengers. Whenever a Messenger brought them that which was not to their liking, they declared false a party `of the Messengers` and another party they would kill. ﴿71﴾ They thought that there would be no trial⁽¹³⁸⁾; they were blinded and deafened, then Allah relented towards them, after that a great many of them were blinded and deafened—indeed Allah is All-Seeing of what they commit.

لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَرَأْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ
رُسُلًا كَلَّمْنَا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَى
أَنْفُسُهُمْ فَرِيقًا كَذَّبُوا وَفَرِيقًا يَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾
وَحَسِبُوا الْأَتَّكَونَ فِئْتَنَةً فَعَمُوا وَصَمُوا لَتْرَابًا
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ثَغْرٌ عَمُوا وَصَمُوا كَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ
وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

﴿72﴾ Deniers indeed are those who say: “Allah is the Messiah, son of Maryam”.⁽¹³⁹⁾ `While` The Messiah `himself` said⁽¹⁴⁰⁾: “Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed whoever Associates with Allah, then Allah will surely forbid him `entry into` Paradise and his home will be Hellfire—the wrongdoers will never have helpers”.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا
لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿٧٢﴾

137 Cf. 5: 12 above.

138 They deceived themselves by airily thinking that they would not be ‘tried’ for their grievous offences. Such self-deceit blinded and deafened them to seeing and hearing the Truth, thus they will not find a way to it. Even after God relented towards them and guided them at a certain juncture of time, a great many of them still fell back into their old ways (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

139 Aya 5: 17 and its subject – the Christian creed – is revisited here. The specific aspects addressed being Jesus’s Lordship and the Trinity.

140 Cf. Luke 4: 8; Matthew 4: 10.

﴿73﴾ Deniers indeed are those who say: "Allah is one of three!" There never would ever be a God but One⁽¹⁴¹⁾. If they do not desist from what they say, those of them who Deny will be touched by a painful Punishment. ﴿74﴾ Would they not 'then' repent to Allah and seek His forgiveness! Indeed Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿75﴾ The Messiah son of Maryam is no more than a Messenger who comes in a line of 'many' Messengers and his mother is an affirmer of Truth⁽¹⁴²⁾, they both used to eat food⁽¹⁴³⁾. Look how We lay plain the Signs for them and look how they turn away 'from the Truth'. ﴿76﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Do you worship besides Allah 'any' who can neither harm nor benefit you! Allah is the one who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَلَاثَةٌ ۚ وَنَالُوا اللَّهَ مَا نَالُوا ۚ وَاللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ ۚ وَإِن لَّمْ يَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ أَفَلَا يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٧٤﴾ مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ ۗ كَانَا بَاكِلَانِ الطَّعَامِ ۗ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ نَبِّئِنَّ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ أَنْظِرْ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ قُلْ اتَّعَبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَآ يَمْلِكُ لَكُم مِّنْ شَيْءٍ وَلَا تَفْعَلُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٧٦﴾

141 "Allah has never had 'any' offspring, nor is there any god besides Him. Otherwise, each god would have taken away what he created, and they would have tried to dominate one another. Glorified is Allah above 'all' what they claim!" (23: 91); "Had there been other gods besides Allah in the Heavens or Earth, both 'realms' would have surely been corrupted. So Glorified is Allah, Lord of the Throne, far above what they claim" (21: 22).

142 She holds the high rank of *ṣiddīqūn* (Affirmers of the Truth, cf. 4: 69 and 66:12). She cannot, however, be venerated way beyond this rightful station to that of divinity, cf. 5: 116 below.

143 Emblematic of their mortality is that both Jesus and his mother needed food for their sustenance. Very much unlike the self-sustaining God, Glory be His, in order to remain alive they had to depend on other creatures and vegetation etc. for food. A real God is not this helpless. "He 'Allah' feeds, and never is He fed" (6: 14). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿77﴾ (144) Say: “People of the Book, do not take an extremely hard line on your religion, that is besides the Truth, and do not follow the desires of ‘those’ folk⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ who ‘themselves’ had become misguided before, led a great many astray and missed the right path ‘themselves’”.

﴿78﴾ The Deniers among the Children of Israel were damned by the tongue of Dāwūd ‘David’ and ‘Isā son of Maryam⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ for their disobedience and persistent aggression. ﴿79﴾ They would not admonish each other for the vile deeds they committed—sordid indeed is what they used to do. ﴿80﴾ You ‘Muhammad’ will see many of them align themselves with the Deniers; sordid indeed is what they have laid themselves out for, that which Allah abhorred, and forever will they abide in Punishment. ﴿81﴾ Were they truly Believing in Allah, the Prophet and what was sent down to him⁽¹⁴⁷⁾,

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا
كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٧٧﴾

لَعْنَةُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ
بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ كَانُوا
لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ
مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ تَرَى كَثِيرًا
مِنْهُمْ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَبِئْسَ
مَا قَدَّمَتْ لَهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ أَنْ سَخِطَ
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَفِي الْعَذَابِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾
وَلَوْ كَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالنَّبِيِّ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ

144 Cf. 4: 171: “People of the Book, do not take an extremely hard line on your religion and say nothing about Allah except the Truth; the Messiah, ‘Isā son of Maryam is no more than a Messenger of Allah, and His word that He cast to Maryam, and a soul from Him. Believe then in Allah and His Messengers, and say not: “Three”. Desist ‘from saying this’ for your own good; indeed Allah is none but one God, far exalted is He above having a child. To Him belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth—sufficient is Allah as Keeper.”

145 Their misguided/misguiding religious leaders. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

146 Cf. the diatribe of the hypocritical Israelite priests as in for instance Matthew 23: 13-38.

147 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Message. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

they would not have taken them as allies, but many of them are 'in Truth' transgressors.

﴿82﴾ (148) You 'Muhammad' will find the bitterest of people in their enmity to Believers are the Jews and those who Associate, while you will find the nearest in affection towards the Believers are those who declare themselves Christians. That is because among them are 'sincere' priests and monks⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ and that they do not disdain 'the Truth'. ﴿83﴾ When they hear what was sent down to the Messenger⁽¹⁵⁰⁾, you will see their eyes swell with tears because of the Truth they knew.

مَا اتَّخَذُوهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَكِنَّ كَثِيرًا
مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

* لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَدَاوَةً لِلَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا وَلَتَجِدَنَّ
أَقْرَبَهُمْ مَّوَدَّةً لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ قَالُوا
إِنَّا نَصْرِيَّ ذَلِكَ بَأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ قِسِيَسِينَ
وَرُهْبَانًا وَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾
وَإِذَا سَأَعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَى
أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ

148 Here, the preceding lengthy argumentation with the People of the Book is rounded off. The Prophet (ﷺ) is told of the reality of the matter in assertive terms: while those who have vested interest in Denying, seeing that the new Message clashes with their worldly gains and benefits will declare nothing but acrimony towards it and thus will never admit the Truth, those who are purer in Faith, being humble and sincere disciples of the Scripture (*qissīsīn*/priests) and/or strict applicers of its dictates (*ruhbān*/monks), will open up their hearts to the Truth, admit it willingly and bear witness to it.

149 The reason being that the former (*priests*) are devoted to learning while the latter (*monks*) are those who have renounced the world and lead ascetical lives (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). One such godly scholar was Warāqah Ibn Nawfal; 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) in the hadith of the beginning of *wahy* (revelation) said: "When the Prophet (ﷺ) went back to 'his wife' Khadijah 'after receiving the first Message via Gabriel (جبرائيل)' with a trembling heart' she took him along to Warāqah Ibn Nawfal, who had become Christian reading the Evangel in Arabic. He asked him: "What do you see?" When he told him, Warāqah said: "This is the *nomos* (*al-nāmūs*) that Allah sent down to Moses. Would your day 'of hardship' come upon me, I shall surely stand firmly by your side!" (al-Bukhārī: 3392, Muslim: 160).

150 The Qur'an that was sent down to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

'Hence' They say: "Our Lord we Believe, so count us among the witnesses." ﴿84﴾ Why should we ever not Believe in Allah and the Truth that came to us⁽¹⁵¹⁾; we are desirous that our Lord will admit us 'into Paradise' along with the righteous. ﴿85﴾ Allah rewarded them for their saying Gardens under which rivers flow, forever they abide therein—that indeed is the reward of the good doers. ﴿86﴾⁽¹⁵²⁾ As for those who Deny and reject our Signs, then these are the companions of the Raging Fire.

﴿87﴾⁽¹⁵³⁾ You who Believe, do not pronounce unlawful the good provisions that Allah made lawful for you⁽¹⁵⁴⁾; do not transgress,

يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَنَطْمَعُ أَنْ يُدْخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ فَأَقْتَرِبُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّهُ بِمَا قَالُوا جَنَّتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٨٧﴾

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَحْرَمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا

151 "Indeed there are among the People of the Book those who Believe in Allah, what has been sent down to you 'Muhammad' and what had been sent down to them, humbling themselves before Allah and do not trade off the Signs of Allah for a pittance; for those is their reward with their Lord—Allah is swift in reckoning" (3: 199); "As for those 'Faithful' to whom We had given the Book before this 'Qur'an', they do Believe in it. *When it is recited to them, they declare: "We Believe in it. This is definitely the Truth from our Lord. We had already submitted before this" (28: 52-53).

152 This aya reflects Aya 5: 10 above.

153 Now that the all important issue of the creed of the People of the Book has been made plain, the discourse again picks up on the laws that are set for the Believing community, reiterating and expounding them. This is to drive home the Message that these laws are ever binding and should not be taken liberty with. Nor are they to be disregarded, or licentiously treated with, as did earlier nations.

154 "Do not falsely declare with your tongues: "This is lawful, and that is unlawful", fabricating lies against Allah. Indeed, those who fabricate lies against Allah will never succeed" (16: 116). Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: "Some men came upon the chambers of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) asking about his worship. When answered they felt that it was not enough 'for them'. Then they said to themselves: "How great the difference is between

surely Allah Loves not the transgressors. ﴿88﴾ Eat of what Allah provided for you, that is lawful and good, and be Mindful of Allah in Whom you Believe⁽¹⁵⁵⁾. ﴿89﴾⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ Allah will not hold you accountable for thoughtlessly swearing 'by Him'⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ but He will hold you to account over the solemn oaths you make; the atonement of which is feeding ten destitutes out of the average 'food' that you feed your households, or clothing them, or manumitting a slave; whoever could not find 'the means to any of these' then let him fast for three days. That is the atonement of 'breaking' your oaths if you swear; 'but' guard your oaths—thus Allah explains to you His Signs so that you might be thankful.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَكُلُوا
مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ لَا يُؤْخَذُكُمْ
اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤْخَذُكُمْ
بِمَا عَقَدْتُمُ الْاَيْمَانَ فَكَفَرْتُمْ بِإِطْعَامِ عَشْرَةِ
مَسْكِينٍ مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تَطْعَمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ
أَوْ كَسْوَتِهِمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرِ رِقَبَةٍ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ
فَصِيَامَ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ذَلِكَ كَفْرَةٌ أَيْمَانِكُمْ
إِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ وَأَحْضُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يَبَيِّنُ
اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾

us and the Prophet (ﷺ), he was forgiven all his past and future misdeeds by Allah!" Then one of them said: "I shall Pray all night long and never sleep!" Another said: "I shall fast all year long and never break it!" And a third said: "I shall shun women and never ever marry!" The Prophet (ﷺ) then came and said: "Are you the ones who said so and so? By Allah I am the most fearful and Mindful of Allah among all here, but I fast and I break my fasting, I Pray and I sleep and I marry women. Whoever renounces my way (Sunnah) has nothing to do with me!" (al-Bukhārī: 5063, Muslim: 1401).

- 155 "Believers, eat of the good things which We provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if you indeed worship Him 'alone'" (2: 172); "Eat and drink, but do not waste. Surely He does not like the wasteful" (7: 31).
- 156 It is not unusual that some would, in a fit of rage or by way of affirming their commitment, habitually swear to something which may be considered as a breach of God's boundaries. Although God will call to account only over those oaths which one takes whilst being fully aware of their gravity (cf. 2: 225), Believers are nonetheless told to guard their oaths (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr).
- 157 Unintentionally saying: "Yes, by God", or: "No, by God" out of habit. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Bukhārī: 6663)

﴿90﴾ (158) You who Believe, intoxicants, gambling, altars of idolatry⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ and casting lots for divination⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ are nothing but defilement of the making of Satan, so steer clear from it 'all', so that you might be successful. ﴿91﴾ Satan wants nothing but to sow enmity and hatred among you through intoxicants and gambling, and repel you from the remembrance of Allah⁽¹⁶¹⁾ and Prayer, will you not 'then' desist? ﴿92﴾ Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and be on your guard. But should you turn away, then know that Our Messenger's duty is nothing but clear delivery 'of the Message'.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ
وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رَجَسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ
فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ
الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ
فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ
ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ
مُنْتَهُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ
وَاحْذَرُوا فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا عَلَى
رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٩٢﴾

158 Some of what they used to habitually consume and practice in the age of ignorance, before the advent of Islam is picked up on here to clearly demarcate the boundaries of the Believing society. The awful reality of what had been the norm is exposed and is warned against in the strongest of terms (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

159 *al-Anṣāb* are stones or idols which are erected for worship and sacrificial offerings. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-Lughah*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*)

160 Cf. 5: 3 above.

161 *Dhikr Allah* is the remembrance and mentioning of God. In Islam it is a noteworthy act of worship through which one gains God's Pleasure and great reward, wards off the devil and disquieting thoughts, and gains comfort and peace in one's heart and life: "Verily in mentioning Allah do hearts find comfort" (13: 28); the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked: "Which deed is seen as the best by Allah?" He replied: "That you die with your tongue moist with mentioning Allah" (al-Bukhārī, *Khalq Af'āl al-'Ibād*: 281; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr*: 93); Mu'ādh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Never has a human done a thing more likely to save him from Allah's Punishment than mentioning Allah, Glory be His" (Aḥmad: 4/239). Ibn al-Qayyim in *al-Wābil al-Ṣayyib* lists more than a hundred benefits and advantages for this act of worship. Little wonder, then, that Satan, man's arch-enemy, is bent on driving people away from it and other acts of obedience to God, notably Prayer.

﴿93﴾ (162) There is no 'blame of' sin for those who Believe and do good deeds over what they used to savour⁽¹⁶³⁾ 'in the past' if they: became Mindful, Believed and did good deeds; then became Mindful and Believed; then became Mindful and perfected 'their deeds'—Allah loves those who perfect 'their deeds'⁽¹⁶⁴⁾.

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعَمُوا إِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

﴿94﴾ You who Believe, Allah shall test you with some game 'well' within the reach of your hands and spears, so that Allah may Know⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ he who fears Him in secret⁽¹⁶⁶⁾. Whoever transgresses after this, then his is a painful Punishment.

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِيَبْلُوكُمْ اللَّهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الصَّيْدِ تَسَالُهُ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَرِمَاحُكُمْ لِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَخَافُهُ بِالْغَيْبِ فَمَن أَعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٤﴾

162 The reason for this aya's revelation is narrated by Anas (رضي الله عنه) whereby: "I was doling out wine to others in the house of Abū Ṭalḥah when the Messenger (ﷺ) ordered someone to call out to people that wine was made unlawful. At that Abū Ṭalḥah said to me: "Get out and drain the wine 'vessels'". I went out and drained them and they ran in the roads of Madinah. Then some people said 'wonderingly': "Some 'of us' were killed while it was in their bellies!" Then Allah sent down: "There is no 'blame of' sin for those who Believe and do good deeds over what they used to savour if they..." (al-Bukhārī: 2464, Muslim: 1980). This aya is the last and final aya that was sent down regarding the ruling of wine and (other) intoxicant consumption and which forbids it once and for all. The other two being Ayas 2: 219 and 4: 43.

163 That is before the ruling came down. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī)

164 These three parallel structures, along with the employment of the coordinator *thumma* (then), which signifies a longish separating period in-between, are meant to heighten the effect of the seriousness of this ruling (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). What used to take place before is pardoned, but Believers are made fully aware not to fall victim to this sin again, hence drawing deeply on the power of their Faith.

165 The kind of knowledge which is made apparent to people according to which some are rewarded and others punished. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

166 "Those who fear their Lord in secret, theirs is forgiveness and a great reward" (67: 12). Restraining one's self from sinning while hidden from the eyes of others and that the sin being so tantalizingly facile is a great test of Faith.

﴿95﴾ You who Believe, do not kill game while you are in a state of sanctity⁽¹⁶⁷⁾, whoever kills any intentionally, then his penalty is 'to compensate for it with one of' the livestock equal to what he killed – so judged by two of you who are of sound judgement⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ – as a gifted offering reaching the Ka'bah⁽¹⁶⁹⁾, or atoning 'for it with providing' food for the destitute, or the equivalent of that in fasting, so that he may taste the consequence of his action. Allah has overlooked what took place in the past, but whoever does it anew, then Allah takes revenge on him—Allah is All-Prevailing, capable of vengeance⁽¹⁷⁰⁾. ﴿96﴾ The game of the sea and its food⁽¹⁷¹⁾ is lawful to you; an enjoyment for you and other wayfarers;

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرُمٌ وَمَنْ قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُمْ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاءٌ مِّثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعَمِ يَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ هَدْيًا بَلِغَ الْكَعْبَةِ أَوْ كَفَّرَهُ طَعَامًا مَسْكِينٍ أَوْ عَدْلٌ ذَلِكِ صِي مَا لِيَدُوقَ وَبِالْأَمْرِ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَمَّا سَلَفَ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَيَنْتَقِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ ﴿٩٥﴾
أَحِلَّ لَكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَحْرِ وَطَعَامُهُ مَتَّعَالِكُمْ
وَاللِّسْيَارَةَ

167 *Hurum*, in a state of sanctity, refers to whether you are donning *ihrām* to perform Hajj or *'umrah*, or whether you are within the inviolable precincts, the *haram* area (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

168 *Dhawā 'adl* (lit. two possessors of fairness) are two people known for their upright character and fair-mindedness (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

169 This compensative offering (*hady*) should reach the sanctified precincts (*haram*), which is what is meant by the Ka'bah here (cf. al-Qurṭubī, who cites the unanimity of exegetes over this issue), be slaughtered within its bounds and distributed to the needy among its inhabitants. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

170 *Dhū intiqām* (revenge, vengeance, retribution), is not an absolute Attribute or Name of Almighty God, but rather is bound by limitation to certain instances (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn). Hence why I have chosen here not to capitalize it as I always do with other Divine Names or Attributes.

171 The game of the sea (*ṣayd al-baḥr*) and its food (*ta'āmuḥ*) are the sea creatures that you fish alive and the dead ones that you scoop out, respectively. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

'however still' unlawful to you is the game of the land as long as you are in a state of sanctity. Be Mindful of Allah to Whom you shall be gathered.

وَحَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ صَيْدَ الْبَرِّ مَا دُمْتُمْ حُرُمًا
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

﴿97﴾ (172) Allah made the Ka'bah, the Sanctified House, a bastion 'of well-being'⁽¹⁷³⁾; as well as the sacrosanct month, gifted offerings, garlanded sacrifices 'are instituted for good cause'⁽¹⁷⁴⁾. That, so you may know that Allah 'perfectly' Knows what is in the Heavens and Earth—verily Allah Knows everything.

* جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِيَامًا
لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَالْهَدْيَ وَالْقَلْبَةَ ذَلِكَ
لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٧﴾

172 Although it seamlessly flows from the previous passage, this aya and the next can be further read within the light of Aya 5: 2 above. Here, the reason for how much stake God places on the violation of these Symbols of His (ﷻ) is stated; there has got to be a place and a time where all people and creatures feel safe and in harmony under their Creator's will.

173 *Qiyām* traces its meaning to erectness and/or taking care of affairs (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). That God made the Ka'bah *qiyāman li al-nās* signifies both their religious, e.g. Prayers, Hajj, 'umrah, etc., and worldly affairs, e.g. trade in all sorts of produce, getting together and knowing each other, etc., are upheld and safeguarded in and around it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī).

Even before Islam, the Sanctified House was a source of guidance to people through which some were constantly reminded of God, especially those known as *al-Ahnāf* (the rightly inclined), and a great source of worldly gains to all Arabs who visited it, but especially a great source of power, wealth and prestige to the Qurayshites (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). "They said 'to you Muhammad', "If we were to follow 'True' guidance with you, we would certainly be snatched away from our land!" Have We not established for them a safe haven 'in Makkah' to which fruits of all kinds are brought as a provision from Us? But most of them do not realize 'this favour'" (28: 57).

174 People will feel safe for their lives and livelihoods during the sacrosanct months, and thus prosper. They will also put these offerings to good use and from which they will eat and manufacture different artifacts from their hides (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī). These are also meant to instill the virtue of self restraint in people.

﴿98﴾ Know you 'all' that Allah is severe in Punishment and that Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿99﴾ The Messenger's duty is nothing but delivery 'of the Message'—Allah Knows what you reveal and what you conceal⁽¹⁷⁵⁾. ﴿100﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "The evil and the good are not equal even though the abundance of the evil may fascinate you". So fear Allah, people of sound reason, so that you might be successful⁽¹⁷⁶⁾.

أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٩٨﴾ مَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ قُلْ
لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ
كَتْرُهُ الْحَبِيثُ فَأَتَقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

﴿101﴾ (177) You who Believe,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

175 Fully realizing that God surely watches over their actions and is aware of their intentions, and now that His Message has been clearly delivered by the Messenger (ﷺ), Believers are left to their consciences and are warned, on pain of a severe punishment, against violating His commands. However, they are also to realize that God overlooks the sins of those of His servants who repent to Him, and being the Most Merciful, He will not burden anyone with that which he cannot bear (cf. 3: 286).

176 People are reminded of this fact so that they persevere in the constant fight against temptation. Ironically, evil might be the more conspicuous of the two and readily strikes the eye, at which the person wonders and/or is allured (*a'jaba*) by it, but this does not make it the more virtuous of the two. Belief and Denial, obedience and rebellion, and lawful and forbidden deeds are not one and the same and that more people are, in fact, Denying, rebelling and committing forbidden deeds does not make evil justifiable or lawful. In the end, those who are Mindful and are really of sound enough reason to pay heed will be the ones who will eventually attain success. "And 'surely' *the final round is for the Mindful*" (7: 128).

177 Believers are urged here to uphold and hold tightly to what was delivered to them by the most trustworthy Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. 3: 103). Questions, and especially contrived questions, when responded to will inevitably widen the circle of Divine ordinances and this might make it difficult for Believers to act on them. God, in His infinite wisdom, perfected His religion, ensuring it was not onerous for people so that it would be easy for them to follow in order to win His great rewards: "Allah wants not to burden you, but He wants to purify you and perfect His favour on you that you may be thankful" (5: 6, cf. also 22: 78). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "People, Allah has ordained Hajj for you so perform it". A man stood up and said: "Every year, Messenger of Allah?" The Messenger did not answer

do not ask about matters, which if explained to you would displease you. But if you ask about them while the Qur'an is being sent down, they will be explained to you⁽¹⁷⁸⁾. Allah overlooked them⁽¹⁷⁹⁾—Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing⁽¹⁸⁰⁾. ﴿102﴾ Some people asked about such matters before you, 'only' to reject them afterwards⁽¹⁸¹⁾.

لَا تَسْأَلُوا عَنْ أَشْيَاءٍ إِنْ بُدِّلَ لَكُمْ تَسْؤُكُمْ وَإِنْ
تَسْأَلُوا عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنَزَّلَ الْقُرْآنُ بُدِّلَ لَكُمْ
عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهَا وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾ قَدْ سَأَلَهَا
قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَصْبَحُوا بِهَا كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

him until he repeated the question three times. Then he said: "Had I said: "Yes", then it would be binding and you would not be able to bear it". Then he added: "You should not be pestering me with questions when I hold my peace. What brought about the ruination of those who came before you is their persistence in asking questions and incessantly counselling their Prophets. If I command you something, do it as much as you can and if I warn you against a matter avoid it altogether" (Muslim: 1337). Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The bearer of the most grievous of sins among the Muslims is the one who asks a question about something which was not declared unlawful 'in the first place' but which was pronounced so because of this question" (al-Bukhārī: 7289, Muslim: 2358). This outlook captures the essence of Islam, the most perfect of all religions, which is very much in tune with human nature.

- 178 It is alright to ask sincere questions about a portion of the Qur'an that one cannot understand and/or to make sure of a particular ruling. Such questions deserve to be answered as much as they are warranted and legitimate (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Rajab, al-Sa'dī).
- 179 This could mean that: 1) God overlooked your questioning and does not hold you to account for your oversight (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī); 2) God warned you against such questioning but allows it once a revelation with its regard comes down from Him (Ibn 'Ashūr); 3) what was not mentioned in the Qur'an is part of what He pardoned so do not bring these up since they were not brought up by God Himself (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 180 "If Allah were to punish people for what they have committed, He would not have left a single living being on the back of Earth. But He delays them for an appointed term. And when their time arrives, then surely Allah is All-Seeing of His servants" (35: 45).
- 181 These people did not ask these questions out of a genuine need for knowledge but instead due to a lack of sincere willingness to carry out what they were commanded to: it was just too convenient for them to disregard what was explained to them. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿103﴾ (182) Allah allowed none of the so-called *baḥīrah*, nor *sā'ibah*, nor *waṣīlah*, nor *hām* but the Deniers fabricate lies against Allah; most of them have no sense. ﴿104﴾ When it is said to them: “Come to what Allah sent down and to the Messenger”. They say: “Good enough for us are the ways of our forefathers”. Would this ‘be the case’ even if their forefathers had no knowledge nor were they able of finding the way⁽¹⁸³⁾. ﴿105﴾ You who Believe, guard your own selves;

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَحِيرَةٍ وَلَا سَائِبَةٍ وَلَا وَصِيلَةٍ
وَلَا حَامٍ وَلَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ
الْكُذِبَ وَأَكْثُرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ
لَهُمْ عَمَلُوا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَىٰ الرَّسُولِ قَالُوا
حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوَلَوْ كَانَ
آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ

182 As much as people are warned against asking questions about matters which were not ordained on them, they are not to abide by laws which were also not decreed by God (cf. Ibn ‘Adīl). The four categories mentioned in this aya are those states of livestock which Arab pagans forbade use of, or did so for specific idolatry practices. They are, as ordered here: *baḥīrah*, a she-camel which has given five live births and whose ear they would slit and make its riding and milking forbidden; *sā'ibah*, a she-camel, a cow, goat or ewe which they would set free to roam and graze in fulfillment of an oath or as an act of obedience to their gods; *waṣīlah*, the seventh live birth of a livestock. If it were male they would slaughter it, but if it were female they would pronounce its meat and milk forbidden for women; *hām*, a male livestock which successfully breeds ten live births, which they would announce as ‘protected’ (or pensioned) and so not use it for riding or conveying loads (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). They inherited these groundless, seemingly devotional, laws from their forefathers, whom they venerated, but whom had no knowledge of God’s laws. They lacked Divine inspiration, a fact which rendered them senseless, following their own desires and superstitions.

183 “Should they be told: “Follow what Allah sent down”, they would say: “Nay, we would only follow that which we found our fathers doing”; “Would they? Even if their fathers were mindless of everything, nor were they guided” (2: 170). Their pretext is ever-ready whenever they are called on to follow God’s commands; they have their old habits to fall back on (cf. also 31: 20-21 and 37: 69-70).

those who lose the path will not harm you if you find the way⁽¹⁸⁴⁾. To Allah you shall all return and then He will tell you 'the Truth' of what you used to do⁽¹⁸⁵⁾.

﴿106﴾ ⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ You who Believe, the testimony of any of you who is attended by death should be witnessed by two 'people' of sound judgement from within you –

لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَن صَبَلَ إِذَا أَهْتَدَيْتُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ
مَرَجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا شَهَدَةُ بَيْنِكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ
أَحَدُكُمْ الْمَوْتُ حِينَ الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنَانِ ذَوَا
عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ

184 This is the limit of the Believers' duty of call and propagation of the laws of God. Once they have delivered the Message as it should duly be, they are not responsible for the actions of those who rebuff them. "You 'Muhammad' surely cannot guide whoever you like, but it is Allah Who guides whoever He wills, and He Knows best who are 'fit to be' guided" (28: 56). (Ibn 'Āshūr)

185 God, Who Knows everything and has a minutely detailed record of it (cf. 18: 49), will be the final Judge. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

186 This aya and the two that follow are said to be the most complex in the whole Qur'an in terms of grammatical structure, interpretation and legal ruling (cf. Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *Mushkil I'rāb al-Qur'ān*, al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*). The great attention to detail found here indicates the importance of inheritance laws in Islam and which merited much detailed accounts in the Qur'an, especially in Sura *al-Nisā'*. Needless to say, no single translation can capture the totality of the complexity of the issues implicated in these ayas and over which scholars of Islam have long pondered. The reason for the revelation, as narrated by Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) does, however, shed light on the issue at hand: "A 'Muslim' man from the clan of Banū Sahm set out on a journey along with Tamīm al-Dārī and 'Adiyy Ibn Baddā' 'before they became Muslim'. This man died in a land where there were no Muslims. When his two companions came back with his inheritance, 'his folk' missed a 'pricey' silver bowl embellished with gold leaves. The Messenger (ﷺ) made them swear an oath 'when they were brought before him'. The bowl had been found in Makkah and its new owners had said: "We bought it from Tamīm and 'Adiyy". Then two relatives of the deceased stood witness and swore: "In all solemnity, our testimony is more worthy than their testimony; the bowl belonged to our dead relative". With this regard the aya was revealed" (al-Bukhārī: 2780).

or two from without you⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ – ‘that is’ at the time of making the will as you set about the land ‘travelling’ and the calamity of death befalls ‘any of’ you. Should you have doubts ‘about their testimony’⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ stand them⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ up from after the Prayer⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ and they ‘should’ swear by Allah that: “We do not seek ‘by this oath’ some monetary reward; ‘nor do we favour a beneficiary’ even if he were a relative ‘of ours’ and ‘that’ we would not withhold ‘any part of’ Allah’s testimony⁽¹⁹¹⁾. If we do that, then we are but sinful.”

﴿107﴾ ‘But’ If they are found ‘indeed’ sinful ‘perjurers’ then two other ‘witnesses’ of those entitled as immediate ‘inheritors’, should stand in their place, swearing

أَوْ عَاخِرَانَ مِنْ غَيْرِكُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ صَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةُ الْمَوْتِ تَحْسِبُونَهُمَا مِنْ بَعْدِ الصَّلَاةِ فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِاللَّهِ إِنْ أَرْتَبْتُمْ لَأَنْتَشِرِي بِهِ تَمَنَّا وَلَوْ كَانُوا قُرْبَىٰ وَلَا نَكْتُمُ شَهَادَةَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا إِذَا لَمِنَ الْأَثِمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ فَإِنْ عُرِيَ عَلَىٰ آتَهُمَا اسْتَحَقَّا إِثْمًا فَتَاخِرَانَ يَقُومَانِ مَقَامَهُمَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَوْلَادِ فَيُقْسِمَانِ

187 If two Muslims cannot be found at the time of a person’s death, being significant as it is, two non-Muslims can be asked to bear witness to the will. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

188 They are made to take such an oath because the judge has justifiable doubts about their truthfulness not because they are non-Muslim (cf. Riḍā, Ibn ‘Uthaymīn).

189 The two non-Muslim witnesses (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). When doubted, it has to be made absolutely sure that their testimony is trustworthy and that if challenged, albeit by Muslims, the challengers will undergo equally scrupulous measures.

190 That they deliver such a weighty testimony after Prayer shows the great solemnity of the oath being undertaken. Prayers are usually attended by a congregation of people, and one realizes the significance of one’s oath should one be brought before the public (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). On the other hand, those witnesses who are humbled by Prayer, and remembrance of God, would find it hard to give false testimony (cf. al-Rāzī).

191 *Shahādat Allāh*, the testimony is ascribed to God to indicate its significance and because He, Glory be His, commanded preserving and not withholding it. (Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Ādil)

by Allah that: “In all solemnity, our testimony is more worthy than their testimony; we did no wrong ‘to them’ or ‘else’ we are among the unjust”. ﴿108﴾ That ‘conduct with the witnesses’ is surer so that they⁽¹⁹²⁾ deliver the testimony truthfully, or fear that their oaths will be reverted ‘to the inheritors’ after they swore theirs⁽¹⁹³⁾. Be Mindful of Allah and listen⁽¹⁹⁴⁾—Allah does not guide the transgressors.

﴿109﴾ ⁽¹⁹⁵⁾On the Day when Allah gathers the Messengers and says ‘to them’: “What response did you receive?” They would say: “We have no knowledge⁽¹⁹⁶⁾, verily You are the All-Knower of what is hidden.”

بِاللَّهِ لَشَهَادَتِنَا أَحَقُّ مِنْ شَهَادَتِهِمَا وَمَا
 أَعْتَدَيْنَا إِنَّا إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ ذَلِكَ أَذِنَ
 أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِالشَّهَادَةِ عَلَىٰ وَجْههَا أَوْ يَخَافُوا أَنْ
 تُرَدَّ أَيْمَنُهُمْ بَعْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَسْمِعُوا
 وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

*يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أُجِبْتُمْ
 قَالُوا لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا بِئَاتِكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّمُ الْعُيُوبِ ﴿١٠٩﴾

192 The two original witnesses. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

193 Knowing that they can be challenged by the deceased’s relatives, they will not be inclined to lie fearing that their testimony is overruled and they are exposed and shamed as liars. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

194 Listen to what you are being told and obey it. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

195 When people are told to be Mindful of God and pay heed to His commands and adhere to His laws, they are reminded of the very weighty Day of Judgement on which they will be gathered before the All-Knower of all that is hidden from other people, Messengers included. Although, on the face of it, the ones who are being addressed are the most honourable infallible Messengers of God (ﷺ), those who are mostly intended by it are those to whom they were sent. In this way, a stark, subtly indirect warning is implicated. (cf. al-Rāzī).

196 This answer could mean: 1) that they had no knowledge of what their followers’ hearts really held; 2) that they had no knowledge of what their followers did after their deaths (this reading is borne out by Jesus’ (ﷺ) testimony before God as told in Aya 5: 117 below); 3) that what they had was perceived knowledge (*zann*) but not true knowledge that would stand in the trial on the Day of Judgement; 4) that they, being fully cognizant of God Almighty’s absolute Knowledge, Wisdom and Fairness and knowing that their answer would not be of real use, deferred the answer to Him out of homage (cf. al-Rāzī).

﴿110﴾ (197) When 'on that Day' Allah says: "Isā son of Maryam, remember my favour on you and your mother, when I aided you with the Holy Spirit; you were made to talk to people while in the cradle, and as a grown man; when I taught you the Book, the Wisdom, the Torah and the Evangel; when you used to form the shape of a bird from clay with My permission and you would blow 'your breath' into it and it became a 'living' bird with My permission; you would cure the born blind and the leper with My permission; when you would bring the dead to life with My permission; and when I restrained the Children of Israel from 'harming' you⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ as you brought them clear evidences, and those of them who Denied said 'indignantly': "This is nothing but sheer sorcery!"

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ لِبِعْسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدْتُكَ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنْفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنْكَ إِذْ جِئْتَهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْحَرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

197 For some detailed background on what follows cf. 3: 42-52. Jesus (ﷺ) of all the other Messengers is singled out here and is minutely 'questioned' because the most deserving of admonishment are those who claim to be his followers. Other nations may have Denied their Messengers but these made the single and most false claim about God Almighty Himself, whereby He has a wife and a child, and around which they built their whole religion. The favours detailed here show in reality that Jesus is no more than a mere human Messenger of God (cf. al-Rāzī). "Indeed the example of Jesus with Allah is like that of Adam; He created him from dust and said: "Be!" and he was" (3: 59).

198 "They 'the Deniers among the Children of Israel' plotted and Allah planned—Allah is verily the best of planners. *When Allah said: "Isā, I shall bring your term 'on Earth' to an end, elevate you to Me, purify you from those who Denied and make those who follow you 'prevail' over those who Deny until the Day of Judgement. Then your 'humans' return will be to Me and I shall judge between you over that which you used to differ on" (3: 54-55).

﴿111﴾ And when I inspired⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ the disciples to Believe in Me and in My Messenger. They said: “We Believe, and bear witness that we are devoutly surrendered!⁽²⁰⁰⁾”

﴿112﴾ When the disciples said: “‘Isā son of Maryam, can your Lord send down to us a table laid⁽²⁰¹⁾ from the sky.” He said: “Be Mindful of Allah, if you are truly Believers!⁽²⁰²⁾”

﴿113﴾ They said: “We ‘just’ want to eat from it; and for our hearts to be comforted; and so we know ‘for certain’ that you tell us the Truth; and that we may be witnesses to it⁽²⁰³⁾.”

وَاذْأَوْحَيْتُ إِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِي وَبِرَسُولِي قَالُوا ءَأَمِنَّا وَأَشْهَدُ بِأَنَّنَا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١١١﴾ إِذْ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٢﴾ قَالُوا نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَأْكُلَ مِنْهَا وَنَضْمِينَ قُلُوبَنَا وَنَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَنَا وَتَكُونُ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ

﴿114﴾ ⁽²⁰⁴⁾ ‘Isā son of Maryam said:

199 *Awhā* (lit. to inspire) means He (ﷺ) threw in their hearts. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

200 For a more detailed account of this incident see 3: 52-53: *When ‘Isā sensed their ‘ardent’ Denial, he said: “Who are my helpers ‘in the way’ to Allah?” The disciples said: “We are the helpers of ‘the way of ‘ Allah. We Believe in Allah. And bear witness that we are devoutly surrendered ‘to Him’ ”. *‘‘Our Lord, we have Believed in what you have brought down and we have sent the Messenger, so write us down among the witnesses’’.*

201 *Mā'idah* in Arabic is a table laden with food. A table without food is called *khiwān*. What is asked for here is the food itself, which could metonymically be called ‘table’ (cf. Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, Ṭaṭṭāwī, *al-Wasīf*): thus, my choice in the translation.

202 Given the illocutionary force of the Arabic original, Jesus’s response here amounts to a challenging retort meant to make them behave more sensibly and in accordance with their Faith.

203 They wanted to bear witness to this miraculous Sign and tell the others about it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Ashūr) thus extending their Faith to others with certitude.

204 There is no favour that God would ever bestow upon His allies that parallels this feast. Simple as it could have been, it provided the Believers with a most needed, assuring and timely evidence that God, with all His Might, was on their side as He always will be with those who are sincerely devoted to Him.

“O Allah, our Lord send down to us a table laid from the sky to be a festive occasion for us – the first and last of us ⁽²⁰⁵⁾ – and a Sign from You. Give us our sustenance; You are the best of providers.”

﴿115﴾ Allah said: “I shall surely send it down to you, but any of you who Denies after this I shall Punish him ‘such’ a Punishment that I never inflict the like of which on any other in the world.”

﴿116﴾ When ‘on the Day of Judgement’ Allah says ⁽²⁰⁶⁾: “‘Isā son of Maryam, did you, yourself, say to people: ‘Take me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?’” He said: “All glory is Yours!

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ تَكُونُ
لَنَا عِيدًا لِأَوْلَادِنَا وَأَخْرَانَا وَآيَةً مِنْكَ وَأَرْزُقْنَا
وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّزُقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾ قَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَتْرُكُهَا
عَلَيْكُمْ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بَعْدَ مِنْكُمُ فَإِنِّي أُعَذِّبُهُ
عَذَابًا لَا أُعَذِّبُهُ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١١٦﴾

وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ لِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ أَنْتَ قُلْتَ
لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمَّيَ الْهَيْبِينَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ

However, this aya should be read within the context of the trying circumstance which Jesus and this company of his staunchest supporters found themselves in at the time of this request. Given their very small number and the great bloodthirsty mobs calling for the murder of their leader that they were pitted against, even the most devout of Believers can be shaken at such times (cf. the account of the psychological state of Believers when they saw their enemy in the Battle of the Trench/Confederates 33:10-11) but where their sincere Faith and trust in God got them through. This is an ever-lasting lesson to Believers that heartens them to stand firm in the face of adversity and prepares them for the trials they will come up against throughout all times and ages. Cf. the ‘title’ section to this sura’s introduction.

205 *Awwalinā wa ākhiranā* (lit. our first and last) means Jesus’s generation and those that were to come after it. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī)

206 This is further admonishment for those who claim to be followers of Jesus (ﷺ) but who distorted his teachings, albeit him being the direct addressee (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr). God wants him to stand witness against them as will every Messenger against his nation: “How ‘will they fare’, when we bring forward a witness from every nation, and We bring you ‘Muhammad’ as witness against these” (4: 41).

Never will I say that which I have no right to. Had I said it, You would have known it. You Know what goes on within me and I do not know what You hold. You are verily the Knower of all that is Unseen.” ﴿117﴾ “I ‘only’ said to them what You told me to, that ‘you should’: “Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord”. I was a witness over them as long as I was among them, But when You brought my term ‘on Earth’ to an end⁽²⁰⁷⁾, You became ‘the sole’ Watcher over them⁽²⁰⁸⁾—You are Witness over everything”. ﴿118﴾ “If you Punish them, then they are ‘only’ Your servants, but if You forgive them, then You are truly the All-Prevailing, All-Wise.”

مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقِّ إِنْ كُنْتُ
قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ
مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿١١٧﴾ مَا قُلْتُ
لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي
وَرَبَّكُمْ وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ
فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتُ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنْتَ
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ
عِبَادُكَ وَإِن تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١١٨﴾

207 “When Allah said: “‘*Īsā, I shall bring your term ‘on Earth’ to an end, elevate you to Me...*” (3: 55).

208 Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “One day the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood before us delivering an admonishing sermon. He said: “People, you will be gathered before Allah ‘on the Day of Judgement’ barefooted, naked and uncircumcised: “*As We initiated the first creation, so shall We return it. It is a promise of Ours that We will do this*” (21:104)... A group of men among my nation will be brought and taken to the left flank ‘towards Hellfire’, and I say: “My Lord, my people!” And it will be said to me: “You do not know what they forged after you”. I will reply to that the very same reply that the righteous servant ‘Jesus (ﷺ)’ said: “*I was a witness over them as long as I was among them, But when You brought my term ‘on Earth’ to an end, You became ‘the sole’ Watcher over them—You are Witness over everything*” * “*If you Punish them, then they are ‘only’ Your servants, but if You forgive them, then You are truly the All-Prevailing, All-Wise*” (5: 117-118). Then it will be said to me: “They kept on turning on their heels ‘away from your teachings’ ever since you left them””. (al-Bukhārī: 2447, Muslim: 2860)

﴿119﴾ Allah says: “This is the Day on which the Truthfulness of the Truthful avails them; for them are Gardens under which rivers flow forever after they abide therein; Allah is Pleased with them⁽²⁰⁹⁾ and they are pleased with Him—that indeed is the greatest gain”.

قَالَ اللَّهُ هَذَا يَوْمٌ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ
لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
أَبَدًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١١٩﴾

﴿120﴾ To Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens, Earth and ‘all’ that is within them; He is Able over everything⁽²¹⁰⁾.

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا فِيهِنَّ وَهُوَ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾



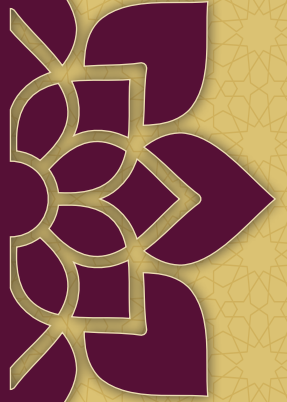
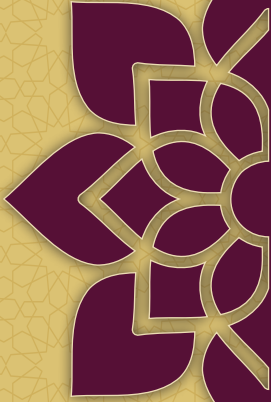
209 Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Then their Lord, Glory is His, will reveal Himself to them ‘the companions of Paradise’ and say: “Ask Me and I shall give you!” They ask Him for His Pleasure and He says: “My Pleasure admitted you into My abode ‘Paradise’ and bestowed on you honour from Me. Ask Me and I shall give you!” They ask Him ‘again’ for His Pleasure. Then He makes them bear witness that they gained His Pleasure”. (al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb*: 3761)

210 This is the message the Believers are forever after left with. It constitutes two parts, both of which are repeated several times in this sura. The first part is a reminder of God’s Absolute Sovereignty over the Heavens, the Earth and all that exists within them. It is repeated in Ayas 17, 18, 40 and 120, all coming after talk of God Almighty’s Ability to Punish as well as Forgive. The second part, whereby God is Able over everything, closely relates to the first one and follows after it as seen in the ayas where it is mentioned: 17, 19, 40, 117 and 120. Both amount to the same effect, i.e. the All-Sovereign, All-Able God disposes of the affairs of His creation at will and no force will ever be able to counter His will. So, people need to be fully Mindful of Him at all times no matter what the circumstances might be; no matter how adverse they come to be.

To be able to sincerely Believe in Him, be Mindful of Him and worship Him as closely and devoutly as possible, the next sura, *al-An‘ām*, provides a detailed account of God’s Oneness and the Uniqueness of His Attributes: none is worthy of worship besides Him.

سُورَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ

al-An'ām
(Livestock)





al-An‘ām (Livestock)

Title: *al-An‘ām* (thus titled in al-Bukhārī: 3524; al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām, *Faḍā’il al-Qur‘ān*, p. 240; Ibn al-Ḍirrīs, *Faḍā’il al-Qur‘ān*, p. 196; al-Ṭabarānī: 12930) equates to livestock. The word *an‘ām* derives from *ni‘mah* which means bounty (cf. al-Ṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Livestock are mentioned in detail in this sura (cf. al-Suyūfī, *al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur‘ān*, 1/197) by way of providing a concrete Sign of God’s sole rightfulness to the worship of the Arabs of the time who depended greatly on their livestock in their daily lives. The Signs of God’s munificence for and nourishment of people are to be found all around us but we need to keep our eyes and hearts open. For these, one only needs to be grateful to God, ‘*Gratitude be to Allah*’, to Whom everything in the universe owes its life and livelihood.

Merit: it is one of the meritorious first seven lengthy suras of the Qur‘an (cf. Introductions to Suras 4 and 5). Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “*al-An‘ām* came down as a whole in Makkah at night, surrounded by seventy thousand angels raising their voices with glorification (*tasbīh*) ‘of Allah’” (al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām, *Faḍā’il al-Qur‘ān*, p. 240; Ibn al-Ḍirrīs, *Faḍā’il al-Qur‘ān*, p. 196; al-Ṭabarānī: 12930; Ibn Ḥajar deemed this narration sound (*ḥasan*) in *Natā’ij al-Afkār*, 3/227; Aḥmad Shākir deemed its chain of narrators sound in *‘Umdat al-Taḥfīr*, 1/761).

Theme: one of only five suras opening with the all too important statement of homage to God’s boundless munificence: *al-ḥamdu li Allāh* (*Gratitude be to Allah*; the other suras being: *al-Fātiḥah*, *al-Kahf*, *Saba’* and *Fāṭir*), *al-An‘ām* talks mainly of the proofs of God Almighty’s sole rightfulness to Lordship and discredits any form of worship extended to others besides Him (ﷻ). The many sub-themes of which this sura is made up are couched within this major discourse. The myriad Signs of God’s ability of creation, revelation, resurrection, reward and punishment, the story of Abraham (رضي الله عنه) as told here, the admonishment of the Deniers and the descriptions of livestock utilization are all meant to lead people to Believe in God by opening up their hearts and using the unclouded powers of their intellects, without prejudice.

Key: in order to grasp the meaning potential of this sura one has to realize the very crucial fact that it is a Makkan sura (the unanimity of exegetes regarding this sura as Makkan is reported by Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*, 1/162, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr* and Ibn ‘Āshūr). This is why we find in it numerous references to Makkah and the Arabian way of life. In the face of tyrannical oppression, the onslaught of hate and the incessant barrage of abuse they were bombarded with daily, the sura seeks to console the Prophet (ﷺ) and the fledging community around him as also to equip them with the right arguments to face up to their detractors and controvert their criticisms and arguments. To ascertain how revealing this sura is, one only needs to cite Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه): “If you want to realize just how ignorant the Arabs were then, read ‘the ayas’ beyond 130 of *al-An‘ām* up until: “*Losers indeed are those who killed their ‘own’ children out of foolishness with no basis in ‘proper’ knowledge, and forbade what Allah provided for them, falsely ascribing it ‘all’ to Allah; they have gone astray, and they were not guided*”” (al-Bukhārī: 3524).

The numerous times the Messenger (ﷺ) is commanded to address the doubtful by the word *qul* (say) underlines how fierce the debate was at those fraught times. This series of commands culminates in the ultimate stand-taking declaration: “Say ‘Muhammad’: “*Would I want to take as lord any other besides Allah while He is the Lord of everything. No soul shall earn ‘anything’ except it being against it; no burdened soul shall carry the burden of another*” (6: 164). No one who stares doubt, confusion and uncertainty in the face can afford to lose sight of *al-An‘ām*.

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

﴿1﴾ 'All' Gratitude be to Allah⁽¹⁾
Who created the Heavens and
Earth, and made darkness and
light⁽²⁾ yet the Deniers set up 'false'
equals to their Lord. ﴿2﴾ He is the
One Who created you 'people'
from clay⁽³⁾ then He decreed a term,
and 'another' term is specified
with Him⁽⁴⁾, yet still you doubt!

أَحْمَدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ
طِينٍ ثُمَّ قَضَىٰ أَجَلًا وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى عِنْدَهُ ثُمَّ
أَنْتُمْ تَمْتَرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

- 1 All praise is God's alone and none besides Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī).
- 2 The expression *al-ẓulumāt wa al-nūr* (lit. darknesses and light) is quite recurrent throughout the Qur'an. 'Darkness' is invariably always found in the plural form (*ẓulumāt*) whilst 'light' is conversely always in the singular. Here they could mean both tangible and abstract darkness and light; ignorance, Association and sin as opposed to knowledge, Belief and obedience (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
This sura being about proving with compelling, inexorable logic God Almighty's singular rightfulness to Lordship, being the sole Creator and Sustainer of the whole universe and all that exists therein, opens up magnificently with this succinct statement. That God is the Creator and the sole deserver of praise and gratitude, that He is the undisputed 'light' that sound human nature is born to vouch for is, given the many contexts that individuals find themselves plunged into, clouded over by multiple 'darknesses'. Yet, all of these 'darknesses' are decimated, one after another, in and through the upcoming ayas. The argument for this singular 'light' is expounded and advanced and the multi-layered, multi-faceted darkness is exposed before those who use their reason to a worthy end. All comes to a climax in Aya 6: 122 below: "*Is the one who was dead and We caused him to come alive and bestowed upon him a light to walk in among people be like the one who is plunged in complete darkness; there is no way for him to emerge out of which?*" (cf. also 2: 257).
- 3 Clay is the original substance of human creation (cf. 15: 26, 55: 14, 37: 11); Adam, the father of humanity, was created from clay, processed earth. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Su'ūd, al-Sa'dī)
- 4 There are two 'terms' (*ajal*) spoken of here. Exegetes have differed over the meaning of each of these. However, many of them (e.g. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr) are of the opinion that God Almighty has set a term for each individual's existence in life, throughout which they will be tried and tested, and then they will die and be turned into the original substance of which humans are made, earth (decomposed clay). This is the first term, whilst the second is the exact timing of the Day on which people

﴿3﴾ He is 'Allah' 'the One' in the Heavens and in Earth⁽⁵⁾; He Knows your 'hidden' secrets and what you make public and He Knows whatever you earn⁽⁶⁾.

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُ
وَجَهْرَهُ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْمُلُونَ ﴿٣﴾

﴿4﴾ Whatever a Sign of the Signs of their Lord comes to them; they will only turn away from it.

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا
كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ

﴿5﴾ They have 'wilfully' declared false the Truth when it came to them; the 'absolute' tidings of what they used to ridicule⁽⁷⁾ will 'certainly' reach them⁽⁸⁾.

لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيهِمْ أَنْبَأُ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ
يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٥﴾

will be resurrected and recreated alive again for judgement; no one knows the exact hour of the Day of Judgement except Almighty God Himself (7: 187). That people see and live through the all too incontrovertible fact of their very own existence, life and death, all around them, is all the more reason for them to be guided to Believing in the Creator, and to ask about the cogent reason behind their existence.

- 5 He is the most glorified Lord Who is rightfully worshipped by the dwellers of these two realms (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). "It is He Who is 'the only' God in the Heavens and 'the only' God in Earth; For He is the All-Wise, All-Knowing" (43: 84).

Note that the Majestic Name, Allah, is deliberately employed in this sura. It is used by way of bringing to mind the Supreme God Whom the Arabs related to (39: 3) but with an added, perspective-changing, emphasis on how He should be viewed. It is a call for a return to the pristine *hanīfiyyah* creed of the patriarch of Prophets, Abraham (ﷺ) of whom they were descendants.

- 6 Only such an Omnipotent, Omnipresent Lord should be heeded and worshipped, and none besides Him.
- 7 Here are three types of reaction to the Signs of God: first denying them and pretending to take no notice of them; secondly, casting aspersions on their truthfulness, and, thirdly, ridiculing and jeering at them. These three reactions are gradual and of varying intensity; the first being the less outspoken (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān). This plays into the bigger picture being drawn here of the stance taken by the Makkan pagans on Islam and its call and highlights how stiff in their opposition to it they were.
- 8 Sooner or later, they will come to realize the Truth of what they Denied. One instance of this, as opined by Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) (quoted in al-Ṭabarī), is

﴿6﴾ Had they not seen how many a generation⁽⁹⁾ before them We have destroyed? We had established them in the land⁽¹⁰⁾

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مَنِ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ
مَكَتَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

the story of one of the Quraysh chiefs, namely al-Walīd Ibn al-Mughīrah, who was one of Islam's brashest enemies and who is vividly described in Sura *al-Qalam*. He was told in that sura that he would be 'branded on the snout' (68: 16), and sure enough this news came true in the Battle of Badr, when his nose was smitten leaving an ineradicable, all visible mark on this most prominent site of pride, as per the Arab culture of the time. Yet, even this sign, he and the few around him did not heed. Another such notable example is the news of the victory of the Byzantines over the Persians after their humiliating defeats beginning in the year 613 up to 615, roughly three years after the Prophet (ﷺ) began his mission and in the midst of the heat of the onslaught against his call. A very remote possibility as it was, Sura *al-Rūm* gave an exact time for which the Byzantines would rebound and gain the upper hand over their enemies: "within a few (*biḍ'*) years", (30: 4). It was within *biḍ'* (anywhere between three and ten years (cf. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*)) that this foretelling took place. In 622, i.e. six or seven years after the Qur'anic prediction, the tide indeed turned in favour of the Byzantines and they gained the upper hand over their enemies. Even this though was not enough of a Sign for the Deniers; clearly, darkness is what they languished in.

It has to be said that, as per many an exegete, the realization of the Truth of the news of the Qur'an, of which they were told, would be in this worldly life and/or in the Hereafter, when they would be brought before ultimate justice.

- 9 *Qarn* which derives from the verb *qarana* (to join together/bundle up) is a large group of people or a nation joined together both temporally and spatially. It is also said of a stretch of time, the people who live through this time, or those who live during a period over which a Prophet was active in his career. It is said that *qarn* is 80 years long but no less than 30 years. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)
- 10 The Qurayshites had many of the ruins of previous, much more prosperous, nations all around them: "You 'Makkans' pass by their ruins morning *and night. Will you not use your reason?" (37: 137-138). They could also see many more of these majestic ruins, especially those of the wealthy Nabateans in Hegra (al-Ḥijr) and Petra (al-Batrā') respectively, during their famed winter and summer journeys (cf. 106: 2). The fact that these earlier nations who were endowed with such abundance and were given water (the source of life and prosperity) both flowing and pouring without end

'far' more firmly than how We established you 'people'! We sent the sky pouring down on them profusely and We made the rivers run under their feet, 'only' then We destroyed them for their sins⁽¹¹⁾ and We brought into being another generation after them.

مَا لَمْ تُمْكِنْ لَهُمْ وَأَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ مَدْرَارًا
وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَنْهَارَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ
بِدُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ ﴿٦﴾

﴿7﴾ (12) Had We sent you a Book in 'actual' sheets, so that they would touch it with their own hands, the Deniers would 'only' say: "This is nothing but sheer sorcery!"⁽¹³⁾
﴿8﴾ They 'further' said: "Had only there been an angel sent down to him!"⁽¹⁴⁾ Had We sent down an angel,

وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قِرْطَابٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ
بِأَيْدِيهِمْ لَقَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْحَرٌ
مُؤْتَمِنٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ
لَأَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكَ

were devastated, did not make them think over their fate contemptively. "Have they not travelled throughout the land to see what was the end of those 'destroyed' before them? They were far superior in might; they cultivated the land and developed it more than these 'Makkans' ever have. Their Messengers came to them with clear proofs. Allah would have never wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves" (30:9).

- 11 "Your Lord never destroys towns until He sends a Messenger to their mother 'town' to recite unto them Our Signs. And We never destroy towns, save when their people are wrongdoers" (28:59).
- 12 This passage expounds, explains and substantiates the previous one.
- 13 The reason for their Denial was not the seemingly weak abstract arguments and evidences they were being presented with, for even if they were to have concrete evidence brought to them (here, a heavenly book in touchable, tangible material, unlike the Unseen revelation that the Messenger (ﷺ) was relaying to them), they would still not Believe, out of deep-set aversion and ingrained antagonism (Ibn 'Uthaymīn). When faced with concrete evidence, they would always conjure up the lame ploy of calling it all nothing but magic: "And even if We opened for them a gate to Heaven, through which they continued to ascend, *they would still say: "Our eyes are hallucinating. We are bewitched!" (15: 14-15).
- 14 "And they say 'mockingly': "What kind of messenger is this who eats food and goes about in market-places 'for a living'? If only an angel had been sent down with him to be his co-warner!" (25: 7).

the whole matter would have been 'immediately' settled and they would not be given respite⁽¹⁵⁾. ﴿9﴾ Had We made him an angel, We would have 'certainly' made him 'in the form of' a man⁽¹⁶⁾ and then We would have confused them for what they 'contrive to' confuse⁽¹⁷⁾. ﴿10﴾ Indeed, Messengers before you were ridiculed, but those who used to ridicule them got hit by what they ridiculed.

لَقَضَى الْأَمْرَ لَمْ لَا يُظْرُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ
مَلَكَ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ
مَا يَلْبَسُونَ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَسْتَهْزَيْتَ بِرُسُلِ مِثْرَ
قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا
بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

15 The delivery of the Message usually takes years, if not even centuries as in the case of Prophet Noah (14 :29) (ﷺ), of hard, toilsome work, example setting, and argumentation and counter-argumentation. Angels were not created for this role. This is why God sends human Messengers; with whom people can interact, relate to and see them acting upon their own teachings, thus providing role models to be emulated and followed. Angels descending to Earth have only one job: to deliver what is 'true'; "either a Message to a human Messenger or a Punishment from God upon those who Deny it" (Mujāhid, quoted in al-Ṭabarī). "They 'brashly' say: "O you to whom the Reminder is revealed! You must be insane! *Why do you not bring us the angels, if what you say is true?" *We do not send down the angels, save in Truth 'Punishment', and were We to do so, they would be granted no respite" (15: 6-8).

Besides, God would not gratify haughty Deniers by answering their devious demands as much as He obliged His most faithful servants Abraham (ﷺ) when he asked Him to show him how He brings the dead to life (2: 260) and Jesus and his disciples when they asked for a heavenly feast (5: 114). Were Messengers to answer each one of these demands, the requests would have known no end. They would have been taken for a plaything, losing their meaning and becoming so commonplace as to be to no avail (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Sincere Belief has to emanate from the heart and be based on unshakable, profound certainty. It is not the result of the mere material realization of a miracle that vanishes once this outside source of awe is no longer perceivable (cf. al-Sa'dī).

16 Such a co-warner angel would have been made to appear in human form so that meaningful communication could take place. Otherwise, the Message could not be delivered to begin with thereby defeating the whole purpose as they would inevitably confuse him for a human being (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Wajīz, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

17 This shows that they were not sincere in their demand and that they only wanted to confuse and mystify matters.

﴿11﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Travel the land and look what was the fate of the deniers".

﴿12﴾ ⁽¹⁸⁾ Say 'Muhammad': "To whom belongs all what is in the Heavens and Earth? Say: "To 'Allah!'" – He decreed Mercy upon Himself⁽¹⁹⁾ – He shall gather you on the Day of Judgement in which there is no doubt. Those who have 'really' lost their souls are the ones who would not Believe". ⁽¹³⁾ For Him belongs what rests 'still' at night and in the morning⁽²⁰⁾—He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

﴿14﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Shall I take as ally 'any other' besides Allah,

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انظُرُوا كَيْفَ
كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١١﴾

قُلْ لِمَنْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ لِلَّهِ
كَتَبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ لِيَجْمَعَ كُمُ
إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ * وَاللَّهُ مَّا
سَكَنَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ
الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣﴾

قُلْ أَعْيُرَ اللَّهُ اتَّخَذُ وَلِيًّا

- 18 Instead of game playing and charade maintaining, they are presented here with real evidence, which engages both the heart and mind, rising above the banal material evidences they were proposing.
- 19 After mentioning the most plausible and irrefutable of all evidences, the creation of the Heavens and Earth, particularly since the Qurayshites did not reject this fact, God Almighty's Mercy is evoked to underline His absolute ability at any given time to destroy them for Denying in and doubting Him. This so that they realize that this happens even though they are given a chance to see reason and repent (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Baghawī, Ibn 'Āshūr). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "When Allah created all of the creatures, He wrote in His Book, which is with Him above the Throne: "My Mercy overrules My Wrath" (al-Bukhārī: 7404, Muslim: 2751). This also constitutes a message to the Believers who are too eager to see Divine Punishment overtake the Deniers (Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 20 This is to show that all dimensions are under the control of God Almighty; the spatial dimension, the Heavens and Earth, and the temporal dimension, day and night. Nothing exists outside the reach of His Power (al-Rāzī, Riḍā, Ibn 'Ādil), not even in their most imperceptible inert states; He is verily the All-Hearing, All-Knowing of everything!

the Originator⁽²¹⁾ of the Heavens and Earth, while He feeds and never is He fed?”⁽²²⁾ Say: “I was commanded to be the first to submit, and that: “Do not you be among the Associators”⁽²³⁾”.
 ﴿15﴾ Say: “I fear, should I disobey my Lord, the Punishment of a dreadful Day”.⁽¹⁶⁾ Whoever is averted ‘from Punishment’ on that Day, then He had Mercy on him—that indeed is the clearest success⁽²⁴⁾.

﴿17﴾ If Allah touches you with affliction, none will remove it except for Him, and if He touches you with good, then He is Able over everything⁽²⁵⁾.
 ﴿18﴾ He is the Most Dominant over His servants⁽²⁶⁾—He is the Most Wise, the All-Knowledgeable.

فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَهُوَ يُطْعَمُ
 وَلَا يُطْعَمُ فُلْ اِنِّيْ اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَكُوْنَ اَوَّلَ مَنْ
 اَسْلَمَ وَلَا تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُسْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ اِنِّيْ
 اَخَافُ اِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّيْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٦﴾
 مَنْ يُصْرَفْ عَنْهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْنَاهُ وَذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
 الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿١٧﴾

وَ اِنْ يَمَسَّ سِمْكَ اللّٰهِ بُصْرًا فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهٗ اِلَّا هُوَ
 وَ اِنْ يَمَسَّ سِمْكَ بَحِيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 قَدِيْرٌ ﴿١٧﴾ وَهُوَ الْفَاھِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهٖ وَهُوَ
 الْحَكِيْمُ الْخَبِيْرُ ﴿١٨﴾

- 21 *Fāṭir* comes from *fatara* (past tense) which means to create something totally brand new, unparalleled in the past (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 22 Only a Self-Sufficient, All-Sustaining God is worthy of worship and should be the only One sought for help. “*I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me. *I want no provision from them, nor do I want them to feed Me. *Indeed, Allah is the One Who is the Supreme Provider—Owner of Power, Ever Mighty*” (51: 56-58).
- 23 This direct quote within the indirect report is meant as a two-fold delivery of this, most crucial Message; first for the Messenger (ﷺ), to assert his firmness, and secondly to deliver it to others (al-Shinqīṭī, al-‘Aḥb al-Namīr).
- 24 “...whoever is dragged away from Hellfire and entered into Paradise, then he is a winner” (3: 185).
- 25 This is further evidence of God Almighty’s Lordship as opposed to all besides Him, especially the idols whom the Makkans used to worship. They could not create anything, let alone the whole universe, or provide sustenance for their servants, nor could they harm or remove harm, bring good or prevent it (Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 26 God Almighty’s total, unchecked dominance over His servants is a notion which is underlined in many Qur’anic passages; cf. 10: 107, 33: 17, 35: 2, 39: 38, 48: 11.

﴿19﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "What thing is most weighty in testimony?"⁽²⁷⁾ Say: "Allah is a Witness between me and you. He revealed to me this Qur'an to warn you with it and whoever it reaches. Certainly you testify that there are other gods with Allah". Say: "I 'most certainly' do not testify 'to this'!" Say: "He is none but One God. I certainly denounce what you Associate 'with Him'"⁽²⁸⁾.

﴿20﴾ Those to whom We gave the Book know him 'Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)' as much as they know their 'own' children. Those who have 'really' lost their souls are the ones who would not Believe⁽²⁹⁾.

قُلْ أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَكْبَرُ شَهَادَةً قُلْ اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَأُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنذِرَكُمْ بِهِ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ أَتَيْكُمْ لَتَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ قُلْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ وَإِنِّي بِرَبِّيءٌ
مَّمَّا تَشْتَرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ
أَبْنَاءَهُمُ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

27 To prove the Truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), God is evoked as Arbiter between him and his opponents (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). In Arab culture, this is a very solemn undertaking; building on a sort of a code of honour. That God's Most Majestic Name, 'Allah', is specifically mentioned draws on the addressees' belief that Allah is Most Supreme over all the gods whom they claimed they only worshipped to draw them nearer to Him (39: 3). He is the One by Whom they used to bind each other in their pledges, dealings and interactions (cf. 4:1). They owed all their exceptional privileges over and above the whole of Arabia, to their legitimacy as guardians of His holiest shrine, the Ka'bah. So to evoke His Name in testimony is extremely serious, especially when it comes from the one person whom they used to call *al-amīn* (the honest), Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). "Nay' But 'in spite of the Deniers' Allah 'Himself' bears witness to what He sent down to you – He sent it with His Knowledge – and the angels bear witness 'to it' too—sufficient is Allah 'indeed' as Witness" (4: 166).

28 This is the testimony of monotheism: the ultimate declaration, that there is only One God worthy of worship, Allah (ﷻ).

29 The People of the Book commanded much respect in the Arab collective consciousness because they were considered learned owing to their having

﴿21﴾ Who is more unjust than him who fabricated lies against Allah, or rejected His Signs—‘certainly’ the unjust are never successful. ﴿22﴾ On the Day when We round them all up, then We say to those who Associated: “Where are your Associates⁽³⁰⁾, whom you used to ‘falsely’ claim?” ﴿23﴾ At that their plea would be only saying: “By Allah, our Lord, we were not Associators”.⁽³¹⁾ ﴿24﴾ Look how they lied to themselves and what they used to fabricate deserted them!

﴿25﴾ Some among them would listen to you; ‘but’ We have put sheaths over their hearts, lest they would perceive it, and in their ears there is impairment⁽³²⁾.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ
 إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا
 ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا إِنَّا سَرَكْنَا فِي الَّذِينَ كُفَرْتُمْ
 تَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُنْ فَتِنُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا وَاللَّهِ
 رَبَّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُوا
 عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَصَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ
 أَلْهَةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا

Scriptures, whereas the Arabs of that time were overwhelmingly illiterate (62: 2). They are being brought to the fore here by way of forestalling an assumed argument of the Makkans against Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The People of the Book had an exact description of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in their Scriptures yet a great many of them did not Believe: “...those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find inscribed in the Torah and the Evangel that is with them, who enjoins upon them what is right, and forbids them what is wrong, and makes good things lawful for them, and forbids them bad things, and relieves them of their burden and the shackles that were upon them. Thus those who Believe in him, honour him, help him, and follow the Light that has been sent down with him; it is they who shall prosper” (7: 157).

30 Those whom they worshipped besides God Almighty.

31 “On the Day Allah resurrects them all, they will ‘falsely’ swear to Him as they swear to you, thinking they have something to stand on. Indeed, it is they who are the ‘total’ liars” (58: 18).

32 This is the case of those among the Deniers who would not see the Truth no matter what they are being presented with. This is because they willingly

Even if they see every Sign, they would not Believe in it⁽³³⁾; so much so that when they come to dispute with you, the Deniers would 'willingly' say: "This is nothing but merely 'a retelling of the' scribbles of the ancients!"⁽³⁴⁾

وَأَن يَرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا
جَاءُوكَ يُجَادِلُونَكَ يَقُولَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِن
هَذَا إِلَّا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

and eagerly rushed into rejecting God's Signs as a matter of principle and out of entrenched beliefs. They knew that Believing would dispossess them of their special privileges, status and prestige, as Islam aimed to build a fundamentally equalitarian society. They just could not bring themselves to Believe in all that leads to this new state of affairs: "Those who Denied said: "Do not listen to this Qur'an. Drown it out so that hopefully you will gain the upper hand" (41: 26); "Some of them would listen to you and when they come out of your place they say: "What did he say earlier?" (47: 16); "They said: "Our hearts are in sheaths regarding what you call us for, there is impairment in our ears and between us and you is a barrier. Do your best then because we will surely be doing our best!" (41: 5).

Other ayas describe the same Denial: "And who is more unjust than those who, when reminded of their Lord's Signs, turn away from them and forget what their own hands have done? We have certainly put sheaths over their hearts – leaving them unable to perceive this 'Qur'an' – and impairment in their ears. And if you invite them to guidance, they will never be guided" (18: 57); "When you recite the Qur'an, We place a hidden veil between you and those who Believe not in the Hereafter. *We have placed sheaths over their hearts, preventing them from perceiving it, and impairment in their ears. When you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn their backs and run away" (17: 45-46).

33 "Yet, whenever they see a Sign, they turn away, saying: "Same old sorcery!" (54: 2).

34 This is a dynamic equivalence translation, reproducing a comparable affective import in the target language. Another translation would be: "This is nothing but myths of old!" Literally, *asāṭir*, are written news and stories of ancient times, where fact and myth are inextricably intertwined (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'an*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). This claim is a familiar ruse of the Deniers: "Whenever Our Signs are recited to them, they say: "We have already heard 'the recitation'. If we wanted, we could have easily produced something similar. This is nothing but scribbles of the ancients!" (8: 31); "They say: "This is nothing but scribbles of the ancients, which he had written down: they are dictated to him morning and evening"" (25: 5).

﴿26﴾ They strongly caution ‘people’ against it ‘the Truth’ and they ‘themselves’ strike a distance away from it; they only destroy themselves unwittingly⁽³⁵⁾.

وَهُمْ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَيَنْعَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَإِنْ يُهْلِكُونَ
إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

﴿27﴾ ⁽³⁶⁾ If only you could see ‘Muhammad’ when they were stood at the Fire and then said: “How we wish we could be returned then we would ‘surely’ not deny the Signs of our Lord and would be among the Believers!⁽³⁷⁾” ﴿28﴾ Nay, but what they used to hide⁽³⁸⁾ before was made to come all too true to them. If they were to return they would ‘only’ backtrack to what they were forbidden from—indeed they are liars.

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَى النَّارِ فَقَالُوا يَا لَيْتَنَا
نُرَدُّ وَلَا نُكَذِّبُ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا وَنَكُونُ مِنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ بَلْ بَدَأَ اللَّهُ مَا كَانُوا يُخْفُونَ مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ
لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

- 35 “Are those whose evil-doing is made so appealing to them that they deem it good ‘like those who are rightly guided’?” (35: 8).
- 36 This passage is meant to console the Prophet (ﷺ) and assure him of the Deniers’ fate – those who caused him much pain and distress – by giving him a preview of some events of the Day of Judgement. The scenes and sights being depicted are so real that the past tense is used as if the events had already taken place. The past tense is also meant as an assurance that the case has already been settled.
- 37 “As for those who Deny, theirs shall be the Fire of Hell. They will neither be done away with so as to die; nor will any of its Punishment be lightened for them. Thus do We requite every Denier. *They will howl out shouting therein: “Our Lord! Let us out, that we may do good other than that which we used to do. Did We not give you long life, enough for whosoever would reflect to reflect therein? And the Warner came to you, so taste ‘the Punishment’! The wrongdoers shall have no helpers.”” (35: 36-37).
- 38 Their realization of the Truth of the Message (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, ‘Uddat al-Ṣābirin, p. 186, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). They knew for sure that it was true but nonetheless they denied it all the same: “They denied them ‘the Signs’, in their wickedness and their pride, even though their souls acknowledged them as true. See how those who spread corruption met their end!” (27: 14).

﴿29﴾ 'Earlier in the worldly life' They used to say: "It is nothing but this worldly life of ours and we shall not be resurrected!" ﴿30﴾ 'But' If only you could see 'Muhammad' when they were stood in front of their Lord; He said: "Is not this real?" They said: "Most certainly, by our Lord!" He said: "Taste you then the Punishment for your Denying". ﴿31﴾ Losers indeed are those who deny the meeting of Allah, until when the Hour comes upon them all of a sudden, they would say: "Woe be us for wasting it 'our lives'!" ﴿39﴾ They would carry their 'burdensome' sins over their backs—sordid indeed what they carry. ﴿32﴾ This worldly life is nothing but a plaything, a distraction, but the final abode is better for the Mindful—have you no sense! ﴿40﴾

وَقَالُوا إِن هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَى رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ بَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّنَا قَالَ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً قَالُوا يَحْسِرْتَنَّا عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَطْنَا فِيهَا وَهُمْ يَحْمِلُونَ أَوْرَادَهُمْ عَلَىٰ ظُهُورِهِمْ ۗ أَلِيسَاءَ مَا يَزُرُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَهْوُ وَلِلْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يُتَّقُونَ ۗ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

39 "Follow 'the Qur'an' the best of what has been sent down to you from your Lord, before the Punishment comes upon you all of a sudden while you are unaware, *lest any soul should say: "Woe is me for having neglected what is due to God, and having been one of those who scoffed!" (39: 55-56).

40 This life is nothing but an illusory enjoyment (3: 185) that will soon come to an abrupt end by death, but the Hereafter is the real life, the everlasting abode, that those of sound reason need to strive for: "The life of this world is merely a plaything and a distraction; the true life is in the Final Abode, if only they knew" (29: 64); "Know you all that the life of this world is but a plaything, a distraction, an ornament, mutual boasting among you, and vying for increase in property and children—the likeness of a rain whose vegetation impresses the farmers; then it withers such that you see it turn yellow; then it becomes chaff. And in the Hereafter there shall be severe Punishment, forgiveness from Allah, and Pleasure, and the life of this world is naught but an illusory enjoyment" (57: 20).

al-Mustawrid Ibn Shaddād (رحمته الله) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "By Allah, this worldly life by comparison to the Hereafter is like a person who

﴿33﴾ (41) We 'surely' Know that what they say saddens you⁽⁴²⁾. 'Know then that' They do not 'really' think you a liar, but the wrongdoers are 'only' dismissive of the Signs of Allah⁽⁴³⁾. ﴿34﴾ Many a Messenger before you has been rejected, but they persevered in the face of their rejection; they were harmed until Our victory came to them. None can change the Words of Allah⁽⁴⁴⁾; the profound news of the Messengers came to you⁽⁴⁵⁾.

قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزَنُكَ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يَكَذِبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ إِنَّمَا يُتِيَاكَ يُحَادِدُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا وَأُوذُوا حَتَّىٰ أَنَّهُمْ نَصَرْنَا وَلَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِنْ نَبِيَّا
الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

dips this finger (pointing his index finger) in the sea; see how much he draws from it!” (Muslim: 2858).

- 41 This passage gives a glimpse at the woes and pains that our great Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) had to endure in his struggle to deliver the Message. He was met with stiff opposition and outright enmity by his own clan and some of his closest relatives, which naturally saddened and pained him. They customarily called him a madman, a sorcerer, a charlatan, a liar, a mere rhymester; they rejected his Message calling it mere scribbles of the ancients, and they hurled many more jeers and sneers at him; and their persecutions were by no means any less severe. But God Almighty was on his side. He bolstered him with the necessary support and comfort to get over such states and to carry on delivering the Message, striving in the cause (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 42 The great grief the Prophet (ﷺ) experienced is laconically captured in the following aya: “*But, perhaps you 'Muhammad' will grieve yourself to death over their Denial, if they 'continue to' Deny in this Discourse*” (18: 6).
- 43 They knew for sure that he came with the Truth, but out of intransigence and haughtiness, they would not admit this (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī). The Qur'an employs the word *jaḥada* which means to deny and reject with the tongue what the heart surely knows to be the Truth; the noun *juhūd*, which derives from it, means ingratitude (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).
- 44 That He (ﷻ) will grant victory to His Messengers and the sincerely faithful around them (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Ashūr): “*Our Word has already been given to Our servants, the Messengers, that: it is they who will be made victorious, and that Our forces will certainly prevail*” (37: 171-173); “*Allah decreed that: "I shall prevail, Me and My Messengers—verily Allah is All-Powerful, All-Prevailing"*” (58: 21).
- 45 “*And all We relate to you 'Muhammad' of the stories of the Messengers is to reassure your heart*” (11: 120).

﴿35﴾ (46) If their aversion is too hard on you, then if you can seek out a tunnel in the ground or ladder to the sky, so that you may bring them a Sign 'then do it'; 'but' if Allah so wished He would have banded them all together around guidance, so be not among the ignorant.

وَإِنْ كَانَ كِبُرُ عَلَيْكَ إِعْرَاضُهُمْ فَإِنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تَنْبَغِيَ نَفَقًا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ سَلْمًا فِي السَّمَاءِ فَتَأْتِيَهُمْ بَيِّنَاتٌ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

﴿36﴾ (47) Indeed only those who can hear⁽⁴⁸⁾ will respond, yet the dead, Allah will resurrect them and then to Him they return⁽⁴⁹⁾. ﴿37﴾ They said: "If only a Sign from his Lord would be sent down to him!"⁽⁵⁰⁾

* إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ وَالْمَوْتَىٰ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ تَوًّا إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ

- 46 In the face of this fierce onslaught, the Prophet (ﷺ) is told that he can do none of the sort of actions mentioned, whether digging a tunnel or climbing up a ladder to the sky, in response to his foes' preposterous demands. Had God wished, He would have made them all willingly embrace his call. So he need not feel anguish on account of this (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ṭaṇṭāwī, *al-Taḥsīn al-Wasīṭ*): "Had your Lord 'O Muhammad' so willed, all 'people' on Earth would have certainly Believed, every single one of them! Would you then force people to become Believers?" (10: 99).
- 47 This passage carries on from the few previous ones further expanding on them. Those who fail to be guided are so done by because they themselves are adamantly unwilling to receive the Signs of God. They are 'dead' to them revelling and languishing in a bottomless pit of darkness (cf. Riḍā, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 48 Those who are well-tuned and receptive (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).
- 49 Those who rebel against the call to Truth and are 'dead' to it will meet their fate on the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr). That the misguided are 'dead' is a metaphor that carries on in Aya 6:122 below: "Is the one who was dead and We caused him to come alive and bestowed upon him a light to walk in among people be like the one who is plunged in complete darkness; there is no way for him to emerge out of which?" (al-Shinqīṭī draws attention to this point).
- 50 They keep on asking for miraculous 'signs' even though whatever Signs they might be given would not be believed in (Aya 25 above), seeking thereby only to further confound and complicate matters (Aya 9 above) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī). This is their oft-evoked lame excuse: "They

Say 'Muhammad': "Indeed Allah can send down a Sign"; but most of them know not⁽⁵¹⁾. ﴿38﴾ There is not a single moving creature on Earth or a bird flying with its two wings except them being nations like you⁽⁵²⁾ – We left nothing

قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ آيَةً وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَّمٌ مِثْلًا لَكُمْ مَّا قَرَّبْنَا

say: "We will not Believe in you 'Muhammad' until you make a spring gush out of the ground for us; *or until you have a garden of date palms and vines, and make rivers pour through them; *or make the sky fall on us in pieces, as you claimed will happen; *or bring Allah and the angels before us face to face; *or have a house made of gold; or ascend into the sky, 'but' even then, we will not Believe in your ascension until you send a 'tangible' book down for us to read". Say: "Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a mortal, a Messenger?" (17: 90-93).

- 51 This draws attention to their sheer ignorance of the laws of God and what befell many a nation before them: when people ask for a sign and choose afterwards to declare it false, they will surely meet a swift reckoning. An example at hand is that of the Thamūd, their not too distant neighbours, who asked for a supernatural she-camel as a Sign but chose to disbelieve in it afterwards, miraculous as it was, and God exacted justice on them momentarily: "Nothing keeps Us from sending the 'demanded' Signs except that they had 'already' been denied by earlier peoples. And We gave the Thamūd the she-camel as a clear 'Sign', but they wrongfully rejected it. We only send the Signs as a warning" (17: 59).
- 52 The 'Signs' are everywhere, all around them but being 'out of tune' and adamantly contradicting resulted in their sense of perception being blotched; they are "deaf and dumb in the bosom of darkness" as if 'dead'. All the creatures around us are but nations like us; in them are enough Signs for those of sound reason to see and know the path to God. They are created, provided for, brought to death and resurrected by God Almighty. All of their lives, livelihoods and deeds are recorded to the smallest detail in the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz*): "There is no moving creature on Earth but that its provision lies with Allah. And He knows its dwelling place and its repository. All is 'accounted for' in a clear Book" (11: 6; cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- The One who does all this, is more than Able to bring them whatever Sign He wishes (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shirbīnī), and to Him they shall all be returned: "We know best the way they listen, when they listen to you and when they confer in secret, and these wrongdoers say: "You are only following a man who is bewitched". *See what they think you are like! But they are lost and cannot find the right way. *They also say: "What? When we are turned to bones and dust, shall we really be raised up in a new act of creation? *Say: "Yes' Even if you were 'as hard as' stone, or iron,

unaccounted for in the Book – and then to their Lord they shall be gathered. ⁴³⁹ Those who deny Our Signs are deaf and dumb in ‘the bosom of’ darkness⁵³. Whoever Allah wishes, He misguides and whoever He wishes, He places him on a Straight Path.

⁴⁴⁰ ⁽⁵⁴⁾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “Would you not see that when Allah’s Punishment comes to you or the Hour comes upon you, would you pray to any besides ‘Allah’ if only you are truthful?” ⁴⁴¹ “Nay, but it is He Whom you would pray to, then He removes what you pray to Him for, if He so wills, and you forget about what you Associate ‘with Him’.”⁽⁵⁵⁾

فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُمٌّ وَبُكْمٌ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ مَن يَشَاءِ اللَّهُ يُضِلِّهِ وَمَن يَشَاءِ يُعِزَّهُ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٩﴾

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ كُمُ إِذَا نَادَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَنِ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآتُوا زَكَاةً لَّسَاعَةَ أَعْبِرَ اللَّهُ تَدْعُونَ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ بَلْ إِنِّي آتَاهُ تَدْعُونَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِن شَاءَ وَتَنْسَوْنَ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

**or any other creation you think hard to bring to life”. Then they will say: “Who will bring us back?” Say: “The One Who created you the first time”. Then they will shake their heads at you and say: “When will that be?” Say: “It may well be very soon: *it will be the Day when He calls you, and you answer by praising Him, and you think you have stayed ‘on Earth’ only a little while” (17: 47-52).*

- 53 *Zulumāt* (lit. darknesses) is, as always given in the Qur’an, in the plural. They waste their lives away in the darknesses of Denying, ignorance and intransigence (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 54 Then, people might have had many gods whom they Associated with God, but when they were touched by affliction or hit by disaster they quickly turned to the One and only God, the ‘Allah’ they knew for sure as All-Able, All-Dominant. At those times their recalcitrance evaded them (cf. al-Rāzī): “He is the One Who enables you to travel through land and sea. And it so happens that you are on ships, sailing with a favourable wind, to the passengers’ delight. Suddenly, the ships are overcome by a gale wind and those on board are overwhelmed by waves from every side, and they assume they are doomed. They cry out to Allah ‘alone’ in sincere devotion: “If You save us from this, we will certainly be grateful” (10: 22).
- 55 “When you are touched with hardship at sea, you forget all ‘the gods’ you ‘normally’ invoke, except Him. But when He delivers you ‘safely’ to shore, you turn away. Humans are ever ungrateful” (17: 67).

﴿42﴾ We have certainly sent 'Messengers' to nations before you 'Muhammad'; We took them by affliction and hardship, so that they might humble themselves.

﴿43﴾ Were they only when Our affliction befell them to 'sincerely' humble themselves!⁽⁵⁶⁾ Nay, but their hearts became hard and Satan made what they used to do look attractive to them⁽⁵⁷⁾. ﴿44﴾ When they forgot what they were reminded of⁽⁵⁸⁾, We opened up for them the doors of everything⁽⁵⁹⁾; yet when they become full of gloating over what they were given,

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُم
بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾
فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِن قَسَتْ
فُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا
عَلَيْهِمُ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا

56 *Yataḍarra'u* is to worship God with all sincerity and in humbleness. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

57 Denial, Association and sinning. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

58 They deliberately disregarded what their Messengers conveyed to them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

59 The doors that were shut to them at times of hardship will be opened and they will experience a life of ease, limitless abundance and merriment. When they become too gleefully sure of it, God brings His swift reckoning over their heads (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī): "*Whenever We sent a Prophet to a town, We afflicted its 'Denying' people with suffering and hardships, so that they might humble themselves 'before Us', *and then We changed their hardship into prosperity, until they multiplied. But then they 'smugly' said: "Hardship and affluence also befell our forefathers", and so We took them all of a sudden, unawares*" (7: 94-95). 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "When you see Allah providing generously for a servant, despite him being 'rebelliously' sinful, then know that it is by way of luring him 'into a trap'". Then he (رضي الله عنه) recited: "*When they forgot what they were reminded of, We opened up for them the doors of everything; yet when they become full of gloating over what they were given, We took them all of a sudden, and lo they are full of despair*" (Aḥmad: 17311, al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ*: 9272, al-Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab al-Īmān*: 4220). This aya, further, relates back to Aya 11 above, which encourages taking heed from the fate of earlier nations who Denied their Messengers.

We took them all of a sudden, and lo they are seized with despair. ⁴⁴⁵ The people who did wrong were utterly wiped out; all gratitude be to Allah, the Lord of all beings.

⁴⁴⁶ Say 'Muhammad': "Would you not see that if Allah were to take away your hearing and your sight; and seal your hearts, what god besides 'Allah' would restore it 'all' back to you!⁶⁰ Look 'Muhammad' how We expound the Signs to them and then they 'defiantly' turn away!⁴⁷ Say 'Muhammad': "Would you not see that if Allah's Punishment befalls you all of a sudden or plainly to sight; would none but only the wrongdoers be destroyed?⁶²

أَخَذْنَهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾
فَقَطَّعَ دَائِرَ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ وَأَبْصَارَكُمْ
وَحَتَمَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ مِنَ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ
بِهِ أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نَصَرَفُ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ هُمْ
يَصْدَفُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ عَدَابُ
اللَّهِ بَغْتَةً أَوْ جَهْرَةً هَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ
الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

- 60 This passage sheds further light and expounds upon the previous one; providing yet further Signs of the Truth and God's Omnipotence. (Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 61 They are reminded to take heed, being warned about a Punishment for the nature of their rejection. The argument goes that any god would normally want hearing, seeing and mindful servants who are able to worship him and pay him homage, but given that the Deniers made no use of these perceptual faculties to come to realize the Truth for what it really is (knowing all too well that their false gods are not in the least able to either benefit or harm them, being nothing more than stones and inanimate objects), and fully knowing that only 'Allah' (God) is able over everything, they might as well be bereft of them (cf. al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-'Aḥḥ al-Namīr).
- 62 Punishment could come to them suddenly without warning or after the coming of its harbingers and none could tip them off in the case of the earlier or save them in the case of the latter; either way, only the Deniers will be taken, and God saves His sincere servants (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Those who Believe and do not mix their Belief with injustice, for those is security and they are 'truly' guided" (6: 82).

﴿48﴾ We send Messengers as nothing but bearers of glad tidings and warners⁽⁶³⁾; whoever Believes and mends 'their ways' then they should not fear nor need they grieve⁽⁶⁴⁾, ﴿49﴾ 'but' those who reject Our Signs, Punishment touches them for their rebelliousness. ﴿50﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "I would not say to you that I hold the treasures of Allah, I do not know 'about' the Unseen⁽⁶⁵⁾, I would not say to you that I am an angel; I only follow what is revealed to me". Say 'Muhammad': "Are the blind and the seeing 'persons' alike?⁽⁶⁶⁾ Would you 'Deniers' not reflect!"

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ
 فَمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
 يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا بِمَسْهُمْ
 الْعَذَابُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ
 لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ
 وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ إِنِّي أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ
 إِلَيَّ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ أَفَلَا
 تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

- 63 This explains plainly that God sends human Messengers for specific purposes, whereby they come to deliver the Message they were entrusted with, but are not to be toyed with. (Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 64 Those who come to embrace Faith in all sincerity are given assurance against future Punishment; they should not be saddened over their previous rebellious actions. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 65 Messengers are but human beings who warn people against rebelling against God and bring them glad tidings of the good rewards in store for those who listen and pay heed. They come with a Message to open up peoples' hearts and minds to the Truth; they are not endowed with the supernatural powers that people want them to demonstrate at will: "Say 'Muhammad': 'I have no power over benefit or harm, 'even' to myself, except as Allah may please: if I had knowledge of the Unseen, I would have abundant good things and no harm could touch me. I am no more than a bearer of warning, and good news to those who Believe'" (7: 188). This clear, definite reply puts an end to their disputatious demands.
- 66 The analogy of the blind and the seeing replicates the other contrasting comparisons between the dead and the living, the deaf and the hearing, with which this sura abounds. Those who are being contrasted here are the Deniers who are 'blind' to the Truth and the Believers who can see it plainly for what it is (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿51﴾ (67) Warn with it⁽⁶⁸⁾ 'Muhammad' those who fear being gathered before their Lord – there is none besides Him as an ally or intercessor for them⁽⁶⁹⁾ – so they might be Mindful. ﴿52﴾ Do not 'Muhammad' turn away⁽⁷⁰⁾ those who pray to their Lord early and late in the day seeking 'only' His Face⁽⁷¹⁾; you will not be brought to account over them nor will they be brought to account over your deeds so that you may turn them away, 'mind you' lest you would be among the wrongdoers.

وَأَنْذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يُحْشَرُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا سَفِيحٌ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

67 Now, discourse sheds light on yet another segment of that society, the less favoured who had no vested interest in the status quo but who wholeheartedly embraced the Message of Truth. A truth they readily saw.

68 The Qur'an. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

69 They sincerely fear God because they fully realize that there will be none on the Day of Judgement to help them or intercede with Him except the Almighty Himself (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

70 In these early days, the ones who sincerely Believed were mostly from among the underprivileged societal denominations, paupers and slaves, so out of sheer egotism when those belonging to the upper echelons of society wanted to sit with the Prophet they disdainfully demanded these 'others' be sent away. Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه) said: "We were with the Prophet (ﷺ), six of us, when the Associates said to him: "Send these away, lest they get overfamiliar with us!" He continued: "There were me, 'Abdullāh' Ibn Mas'ūd, a man from 'the clan of' Hudhayl, Bilāl 'Ibn Rabāḥ' and another two men whom I do not know their names. Something 'of sorts' occurred to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and then Allah sent down: "Do not 'Muhammad' turn away those who pray to their Lord early and late in the day'" (Muslim: 2413).

Such haughtiness was known about since the first Messenger, Noah (عليه السلام), was sent to humanity: "They said: "Why should we Believe you 'Noah' when only the rif-raff follow you?" *He said: "What knowledge do I have of what they used to do? *It is for my Lord alone to bring them to account - if only you could see - *I will not drive Believers away. *I am but a clear warner"" (26: 111-115).

71 The fact that they are busy with mentioning and praying to their Lord at these two most busy times of the day underlines how devoted they were (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

﴿53﴾ Like so We tested some of them by means of others⁽⁷²⁾, so they 'the haughty' would say: "Is it these whom Allah favoured among us!" Is not Allah more aware of the thankful?⁽⁷³⁾ ﴿54﴾ When those who Believe in Our Signs come to you say 'to them': "Peace be upon you – your Lord decreed Mercy upon Himself – whoever of you commits evil out of ignorance then repents afterwards, and mends 'their ways', then Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful"⁽⁷⁴⁾.

﴿55﴾ Like so We spell out the Signs so that the path of the criminals becomes plain 'to sight'⁽⁷⁵⁾.

وَكَذَلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لِيَقُولُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِالشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهْلَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نَفْصَلُ الْآيَاتِ وَلِتَسْتَبِينَ سَبِيلُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

- 72 That mainly the less significant of the population were the first to embrace the call is yet another test for the notables of society. In order to become true Believers, they would have to suppress their feelings of deep contempt and really consider themselves brethren with those whom they saw themselves as vastly superior to (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 73 Their senses were not clouded by worldly distractions, so they knew the Truth for what it really was once they saw it; they readily counted God's many favours on them and became thankful.
- 74 No matter what rank other mortals held them at, they were practically honoured by their Most High Lord. They were to be amiably received and greeted by the Noble Messenger (ﷺ), given the good tidings of God's Mercy to them and told that their sins will be forgiven once they seek repentance. These were the most solid kernel of the Believing society, who performed many death-defying acts of heroism and whose role was decisive in bolstering the preservation of the whole Faith community in those early days.
- 75 The path of the Believers further draws attention to how swerved the path of the Deniers is (al-Rāzī, al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūm*). The Believers' whole-hearted, unconditional acceptance of the call of Truth was to be yet another Sign of the true path to take had the Deniers' senses not been clouded: "If they 'the Deniers' see the path of guidedness, they would not take it as a path..." (7: 146).

﴿56﴾ (76) Say ‘Muhammad’: “I was forbidden to worship those you invoke besides Allah”. Say: “I shall not follow your ‘vain’ desires⁽⁷⁷⁾; ‘for then’ I shall be misguided and not among the guided”. ﴿57﴾ Say: “I stand on clear evidence from my Lord, yet you deny it; I do not have what you are in a hurry for⁽⁷⁸⁾. Only Allah has a decision ‘about that’; He declares the Truth—He is the best of adjudicators”. ﴿58﴾ Say: “If I have what you seek to hasten, the matter between me and you would have been ‘soon’ settled—Allah knows best the wrongdoers⁽⁷⁹⁾”.

﴿59﴾ (80) “He ‘Allah’ has the keys of the Unseen⁽⁸¹⁾, only He knows them.

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهِيتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَا آتِيْعَ أَهْوَاءَكُمْ قَدْ ضَلَلْتُ إِذًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِهِ مَا عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ يَقْضِي الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَاصِلِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قُلْ لَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ لَقَضِيَ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

*وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِيْحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ

- 76 The diatribe against the Deniers is renewed here with emphasis on stating a clear position which strikes a definite distance from the path of the misguided (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Ashūr).
- 77 Following vain desires is what led them to stray. (Abū Ḥayyān)
- 78 That is Punishment from God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “They also said: “O Allah, if this really is the Truth from You, then rain stones on us from the heavens, or send us some other painful Punishment” (8: 32); “They say: “Our Lord, hasten us our share of Punishment before the Day of Reckoning!” (38: 16).
- 79 An allusion to the destruction of the ‘wrongdoers’; a throwback to Aya 47 above.
- 80 The following are indications of the absolute Omnipotence and Omniscience of the One and true Master of the universe, Whom they Deny out of sheer ignorance (Abū Ḥayyān).
- 81 *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* (lit. keys of the Unseen) is invariably interpreted by exegetes as *khazā’in al-ghayb*, troves of the Unseen. Although this passage provides a number of these ‘keys’ that lie beyond human perceptions, the example usually given is Aya 31: 34: “Indeed, Allah ‘alone’ has the

He knows ‘all’ what is there in the land and sea; not a leaf that falls without Him knowing about it, not a seed in the ‘deepest recess of the’ darkness of Earth⁽⁸²⁾, not a thing moist nor dry⁽⁸³⁾ except ‘it’ being in a clarifying book⁽⁸⁴⁾.”
 ﴿60﴾ “He is the One Who terminates your ‘lives’ at night⁽⁸⁵⁾ and knows what you earn during the day, then He sets you off ‘again’ during it ‘the day’ so that a specified term comes to an end⁽⁸⁶⁾; then to Him is your return then He gives you the news about what you used to do⁽⁸⁷⁾.” ﴿61﴾ “He is the Most Dominant over His servants⁽⁸⁸⁾

وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنَ
 وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظِلْمَتِ الْأَرْضِ
 وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٥٩﴾
 وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُم
 بِالنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَىٰ أَجَلٌ
 مُّسْتَقَرٌّ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا
 كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ

knowledge of the Hour. He sends down the rain, and knows what is in the wombs. No soul knows what it will earn for tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it will die. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware’.

- 82 The seeds buried deep in the ground. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 83 Exegetes hold different opinions regarding the meaning of this binary pair; however al-Baghawī notes that ‘moist’ and ‘dry’ could be used as metonyms for life and death, respectively.
- 84 The Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz*) in which everything is clearly written ever since God first created the universe. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 85 The taking of people’s souls away from their bodies during their sleep (known as *al-wafāt al-ṣuḡhrā*; the lesser death) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “Allah takes the souls of the dead and the souls of the living while they sleep - He keeps hold of those whose death He has ordained and sends the others back until their appointed time - there truly are Signs in this for those who reflect” (39: 42).
- 86 A person’s life.
- 87 On the Day of Judgement, God will bring people to account for their deeds after reviewing their records in public. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 88 God Almighty’s total, unchecked Dominance over His servants is a notion which is underlined in many Qur’anic passages; cf. 10: 107, 35: 2, 39: 38, 48: 11, 33: 17.

and He sends 'constant' keepers⁽⁸⁹⁾ over you, until when death comes upon any of you, Our messengers⁽⁹⁰⁾ terminate his life; never do they neglect 'a thing'". ⁽⁶²⁾ ⁽⁹¹⁾ Then they are returned to Allah, their real Master; nay but to Him alone belongs the decision—He is the swiftest of Reckoners.

وَبُرْسُلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمْ
الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفَرِّطُونَ ﴿٦١﴾
ثُمَّ رُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقِّ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ الْحُكْمُ
وَهُوَ أَسْرَعُ الْحَاسِبِينَ ﴿٦٢﴾

⁽⁶³⁾ Say 'Muhammad': "Who salvages you from the 'danger-fraught, deep' darkness of the land and sea?⁽⁹²⁾ 'But the One' You invoke Him humbly and mutedly⁽⁹³⁾; 'saying' "Should He salvage us from this, we will surely be among the thankful".

قُلْ مَنْ يُجِيبُكُمْ مِّنْ ظُلُمَاتِ اللَّيْلِ وَالْبَحْرِ
تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً لَّئِنْ أَنجَانَا مِنْ هَٰذِهِ
لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾

- 89 *Hafazah* (lit. keepers/protectors); these are angels who protect people and keep record of their deeds (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "For each one there are successive angels before and behind, protecting them by Allah's command" (13: 11); "Standing over you are guardians 'angels', *watchers, noble recorders *who know what you do" (82: 10-12).
- 90 The angels whose task is to take souls. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 91 The change of tone in this passage concluding aya is nothing short of majestic: the shift from first person to third person pronouns, from being talked to and then being talked about; from the present tense, which directly addresses the interlocutors and talks about the now, to the past tense in which the intended are only alluded to, and talks about a scene from the future as if already past and gone; and use of the marked exclusive "a-lā" (nay but!) is meant to further indicate the boundless Supremacy of God, Who is the sole Judge of people's deeds.
- 92 The Arabs of that time, like many people nowadays, did not deny that 'Allah' was their sole Lord (known as *tawhīd al-rubūbiyyah*) Whom they turned to in hard times, but what they denied was His sole Godhood (known as *tawhīd al-ulūhiyyah*), i.e. that He is the only God worthy of worship. Discourse here draws their attention to this fact in argument against them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 93 That is they summon up their most sincere prayers in true humbleness and whole-heartedly as people would do in hard times, yet once their prayers are answered, they renege on their promise to God.

﴿64﴾ Say: “Allah ‘alone’ salvages you from it and from every distress, ‘but only’ then you ‘just’ Associate ‘with Him’”.⁽⁹⁴⁾
 ﴿65﴾ ⁽⁹⁵⁾ Say: “He is ever Able to send a Punishment on you from above you or from under your feet⁽⁹⁶⁾; or mull you up into ‘hostile’ factions, letting some of you taste the brawn of the other”.⁽⁹⁷⁾

قُلْ اللَّهُ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ تُنْمَأْتُمْ
 تُشْرَكُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 عَذَابًا مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْبَسَكُمْ
 شِيْعًا وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ

- 94 “When you are touched with hardship at sea, you forget all ‘the gods’ you invoke, except for Him. But when He delivers you ‘safely’ ashore, you turn away. Humankind is ever ungrateful!” (17: 67).
- 95 This is to make them realize that the thin cover of safety and security in which they revelled can easily be blown away by the Almighty, so that they need not take Him lightly or pretend to forget about Him (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*): “Do the people of these towns feel secure that Our Punishment will not come upon them by night, while they are asleep? *Do the people of these towns feel secure that Our Punishment will not come upon them by day, while they are at play? *Do they feel secure against Allah’s planning? None would feel secure from Allah’s planning except the losers!” (7: 97-99).
- 96 This unqualified, undefined ‘Punishment’ opens up the doors to imagining all sorts of awful disasters that God can strike them with (Riḍā). They only need to ponder the fate of earlier nations and indeed their own fate whereby they think about the blessings they comfortably take for granted and the dangers they are oblivious to: “Your Lord is He Who makes ships go smoothly for you on the sea so that you can seek His bounty: He is Most Merciful towards you. *When you are touched with hardship at sea, you forget all ‘the gods’ you invoke, except for Him. But when He delivers you ‘safely’ ashore, you turn away. Humankind is ever ungrateful! *Do you feel secure that He will not cause the land to swallow you up, or unleash upon you a storm of stones? Then you will find none to protect you. *Or do you feel secure that He will not cause you to return to it another time, and unleash upon you a tempestuous wind, and drown you for your having been ungrateful? Then you would find no avenger therein against Us” (17: 66-69); “Are you sure that He Who is in Heaven will not make the land swallow you up with a violent shudder? *Are you sure that He Who is in Heaven will not send a whirlwind to pelt you with stones? You will come to know what My warning means!” (67: 16-17).
- 97 That is to trigger discord and civil unrest. Society’s vulnerability to this most hideous monster rearing its head in its midst, making life almost

Look 'Muhammad' how We diversify the Signs so that may they discern! ⁶⁶ Your people 'Muhammad' denied it, while it is the Truth, say: "I am not a guardian over you!" ⁶⁷ "For every 'piece of significant' news is a 'date' of fulfillment; you shall come to know."

⁶⁸ ⁽⁹⁸⁾ When you 'Muhammad' see those who indulge in 'blasphemous talk about' Our Signs, avert them until they engage in 'some' other speech⁽⁹⁹⁾; perchance should Satan cause you to forget 'about this' then once you remember, do not sit with the wrongful people.

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نَصَرْنَا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾
وَكَذَّبَ بِهِ قَوْمُكَ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ قُلْ لَسْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ
بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿٦٦﴾ لِكُلِّ نَبَأٍ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

وَإِذْ أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَحُضُّونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهُمْ
حَتَّى يَحُضُّوْا فِي حَدِيثِ غَيْرِهِ ۗ وَإِنَّمَا يُنْسِيَنَّكَ
السَّيْطَانُ فَلَا تَقْعُدْ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِ مَعَ الْقَوَّارِ
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

impossible to endure, is thus exposed. At such turbulent times, they just wish for their lives to end a thousand times over. Jābir Ibn 'Abdillāh narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) sought refuge by God from the former two types of Punishment when he heard this aya for the first time, but said: "These two are much lighter and much less severe", when he heard the third type of Punishment, i.e. them being divided into warring factions (al-Bukhārī: 7313).

- 98 Building on the preceding episode as much as in an earlier passage (Ayas 51-55), this passage yet again points the Messenger (ﷺ) to the right way of dealing with his circumstances and the people that exist in them. Given the elongated answer that he was delivered before, he is also told here of the right manner to deal with the Denying ones around him (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 99 This is a general rule that applies at all times: "He sent down 'in' the Book to you that should you hear the Signs of Allah being Denied or ridiculed 'by some', then remain not with them unless they engage in a conversation other than that. 'If you still stay with them' Then you are 'just' like them—indeed Allah will gather the Deniers and the hypocrites in Hellfire altogether" (4: 140).

﴿69﴾ Those who are Mindful will not be brought to account over them 'the wrongdoers'; but only a reminder 'are extended', perchance they become Mindful. ﴿70﴾ Leave behind 'Muhammad' those who took their religion lightly and playfully and were deceived by the worldly life, and remind with it 'the Qur'an', lest that a soul becomes bonded by what it earned; there is no ally or intercessor for it besides Allah and if it were to ransom itself with anything it will not be accepted from it⁽¹⁰⁰⁾. Those are the ones who are bonded for their earning, for them are a boiling drink and a painful Punishment for all their Denying.

﴿71﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Are we to pray to that – apart from Allah – which neither benefits us nor harms us⁽¹⁰¹⁾; and be turned on our heels when Allah guided us⁽¹⁰²⁾?" "And be ' Like the one who was lured by the devils 'to stray' in the land, bewildered, while he has 'true' friends calling him to guidance: "Come to us!"

وَمَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَلَكِنْ ذَكَرُوا لَعَنَهُمُ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾
 وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَلَهْوًا وَعَرَّتْهُمْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَذَكَّرَ بِهِ أَنْ تُبْسَلَ نَفْسٌ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ وَإِنْ تَعَدَّلَ كُلٌّ عَدَلٍ لَا يُؤَخِّذُ مِنْهَا أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أُبْسِلُوا بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

قُلْ أَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَلَا يَتَّقُوا مَا لَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَكُرِّدُوا عَلَىٰ آعْقَابِهِمْ أَبَدًا وَهُمْ لَا يُدْرِكُهُمْ السَّيِّئَاتُ فِي الْأَرْضِ حَيْرَانَ لَهُمْ أَصْحَابٌ يَدْعُونَهُ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ انْتَبِهتُمْ

100 "Those who Deny and die as Deniers, 'as much as' Earth's fill of gold will not be accepted from them, even if they were to ransom themselves with it—for those is a painful Punishment and they will have no helpers" (3: 91).

101 This implies the surrounding idolaters, who worshipped nothing more than inanimate objects, statues and carvings (cf. al-Rāzī).

102 Back to the old days of misguidedness. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

Say: “Indeed ‘true’ guidance is the guidance of Allah! We were commanded to ‘devoutly’ submit to the Lord of all beings”. ﴿72﴾ And “to keep you the Prayer and be Mindful of Him—‘indeed’ He is the One to whom you shall be gathered⁽¹⁰³⁾”. ﴿73﴾ He is the One Who created the Heavens and Earth with the Truth⁽¹⁰⁴⁾; and on the Day when He says: “Be!” and it shall be⁽¹⁰⁵⁾; His speech is the Truth and to Him belongs Sovereignty on the Day when the Horn⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ will be blown – the All-Knower of what is unseen and witnessed—He is the Most Wise, the All-Knowledgeable.

﴿74﴾⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ ‘Mention’ When Ibrāhīm ‘Abraham’ said to his father, Āzar:

قُلْ إِنْ هَدَىٰ اللَّهُ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ وَأَمْرًا يُسَلِّمَ
لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَأَنْ أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوْهُ
وَهُوَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُخْشَرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي
خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ
كُنْ فَيَكُونُ قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ وَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ
يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿٧٣﴾

*وَأَذَقْنَا لِبْرَاهِيمَ لَآئِمَهُ أَرْزَرَ

- 103 On the Day of Judgement when everyone will be held accountable for their deeds. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 104 This is the greatest Sign ever, one that was created for a good reason: “We have not created the Heavens and Earth and everything in between without purpose – that is the assumption of those who Denied—woe to those who Denied when they are in the Fire!” (38: 27).
- 105 The All-Sovereign of the Day of Judgement will only say: “Be!” and His will is no sooner realized (cf. al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Ashūr).
- 106 Exegetes are unanimous that *al-ṣūr* is a horn which is blown by Archangel Isrāfīl to announce the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-‘Ulūm*): “And the Horn was blown; that indeed is the Day promised” (50: 20); “The Horn will be sounded and – lo and behold! – they will rush out to their Lord from their graves” (36: 51).
- 107 The direct addressees here are the Qurayshites, who rightly considered themselves as the descendants of Abraham (ﷺ), being the offspring of Ishmael (ﷺ). They also considered their religion linked to him, although being only remotely related to his *ḥanīfiyyah* in the most rudimentary of terms. This is why he is cited in argument against them, giving them insight as to how he came to be the true Believer in God and His Signs that he was; having to read cosmic Signs to reach this conclusion (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

“Do you take on idols as gods! Indeed I see you and your people in apparent misguidance”.
 ﴿75﴾ Like so We showed Ibrāhīm the magnificent Dominion⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ of the Heavens and Earth and that he shall be among those possessing certitude. ﴿76﴾ Thus when ‘the darkness of’ night shrouded him, he saw a ‘particularly luminous’ planet and said: “This is my Lord?”⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ When it vanished,

أَتَّخَذُوا صَمَاءَ آلِهَةً إِنِّي أَرَأَيْتُكَ وَقَوْمَكَ
 فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ
 مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَكُونُ
 مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى
 كَوْكَبًا قَالُ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ

108 *Malakūt* is a hyperbolic form of *mulk* (dominion, sovereignty); it is the greatest form of *mulk* (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). For him to be shown the *malakūt* of the Heavens and Earth is to see all that God made in them as Signs (cf. Muqātil quoted in al-Ṭabarī). It is to fully realize the Truthfulness of the Oneness of God and that no one besides Him is worthy of worship. This elevated him to the station of *yaqīn* (lit. certitude) which is the highest station of *īmān* (Faith), which never gets mixed with doubt (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

109 Scholars and exegetes, old and new, pondered at length on the nature of the declaration: “*This is my Lord*” in this aya and the next two and the question is still being raised. Generally, they have come to the conclusion that Abraham (ؑ) was engaged in a debate with his people and was not involved in meditating the universe around him in this instance (*kāna munāziran wa lam yakun nāziran* cf. al-Eijī). That is, this declaration should not be misconstrued as a declaration of faith by Abraham and that it comes within the context of his argument with his people (cf. Ayas 80-83 below and al-Shinqīfī), the Chaldeans, who worshiped planets. In order to persuade them, Abraham mimicked their own line of deduction (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr), whereby he followed a gradual line of argument moving from one terrestrial body to another, to the bigger and more luminous, only to reach the same final result at the end. They also cite many proofs to bolster this point of interpretation.

Another view is provided by the great exegete al-Ṭabarī whereby Abraham was genuinely engaged in meditation (*nāziran*), thus, he called upon his Lord to guide him or else he too would go astray. Although this view is frowned upon as it is understood to cast doubts on Abraham’s (ؑ) all-time purity of Faith, it could give a glimpse at another way of looking at the concerned ayas. This passage, Ayas 74-79, provides a composite whole and is couched

he said: “I do not like those that vanish!” ^{﴿77﴾} When he saw the moon rising, he said: “This is my Lord? When it vanished,

قَالَ لَا أُحِبُّ الْأَفْلِيَّتَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَلَمَّارَاءَ الْقَمَرِ
بَارِعًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ

in the context of exposing the folly of idol worship: it cuts against the grain of sound human nature as these idols possess neither power nor ability to either harm or benefit, thus they do not possess the very basic quality of a god worthy of the name. This conclusion was reached at by Abraham who was endowed with true guidance and sound judgement (*rushd*) from an early age (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*: “We had certainly given Abraham his *rushdahū* (his portion of sound judgement, guidance, rectitude) before, and We were of him Well-Knowing” (21: 51)). Thus, he saw the folly of worshipping mere idols, who can neither harm nor benefit and he points this fact out to his father (Aya 74). For this firm stand, he was gifted with the faculty of reading the Signs of the Heavens and Earth (shown the *malakūt*; cf. Muqātil quoted in al-Ṭabarī) to realize the Truth and thus attain certitude of Faith (*li yakuna min al-muqinīn*; Aya 75). As he had to intellectually deduce these, he had to engage in deep, hard thinking and being in that state, coupled with the very lonely engulfing darkness of the night (*janna*; cf. al-Māwardī, *al-Nukat wa al-‘Uyūn*, Ibn ‘Āshūr), he naturally turned his face to the sky. He saw this shining star which he wondered if it were his lord, but soon realized that it was not, being of the sound judgement (*rushd*) that he was gifted with by God. This state of meditation lasted until another night when he saw the moon rising in its full glory, but it having the same shortcoming as the earlier star made him realize for sure that his real Lord is way beyond any of these and, hence, he prayed for guidance. By this time he was bestowed with certitude (*yaqīn*), and so turned to his people to use this newly gained logic (God’s own *hujjah* argument, cf. Aya 83 below) and cited the sun, the largest and brightest star glaringly visible to humans, as being essentially imperfect, faulty and frail. None of these heavenly bodies fit the criterion of being present at all times (Omnipresent) to hear and answer those who worship it; whatever vanishes is not God because it abandons its worshippers leaving them to fend for themselves (this reading is alluded to by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah in his *Tafsīr*). Thus his certitude of Faith materialized as he stood in the face of his people unequivocally declaring his beliefs (disowning their idols) and showing his real substance. By singularly taking on a whole nation, he fully deserves the designation one-man ‘nation’: “Truly Ibrāhīm was a nation, devoutly obedient to Allah, rightly-oriented, and he was not among the Associators” (16: 120). Having said this, one cannot emphasize enough the importance of considering the learned opinion of the majority of exegetes on this issue whereby Abraham was engaged in debate and argumentation with his people.

he said: “If my Lord does not guide me then I shall be one of the misguided people!” ^{﴿78﴾} When he saw the sun rising, he said: “This is my Lord! This is greater!” When it vanished, he said: “My people, I hereby disown those that you Associate ‘with Allah’”. ^{﴿79﴾} “I hereby direct my face to He Who Originated the Heavens and Earth⁽¹¹⁰⁾, ‘being’ rightly-oriented, and never am I one of the Associators.”

^{﴿80﴾} His people ‘then’ argued with him; He said: “Do you argue with me concerning Allah when ‘surely’ He has guided me? ‘Besides’ I do not fear those that you Associate with Him, unless my Lord wills something. My Lord encompasses everything with ‘His’ Knowledge⁽¹¹¹⁾; do you heed not?” ^{﴿81﴾} “How should I ‘ever’ fear those that you Associate⁽¹¹²⁾, while you do not fear

قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسُ بَازِغَةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يُقَوْمُ إِنِّي بِرَبِّيٓ ءِٔ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾

وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ أَتُحِبُّونِي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِ وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ

110 “People! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you might be Mindful. *He Who made the land a carpet and the sky a roof for you, and sent water down from the sky and grew with it ‘all sorts of’ produce as provisions for you. Therefore, knowing this, do not set up ‘rivalling’ equals for Him” (2: 21-22).

111 That is, unlike your gods, my God has total knowledge of everything, and is able to block any harm coming my way. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

112 This argument further draws the line under the basic fact that any god worthy of the name should at least be able to harm or benefit (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’adī, Ibn ‘Ashūr). The same logic was applied by the people of Prophet Hūd (ﷺ) who superstitiously thought that their gods were able to hurt people. Hūd’s firm Belief in God made him feel immune to such threats, sure that he would only be harmed with God’s permission: “They said: “Hūd! You have not given us any clear proof, and we will never abandon our gods

that you Associate with Allah those for which He sent down to you no authority; so which of the two parties is more deserving of security, if you ‘truly’ know?”
 ﴿82﴾ – Those who Believe and do not mix their Belief with injustice⁽¹¹³⁾, for those is security and they are ‘truly’ guided – ﴿83﴾ That is Our argument⁽¹¹⁴⁾ that We gave to Ibrāhīm against his people; We raise in rank whoever We will— ‘Muhammad’ indeed your Lord is Most Wise, All-Knowing.

﴿84﴾ ⁽¹¹⁵⁾And We granted him ‘Ibrāhīm’ Ishāq ‘Isaac’ and Ya‘qūb

أَتَكْفُرُ أَشْرَكَتُمْ بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ
 عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ
 بِالْأَمْنِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ الَّذِينَ
 ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ
 الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا
 ءَاتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ
 مَّن نَّشَاءُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٨٤﴾

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ

*upon your word, nor will we believe in you. *All we can say is that one of our gods may have inflicted some harm on you”. He said: “I call Allah to witness, and you too bear witness, that I reject whatever you Associate *with Him ‘in worship’. So let all of you plot against me without delay! *I put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is no creature which He does not control. My Lord’s path is straight” (11: 53-57).*

- 113 ‘Injustice’ here means *shirk* (Association): ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “When this aya was sent down the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) felt it burdensome and said: “None of us did not do himself an injustice!” The Messenger (ﷺ) said: “It is not what you think it is, but it is akin to what Luqmān ‘the sage’ said to his son: “My son, do not Associate with Allah ‘in worship’. Indeed Association is a grave injustice” (31: 13), (al-Bukhārī: 6937; Muslim: 124).
- 114 Exegetes have differed about which argument this is (*hujjah*): al-Ṭabari is of the opinion that it is: “... which of the two parties is more deserving of security...”, while others (including al-Wāhidī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī) saw it as the whole interaction between Abraham and his people beginning with: “...when ‘the darkness of’ night shrouded him...”.
- 115 This is a line-up of God’s most notable Messengers who were ‘raised ranks’ above all others and singled out for perfect guidance with which they guided those who followed them. 18 out of the 25 names of the Messengers who are mentioned in the Qur’an are to be found here. Their mention and praise points them as examples to the Prophet (ﷺ), strengthening his stand in the face of the severe hardship he was facing in his call to God.

'Jacob'⁽¹¹⁶⁾; all these We guided – and We guided Nūḥ 'Noah'⁽¹¹⁷⁾ before – and from his posterity 'We guided': Dāwūd 'David', Sulaymān 'Solomon', Ayyūb 'Job', Yūsuf 'Joseph', Mūsā 'Moses' and Hārūn 'Aaron' – like so We reward the good doers⁽¹¹⁸⁾

كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

- 116 For his patience and endurance Abraham (ﷺ) was given a great gift, a righteous posterity that would always be a credit to him throughout time: his son Isaac and the son of his son Jacob, and many other Prophets who were his descendants so much so that he is rightly called the Patriarch of Prophets (*abū al-anbiyā'*, lit. the father of the Prophets) (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): *"We granted him Isaac and Jacob, and reserved Prophethood and the Book for his descendants. We gave him his reward in this life, and in the Hereafter he will certainly be among the righteous"* (29: 27); *"Remember Our servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all men of strength and vision. *Truly We purified them with that which is pure: remembrance of the Abode. *Surely, they are with Us, of those chosen and the best!"* (38: 45-47). His two sons and their posterity were the ones who inhabited and purified for generations the sacred land which he chose for residence after he left his people: *"So he withdrew from them and what they worship other than God. And We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob. And each of them We made a Prophet"* (19: 49; cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Ishmael (ﷺ), his other son, on the other hand, was chosen to help his father raise the foundations of the House in Makkah, people's everlasting sanctuary, and populate its environs.
- 117 Prophet Noah (ﷺ) is the first Messenger that was sent by God to humanity, after Adam (ﷺ) himself. He is rightly considered the second father of humanity, as after the flood only his posterity were kept alive and thrived thereafter: *"...and made his 'Noah's' descendants the sole survivors"* (37: 77). He along with Abraham are the fathers of Prophets: *"Indeed, We had sent Noah and Abraham and reserved Prophethood and the Book for their descendants"* (57: 26); *"These were the Prophets God blessed - from the seed of Adam, of those We carried in the Ark with Noah, from the seed of Abraham and Israel - and those We guided and chose. When the Signs of the Most Merciful were recited to them, they fell to their knees and wept"* (19: 58). Thus the mention of the names of all the Prophets in this aya as being his descendants, especially Lot (ﷺ) as he was Abraham's nephew (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr) and so could have been considered Abraham's 'descendant' because Abraham was the one who taught him.
- 118 *"Those who accept guidance, He will increase their guidance and bestow on them their Mindfulness"* (47: 17).

﴿85﴾ – Zakariyyā 'Zachariah', Yahyā 'John', 'Īsā 'Jesus', Ilyās 'Elijah' – everyone 'of them' is among the righteous – ﴿86﴾ Ismā'il 'Ishmael', al-Yasa' 'Elisha', Yūnus 'Jonah' and Lūṭ 'Lot' – everyone of them We preferred to all other humans⁽¹¹⁹⁾ – ﴿87﴾ and 'were guided some' from among their fathers, posterity and brothers⁽¹²⁰⁾; We picked them and guided them to a Straight Path. ﴿88﴾ That is the guidance of Allah; He guides with it whomever He wills from among His servants. Had they Associated, what they used to do would have been laid to waste⁽¹²¹⁾. ﴿89﴾ Those are the ones to whom We gave the Book, judiciousness⁽¹²²⁾ and Prophethood; but if these 'Makkans'⁽¹²³⁾ Deny them, then We have entrusted them to others who would never Deny them⁽¹²⁴⁾.

وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَإِيلَىٰ كُلٌّ مِّنَ
الضَّالِّحِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيُوسُفَ
وَلُوطًا وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَمِن
آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ
وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٨٧﴾ ذَلِكَ
هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ
وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحِطَّ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾
أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ
وَالنَّبُوَّةَ فَإِن يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَلْوَءَ فَقَدْ وَكَلْنَا
بِهَا قَوْمًا لَّيْسُوا بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

119 "Indeed Allah chose 'for honour' Adam, Noah, the House of Ibrāhīm and the Family of 'Imrān over 'and above' all other humans" (3: 33).

120 These Prophets were not alone on this road to which not an insignificant number were blessed with guidance. Thus it is, by no means, for the select few (al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

121 "It has already been revealed to you 'Muhammad' and to those before you: 'If you Associate 'with Allah in worship', all your work will be rendered void: you will be one of the losers. *Rather, worship Allah and be among the thankful!'" (39: 65-66)

122 The proper and deep understanding⁽¹²²⁾ of the Scriptures with which to guide people and judge among them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

123 Cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī.

124 All those who truly Believe. (al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*)

﴿90﴾ Those ‘Prophets’ are the ones whom Allah guided, follow then ‘Muhammad’ their guidance. Say ‘Muhammad’: “I am not asking for payment for it⁽¹²⁵⁾; it is nothing less than a reminder to all beings”.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهِدَاهُمْ أَقْتَدِهِ
قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ
لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

﴿91﴾ They did not appreciate Allah as much as He should ‘rightly’ be appreciated, when they said: “Allah never sent down anything to any human!”⁽¹²⁶⁾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “Who ‘then’ sent down the Book with which Mūsā came as a light and guidance to people? – You make it ‘the Book’ into sheets that you display and you conceal much ‘of it’⁽¹²⁷⁾.

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِذْ قَالُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ
بَشَرًا مِّنْ شَيْءٍ قُلْ مَنْ أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ الَّذِي
جَاءَ بِهِ ءَمُوسَى نُورًا وَهَدَى لِّلنَّاسِ لِيَجْعَلُوهُ
قُرْآنًا مَّيِّمًا ۚ وَمَنْ يُكْفُفْهُ فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ ﴿٩١﴾

125 Guidance is the priciest gift that any human can be presented with, yet it is vehemently rejected. People had to be reminded of the paradoxical nature of their situation. In Sura *al-Shu‘arā’*, Prophets Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot and Shu‘ayb, all pointed this out to their people: “*I do not ask you for a payment for it. Indeed my payment is with the Lord of all beings!*” Other instances also highlight the same, e.g.: “*Then from the farthest end of the city a man came, rushing. He said: “My people! Follow the Messengers. *Follow those who ask not of you any payment and who are guided”*” (36: 20-21).

126 al-Biqā‘ī (*Naẓm al-Durar*) has it that the Makkan’s reply to the ‘reminder’ was an answer dictated to them by the Jews of Madinah from whom they sought advice. In their eagerness to deny him and based on these false grounds they doubted the Divine Wisdom of choice (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī); a Wisdom that has been well explained earlier in this sura when the Deniers asked for an angel Messenger.

127 *Qarā’īs* (translated here as sheets) is whatever written material they had available at that time made into separate sheets and not bound together, which makes it easier to hide some of it whenever this is felt convenient (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). The use of the word is meant to berate the Jews for taking liberty with the Torah altering and distorting its purport; one very prominent fact they tried to hide was Prophet Muhammad’s (ﷺ) Messengership (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

You were taught what you and your fathers did not know ‘before’!⁽¹²⁸⁾ – Say: “*Allah!*”⁽¹²⁹⁾ Then abandon them to joyously waddle in their mess”.⁽¹³⁰⁾ ﴿92﴾ And this ‘Qur’an’ is a Book We sent down, blessed, professing the Truth of what came before it⁽¹³¹⁾, so that you ‘Muhammad’ may warn ‘the people of’ the mother of towns⁽¹³²⁾ and those around it⁽¹³³⁾. Those who Believe in the Hereafter ‘do’ Believe in it; they safeguard their Prayers⁽¹³⁴⁾.

وَعَلَّمْتُم مَّا لَمْ تَعْلَمُونَ وَلَا آبَاؤُكُمْ قُلْ
 اللَّهُ تَزَوَّجْتُمْ فِي حَوَاصِرِهِمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَهَذَا
 كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مَبْرُوكٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّلَّذِي بَيْنَ
 يَدَيْهِ وَيُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَالَّذِينَ
 يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ ۖ وَهُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ
 يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

- 128 The addressees in this sentence are the Makkans. By means of the Qur’an, they were taught things that neither they nor their fathers were aware of before. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 129 This single-word reply is the answer to the question posed earlier in the aya before the parenthetical interjection: “*Who ‘then’ sent down the Book with which Mūsā came as a light and guidance to people?*” As said earlier, the use of the Proper Divine Name of God, Allah, in this sura delivers a very potent rhetorical message; a strong reminder to the Qurayshites of Makkah of the ‘Allah’ they beseech and draw their strength and very privileged status from. Yet, they conveniently forget about Him whenever it suits them.
- 130 After giving them this sobering answer precisely and clearly, the Messenger has done his duty of delivering the Message properly. He is not to pain over their denial but should instead leave them to face none but God for it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 131 Confirming and conforming to the Truth found in earlier Heavenly revealed Scriptures. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 132 Makkah, being the largest and most thriving town in Arabia at that time (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 133 Ibn ‘Ashūr sees no point in the understanding that this implies that the Prophetic mission is limited to Makkah and its neighbouring towns. Their specific mention here, he carries on, is because theirs are the people who are being directly argued with in this early Makkan sura. That the Message of Islam is global is emphasized in a number of other ayas: “*Say ‘Muhammad’: ‘O humanity! I am Allah’s Messenger to you all’*” (7:158); “*We have sent you ‘Muhammad’ only as a deliverer of good news and a warner to all of humanity, but most people do not know*” (34: 28).
- 134 Prayer (*ṣalāh*) is the most manifest, singularly defining form of worship of the Followers of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr).

﴿93﴾ Who is more wrongful than he who fabricates falsehood against Allah⁽¹³⁵⁾ or says: “I was given revelation”, while nothing was revealed to him, and he who says: “I will send down the like of that which Allah sent down”.⁽¹³⁶⁾ If only you could see “Muhammad” when the wrongdoers are in the throes of death and the angels stretch their hands to them⁽¹³⁷⁾ saying: “Give up your souls. Today you will be rewarded the Punishment of degradation for saying what is false against Allah and snubbing His Signs”. ﴿94﴾ Indeed you have come to Us each one separately just as We created you in the first time and you left behind ‘all’ what We conferred on you⁽¹³⁸⁾.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ قَالَ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوحَ إِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ قَالَ سَأُنزِلُ
مِثْلَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي
غَمْرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُوا أَيْدِيهِمْ
أَخْرَجُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ
بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَكُنتُمْ
عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا
فُرْدَىٰ كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرْكَبْتُمْ مَا
كَوَّنَّا لَكُمُ وِرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ

135 The idolaters of Makkah, and Arabia at large, who coined so-called ‘laws’ and said that they came with God’s command (Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Allah allowed none ‘of the so-called’ bahīrah, nor sā’ibah, nor waṣīlah, nor ḥām but the Deniers fabricate lies against Allah; most of them have no sense” (5: 103).

136 It is said that this came with regards to the false prophets that appeared in parts of Arabia at that time (Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Ikrimah and Qatādah cited in Ibn Kathīr). Furthermore, those who came and will come after them are also implicated (Ibn ‘Āshūr).

137 Landing blows on their faces and backsides (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “If only you could see when the angels take their ‘the Deniers’ souls, beating their faces and backsides; that because they followed what angered Allah and hated His Pleasure” (47: 27-28).

138 The dialogue here takes place on the Day of Judgement when they will be stripped down to nothing but themselves and brought before God for reckoning (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “They will be lined up before

We do not see your intercessors with you, those you ‘falsely’ claimed are partners ‘with Us’ in you⁽¹³⁹⁾; all has been severed between you ‘and them’ and all that which you once claimed has deserted you⁽¹⁴⁰⁾.

وَمَا نَرَىٰ مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءُ لَقَدْ تَفَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْكُمْ مَا كُنتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

﴿95﴾ Verily ‘Allah’⁽¹⁴¹⁾ is the One Who ‘ever’ cracks grains and seeds⁽¹⁴²⁾ – ‘thus’ He brings the living out of the dead – and He is the One Who ‘ever’ brings the dead out of the living⁽¹⁴³⁾.

* إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَىٰ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَمُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ الْحَيِّ

your Lord ‘and He will say’: “*Now you have come to Us as We first created you, although you claimed We had not made any such appointment for you*” (18: 48). This is what this battle of wits and blows boils down to; a very macabre scene of what awaits rebellious Deniers. The use of the past tense for a future happening is just as striking as the scene being depicted; it imparts a sense of immediate imminence on the whole occurrence.

- 139 The false idols whom they claimed had a right in their worship alongside God Almighty, and that they would intercede with Him on their behalf on the Day of Judgement. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 140 Cf. Ayas 22-24 above: “*On the Day when We round them all up, then We say to those who Associated: “Where are your Associates, whom you used to ‘falsely’ claim?” *At that their plea would be only saying: “By Allah, our Lord, we were not Associators.” *Look how they lied to themselves and what they used to fabricate deserted them!*”
- 141 This passage and the next set out to correct the gross misconceptions they held about ‘Allah’, God Almighty, and shows them the real worth of He Whom they under-appreciated (cf. Ibn ‘Ādil).
- 142 That is God is the One Who infuses life into the ‘dead’ kernel of all plants and trees which either, like barley and wheat, grow from grains (*ḥabb*) or palm date trees, which grow from seeds and fruit stones (*nawā*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 143 Endowing such kernels with life in the first place and sprouting the latent germ of life in them is God’s Own doing. All plants and animals originate from such ‘dead’ elements: seeds, grains, and sperm. Like so, these ‘dead’ elements germinate from living, breathing beings (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah). This is the most widely held reading of the meaning of this segment, yet others exist,

That you see is ‘Allah’, whereof are you then turned away ‘from the Truth’? ⁹⁶ He is the One Who ‘ever’ cracks the dawn, and made night a repose⁽¹⁴⁴⁾, and the sun and the moon ‘run’ in ‘exact’ calculation⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ – that is the measure of the All-Prevailing, All-Knowing. ⁹⁷ He is the One Who made the stars for you ‘as Signs’ so that you may find the way through them amid the ‘deep’ darkness of the land and sea—indeed We have detailed the Signs to those who ‘really’ know⁽¹⁴⁶⁾.

ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ فَاَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ ۝ فَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ
وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ سَكَنًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا
ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٩٦﴾ ۝ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ
لَكُمْ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ
وَالْبَحْرِ ۗ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

some of which are figurative. This also seeks to open the eyes of the Deniers to a fact they chose to be ignorant of, i.e. God’s ability to take life and bring the dead to life again for resurrection and reckoning. The example given is just a miniature representation of this more serious event (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr).

- 144 God is the One Who makes the light of day seep through the thick cloak of night’s darkness, of ‘cracking’ it so that people can go about their living. At night, He so decreed that they find rest and tranquility (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīfī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*): “Say ‘Muhammad’: “Would you not see, if Allah were to cast perpetual night over you until the Day of Resurrection, what god other than Allah could bring you light? Do you not listen? *Say: “Have you considered: if God should make day come over you unceasingly until the Day of Resurrection, what god other than Allah would bring you night, that you might rest therein? Will you not, then, see? *In His Mercy He has given you night and day, so that you may rest and seek His Bounty and be grateful” (28: 71-73).
- 145 God makes the sun and moon run to an absolutely exact calculation (*ḥusbān*). This calculation never alters nor will it ever falter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “He is the One Who made the sun a radiance and the moon a light, with precisely ordained phases, so that you may know the number of years and calculation ‘of time’. Allah did not create all this except for a purpose. He makes the Signs clear for people of knowledge” (10: 5).
- 146 Day break, the sun, the moon and the stars are among the many cosmic Signs that need to be contemplated and pondered upon to be lead to Believing in God and realizing His immeasurable Magnificence (cf. al-Rāzī).

﴿98﴾ He is the One Who initiated you from a single soul, then 'you move on from' a place of stay to a place of storage⁽¹⁴⁷⁾; indeed We have detailed the Signs for those who discern. ﴿99﴾ He is the One Who sends water from the sky and We bring out with it 'all types of' plants of everything: and We bring with it 'all' greens from which We bring out all grains stacked up⁽¹⁴⁸⁾; and of date palm from their sheaths 'come out' clusters 'of dates' hanging down; and gardens of vines; and olive and pomegranate 'confusingly' resembling each other but are not similar⁽¹⁴⁹⁾; look you at⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ its fruits when it yields and its lushness—indeed in all that are Signs to those who Believe.

﴿100﴾ They ascribe jinn as partners to Allah⁽¹⁵¹⁾, while He 'is the One

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُخْجًا مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنْهُ الْتَخَلُّ مِنْ طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ نَنْظُرُ وَإِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكُمْ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ

147 The single soul is Adam, the father of humanity. Then humans were made into 'drops' that move from the loins of men, the places of stay (*mustaqarr*), to the wombs of women, the places of storage (*mustawda'*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Alternatively, as some exegetes would have it, it could be understood as: a time-limit (*mustaqarr*) on the surface of the Earth and a resting-place (*mustawda'*) in its belly after death.

148 Like the spikes of wheat and ears of corn. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

149 The leaves of olives and pomegranate trees may look confusingly alike (*mushtabih*) but their fruits are different (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Or that no two fruits of the same kind, which may look alike, are of the same taste (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*).

150 Or: feast your eyes.

151 Their worship of such creatures as the jinn gives a glimpse of how far astray from the right path these pagans were (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "They pray to none besides Him but females; they only pray to a rebelliously defiant Devil" (4: 117).

Who created them ‘the jinn’, and ‘moreover’ they concocted⁽¹⁵²⁾, without ‘proper’ knowledge, to Him sons and daughters—glorified and exalted be He from what they describe. ﴿101﴾ The Originator of the Heavens and Earth, whereof would He have a son while He has no mate⁽¹⁵³⁾—He created everything and He is All-Knowing of everything. ﴿102﴾ That ‘you see’ is ‘Allah’ your ‘real’ Lord, there is no god but Him. He is the Creator of everything, so worship Him ‘alone’—He is Guardian over everything. ﴿103﴾ Sights do not grasp Him but He grasps sights—He is the Most Subtle, All-Knower.

﴿104﴾⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ There has come to you eye-opener ‘evidences’ from your Lord, whoever opens his eyes,

وَحَلَقَهُمْ وَخَرَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ سُبْحٰنَهُ
وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾ بِدِيْعِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
اَنۡىۤ اَيۡكُوْنُ لَهُۥ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنۡ لَّهٗ رَصِيۡدَةً وَّحَلَقَ
كُلَّ شَيْۡءٍ وَّهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْۡءٍ عَلِيۡمٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾
ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ خَلَقَ كُلَّ
شَيْۡءٍ فَاَعْبُدُوْهُ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْۡءٍ وَكِيْلٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾
لَّا تَدْرِيۡكُمُ الْاَبۡصٰرُ وَهُوَ يَدْرِكُ الْاَبۡصٰرَ
وَهُوَ الْغَلِيۡظُ الْخَبِيۡرُ ﴿١٠٤﴾

فَدَجَّآءَ كُمْ بَصَآئِرٌ مِّنۡ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْۢ بَصَرَ

Demons could have possessed their idols and communicated through them; they also used to seek refuge from the evil of the jinn by appraising them and slaughtering sacrifices in their cause (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 14: 283-284; Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifā‘ al-‘Alīl*, p. 27).

152 *Kharaqa* is to fabricate utter falsity without any grounds whatsoever. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

153 *Sāhibah* (lit. constant companion) is wife, so called because the wife accompanies the husband in most of his affairs and wherever he fares. So pointed because they claimed He had children while none of them made the same claim about a wife. This argument built on the natural order of things (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

154 Now that the eye opening Signs of the rightfulness of worship of God Himself alone (ﷻ) have been well-detailed and expounded, this passage and the next few show the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers around him the best way to deal with the adamant Deniers who are unwilling to open up their hearts and minds: “Have they not travelled throughout the land so their hearts may reason, and their ears may listen? Indeed, it is not the eyes that are blind, but it is the hearts in the chests that go blind” (22: 46).

then his ‘seeing’ is for himself; but whoever turns a blind eye, then it is against him—and I am not a keeper⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ over you. ﴿105﴾ Like so We diversify the Signs, let them ‘Muhammad, scornfully’ say: “You studied this ‘somewhere’”⁽¹⁵⁶⁾; and ‘more so’ We shall make it clear to those who ‘really’ know⁽¹⁵⁷⁾. ﴿106﴾ Follow ‘Muhammad’ what was revealed to you by your Lord – there is no god but Him – and turn away from the Associators. ﴿107﴾ Had Allah wished, they would not have Associated⁽¹⁵⁸⁾; We have not made you a keeper over them; nor are you a maintainer over them⁽¹⁵⁹⁾.

فَلْيَقْسِمْ^ط وَمَنْ عَمِيَ^ط فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ
بِحَفِيظٍ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ
وَلِيَقُولُوا دَرَسْتَ وَلِنُبَيِّنَهُ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾
اتَّبِعْ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَأَعْرِضْ
عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكُوا^ط
وَمَا جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا وَمَا أَنتَ عَلَيْهِمْ
بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾

155 The Prophet’s (ﷺ) mission is to deliver the Message clearly and the rest is for God: “...your duty ‘Muhammad’ is only to deliver the Message; the Reckoning is Ours” (13: 40).

156 In their efforts to discredit the Prophet (ﷺ) they arrived at this sham, which they kept on repeating: “We know that they say: “It is only a human being who is teaching him”. The tongue of him they allude to is a foreign one whereas this is in clear and lucid Arabic!” (16: 103).

157 Whereas the blind of heart only receive the Signs derisively, those endowed with a real faculty for attaining darkness dissipating knowledge will realize the potential of what is being said to them: “It ‘the Qur’an’ is a guidance and a healing for those who Believe, and those who do not Believe have a deafness in their ears, and it is a blindness for them” (41: 44).

158 This is stated to comfort the Prophet (ﷺ), who was deeply saddened by the Denial of his people, who remained languishing in darkness no matter how glaring the Signs he kept on presenting them with were. Had God wished, He could have made them all embrace the call willingly without fail, but how then would the real Believers, who overcame the many hurdles in their way, be set apart from those who came to Believe due to a default gene? What choice is a human left with then? What pains is he to endure to attain Faith? (Cf. Abū al-Su‘ūd, Ibn ‘Ashūr)

159 The caller is to feel a sense of empathy towards those to whom he is delivering the Message, he is not to feel bitter or bear grudges against those

﴿108﴾ Do not ‘you Believers’ insult what they pray to besides Allah, so that they would ‘in return’ insult Allah transgressedly, out of ignorance. Like so We have prettified for every nation their deeds⁽¹⁶⁰⁾, then their return is to their Lord and He will give them the news about what they used to do⁽¹⁶¹⁾. ﴿109﴾ They had sworn by Allah with their most solemn oaths that if a Sign were to come to them, they would surely Believe in it. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Indeed Signs are from none but Allah!” How would you ‘Believers’ know that when they ‘the Signs’ come, they would ‘still’ not Believe? ﴿110﴾ We keep on turning their hearts and their sights⁽¹⁶²⁾ away for not Believing in it the first time and ‘thus’ We leave them to wander aimlessly in their ‘unbending’ recalcitrance.

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ
أُمَّةٍ عَمَلَهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ
أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ لَيُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهَا قُلْ
إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ أَنَّهَا إِذَا
جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَتَقَلِّبُ آفَاقَهُمْ
وَأَبْصَرَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ أَوَّْلَ مَرَّةٍ
وَنَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

whom he calls; he is neither to keep a record of the deeds to hold them to account over (*hafīz*) nor is he to seize control of their affairs and dispose of them at will (*wakīl*). (al-Biqā‘ī, *Nāẓm al-Durar*, Riḍā)

- 160 “Can those who follow clear proof from their Lord be compared to those whose foul deeds are made to seem prettified to them—those who follow their own desires?” (47: 14)
- 161 God will hold them to account over their deeds on the Day of Judgement. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 162 This is their punishment from God: “So when they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate; for Allah does not guide the rebellious people” (61: 5).

﴿111﴾⁽¹⁶³⁾ Had We sent down the angels 'successively' to them⁽¹⁶⁴⁾, made the dead talk to them⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ and congregated everything right before them⁽¹⁶⁶⁾, they would not have Believed⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ unless that Allah wills it so; but indeed most of them are ignorant. ﴿112﴾ Like so We made for every Prophet an enemy, the devils of humans and jinn; they inspire each other with glittering speech in order to deceive⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ – had your Lord wished, they would not have done so; leave them then and their 'false' fabrications – ﴿113﴾ and that the hearts of those who do not Believe in the Hereafter may be drawn to it 'such deceit',

﴿111﴾ وَلَوْ أَنزَلْنَا نَزْلَاتِنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ
الْمَوْتَى وَخَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَا كَانُوا
لِيُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَئِنْ كُنَّا لَهُمْ
بَيِّنَاتٍ ﴿١١١﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ
عَدُوًّا شَيْطَانِ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ
إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ
مَا فَعَلُوهُ قَدْ زُهِمَ وَمَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلِتَصْغَى
إِلَيْهِ أَفئِدَةُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ

- 163 The fact that they only cherry pick to 'see' and 'realize' what is only to their fancy and selectively pay heed to whatever supports their position, alluded to in the previous passage, is further underlined and detailed here (cf. Riḍā).
- 164 Cf. Aya 8 above. Such a demand is not unusual of them: "Those who do not expect to meet Us say: "If only the angels were sent down to us, or we could see our Lord!" They have certainly been carried away by their arrogance and have entirely exceeded all limits" (25: 21).
- 165 To bear out the Truth of what the Messenger (ﷺ) is telling them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 166 Even if everything was made to come before them and speak about the Truth of the Messenger (ﷺ), they would not change their minds. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 167 "Truly those for whom the Word of your Lord has come due will not Believe, *though every Sign should come to them, till they see the painful Punishment" (10: 96-97).
- 168 The arguments and disputations they offer, which to all appearance seem valid, is nothing but an elaborate fabrication, a sham meant to deceive and steer away from the Truth. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Wajīz, al-Qurtubī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

and they may approve of it and ‘insistently’ perpetrate what they are perpetrating⁽¹⁶⁹⁾.

﴿114﴾ Would I ‘then’ want a judge apart from Allah, while He sent you the Book, detailed?⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ Those to whom We gave the Book⁽¹⁷¹⁾ know that it ‘the Qur’an’ is sent down from your Lord with the Truth—be not then among the doubters. ﴿115﴾ Your Lord’s Word ‘Muhammad’ was perfected truthfully and justly⁽¹⁷²⁾; None can change His Words⁽¹⁷³⁾—He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

وَلِيَرْصُدَهُ وَلِيَقْتَرِفُوا مَا هُمْ مُقْتَرِفُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ ابْتِغَىٰ حَكَمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ
إِلَيْكُمْ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا وَالَّذِينَ
ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنَزَّلٌ مِّنْ

رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا ۗ لَا مُبَدِّلَ

لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١١٥﴾

- 169 They are only drawn to what is to their liking, which is provided by both human and jinn devils; they hearken to, believe and act upon such hollow, glittering words, willingly thus committing sinful deeds. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 170 All matters of dispute are to be referred to God alone and judged against the Heavenly revealed yardstick, the Qur’an: “*And We sent down to you ‘Muhammad’ the Book as a clarification of all things, and as a guidance and a mercy and glad tidings for those who ‘wholly’ submit*” (16: 89); “*Mankind was one nation, then Allah sent the Prophets bearing good tidings and cautioning, and He sent down with them the Book with Truth so as to arbitrate between people in what they dispute over*” (2: 213).
- 171 The Jews who were given the Torah and the Christians who were given the Evangel, and who were considered with respect as authorities on such matters in Arabia at that time, fully knew that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was truthful and that the Qur’an is God’s Word, even if they did not openly admit it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar’ Ta‘ārūḍ al-‘Aql wa al-Naql*, al-Sa‘dī): “*But if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed to you ‘Muhammad’, ask those who read the Book before you; certainly the Truth has come to you from your Lord, therefore you should not be of the doubters*” (10: 94).
- 172 All that we find in the Qur’an is true and fair. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 173 God has perfected His Word and He guaranteed to preserve it from alteration and corruption: “*We have sent down the Reminder ‘Qur’an’ Ourselves, and We Ourselves will guard it*” (15: 9).

﴿116﴾ If you 'Muhammad' obey most of those on Earth, they will lead you away from the Path of Allah; indeed they only follow 'mere' fancies, indeed they are only guessing. ﴿117﴾ Verily your Lord knows best those who steer away from His path, and He knows best the guided.

وَأِنْ تَطَعْتَ أَكْثَرَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾ إِنْ رَبِّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَضِلُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١١٧﴾

﴿118﴾ (174) Eat then from what Allah's Name was mentioned on if you are truly Believing in His Signs. ﴿119﴾ Why would you not eat from what Allah's Name was mentioned on when He detailed to you what He made unlawful for you,

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ بِآيَاتِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾ وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ

174 In a way, this passage sheds more light on the previous two passages. The devils inspiring their allies 'glittering speech' such that they argue with the Believers regarding a matter for which God is the only worthy 'judge'; this when He said His 'detailed' Word in the matter of eating sacrifices dedicated to Him, and all types of lawful food. Regarding this, the Messenger (ﷺ) and his followers by extension need know no 'doubt', or follow the groundless 'fancies' and whims of the Deniers. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās narrated that the reason for this aya's revelation was that some people went to the Messenger (ﷺ) asking him whether they should eat from what they kill themselves and not what God Himself killed (i.e. carrion)! (Cf. al-Tirmidhī: 3069, al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*) Ibn 'Āshūr comments: "This aya entails answering the argument regarding forbidding eating carrion which was forwarded by the Associators. They said: "You 'Muhammad' claim that what you, your Companions, the dog and the falcon kill is lawful and what Allah kills (i.e. carrion) is unlawful? Their argument is implicated in Allah's saying: "...indeed they only follow 'mere' fancies, indeed they are only guessing". When He (ﷺ) called their laws 'mere' fancies' and warned against following them, He subsequently explained what is lawful, i.e., eating from what Allah's Name was mentioned on at the time of its killing and forbidding what Allah's Name was not mentioned on while killing it, including carrion".

excepting what you are forced to⁽¹⁷⁵⁾; indeed many misguide with their vain desires out of ignorance—indeed your Lord knows best the transgressors⁽¹⁷⁶⁾. ﴿120﴾ Abandon ‘you all’ sin, secret and open; indeed those who earn sin will be required for what they used to ‘insistently’ perpetrate. ﴿121﴾ Do not eat from what Allah’s Name was not mentioned on; that is surely a serious contravention⁽¹⁷⁷⁾. Indeed the devils inspire their allies so that they may argue with you ‘Believers’, but if you obey them then you are ‘among the’ Associators⁽¹⁷⁸⁾. ﴿122﴾ Is the one who was dead⁽¹⁷⁹⁾

إِلَّا مَا اضْطُرِرْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا لَيُضِلُّونَ
بَاهْوَاءِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ
بِالْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَذَرُوا ظَهْرَ الْأَثَرِ وَبَاطِنَهُ
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الْأَثَرَ سَيَجْزَوْنَ بِمَا
كَانُوا يَمْتَرُونَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ
يُذَكِّرْ اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ وَإِرَابٌ
الشَّيْطَانِ لِيُوْحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَآئِهِمْ لِيُجِدُوا كُفْرَهُمْ
وَإِنَّ أَطْعَمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾
أَوْ مَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا

- 175 Believers are given license here only when they are hard pressed into it by necessity: “Indeed He made unlawful for you carrion, blood, swine flesh, and what was intended as sacrifice for others besides Allah; yet whoever is forced by necessity – neither transgressing nor going to excess – he is not guilty of sin—certainly Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (2: 173).
- 176 God is only too aware of those who violate the rules and overstep the boundaries set by Him. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 177 *Fisq* is serious infringement of the laws of God. The word is derived from the imagery of a palm date coming out of its protective covering (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Rebellious against God’s ordained laws exposes one as much as an uncovered palm date is exposed to the elements.
- 178 Associators (*mushrikūn*) set themselves up as equal to God. They forbid what He made lawful and allow what He forbade (cf. al-Shirbinī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Adwā’ al-Bayān*). Contravening God’s laws comes under Associating others with Him (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 179 The Deniers who are languishing in ignorance and dwelling in a bottomless pit of darkness are as good as dead, bereft of the light of guidance, which is equal to life itself (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “Or like darkness upon an abysmal sea: one wave covers up another wave, over which there hang clouds; layers of darkness, one above the other! When he stretches

and We caused him to come alive and bestowed upon him a light to walk in⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ among people be like the one who is plunged in complete darkness; there is no way for him to emerge out of which? Thus what they used to do was prettified for the Deniers.

﴿123﴾ Like so⁽¹⁸¹⁾ We made into each town its chief criminals so that they may spread ‘conniving’ plots in it; they only weave plots against themselves but they are not aware of it. ﴿124﴾ When a Sign comes to them, they ‘readily’ say: “We will not Believe unless we are given the like of which the Messengers of Allah⁽¹⁸²⁾ were given”.

فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي
النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ
مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُزَيِّنُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكْبَرًا
مُجْرِمِيهَا لِيَمْكُرُوا فِيهَا وَمَا يَمْكُرُونَ
إِلَّا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ وَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ
آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَوْلَا نُنزِّلُهَا عَلَيْنَا مِثْلَ مَا
أُنزِّلُ اللَّهُ

out his hand, he can scarcely see it. Anyone whom Allah does not grant light to will have no light!” (24: 40).

- 180 *Yamshī bihi* could be translated as ‘walk in’ or ‘walk with’. A Believer who has light is guided in himself and is guiding to other people. So he walks ‘in’ this light and walks ‘with’ it, lighting with it the paths of other people (Abū Ḥayyān).
- 181 The instigators of such wiles and cunning criminalities were the notables of Makkah, who had most interest in keeping the status quo, which the Message came to unpend. Ibn Kathīr opines that this fact is mentioned here by way of comforting the Prophet (ﷺ), a sub-text which runs throughout this sura. That the Prophet is opposed by the notables of his town is nothing new, ‘like so’ all towns were made to fall into the grips of such ‘criminals’ whose doing is nothing more than weaving stratagems and conniving: “*Like so We have made for every Prophet an enemy among the criminals. But your Lord is sufficient as a Guide and Helper*” (25: 31).
- 182 They did not say: “The Messenger of Allah”, because they wanted to vent their covetous wish without acknowledging his Messengership (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*Nay but each one of them demands that a Scripture be sent down to him, unrolled before his very eyes*” (74: 52). They could also have said this derogatorily (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr), seeing him as unworthy of the Message: “*And they said: “Why was this Qur’ān not sent down to a distinguished man, from either of the two towns ‘Makkah and Taif’?”*” (43: 31).

Allah knows best where He places His Message; the crime perpetrators will be seized by debasement in front of Allah and 'for them is' a severe Punishment for their plot weaving.⁽¹⁸³⁾ ﴿125﴾ Whoever Allah wants to guide, He opens up his heart to Islam⁽¹⁸⁴⁾, but whoever He wants to misguide, He makes His chest constricted, gripped as if elevating into the 'heights' of the sky. Like so Allah places plight on those who do not Believe. ﴿126﴾⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ This is the path of your Lord, straight, We have detailed the Signs to those who reason.

اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ سَيُصِيبُ
الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا صَغَارٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعَذَابٌ
شَدِيدٌ يُمَآكِنُوا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ فَمَنْ
يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ
وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا
حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ
يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾
وَهَذَا صِرَاطٌ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمًا قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا
الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٢٦﴾

- 183 Their truth and fate in the Hereafter are told graphically in the following ayas: "Those who waxed arrogant will say to those who had been weak and oppressed: "Did we turn you away from guidance after it had come unto you? Nay! But you were 'equally' criminals. *Those who had been weak and oppressed will say to those who waxed arrogant: "Nay! But there was plotting by night and day when you ordered us to Deny Allah, and to set up equals to Him". And they will hide their remorse when they see the Punishment, and We put shackles to the necks of those who Deny. Will they be requited for nothing but what they used to do? *And We sent no warner to a town, but that those living in luxury therein said: "We do not believe in that where with you have been sent. *And they say: "We are greater in wealth and children, and we shall not be Punished" (34: 32-35).
- 184 "But Allah has endeared Belief to you, making it appealing to your hearts. And He has made Denying, rebelliousness, and disobedience detestable to you. Those are the ones rightly guided. *This is 'A bounty and a blessing from Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise" (49: 7-8).
- 185 Such a clear straight path, Islam, to which there are no twists and turns is easy to see and walk in, but the Deniers are plighted with blotched perceptions. They just cannot bring themselves to Believe in the Message; it is too hard on them as if they are breathing through the eye of a needle, like one climbing up to the sky or gaping heights (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿127﴾ For them⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ is the Abode of Peace⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ with their Lord; He is their Ally for what they used to do.

* لَهُمْ دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ وَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمْ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

﴿128﴾ ⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ And on the Day when He congregates them all and says: “You assembly of jinn have taken great liberties⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ with humans!” Their allies among humans said: “Our Lord, we enjoyed⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ each other and we fulfilled our term that You have appointed for us⁽¹⁹¹⁾”.

وَيَوْمَ يُجْشِرُ هُمْ جَمِيعًا لِمَعْنَرِ الْجِبْرِ قَدْ
اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ وَقَالَ أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمْ
مِنَ الْإِنْسِ رَبَّنَا اسْتَمْتَعَ بَعْضُنَا بِبَعْضٍ
وَبَلَّغْنَا آجَلَنَا الَّذِي أَجَلْتَ لَنَا

- 186 Those who open up their minds and hearts to ponder the Signs of God while Believing (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 187 Paradise where they are kept aloof and safe from all worries and dangers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 188 This passage depicts a scene from the Day of Judgement and starkly details the humiliating ‘debasement’ of the humans and their jinn ‘allies’ who pitted themselves against the Message. On that Day their truth and the fragility of their alliance will be exposed as they have nothing to offer but lame excuses and shameful confessions. This dark fate is sharply contrasted to that of those who embraced the Message who peacefully dwell in the ‘Abode of Peace’ in great dignity, the telling of which has just been given in the previous aya. Both scenes are brought together by the conjunctive *wa* (and) found at the beginning of Aya 128 here (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 189 They heeded no limits in taking humans as followers and in leading them far away from the right path; this resulted in a great many humans being misguided (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī): “*He ‘Satan, then said: “You see this being ‘Adam’ You have honoured above me? If You reprieve me until the Day of Resurrection, I will lead all but a few of his descendants by the nose” (17: 62); “Indeed, Iblīs ‘Satan’ was proved right in his opinion of them, they followed him, except a group of ‘true’ Believers” (34: 20).*
- 190 The jinn ‘enjoyed’ the humans obeying and worshipping them and the humans ‘enjoyed’ that the jinn fulfilled their wishes and gratified their lusts (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). They volunteered to offer such a lame self-incriminating defense because they knew they were implicated in the taunt directed at the jinn and so they volunteered to answer for themselves and on behalf of their masters, not wanting in the process to appear the lesser party in this alliance (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 191 *Ajal* is the period they were destined to stay in life (cf. Aya 2 above; al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī). They state this fact out of sheer despair seeing their

He said: “Fire is your dwelling, eternally ‘you abide’ therein, except what Allah wills”—indeed your Lord ‘O Muhammad’ is All-Wise, All-Knowing. ﴿129﴾ Like so We ally⁽¹⁹²⁾ the wrongdoers with each other because of what they used to earn. ﴿130﴾ “You assembly of jinn and humans, have there come to you no Messengers of your kind communicating to you My Signs and warning you of meeting this Day of yours?” They said: “We bear witness against ourselves”.⁽¹⁹³⁾ The worldly life has deluded them⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ and they bore witness against themselves that they were Deniers. ﴿131﴾ That⁽¹⁹⁵⁾, for your Lord will not destroy towns unjustly while their people are unaware.

قَالَ النَّارُ مَثْوَاكُمْ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نُوَلِّي بَعْضَ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ يَمْشُرَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ الْأَرْيَاءَ إِنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا شَهِدْنَا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِنَا وَعَرَّثَهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ ذَلِكَ أَنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلُهَا غَافِلُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

more able allies unable to speak for themselves and being hit by the reality they were warned about coming true (cf. al-Alūsī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

- 192 Such criminals will always flock together and find solace and support and encouragement in each other’s company; they are partners in sin (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Sa‘dī).
- 193 “...and they said: “Had we listened or reasoned, we would not have been among the companions of the Blaze.” *So they confessed their sin; away with the companions of the Blaze” (67: 10-11).
- 194 This is the real reason that they were straying (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*); they were lured by this worldly life and all the pleasures it has to offer.
- 195 The communication of the Message and the warning; God, the All-Just, will only inflict punishment on those whom He forewarned and are made aware of their wrongs (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr): “These ‘Messengers’ were sent as ‘deliverers of glad tidings and warnings, so that people would have no pretext against Allah after the Messengers’ coming to them’—verily Allah is Most Prevailing, All-Wise” (4: 165).

﴿132﴾ For each are ranks for what they did⁽¹⁹⁶⁾; Your Lord "Muhammad" is not oblivious to what they do. ﴿133﴾ Your Lord is the "One" Free from Need, the Possessor of Mercy⁽¹⁹⁷⁾, if He wishes He would do away with you "all" and bring to succeed you whatever He wishes; the same as He brought you from the offspring of other people⁽¹⁹⁸⁾. ﴿134﴾ What you are being promised will most certainly come to take place⁽¹⁹⁹⁾; you will never tire "Me"⁽²⁰⁰⁾.

وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٍ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا وَمَا رُبُّكَ
بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ وَرُبُّكَ الْغَنِيُّ
ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ إِن يَشَاءُ يُدْهِبْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفْ
مِنْ بَعْدِكُمْ مَا يَشَاءُ كَمَا أَنْشَأَكُم
مِنْ ذُرِّيَّةٍ قَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ إِنَّ مَا تُوْعَدُونَ
لَأَتِيٌّ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

196 This is yet another hint pointing to the fate of people in the life to come: essentially, then, the different ranks people will occupy in the Hereafter either in Hell or Paradise, each according to their deeds. The more good one does, the higher rank they will have in Paradise, the more evil one commits the severer the place in Hell (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Jāmi' al-Rasā'il*, 1:111, al-Sa'dī): "See how We have favoured some of them over others, and surely the Hereafter is greater in ranking and greater in favour" (17: 21).

197 *al-Ghaniyy* (lit. The Free from Need) is to indicate that God Almighty is in no need of His creation so it is in His Power to wipe them out at will, but He is also *Dhū al-Raḥmah* (lit. The Possessor of Mercy) and for it He gives them respite to reflect and try to mend their ways. That He allows people to go on rebelling against Him is not to be mistaken for any lack of ability (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Biqā'ī, *Nazm al-Durar*): "People, it is you who stand in need of Allah, indeed God is the 'One' Free from Need, the Praiseworthy; *if He wills, He can do away with you and bring in a new creation, *and that is no great matter for Allah" (35: 15-17).

198 Earlier generations of humans. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

199 Requit for your deeds. (al-Qurṭubī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

200 "Those who Deny claim they will not be resurrected. Say 'Muhammad': "Yes, by my Lord, you will surely be resurrected, then you will certainly be informed of what you have done – that is easy for Allah" (64: 7).

﴿135﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: My people labour in the state in which you are⁽²⁰¹⁾, as I will be labouring ‘my own way’, for sure you will come to know to whom belongs the last round in the land⁽²⁰²⁾—indeed the wrongdoers do not prosper.

قُلْ يَلْقَؤُمْ اَعْمَلُوْا عَلٰى مَكَاتِكُمْ اِنِّىْ
عَامِلٌ فَمَسُوْفٌ تَعْلَمُوْنَ مَنْ تَكُوْنُ لَهٗ
عَقِيْبَةُ الدَّارِ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُوْنَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

﴿136﴾⁽²⁰³⁾ They professed for Allah a share in crops and livestock which He generated and said: “This is for Allah – so they claimed – and this is for our Associates⁽²⁰⁴⁾”;

وَجَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ وَالْاَنْعَامِ
نَصِيْبًا فَقَالُوْا هٰذَا لِلّٰهِ بِرَعْمِهِمْ وَهٰذَا
لِشُرَكَائِنَا

201 That is to say, continue in your current state of Denial, refusing to heed the Signs of God with which you are satisfied, just as I will continue following the dictates of God and the path of His Pleasure and I will not be hurt by your intransigence (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). Their sordid state of affairs will be detailed shortly in Ayas 136-140.

202 Who will gain the upper hand when God’s promise is fulfilled either soon in this worldly life or later in the Hereafter? (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “Surely, We will make Our Messengers victorious and those who Believe in the worldly life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand. *On the Day when excuses will not profit the evildoers, their fate will be rejection and they will have the worst of homes” (40: 51-52); “Indeed We wrote in the Psalms, as We did in the ‘earlier’ Scripture: “My righteous servants shall inherit the land”” (21: 105); “Allah has promised those of you who Believe and do good that He will certainly make them successors in the land, as He did with those before them; and will surely establish for them their Faith which He has chosen for them; and will indeed change their fear into security—‘provided that’ they worship Me, Associating nothing with Me. But whoever Denies after this ‘promise’, it is they who will be the rebellious” (24: 55).

203 This passage and the next detail the sorry moral ‘state’ (*makānah*) to which the idolater Arabs of Makkah were demoted because they fabricated laws and falsely ascribed them to God. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: “If you want to realize just how ignorant the Arabs were then, read ‘the ayas’ beyond 130 of *al-An‘ām* up until: “Losers indeed are those who killed their ‘own’ children out of foolishness with no basis in ‘proper’ knowledge, and forbade what Allah provided for them, falsely ascribing it ‘all’ to Allah; they have gone astray, and they were not guided” (al-Bukhāri: 358).

204 Their idols (cf. al-Ṭabarī). It was their heathen ritual to allocate two shares

whatever is allocated for their Associates does not reach Allah, but whatever is allocated for Allah reaches their Associates—sordid indeed how they judge. ﴿137﴾ Like so⁽²⁰⁵⁾ the Associates made alluring for many of the Associators killing their 'own' children to ruin them and confound them in their religion. Had Allah wished, they would not have done it, so leave them 'Muhammad' and what they concoct. ﴿138﴾ They also said: "These are prohibited livestock and crops which are only to be consumed by those whom we wish"⁽²⁰⁶⁾ – so they claimed –

فَمَا كَانَ لَشُرْكَائِهِمْ فَلَا يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۗ
وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ إِلَى شُرْكَائِهِمْ ۗ
سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَ لِكَثِيرٍ
مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتْلَ أَوْلَادِهِمْ
شُرْكَاءَهُمْ لِيُرُدُّوهُمْ وَيَلْبِسُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
دِينَهُمْ ۗ وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ قَدْ زَهَرَهُمْ
وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا هَذِهِ الْأَنْعَامُ وَحَرَّتْ
حَجَرٌ لَّا يَطْعَمُهَا إِلَّا مَن نَّشَاءُ بِرَعْمِهِمْ

out of their livestock; a share for God and a share for the idols. If a portion of the share they allocated to God was mixed with that of their idols, they would not deduct and add it to God's so-called share, saying that God is in no need of it. Yet they would not do so the other way round; if a portion of the share they allocated for their idols fell with that of God's they would readily cut it and add it on to their idols' share (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*).

205 The same principle applies to another of their grievous and ritualistic crimes; killing their own children. Since they only followed their mere fancies (Aya 116 above) and the whisperings of the devils, they strayed far from the path of God and were degraded to such a sub-human state of affairs (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "When one of them is given news of the birth of a baby girl, his face darkens and he is filled with gloom. *In his shame he hides himself away from his people because of the bad news he has been given. Should he keep her and suffer contempt or bury her in the dust? Sordid indeed is how they judge!" (16: 58-59)

206 "Allah allowed none 'of the so designated' baḥīrah, nor sā'ibah, nor waṣīlah, nor ḥām but the Deniers fabricate lies against Allah; most of them have no sense" (5: 103); "Say: "Think about the provision Allah has sent down for you, some of which you have made unlawful and some lawful". Say: "Has Allah given you permission 'to do this', or are you fabricating lies against Allah?" (10: 59)

‘other’ livestock the backs of which were made forbidden⁽²⁰⁷⁾, and ‘some’ livestock over which they do not mention Allah’s Name⁽²⁰⁸⁾, ascribing this falsely to Him; He will requite them for what they used concoct. ﴿139﴾ They also said: “Whatever is in the bellies of these livestock ‘if alive’ is reserved exclusively for our males and is forbidden to our ‘female’ mates”.⁽²⁰⁹⁾ But if it is ‘born’ dead then it is shared with them; He will requite them for their designation⁽²¹⁰⁾—verily He is Most Wise, All-Knowing. ﴿140﴾ Losers indeed are those who killed their ‘own’ children out of foolishness with no ‘basis in proper’ knowledge, and forbade what Allah provided for them, falsely ascribing it ‘all’ to Allah; they have gone astray, and they were not guided.

وَأَنْعَمَ حَرَمْتَ ظُهُورَهَا وَانْعَمَ لَا يَذْكُرُونَ
 أَسْمَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا افْتِرَاءً عَلَيْهِ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ
 بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ وَقَالُوا مَا فِي بُطُونِ
 هَذِهِ الْأَنْعَامِ خَالِصَةٌ لِلذَّكَورِ نَحْنُ وَامْحَرَمُ
 عَلَىٰ أَرْوَاجِنَا وَإِن يَكُن مِّمَّتَهُ فَهُمْ
 فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ وَصَفَهُمْ أَنَّهُ
 حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٤٠﴾ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا
 أَوْلَادَهُمْ سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَحَرَمُوا مَا
 رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ افْتِرَاءً عَلَى اللَّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا وَمَا
 كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

207 Some animals were made forbidden to ride. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

208 Superstitiously, they would deliberately not mention God’s Name on them when riding, milking, loading or slaughtering them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Wajīz, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

209 Another of their ‘religious’ fabrications was their dedication of every live birth of their livestock to men but to the exclusion of women. This because they regarded women as impure, bad omens and this is why they allowed them to consume of the born dead because then there would be no harm done (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

210 Calling this lawful and that forbidden (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī): “*And utter not lies in what your tongues designate, ‘saying’: ‘This is lawful and this is forbidden’, such that you fabricate a lie against Allah. Surely those who fabricate lies against Allah will not prosper*” (16: 116).

﴿141﴾ (211) He is the One Who fashioned gardens, trellised and untrellised⁽²¹²⁾, palm dates and greenery of various edibles⁽²¹³⁾, and olive and pomegranate resembling each other but are not similar⁽²¹⁴⁾, eat 'you' of its fruits when it yields⁽²¹⁵⁾

* وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ جَنَّاتٍ مَّعْرُوشَاتٍ
وَعَيْرَ مَعْرُوشَاتٍ وَالنَّخْلَ وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا
أُكْلُهُ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّاتَ مُتَشَابِهًا
وَعَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ

- 211 This passage explains the ruling regarding God's provisions to humans in contrast with the pagan way which falls in the footsteps of man's arch-enemy, Satan (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 212 The creation of gardens of all sorts is God's own doing. He created all those plants; those that crawl on the ground which need to be trellised for support and those which stand on their own (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī). Even those gardens that humans tend by supporting their plants to enhance the produce are in essence God made.
- 213 Indicating Almighty God's bountiful Generosity and His awe-inspiring Ability of creation (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 214 This segment of the aya is parallel to an almost similar one found in Aya 99 above. However the difference is very subtle and scholars provide a number of readings. Whereas the previous one uses the adjective *mushtabih* (confusingly resembling each other) to qualify olives and pomegranates, this one uses the less intensified adjective *mutashābih* (resembling each other). Aya 99 comes within the context of expounding God's Signs which lead to realizing His Omnipotence and this requires that one take a close look around trying to read even the smallest of signs as opposed to the cosmic signs which were spoken about many times earlier in the sura. What is meant there is to look at the trees, especially the saplings as alluded to in the aya, of olive and pomegranate which look closely similar but the produce is wholly different in terms of shape and taste. Once one is 'confused' by such resemblance, one is more likely to ask questions about the subtlety of the creation and thus the Ability of the Creator, Who is, to say the least, a far cry from the idols they hold as gods. However, this aya deals with God's provision of fruits and the best manner of dealing with them, so looking at the trees themselves when they bear fruits is no longer 'confusingly' similar since their fruits are not alike. In Aya 99 God commands: "Look!" whereas here He bids: "Eat!" (cf. al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).
- 215 This is the reason why these fruits have been created; to be consumed and not to be declared unlawful by and for some (cf. al-Rāzī).

and give out the given right⁽²¹⁶⁾ out of it on the day of its harvest; and do not squander, for He does not like the squanderers. ^{﴿142﴾} And out of livestock ‘He fashioned’ some for burden and some for tapestry⁽²¹⁷⁾, eat ‘you’ of what Allah has provided for you and do not follow the footsteps of Satan⁽²¹⁸⁾— he is indeed an open enemy to you.

﴿143﴾ ⁽²¹⁹⁾ ‘Now, these livestock are’ eight mates⁽²²⁰⁾, two of sheep

وَأَلْوُحُوقَهُ يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَ مِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ حَمُولَةٌ وَ قَرَشَاتٌ كُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾

ثَمَنِيَّةً أَزْوَاجًا مِّنَ الضَّأْنِ اثْنَيْنِ

216 Their ‘right’ is the zakah (prescribed alms), which is to be given out readily without delay (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīī). Those who do not give out this God-given right will soon be afflicted: “*Indeed, We have tested them ‘Makkans’ as We tested the owners of the garden – when they swore they would surely harvest ‘all’ its fruit in the early morning, *and they made no exception. *Whereupon a visitation from your Lord came upon that ‘garden’ while they were asleep, *and by morning it was stripped bare, a desolate land. *Then by daybreak they called out to each other, *saying: ‘Rush early to your harvest, if you are bent on picking ‘all’ the fruit. *They hurried off muttering to one another: *‘Do not let any poor person enter your garden today.’ *They left early, bent on their purpose. *But when they saw it ‘devastated’, they cried, ‘We must have lost our way! Nay! But we are made to suffer privation’*” (68: 17-28).

217 This is the translation for the Qur’anic word *farsh* based on al-Zamakhsharī in *al-Kashshāf* meaning the wool, fur and hair of animals out of which tapestries and furnishings are woven: “*Allah is the One Who has given you a place of rest in your homes and from the hides of animals made you homes that you find light ‘to handle’ when you travel and when you set up camp; furnishings and comfort for a while from their wool, fur, and hair*” (16: 80). However, al-Iṣḥāhānī in *al-Mufradāt* has it that *farsh* are the camels which are not fit for loading so that they are rode as much as pieces of furniture. Yet *Lisān al-‘Arab* quotes Abū Ishāq al-Ḥaḍramī saying that all linguists are of the opinion that *farsh* are small camel. In fact, the word and how it is coined allude to all these meanings.

218 By falsely declaring some of these provisions lawful and others as unlawful. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

219 This passage delivers a knockout argument and highlights the folly of the heathen laws which, to say the least, lack wisdom and are prone to be derided if looked at critically as in this passage (al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

220 “*He created you from a single soul. Then He made from it its mate, and He produced for you from the grazing livestock eight mates...*” (39: 6).

and two of goats. Say 'Muhammad': "Pray you Did He forbid the two males or the two females, or what is contained in the wombs of the two females?⁽²²¹⁾ Tell me with knowledge⁽²²²⁾, if you are truthful!" ^{﴿144﴾} "And two of camels and two of cattle. Say 'Muhammad': "Pray you Did He forbid the two males or the two females, or what is contained in the wombs of the two females? Or were you witness as Allah bade you to this 'commandment'?"⁽²²³⁾ Who is more unjust than one who fabricates lies against Allah to misguide people with no basis in 'proper' knowledge—verily Allah guides not the wrongful people.

^{﴿145﴾} Say 'Muhammad': "I find none in what is revealed to me forbidden for any eater to eat thereof,

وَمِنَ الْمَعْزِ أَثْنَيْنِ قُلْ ءَآلَّذَكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ
أَمْ الْأُنثَيْنِ أَمْآ أَشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُهُ
الْأُنثَيْنِ تَبَيَّنَ بِعِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾
وَمِنَ الْإِبِلِ أَثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ أَثْنَيْنِ قُلْ
ءَآلَّذَكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمْ الْأُنثَيْنِ أَمْآ أَشْتَمَلَتْ
عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُهُ الْأُنثَيْنِ أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ
إِذْ وَصَلَكُمْ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ
مِمَّنْ أَفْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا يُضِلُّ النَّاسَ
بِعَدْوٍ عِلْمًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

قُلْ لَا أَحَدٌ فِي مَا أَوْحَى إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ
يَطْعُمُهُ

221 This brings into question the wisdom behind their declaring unlawful some of the mentioned kinds (males, females and embryos) but not all of them, and as to why some of these were made unlawful in particular and not all of them since the same principles apply in all parallel cases (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). If a male sheep was declared unlawful then why not a he goat?; if a female sheep was declared unlawful then why not a she goat?; if an embryo in the womb of the female sheep was declared unlawful then, by the same token, why was the embryo in the womb of the she goat not declared so? (al-Rāzī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*).

222 That is this peculiar choice is not justified by proper knowledge! (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). It also mounts a challenge to the Arabs of the time who claimed to follow the creed of Abraham (ﷺ).

223 This alludes to the fact that their so-called laws were not based on a revelation from the Creator of all things, Almighty God, which is the real source of proper knowledge (cf. al-Sa'dī).

except it being carrion, flowing blood, swine flesh then it is a defilement⁽²²⁴⁾, or 'further' an act of contravention intended 'as sacrifice' for others besides Allah⁽²²⁵⁾. 'Yet' Whoever is forced 'by necessity' – neither transgressing nor going to excess – he is not guilty of sin—certainly Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿146﴾⁽²²⁶⁾ And for those of Jewish faith, We prohibited all animals of nails⁽²²⁷⁾, and from cattle, sheep and goats We prohibited for them their fat except what their backs hold or the entrails or what mixes with bone⁽²²⁸⁾; that We imposed on them for their transgression—Indeed We are all but Truthful.

إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَسْفُوحًا
 أَوْ لَحْمَ خِنْزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ أَوْ فِسْقًا أُهْلًا
 لِعَدِّ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ
 فَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ
 هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا كُلَّ ذِي ظُفْرٍ وَمِنَ
 الْبَقَرِ وَالْغَنَمِ حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ شُحُومَهُمَا
 إِلَّا مَحَمَّتَ ظُهُورُهُمَا أَوِ الْحَوَايَا أَوْ مَا اخْتَلَطَ
 بِعَظْمٍ ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَهُمْ بِبَعْثِهِمْ وَإِنَّا
 صَالِفُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾

224 *Rijs* is something which is abhorrently filthy and desecrated (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). To these types of forbidden foods are added the ones in Aya 3 of Sura *al-Mā'idah*, a late Madinan sura, which 'perfected' the religion and detailed its rulings for Believers (cf. al-Qurtubī). For a detailed discussion of the types mentioned here see Aya 173.

225 All that which is intended as sacrifice for others besides God is also added to this list of prohibited foods (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Ashūr).

226 This is mentioned here to further specify the generalization that all food is lawful except what was told of in the previous aya since lawful food applies to all humans and not only Believers; God-ordained rulings are thus detailed (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Furthermore, since mention was made earlier of the fact that setting laws is to be backed by Divine revelation, such a law is cited as example here (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

227 Clawed animals that have nails in their toes, e.g. camels, ostriches, duck, geese, etc. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

228 The fat on animals' backs, in their entrails or that which is mixed with bones are all exempted from this general ruling. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*)

﴿147﴾ If they call you a liar then say 'Muhammad to them': "Your Lord is of vast Mercy and His affliction is never to be warded off away from the criminal people"⁽²²⁹⁾.

﴿148﴾ ⁽²³⁰⁾Those who Associate will say: "Had Allah wished, we would not have Associated, neither we nor our fathers; neither would we have prohibited anything!"⁽²³¹⁾ Likewise the ones before them denied until they tasted Our affliction⁽²³²⁾. Say 'Muhammad':

فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ رَبُّكُمْ ذُو رَحْمَةٍ وَسَعَةٍ
وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَأْسُهُ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا
أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاءُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ
كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّى
دَأَبُوا بِأَسْأَفُلٍ

229 That is to say, although your Lord's Mercy is rightly vast, do not be fooled by the slackening of His reins for you, as His Might may catch up with you at any time so heed Him well (cf. al-Anṣārī, *Faḥ al-Raḥmān*).

230 Now that it is their presumed turn to respond to the arguments put forward to them, assuming their position, God quotes this time-worn pretext of the rejecters of the Truth; blaming their Denial on God (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī): "The Associators said: "Had Allah wished, neither we nor our fathers would have worshipped anything other than Him, nor prohibited anything without His command". The same was done by those before them. Is not the Messengers' duty only to deliver 'the Message' clearly?" (16: 35)

231 They argue by citing predestination (*al-qadar*), yet they were given the choice of choosing the path they follow in life whilst being sent Messengers to show them the right path: "...and pointed out to him 'man' the two clear ways 'of good and evil'?" (90: 10); "We showed him the way, be he thankful or be he ardently Denying" (76: 3); "... and by the soul and how He formed it; *And inspired it 'with discernment of' its wickedness and its righteousness" (91: 7-8). Thus endowed, blaming their evil doings on God's will is nothing more than scapegoating, a weak ploy meant either to evade responsibility or to quiet one's nagging conscience. Yet it could also be meant merely for the sake of arguing back.

232 The example of earlier nations is given here to confirm that God is not pleased with the path they chose for themselves no matter what line of argument they take, so that they may rethink. Earlier in the sura (Aya 11) they were bade to: "Travel the land and look what was the fate of the deniers".

“Do you have knowledge that you may produce for us? Indeed you only follow ‘mere’ fancies, indeed they are only guessing”⁽²³³⁾.

﴿149﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “The conclusive argument belongs to Allah; had He wished, He would have guided you all⁽²³⁴⁾”.

﴿150﴾ Say: “Bring forth your witnesses who bear out that Allah prohibited this”⁽²³⁵⁾. If they bear witness⁽²³⁶⁾, then do not bear witness with them and do not follow the vain desires of those who rejected our Signs and those who do not Believe in the Hereafter while they set up ‘false’ equals to their Lord.

﴿151﴾⁽²³⁷⁾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “Come

هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَمَا إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾
 قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ فَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدْنَاكُمْ
 أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ قُلْ هَلْ سَأَلْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَكُمْ الَّذِينَ
 يَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ هَذَا فإِنْ شَهِدُوا قُلَّا
 تَتَّبِعُهُمْ فَمَعَهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا
 بِآيَاتِنَا وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ
 بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

﴿قُلْ تَعَالَوْا﴾

233 In actuality, this is what they base their ‘laws’ on, a fact stated earlier in Aya 116 above and alluded to throughout the sura.

234 Cf. Aya 107 above.

235 Their fallacious stance is again revisited to drive the message home.

236 That is even if they decide to come up with some forgery of their own to attempt additional challenge.

237 This passage further exposes the immorality of their practices by detailing ten ‘real’ high morals of God’s religion and what they stand for (cf. al-Rāzī, Riḍā): worshipping only the Sole rightful God Almighty, being kind to one’s parents, not killing one’s children under any circumstance (which over-rules their such practice) and being affectionate and charitable to them (cf. Ibn Kathīr), staying aloof from all vices and immoral acts, not killing other humans unless having a legal right to do so, striking a distance from the money of orphans, the most vulnerable segment in society, being fair and equitable in trade and financial dealings, passing a just judgement and uttering fair words at all times, and upholding one’s duty to God by obeying His commands and steering away from what He forbade; indeed this is a Straight Path!

'you' along so that I may recite what your Lord 'really' forbade for you: that you do not Associate anything with Him,⁽²³⁸⁾ and being kind to 'one's' parents⁽²³⁹⁾; do not kill your children out of 'desperate' destitution⁽²⁴⁰⁾ – We shall provide for both of you and them; do not come near vices, both open and secret; do not kill the soul that Allah forbade, except with a right to it⁽²⁴¹⁾. That He bade you to, so that you may reason⁽²⁴²⁾.

أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ كُفْرًا بِآلِهَاتِكُمُ الْإِتِّسَافُ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَالْوَالِدِينَ إِحْسَانًا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِمَّنْ نَزَّلْنَا بِكُمْ وَأَيْسَاهُمْ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّوْكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

It has to be noted that the principles mentioned here are of both a global and local purport as they at once address humans throughout times and places even though they address and highlight the particular moral failings of the Arabs at the time of revelation. The passage is further divided into two parts; the first deals with doing away with all forms of vice, and the second deals with basic virtues.

- 238 Pure monotheism (*tawhīd*), worshipping God Almighty alone, is the fountain-head of all virtue whereas Associating with God is, by contrast, the source of all evil. So, clearing this Association out and wholly subscribing to this foremost foundational principle comes first in the list of virtues (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 239 This is a major moral principle which is recurrently revisited in the Qur'an and is almost invariably coupled with worshipping God Almighty alone (cf. 2: 83, 4: 36, 17: 32). Little wonder really because parents are the source of one's existence and one's first benefactors after God (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 240 This is the vilest of all vices so that it is singled out before the rest. 'Vices' here are preceded by killing one's own children and followed by killing other people, because violating a sacrosanct soul is a most serious act of infringement of Divine laws (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 241 Cf. Aya 5: 32: "...whoever kills a person – unless for killing another or spreading corruption in the land – it shall be as if he killed all people and whoever saves a life then it is as if he gave life to all people".
- 242 The person who abides by these commandments is indeed endowed with sound reason (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn, *al-Qawl al-Mufīd 'alā Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, 1/39).

﴿152﴾ (243) “Do not ‘neither’ come near the money of the orphan – except in a comely manner – until his coming of age⁽²⁴⁴⁾; give weights and scales their full measure with equity – We shall only task a soul with that which it could bear⁽²⁴⁵⁾; when you say ‘something’ say it fairly, even against a next of kin⁽²⁴⁶⁾; and fulfil your duty to Allah. That He bade you so that you may remember⁽²⁴⁷⁾. ﴿153﴾ Indeed this is My path, Straight, so follow it and do not follow the ‘diverse’ roads and get driven away from His road; that He bade you so that you may become Mindful⁽²⁴⁸⁾.

وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَقًّا
يَبْلُغُ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْكَيْلِ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ
لَا تَكْلِفْ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا
وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ذَٰلِكُمْ
وَصَلُّوا بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَإِنَّ
هَٰذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ
وَصَلُّوا بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

- 243 This aya deals with the rights of others in society be they financial or otherwise. It begins with the rights of the weakest link in society, the young and orphaned, neither of whom can stand up for themselves (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 244 Cf. 4: 6.
- 245 This principle underlines God’s benevolence to humans: “*Allah would not charge a soul with that which it cannot bear; to it belongs what it earned and against it is held what it has committed*” (2: 286). Although people are to take care of their dealings and how they ‘weigh their scales’, God does not require them to be minutely exact, but rather that they should be Mindful of Him whenever engaging in such transactions (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 246 This commandment involves all human transactions done through speech: bearing witness and testifying, passing judgement, giving advice, getting involved in the affairs of other people, offering recommendations, etc. The principle of fairness is to be abided by even if it might be detrimental to a person one is closely related to (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*You who Believe, be ‘staunch’ upholders of absolute justice; witnesses for ‘the sake of’ Allah even against yourselves or your parents and relatives*” (4: 135).
- 247 These virtues were well-known and highly recommended in the Arab culture at the time: although society was not exactly godly, it nonetheless was inspired to an extent by some basic form of morality. This reminds them of the code of conduct they prided themselves on (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 248 Whoever follows this Straight Path becomes one of the Mindful (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿154﴾ (249) Then ‘know that’ We had given Musā ‘Moses’ the Book in perfection ‘for Our bounty’ for he who did well⁽²⁵⁰⁾ and detailing everything; a guidance and mercy so that they may Believe in meeting their Lord. ﴿155﴾ And this ‘Qur’an’ is a Book⁽²⁵¹⁾ We sent down, blessed, so follow it and be Mindful so that you may be shown mercy. ﴿156﴾ Lest that you may say: “But this Book was sent down to two ‘other’ groups⁽²⁵²⁾ before us;

ثُمَّ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ تَمَامًا عَلَى الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ وَتَفْصِيلًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّعَالَمِهِمْ يَلْقَاءُ رَبَّهُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مَبَارَكٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ أَنْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْزَلَ الْأَلْكِتَابَ عَلَى طَائِفَتَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا

249 Since the ayas in this passage deal with the revelation of both the Torah and the Qur’an, they both build and reflect on the ten commandments found in the Torah, which in their totality are reflected in Ayas 151-153 above, as well as Ayas 91-92 which talk about the source of the revelation of the Torah and the Qur’an (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Exegetes have differed on the meaning of the connective *thumma* (then), but the closest to what is meant is not to put the events themselves in order but to order their telling which is closely related and relevant (cf. al-Sha‘rāwī). Moses is pointed out here to highlight, to the Makkans who acknowledged the Divine source of the Torah, that both the source of the Qur’an and the Torah (and the Evangel as implicated by mention of the ‘two groups’, the Jews and the Christians) is the same since the vices they forbid and the virtues they call for are essentially the same (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). It is customary in the Qur’an that both the Qur’an and the Torah are mentioned together as they both provide the most detailing of Divine laws of the Heavenly revealed Books (al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).

250 The revelation of the Torah was a God-given blessing for those who did well among the Children of Israel (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). Or ‘*he who did well*’ could mean Moses (ﷺ) exclusively (cf. al-Ṭabarī, *al-Sa‘dī*).

251 “*And this ‘Qur’an’ is a Book We sent down, blessed, professing the Truth of what came before it*” (6: 92); “*And We sent down to you ‘Muhammad’ the Book ‘the Qur’an’ with the Truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Book ‘the Torah and the Evangel’ and a ‘supreme’ authority over it*” (5: 48).

252 The reference here is to the Jews to whom the Torah was sent down and the Christians to whom the Evangel was sent down (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Sa‘dī*). Both of whom the Arabs reverently regarded as ‘people of the Book’.

indeed we are totally oblivious to their studying!⁽²⁵³⁾ ﴿157﴾ Or you may say: “Had we had the Book sent down to us, we would have been more guided than they are!” Surely then a clear evidence has come to you from your Lord, a guidance and mercy. Who is then more unjust than one who rejects Allah’s Signs and spurns them? We shall requite those who spurn Our Signs the worst of Punishment for their spurning. ﴿158﴾ Do they expect ‘nothing’ but that the angels come upon them⁽²⁵⁴⁾; or your Lord comes, or some of your Lord’s Signs come ‘upon them’? On the Day when some of your Lord’s Signs come, a soul’s Believing will be to no avail to it had it not Believed earlier or earned good⁽²⁵⁵⁾ in its Believing⁽²⁵⁶⁾, – say ‘Muhammad’:

وَإِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ دِرَاسَتِهِمْ لَغَفْلِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾
 أَوْ تَقُولُوا لَوْ أَنَّا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْكِتَابُ
 لَكُنَّا أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمْ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ
 مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن
 كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَصَدَفَ عَنْهَا سَنَجْزِي الَّذِينَ
 يَصْدِفُونَ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا
 يَصْدِفُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ
 الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ
 يَوْمَ يَأْتِي بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيمَانُهَا
 لَمْ تَكُنْ ءَامَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا
 حَيْرَانًا

253 That is, they were ignorant of what these two Books contained not having access to them due to linguistic barriers, and that they were thought of as exclusive to their people (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

254 That is, not embracing the evident Truth they were given, they only wait for one of three very grave things to happen: 1) that angels come to them with death, terminating their lives while still Denying; 2) God coming to judge their affairs on the Day of Judgement: “Do they expect ‘nothing’ but that Allah comes to them in shadows of clouds along with the angels; ‘lo!’ the affair is settled and to Allah all affairs are returned” (2: 210); 3) that some of the Signs of the Day of Judgement, especially the sun rising from the West, take place. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

255 Those who Believe are also to do good deeds and earn rewards for them (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

256 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The Hour will not come until the sun rises from the West. When it does so, people will Believe, but

“Wait ‘you’, for we shall be waiting”. ﴿159﴾ Indeed those who divided their religion and became sects, you have nothing to do with them⁽²⁵⁷⁾; their affair is ‘left’ to Allah, then He will give them the news about what they used to do. ﴿160﴾⁽²⁵⁸⁾ Whoever comes with a good deed, then for him is its equal tenfold, but whoever comes with a bad deed will only be requited its like; they shall not be wronged.

﴿161﴾⁽²⁵⁹⁾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “Indeed my Lord guided me to a Straight Path; an upright religion,

أَنْتَظِرُوا إِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَرَّعُوا دِيَارَهُمْ
وَكَاؤُوا شَيْعًا لَلَّتْ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ
إِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْتَبِئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾
مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا وَمَنْ
جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ
لَا يُظَاهَمُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَيْتَنِي رَبِّيَ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا
قِيمًا

then: “...a soul’s Believing will be to no avail to it had it not Believed earlier or earned good in its Believing” (al-Bukhārī: 6506, Muslim: 157). Belief has got to be in the Unseen and out of free choice but if the Signs are present then it becomes useless, because it becomes a must (cf. al-Sa’dī): “Repentance is not ‘due’ for those who carry on committing ‘many a grave’ evil, until death comes upon one of them, whence he says: “Now I repent!” (4: 18).

257 “He has prescribed for you as religion that which He enjoined upon Noah, and that which We sent down to you ‘Muhammad’, and that which We enjoined upon Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, that you uphold religion and not become divided therein” (42: 13); “This nation of yours is one – and I am your Lord: be Mindful of Me – *but they have split their community into sects, each rejoicing in their own. *So leave them ‘Muhammad’ for a while steeped ‘in their ignorance’. *Do they reckon that, by giving them wealth and children, *We race to give them good things? Nay, but they are unaware!” (23: 52-56)

258 Such is Almighty God’s boundless benevolence to those who do good deeds, and ultimate justice in judging the affairs of those who commit evil (cf. al-Shinqīfī, al-‘Adhb al-Namīr).

259 This is the sura’s concluding passage. It draws to a close the series of commands to the Prophet (ﷺ) to argue with his Denying people (to ‘say’ to them; which is further repeated thrice in this passage) so that they may see some sense and make an ultimate and firm stand-taking declaration (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

the creed of Ibrāhīm 'which is' rightly oriented and never was he among the Associators"⁽²⁶⁰⁾.
 ﴿162﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "My Prayers, devotional rites⁽²⁶¹⁾, living and death are all for Allah, the Lord of all beings. ﴿163﴾ There is no Associate for Him – with that I was commanded – and I am the first of those who submit".
 ﴿164﴾ Say: "Would I want to take as lord any other besides Allah while He is the Lord of everything". No soul shall earn 'anything' except it being against it⁽²⁶²⁾; no burdened soul shall carry the burden of another.

مَلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَتْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾
 قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ
 رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا
 أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ قُلْ أَغْبَرَ اللَّهُ ابْنِي رَبًّا وَهُوَ
 رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا
 عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ

260 The creed of Abraham, *ḥanīfiyyah*, is the most pristine form of submission (*islām*) to God and the unadulterated source of all Heavenly-revealed religions. Makkans, being the custodians of the holy sites which Abraham himself instated by the command of God, fully realized the meaning of a new religion coming to them, one that would restore their true religion to its purest form (cf. Riḍā): "They said: "Become Jews or Christian, and you will be guided". Say: "Nay, but 'we follow' the creed of Ibrāhīm, rightly oriented, and he was not one of the Associators" (2: 135); "With this Ibrāhīm and Ya'qūb 'Jacob' enjoined their sons: "My sons! Allah has chosen this religion for you, so die not without being devoutly submitted" (2: 132).

261 *Nusuk* is a general denominator for all acts of worship meant to get closer to God (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). However, the majority of exegetes are of the opinion that here it means sacrificing animals (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*). Both Prayers and sacrificing were very conspicuous acts of devotion which ran contrary to the then common practices prevalent in the Makkan polytheistic society. They are both symbolic of the firmness of Faith (cf. al-Sa'dī).

262 A person who earns evil is earning it against himself alone (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*): "Every soul is held in pledge for what it has earned" (74: 38).

Then to your Lord is your return and He will give you the news about what you used to differ upon⁽²⁶³⁾. ^{﴿165﴾} Indeed He is the One Who made you successors⁽²⁶⁴⁾ in the land and raised some of you ranks above others so that He may test you through what He bestowed upon you⁽²⁶⁵⁾—verily your Lord is swift in retribution⁽²⁶⁶⁾; verily He is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ
تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ
وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَبْلُوكُمْ فِي
مَاءِ آتَانِكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾



263 “Say ‘Muhammad’: “You will not be questioned concerning that of which we were guilty; nor will we be questioned concerning what you do. *Say: “Our Lord will gather us together; then He will decide between us with Truth; and He is the Arbiter, the Knower” (34: 25-26); “Then your ‘humans’ return will be to Me and I shall judge between you over that which you used to differ” (3: 55).

264 The God they defied is the One Who raised them to take the place of other people who preceded them, and empowered them to ‘succeed’ in His land (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

265 People are of varying degrees with regards to God’s bounty on them: beauty, strength, character, wealth, intellectual ability, power, knowledge, etc. This is to see what they do with what they are endowed with (cf. Riḍā).

266 The One Who raised people in succession and endowed them with various bounties is All-Able to hold them accountable for their deeds.

God’s Signs of the creation of people and His providing their livelihoods for them, their coming in succession, generation after another, and the struggles of the Messengers with them, and their reckoning both in this worldly life and in the Hereafter are significant themes of the next sura, *al-A’rāf*.

سُورَةُ الْأَعْرَافِ

al-A'raf
(The Heights)



al-A‘rāf (The Heights)

Title: *al-A‘rāf* (thus titled in al-Nasā‘ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 911; al-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*: 3362; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 4037) is raised ground, a height, forming a separating barrier between Paradise and its dwellers and Hellfire and its dwellers. This is the only sura where *al-a‘rāf*, as such, is mentioned in the Qur’an. This lexical item and the happenings pertaining to it as detailed in Ayas 46-52 vividly depict the final scene in the chapter of the battle of good and evil over God Almighty’s sole rightfulness to worship, around which the whole sura revolves.

Merit: it is one of the meritorious first seven lengthy suras of the Qur’an (cf. Introductions to Suras 4 and 5). ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) recited ‘the whole of’ Sura *al-A‘rāf* during al-Maghrib Prayer dividing it between the two *rak‘ahs* ‘units of Prayer’” (al-Nasā‘ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 991; al-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*: 3362, al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 4037; this narration was deemed authentic in: al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awtār*, 2/258; al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Nasā‘ī*, 990).

Theme: this sura takes the reader on a long, illustrative journey of the battle between good and evil ever since the creation of Adam, the father of humanity, who epitomized what ‘good’ and virtuous is and the emergence of his archenemy, Satan, who epitomized what is ‘evil’ and devious. It charts out many historical occurrences that took place between the Messengers of God to humanity, who came to guide them to the Straight Path urging them to dedicate their worship to Allah alone, and their enemies among the forces of evil, the followers of Satan. The many ‘Signs’ and arguments detailed in answer to the Deniers throughout history and how they were destroyed, the causes of straying and deviation, and the graphic description of scenes happening around the ‘heights’, are meant to bring the Deniers to their senses so that they may heed and are intended for the Believers so that they may find solace and remain steadfast. The Qur’an, God’s everlasting Message to humanity, is further highlighted at the very beginning of the sura and at its end as an ‘eye-opener’, ‘guidance’ and ‘light’ which should be listened to attentively so that people may salvage and deliver themselves from ruination.

Key: this is a Makkan (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān) sura just like the previous one, *al-An'ām* and follows on from it in a number of ways. Like *al-An'ām*, it is set against a backdrop of the tough Makkan days of Islam. Thus, in many ways, it comes as consolation to the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers around him (al-Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣā'ir Dhawī al-Tamyīz*), assuring him of the final result of the battle that he was engaged in with the Deniers; the pious enjoying the many blisses of Paradise and the rebellious suffering all forms of torment in Hellfire, and citing in the process many examples of earlier Messengers and how they struggled against the forces of evil who came, in the end, to meet their doom. On the other hand, whereas *al-An'ām* talks mainly of the proofs and 'Signs' (*āyāt*) of God Almighty's sole rightfulness to Lordship (*rubūbiyyah*) which sound human nature vouches for, given that it is provided with potent 'Signs', *al-A'raf* (the sura where the word 'Signs' (*āyāt*) occurs most in the Qur'an) takes it a step further to prove Allah's Godship (*ulūhiyyah*), and that He is the Sole Deserver of all acts of worship and that He is not to be Associated with. In the same vein, whereas *al-An'ām* contrasts 'darknesses' and 'light', *al-A'raf* draws the line between good and evil and recounts the ever raging battle between the two divides.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿1﴾ *Alif, Lām, Mīm, Šād*⁽¹⁾. ﴿2﴾ A Book⁽²⁾ that has been sent down to you 'Muhammad' – let there not be unease in your chest about it⁽³⁾ – so that you may warn with it, and it be a reminder to the Believers. ﴿3﴾ Follow 'you people' what was sent down to you from your Lord and do not follow allies besides Him—'how' little do you heed!⁽⁴⁾

الْمَصِّ ۝ كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِي صَدْرِكَ
حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنذِرَ بِهِ ۖ وَذَكْرًا لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝
اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِن
دُونِهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ۝

- 1 These disjointed letters, highlighting the inimitable nature of the Qur'an (cf. 2: 1), are meant as a challenge to those who argue with the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers regarding the Truthfulness of the Message.
- 2 The Qur'an, God's most potent Message to humanity (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). It is the 'eye-opener' Book (cf. 6: 92 and 155) that needs to be both professed and adhered to. Ibn 'Ashūr opines that the use of the word 'Book' in the indefinite form is, among other rhetorical purposes, meant to underline the greatness of the Qur'an. Riḍā, on the other hand, goes to say that the 'Book' is so well-known that it needs no defining, and hence the use of the indefinite form. Significantly, 'Book' is the very first word in this sura. The Qur'an explains and expounds upon the divide that separates good and evil; it is the Distinguisher (*al-Furqān*) which shows rightfulness from wrongfulness and sets Truth apart from falsehood: "*Blessed is He Who sent down the Distinguisher to His servant that he may be a warner to all beings*" (25: 1); "...indeed there has come to you a Light and a clarifying Book 'The Qur'an'; *by it Allah guides those who follow His Pleasure to the path of peace and delivers them from utter darkness into light with His permission; He guides them to a Straight Path" (5: 15-16).
- 3 Anyone who is entrusted with a task of this great a magnitude, who guides humanity to light and dispels the darkness in which they live, and suffers as a result all sorts of oppression and harm, will very understandably experience trepidation when looking at the task that lies ahead.
- 4 This aya captures the essence of the Message; that the Qur'an, and it alone, is to be followed should one want to be truly guided (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿4﴾ ﴿5﴾ How many a town have We destroyed and Our Might befallen it ﴿6﴾ 'while they were fast asleep' at night, or as they were resting during the day! ﴿7﴾ ﴿5﴾ Then their only plea, when Our Might befell them, was to say: "We have indeed been wrongdoers!" ﴿8﴾
 ﴿6﴾ We shall surely ask the ones to whom it 'the Message' was sent and We shall surely ask the ones who were sent 'the Messengers' ﴿9﴾.

وَكَمْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَا بِمَا نَسَا
 بَيْتًا أَوْ هُمْ قَائِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ فَمَا كَانَ دَعْوَاهُمْ
 إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بِأَسْأَا إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا
 ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٥﴾ فَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ
 وَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٦﴾

- 5 Now that the defining criterion, the Qur'an, the Distinguisher, which has to be 'heeded', has been introduced, this passage brings into light the fate of those who lost their souls and rebelled against God's Signs; destruction in this world and Punishment in the Hereafter (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 6 God, the All-Just, will only inflict punishment on those whom He forewarned and who were made aware of their wrongs through the communication of the Message and warning (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr): "These `Messengers` were sent as `deliverers of glad tidings and warnings, so that people would have no pretext against Allah after the Messengers` coming to them`—verily Allah is Most Prevailing, All-Wise" (4: 165); "That, for your Lord will not destroy towns unjustly while their people are unaware" (6: 131).
- 7 That is in a state when people feel most safe and secure and least expect disaster to hit; so much so that the warning becomes more real and the message hard-hitting: "Do those who have plotted evil deeds feel secure that God will not cause the Earth to engulf them, or that the punishment will not come upon them whence they are not aware? *Or that He will not seize them in the midst of their going to and fro, and they will be powerless to thwart 'it'? *Or that He will not seize them with a gradual diminishing? And truly your Lord is Kind, Merciful" (16: 45-47).
- 8 Faced with this most truthful fact, they could say nothing but admit guilt: "And how many a town have We destroyed because of its wrong doing, and We established after them a different people! *When they felt Our Might, they fled at once. *Do not run, and come back to that which you were living lavishly in and your homes; so that you will be questioned." *They cried: "Woe to us! We have surely been wrongdoers!" *That cry of theirs did not cease until We made them burnt-off stubble" (21: 11-15).
- 9 That God does not wrong anyone by the smallest amount, entails that He brings witnesses to testify either for or against those who are held to account on the Day of Judgement. These witnesses are no less than the most

﴿7﴾ Then We shall surely recount for them, out of 'real' knowledge; 'verily' We were not absent⁽¹⁰⁾.
 ﴿8﴾ ⁽¹¹⁾The weighing on that Day is truthful; the one whose scales are heavy, then these are the successful; ⁽⁹⁾ 'while' the one whose scales are light, then these are the ones who lost their souls, for wrongfully dealing with Our Signs⁽¹²⁾.

فَلَنَقُصَّنَّ عَلَيْهِم بِعِلْمٍ وَمَا كُنَّا غَائِبِينَ ﴿٧﴾
 وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ
 فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ
 مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ بِمَا
 كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَظَاهِرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

honourable Prophets that God sent to each nation to show them the Straight Path that leads to His Pleasure (cf. al-Rāzī): "How 'will they fare', when we bring forward a witness from every nation, and We bring you 'Muhammad' as witness against these!" (4: 41).

- 10 Almighty God Who is Ever-Present at all times and Whose angels keep a minute record of people's deeds, will recount for them what they said and what they did on the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 11 The outcome of this Reckoning is that these deeds will be weighed on the Scales; the one who did good, his deeds will tip the Scale to his side and thus attain salvation and great reward, but the one whose deeds are 'light' and not weighty enough to tip the scale in his favour will be consigned to the worst of suffering (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Sa'dī): "And We will place the Scales of justice for the Day of Judgement, so that no soul will be wronged in the least. Even if it was the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it. And We are sufficient as a Reckoner" (21: 47); "Verily Allah does not deal 'anyone' unjustly as much as a mote's weight; if it is a 'one' good deed done, then He multiplies it and grants from His Own 'additionally' a great reward" (4: 40).
 Abū al-Dardā' (رضي الله عنه) narrated that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say: "Nothing is put on the Scale bearing more weight than good manners. The person of good moral behaviour attains the rank of the person known for upholding Prayers and fasting" (Abū Dāwūd: 4799, al-Tirmidhī: 2003); Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Two words; light on the tongue, heavy on the Scale, loved by the Most Merciful: *subhāna Allah-i wa bi ḥamdihi, subhāna Allah-i l-'Azīm* (Glory be to Allah and in Gratitude for Him I do glorify Him. Glory be to Allah, the Most Great)" (al-Bukhārī: 6682, Muslim: 2694).
- 12 The word 'Signs', meaning that which they rejected is deployed throughout this sura on 22 occasions. Indeed it is one of the most recurrent Qur'anic

﴿10﴾ (13) Indeed We had empowered you on Earth and We made into it for you many a livelihood— ‘how’ little do you give thanks!⁽¹⁴⁾
 ﴿11﴾ (15) We had indeed created you, then We formed you, then We said to the angels: “Prostrate to Adam!” They all prostrated except Iblīs; he was not among those who prostrated⁽¹⁶⁾.

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعْيِشًا قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿١١﴾

lexical items. In its plural form alone it is to be found 280 times in the Qur’an. God would never leave people in the dark without showing them His Signs, but it is up to them to choose to Believe or Deny: “*We shall show them Our Signs in the horizons, and within themselves, until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth*” (41: 53).

- 13 What follows is the first episode in the long history of the epic struggle between good and evil, which is unravelled in what is to come later in this sura. It begins with a gentle reminder to people of God’s most benevolent favour on them, their livelihoods, which they find all around them, a constant reminder of their Most Benevolent Lord. Then it goes on to account for God’s most generous favour; the creation and honouring of humans over other beings: “*Indeed, We have honoured the children of Adam, carried them on land and sea, granted them good and lawful provisions, and privileged them far above many of Our creatures*” (17: 70).
- 14 Indeed God’s favours to humanity are boundless; they are being catered and provided for profusely so that they may ponder this ‘Sign’, pay heed and thank their Creator (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*Indeed Allah is bountiful to people, but most of them are thankless*” (2: 243); “*He has given you all that you asked Him for. If you were to count God’s favours, you could never calculate them: man is truly unjust and ungrateful*” (14: 34).
- 15 The favour of provision is followed by that of creation and the honouring of the father of humanity (Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 16 This story, which took place at the dawn of the creation of the very first human ever, Adam the father of humanity, bears special significance and is told over a number of times in the Qur’an, throwing new light on it as per the occasion of its mention. Earlier, it was told in Sura *al-Baqarah* (Ayas 30-39), which ends with: a stark forewarning: “*We said: “Go down all of you, whenever guidance comes to you from Me whoever follows it will have neither fear nor will they grieve. *As for those who Deny and disbelieve in our Signs these are the company of the Fire; forever they will abide therein*” (2: 38-39).

﴿12﴾ He 'Allah' said: "What prevented you from prostrating as I commanded you!" He said: "I am 'surely' better than him! You created me from fire and created him from clay!"⁽¹⁷⁾ ﴿13﴾ He said: "Then down with you from it 'Paradise'; it is not for you to wax arrogant in;⁽¹⁸⁾ out with you, you are verily one of the degraded!" ﴿14﴾ He said: "Allow me respite 'then' until the Day when they are resurrected".

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ آلَا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ ﴿١٣﴾ قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

17 Satan rebelled against the Command of his Lord out of sheer arrogance. Moreover, by doing this he questioned the Wisdom of God (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*). He quoted the substance from which he was created, fire, in argument as to why he felt superior to Adam, who was created from clay, and thus refused to prostrate to him as per God's order, further proving himself in the wrong. Prior to this command, to prostrate to Adam, God practically explained to the angels, among whom Iblīs was present, the Wisdom of this occurrence. Unlike Iblīs, they dutifully followed the word of their Lord: "'Mention Muhammad' *When your Lord said to the angels: "I shall instate a successor on Earth!" They said: "Will you instate in it one who sows corruption and sheds blood, whereas we 'incessantly' glorify You in gratitude to You and exalt You?" He said: "I know that which you do not". *He taught Adam all the names 'of things', then showed them to the angels and said: "Tell Me the names of these, if only you were truthful!" *They said: "Glorified may You be! We have no knowledge but what You have taught us. You are All-Knowing, All-Wise". *He said: "Adam! Tell them their names". When he told them their names, He said: "Did I not instruct you that I know what is hidden in the Heavens and the Earth? – and I know what you hide and what you make public" (2: 30-33). How far apart is the response of the angels to that of Satan! His arrogance made him adamant in his stance and thus blinded him from seeking forgiveness from God (cf. al-Rāzī).*

God Almighty, is the One Who created and provides for His creation, so His Wisdom should not be questioned and His Commands, which are binding in nature, should never be disobeyed (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān, Khan, *Fath al-Bayān fī Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*).

18 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "None who has a mote's weight of arrogance in his heart shall enter Paradise" (Muslim: 91).

﴿15﴾ He said: “You are among those given respite”. ﴿16﴾ He said: “Then for Your misguiding of me⁽¹⁹⁾, I shall certainly lie in wait for them on Your Straight Path!”⁽²⁰⁾ ﴿17﴾ “Then I shall come to them from their fronts, backs, rights and lefts, and You shall not find most of them thankful”⁽²¹⁾.

قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَالَ فِيمَا أُغْوَيْتَنِي لَأَفْعَدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ لَأَنْتَبَهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

- 19 By citing predestination (*al-qadar*), that God had already decreed him to be misguided, Satan sets the record for being the first to use *al-qadar* as a pretext for not following God's command (*al-amr*) as an excuse to justify his rebelliousness against Him (ﷻ) (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Rasā'il wa al-Masā'il*, 5: 134; Ibn al-Qayyim, *Rawdat al-Muḥibbīn*, p. 62).
- 20 Sabrah Ibn Abi Fākih (ﷺ) narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “Satan sat at the roads of the son of Adam. He sat for him at the road of Islam and said to him: “Do you become Muslim and abandon your religion, the religion of your fathers and the forefathers of your fathers?” But he ‘the son of Adam’ disobeyed him and became Muslim. Then he sat for him at the road of migrating and said to him: “Do you migrate and leave behind your land and your sky? Indeed the migrant is nothing but a ‘lonely’ horse tied to a rope!” But he ‘the son of Adam’ disobeyed him and migrated. Then he sat for him at the road of striving in the cause of Allah and said: “It is indeed hard for the soul and wealth; you fight and get killed then your wife will get married and your wealth divided!” But he ‘the son of Adam’ disobeyed him and strove in the cause of Allah. Whoever of them does that and dies, then it is obligatorily that Allah will admit him into Paradise; if he gets killed then it is obligatorily that Allah will admit him into Paradise; if he drowns then it is obligatorily that Allah will admit him into Paradise; or if his neck gets broken because of an animal then it is obligatorily that Allah will admit him into Paradise” (al-Nasā'ī: 3134, Imām Aḥmad: 16000, Ibn Ḥibbān: 4593).
- 21 This shows how purposeful and determined Satan really is in his mission (Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i' al-Fawā'id*, 1/120). Indeed, he came to be successful; when at the beginning he was just guessing (Ibn Kathīr: “Indeed, Iblīs' assumption about them has come true, so they ‘all’ followed him, except a group of ‘true’ Believers. *He does not have any authority over them, but ‘Our Will is’ only to distinguish those who Believe in the Hereafter from those who are in doubt about it. And your Lord is a ‘vigilant’ Keeper over all things” (34: 20-21). Such a purposeful enemy should be guarded against with constant vigilance (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿18﴾ He said: “Out with you from it; condemned and routed⁽²²⁾. Whoever follows you of them, I shall fill up Hell with you all”.⁽²³⁾

قَالَ أَخْرَجُ مِنْهَا مَذْمُومًا مَدْحُورًا لَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ
لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

﴿19﴾ ⁽²⁴⁾“And you Adam! Dwell yourself and your wife in the Garden and eat thereof whatever you wish, and do not come near this tree, or ‘else’ you two will be from among the wrongful.”

وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَوَسَّوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْءِ الثَّيْمَانِ وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا

﴿20﴾ Satan whispered to them, so that he may expose to them what was made hidden to them of their nether regions⁽²⁵⁾, and said: “Your Lord only forbade you

22 “He said: “Be gone from it! You are indeed outcast. *Truly on you is My Damnation until the Day of Judgement” (38: 77-78).

23 “He said: “Go, and whoever follows you from them. Hellfire shall be the reward of you all, a reward well-deserved. *And rouse whoever you can of them with your voice, and mobilize all your forces and men against them, and you may share with them in their money and children, and promise them.” But Satan promises them nothing but deceit. *As for My ‘true’ servants, you will have no power over them. And your Lord suffices as a Trustee” (17: 63-65).

24 Satan started acting on his mission right away and he made his first successful incursion. (Another slightly different account of this episode was dealt with in Sura *al-Baqarah*, Aya 35-39. You may wish to refer to it for more details on the issue at hand.) The warning comes later (Aya 27 below) to the children of Adam to guard against Satan and not give him the chance to ‘weave his magic’ on them.

25 The particle *li* (translated here as “so that”) could grammatically be what is known as *lām al-ṣayrūrah* (the *lām* of destination). Hence the aya could be interpreted whereby Satan did not initially intend to show them their nether regions but to make them commit sin, and that the final result of this sinning was that they were exposed. Another grammatical rationalization of the *lām* is *ta’līl* (justification), i.e. that he intended to lower their state through nakedness (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). The significance of guarding against nakedness and its symbolic nature will be taken up shortly.

from this tree, lest that you two become angels, or be immortal!”⁽²⁶⁾
 ﴿21﴾ He “further” swore to them: “I am indeed a sincere adviser to you!”⁽²²⁾ He dipped⁽²⁷⁾ them “low” with delusion; when they tasted from the tree, their nether regions became exposed to them and they ‘panickingly’ scurried to attaching leaves of the Garden to themselves; their Lord called out for them: “Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan was an open enemy to you!”⁽²³⁾ They said: “Our Lord, we have indeed wronged ourselves. Should you not forgive us and have mercy on us then we shall surely be among the losers”.⁽²⁸⁾
 ﴿24﴾ He said: “Go down, as enemies to each other. On Earth will be your dwelling and livelihood for a given time!”⁽²⁵⁾ He said: “Therein you live, therein you die and from it you are brought out”.

عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَائِكَةً
 أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا
 لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَدَلَّهُمَا بِعُرْوَةٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا
 الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ
 عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا
 عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلْتُ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ
 لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا
 وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
 الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ أَهبطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ
 وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتْعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٥﴾
 قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَمِنْهَا
 تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

26 “Then Satan whispered to him, saying: “Adam! Shall I show you the Tree of Immortality and a kingship that does not fade away?” (20: 120).

27 *Dallāhumā* means that he tricked them as well as he lowered them, just like a bucket is lowered into a well to draw water (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). Indeed he tricked them, made them ‘dip’ into sin, and lowered their status.

28 Their immediate repentance sharply contrasts with Satan’s haughty stance upon his disobedience of God: “Adam received a few words ‘a supplication’ from His Lord, and He forgave him; He is the All-Forgiving the Most Merciful” (2: 37). The one who sins and seeks repentance is more likely to be forgiven: “Verily Allah likes those who repeatedly repent and those who purify themselves” (2: 222).

﴿26﴾ (29) Children of Adam! We have sent down to you raiment that hides your nether regions and feathers⁽³⁰⁾; and ‘as for’ the raiment of Mindfulness, that is the best ‘of all raiment’⁽³¹⁾. That is indeed from among the Signs of Allah, so that you may pay heed. ﴿27﴾ Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you just as he banished your two parents from the Garden; he ripped off their raiment from them to expose their nether regions to them. Indeed he sees you along with his kind from where you do not see them—indeed We made the devils allies to those who do not Believe. ﴿28﴾ When they commit a vice⁽³²⁾, they say: “We found

يٰۤاٰدَمَ قَدْ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلٰىكَ لِبَاسًا يُورِي
سَوَءَ تَكْوُرِكَ وَّرِيْشًا وَّلِبَاسًا التَّمْوِيْ
ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ يٰۤاٰدَمَ
لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكَ الشَّيْطٰنُ كَمَا اَخْرَجَ
اٰبَوٰكَ مِنْ الْجَنَّةِ يَنْزِعُ عَنْهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا
لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوَءَ اَنْهٰمَ اٰتٰهُ يَرْذُكُمُ هُوَ وَّقَبِيْلُهُ
مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيْطٰنَ اَوْلِيَّاءَ
لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَاِذَا فَعَلُوْا فٰحِشَةً قَالُوْا
وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْنَا

- 29 The detailing of the bliss of ‘raiment’ that was given to the children of Adam is a symbolic reminder of how much they should guard their cover of modesty lest Satan and his kind ‘rip it off’ them with their insinuations and make them fall into sin as much as he did to their parents, thus ‘lowering’ their moral status.
- 30 *Rīsh* literally means the feathers of birds. Birds find protection and beauty in their feathers (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 12: 255). However, here it means luxuriant garments which are used for beautification (al-Ṭabarī, al-Jawharī, *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, 3/1008, al-Baghawī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 31 There are three types of raiment spoken of here: the clothing which is necessary to cover one’s nakedness, thus basically setting humans apart from animals; luxuriant feathery garments as adornments showing God’s honouring of humans (cf. Ayas 31-32 below), and the most superior ‘raiment’, i.e. that of Mindfulness of God and paying Him heed. This elevates humans to new heights for such ‘raiment’ both protects the human against Satan and his kind, who lie in waiting unseen, and, in more than one aspect, adorns him.
- 32 The heathen practice of the Arabs who used to circumambulate around the Ka‘bah naked as part of their so-called pilgrimage rites (cf. al-Ṭabarī,

our fathers thus doing and Allah bade us to it". Say "Muhammad": "Allah does not bid vice. Do you say regarding Allah that which you have no knowledge of?"⁴²⁹ Say: "Muhammad": "My Lord 'only' bade equity⁽³³⁾ and that you should devote your faces⁽³⁴⁾ at all

ءَابَاءَنَا وَاللَّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَأْمُرُ
بِالْفَحْشَاءِ أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾
قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ

Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 21/276, Ibn Rajab, *Fath al-Bārī*, 2/335), is being alluded to here and is something of a subtext to be found throughout these opening passages. It bears special significance because it is indicative of how morally low they stooped; that is for taking Satan as ally and following in his footsteps generation after another. Devotional acts of worship are not to be mixed with base desires and lewdness. This 'vice' is the vilest of all acts, and sound human nature rebels against it (as much as Adam and Eve instinctively wanted to cover up from each other in Paradise) (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

- 33 *al-Qist* is fairness with regards to acts of worship by devoting them solely to God, and transactions by being fair to others (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). *al-Qist* captures the totality of the true heavenly religion; it is a middle ground between extremes: monotheism is a middle ground between Association and atheism, calculated generosity is a middle ground between tightfistedness and wastefulness, and so on and so forth. It is the source of all virtue (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 34 *Iqāmat al-wajh* (lit. keeping the face forward facing) is dedicating worship only and wholeheartedly to God: "I hereby direct my face to He Who Originated the Heavens and Earth, 'being' rightly-oriented, and never am I one of the Associators" (6: 79). Ibn 'Āshūr explains: "That one 'devotes his face' is illustrative of the perfection of the dedication of worship in its designated places. It is like when a person directs his undivided attention to see something very important; he does not look left or right. This pure dedication is called *iqāmat al-wajh* because it keeps the face absolutely forward facing. This means that Allah enjoined people to keep their faces upright in places of worship, because they are where the Lord is glorified; He did not enjoin people to glorify Him or ennoble His places of worship with anything let alone nakedness or Associating with Him.... Prohibiting nakedness is purposeful here because the word *fāhishah* (vice) entails it and because the context bears it out; the conferment of raiment and the prohibition of nudity being underlined". 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when standing for Prayer used to say: "I turn my face to He Who originated the creation of the Heavens and Earth being rightly-oriented 'in religion' and not being one of the Associators. Indeed, my Prayer, devotional rites, life and death belong to Allah, there is

places of prostration and invoke Him being devout in religion to Him; as He originated you, you will return”⁽³⁵⁾. ﴿30﴾ A party ‘of you’ He guides, and another party misguidedness is their rightful lot; they betook the devils as allies besides Allah and they think that they are guided!⁽³⁶⁾

عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ
الْذِينَ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَرِيقًا
هَدَىٰ وَفَرِيقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلَالَةُ إِنَّهُمْ
اتَّخَذُوا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُم مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

no Associating with Him. With this I have been bade and I am one of those who submit. O Allah! You are the King, there is no god ‘worthy of worship’ but You. You are my Lord and I am Your servant. I have transgressed against myself and confessed my misdeeds. Forgive all my misdeeds, no one forgives misdeeds but You. Guide me to the best of manners, no one guides to them but You. Drive bad manners away from me, no one drives them away but You. I hold fast to worshipping You, which immensely helped me ‘and pleased me’. All that is good is in Your Hands. Evil is not to be ascribed to You. My success is from You and I turn to You ‘in all my affairs’. Glorified and exalted You are. I ask You for forgiveness and turn in repentance to You” (Muslim: 771). al-Barā’ Ibn ‘Āzib (رضي الله عنه) said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “When you want to go to bed perform *wuḍū’* in the same way as you would for Prayer, then lie on your right side and say: “O Allah! I have submitted my soul to You and directed my face towards You, and I have entrusted You with ‘all’ my affairs, and I have depended on You ‘with all my affairs’, expecting Your favour and dreading Your punishment. There is no fleeing or refuge from You except to You. I Believe in the Book you have revealed and the Prophet you have sent. If you die that night, you will die in ‘the state of’ *fiṭrah* (pure Faith). Make them the last things you say” (al-Bukhārī: 6311, Muslim: 2710).

- 35 They are to be mindful that the One Who created them the first time is Able to resurrect them for Judgement (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*And he cites an example for Us, forgetting his own creation. He said: “Who can give life back to bones after they have decayed? *Say: “The One Who made them in the first place will resurrect them. He is fully aware of every creation”*” (36: 78-79).
- 36 “*Indeed, those who revert ‘to Denying’ after guidance has become clear to them; Satan has tempted them, luring them with false hope”* (47: 25); “*Say: “Shall I inform you who are the greatest losers in respect to their deeds? *Those whose efforts go astray in the worldly life, while they reckon that they are virtuous in their works. *It is they who Denied the Signs of their Lord and their meeting with Him, their deeds became void, so We will not give their deeds any weight on the Day of Judgement”*” (18: 103-105).

﴿31﴾ (37)Children of Adam! | يٰبَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ
Take your adornment at every | وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
place of prostration; eat and | الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣١﴾
drink⁽³⁸⁾ but do not squander—
He likes not the squanderers.

37 The morally degrading, religiously defiling issue of nudity, which arouses the beast in man and runs contrary to holiness, is being implicated here. As for the reason for revelation of this aya Ibn ‘Abbās says: “Women used to circumambulate around the Ka‘bah ‘stark’ naked and ask: “Who would lend me a cover for circumambulation (*tiṭwāf*)?” They would then cover with it their private parts and say ‘in poetry’: “Today some or all of it is exposed; whatever is exposed of it I do not grant permission to it!” Then this aya was sent down: “...take your adornment at every place of worship” (Muslim: 3028). Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (*Fath al-Bārī*: 2/335) said: “It was sent down because the Associators used to circumambulate around the Ka‘bah ‘stark’ naked. Ibn ‘Abbās’s narration is authentic and all earlier exegetes are unanimous about it”. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said that Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) sent him - during the pilgrimage mission that the Prophet (ﷺ) appointed him as head of - and bade him announce to people that: “No Associator shall perform hajj after this year and no naked person shall circumambulate around the Ka‘bah” (al-Bukhārī: 1622, Muslim: 1347). God commanded that people ‘take adornment’ and not merely cover their nakedness by way of indicating that people should wear their best to Prayers. It is reported that there was one among our rightly-guided predecessors who used to have a luxuriantly expensive garment to wear for Prayer, when asked he said: “My Lord has the most right from me to look my best for Prayer”. It is well-known that Allah likes to see the mark of His Bounty on His servants, especially when they stand in front of Him; the best way to do so is by wearing one’s best raiment that Allah bestowed on Him both outer (the garment) and inner (Mindfulness) (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*, 5/326, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, 2/363). Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “None who has a mote’s measure of arrogance will enter Paradise”. A man remarked: “One likes his clothing and footwear to look good!” He ‘the Messenger (ﷺ)’ replied: “Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty! ‘Arrogance’ is to disdainfully dismiss what is rightful and to regard other people with contempt” (Muslim: 91).

38 In their heathen days they used to even forbid certain types of food, or that no food should enter Makkah besides what was already available therein and only eat from it during the time of pilgrimage (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn ‘Ashūr). These two practices bidding what is unlawful, nudity, and forbidding what is lawful, food consumption, are indicative of how far straying the Arab community was from God’s Path and how eaten up by Satan they were. God only bids what is equitable (*qist*): moderation between miserliness and wastefulness.

﴿32﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Who is he who declared unlawful the adornment of Allah that He brought forth to His servants⁽³⁹⁾, and His good provisions?" Say 'Muhammad': "It is for those who Believe during this worldly life; 'and theirs' solely in the Hereafter."⁽⁴⁰⁾ Thus We detail the Signs to those who know.

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ
وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كَذَلِكَ
نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

﴿33﴾ ⁽⁴¹⁾ Say 'Muhammad': "My Lord only forbade vices, both open and secret⁽⁴²⁾, sinning, aggressing unrightfully⁽⁴³⁾, that

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا
بَطَّنَ ۖ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ

- 39 Ibn Kathīr says in his commentary: "The Arabs, excepting the Quraysh, used not to circumambulate around the Ka'bah in the garments in which they committed sins in... whoever was lent a garment by a Qurayshite would use it and whoever circumambulated in a 'brand' new garment would throw it away 'after performing the rites' and no one would use it afterwards. But whoever could not find 'or afford' a new garment or borrow one from a Qurayshite, would perform the rite naked" (cf. also al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makkah*, 1/138).
- 40 This 'adornment' and good provision may be enjoyed by both the Believers and the Deniers in this life but in the Hereafter it is only enjoyed by those who Believed (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*). This allusion paves the way for the scenes of the Hereafter that come shortly.
- 41 This message is to affirm the Godly stand on their sordid state of affairs and warns them against His retribution. A detailed account of what real morality is, is provided in the previous Makkan Sura *al-An'ām*, Ayas 151-153, which pointedly concludes with: "Indeed this is My path, Straight, so follow it and do not follow the 'diverse' roads and get driven away from His road; that He bade you so that you may become Mindful".
- 42 *al-Fawāḥish* (lit. vices) mentioned here are, in a way, related to acts of lewdness (cf. Aya 80 below which talks of homosexuality as a 'vice') and nudity (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 15/381). Ibn 'Abbās narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "No one is more solicitously jealous than Allah. This is why He forbade vices, both open and secret" (al-Bukhārī: 4637, Muslim: 2670).
- 43 It is given that all forms of aggression (*baghy*) are undoubtedly not rightful, but 'unrightful' (*bi ghayr al-haqq*): this is mentioned here by way of calling

you Associate with Him that for which He sent down no authority, and that you say about Allah what you have no knowledge of".⁴⁴ For every nation there is a 'set' term; when their term is due, they will not be delayed an hour nor will they be hastened⁴⁴.

⁴⁵ Children of Adam! Whenever Messengers from among you⁴⁶ come to you recounting My Signs to you; whoever 'then' becomes Mindful and makes amends, then they should not fear nor need they grieve⁴⁷.⁴⁶ While those who rejected Our Signs and disdained them, these are the Companions of Hellfire—forever they abide therein.

وَأَنْ تَشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

يَبْنَیْءَ آدَمَ إِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكَ رُسُلٌ مِنْكَ بِضُؤُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِي فَمَنْ أَتَقَى وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَأَسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

attention to its repulsiveness. Conversely, it could mean that 'rightful aggression' is justified when exacting justice against someone who aggressed against the person concerned (al-Rāzī, al-Shinqīfī, al-'Adhb al-Namīr).

- 44 A set time for it to taste Divine Wrath and retribution should it persist in Denying (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Basīṭ, Shinqīfī, al-'Adhb al-Namīr). The ones who are directly meant by this warning are the Arabs of that time who stood against the Message. Their attention is being drawn to what befell those who came before them (Ibn 'Ashūr): "*Indeed, Messengers before you were ridiculed, but those who used to ridicule them got hit by what they ridiculed. *Say 'Muhammad': 'Travel the land and look what was the fate of the Deniers'*" (6: 10-11).
- 45 Now the address, 'Children of Adam', takes on a more general note and speaks not particularly to Arabs, who were especially morally degraded (as they had nudity enshrined in their religion), but humanity at large.
- 46 Messengers from among humankind (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, al-Shinqīfī). That the Messengers are humans 'from you' is the more reason to Believe (cf. 6: 9) and is used here in argument against them (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 47 They need not worry about the future nor brood over their past sins. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿37﴾ Who does more wrong than one who fabricated lies against Allah or rejected His Signs; those their share 'as' per the Book will catch up with them⁽⁴⁸⁾, until when Our messengers⁽⁴⁹⁾ come upon them to terminate their lives, they would say: "Where is it that you were invoking besides Allah?" They said: "They have deserted us!"⁽⁵⁰⁾ They bore witness against themselves that they were Deniers⁽⁵¹⁾. ﴿38﴾ He 'Allah' said: "Enter you to join nations of humans and jinn, who passed away before you, in Hellfire". Whenever a nation enters, it damns its sister⁽⁵²⁾; until when they are all amassed in it,

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ
بِآيَاتِهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ يَتْلُوهُمْ نُصَيْبُهُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ تُهْمٌ رُّسُلْنَا بِتَوْفِقِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا
كُنَّا نَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا أَضَلُّوا عَنَّا
وَشَهِدُوا عَلَيَّ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾
قَالَ ادْخُلُوا فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مِنَ
الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ فِي النَّارِ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ أُمَّةٌ
لَعَنَتْ أُخْتَهَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا آدَارَكُوا فِيهَا جَمِيعًا

- 48 Even those who chose to Deny will get their allocated provisions and will go on living their lives as per what is written in the Book, the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī): "Those who Deny, let their Denying not grieve you 'Muhammad'. To Us is their return and We shall inform them what they have done. Surely, Allah is the All-Knower of what is in the hearts 'of people'. *We let them enjoy for a little while 'in this world', then We shall oblige them to enter a rough Punishment 'in the Hereafter'" (31: 23-24).
- 49 The angels who are tasked with claiming peoples' lives. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*)
- 50 Their so-called gods whom they Associate with God; they 'deserted' them at the time of their most pressing need! (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*)
- 51 Only at the time of their death did they realize the Truth! (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ʿĀshūr)
- 52 By replying positively to the question about their 'gods', they effectively, and quite regretfully, admitted guilt: "He 'Ibrāhīm' said: "You have taken besides Allah idols 'for worship', only to keep 'a bond of' love among yourselves in this worldly life. But on the Day of Judgement you will disown and damn one another. Your home will be the Fire, and you will have no helper!" (29: 25)

the last of them says⁽⁵³⁾ to the first of them: “Our Lord! These are the ones who misled us, so give them double the Punishment in Hellfire”. He ‘Allah’ said: “There is double ‘Punishment’ for everyone⁽⁵⁴⁾ but you do not know”.⁽³⁹⁾ The first of them said to the last of them: “You are no better than us. Taste you the Punishment for what you used to earn⁽⁵⁵⁾”.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Indeed those who rejected Our Signs and disdained them, the gates of Heaven will not be opened up for them⁽⁵⁶⁾ and they will not enter Paradise until the camel gets through the eye of a needle⁽⁵⁷⁾— thus We requite the criminals.

قَالَتْ أَخْرِطْهُمْ لِأَوْلِيهِمْ رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ أَضَلُّونَا
فَقَاتِهِمْ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا مِّنَ النَّارِ قَالَ لِكُلِّ ضِعْفٍ
وَلَكِن لَّا تَعْمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَالَتْ أَوْلِيَهُمْ لِأَخْرِطْهُمْ
فَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِن فَضْلٍ فَذُوقُوا
العَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا
لَا نَفْتَحُ لَهُمُ أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ
حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

53 Another such acrimonious interaction between the dwellers of Hellfire, both early and late, is recounted elsewhere: “...if only you could see ‘Muhammad’ when the wrongdoers will be detained before their Lord, throwing blame at each other! The lowly ‘followers’ will say to the arrogant ‘leaders’: ‘Had it not been for you, we would certainly have been Believers. *The arrogant will respond to the lowly, ‘Did we ever drive you away from guidance after it came to you? Indeed, you were criminals’ in your own right” (34: 31-32).

54 “As for those who Deny and turn away ‘others’ from the Way of Allah, We will add more Punishment to their Punishment for all the corruption they spread” (16: 88).

55 The sins they used to commit. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*)

56 The doors of Heaven will be closed shut for their deeds during their lives because of their disdainful rejection of God’s Signs, nor will they be opened up for their souls when they die. (*al-Muyassar, al-Mukhtaṣar*; for details about what happens to the souls of those who Believe and those who Deny upon their death see Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaḥ*: 12059, Imām Aḥmad: 18534, al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*: 107)

57 An impossible prospect indeed: “...whoever Associates with Allah, then Allah will surely forbid him ‘entry into’ Paradise and his home will be Hellfire—the wrongdoers will never have helpers” (5: 72).

﴿41﴾ Theirs is bedding from Hellfire and above them are covers 'of fire'— thus We requite the wrongdoers.

﴿42﴾ And 'as for' those who Believed and did good deeds – We only charge a soul with that which it can bear⁽⁵⁸⁾ – these are the Companions of Paradise—forever they abide therein. ﴿43﴾ And We had stripped away the ill will that is in their chests⁽⁵⁹⁾; rivers flow from under them. And they said: “All gratitude be to Allah⁽⁶⁰⁾, Who guided us to this. We would not have been guided had Allah not guided us. Surely the Messengers of our Lord came with the Truth”. They were called out: “That is Paradise; you were made to inherit it for what you used to do”.⁽⁶¹⁾

لَهُمْ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَمِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ غَوَاشٍ وَكَذَلِكَ
يَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ
نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا اُولَئِكَ اَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ
مِنْ عَلِيٍّ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ اِلَآ نَهْرٌ وَقَالُوا
اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي هَدٰنَا لِهٰذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ
لَوْلَا اَنْ هَدٰنَا اللّٰهُ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلٌ رَبِّنَا
بِالْحَقِّ وَنُودُوا اَنْ تَلِكُمُ الْجَنَّةُ اُورَثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

- 58 The statement in parenthesis asserts a major Qur'anic tenet that God laid upon us “no hardship in the religion” (22: 78, cf. also: 2: 333, 2: 286, 6: 152, 23: 62, 65: 7, 64: 16). It is raised here to encourage people to do whatever is in their capacity to gain Paradise (al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 59 All the evil thoughts and toxic feelings they might have had, will be removed from their hearts, so that they live in total peace and do not harbour any ill will for each other, especially given that they are of different ranks in Paradise (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).
- 60 “And they said: “All Gratitude be to Allah, Who has dispelled grief from us. Truly our Lord is Most Forgiving, All-Thankful, *Who, of His Bounty, has caused us to dwell in the Abode of Everlasting Life, wherein no weariness shall touch us, nor fatigue befall us” (35: 34-35). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Each one of the Companions of Paradise sees his ‘could have been’ seat in Hellfire and says: “Had Allah not guided me!” Uttering it out of thankfulness. Each one of the Companions of Hellfire sees his ‘could have been’ seat in Paradise and says: “Had Allah guided me!” Uttering it out of dismay” (al-Nasā'ī: 11390. Imām Aḥmad: 10652).
- 61 “These are the inheritors, *who inherit Paradise; forever they abide therein” (23: 10-11). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Each

﴿44﴾ (62) The Companions of Paradise called out to the Companions of Hellfire⁽⁶³⁾: “We have indeed found what our Lord promised us as truthful! Did you ‘too’ find what your Lord promised you as truthful?” They said: “Yes!” Then an announcer announced⁽⁶⁴⁾ between them: “Indeed Allah’s Damnation is on the wrongdoers;

وَتَادَىٰ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ أَنْ قَدَّ
وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا رَبُّنَا حَقًّا فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَ
رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا قَالُوا نَعَمْ فَأَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنَّ
لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

one of you has two ‘would be’ abodes: one in Paradise and one in Hellfire. When one dies and is admitted into Hellfire, the Companions of Paradise inherit his abode. That is what is meant by: “*These are the inheritors*” (23: 10) (Ibn Mājah: 4341, al-Bayhaqī, *al-Ba‘th wa al-Nushūr*: 241).

- 62 What follows is a graphic description, a vivid recreation of what will take place after the Companions of both Paradise and Hellfire have been settled in their abodes and have had a taste of what both parties have been promised through the Messengers of God. This is the culminating scene of the battle between good and evil; the central theme of this sura.

Notice that the past tense is employed throughout the passage, and indeed this is the case of almost all the happenings of the Day of Judgement and beyond in the different passages where it is mentioned in the Qur’an, even though the events being talked about are future events. This carries a number of interrelated rhetorical purposes: to ascertain its taking place as if it had already done so since it is the Truth coming from the All-Wise, All-Knowing (ﷻ), to heighten the effect on the receiver whose brain is programmed to taking past events as a foregone conclusion. Since the narrator is no one less than the Majestic Creator of the universe, the Founder of life and death (ﷻ), what we are told will happen in the future is surely a foregone conclusion (cf. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Mathal al-Sā‘ir fī Adab al-Kātib wa al-Shā‘ir*, al-Shinqīī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*).

- 63 After enduring a barrage of ridicule and slandering from the Deniers, it is now the turn of the Believers to ridicule those who hurt them so much seeing that they justly got what they deserved: “*The worldly life is prettified for the Deniers; they ridicule those who Believe; ‘but’ the Mindful are indeed above them on the Day of Judgement—Allah shows with favours whom He wills without account*” (2: 212).
- 64 The announcement is said in a loud, clearly audible, authoritative voice: al-Qurṭubī is of the opinion that it is the angels’ (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). This announcement is meant to make the Companions of Hellfire despair of all hope of deliverance (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿45﴾ those who turn away⁽⁶⁵⁾ from the Way of Allah and wish it be crooked, while they are 'staunchly' Denying of the Hereafter". ﴿46﴾ Between them is a barrier⁽⁶⁶⁾ and on the heights are men⁽⁶⁷⁾ who know each by their signs⁽⁶⁸⁾; they called out to

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَعُوجُّونَهَا عَوجًا
وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ وَعَلَى
الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ يَعْرِفُونَ كُلًّا بِسِيمَاهُمْ وَنَادُوا

- 65 They always cast the religion of God in bad light, showing it as defective and imperfect (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): “*And when Our Signs are recited to them as clear proofs, they say: “This is naught but a man who desires to turn you from that which your fathers used to worship”. And they say: “This is naught but a fabricated perversion”. And those who Denied say to the Truth when it comes to them: “This is naught but manifest sorcery”*” (34: 43). They used to ‘turn away’ (*yaṣuddūna*) from the Truth themselves and divert other people from it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 66 Between the dwellers of both abodes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “*So a fence will be set up between them, whose gate separates Mercy on the inner side, from Punishment on the outer side*” (57: 13).
- 67 There are a number of opinions as to who these people really are. It is mostly agreed however that these are people whose good deeds and bad deeds came in equal measure after their weighing on the Scale of deeds on the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-‘Adhb al-Namīr). That they are said to be ‘men’ (*rijāl*) does not necessarily exclude women; a woman in authentic Arabic is also called ‘*rajulah*’ (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, al-‘Adhb al-Namīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 68 The beauty and illuminated faces of the dwellers of Paradise and the grotesque faces of the dwellers of Hell which are clouded with darkness (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-‘Adhb al-Namīr). Being on such a high and raised place, they are afforded the vantage point of seeing the stark difference between those terminally suffering in Hell in contrast to those who dwell in Paradise enjoying all sorts of bliss (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr*, 2/124): “*On the Day when some faces are illumined and others are darkened; as for those whose faces become dark: “Did you Deny after you have become Believers? Taste then the Punishment of your Denial”. *As for those whose faces become illumined, they will be ‘admitted’ in Allah’s Mercy, forever they reside therein*” (3: 106-107): “*Faces on that Day shall be beaming; *laughing, rejoicing. *And faces that Day shall be covered with dust, *and overcast with gloom*” (80: 38-41): “*Those who had done good, will have the best reward and even more. Neither dust nor humiliating disgrace shall cover their faces. They are the Companions of Paradise; forever they abide therein. *And those who have earned evil*

the Companions of Paradise: “Peace be upon you!” They did not get into it⁽⁶⁹⁾ ‘Paradise, yet’; they are desirous.⁽⁴⁷⁾ When their sights were turned towards the Companions of Hellfire, they said: “Our Lord, do not let us end up with the wrongdoers!”⁽⁴⁸⁾ The Companions of the heights called out ‘some’ men they knew by their signs⁽⁷⁰⁾: “What has your gathering⁽⁷¹⁾ and your arrogance warded off from you?”⁽⁴⁹⁾ “Are these the ones that you swore that Allah would not touch them with His Mercy?”⁽⁷²⁾

أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ سَلَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ لَمْ يَدْخُلُوهَا وَهُمْ يَطْمَعُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ *وَإِذَا صُرِفَتْ أَبْصَارُهُمْ تِلْقَاءَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَتَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالًا يَعْرِفُونَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ قَالُوا مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ أَهَلْؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمْتُمْ لَا يَنَالُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ

deeds, the recompense of an evil deed will be the like thereof, humiliating disgrace will cover them. They will not have any defender from Allah. 'It will be' As if their faces are covered with dark patches of night. They are the Companions of Hellfire; forever they abide therein." (10: 26-27).

- 69 The people on the heights have not yet entered Paradise, but they are desperately hopeful that they will be admitted into it with God's Mercy (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*). They are to be entered into Paradise but they are being stood on these heights as a light punishment, a purification of their misdeeds (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr; this is his inference from the views of earlier exegetes).
- 70 Unlike the earlier 'signs' which brand the whole population of Hellfire, these are special 'signs' which mark out the heads of the criminals who dwell in Hell (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 71 The sons, men and resources they amassed around themselves to fend off evil from themselves (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Su'ūd). Their cry on that Day is: “*My wealth has availed me nothing, *Vanished has my power from me!*” (69: 28-29)
- 72 In the worldly life they were so blinded by arrogance that seeing, merely by worldly measures, how lowly some of the Believers were, they assumed them not worthy of God's Mercy; thus applying their own seriously convoluted standards to those of God (cf. al-Wāḥidī, al-Rāzī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī). This is by way of catching the attention of the haughty Arab masters who regarded the Believers at that time, among whom were slaves and those of low social standing, with disdainful contempt (cf. 6: 52-53, Ibn 'Āshūr).

“Enter you Paradise, you should not fear nor need you grieve.”⁽⁷³⁾

﴿50﴾ And the Companions of Hellfire called out to the Companions of Paradise: “Spill over some water for us or ‘any’ of what Allah blessed you with!”⁽⁷⁴⁾ They said: “Indeed Allah has forbidden both to the Deniers; ﴿51﴾ those who took their religion lightly and playfully⁽⁷⁵⁾ and were deceived by the worldly life”⁽⁷⁶⁾. Today We forget them as they had forgotten their meeting of this Day of theirs⁽⁷⁷⁾ and for denying Our Signs.

أَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾
 وَتَادَىٰ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ أَيْضُوا
 عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ أَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ قَالُوا
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ مَا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ الَّذِينَ
 اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَلَعِبًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ
 الدُّنْيَا فَالْيَوْمَ نَنسَاهُمْ كَمَا نَسُوا لِقَاءَ يَوْمِهِمْ
 هَذَا وَمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

73 The addressees here are the people of the heights (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Sa‘dī).

74 They would beg them for water and food (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

75 “When you call for Prayer they playfully take it ‘as an object of’ mockery and scorn. That because they are people who do not reason” (5: 58).

76 This aya strongly brings to mind Aya 6: 70: “Leave behind ‘Muhammad’ those who took their religion lightly and playfully and were deceived by the worldly life, and remind with it ‘the Qur’an’, lest that a soul becomes bonded by what it earned; there is no ally or intercessor for it besides Allah and if it were to ransom itself with anything it will not be accepted from it. Those are the ones who are bonded for their earning, for them are a boiling drink and a painful Punishment for all their Denying”.

77 Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Allah meets the servant and says: “You so-and so! Have I not been generous towards you, made you into a master, got you married, availed you with horses and camels, and let you reign supreme?” He says: “Yes indeed!” He (ﷺ) then says: “Were you of a mind that you would not come to meet Me?” He says: “No!” He then says: “Then I forget you just as you had forgotten Me!” Then He meets another one and says: “You so-and so! Have I not been generous towards you, made you into a master, got you married, availed you with horses and camels, and let you reign supreme?” He says: “Yes indeed!” He (ﷺ) then says: “Were you of a mind that you would not come to meet Me?” He (ﷺ) says: “No!” He then says: “Then I forget you just as you had forgotten Me!” (Muslim: 2968); “So taste ‘the Punishment’ for forgetting the meeting of this Day of yours. We ‘too’ have certainly forgotten you; taste the Punishment of eternity for what you used to do!” (32: 14)

﴿52﴾ Verily, We had brought them a Book, which We have detailed with 'proper' knowledge; a guidance and mercy for the Believing people.⁽⁷⁸⁾
 ﴿53﴾ Do they expect 'nothing' but its realization!⁽⁷⁹⁾ On the Day when its realization comes, those who forgot it before would say: "Indeed the Messengers of our Lord came with the Truth. Will we then have intercessors to intercede for us, or are we to be returned so that we may do that besides what we used to do!"⁽⁸⁰⁾ Surely, they have lost their souls⁽⁸¹⁾ and what they used to weave⁽⁸²⁾ deserted them.

وَلَقَدْ جِئْنَاهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ
 هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّتُؤْمِرُوا ۖ هَلْ يُظْهِرُونَ إِلَّا تَأْوِيلَهُ ۚ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي تَأْوِيلَهُ يَقُولُ
 الَّذِينَ تَسُوهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا
 بِالْحَقِّ فَهَلْ لَنَا مِنْ شَفْعَاءَ فَيَشْفَعُوا لَنَا
 أَوْ نُرَدُّ فَنَعْمَلَ غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ۚ قَدْ
 خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَصَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا
 يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

- 78 The telling here of these stories and occurrences that will come to be true on the Day of Judgement and beyond are Signs for those who take heed so that they may prepare for their future and choose the path that takes them to their fate: "... indeed there has come to you a Light and a clarifying Book; *by it Allah guides those who follow His Pleasure to the path of peace and delivers them from utter darkness into light with His permission; He guides them to a Straight Path" (5: 15-16).
- 79 *Ta'wilahu* (lit. its interpretation) is the coming true and realization of what it tells of and promises: resurrection, reckoning and Punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Do they expect 'nothing' but that the angels come upon them; or your Lord comes, or some of your Lord's Signs come 'upon them'? On the Day when some of your Lord's Signs come, a soul's Believing will be to no avail to it had it not Believed earlier or earned good in its Believing. Say 'Muhammad': "Wait 'you', for we shall be waiting"" (6: 158).
- 80 "If only you could see 'Muhammad' when they were stood at the Fire and then said: "How we wish we could be returned then we would 'surely' not deny the Signs of our Lord and would be among the Believers!" *Nay, but what they used to hide before was made to come all too true to them. If they were to return they would 'only' backtrack to what they were forbidden from—indeed they are liars" (6: 27-28).
- 81 "Losers indeed are those who deny the meeting of Allah, until when the Hour comes upon them all of a sudden, they would say: "Woe be us for wasting it 'our lives'!" They would carry their 'burdensome' sins over their backs—sordid indeed what they carry" (6: 31).
- 82 The false idols and gods they used to set up as rivals to Almighty God (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿54﴾ (83) Indeed your 'True' Lord is Allah Who created the Heavens and Earth in six days⁽⁸⁴⁾, then Established⁽⁸⁵⁾ Himself on the Throne; He shrouds night over day, relentlessly pursuing it⁽⁸⁶⁾; the sun, the moon and the stars are dominated by His Command⁽⁸⁷⁾;

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ
يُعْشَىٰ لَيْلَ النَّهَارِ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسُ
وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ مُسَخَّرَاتٌ بِأَمْرِهِ

- 83 This passage and the next one mark an interpose; acting as anchorage for the flow of the discourse, a reminder of this sura's central theme, Allah's Godship (*ulūhiyyah*), and that He is the Sole Deserver of all acts of worship Who is not to be Associated with. The truly cosmic Signs detailed here are proofs of His Majesty, indications of the extent of His limitless Power, and rightfulness to devoted worship (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr). This is the single most Truth that people engage in struggle over; the core Message of all Prophets throughout time: "Worship Allah 'alone', there is no god for you besides Him".
- 84 "Surely your Lord is Allah Who created the Heavens and Earth in six days, then Established Himself on the Throne, conducting every affair. None can intercede except by His permission. That is Allah—your Lord, so worship Him 'alone'. Will you not then be heedful?" (10: 3); "Allah is He Who has created the Heavens and Earth and everything in between in six days, then Established Himself on the Throne. You have no Protector or Intercessor besides Him. Will you not then be heedful?" (32: 4)
- 85 The verb *istawā* literally means rose and ascended in a manner befitting His Majesty only and unlike any of His creation. This Attribute of Almighty God (ﷻ) should be established as it is without *tashbīh* (drawing analogies), *takyīf* (adaptation) or *ta'fīl* (repudiation). (Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī)
- 86 The Qur'an depicts striking imagery of the relationship that holds between night and day in many places where they are mentioned as cosmic Signs of God's magnificent creation; they are personified as truly odd companions who live in constant contrast and struggle: "You 'Allah' merge night into day and You merge day into night" (3: 27); "He shrouds night over day. Indeed in these are Signs for those who pay heed" (13: 3); "The night is also a Sign for them: We strip the daylight from it, and behold!- they are left in darkness" (36: 37); "The sun is not permitted to overtake the moon, nor can the night outrun the day: each floats in 'its own' orbit" (36: 40).
- 87 This is yet another Sign of God's ability and He has subjected these planets for the benefit of creation; no one could have otherwise done so (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "He has made night and day subservient to you, and the sun, moon and stars, all dominated by His Command. There are certainly Signs in that for people who use their intellect" (16: 12).

verily for Him 'alone' is the creation and the Command⁽⁸⁸⁾—glorified be Allah, the Lord of all beings⁽⁸⁹⁾.⁴⁵⁵ Invoke your Lord⁽⁹⁰⁾ humbly and mutedly⁽⁹¹⁾; indeed He likes not the transgressors⁽⁹²⁾.

اَلَا اِلٰهَ الْخَلْقِ وَالْاَمْرِ تَبَارَكَ اللهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾
 اَدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ
 الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾

- 88 God Almighty (ﷻ) is the Sole Creator. He is the One Who truly controls His creation disposing of their affairs at will, (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): “Say: “Who provides for you from the Heavens and Earth? Who owns hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And Who conducts every affair?” They will ‘surely’ say: “Allah!” Say: “Will you not be Mindful?” (10: 31).
- 89 “So ‘all’ gratitude is for Allah—Lord of the Heavens and Lord of Earth, Lord of all beings. *His ‘alone’ is Majesty in the Heavens and Earth, and He is the All-Mighty, All-Wise” (45: 36-37).
- 90 The result of realizing how Magnificent and Dominant God is, is to direct one’s sincerest act of worship, supplication (*du‘ā*) to Him alone. al-Nu‘mān Ibn Bashīr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Supplication is worship” then he (ﷺ) read: “Your Lord said: “Call on Me and I will answer you; those who are too proud to serve Me will enter Hell humiliated” (40: 60)” (Imām Aḥmad: 271, Abū Dāwūd: 1479, al-Tirmidhī: 2969).
- 91 This is one of the protocols of calling upon God through invocations, i.e. summoning up one’s most sincere prayers in true humbleness, wholeheartedly and in secret; finding this one-to-One connection in all sincerity (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). That God is invoked secretly in a low voice bears special significance and is sincerer of Faith as it shows how much the supplicator realizes the nearness of God and His presence in his life, as well as how respecting of his Sovereign he really is (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā’i’ al-Fawā’id*, 6/3). Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) said: “We were travelling with the Prophet (ﷺ) and people began raising their voices glorifying ‘Allah’. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “O people! Go easy on yourselves; you are not invoking one who is deaf or absent. You are calling One Who is All-Hearing, All-Near; He is with you” (al-Bukhārī: 2992, Muslim: 2704).
- 92 Those who overstep the proper limits in their supplication and worship are called *mu’tadīn* (transgressors) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī). ‘Abdullāh Ibn Muḡhaffal (رضي الله عنه) heard a son of his pray, saying: “O Allah, I ask You for the white castle in Paradise, when I am admitted into it, to be on my right”. He said to him: “Son, ‘only’ pray to Allah to give you Paradise and seek refuge with Him from Hellfire for I truly heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “There will come after me, from this very nation, people who will transgress in supplication and purification (cleanliness)” (Abū Dāwūd: 96, Ibn Mājah: 3864, Imām Aḥmad: 20554).

﴿56﴾ Do not spread corruption in the land after it has been set aright⁽⁹³⁾ and invoke Him out of fear and in hope⁽⁹⁴⁾; indeed Allah's Mercy is ever close to the good-doers⁽⁹⁵⁾.

وَلَا تَقْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

﴿57﴾ ⁽⁹⁶⁾He is the One Who sends

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ

- 93 Another result of realizing the sheer Magnificence and Dominance of God Almighty is to steer clear of all forms of corruption and deviation from God's commands; notably Associating with Him in worship and sinning. The world has been set aright by the sending of the Messengers (ﷺ) who explained and expounded God's laws (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīb*).
- 94 This is yet another protocol of *du'ā'* which signifies that one should not be too sure of oneself while supplicating to God, gloating over good deeds or, conversely, despairing of His Mercy. In sincere acts of devotion, one should earnestly invest both fear (*al-khawf*) and hope (*al-rajā'*). Indeed God speaks of the supplication of His most sincere servants, the Messengers (ﷺ) who are the role models of humanity in such a manner: "...indeed, they used to race in doing good, and call upon Us in hope and fear, totally humbling themselves before Us" (21: 90).
- 95 Those who observe such rules of conduct in supplication are good-doers and will gain God's Mercy (Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i' al-Fawā'id*, 3/31). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allah, Glory be His, says: "I am as much as my servant thinks of Me and I am with him whenever he mentions Me; if he mentions Me to himself, I will Mention him to Myself, if he mentions Me to a company, I will Mention him to a better company; if he draws nearer to Me by a hand span, I will Draw nearer to him an arm's length, if he draws nearer to Me an arm's length, I will Draw nearer to him the length of arms stretched out, and if he comes to Me walking, I will come to him jogging" (al-Bukhārī: 7405, Muslim: 2675).
- 96 These are further Signs of God's sole rightfulness to worship. The analogy here is drawn between life-giving rain and how it transforms 'dead' land making it teem with life and producing all sorts of growths, on the one hand, and God's Ability over bringing the dead to life and resurrecting them, on the other (cf. al-Rāzī). Further, people are likened to different plots of land of which some are 'good' and will readily benefit from rain, whilst others are 'malicious' and will only yield horrible produce; so, then, are people with regards to their reception of God's Signs and Guidance (al-Sa'dī, Ibn ʿAshūr): "*Another of His Signs is that He sends out the winds bearing glad tidings, giving you a taste of His Mercy... So observe the traces of Allah's Mercy, how He revives the land after its death. Truly that is the Reviver of the dead; He is Able over all things*" (30: 46 and 50).

out winds as glad tidings heralding His Mercy⁽⁹⁷⁾; until when they haul heavy clouds, We drive them to a dead land, then We cause by them water to come down and We bring out with it crops of all types; like so do We bring out the dead so that you may heed⁽⁹⁸⁾. ﴿58﴾ And the good land, its growths come out by its Lord's permission⁽⁹⁹⁾; and the malicious one only comes out nasty⁽¹⁰⁰⁾—like so We expound the Signs for those who are thankful⁽¹⁰¹⁾.

الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَقْلَّتْ
سَحَابًا نُنْفَخُهَا سُقْتًا لِبَلَدٍ مَيِّتٍ فَأَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ
الْمَاءَ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ
نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالْبَلَدُ
الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ بِنَاءِ رَبِّهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ ۗ وَالَّذِي خَبَثَ
لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا نَكْدًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْأَلْيَاتِ
لِقَوْمٍ يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

- 97 *Rahmah* (mercy) here means rain because with it God shows mercy on His creation and through it they are provided with the sources of life: water and food (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).
- 98 This is a major Sign of God's Ability to bring the dead to life: “*Allah is the One Who sends forth the winds; they raise up the clouds; We drive them to a dead town and with them revive the land after its death: such will be the Resurrection*” (35: 9); “*Among His Signs is that you see the land devoid of life, but as soon as We send down rain upon it, it begins to stir ‘to life’ and swell. Indeed, the One Who revives it can willingly revive the dead. He is certainly Most Able of everything*” (41: 39): “*We send blessed water down from the sky and grow with it gardens, harvest grain, *and soaring palm trees, with clustered dates; *a provision for the servants, and We give life with it to the land which is dead. Such is the coming forth ‘resurrection’*” (50: 9-11).
- 99 So God Wills that such good land becomes fruitful and grows good produce readily and speedily (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 100 Even if rain were to fall on such land and it were to produce anything, it would only grow forth that which is displeasing and bereft of all benefit (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The example of the guidance and knowledge with which Allah sent me is that of the rain that falls on ‘vast’ land: parts of it are good, they accepted the water, grew with it dense greenery and herbage; yet parts of it are arid, they held water therein so by it Allah benefitted people so they could drink of it, they quenched the thirst of others from it and grazed; other parts are barren, they do not hold water nor do they grow herbage. Like so is the example of the person who bears knowledge of the religion of Allah, benefitted from what Allah sent me with so he learned and taught and ‘on the other hand,’ those who did not rise to the occasion and did not accept the guidance of Allah with which I was sent” (al-Bukhārī: 79, Muslim: 2282).
- 101 Those who are receptive and thankful will readily benefit most from these Signs (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Atīyyah, al-Qurtubī).

﴿59﴾ (102) Verily We had sent Nūh 'Noah' to his people and he said: "My people, worship Allah 'alone', there is no god for you besides Him⁽¹⁰³⁾. Certainly, I fear for you the Punishment of a dreadful Day!"

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا كُفِّرْتُمْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥٩﴾

102 The 'good land' and 'malicious land' are to be found throughout times and ages. Those who benefit from God's Signs are the 'good' ones who are set apart from the 'evil' ones who only get worse once God's Signs are recited for them. According to al-Rāzī, the series of stories of the Messengers of God which are to be told here serve a number of goals: 1) to console Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) by showing him that shunning the Signs of God and treating them disdainfully is not limited to his people but rather a great many previous nations were as rebellious; 2) to show the two parties, the Believers and the Deniers, the fate of each through previous real examples; 3) to draw attention to the, both at once, assuring and unsettling fact that God may slacken the rein for those who rebel against His command but He never disregards them; 4) they provide further proof of the Truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) who was unlettered and yet he managed to narrate stories of different nations, scattered throughout the land, with striking accuracy!

It is also useful to mention that these stories as told here are laconically styled (many of which are told elsewhere in the Qur'an in much more detail) recounting briefly the Message, the response to it, the response to the response and the punishment for not heeding it. Further, the rapport between the Messenger and those to whom he was sent is highlighted through the use of appellations like 'their brother' and 'my people' (cf. al-Biqā'i, *Naẓm al-Durar*); note too how some of the Messengers deeply and sorrowfully reflected on the fate of their people when they were hit by affliction. In this instance, further to what is alluded to by scholars, these stories can be taken as a reflection of the psychological state of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and how deeply he felt for his people; the interactions that went on between the Messengers and their people are also resonant of the ones that went on between Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his folk.

103 This is the single most Truth that people engage in struggle over; the core Message of all Prophets throughout time and ages: "*Worship Allah 'alone', there is no god for you besides Him*". It is the first Message that any Messenger will deliver to his people (with the notable exception of the people of Lot as explained below), because it deals with monotheism (*al-tawhīd*) which is the first and surest step to sincere Faith (Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikin*, 1/154): "*We surely sent a Messenger to every nation, saying: "Worship Allah and shun false gods". But some of them Allah guided them, while others were destined to stray. So travel throughout the land and see the fate of the deniers!*" (16: 36)

﴿60﴾ The notables among his people said: “Most certainly we see you are in manifest error!”

﴿61﴾ He said: “My people, there is nothing misguided about me, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of all beings!” ﴿62﴾ “I deliver to you the Messages of my Lord, sincerely advise you; I know of Allah that which you do not know!” ﴿63﴾ “Do you find it astounding that a reminder from your Lord comes to you through a man from among you to warn you so that you may become Mindful, and be shown mercy?”

﴿64﴾ They declared him a liar and We salvaged him and those with him in the ship and We drowned those who rejected Our Signs; indeed they were people smitten with blindness!⁽¹⁰⁴⁾”

﴿65﴾ And to ‘Ad ‘We sent’ their brother Hūd. He said: “My people, worship Allah ‘alone’, there is no god for you besides Him; would you not be Mindful?”

﴿66﴾ The Denying notables among his people said: “Most certainly we see you lacking in sound judgement and we certainly believe that you are one of the liars!”

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالَ يَقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي ضَلَالَةٌ وَلَا كِبَىٰ رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ أَتُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَأَنْصَحُ لَكُمْ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ أَوْحَيْتُ لَكَ كَلِمًا تَذَكَّرُ مَن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَلِتَتَّقُوا وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَجْحِبْتَهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَأَعْرَفْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا عَمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

* وَإِلَىٰ عَادِ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا قَالَ يَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۚ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِي سَفَاهَةٍ وَإِنَّا لَنُظُنُّكَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

104 Blindness of the heart is the real blindness (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “Have they not journeyed in the land, that they might have hearts by which to understand or ears by which to hear? Truly it is not the eyes that go blind, but it is hearts within chests that go blind!” (22: 46).

﴿67﴾ He said: “My people, I am not lacking sound judgement, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of all beings!”⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ ﴿68﴾ “I deliver to you the Messages of my Lord and I am a sincere adviser to you in all honesty.”⁽⁶⁹⁾ “Do you find it astounding that a reminder from your Lord comes to you through a man from among you?⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Remember that He made you successors after the people of Nūḥ and He made your ‘physical’ creation high statured⁽¹⁰⁷⁾; remember then the bounties of Allah so that you may become successful.”⁽⁷⁰⁾ They said: “Have you come to us to worship Allah alone and abandon what our fathers used to worship! Then bring down on us what you promise us, if you are truthful!”⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ ﴿71﴾ He said: “There befalls you an affliction from your Lord, and Wrath! Do you argue with me on

قَالَ يٰٓقَوْمِ لِمَ تَسْتَهْتِكُمْ فِي سَفَاهَةٍ وَلِكَيْ رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ اٰتٰىكُمْ رَسٰلَتِي رَبِّيْ وَاَنَا لَكُمْ نٰصِيْحٌ اٰمِيْنٌ ﴿٦٨﴾ اَوْ عَجِبْتُمْ اَنْ جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَاذْكُرُوْا اِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَآءَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوْحٍ وَّرَادَكُمْ فِي الْخٰلِقِ بَضْطَةً فَاذْكُرُوْا ءَايٰتِ اللّٰهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالُوْا اٰجِئْتَنَا لِنَعْبُدَ اللّٰهَ وَحَدُوْدَهُ وَاَنْذَرَنَا اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَتْ قَدْ وُقِعَ عَلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ وَّعَصَبٌ اُتِّجِدُ لُنِيْ فِي

105 This calm, well-poised answer by this noble Messenger of God, like that of Noah’s (ﷺ), to the outrageous slur of his people, who knew full well who he really was, is a great example of how to deal with ignorant people (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Abū Ḥayyān).

106 “The only thing that kept people from Believing, when guidance came to them, was that they said: “Has Allah sent a human being as a Messenger?”” (17: 94)

107 “As for ‘Ād, they waxed arrogant in the land without right and said: “Who is greater than us in strength?” Have they not considered that Allah, Who created them, is greater than them in strength? They continued to reject Our Signs” (41: 15).

108 “They said: “Have you come to us to divert us away from our gods? Then bring us what you are promising us, if you are truthful!”” (46: 22)

'behalf' of 'mere' names that you and your fathers name for whom Allah sent down no authority? Wait you then and I shall be with you among those who wait!"
 ﴿72﴾ Then We salvaged him and those with him by Our Mercy and We cut off, down to the last one⁽¹⁰⁹⁾, those who rejected Our Signs; never were they Believers⁽¹¹⁰⁾.

﴿73﴾ And to Thamūd 'We sent' their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said: "My people, worship Allah 'alone', there is no god for you besides Him. There has come to you a clear evidence from your Lord; this is the she-camel of Allah, a Sign for you, so let it graze 'freely' in the land of Allah and touch it not with 'any' harm⁽¹¹¹⁾; else a painful punishment will betake you". ﴿74﴾ "Remember that He made you successors after 'the people of' 'Ād and He made the land 'a comfortable' abode for you; you install castles

أَسْمَاءٍ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ
 مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ فَانظُرُوا إِلَى
 مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُتَظَنِّينَ ﴿٧١﴾ فَانجَيْنَاهُ
 وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَقَطَعْنَا دَابِرَ
 الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بآيَاتِنَا وَمَا كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾
 وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ
 اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِن إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ
 جَاءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ
 اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ
 اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا يُسْوَءَ فَمَا خَذَكُم عَذَابُ
 آلِيمٍ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَادْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلَكُم حُلَفَاءَ
 مِّن بَعْدِ عَادٍ وَبَوَّأَكُم فِي الْأَرْضِ تَتَّخِذُونَ
 مِنْ سُهُولِهَا قُصُورًا

109 *Qaṭa'a dābir* is to completely wipe out (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).

110 "That was 'Ād; they rejected the Signs of their Lord, disobeyed the Messengers, and followed the command of every stubborn tyrant. *So' They were pursued by damnation in this world as they will be on the Day of Judgement. Indeed, 'Ād denied their Lord. So away with 'Ād, the people of Hūd!" (11: 59-60).

111 "He said: "Here is a she-camel 'as a Sign for you'. She will have her turn to drink as you have yours, each on an appointed day. *And touch her not with harm, lest you be taken by the Punishment of a tremendous day" (26: 155-156).

on its plains and carve houses in mountains. Remember then the bounties of Allah and do not go about the land corrupting.”⁴⁷⁵ The notables who waxed arrogant said to those who were downtrodden, those who Believed of them: “Do you know ‘for certain’ that Ṣāliḥ is sent from His Lord?” They said: “Indeed we Believe in what he was sent with!”⁴⁷⁶ Those who waxed arrogant said: “Indeed we Deny that which you Believe in!”⁴⁷⁷ They then slayed⁽¹¹²⁾ the she-camel, insolently rebelled against their Lord’s Command and said: “Ṣāliḥ, bring down on us what you promise us if ‘only’ you are ‘truly’ one of the ones who were sent ‘the Messengers’!”⁴⁷⁸ Then the quake ‘soon’ betook them and they became ‘dead’ fallen prone in their ‘very’ land.⁴⁷⁹ He turned away from them and said: “My people, indeed I have delivered the Message of my Lord to you, gave you sincere advice, but you like not those who give advice!”⁽¹¹³⁾

وَتَسْحَبُونَ الْجِبَالَ بُيُوتًا فَادْكُرُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾
 قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا لِمَنْ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُمْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ صَالِحًا مُرْسَلٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ؕ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلَ بِهِءُ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾
 قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا بِالَّذِي ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِءُ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَعَقَرُوا النَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقَالُوا يُصْلِحُ آئِنَّا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾
 فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جِثِيمِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَلْقَوْنَ لَكَدًا ابْتَلَعْتُمْ رَسُولَ رَبِّي وَتَصَحَّتْ لَكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُحِبُّونَ النَّصِيحِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾

112 The verb used here is ‘aqarū as opposed to the most obvious word, which is usually used for such an action, naḥara. al-Biqā’ī (*Naẓm al-Durar*) distinguishes between the two in that naḥara as opposed to ‘aqara is to put an animal to the knife for a purposeful end, for example, to eat the meat or use the hide. However, ‘aqara is a pointless act of butchering. It is used to further highlight the magnitude of their contempt. The Arabic language authority, al-Farāhīdī (quoted in Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*) says that it means ‘to hamstring’.

113 This theatrical aside of the monologue beautifully captures the depth of the desolation Prophet Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ) felt upon seeing the ghastly sight of his

﴿80﴾ And [Mention] Lūt 'Lot' when he said to his people⁽¹¹⁴⁾: “Do you commit the ‘one’ vice to which none of all beings preceded you to?” ﴿81﴾ “Indeed you approach men lustfully instead of women; nay but you are excessive people!”⁽¹¹⁵⁾ ﴿82﴾ The reply of his people was nothing other than saying: “Expel them out of your town; these are people who keep ‘themselves’ pure!”⁽¹¹⁶⁾ ﴿83﴾ We salvaged him and his family, except his wife; she was among those remaining in doom⁽¹¹⁷⁾.

وَلَوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾
 إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِنْ دُونِ
 الْبَنَاتِ أَلَيْسَ بَلِّ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَمَا
 كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَخْرِجُوهُمْ
 مَنْ قَدْ يَتَّبِعُكُمْ أَنْهُمْ أَنْ لَا يَبْطِئُ رُؤُوسَ
 قَوْمِهِمْ وَأَهْلَهُمْ إِلَّا أَمْرَاتُهُمْ كَانَتْ
 مِنَ الْعَابِرِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

own people, lifeless, flipped on their faces and stuck in the ground: “As for Thamūd, We showed them guidance, but they preferred blindness over guidance. So the blast of a disgracing Punishment overtook them for what they used to earn” (41: 17).

- 114 Notice that Lot (ﷺ) is the only Messenger told of here who did not begin his call to his people to worship God alone. This is by way of signifying the sheer vileness of the act they were involved in, namely, sodomy. No coaxing or sweet talking is appropriate in such a dire situation; anything otherwise would have been akin to ignoring the elephant in the room. Notice also the terseness of the story’s account which is also conducive in bringing about the same effect.
- 115 They were described as “excessive” because they exceeded the limits of moderation (*al-qist*) that God commands people to. Desire will find vent in lawful marriage, but overindulgence and being slave to one’s own animalistic lusts can only lead to the lowering of the status of the human race (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Of all beings, do you lie with males, *and abandon the wives that God has created for you? You are exceeding all bounds!” (26: 165-166); “Do you really lust after men instead of women? In fact, you are nothing but ignorant people acting ignorantly!” (27: 55).
- 116 To such people, the mere presence of those who do not partake in their hedonistic way of life is a painful reminder of the virtue they are not, one that constantly gnaws on their consciences. Naturally, they want them gone (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Their only charge was that they were ‘pure’.
- 117 She was so condemned because she condoned the morally degrading behaviour of her people (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, 15/344).

﴿84﴾ We rained down 'some' rain⁽¹¹⁸⁾ on them; behold then what was the end of the criminals.

﴿85﴾ And to Midian 'We sent' their brother Shu'ayb. He said: "My people, worship Allah 'alone', there is no god for you besides Him. There has come to you clear evidence from your Lord; give full measure and weight⁽¹¹⁹⁾, do not swindle people out of the things that are 'rightly' theirs⁽¹²⁰⁾, and do not sow corruption in the land after it has been set aright. That is better for you; if only you 'would' Believe!" ﴿86﴾ "Do not also sit 'in ambush' at every path threatening⁽¹²¹⁾ and turning

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا فَأَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

وَالِىَ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَلَا تَقْعُدُوا بِكُلِّ صِرَاطٍ تُوعِدُونَ وَتَصُدُّونَ

118 "So when Our Command came, We turned its uppermost to be its lowermost, and We rained down upon them stones of baked clay, one upon another, *marked from your Lord. It is not far from the evildoers" (11: 82-83).

119 The sin of these people was wantonly engaging in fraudulent dealings; in other words, greed. "Give full measure, and cause no loss 'to others'. *Weigh with honest scales" (26: 181-182); "And to Midian was 'sent' their brother Shu'ayb, he said: "My people, worship Allah, you have no god besides Him, and do not give short in the measure and weight. I see you well to do, and I fear for you the retribution of a day that is surrounding. *My people, in fairness, give full measure and weight. Do not swindle people out of the things that are rightly theirs, and do not spread corruption in the land" (11: 84-85). This seemingly insignificant 'sin' is tantamount to corruption and sleaziness *par excellence*. Its unchecked spread generates a most dire consequence on the prosperity and sustainability of any community (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

120 Here is one example of such swindling defraud: "Woe to the defrauders, *who, when they take measure from people, demand 'it' in full, and when they measure for them or weigh for them, they stint. *Do such people not think that they will be resurrected *on a mighty Day; *a Day when mankind shall stand before the Lord of all beings?" (83: 1-6).

121 Ibn Kathīr and Ibn 'Atīyyah are of the opinion that Shu'ayb's people were engaged in highway robberies (cf. also al-Shawkānī, al-Wāhidi); along with

away from the road of Allah those who Believe⁽¹²²⁾ wanting it to be crooked⁽¹²³⁾. Remember when you were but few and He multiplied your numbers and look how was the end of the corruptors.”⁽¹²⁴⁾
 ﴿87﴾ “Given that a party of you Believed in what I was sent with and ‘another’ party did not Believe, ‘so’ wait ‘you then’ until Allah judges between us – He is the best of judges.”⁽¹²⁵⁾

﴿88﴾ The notables among his people who waxed arrogant said: “We shall expel you, Shu‘ayb, and those who Believed with you from our town⁽¹²⁶⁾ or you shall revert back to our way of life!” He said: “Even if we were detesting ‘of it!’”⁽¹²⁷⁾

عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَنْ ءَامَرَ بِهِ وَتَبِعُونَهَا
 عَوَجًا وَأَذْكَرًا وَإِذْ كُنْتُمْ قَلِيلًا فَكَثَّرَكُمْ
 وَأَنْظَرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾
 وَإِنْ كَانَ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْكُمْ ءَامَنُوا بِالَّذِي
 أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَطَائِفَةٌ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَاصْبِرُوا
 حَتَّى يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَنَا وَهُوَ خَيْرُ
 الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

* قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ
 لَنُخْرِجَنَّكَ يَشْعَبُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَكَ مِنْ
 قَرْيَتِنَا أَوْ لَتَعُودُنَّ فِي مِلَّتِنَا قَالَ أَوَلَوْ كُنَّا
 كَارِهِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

turning away those who sought out Shu‘ayb so they could listen to him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī).

- 122 They also sat on roads seeking to turn away those who so sought out Shu‘ayb (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī).
- 123 Cf. Aya 45 above.
- 124 “O my people! Let not your dissension with me lead you into sin, such that there should befall you that which befell the people of Noah, or the people of Hūd, or the people of Ṣāliḥ? And the people of Lot are not far from you!” (11: 89).
- 125 “My people labour in the state in which you are, as I will be labouring ‘my own way’, for sure you will come to know who shall be visited by a Punishment to debase him; await and I shall await with you.” (11: 93)
- 126 As with Lot (ﷻ), the first reaction of the sinful was to threaten those of higher moral standing with expulsion from their lands, or have them revert back to their way of life. This is and was not a unique incident; a great many Messengers (ﷺ) were faced with the same threat: “But those who Denied said to their Messengers: “We shall surely expel you from our land, or you shall revert to our way of life...” (14: 13).
- 127 These true Believers chose to firmly adhere to their religion over a way of life that ran contrary to it (Abū Ḥayyān, Riḍā); prosperity in the Hereafter over prosperity in this worldly life, the “illusory enjoyment” (57: 20).

﴿89﴾ “We would be fabricating ‘abominable’ lies against Allah should we revert back to your way of life when Allah delivered us from it. We would not ‘ever’ revert back to it unless Allah, our Lord, wills it so⁽¹²⁸⁾; indeed our Lord encompasses everything with ‘His’ Knowledge. On Allah we rely!” “Our Lord, decide between us and our people with the Truth—You are the best of those who decide⁽¹²⁹⁾.” ﴿90﴾ The Denying notables among his people said: “Should you follow Shu‘ayb, you shall surely come to be losers!⁽¹³⁰⁾” ﴿91﴾ Then the quake ‘soon’ betook them and they became ‘dead’ fallen prone in their land. ﴿92﴾ The ones who declared Shu‘ayb a liar ‘ended’ as if they did not thrive in it ‘their land’; the ones who declared Shu‘ayb a liar were indeed the ‘real’ losers!⁽¹³¹⁾

قَدِ افْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ
 إِذْ جَعَلْنَا اللَّهَ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَعُودَ فِيهَا
 إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَسِعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ
 عِلْمًا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ
 قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفَاتِحِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتُمْ شُعَيْبًا
 إِتَّكُمُ إِذَا الْخَلَسْتُمْ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَاتَّخَذْتُمُ الرَّجْفَةَ
 فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جِثْمِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ الَّذِينَ
 كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْبًا كَانُوا يَرْغَبُونَ فِيهَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا
 شُعَيْبًا كَانُوا هُمُ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

128 All creatures are subject to the will of Almighty God (ﷻ), Who knows everything present, past and future (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī): “But you cannot will unless Allah wills. Verily, Allah is ‘ever’ All-Knowing, All-Wise” (76: 30).

129 “Truly Allah does not wrong human beings in the least, but rather human beings wrong themselves” (10: 44).

130 Being so worldly they measured loss and gain in purely financial terms. They thought that those who followed the way of Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) were missing out on real opportunities to amass wealth, giving little thought to the legality and ethicality of their transactions (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Rāzī).

131 This is a much greater loss indeed than that of deviously seeking out financial gain: “Therefore, serve whatever you wish besides Him. Say: ‘The losers are those who lose their souls, and their families, on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed, such is the real loss’” (39: 15).

﴿93﴾ He turned away from them and said: “My people, indeed I have delivered the Messages of my Lord to you, gave you sincere advice; how would I then feel ‘deep’ grief for Denying people!”

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَكْفُورُونَ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتَكُمْ
رِسَالَتِي رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ فَكَيْفَ
ءَأْسَى عَلَى قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

﴿94﴾ (132) We have never sent a Prophet to a town without taking its people by affliction and hardship⁽¹³³⁾, so that they might humble themselves. ﴿95﴾ Then We ‘always’ replaced the bad ‘times’ with the good ‘times’ until they prospered⁽¹³⁴⁾ and ‘dismissively’ said: “Affliction and hardship had touched our fathers ‘before’!” We took them all of a sudden while they did not realize ‘it’!

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا
بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضُرَّعُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾
ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَا مَكَانَ السَّيِّئَةِ الْحَسَنَةَ حَتَّى
عَفَوْا وَقَالُوا قَدْ مَسَّ آبَاءَنَا الضَّرَّاءُ وَالسَّرَّاءُ
فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

132 This passage summarizes the moral of the stories of the Messengers (ﷺ) and the lessons to be drawn from them. It encapsulates society’s ways forward to prosperity and salvation (cf. al-Rāzī).

133 It is part of human nature to turn to God when hardship is experienced. In the same way, communities are hit with affliction, hardship and rough times for Denying God’s Signs so that they may come around to themselves and realize how wrong they are (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “We have certainly sent ‘Messengers’ to nations before you ‘Muhammad’; We took them by affliction and hardship, so that they might humble themselves. *Were they only when Our affliction befell them to ‘sincerely’ humble themselves! Nay, but their hearts became hard and Satan made what they used to do look attractive to them” (6: 42-43).

134 ‘Afaw (translated here as prospered) is a semantically dense word. It, at once, means they became bodily healthy, prosperous and great in number (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Ashūr). This is by way of ‘slackening the reins for them to wander aimlessly in their blindness’ (cf. 2: 15): “When they forgot what they were reminded of, We opened up for them the doors of everything; yet when they become full of gloating over what they were given, We took them all of a sudden, and lo they are seized with despair” (6: 44).

﴿96﴾ Had the people of towns Believed and become Mindful, We would have opened up for them blessings from the Heavens and Earth⁽¹³⁵⁾, but they rejected and We took them 'to task' for what they used to earn. ﴿97﴾ Do the townspeople feel secure that Our Might would not come to them at night while they are sleeping? ﴿98﴾ Do the townspeople feel secure that Our Might would not come to them in the forenoon while they are playing?⁽¹³⁶⁾ ﴿99﴾ Do they feel secure from the planning of Allah? Verily none feels safe from the planning of Allah except the losers.⁽¹³⁷⁾

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَٰكِن كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ أَفَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا بَيِّنًا وَهُمْ يَقَابِلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾ أَوْ آمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا ضَعْفَىٰ وَهُمْ يُلَاعِبُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

135 Those who truly Believe and obey God will come to lead lives of abundance: “Had they taken to the right way, We would have given them abundant water to drink” (72: 16); “... and had they upheld the Torah and the Evangel and what was sent down to them from their Lord, they would have eaten ‘blissfully’ from above them and from under their feet” (5: 66); “...and whoever is Mindful of Allah, He will make a way out for them, *and He will provide for him whence he never expects...” (65: 2-3).

136 These are the times they are least expecting something terrible to hit them: “Such is the seizing of your Lord when He seizes the towns while they are doing wrong. Surely His seizing is painful, severe!” (11: 102).

137 “And those who Denied Our Signs, We will ‘gradually’ lure them whence they know not. *And I will grant them indulgence for a while. Truly, My planning is stout’, unfailing” (7: 182-183); “Let not those who Deny think that the rein We give them is better for them. We only give them allowance so that they would accumulate sins; theirs is a humiliating Punishment” (3: 178).

Even the most devout of Believers should not feel content with the good that they have done, as were our rightly-guided predecessors (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “The hearts of the offspring of Adam are between two Fingers of the Fingers of the Most Merciful like one heart. He directs it wherever He wishes”. Then the Messenger (ﷺ) added: “O Allah! You Who directs hearts. Direct our hearts towards Your observance” (Muslim: 2654).

﴿100﴾ Were those who come to inherit the land after its people not to perceive that should We have willed, We would have smitten them for their sins⁽¹³⁸⁾ and stamped on their hearts so that they would not hear?⁽¹³⁹⁾

أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لِلَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ
أَهْلِهَا أَنْ لَوْ نَشَاءُ أَصَبْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ
وَنَنْظِعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

﴿101﴾ ⁽¹⁴⁰⁾Those 'bygone' towns, We relate to you 'Muhammad' of their notable news⁽¹⁴¹⁾.

تِلْكَ الْأَقْرَابُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِهَا

- 138 Indeed the Signs of God's ability are all around people; their very existence and taking over after those who preceded them is not the least of these: "Had they not seen how many a generation before them We have destroyed? We had established them in the land 'far' more firmly than how We established you 'people'! We sent the sky pouring down on them profusely and We made the rivers run under their feet, 'only' then We destroyed them for their sins and We brought into being another generation after them" (6: 6); "Is it not 'enough of a lesson for them 'to see' how many a generation We destroyed before them, in whose homes they now walk? There truly are Signs in this; do they not hear?" (32: 26).
- 139 "And who is more unjust than those who, when reminded of their Lord's Signs, turn away from them and forget what their own hands have done? We have certainly put sheaths over their hearts – leaving them unable to perceive this 'Qur'an' – and impairment in their ears. And if you invite them to guidance, they will never be guided" (18: 57).
- 140 This is a connecting passage which concludes the previous episode and opens up the next one.
- 141 These stories are related so that the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers around him find comfort. Further, they serve as a reminder for those who take heed and a warning for those who Deny (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): "If they deny you 'Muhammad', surely did deny before them the people of Nūh, 'Ad, and Thamūd, *and the People of Ibrāhīm and the people of Lūṭ *and the inhabitants of Midian, and Mūsā too was denied. But I granted the Deniers respite; then I overtook them 'with punishment'; how, then, was the repudiation I wrought!" (22: 42-44); "These accounts We relate to you 'Muhammad', of the 'bygone' towns; some are still standing 'deserted', while others have been mowed down. *We did not wrong them but they wronged themselves; the gods they prayed to besides Allah availed them nothing: when Allah's Command came upon them, they increased them in nothing except destruction. *That is how your Lord seizes the townships as He seizes them when they are wrongdoers. His seizing is indeed painful,

Indeed their Messengers came to them with clear evidences, but they would not come to Believe in what they had earlier denied⁽¹⁴²⁾; like so Allah stamps on the hearts of the Deniers;⁽¹⁴³⁾ ﴿102﴾ We had not found most of them honouring of their pledge; nay, but We found most of them transgressors⁽¹⁴⁴⁾.

﴿103﴾ ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾Then We sent after them

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا
لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ كَذَلِكَ
يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَمَا وَجَدْنَا
لِكَثْرَتِهِمْ مِنْ عَهْدٍ وَإِنْ وَجَدْنَا أَكْثَرَهُمْ
لَفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ

severe. *Truly in that is a Sign for those who fear the Punishment of the Hereafter. That is a Day on which mankind shall be gathered together, and that is a Day that shall be witnessed” (11: 100-103).

- 142 “They had sworn by Allah with their most solemn oaths that if a Sign were to come to them, they would surely Believe in it. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Indeed Signs are from none but Allah!” How would you ‘Believers’ know that when they ‘the Signs’ come, they would ‘still’ not Believe? *We keep on turning their hearts and their sights away for not Believing in it the first time and ‘thus’ We leave them to wander aimlessly in their ‘unbending’ recalcitrance” (6: 109-110): “...so when they deviated, Allah made their hearts deviate. Allah does not guide the rebellious people” (61: 5).
- 143 “Indeed the Deniers, whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not Believe. *Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and over their eyes there is a veil—theirs is a grievous Punishment” (2: 6-7); “Those who dispute Allah’s Signs, with no authority given to them, are doing something that is loathed by Allah and by those who Believe. In this way God stamps on the heart of every arrogant tyrant” (40: 35).
- 144 “And surely most of the earlier generations had strayed before them” (37: 71).
- 145 The story of Moses is singled out and recounted in detail here and indeed in many other suras (‘Moses’ is mentioned no less than 136 times in 34 suras) for its special significance. Of all the Messengers, his mission bears the most similarities with that of Prophet Muhammad’s (ﷺ), his miracles were amongst the greatest to be found, it is one of the most nuanced and intricate of the stories of the Messengers (ﷺ), his laws were the greatest before the advent of Islam and, in a way, paved the way for it, his nation were among the greatest nations that followed a Messenger before Muhammad (ﷺ) and at the time of revelation they existed in the locales of revelation (notably in Madinah) so that they were to be called on to Believe in Prophet Muhammad’s Message, and that the Believers were to take heed from them and not forget the pledge of God as they did (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr). In short, the lessons drawn from Moses’ story are very relevant.

Mūsā 'Moses' with Our Sign to Pharaoh and his notables and they wrongfully dealt with them,⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ behold then what was the end of the corruptors.

﴿104﴾ Mūsā said: “Pharaoh, truly I am a Messenger of the Lord of all beings; ﴿105﴾ rightful to saying nothing but what is right about Allah; I have come to you with a clear Sign from your Lord, so send the Children of Israel ‘away’ with me!”⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ ﴿106﴾ He ‘Pharaoh’ said: “If you have come with a Sign, bring it forth, if only you are Truthful!” ﴿107﴾ He ‘Mūsā’ cast his staff, and lo, it was a ‘great’ snake, plain ‘to sight’! ﴿108﴾ He ‘swiftly’ pulled out his hand, and lo, it was white to all beholders!⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِۦ فَظَمَرُوا
بِهَا فَاَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يٰفِرْعَوْنُ اِنِّى رَسُوْلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ حَقِيْقٌ عَلٰى اَنْ لَا اَقُوْلَ عَلٰى اللّٰهِ
اِلَّا الْحَقَّ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنٰتٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
فَاَرْسِلْ مَعِىٓ بَنِىٓ اِسْرٰءِيْلَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ قَالَ اِنْ كُنْتَ
جِئْتَ بِبَيِّنٰتٍ فَاتِّبِعْ بِهَا اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ
الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ فَاَلْقٰى عَصَاهُ فَاِذَا هِىَ ثُعْبٰنٌ
مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَنَزَعَ يَدَهٗ فَاِذَا هِىَ بَيْضًا لِّلنّٰظِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

146 This is a teaser for the long and epic story that will shortly unfold (cf. Ridā).

147 At this point, Moses' (ﷺ) mission was mainly to deliver his brethren, the offspring of Jacob, from the oppression of Pharaoh and his people who subjected them to the “worst of suffering” (cf. 2: 49, 7: 141, 14: 6) so that they may find themselves a place to worship Almighty God alone (al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Go ‘the both of you, Moses and Aaron’ to him and say: “We are both Messengers from your Lord. Send the Children of Israel ‘away’ with us and do not torment them. We have brought you a Sign from your Lord, and may peace be upon whoever follows guidance” (20: 47). He underlined his truthfulness and mentioned the Sign he had, knowing all too well that he would be denied, so he wanted to forestall it (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

148 Pharaoh, who out of his bloated egotism claimed that he was no less than Almighty God, the Most High Lord (79: 24 and 28: 38), was dismissive at first and challenged Moses toyingly seeing Moses as nothing more than a fugitive slave or, at best, a disobedient fosterling he had brought up under his own roof. But the two Signs that Moses managed to produce with such ease, had a remarkable unsettling effect on him and drove him to the edge of hysteria as evidenced by how manically he managed the

﴿109﴾ The notables among the people of Pharaoh said: “This one is evidently a greatly knowledgeable magician!”

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّ هَذَا السَّحِرُ

عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾

whole encounter. Once the significance of these two very potent Signs is explained, one clearly sees ample justification for Pharaoh’s erratic, out of hand behaviour.

Firstly, the staff, a humble shepherd’s staff, was thrown down only to momentarily and readily turn into a great snake, about which there is no mistake (the vigour of this creature is variably described and stressed in the Qur’an as in, for instance, here and: 20: 20, 27: 10). In ancient Egypt, the cobra snake, known as the uraeus, was used as a symbol of sovereignty, royalty, deity and divine authority emblematically worn on the headdresses and crowns of ancient Egyptian deities and sovereigns. It stood for the goddess Wadjet who was often depicted as a cobra. The Pharaohs wore the uraeus on their heads either with the body of Wadjet atop the head, or as a crown encircling the head; this indicated Wadjet’s protection and reinforced the Pharaoh’s claim over the land. It was in effect the Pharaoh’s crown; a pharaoh was recognized only by wearing the uraeus, which conveyed legitimacy to his rule. The uraeus, then, was nothing more than a ‘symbolic’ sign of rightful kingship, which is nothing compared with the living, moving creature after which it was modelled; in it, we see how the image of a thing fades out in comparison to the real thing. The legitimacy and effectively the supremacy of Pharaoh was proven to be a mere charade compared to that of Moses.

The second Sign, being the white hand, was equally symbolic. The Children of Israel amounted to nothing but mere bondsmen and slaves whose will had long ago been broken and whose lives were domineered by their masters of old, the Egyptians. The sign of their servitude was the extra dark skin that they came to assume after years and years of hard, gruelling labour under a scorching, unforgiving sun. Moses (ﷺ) himself was of a dark hue (cf. al-Bukhārī: 245 and 3207) which, in the pharaonic psyche, carried the insignia of his own people, namely, slavery. That he was so easily able to shed such a tell-tale sign and assume the most glaring symbol of nobility, whiteness of the skin, coupled with the gesture in itself, a brawny hand suddenly and decisively raised, is nothing less than an indication that he, and his people by extension, had broken the shackles of slavery and subjugation and were already revolting against Pharaoh’s authority.

That Moses asked for the release of his people was, to Pharaoh’s mind, nothing less than an outright revolution and bare-faced challenge to the throne aiming to destabilize it and depose its occupant. This surely touched a raw nerve and, thus, we find that Pharaoh and his cronies were concerned that Moses would ‘oust’ them from their land. From their perspective, the war they waged was nothing if not justified.

﴿110﴾ Pharaoh said: "He intends to oust you from your land! Then what do you command!"⁽¹⁴⁹⁾
 ﴿111﴾ They said: "Put him off⁽¹⁵⁰⁾, and his brother, and send out to the territories 'forceful' gatherers; ⁽¹¹²⁾ they will bring to you every greatly knowledgeable magician!"

﴿113﴾ The magicians came to Pharaoh and said: "Indeed there is a reward for us, if we emerge winners!"⁽¹¹⁴⁾ He 'Pharaoh' said: "Yes 'certainly'! And you shall be among the ones drawn near 'to me'!"⁽¹⁵¹⁾ ﴿115﴾ They said: "Moses! Either you cast or we shall cast 'first'".⁽¹¹⁶⁾ He said: "Cast!"⁽¹⁵²⁾ When they cast, they bewitched the eyes of people⁽¹⁵³⁾,

يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ قَالُوا أَرْجِهْ وَأَخَاهُ وَأَرْسِلْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ ﴿١١١﴾ يَا تَوَكُّبِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿١١٢﴾

وَجَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوا إِنَّ لَنَا لَأَجْرًا إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْعَالِيِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ لَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ قَالُوا يَمْوَسَّىٰ إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقَىٰ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِيَاتِ ﴿١١٥﴾ قَالَ الْقَوَائِمَا الْقَوَائِمَا سَاحِرُوا وَعَاثِرَاتُ النَّاسِ

149 Panic-stricken, Pharaoh lost his pompously self-assured façade and faded into the background letting those around him decide. He even asked them to 'command' him to a course of action, blurting out his top-most concern, 'ousting' from the land.

150 They felt that such a stately matter, a real sudden challenge to the throne, could only be argued after much great deliberation and well thought-out preparation, so they advised him and somehow tried to soothe their master's worries by accusing Moses (ﷺ) of magic, a prevalent trade in the provinces of his kingdom, in which there was no scarcity of masters. So basically, they bought time and afforded their master a chance to regain his composure.

151 The magicians simply saw this as a great chance and wanted to make the best of it (cf. al-Rāzī). They dictated their own terms, and surely Pharaoh was ripe for it. He offered them way more than they asked for; to be ever close to him as part of his inner court assured of great favours which would last a long while. He succumbed to their demands and bared his heart, out of sheer panic.

152 This one-word reply shows how sure Moses (ﷺ) was of victory to the extent that he sounded careless (cf. Riḍā).

153 They made their staffs and ropes appear to the onlookers as a great many large snakes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb*

gave them the shivers, and they came up with great magic”.

﴿117﴾ Then We inspired Mūsā as: “Throw your staff!” And lo, it ‘swiftly’ swallowed up their fakery!⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ ﴿118﴾ At that, the Truth fell down ‘heavy’ and what they used to ‘naturally’ do unravelled⁽¹⁵⁵⁾. ﴿119﴾ They were routed there, and they retreated in disgrace⁽¹⁵⁶⁾. ﴿120﴾ Then the magicians threw themselves down⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ prostrating. ﴿121﴾ They said: “We Believe in the Lord of all beings; ﴿122﴾ the Lord of Mūsā and Hārūn ‘Aaron’”. ﴿123﴾ Pharaoh said: “Did you ‘dare’ believe in Him before I granted you permission? This is nothing but a scheme you have weaved in the city to oust its dwellers from it⁽¹⁵⁸⁾; you shall see!

وَأَسْتَرَهُمُوهُمْ وَجَاءُوا بِسِحْرِ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١١٧﴾
 * وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ
 مَا يَأْفِكُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا
 يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سِهَابًا ﴿١٢٠﴾
 صَالِحِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَقَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ رَبِّ مُوسَى
 وَهَارُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ءَأَمِنْتُمْ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ
 ءَأْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَمَكْرٌ مَكْرُتُوهُ فِي
 الْمَدِينَةِ لِتُخْرِجُوا مِنْهَا أَهْلَهَا فَسَوْفَ نَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

al-Namīr: “...and suddenly their ropes and staffs appeared to him – by their magic – to be slithering” (20: 66).

- 154 “Throw down what is in your right hand so it will swallow up anything they have produced. What they have produced is only some magician’s trick, and no magician succeeds no matter where he goes” (20: 69).
- 155 Any false hope that Pharaoh and those around him might have harboured was blown away, by the heavy stamp of Moses’s truthfulness.
- 156 The result of this encounter came as a particularly heavy blow to Pharaoh and his cronies (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah).
- 157 Realizing the magnitude of what they had just witnessed, Almighty God’s Power, the like of which they had never seen before, the magicians were forced to fall down (*ulqiyā*); they could not help doing so (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, al-Shinqīfī, *al-‘Adhb al Namīr*).
- 158 Understandably, Pharaoh’s shock at this turn of events was so immeasurable that he spoke incoherently, bringing the full force of his wrath on the heads of his subordinates: chastising them for insubordination and defying his authority and blaming them for scheming with Moses (ﷺ), whom he called

﴿124﴾ I shall 'mercilessly' cut off your hands and feet on alternate sides! Then I shall crucify you all”.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ ﴿125﴾ They said: “We shall return to our Lord;⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ ﴿126﴾ and do you resent us for nothing but Believing in our Lord's Signs when they came to us!⁽¹⁶¹⁾ Our Lord! Pour steadfastness on us and bring our lives to termination as wholly submitting⁽¹⁶²⁾”.

لَا قُطْعَانَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ
تُرًّا لِأَصْلَابِكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا
مُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا تَنْقِمُ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَنْ ءَامَنَّا
بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا لَمَّا جَاءَتْنَا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا
وَتَوَقَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾

in another account 'their chief who taught them magic' (cf. 20: 71), to 'oust' people from their land, the issue that exasperated him most (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

- 159 This punishment is the most severe in nature and is reserved for those who sow corruption in the land and wage war against the sovereign (cf. al-Sa'dī).
- 160 The firmness of Faith they attained in such a very short period of time is awe-inspiring and provides many great lessons (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Ṣawā'iq al-Mursalāh*, 4/1389): “They said: “No harm! Verily to our Lord we are to return. *Truly we hope that our Lord will forgive us our sins for our having been the first of the Believers” (26: 50-51); “They said: “We never prefer you over what has come to us from the clear Signs and to Him Who created us. So you decree whatever you wish to decree, you can only decree about this worldly life. *We have Believed in our Lord so that He may forgive us for our mistakes and for the magic which you forced us to perform. Allah is better and longer lasting” (20: 72-73). This is what happens when rich knowledge meets pure intention: “...it is those of His servants who have knowledge who stand in true awe of Allah” (35: 28). What he threatened them with was nothing more than expediting them to a desirable destination; meeting their Lord.
- 161 This implies deriding Pharaoh for his skewed standards.
- 162 *Muslimīn* (plural form of *muslim*), i.e. totally submitted to God. Total submission to God and devotion to Him in worship is the basic meaning of *Islām*. All Prophets were ‘Muslim’ in as much as they were wholly devoted to God and sincerely submitted to Him in worship according to their own respective creeds. Needless to say, after Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent to mankind no other religion except Islam is accepted from anyone (cf. 3: 85).

﴿127﴾ The notables among the people of Pharaoh said: “Will you ‘Pharaoh’ let Mūsā and his people ‘loose’ to be corrupt in the land and forsake you and your gods!” He said: “We shall slaughter their sons and retain their womenfolk alive; verily we are domineering over them!” ﴿128﴾ ﴿163﴾ Mūsā said to his people: “Seek help in Allah and be steadfast. Indeed the land is for Allah, He bequeaths it to whom He wills among His servants; the final round is for the Mindful! ﴿164﴾ ﴿129﴾ They said: “We suffered harm before you came to us and ‘now’ after you came to us”. ﴿165﴾ He said: “Hopefully your Lord may well destroy your enemy and make you successors to the land, so that He sees how you fare”. ﴿166﴾

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنَ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَتَدْرُمُونِى وَقَوْمَهُ
لِيُقْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَيَذُرْكُ وَءِ الْهَتَكَ قَالَ
سَنُقْتِلُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيِ نِسَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّا
فَوْقَهُمْ قَاهُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا
بِاللَّهِ وَأَصْبِرُوا إِنَّا الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ
يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾
قَالُوا أَوْزَيْتَنَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَأْتِيَنَا وَمَنْ بَعْدَ مَا
جِئْتَنَا قَالَ عَسَى رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ عَدُوَّكُمْ
وَيَسْتَخْلَفَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾

163 They intended to hearten their master and spur him to clamp down on Moses and his people, serving only their own interests and privileges in the process. Readily, he followed their insinuations: “Then, when he brought the truth from Us to them, they said: “Kill the sons of those who Believe with him and let their womenfolk live.” The scheming of the Deniers is naught but astray” (40: 25). See how far apart the stand of this ruling elite was from that of the truly knowledgeable.

164 He wanted to hearten them and remind them of the Divine canon that no one nation remains dominant indefinitely: “...those are the days We rotate them between people!” (3: 140); “We surely destroyed ‘other’ peoples before you when they did wrong, and their Messengers had come to them with clear proofs but they would not Believe! This is how We reward the wicked people” (10: 13).

165 They said this out of sheer desperation (cf. al-Jazā’irī).

166 This is not merely a wish but a prayer of a most noble Messenger of God and, somehow a promise to his people (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Riḍā). What follows is a detailing of how this prayer was answered and the promise fulfilled. This is how great leaders shine like stars in the dark in the most adverse of circumstances.

﴿130﴾ (167) "Then" We overtook Pharaoh's folk with "severely dry" years and dwindling crops so that they might pay heed. ﴿131﴾ Whenever a good thing⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ came their way, they would say: "This is "deservedly" ours!" Yet when a bad thing hit them, they would find an ill omen with Mūsā and those with him⁽¹⁶⁹⁾; indeed their omen is nowhere but with Allah, but most of them do not know!"⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ ﴿132﴾ They "further" said "to Mūsā": "No matter what sign you bring us to bewitch us, we shall never believe in you!" ﴿133﴾ Then We sent on them the flood, locusts, bugs, frogs and blood; Signs detailed. But they waxed arrogant, and were "nothing but" criminal people⁽¹⁷¹⁾.

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالْبَيْتِينَ وَنَقِصَ
مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ فَإِذَا
جَاءَهُمُ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوا لَنَا هَذِهِ وَإِنْ تُصِيبُهُمْ
سَيِّئَةٌ بَطَّيَرُوا بِمُوسَىٰ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ إِلَّا
إِنَّمَا ظَنَرُهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَالْكِتَابَ أَكْثَرُ لَهُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَقَالُوا مَهْمَا تَأْتِنَا بِهِ مِنْ آيَةٍ
لِيَسْحَرَنَا بِهَا فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾
فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ
وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالدَّمَ آيَاتٍ مُفَصَّلَاتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا
وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

167 This marks the beginning of the end and ruination for Pharaoh and his people (cf. al-Rāzī). God in His Infinite Justice wanted to give them a chance to repent: "Not a Sign did We show them, but that it was greater than its sister. And We overtook them with the punishment, so that they might return 'to the Right Path'" (43: 48).

168 A prosperous time, when they find abundant rain and crops (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

169 Out of egotism and smugness, they felt they deserved all things that are good (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Hard times did not really have much of a humbling effect on them. Whenever they were plighted with hardship, they would easily blame it on others; in this case Moses and those around him. Such is always the habit of the rebellious: "...when good 'fortune' comes their way, they say: "This is from Allah", but when a misfortune befalls them, they say: "This is from you 'Muhammad'!" Say 'Muhammad': "All 'good and bad fortune' is from Allah". What is wrong with these people, they can hardly grasp what is said 'to them!'" (4: 78).

170 "Corruption has spread on land and sea as a result of what people's hands have done, so that Allah may cause them to taste 'the consequences of some of their deeds and perhaps they might return 'repentant'" (30: 41).

171 For their adamant Denial and unshakably rebellious stance, God plighted them with a number of successive catastrophes: 1) the flood (*al-tūfān*)

﴿134﴾ When the plight⁽¹⁷²⁾ hit them 'hard', they said: "Mūsā, pray to your Lord for us by virtue of what He entrusted you with. Should you remove the plight 'away' from us, we would surely Believe in you and we shall send the Children of Israel 'away' with you!" ﴿135﴾ When We removed the plight 'away' from them – for a term they would 'inevitably' reach⁽¹⁷³⁾ – they swiftly reneged. ﴿136﴾ We 'at once' took vengeance on them and We drowned them

وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى ادْعُ
 لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ لَئِن كَشَفْتَ
 عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَئِن لَّمْ يَكُفَّ
 بِنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ
 الرِّجْزَ إِلَى أَجَلٍ هُمْ بِلَعْنَتِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُتُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾
 فَأَنْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ

which deluged their houses and submerged their plantations; 2) locusts (*al-jarād*) that swarmed and devastated their plantations and crops; 3) bugs (*al-qummal*; the exact nature of which is not agreed upon by exegetes) which caused them great distress and harm; 4) frogs (*al-dafādi*) which swarmed upon them in their multitudes making their lives unbearable, and; blood (*al-dam*) which took the place of the water they drank and used (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*). These were unmistakably Messages bearing 'Signs' from God. This is why they somehow relented, as will be detailed next.

- 172 Exegetes are of different opinions as to what this plight (*rijz*) actually was. However, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī deem it as the flood, locusts, bugs, frogs and blood which were just mentioned, citing in the process the following aya: "*We showed them no Sign which was not greater than the one before it. We inflicted punishment on them so that they might return to the Right Path*" (43: 48). They only turned to Moses, when the affliction bit them hard (cf. Abū Ḥayyān), and hardly in a sincerely humble manner at that (cf. al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr): "*They said: "Magician, call on your Lord for us, by virtue of what He entrusted you with: we shall certainly accept guidance. *But when We removed the punishment from them, they swiftly reneged!*" (43: 49-50). This just shows the kind of people, Moses had to put up with; indeed a lesson for all those who suffer all sorts of hardship in pursuing their calling.
- 173 The specific time God set for their destruction (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

in the deep sea⁽¹⁷⁴⁾, because they denied Our Signs and were 'willingly' averting of them⁽¹⁷⁵⁾. ﴿137﴾ And We bequeathed those people whom were down-trodden⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ the Easts and Wests of the land that We blessed⁽¹⁷⁷⁾. The gracious Word⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel for their steadfastness and We destroyed what Pharaoh and his people used to make and what they used to 'carefully' trellis⁽¹⁷⁹⁾.

فِي الْبَيْرِ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسْتَضْعَفُونَ مَشْرِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمِغْرِبَهَا الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَدَمَرْنَا مَا كَانَ يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

174 This is the fulfilment of the first part of Moses's 'wish' as related in Aya 129: "*Hopefully your Lord will destroy your enemy...*". The detailed story of how they were drowned is told in 26: 52-67.

175 They averted considering what came to them as real Signs and paid no heed to them (cf. Aya 132 above).

176 This is the fulfilment of the second part of Moses' 'wish' as related in Aya 129: "*...and make you succeed them in the land...*".

177 The extent of God's Bounty on them is shown in the words chosen: the East(s), West(s), literally the Eastern and Western parts (cf. al-Wāḥidī, al-Wajīz, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī), connote vastness and openness (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr) as contrasted with the really narrow, constricted life they were made to endure. Moreover, they were made to 'inherit' not any land but one of bountiful blessings. Most exegetes are of the opinion that this land is *arḍ al-shām* (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Wajīz, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr), which roughly translates as the Levant, however this region is variably demarcated and named throughout history. It is a land of perpetual bliss and abundance of rain and crops (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Wasīṭ, al-Shinqīṭī, al-'Adhb al-Namūr).

178 God's glad promise to the Children of Israel; many exegetes (cf. al-Wāḥidī, al-Basīṭ, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, al-'Adhb al-Namūr) are of the opinion that this 'Word' is this aya: "*We wanted to favour those who were downtrodden in the land, and make them leaders and make them inheritors of the land*" (28: 5).

179 Respectively, their masonry and farms (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī, al-'Adhb al-Namūr). They took great care and pride in these, but God not only destroyed them, He even obliterated their vestiges for so stubbornly rebelling against His Signs and overly transgressing against other human beings.

﴿138﴾ (180) And We whisked⁽¹⁸¹⁾ the Children of Israel across the sea, and then they came upon a people who were devoutly attentive to some idols of theirs. They said: “Mūsā, make us a god like the gods they have!” He said: “You are ‘but’ ignorant people⁽¹⁸²⁾; ﴿139﴾ verily whatever these are, is ill-fated⁽¹⁸³⁾, and futile is what they are used to labour ‘at’”.⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ ﴿140﴾ He ‘further’ said: “How would I ‘ever’ seek a lord besides Allah for you, when He favoured you above all people?”
 ﴿141﴾ ‘Remember’ “When We delivered you from Pharaoh’s folk

وَجَوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَانٍ لَهُمْ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا آلِهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ مَتَّبِعُوا مَا هُمْ فِيهِ وَبَطِلُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ قَالَ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْغِيكُمْ آلِهًا وَهُوَ فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

وَإِذْ أَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ

- 180 What follows are snippets of how the Israelites fared when God made them inherit that land, as alluded to in the last part of Aya 129: “... so that He sees how you fare”. This is told in detail here so that Believers may take heed and guard their Faith at all times (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 181 *Jāwaza* means that God made it possible as well as effortless for them to pass through the sea (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 182 They did not fully realize the extent of God Almighty’s Magnificence and the binding nature of worshipping Him alone (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). After censuring them, Moses explained to them, why he was so forthright with them on this issue (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Nazm al-Durar*) so that they might realize how erroneous they were (cf. Riḍā).
- 183 “We shall turn to whatever work they have done, and make it scattered dust” (25: 23).
- 184 “Those will have nothing in the Hereafter except the Fire; their efforts in it ‘this life’ will prove futile and what they used to do shall be in vain” (11: 16); “Verily, those that you are praying to besides Him cannot help you, nor can they help themselves” (7: 197); “...but those you invoke besides Him do not possess even the skin of a date stone. *If you pray to them, they do not hear your call, and even if they hear you, they cannot answer you. On the Day of Judgement, they will disown your worshipping them—none can inform you like the All-Knowledgeable” (35: 13-14).

'who' used to subject you to the worst of suffering; they would slaughter your sons and retain your womenfolk alive, indeed in that is a great trial from your Lord."

يَسْؤُمُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُقْتَلُونَ
أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي
ذَلِكَ بَلَاءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤١﴾

﴿142﴾ (185) And We appointed for Moses thirty nights and We completed them with ten; so the appointment⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ of his Lord was forty nights complete. Mūsā said to his brother Hārūn: "Assume my role among my people; set aright 'their affairs' and do not follow the path of the corruptors".

*وَوَاعَدْنَا مُوسَى ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتَمَمْنَا
بِعَشْرٍ فَتَمَّ مِيقَاتُ رَبِّهِ ۚ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً
وَقَالَ مُوسَى لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي
وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾
وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ
رَبِّ أَرِنِي ۖ أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ ۗ قَالَ لَنْ نَرَاكَ

﴿143﴾ When Mūsā came for Our appointment and His Lord spoke to him, he said: "My Lord, show me ' , let me' look at You!" He said: "You shall not see Me."⁽¹⁸⁷⁾

185 The few passages that follow are couched in the overall narrative of the story of the exodus of the Israelites and how they fared after their deliverance, yet they are interspersed with references to the Torah; how it came into being and how wrongfully it was dealt with. This highlights that it bears out the Qur'an and foretells the coming of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to whom the Qur'an, the light that sets good apart from evil, was sent down (cf. also: 6: 154-157).

186 The length of time God set for Moses to communicate with him and send the Torah down to him (al-Ṭabarī, al-Marāghī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namir*).

187 People cannot see God Almighty (ﷻ) in this worldly life, not even a noble Messenger of Moses' (ﷺ) status to whom He talked directly without a mediator (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī). Humans are simply not built in such a way as to bear it (cf. al-Sa'dī, al-, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namir*). Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood among us to deliver five 'weighty' words. He said: "Allah, Glory be His, does not sleep and it is not befitting of Him to sleep; He lowers 'with the scale of' justice 'whoever does wrong' and raises 'with' it 'whoever does good'; to Him the deeds of the day are raised before the deeds of the night and the deeds of the night are raised before the deeds of the day; His Veil is the Light; if He were to lift it, the Magnificent Splendours of His Face would burn whomever of His creation, His Sight reaches" (Muslim: 179).

But look at the mountain. If it 'still' remains in its place, then you will see Me". Then as His Lord revealed Himself to the mountain, He crushed it flat and Mūsā collapsed, struck⁽¹⁸⁸⁾. When he recovered, he said: "Glory be Yours; I repent to You; I am the first of the Believers!"⁽¹⁸⁹⁾

﴿144﴾ He said⁽¹⁹⁰⁾: "Mūsā, I have chosen you above all people for My Messages and My 'direct' Speech; take then what I gave you and be among the thankful!"

﴿145﴾ We wrote for him in the tablets about everything⁽¹⁹¹⁾; and exhortation and elaboration of everything⁽¹⁹²⁾: "Take them 'Mūsā' with strength⁽¹⁹³⁾ and command your people to take

وَلَكِنْ أَنْظِرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ
فَسَوْفَ تَرِنُنِي فَأَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ
دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ
سُبْحَانَكَ ثُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

قَالَ يَمُوسَىٰ إِنِّي أَصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ
بِرِسَالَتِي وَبِكَلِمِي فَخُذْ مَا آتَيْتُكَ وَكُن مِّنَ
الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَلْوَاحِ
مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلًا لِّكُلِّ
شَيْءٍ فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ يَأْخُذُوا

188 God Almighty practically showed Moses how unable he was of seeing Him (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Sa'dī); the mountain, which was by far a mightier creation than man, was crushed to dust when God revealed Himself to it (cf. al-Wāḥidī, al-Basī, al-Shinqī, al-'Adhb al-Namīr).

189 Sincere Belief (*Īmān*) requires no tangible evidence (cf. al-Biqā'ī).

190 For refusing him his demand, God assuaged Moses by spelling out His singularly most important bounties on him (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān).

191 The tablets (*al-alwāḥ*) which contained the Torah (cf. al-Wāḥidī, al-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr) detailed all the laws and guidelines that Moses' nation needed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī).

192 "Then 'know that' We had given Mūsā the Book 'the Torah' in perfection 'for Our bounty' for he who did well and detailing everything; a guidance and mercy so that they may Believe in meeting their Lord" (6: 154).

193 Firmly adhere to the dictates of the Torah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

the best therein⁽¹⁹⁴⁾—I shall show you the abode of those who contravene⁽¹⁹⁵⁾”.

﴿146﴾ (196) I shall turn away from My Signs those who wax arrogant in the land, unrightfully⁽¹⁹⁷⁾. So even if they see each 'and every' Sign, they would not Believe in it⁽¹⁹⁸⁾;

بِأَحْسَنِهَا سَأُوْرِكُمْ دَارَ الْفَسِقِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَاتِي الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كَلَّآءِآءِ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا

194 They were told to observe and practice the best of what they find in the Torah: carry out its bidding, avoid what is forbidden and ponder over its moral directions (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).

195 *Sa-urikum dār al-fāsiqīn* (rendered here directly) has been a site of argument among scholars. Some have opined that the 'abode of those who contravene' is Hellfire, taking it to refer to those who contravene the dictates of the Torah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*). Others have taken it to mean the hometown of the Canaanites, i.e. Jerusalem, and thus it was a promise from God that should they adhere to the Torah, they would be rewarded with the blessed land (cf. al-Qāsimī, Ibn 'Ashūr).

196 Reflective parentheses such as this passage are meant to serve a number of purposes. Here, it could be taken to bring relevance to the flow of narrative; i.e. food for thought. The reader/listener/reciter is directed to draw lessons from the epic story of the Israelites and how haughtily many of them dealt with the myriad of Signs that they were exposed to. This bore special significance to the immediate community of revelation around whom the Israelites lived in their multitudes and who were regarded with respect for their being 'People of the Book'.

197 Arrogance is pointed out here as a major cause for falling into Denial, because it forms an insurmountable barrier between the heart and Believing; the arrogant will not heed admonition nor will they hearken to advice (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 13/242). Arrogance was the cardinal sin that drove Satan out of Paradise (cf. Aya 13 above) and it is the most dangerous human impulse that has to be repressed by humbly and sincerely prostrating to God and glorifying Him (cf. Aya 206 below).

This is their punishment from God: "...so when they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate; for Allah does not guide the rebellious people" (61: 5); "We keep on turning their hearts and their sights away for not Believing in it the first time and 'thus' We leave them to wander aimlessly in their 'unbending' recalcitrance" (6: 110).

198 "Had We sent down the angels 'successively' to them, made the dead talk to them and congregated everything right before them, they would not

if they see the path of guidedness they would not take it as a path 'of theirs', and if they see the path of 'utter' misguidedness, they would take it as a path 'of theirs'; that because they denied Our Signs and were 'willingly' averting of them⁽¹⁹⁹⁾. ﴿147﴾ Those who denied Our Signs and the meeting of the Hereafter, their deeds were rendered void; do they get rewarded except for what they used to do?⁽²⁰⁰⁾

﴿148﴾ The people of Mūsā took up 'as idol' when he was gone – 'made' from their jewellery – a calf⁽²⁰¹⁾, a 'mere' body of a lowing sound. Did they not 'just' see that he would not talk to them, nor guide them to the way!⁽²⁰²⁾

وَأَن يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا
وَأَن يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْعِغْيِ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ذَلِكَ
بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا
عَافِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ
إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

وَأَتَّخَذَ قَوْمُ مُوسَىٰ مِن بَعْدِهِ مِن حُلِيِّهِمْ
عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُورٌ أَلْمَيْرُ وَأَنَّهُ لَا
يُكَلِّمُهُمْ وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا

have Believed unless that Allah wills it so; but indeed most of them are ignorant” (6: 111).

- 199 Out of a deep-seated lack of sincere will to embrace Faith, their first reaction to the Signs was to deny them. They did not make the necessary effort to consider and contemplate them and, thus, treated them with disdain. So God, in punishment of them, diverted their hearts away from them, much to their grave detriment (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*We created not the Heavens and Earth and whatsoever is in between them save with Truth, and for a term stated. Yet the Deniers are turning away from what they have been warned about*” (46: 3).
- 200 “*We thus requited them for their Denying; do We ever requite save the ardent Denier*” (34: 17).
- 201 When Moses (ﷺ) was gone for forty nights for his appointment with God, his people sculptured out of their jewellery a calf that produced a bellowing sound and worshipped it: “*And ‘remember’ when We appointed forty nights for Moses, and then when he was away you took up ‘worshipping’ the calf—you were unjust*” (2: 51).
- 202 This mere body even lacked the most basic attributes of being a god (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, 13/242): “*How did they not see that it could not give them any response and had no power to harm or benefit them?*” (20: 89)

They took up 'worshipping' him; they were 'truly' wrongdoers!⁽²⁰³⁾
 ﴿149﴾ When they felt profound regret and they saw that they went astray, they said: "Should our Lord not have mercy on us and forgive us, we shall surely be among the losers!"

أَتَّخَذُوهُ وَكَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَلَمَّا سَوَّطَ
 فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ قَدَ ضَلُّوا قَالُوا لَئِن
 لَّمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
 الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

﴿150﴾ When Moses returned – enraged and exasperated⁽²⁰⁴⁾ – he said: "Awful indeed what you superseded me with after I was gone!⁽²⁰⁵⁾ Did you seek to hasten your Lord's decree?"⁽²⁰⁶⁾ He threw down the tablets⁽²⁰⁷⁾, seized his brother's head tugging it towards him⁽²⁰⁸⁾.

وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا قَالَ
 بِسْمَا خَلَقْتُمُونِي مِنْ بَعْدِي أَعَجِلْتُمْ أَمْرَ
 رَبِّكُمْ ۗ وَالْقَىٰ الْأَلْوَابِ وَأَخَذَ بِرَأْسِ أَخِيهِ
 يَجُرُّهُ إِلَيْهِ

- 203 "Remember" When Moses said to his people: "My people, you have done yourselves injustice by taking the calf" as an idol'..." (2: 54).
- 204 God told him what befell his people while he was away: "Allah said: 'Moses, what has made you come ahead of your people in such haste?' *He said: "They are following in my footsteps. I rushed to You, Lord, to please You" *He 'Allah' said, "But We have tested your people after you 'departed', and the Samaritan has led them astray". *So Moses returned to his people, enraged and exasperated. He said: "My people! Had your Lord not made you a good promise? Has my absence been too long for you? Or have you wished for Wrath from your Lord to befall you, so you broke your promise to me?" (20: 83-86).
- 205 He reminded them of what he had told them when they saw some idol worshippers deeply involved in their devotions and asked him to make them a god like the idolaters had (cf. Ayas 138-140 above).
- 206 In other words, "Could you not have waited until I came back to you with your Lord's good Guidance?" (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 207 That the tablets were 'thrown down' is symbolic of the context in which God's Guidance was received; instead of one of cheeriness and thankfulness it was one of deviation and Association, much to the consternation of the Messenger. Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Hearing is not like seeing. Allah told Moses of what his people did with the calf and he did not throw down the tablets. Yet, when he actually saw what they did he threw them down!" (Imām Aḥmad: 2447; Ibn Ḥibbān: 6213)
- 208 "He said: "Hārūn, what prevented you, when you saw they had strayed *from following me? Why did you disobey my command?" (20: 92-93).

He 'Hārūn' said: "Son of my mother! The folks thought little of me and they almost killed me!⁽²⁰⁹⁾ Do not then let the enemies rejoice on my account and do not count me among the wrongdoers!"^{﴿151﴾} He 'Mūsā' said: "My Lord forgive me and my brother⁽²¹⁰⁾, admit us into Your Mercy— You are the Most Merciful of the merciful"^{﴿152﴾} Those who took 'to worshipping' the calf will gain Wrath from their Lord, and disgrace in the worldly life; thus We requite the lies weavers.^{﴿153﴾} Those who committed bad deeds, then repented afterwards and Believed; indeed your Lord after that is certainly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful⁽²¹¹⁾.

قَالَ ابْنُ أُمِّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضَعُّوْنِي وَكَادُوا يَقْتُلُونَنِي فَلَا تُشْمِتْ بِي الْأَعْدَاءَ وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِإِخِي وَأَدْخِلْنَا فِي رَحْمَتِكَ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيِّئًا لَّهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْتَرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِن بَعْدِهَا وَآمَنُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِن بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٥٤﴾

- 209 "Hārūn had already, before this said to them: "My people! You are being tested in this: for verily your Lord is 'Allah' the Most Gracious; so follow me and obey my command". *They said: "We will never cease being devoted to it 'the calf' until Moses returns to us"" (20: 90-91).
- 210 Thus he practically apologized to his brother, demonstrated that he accepted his explanation and did not make his enemies rejoice at his misfortune (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 211 This shows that no matter how grave the sin is, God will forgive it if the person truly repents and sincerely Believes. This represents a great ray of hope indeed (cf. al-Shirbīnī): "Verily, I am indeed Most Forgiving towards the one who repents, Believes, does righteous deeds, and then remains guided" (20: 82). Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) said that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say: "Allah, glory be His, said: "Son of Adam! Verily, you shall not pray to Me and beseech Me without Me easily absolving you of your sins no matter how grave they are. Son of Adam! Verily, if your sins were to mount up to the sky, then you asked Me for forgiveness, I shall easily forgive you. Son of Adam! If you were to come to Me with nearly Earth's fill of misdeeds and you meet Me without Associating anything with Me, I shall come to you with its measure of forgiveness" (al-Tirmidhī: 3540, al-Ṭabarānī, al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ: 4305).

﴿154﴾ When rage ceased to haunt Mūsā, he picked up the tablets; copied in them is guidance and a mercy to those who stand in awe⁽²¹²⁾ of their Lord. ﴿155﴾ Then Mūsā chose 'from' his people seventy men for Our appointment. When the quake seized them,⁽²¹³⁾ he 'Mūsā' said: "My Lord, had You wished, You would have destroyed them earlier along with me! Do you destroy us for what the feeble-minded among us committed! Indeed, it is nothing but a trial⁽²¹⁴⁾ of Yours, You misguide with it whomever You will and guide whomever You will—You are our Ally, so forgive us and show us mercy; You are the best of forgivers;

وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَنْ مُوسَى الْغَضَبُ أَخَذَ الْأَلْوَابِحَ
 وَفِي نُسخِهَا هُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِربِّهِمْ
 يَرْهَبُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَأَخْتَارَ مُوسَى قَوْمَهُ سَمْعِينَ
 رَجُلًا لِمِيقَاتِنَا فَلَمَّا أَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ قَالَ
 رَبِّ لَوْ شِئْتَ أَهْلَكْتَهُم مِّن قَبْلُ وَإِنِّي
 أَنُتْهِلِكُمْ إِمَّا فَعَلْتُ السُّفْهَاءَ مَتَى إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا
 فِتْنَتُكَ نُضِلُّ بِهِم مِّن تَشَاءُ وَتَهْدِي مَن تَشَاءُ إِنَّتَ
 وَإِنَّا فَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْعَافِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

212 *Yarhabūn* is fear mixed with apprehension (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-*Iṣfahānī*, al-*Mufradāt*). Those who are always on their guard will benefit most from Divine guidance: "...so remind by means of the *Qur'ān* those who fear My Threat" (50: 45).

213 They were hit with an earthquake and were either struck unconscious or actually died (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān). Exegetes have differed as to what the reason behind this punishment was. Ibn al-Jawzī (*Zād al-Masīr*, 2/158-159) sums up three widely postulated reasons (though they are not by any means conclusive, since they are not supported by evidence); they are: 1) that they transgressed in their supplications; 2) that they did not stand up to those who worshipped the calf; 3) that they demanded that they speak to God and see Him directly. However, given the immediate context, al-Ṭabarī and Ibn 'Āshur conclude that it related to the worship of the calf, as Moses hinted to in his prayer: "Do you destroy us for what the feeble-minded among us committed!" They took the 'feeble-minded' here to mean the calf worshippers.

214 That is, the worship of the calf was a test for the people of Moses to see who remained firm and who wavered and slipped into misguidedness (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr): "He 'Allah' said: "But We have tested your people after you 'departed', and the Samaritan has led them astray" (20: 85).

﴿156﴾ and decree for us what is good in this worldly life and in the Hereafter⁽²¹⁵⁾; we have returned to You repentant⁽²¹⁶⁾.” He ‘Allah’ said: “My Punishment, I hit with it whoever I wish⁽²¹⁷⁾ and My Mercy encompasses everything⁽²¹⁸⁾; I will decree it to those who are Mindful and give out the prescribed alms, and those who are ‘firmly’ Believing in Our Signs⁽²¹⁹⁾;

وَأَكْتَسَبْنَا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً
وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ إِنَّا هُدُنَا إِلَىٰ يَدَيْكَ
قَالَ عَدَائِي
أَصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ أَشَاءُ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ
شَيْءٍ فَسَأَلْتُهُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ
الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ
الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

- 215 The good (*hasanah*) is all that is desirable and sought by humans in this worldly life, on the one hand, and forgiveness and admittance into Paradise in the Hereafter, on the other (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 216 *Hudnā ilyaka* is to repent and return (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). This is the verbal form (*hudnā* from the stem *h-w-d*) from where the name *yahūd* (Jews) comes from; i.e. those who return to God in repentance (cf. al-Iṣfahānī, al-Mufradāt, al-Ḥalabī, ‘*Umdat al-Huffāz*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*).
- 217 Among those who deserve punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 218 God’s Mercy is boundless. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “God has one hundred mercies. He sent down one of them on humans, jinn, animals and venomous creatures. Through it they show mercy to each other, and through it wild beasts show mercy to their young. God has reserved ninety-nine mercies with which He will bestow mercy on His servants on the Day of Judgement” (al-Bukhārī: 6000; Muslim: 2752); Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When Allah created all of the creatures, He wrote in His Book, which is with Him above the Throne: “My Mercy overrules My Wrath” (al-Bukhārī: 7404, Muslim: 2751).
- 219 These are three conditions necessary for rightfully earning God’s Mercy: 1) being Mindful of Him: “When those who Believe in Our Signs come to you say to them: “Peace be upon you – your Lord decreed Mercy upon Himself – whoever of you commits evil out of ignorance then repents afterwards, and mends ‘their ways’, then Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (6: 54); 2) willingly and charitably giving out zakah (the prescribed alms): “...indeed Allah’s Mercy is ever close to the good-doers” (7: 56), and 3) unequivocally Believing in God’s Signs. However, there is a fourth very important condition, singled out for its importance in the next aya, i.e. to Believe in the Messengership of Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. al-Rāzī).

﴿157﴾ those who follow the Messenger, 'the unlettered'⁽²²⁰⁾ | الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ

220 Exegetes are unanimous that this unlettered Messenger Prophet is Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. al-Khāzin). That he was unlettered (*ummī*) is evidenced in the Qur'an: "You 'Muhammad' never recited any Scripture before 'We sent down' this one 'to you'; you never wrote one down with your hand. If you had done so, those who follow falsehood might have had cause to doubt" (29: 48); "And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our Command. You did not know what the Book or Faith are, but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants. And indeed, 'Muhammad,' you guide to a Straight Path" (42: 52).

That he (ﷺ) was unlettered and raised among an unlettered nation ("He is the One Who raised for the unlettered 'people' a Messenger from among themselves...") (62: 2) was to: 1) ensure that no reasonable doubt arises about the Source of revelation; 2) the revelation remains intact and does not get mixed up with other sources and/or what hearts and minds are programmed with, and; 3) very significantly to connect him (ﷺ) directly to the most elevated and pristine of all sources, the Divine, as opposed to human sources which are very likely be adulterated (cf. al-Sha'rāwī). Some have speculated that *ummī* means or is derived from *umm al-Qurā* (Makkah, the Arab metropolis) from which he (ﷺ) originated, or being one of the 'unlettered nation', the Arabs (cf. al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*), and especially 'gentile' (particularly some recent sources and English translations of the Qur'an). However, upon thorough study, this could be challenged by the fact that notably the Jews of Madinah as told in Aya 2: 89 ("When a Book came to them from Allah confirming what they already have; 'while' before it they used to invoke 'Divine' assistance over those who Deny, still when what they knew came to them, they Denied it. Allah's Damnation is on the Deniers") were expectant of a Messenger of their own and not a gentile one (cf. al-Ṭabarī). The Jews of Madinah were very learned and alive to their Scriptures (as attested to in numerous instances in the Qur'an and Sunnah), so translating *ummī* as 'gentile' is, to say the least, misleading because it speculatively reflects on Scriptures which are either lost or distorted beyond recognition, and is not attested to by Qur'anic evidence. On the other hand, for the Messenger (ﷺ) to be described as 'the unlettered Prophet' is to directly quote what is exactly written in the Torah and the Evangel (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Needless to say, such pristine sources are no longer in existence. 'Messenger' (*rasūl*) differs from 'Prophet' (*nabīyy*, lit. one who is told) in that it is a more specific designation; every Messenger is a Prophet but not every Prophet is a Messenger (cf. Riḍā, and for more on the difference between the two see, Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Nubūwwāt*, 2/714). Muhammad (ﷺ) was privileged by both Messengership and Prophethood.

Prophet', whom they find with them written in the Torah and the Evangel⁽²²¹⁾. He enjoins them to virtue and advises them against what is unacceptable; makes lawful for them good provisions and makes unlawful for them what is deleterious⁽²²²⁾;

الَّذِي يَجِدُ وَنَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ
وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ
عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ

221 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is described in great detail in both the Torah and the Evangel (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): “*And mention when Jesus, the son of Mary, said: “Children of Israel, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad ‘the praised one’.*” But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said: “This is clearly magic” (61: 6). ‘Aṭā’ Ibn Yasār (رضي الله عنه) said: “I met ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Āṣ (رضي الله عنه) and I said to him: “Tell me about the description of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in the Torah”. He said: “Indeed! By Allah he is described in the Torah with some of his descriptions in the Qur’an: “*O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings and, a warner*” (33: 45); as a shelter for the unlettered ones ‘the Arabs’, and thus ‘said God in the Torah’: “You are My servant and My Messenger, I called you *al-mutawakkil* ‘the one who trustfully relies on God’”; he is ‘further described as’ not foul mouthed neither is he hard-hearted, nor raucous in market places; he does not offend when offended, but he forgives and forgets; Allah will not take his soul until he sets straight by him the crooked creed, i.e., that they say: “There is no god but Allah”, he opens up with it ‘this declaration’ blinded eyes, deafened ears and encased hearts” (al-Bukhārī: 4838).

222 “*Forbidden for you is carrion, ‘spilled’ blood, the flesh of swine, what was offered ‘as sacrifice’ to others besides Allah, the strangled, the battered, the fallen, the rammed, what is mangled by beasts of prey – except those ‘of these’ that you slaughter ‘before their dying’ – what is slaughtered at the altars of idols, and that you allot shares ‘of meat’ by drawing lots; ‘all of’ that is a serious contravention. Today the Deniers have despaired of ‘undermining’ your religion, so fear them not but fear Me; today I have perfected your religion for you, finalized My Favour on you and I approve Islam as a religion for you. ‘But’ Whoever is forced by wasting hunger ‘to eat of what is forbidden’, not swayed by sin, then Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful*” (5: 3); “*You who Believe, intoxicants, gambling, altars ‘of idolatry’ and casting lots ‘for divination’ are nothing but defilement of the making of Satan, so steer clear from it ‘all’, so that you might be successful. *Satan wants nothing but to sow enmity and hatred among you through intoxicants and gambling, and repel you from the remembrance of Allah and Prayer, will you not ‘then’ desist?*” (5: 90-91).

lays down their burden and the yokes that were 'imposed' on them⁽²²³⁾. Then those who have Believed in him, strongly supported him, aided him and followed the Light that came down with him⁽²²⁴⁾; these are 'truly' the successful”.

وَبَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

﴿158﴾ (225) Say 'Muhammad': “O people, I am Allah’s Messenger

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

- 223 “Allah would not charge a soul with that which it cannot bear; to it belongs what it earned and against it is held what it has committed. ‘We pray to you’ “Our Lord, do not charge us for what we forgot or erred ‘in doing’; our Lord, do not lay on us what is burdensome as you did unto those who came before us; our Lord, do not burden us with that which we have no power over; forgive us, absolve us and have mercy on us. You are our Ally; make us prevail over the Denying people” (2: 286).
- 224 The Qur’an: “People of the Book, here is Our Messenger coming to you to reveal to you much of what you used to hide of the Book and overlooks much—indeed there has come to you a Light from Allah and a clarifying Book; *by it Allah guides those who follow His Pleasure to the path of peace and delivers them from utter darkness into light with His permission; He guides them to a Straight Path” (5: 15-16); “O people, there has come to you a ‘conclusive’ proof from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a Glaring Light. *As for those who Believe in Allah and hold fast to Him, He will admit them into a Mercy and Grace from Him, and will guide them to a Straight Path” (4: 174-175).
- 225 This is a call to all who lived through the age of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), humanity’s last Messenger, the people of the Book included, and those that were to come after, to Believe in him, strongly support him, aid him and follow the Light that came down with him in order to attain success (al-Rāzī, Abū Hayyān). The address: “O people!” makes it clear that the extent of his Message is truly global, and to clear up any confusion that might arise from the fact that this declaration comes just after the stating of the fact that his foretelling was specifically mentioned in the Torah and the Evangel (cf. al-Sa’dī): “We have sent you ‘Muhammad’ as nothing but a deliverer of good tidings and a warner to all of humanity, but most people do not know” (34: 28); “We have sent you as nothing but mercy to all beings” (21: 107). Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “I was given five ‘privileges’ none of the Prophets was given...a Prophet would only be sent to his own people in particular and I am sent to all people without exception...” (al-Bukhārī: 438; Muslim: 521).

to all of you. He is the One to Whom belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth, He gives life and causes death⁽²²⁶⁾; so Believe in Allah and His Messenger, ‘the unlettered Prophet’⁽²²⁷⁾, who Believes in Allah and His Words and follow him so that you might be guided’.⁽²²⁸⁾

﴿159﴾ And from among Mūsā’s people is a legion that guide with the Truth and with it they administer justice⁽²²⁹⁾.

إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَآمِنُوا
بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ الَّذِي الْأُمِّيُّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِرُ
بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ ۗ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

وَمِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى أُمَّةٌ يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

- 226 This global Message comes from None but the Absolute Sovereign of the dominions of the Heavens and Earth, the solely True Lord, Who holds Power over lives and livelihoods (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*): “...to Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth and all there is between them, He creates whatever He wills—Allah is indeed Able over everything” (5: 17); “Do they not see that Allah, Who created the Heavens and Earth and did not tire in doing so, has the Power to bring the dead back to life? Yes indeed! He has Power over everything” (46: 33).
- 227 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is being defined by this honorific epithet which is attested to in God’s Divine Writs. That it is brought up here again implicates authority and encourages the people of the Book at his time to Believe in him, since he is clearly described in their Books (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Had they Believed, the ‘unlettered’ Arabs would have felt tempted to follow suit, given the high regard in which they held the People of the Book.
- 228 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is set here as an example for all; to Believe in Allah and His Words, i.e. the Books He sent to His Messengers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī). So, consequently, people are to follow his example and Believe in the Light, the Qur’an, God’s Word, which he recites to them in order to be truly guided: “Say ‘Muhammad’: “If you ‘really’ love Allah then follow me and Allah shall love you and forgive your sins—Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful”. *Say: “Obey Allah and the Messenger, but if they take to their heels, then Allah likes not the Deniers” (3: 31-32).
- 229 Here, the story of the Israelites is resumed after the last parenthetical reflection, which highlighted the relevance of the story, and good doers are an exception from the earlier Aya 148 which talks of the “people of Mūsā” taking up the calf as idol, so that they are not to be bundled up together under one heading (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr). That mention of this fact is delayed until here, after the call to all people to Believe in Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), is, in a way, to point out that some who are deservedly called the ‘people of Mūsā’, being rightly inclined, (cf. Ibn

﴿160﴾ And We cleaved them up into twelve tribal nations⁽²³⁰⁾. We inspired Mūsā, when his people appealed to him for water, to: “Strike the rock with your staff!” Twelve springs spurted out from it; every people knew their own fountain. We ‘further’ made the clouds shade them, sent down to them the manna and quails; “Eat from the good things that We provided for you”⁽²³¹⁾—they did not commit injustice against Us, but they did themselves the injustice⁽²³²⁾.

وَقَطَعْنَاهُمْ أَثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ أَسْبَاطًا أُمَمًا
وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ إِذِ اسْتَسْقَاهُ قَوْمُهُ
أَنْ اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْبَجَسَتْ مِنْهُ
أَثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ
مَشْرِبَهُمْ وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْهُمُ الْعَمَمَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا
عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُّوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ
مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

‘Āshūr) will come to embrace Islam (cf. Abū Hayyān), which they surely did as mentioned in the later revealed Madinan Sura *Āl ‘Imrān*: “They are not ‘all’ alike, there are among the People of the Book a legion, upright, reciting the Signs of Allah throughout the night and they prostrate ‘in Prayer’. *They Believe in Allah and the Last Day, enjoin virtue and advise against what is unacceptable and rush forth to do good—those are among the Righteous. *Whatever good they do they will not be denied it—Allah knows best the Mindful” (3: 113-115); “Indeed there are among the People of the Book those who Believe in Allah, what has been sent down to you ‘Muhammad’ and what had been sent down to them, humbling themselves before Allah and do not trade off the Signs of Allah for a pittance; for those is their reward with their Lord—Allah is swift in reckoning” (3: 199).

230 This fact is stated by way of detailing God’s many favours on them. Dividing them into tribal nations implicated that they were to thrive and their numbers to multiply (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr). It was also by way of smoothly running their affairs and building them up into an organized community, the first manifestation of which was that each tribe was allocated a spring, its own resource (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). However, *qaṭṭa’a* (lit. to cut into several pieces) could be taken as a seed sown for severance of ties (the Diaspora) as is indicated in Aya 168 below.

231 This is a telling of the many favours that God showered them with during their exodus: they were provided with water, food and shade in the arid, scathingly sunny desert in which they wandered (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Sa’dī).

232 They simply treated God’s immeasurable favours with rebellion and ingratitude; thus they did themselves an injustice and deserved His punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, al-Sa’dī).

﴿161﴾ (233) 'Remember' When was said to them: "Dwell this town and eat therein whatever you like⁽²³⁴⁾ and say: "*hiṭṭah!*"⁽²³⁵⁾; and enter through the gate prostrating 'in thankfulness', and We shall forgive you your sins and We shall increase 'the reward of' those who do good"⁽²³⁶⁾. ﴿162﴾ The wrongdoers among them substituted what was said to them for something else, and We sent down on them a plague⁽²³⁷⁾ from the sky for their injustice.

وَإِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ اسْكُنُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ
وَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ
وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا نَعْفِرْ لَكُمْ
خَطِيئَتَكُمْ سَيُرِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾
فَدَلَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ قَوْلًا غَيْرَ
الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزًا
مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾

- 233 What is to come is another gravely rebellious deed for which they deserved the severe punishment that they were to undergo. A series of such instances of insubordination and disregard of God's commands are detailed in the upcoming passages.
- 234 This Divine command is God's greatest favour yet, to grant them a home after they have had none for centuries; a very prosperous and desirable one at that. This home was Jerusalem according to most exegetes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī). A more detailed account of what happened at the gates of Jerusalem is told elsewhere: "*My people, enter the sacred land that Allah decreed for you and do not turn back on your heels for then you will be the losers.*" *They said: "*Moses, there are mighty people in it. We will not enter it until they come out of it and only then shall we enter.*" *Two 'Allah-' fearing men – whom Allah favoured – said: "*Enter you the gate upon them! Shall you 'only' enter it, you will surely have the upper hand. Put your trust in Allah if only you are 'truly' Believers.*" *They said: "*Moses, we shall not enter it as long as they are in it. Go then you and your Lord and fight, we are staying put here*" (5: 21-24).
- 235 That is 'forgiveness'; they were asked to seek forgiveness. The word is derived from *ḥaṭṭa*, i.e. to put down a burden (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, p. 50; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 2: 13), but they subtly twisted their tongues to mean 'barley', *ḥiṭṭah* (al-Bukhārī: 4641, cf. particularly al-'Asqalānī's comment).
- 236 God wanted to show them great mercy and treat them magnanimously for carrying out these very simple commands; to enter the gate asking for forgiveness, yet even this they did not care to do.
- 237 *Rijz*, i.e. torment and tumult. (Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)

﴿163﴾ And ask them 'Muhammad'⁽²³⁸⁾ about the seaside town; they 'its people' used to transgress on the Sabbath. Their 'large' fish used to come to them forthrightly on their Sabbath, but when they were not observing the Sabbath, they 'the fish' would not come to them. Thus we tested them for their contravening. ﴿164﴾ 'Mention' When a group of them said 'to another group': "Why do you admonish 'those' folks whom Allah will surely destroy or punish severely?" They said: "As an apology in front of your Lord⁽²³⁹⁾ and that they might be Mindful".

﴿165﴾ When they disregarded what they were reminded of, We salvaged those who forbade evil and overtook the wrongdoers with an abject punishment for their contravening. ﴿166﴾ When they 'flagrantly' defied what they were forbidden from We said to them: "Be apes, despised!"⁽²⁴⁰⁾

وَسَأَلُهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ
حَاضِرَةً الْبَحْرِ إِذْ يَعْدُونَ فِي السَّبْتِ
إِذْ تَأْتِيهِمْ حِيتَانُهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرَاقِمًا
وَيَوْمَ لَا يَأْتِيهِمْ لَا تَأْتِيهِمْ كَذَلِكَ
نَبَوْنَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَإِذْ
قَالَتْ أُمَّةٌ مِّنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعِظُونَ قَوْمًا اللَّهُ مُهْلِكُهُمْ
أَوْ مُعَدِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا قَالُوا مَعْدَرَةٌ إِلَىٰ
رَبِّكُمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ فَلَمَّا سَأَلُوا مَا
ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ أَنْجَبْنَا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ السُّوءِ
وَأَخَذْنَا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِعَدَابٍ بَيِّنٍ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ فَلَمَّا عَتَوْا عَن مَّا نُهُوا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا
لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

238 This is yet another act of contravention some of them committed. That Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was directly told to ask his contemporary Jewish community about this jealously guarded embarrassing secret of theirs, was to further prove to them the Divine source of his Message (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*, Ibn ʿĀshūr). This is the most detailed account of this story that was only hinted at elsewhere (cf. 2: 65-66 and 4: 154).

239 *Ma'dhirah* is no more than an alibi. One they provided so that they would not be held accountable for not admonishing those who flouted a commandment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ʿĀshūr).

240 "You who were given the Book, Believe in what We sent down confirming the Truth of what you have, 'that is' before we deface some countenances and twist them towards the rear, or We Damn them like We Damned the

﴿167﴾ 'Mention Muhammad' When your Lord declared 'that' He would certainly send against them, until the Day of Judgement, 'those' who would subject them to the worst of suffering⁽²⁴¹⁾—indeed your Lord is swift in reprisal and He certainly is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿178﴾ And We cut them into 'separate' nations 'asunder' in the land⁽²⁴²⁾; among them are those who are righteous and those who are less so. We tested them with the good and bad 'fortune' so that they might return.

وإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكَ لَيَبْعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْفَيْصِمَةِ
مَنْ يَسُومُهُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَسَرِيعُ
الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٦٧﴾ وَقَطَعْنَاهُمْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ أُمَّمًا مِمَّا مَتَّعْتَهُمُ الصَّالِحِينَ وَمِنْهُمْ
دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَبَلَوْنَاهُمْ بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

companions of the Sabbath—indeed the Command of Allah always comes to pass" (4: 47).

Their deed was devious and deceptive, only outwardly resembling observance of God's commands. As such, they are apes only outwardly resembling humans, but are actually far apart from real humans (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*, 6/28, Ibn Kathīr).

- 241 This is in punishment for constantly and irreverently flouting their pledge with God (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 242 Allusion here is made to the Jewish Diaspora and their forced dispersion out of their lands (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*): "And We decreed to the Children of Israel in the Book that: "You will surely cause corruption on the Earth twice, and you will surely reach "a degree of" great haughtiness. *When the first of the two warnings would come to pass, We would send against you some of Our servants, of great might, who would ravage your lands. This would be a warning fulfilled. *Then We would give you the upper hand over them and aid you with wealth and offspring, causing you to outnumber them. *If you act rightly, it is for your own good, but if you do wrong, it is to your own loss. And when the second warning would come to pass, your enemies would totally disgrace you and enter the temple as they entered it the first time, and utterly destroy whatever would fall into their hands. *Perhaps your Lord will have mercy on you 'should you repent', but if you return 'to sin', We will return 'to punishment'. And We have made Hell a prison for the Deniers"" (17: 4-8).

﴿169﴾ Then they were succeeded by a generation who inherited the Book; they would take the offer of that which is lower⁽²⁴³⁾ and say: “We will be forgiven!” And when ‘yet again’ a like offer came to them, they seized it⁽²⁴⁴⁾; was not the pledge of the Book taken against them that they should not say about Allah except the Truth?⁽²⁴⁵⁾ ‘Irrespective of that’ They have ‘carefully’ studied it! Indeed the Last Abode is better for the Mindful⁽²⁴⁶⁾, have you no sense? ﴿170﴾ But those who ‘firmly’ hold fast to the Book⁽²⁴⁷⁾ and keep up the Prayer, We would never render void the reward of the reformers.

فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَرِثُوا الْكِتَابَ
يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَدْنَى وَيَقُولُونَ
سَيَغْفِرَ لَنَا وَإِن يَأْتِهِمْ عَرَضٌ مِثْلَهُ يَأْخُذُوهُ
أَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِيثَاقُ الْكِتَابِ أَن لَا يَقُولُوا
عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ وَدَرَسُوا مَا فِيهِ وَالذَّارُ الْأَخِرَةُ
خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
يُمْسِكُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّا
لَا نُنْصِغُ أَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

243 They used to take the offer of a worldly, lowly life, i.e. bribes and unlawful money, and did not abide by the Torah, which forbade such unholy gains (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “*Woe betides those who write the Book with their own hands, then say: “This is from Allah!”*, so that they may exchange it for a pittance. Woe betides them for what their hands have written, and woe betides them from what they earn. *They say: “The Fire will not touch us except for a limited number of days”. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Have you ‘got’ a promise from Allah? For Allah never breaks His promise. Or do you say about Allah that of which you have no knowledge?” (2: 79-80).

244 This shows how adamant and self justifying they were in sticking to their devious ways (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr).

245 “‘Mention’ *When Allah took the pledge of those who were given the Book that you should make it plain to people rather than suppress it; they tossed it behind their backs and traded it off for a pittance—miserable indeed is what they buy*” (3: 187).

246 “*And whatever thing you ‘people’ have been given is ‘only for’ the enjoyment of this worldly life and its adornment. And what is with Allah is better and more lasting; so will you not use reason?*” (28: 60).

247 These are the ones who, unlike those greedy learned, treat their Scripture with the reverence it merits and do not suppress or distort the parts of it which foretell the coming of the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, and the binding nature of Believing in him (cf. al-Sam‘ānī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Shawkānī).

﴿171﴾ (248) 'Mention Muhammad' When We uprooted the mountain 'lifting it' like a canopy above them and they expected it to fall on them, 'We said': "Hold fast to what We have given you and bear in mind what came into it, so that you might be Mindful".⁽²⁴⁹⁾

﴿172﴾ 'Mention' When your Lord took the posterity of the children of Adam from their backs and made them bear witness about themselves 'thus': "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes, indeed! We bear witness 'to it'".⁽²⁵⁰⁾ That,

* وَإِذْ نَقَعْنَا الْجَبَلَ فَوْقَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُ ظِلَّةٌ وَظَنُوا أَنَّهُ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧١﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنْ بُنَىٰ آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا

248 This passage highlights a further incident from the saga of the Israelites. It is notable in the current context as it provides greater relevance to the rest of humanity, so that they may draw lessons from it. People, in general, are not to be misled into thinking that God only took the pledge from the Israelites specifically. Instead, they are being made aware of an earlier testimony from all humans that Allah is their only and true God. That they are told so after mention of the show of force that God demonstrated to the Israelites reminds people of God's Power in the face of those who defy Him: "And nothing prevents people from Believing when guidance comes to them and from asking forgiveness of their Lord except that there 'must' befall them the 'accustomed' fate of the former peoples or that punishment should come 'directly' before them" (18: 55).

249 After all these incidents of rebelling against God's commands and Moses' bidding as highlighted in Aya 145 above, they were only to afford the matter the care and concern it deserved through such a drastic measure as uprooting a mountain (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr), yet even that was not enough for them: "Remember When We took your pledge, and raised the mountain above you; "Hold fast to what We have given you and bear in mind what came into it, so that you might be Mindful. 'Remember' When We took your pledge, and raised the mountain above you; "Hold fast to what We have given you and bear in mind what came into it, so that you might be Mindful. *Then you turned away after that. Had it not been for Allah's favour and Mercy, you would have been among the Losers" (2: 63-64).

250 There are two equally strong, potentially reconcilable, views as to the time and nature of this testimony which is widely known among scholars as *mīhāq*

lest that you say on the Day of Judgement: “We were not aware of this!” (173) Or that you may say: “Nay, but our fathers Associated before and we were nothing but a posterity ‘taking’ after them; do You do away with us for what falsifiers⁽²⁵¹⁾ committed?”

أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا
عَافِينَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِن
قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِّنْ بَعْدِهِمْ أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا
بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿١٧٤﴾

al-fiṭrah (the covenant of innate nature). The first being that God (ﷻ) extracted the children of Adam from his back and hence generated them one generation after the other from their fathers’ backs and made them all bear this testimony (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Shawkānī, al-Shinqīṭī). The hadiths cited in support of this view are the one narrated by Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When Allah created Adam, He swiped his back and from his back fell everyone He would create from his posterity until the Day of Judgement” (al-Tirmidhī: 3076, al-Bazzār: 8892, al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*: 4132; it was deemed authentic by al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*, Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3/370, and Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, 2/333); and that which was narrated by Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Allah took the pledge from the back of Adam; He took from his loin all the posterity He created and scattered them between His Hands like small ants, then He talked to them directly ‘saying’: “Am I not your Lord?” They said: “Yes, indeed! We bear witness ‘to it’.” That, lest that you say on the Day of Judgement: “We were not aware of this!” Or that you may say: “Nay, but our fathers Associated before and we were nothing but a posterity ‘taking’ after them; do You do away with us for what falsifiers committed?” (Imām Aḥmad: 2455, al-Nasā’ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 11127; it was deemed authentic by al-Ḥākim: 75, al-Dhahabī, Aḥmad Shākir, *Musnad Aḥmad*, and al-Albānī, *Takhrīj Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, p. 171)

The other view, which is held by such mighty scholars as Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar’ Ta’arūḍ al-‘Aql wa al-Naql*, 8/487, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifā’ al-‘Alīl*, pp. 12-13, Ibn Kathīr and al-Sa’dī, is that God made it innate for people, generation after the other, and that it is hard-wired in our very nature to Believe and vouch for the Oneness of God, being rightly-inclined to pristine Faith (*ḥanīfiyyah*): “Devote yourself uprightly to the Religion and follow the innate nature ‘/constitution’ as made by Allah, that innate nature in which He has created mankind. There is no altering the creation of Allah. That is the right religion. But most people do not realize it” (30: 30). Since God created all humans thus, scattered His Signs all around them in all His creation and sent them Messengers as bearers of glad tidings and warners, they have no excuse but to Believe in Him and dedicate their worship to Him alone (*Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

²⁵¹ This stands for *al-mubṭilūn*, i.e. their fathers who came with falsehood (*al-bāṭil*) and abandoned monotheism (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Baiḍāwī).

﴿174﴾ Thus We expound the Signs, perchance they may return.

﴿175﴾ And recite to them 'Muhammad' the notable news of the one⁽²⁵²⁾ to whom We gave our Signs but he skinned himself out⁽²⁵³⁾ of them, Satan 'eagerly' caught up with him⁽²⁵⁴⁾ and he became one of the strayed ones.

﴿176﴾ Had We wished, We would have elevated him by 'means of' them⁽²⁵⁵⁾, but he stuck to the ground and followed his desire⁽²⁵⁶⁾. His example is that of a dog, when you chase it away, it pants and 'even' when you leave it, it pants⁽²⁵⁷⁾. That is the example

وَكَذَلِكَ نَفْصَلُ الْآيَاتِ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٧٤﴾

وَأَتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَخَ

مِنْهَا فَاَتْبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْعَاوِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى

الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ

إِنْ تَحِمَلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ أَوْ تَرَكَهُ يَلْهَثُ

ذَلِكَ مَثَلٌ

252 Exegetes speculated as to who exactly this person was, but al-Ṭabarī is of the opinion that determining this is inconsequential as the case is of a general nature and could apply to many people. Indeed, the moral of the parable is universally applicable and calls for much thought (for many reflections on this parable see: Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Fawā'id*, pp. 101-102 and *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn*, 1/127).

253 *Fa-nsalakha minhā* aptly brings to the fore the image of skinning so as to underline how much this person has shrugged off the Divine knowledge that he was given and how far he has distanced himself from it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Sa'dī).

254 Thus he exposed himself to Satan who eagerly ceased the chance to sway him away and so possess him (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtasar*).

255 Knowledge is not enough to elevate a person and nurture his spirit but following the Truth, choosing it over everything else and seeking God's Pleasure do just that (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn*, 1/129).

256 *Akhlada ilā al-arḍ* means that he preferred the joys and riches of this lowly life to that of the Hereafter, thus following his lusts and vain desires (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

257 It is part of a dog's nature to pant whether it is being chased away or not. Such is the degrading parable that God draws of this kind of person who 'pants after' this worldly life; no matter whether he is admonished or not, he will not change (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Indeed the Deniers, whether

of the people who denied Our Signs; so recount 'Muhammad' the stories perchance they may ponder. ﴿177﴾ Sordid is the example of the folk who denied Our Signs and did themselves a great injustice. ﴿178﴾ Whoever Allah guides is the truly guided, and whoever He misguides, then these are the true losers.

الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بآيَاتِنَا فَاقْصُصْ
الْقِصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ سَاءَ مَثَلًا
الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بآيَاتِنَا وَأَنْفُسَهُمْ كَانُوا
يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾ مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِي
وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٧٨﴾

﴿179﴾ (258) We have indeed spawned for Hellfire many among the jinn and humans; theirs are hearts with which they comprehend naught, theirs are eyes with which they see naught and theirs are ears with which they hear naught. Those are akin to livestock, nay but they are more at loss⁽²⁵⁹⁾;

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ لَهُمْ
قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ
بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ
كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ

*you warn them or do not warn them, they will not Believe. *Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and over their eyes there is a veil—theirs is a grievous Punishment”* (2: 6-7).

258 The misguided ones, who are destined for Hell, willfully fail to use their faculties of discernment and understanding which God endowed them with to get at the Truth and follow guidance (cf. Abū Ḥayyān): “... We gave them hearing, sight, and hearts. But their hearing and sight and hearts availed them not from anything when they were ‘continually’ rejecting Allah’s Signs. And ‘so’ they were overwhelmed by what they used to ridicule” (46: 26); “The worst creatures with Allah are those who are ‘willfully’ deaf and dumb, who do not reason. *Had Allah known any good in them, He would have made them hear; but had He made them hear, they would have turned away, averse.” (8: 22-23).

259 The greatest care and concern of the misguided in this life is to satiate their animalistic drives and materialistic pursuits, not sparing the least thought to the life to come; the real life: “The life of this world is merely an amusement and a diversion; the true life is in the Hereafter, if only they knew” (29: 64). In this respect, they are no better than livestock, yet the fact of the matter is that livestock are in a better state because they act upon what benefits them and instinctively pull themselves away from the bottomless abysses of eternal misery and self-destruction (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sam‘ānī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr,

these are the unmindful⁽²⁶⁰⁾. ﴿180﴾ ⁽²⁶¹⁾To Allah belong the Beautiful Names, so pray to Him by them and leave out those who skew His Names⁽²⁶²⁾; they will be requited for what they used to do. ﴿181﴾ And among those whom We have created, is a nation who guide with the Truth and with it they administer justice⁽²⁶³⁾. ﴿182﴾ But those who denied Our Signs, We will lure them 'gradually' whereof they know not⁽²⁶⁴⁾;

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَافُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ
فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذُرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ
سَيَجْزُونَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَهَمَّنْ خَلْقًا أُمَّةً
يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

Ibn 'Āshūr: “Or do you reckon that most of them do hear or ‘even’ use their reason? They are just like livestock; nay but they are more at loss” (25: 44).

- 260 “Those are the ones over whose hearts and hearing and sights Allah has sealed; these are the unmindful” (16: 108).
- 261 A central theme of this sura, *Rubūbiyyah* (i.e. God’s sole rightfulness to worship) is revisited here. The ones who are ‘spawned for Hell’ are quintessentially Associators, and thus they omit one of the most inherent Attributes of God, i.e. His Oneness, and, in turn, a host of related Divine Attributes and Names. So Believers are told to pray to God upholding His Most Beautiful Names and ignore the squabbles that the misguided try to stir in this regard (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Say: “Invoke Allah or invoke the Most Merciful – whichever you call, He has the Most Beautiful Names...” (17: 110). Invocation (*du‘ā*) encapsulates the essence of dedicated worship. In fact, the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Indeed invocation is worship” (al-Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*: 714, Imām Aḥmad: 18352). Believers are, in a way, directed to find solace in God and His Most Beautiful Names, thus shutting out all that bears down on their morale and psychological peace.
- 262 *Yulhidūna fī asmā’ih* is to slant/distort/twist the Names of God from their original, proper meaning. They would call their gods by them, add to them, subtract from them, or deny some of them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 263 These are by contrast the guided ones (cf. Abū Ḥayyān): “By time, *surely mankind is in loss, *except for those who Believe, do good deeds, urge one another to the Truth, and urge one another to steadfastness.” (103: 1-3).
- 264 “When they forgot what they were reminded of, We opened up for them the doors of everything; yet when they became full of gloating over what they were given, We took them all of a sudden, and lo they are seized with despair. *The people who did wrong were utterly wiped out; all gratitude be to Allah, the Lord of all beings” (6: 44-45); “So leave them in their

﴿183﴾ I will allow them time⁽²⁶⁵⁾—
 verily My Machination is robust⁽²⁶⁶⁾.

﴿184﴾ Did they not perceive that their fellow has no madness in him?⁽²⁶⁷⁾ He is none but a fluent⁽²⁶⁸⁾ warner! ﴿185﴾ Did they not look at the dominion of the Heavens and Earth, and whatever thing that Allah created⁽²⁶⁹⁾; perchance that their end has drawn near⁽²⁷⁰⁾— in what speech else besides it⁽²⁷¹⁾ do they ‘then’ believe?

وَأْمَلِي لَهُمْ إِنْ كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ ﴿١٨٣﴾

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا مَا يَصَاحِبُهُمْ مِنْ جَنَّتٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٨٤﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾

*heedlessness for a time. *Do they reckon that, ‘on account of’ the wealth and the children that We have provided them, *We hasten to them with good things? Nay, but they are unaware!’* (23: 54-56).

- 265 Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Indeed Allah allows the wrongful time, but when He seizes them, He will not let them off”. Then he (ﷺ) recited: “Such is the seizing of your Lord when He seizes the towns while they are doing wrong. Surely His seizing is painful, severe!” (11: 102) (al-Bukhārī: 4686, Muslim: 2583)
- 266 As opposed to the *kayd* (machinations) of the Devil, whom the Deniers follow, which is described as *ḍa’ifā* (frail) in 4: 76.
- 267 ‘Their fellow’ (*sāhibuhum*) is Muhammad (ﷺ) who brought them the Message and whose balanced character they knew all too well. Their collective faculties of discernment where so willfully clouded that they did not bother to ponder that he was indeed Truthful (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr): “Say ‘Muhammad’: “I advise you to do one thing only: stand before Allah, in pairs or singly, and reflect: there is no sign of madness in your fellow; he is only warning you before severe suffering arrives” (34: 46).
- 268 His being ‘fluent’ (*mubīn*) is a far cry from the incoherent babbling of a madman; yet even this clear fact seemed to elude them.
- 269 Even if they were so biased against the Prophet (ﷺ), they would have done themselves a great service by contemplating God’s most obvious Signs, the Heavens and Earth, along with all His creations. Were they not so biased, that would surely have led them to Believe (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah).
- 270 They could even have considered their fate and thereby done themselves a great service by averting it (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū al-Su‘ūd).
- 271 That is the Qur’an which is enough of a reminder and an eye-opener for those of sound perception (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

﴿186﴾ Whoever Allah sends astray, there is no guide for him; He leaves them to wander aimlessly in their blindness⁽²⁷²⁾.

مَنْ يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَيَدْرُهمُ فِي
طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾

﴿187﴾ They ask you 'Muhammad' about the Hour: "When is its materialization?"⁽²⁷³⁾ Say: "This knowledge is with none but my Lord⁽²⁷⁴⁾. None reveals it at its 'due' time except Him. Heavy⁽²⁷⁵⁾

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسِمُهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا
عِنْدَ رَبِّي لَا يُجِيبُهَا لَوْ هِيَ إِلَّا هُوَ ثَقُلَتْ

272 *Tuḡhyān*, lit. transgression and exceeding the limits (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, 41; al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, 321): "Have you seen him who takes his whims and desires to be his god; whom Allah has misguided despite his knowledge, sealed up his hearing and his heart and placed a cover over his eyes? Who then will guide him after Allah? So will you not pay heed?" (45: 23).

273 Showing how far off in their blindness the Qurayshites have strayed, they toyingly asked the Messenger to pin point for them the exact time of the Final Hour's happening (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr). Denying its happening is sheer folly; the Hour (*al-sā'ah*) at which people will be resurrected, then held to account for their deeds on the Day of Judgement and consigned to their eternal abodes, is an inevitability. A wise person knows better than to ridicule this gravest of all matters: "But the Deniers say: "Shall we show you a man 'i.e. Muhammad' who claims that, when you have been utterly torn to pieces, you will be raised in a new creation?" (34: 7); "And they say: "When will this promise 'come true', if you are 'really' telling the truth? *Say, 'Muhammad': "A Day has 'already' been appointed for you, which you can neither delay nor advance by a 'single' moment" (34: 29-30); "Yet man wants to deny what is ahead of him: *he says: "So, when will this Day of Judgement be?" (75: 5-6).

274 This is a very calculated answer, which is not driven by self-vindication, to their slanderous question. That Prophet Muhammad was just a human Messenger of God is the greatest honour any human being can be given, and not the stigma they alluded to (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr). Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: "A man asked the Prophet (ﷺ): "Messenger of Allah, When is the Hour?" He replied: "What did you prepare for it?" He said: "Nothing much with regards to Praying, fasting and giving in charity. But I love Allah and His Messenger". He (ﷺ) replied: "You are with those whom you love 'in Paradise'" (al-Bukhārī: 6171, Muslim: 2639).

275 This is a direct translation of *thaqulat* which signifies the Hour's heaviness and solemnity, after both Ibn 'Ashūr and al-Shinqīṭī. Another reading, albeit

it is in the Heavens and on Earth. It will come to you naught but all of a sudden⁽²⁷⁶⁾”. They ask you ‘Muhammad’ as if you were too keen on it! Say: “Its knowledge is with none but Allah”—indeed most people know ‘that’ not.

فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً يَسْتَأْذِنُوكَ
كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنِّي
أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

more exegetical given the co-text, is that *thaqulat* means it is ‘concealed’ (*khafiyat*) for its sheer profundity from the dwellers of both the Heavens and Earth; no angel, no matter how nearly drawn to God he might be, or an honourable Prophet Messenger is made privy to its timing. This meaning is chosen by al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr. al-Sa’dī marries the two meanings and says that it is a grave occurrence which no one, except God Almighty, knows when it will take place: “...how can you tell? The Last Hour may well be near: *Those who Believe not in it seek to hasten it, and those who Believe are ‘fearfully’ wary of it and know that it is the Truth. Are not those who dispute the Hour far astray?” (42: 17-18); “So if you Deny, how can you guard yourselves against a Day that will turn children’s hair grey; *it will ‘even’ cause the sky to crack ‘open’. His promise must be fulfilled” (73: 17-18). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “One day, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was out with the people. ‘Archangel’ Gabriel came to him and asked: “When is the Hour?” He (ﷺ) replied: “The one being asked about it knows none better than the one asking!”” (al-Bukhārī: 50, Muslim: 9)

- 276 Its suddenness calls for greater angst of it and better preparedness for it: “And they say: “When will this promise come to pass, if you are truthful? *They await naught but a single cry that will seize them while they dispute among themselves, *They will not even be able to leave a will, nor will they be able to return to their families” (36: 48-50). Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “The Hour will only be announced after the sun rises from where it sets ‘the West’. When it rises thus, people will see it and they will all then Believe and that’s when: “... a soul’s Believing will be to no avail to it had it not Believed earlier or earned good in its Believing...” (6: 158). Verily, the Hour will be announced ‘suddenly’ while two men are spreading a cloth between them; they would not be given time to finish their bargain or to fold the cloth. Verily, the Hour will be announced ‘suddenly’ while a man is still carrying the milk he got from his she-camel but he will not be able to taste it. Verily, the Hour will be announced ‘suddenly’ while a man is caring for his watering bowl, and he will not have the time to water ‘his herd’ from it. Verily, the Hour will be announced ‘suddenly’ while a person raises his morsel of food to his mouth but he will not be able to eat it” (al-Bukhārī: 6506, Muslim: 157).

﴿188﴾ Say: “I have no power over benefit or harm coming my way, except ‘it being’ what Allah willed. Had I ‘any’ knowledge of the Unseen, I would have stockpiled ‘all that is’ good and no harm would have touched me. I am none but a warner and a bearer of glad tidings⁽²⁷⁷⁾ to those who Believe”.

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ لَاسْتَكْتَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾

﴿189﴾ He is the One Who created you from a single soul and from it He made its mate⁽²⁷⁸⁾ so that he may find assuagement⁽²⁷⁹⁾ in her. When he pulled himself over her⁽²⁸⁰⁾,

* هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا فَلَمَّا تَغَشَّاهَا

277 In the face of incessant asking and demands, this puts the scope of the Prophetic mission into proper perspective; he is not a miracle weaver nor is he privy to much of the Unseen, unless God allows him it. He is no more than a deliverer of the Message so people need to listen, heed and Believe; but only the mindful will benefit from him (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr).

278 Adam, the single soul, and Eve its mate (ﷻ) (cf. 4:1, 39:6; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). That all humans are the offspring of a single pair of people calls for considering the very likely prospect of resurrection; as much as creation from sheer nothingness was possible, re-creation is a more likely probability (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). Thus people are reminded to be Mindful of God Almighty: “O people, be Mindful of your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it He created its mate, and from both of them He dispersed scores of men and women...” (4: 1).

279 “And of His Signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find assuagement in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who reflect” (30: 21).

280 Exegetes hold two standpoints on who these two individuals actually were. The first, which is that of al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sam‘ānī and Ibn al-Jawzī, hold them to be Adam and Eve themselves who could not conceive children at an early stage in their nuptial life so Satan whispered to them to dedicate their child to another besides God. However, Ibn Kathīr debunks this view on the basis that it draws on apocryphal Biblical sources (known as *isrā’īliyyāt*), thus he along with a host of other exegetes, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn al-Qayyim, hold that these two are generic for many human couples thereafter. Since there is no traditional evidence in

she became lightly pregnant, and she 'carefreely' spent it 'her pregnancy'; when it became heavy, they both prayed to Allah, their Lord: "Should You grant us a well one⁽²⁸¹⁾, we shall surely be among the grateful". ^{﴿190﴾} When He granted them both a well one, they claimed Associates with Him in what He granted them both—exalted be Allah above 'all' what they Associate 'with Him'. ^{﴿191﴾} Do they Associate 'with Him' that which would not create, while they 'themselves' are being created?⁽²⁸²⁾ ^{﴿192﴾} They are not able to avail them with help, nor are they able of helping themselves⁽²⁸³⁾.

حَمَلَتْ حَمَلًا خَفِيفًا فَمَرَّتْ بِهِ فَلَمَّا أَثْقَلَتْ
دَعَا اللَّهُ رَبَّهُمَا لَئِن آتَيْتَنَا صَالِحًا لَنُكَونَنَّ
مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٩٠﴾ فَلَمَّا آتَاهُمَا صَالِحًا
جَعَلَا لَهُ شُرَكَاءَ فِيمَا آتَاهُمَا فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا
يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٩١﴾ أَيْسُرُكُمْ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ
يَخْلُقُونَ ﴿١٩٢﴾ وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا
وَلَا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ ﴿١٩٣﴾

support of this view either, some tried to find textual evidence from the aya and those that follow in this passage. However, no matter who the exact referents of the pronouns in this episode were, it highlights how ungrateful humans can be to their Lord Who created them from a single soul, blessed him with a soul-mate, made the wife bear children and her pregnancy uncumbersome in its early stages, and dispersed a well-portioned posterity thereof.

- 281 *Sālihan* means good, well, healthy and righteous. Many exegetes, for example, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīī, take that the parents, as would normally be the case, prayed that their child would be birthed free from deformation. Yet al-Ṭabarī sees no point in limiting it to one meaning in particular as such would lack proper evidence.
- 282 The idols they create and worship (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Shawkānī): "He said: "Do you worship that which you carve, *while God created you and whatever you make?" (37: 95-96).
- 283 How can they worship such so-called 'gods' who cannot even help themselves? But they are heedless: "...his example is that of a dog, when you chase it away, it pants and when 'even' you leave it, it pants. That is the example of the people who denied Our Signs; so recount 'Muhammad' the stories perchance they may ponder. *Sordid is the example of the folk who denied Our Signs and did themselves a great injustice." (7: 176-177).

﴿193﴾ If you call them to guidance, they would not follow you; it is all the same whether you call them or you were to remain silent.

وَأِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ لَا يَتَّبِعُوكَ سِوَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ
أَدْعَاؤُهُمْ إِمْرَانْتُمْ صَلْمُونَ ﴿١٩٣﴾

﴿194﴾ ⁽²⁸⁴⁾ Verily those whom you invoke ⁽²⁸⁵⁾ besides Allah are naught but subjects like you; invoke them then and let them respond to you if only you were truthful. ﴿195﴾ Do they have legs with which they walk? Or do they have hands with which they smite? Or do they have eyes with which they see? Or do they have ears with which they hear? ⁽²⁸⁶⁾ Say 'Muhammad': "Round up your Associates and conspire against me without delay ⁽²⁸⁷⁾;

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عِبَادٌ
أَمْثَلُكُمْ فَادْعُوهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ اللَّهُمَّ ارْجُلُ يَمْشُونَ
بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَيْدٍ يَبِطُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ
يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ
بِهَا قُلْ ادْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ كِيدُوا
فَلَا تُنظَرُونَ ﴿١٩٥﴾

284 The arguments in the previous passage are reinforced and expounded upon in this one (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). Both relate to the sura's central theme, being God's sole rightfulness to worship, hence they are to be found in the closing, wrapping up, passages.

285 Invocation (*du'ā'*) is singled out of all acts of devotion because in it a servant asks something of a power that has the ability to change the course of matters. Yet the 'gods' they invoke are nothing more than 'subjects' themselves to a higher Power and that is Almighty God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr): "He merges Night into Day, and He merges Day into Night, and He has subjected the sun and the moon to His will": each one runs its course for a term appointed. Such is Allah your Lord: to Him belongs all Dominion. And those whom you invoke besides Him have not the least power. *If you invoke them, they do not hear you, and even if they could hear, they would not respond to you. On the Day of Resurrection, they will reject your having Associated them with God, and no one can inform you 'of the Truth' like the One Who is All-Aware" (35: 13-14); "And who is more misguided than one who invokes, besides Allah, such as will not answer him until the Day of Judgement, and who are not even aware of his call" (46: 5).

286 The spelling out of the arguments here highlight how desperately impervious the Associators were to basic logical reasoning (Ibn 'Āshūr). They are urged to see that they are more well-endowed with the tools of action and perception than their chosen gods (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Shawkānī).

287 This outrightly daring challenge further highlights the powerlessness

﴿196﴾ Verily my Ally is Allah, Who sent down the Book⁽²⁸⁸⁾; He covers the righteous in 'His' Alliance⁽²⁸⁹⁾; ﴿197﴾ but those whom you invoke besides Him, they cannot avail you with help nor are they able of helping themselves". ﴿198﴾ If you call them for guidance, they could not hear, and you 'Muhammad' see them look at you but they do not see.

﴿199﴾⁽²⁹⁰⁾ Accept 'Muhammad' whatever is bearable⁽²⁹¹⁾, enjoin what is

إِنَّ وَلِيََّ اللَّهُ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ ۖ وَهُوَ بِتَوَّابٍ
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٩٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ
لَا يَسْتَمِيعُونَ نَصْرَكُمْ وَلَا أَنْفُسَهُمْ
يَبْصُرُونَ ﴿١٩٧﴾ وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ لَا يَسْمَعُوا
وَتَرَاهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٩٨﴾

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ

of their gods (cf. al-Ṭabarī); as opposed to Almighty God Who should deservedly be relied upon (cf. al-Rāzī).

- 288 The Messenger's firm Faith in the Book, the Qur'an, made him mount such a challenge. In the Qur'an, God assures the Messenger (ﷺ) of His ever-near aid and protection: "O Messenger, convey what came down to you from your Lord ... ; Allah will 'certainly' shield you from people" (5: 67); "Is Allah not sufficient for His servant 'for protection'? Yet they threaten you 'Muhammad' with other 'helpless' gods besides Him! Whoever Allah misguides will be left with no guide" (39: 36).
- 289 "Surely Allah defends those who Believe..." (22: 38); "We shall certainly help Our Messengers and the Believers, 'both' in this worldly life and on the Day the witnesses will stand forth 'for testimony'" (40: 51). 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: "I was 'riding' behind the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) one day. He said: "Young man, I shall teach you a few 'significant' words. Preserve Allah and He shall preserve you. Preserve Allah and you shall find Him 'always' in front of you" (al-Tirmidhī: 2516, Imām Aḥmad: 2669).
- 290 In this penultimate passage, the Messenger (ﷺ) is being directed to the best course of action to take after the many digressions, transgressions, aberrations and deviations of the stubbornly Denying have been exposed and expounded on. The Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers around him are told to carry on with their mission of calling people to the Path of God and overlook whatever lack of regard and respect that might come their way (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 291 *al-'Afw* is the bottom-line acceptable and good of people's manners and behaviour. In the face of this all round belligerence and scorn, the Messenger (ﷺ) is told to accept whatever little he might be afforded of bearable behaviour (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Wajīz, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel 'bad' by that 'deed' which is

acceptable⁽²⁹²⁾ and turn away from the ignorant⁽²⁹³⁾. ⁽²⁰⁰⁾ Should Satan somehow stir you 'Muhammad', seek refuge with Allah⁽²⁹⁴⁾—indeed He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ⁽²⁰¹⁾ Indeed those who are Mindful when touched by a rounder visitation⁽²⁹⁵⁾ of Satan's,

بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿١٩٩﴾ وَإِنَّمَا
يَنْزَعَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ
إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا
مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ

*better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity 'will become' as though he was a devoted friend, *but no one will be granted it 'such goodness' except those who exercise patience and self-restraint; no one is granted it save those who are truly fortunate"* (41: 34-35).

- 292 *al-'Urf* is what is accepted and condoned of by sound human nature and is ratified by Divine law (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī).
- 293 This means to turn a blind eye and pretend to take no notice of abuse and slander (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*): "*The servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk humbly upon the Earth, and when the ignorant address them, say: "Peace"*" (25: 63); "*When they hear slanderous talk, they turn away from it, saying: "We are accountable for our deeds and you for yours. Peace to you! We want nothing to do with those who act ignorantly"*" (28: 55).
- 294 The natural instinct of a person when insulted is to get angry and react. But the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers are reminded to control their anger and know that the devil is the one who is stirring it (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Ashūr, al-Sa'dī). Sulaymān Ibn Ṣurad (رضي الله عنه) said: "I was sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ) when two men started cursing one another. One of them flared with anger and flew into a fit of rage. The Prophet then said: "I know some words, that, for sure, if he says them would ease away what it is: *a'ūdhu bi Allāh-i min al-shayṭān* (I seek refuge with Allah from Satan)" (al-Bukhārī: 3282, Muslim: 2610).
- 295 *Tā'if* is a spur triggered by the devil. Originally, it denotes someone or something circling around someone or something (al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*): "*Those who spend at times of prosperity and adversity, restrain 'their' anger and pardon 'other' people—Allah loves good doers; *the ones who upon committing a 'gravely' vile deed or doing themselves an injustice, they remember Allah and implore 'Him' for forgiveness for their sins – and who else would forgive sins besides Allah; they do not persist in committing what they do knowingly"* (3: 134-135). *Tā'if* being a 'rounder' visitation, suggests the movement of the devils around people whispering evil into their hearts, cf. Aya 17 above: "*Then I shall come to them from their fronts, backs, rights and lefts, and you shall not find most of them thankful*".

they remember and lo they become clear-sighted. ^{﴿202﴾} But ⁽²⁹⁶⁾ their brothers, they 'the devils' pave a long path for them in error and they do not hold back. ^{﴿203﴾} ⁽²⁹⁷⁾If you 'Muhammad' do not bring them a Sign, they would say: "Would you not just come up with it?" ⁽²⁹⁸⁾ Say: "I merely follow what is being revealed to me from my Lord" ⁽²⁹⁹⁾.

تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠٢﴾ وَإِخْوَانُهُمْ
يَمُدُّونَهُمْ فِي الْغَيِّ ثُمَّ لَا يُقْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾ وَإِذَا
لَمْ تَأْتِهِمْ بِآيَةٍ قَالُوا لَوْلَا آجْتَبَيْتَهَا قُلْ
إِنَّمَا أَتَّبِعُ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ مِنْ رَبِّي

- 296 The Deniers, the brothers of the devils, are being contrasted here to the Believers in terms of how far astray they will go and that they practice no restraint on their impulses (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "*Do you not see that We have unleashed the devils on the Deniers, constantly stirring them with incitement?*" (19: 83).
- 297 Challenging the Messenger (ﷺ) to come up with tailored miracles is an example of the inciting of devils (cf. al-Rāzi): "*And they say, "We shall not believe in you till you make a spring gush forth for us from the earth, *or till you have a garden of date palms and grapevines, and you make streams gush forth in the midst of it, *or till you make the sky fall upon us in pieces, as you have claimed, or you bring Allah and the angels before us, *or until you have a house of gold, or you ascend into heaven – and even then we will not believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a book that we can read."* Say: "Glory be to my Lord! Am I not only a human Messenger?" (17: 90-93).
- 298 "*And when Our Signs are recited to them as clear proofs, those who anticipate not the meeting with Us say: "Bring a Qur'ān other than this, or alter it."* Say: "It is not for me to alter it of my own accord. I follow only that which is revealed unto me..." (10: 15).
- 299 "Say 'Muhammad': "I would not say to you that I hold the treasures of Allah, I do not know 'about' the Unseen, I would not say to you that I am an angel; I only follow what is revealed to me..." (6: 50); "They say: "If only 'some' Signs had been sent down to him from his Lord!" Say 'Muhammad': "Signs are only with Allah; I am only sent with a clear warning. *Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book, 'which is' recited to them. Surely in this 'Qur'an' is a mercy and reminder for people who Believe" (29: 50-51).

This 'Qur'an'⁽³⁰⁰⁾ is 'a plethora of eye-openers from your Lord, a guidance and mercy to those who Believe'.

هَذَا بَصَائِرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ
لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾

﴿204﴾⁽³⁰¹⁾ When the Qur'an is recited, listen to it 'people' and hearken, so that you might be shown mercy⁽³⁰²⁾.
﴿205﴾ And mention your Lord to yourself, humbly and fearfully; lower than audible speech⁽³⁰³⁾, early and late in the day⁽³⁰⁴⁾, and be not among the unmindful.

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٢٠٤﴾ وَأَذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ
تَضَرَّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ
وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾

- 300 The Qur'an is the greatest Sign ever and nothing besides it, in terms of miracles, should be asked for (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "...indeed there has come to you a Light from Allah and a clarifying Book; *by it Allah guides those who follow His Pleasure to the path of peace and delivers them from utter darkness into light with His permission; He guides them to a Straight Path" (5: 15-16).
- 301 This passage concludes the sura by providing some guiding principles that lead to felicity in this worldly life and in the Hereafter: 1) showing people how to deal with God's greatest miracle, the Qur'an, the thickest rope of Allah which whoever follows it is guided and whoever does not goes astray: "So hold fast to that 'the Qur'an' which is revealed to you. Surely, you are on a Straight Path" (43: 43); 2) having God in mind at all times and being faithfully sincere to Him; 3) God's most honorable creatures, the angels, are set as an example for their sincerity and willingness of worship.
- 302 This great Sign, the Qur'an, the light that shows people the path of peace, should be listened to attentively and with great care in order to be guided to the Straight Path and gain God's Mercy (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr).
- 303 Thus it would be closer to sincerity and purer for Faith, see Ayas 54 and 55 above. Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه): "We were 'on a journey' with the Messenger (ﷺ) and when we came in view of a valley we would say: "Lā ilāha illā Allāh, Allāh-u akbar (there is no god but Allah, Allah is the Greatest)", raising our voices. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "O people, go easy on yourselves. You are not praying to one who is dumb or far away. He is with you; All-Hearing, Ever Near" (al-Bukhārī: 2992, Muslim: 2704).
- 304 "You who Believe, mention Allah abundantly, *and glorify Him early and late in the day" (33: 41-42).

﴿206﴾ Indeed those who are with your Lord⁽³⁰⁵⁾ do not disdain from His worship, they glorify Him and to Him they prostrate ﴿﴾⁽³⁰⁶⁾.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ وَهُوَ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾



305 al-Qurtubī mentions that exegetes are unanimous that these are the angels: “And to Allah prostrates whatever creatures and the angels that are in the Heavens or on the Earth; they are free from arrogance. *They fear their Lord above them, and do whatever they are commanded” (16: 49-50); “Those who carry the Throne and whoever is around it glorify the praises of their Lord and Believe in Him and ask for forgiveness for those who Believe saying: “Our Lord! You have encompassed everything in Mercy and in Knowledge; forgive those who repented and followed Your way and guard them from the punishment of Hellfire”” (40: 7).

306 It is very significant to note that this sura ends with a prostration (*sajdah*) which is the embodiment of humbleness and devotion. At the beginning of the sura (cf. Ayas 11 and 12), Satan refused out of arrogance to prostrate to Adam as per God’s command and thus he rebelled, was punished and vowed to sway Adam and his posterity. The sura then went to great lengths to explain how he managed to do so and the stories of the Messengers that God sent to guide people to the Straight Path. This *sajdah* is a message that people are left with; to humble themselves to the will of God in order to be guided. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When the son of Adam recites ‘an aya with’ a prostration and prostrates, Satan moves aside and weeps saying: “Woe is me! The Son of Adam was commanded to prostrate and he did, and his ‘for it’ is Paradise. I was commanded to prostrate and I refused and mine ‘for it’ is Hellfire!” (Muslim: 81).

This is the first of 15 instances of prostration. It is the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) to prostrate when reciting these: Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: “When the Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite the Qur’an, and come upon a sura in which there is prostration, he would prostrate and we would prostrate with him; some among us would not ‘even’ find a place for his forehead” (Muslim: 575); ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to say when prostrating while reading the Qur’an at night: “My face has prostrated to He Who created it and slit in it its hearing and sight with His Ability and Power (*sajada wajhi li-lladhi khalaqahu wa shaqqa fihi sam’ahu wa basharahu bi-hawlihi wa quwatih*)” (al-Tirmidhī: 1035). In another hadith (al-Tirmidhī: 3424), the supplication said during such a prostration is: “O Allah, record for me this one as a reward, eliminate me with it a sin of mine, make it a deposit for me with You and accept it from me as You have accepted it from Your servant, Dāwūd (*Allāhumma ktub li bihā ‘indaka ajran, wa ḍa’ annī bihā wizran, wa j’alhā lī ‘indaka dhukhran, wa taqabbalhā minnī kamā taqabbaltahā min ‘abdika Dāwūd*)”.



سُورَةُ الْأَنْفَالِ

al-Anfāl
(Spoils of Victory)



al-Anfāl (Spoils of Victory)

Title: *al-Anfāl* (thus titled in al-Bukhārī: 4645, Muslim: 3031) is named after the gains that the Believers made at the Battle of Badr and how they differed about its division amongst themselves. *al-Anfāl*, the first ever spoils of war that the Believing community encountered after the establishment of their state in Madinah, is symbolic of the materialistic side of human nature, one which stands between a person and his pursuit of a higher calling.

Merit: it, along with the next sura, *al-Tawbah* (also known as *Barā'ah*), together make up the last of the meritorious seven lengthy suras of the Qur'an (cf. Introductions to Suras 4 and 5). 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān (رضي الله عنه) said: "Both *al-Anfāl* and *Barā'ah* were called at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), *al-qarīnatayn* (lit. the two conjoined suras). This is why I have included them both in the seven lengthy suras 'in the Uthmanic codex'..." (al-Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, 3/208, also al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ*, 7/7638).

Theme: this sura reflects on and draws lessons from the major Battle of Badr (known in history as *ghazwat Badr al-kubrā*), also known as *yawm al-furqān* (the Distinguisher Day), i.e. in which God distinguished between Truth, as represented by the Believers who won, and falsehood, as represented by the Deniers who lost. The great Prophetic biographer, Ibn Hishām (*al-Sīrah al-Munawwarah*, p. 667) has it that whenever 'Ubādah Ibn al-Ṣāmit (رضي الله عنه) was asked about *al-Anfāl* he would reply: "It came down on account of us, the people of Badr. When we differed regarding the distribution of the gains of victory, Allah took the matter out of our hands when our manners turned sour, and made the Messenger (ﷺ) the judge of it all. He then divided it between us equitably. It was 'a lesson': to be Mindful of Allah, to obey Allah and His Messenger and mend our bond 'of brotherhood'".

Besides this major lesson, the sura details the chief reasons for winning victory, to wit: being truly dependent on God (*al-tawakkul*), standing firm, mentioning God profusely, observing the commands of God and His Messenger (ﷺ) (the Qur'an and the Sunnah), maintaining harmony and avoiding discord, remaining steadfast, conducting one's self with humbleness and dignity, and having the best intentions at heart for the purpose of battle. The sura moreover marks a watershed between two

methods of spreading the call of Faith: the receptive which advocates forbearance and leniency, on the one hand, and the proactive which encourages getting ready for battle and braving the world, on the other.

Key: *al-Anfāl* came down during the second year of Hijrah immediately after the Battle of Badr (cf. al-Qurṭubī). It can only be properly understood by means of a thorough study of that battle especially its context and the circumstances it was played out against: Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Gains of war were not rendered lawful to any before us. That is because Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, saw our destitution and helplessness and made it palatable for us” (al-Bukhārī: 3124, Muslim: 1747). These were the very early days when Muslims had just settled into their own designated territory, i.e. Madinah, and were neither mentally nor materially sufficiently prepared for waging war. Added to this is that they were not initially meant to engage in the battle, for it started off only as a reconnaissance sortie and, thus, the Believers were not prepared with the necessary equipment to fight a warring army. The Messenger expeditiously only called to it those who had their mounts at hand and essentially they only had what was just about enough to seize a lightly guarded caravan. This is why a party of the Believers at first were unwilling and lethargic and, hence, God’s gradual preparation of them for battle, both materially and mentally. The moralizing account of the Battle of Badr as recounted here is set against this backdrop. It also explains the chiding, and/or incentivizing, undertone with which Believers are broadly addressed here.

al-Anfāl disciplines the Believing spirit into practicing self-restraint and reining in one’s worldly desires; putting one’s commitments to God and Faith over all other mere worldly considerations.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿١﴾ They ask you ‘Muhammad’ about the spoils⁽¹⁾, say: “The spoils are for Allah and the Messenger⁽²⁾.”

- 1 The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) came to him to ask him about how the gains of their victory were to be distributed among them; they had disputed over this and were keen on knowing the answer: ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: “On the Day of Badr, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Whoever does this and that, then his is this and that of the loot. Then the younger ones marched forward ‘towards the enemy’ and the older ones remained in their place holding the banners. When Allah gave them victory ‘at the end of the battle’, the elders said: “We were backing you! Had you retreated you would have sought us out! You shall not get all the gains and leave us with nothing!” The youths refused and said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) allotted it all for us!” Then Allah sent down: “*They ask you about the spoils, say: “The spoils are for Allah and the Messenger. So be ‘truly’ Mindful of Allah, mend your bond ‘of brotherhood’ and obey Allah and His Messenger, if only you are ‘truly’ Believers. *Indeed the ‘true’ Believers are the ones who when Allah is mentioned their hearts tremble with awe, when His Signs are recited for them their Faith increases and they ‘devoutly’ put their trust in their Lord; *the ones who keep up the Prayer and ‘charitably’ spend out from what We provided them with. *These are truly the Believers; they have ‘elevated’ grades with their Lord, forgiveness and generous provision*” (Abū Dāwūd: 2737, al-Nasā’ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 11133. Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: 5093); Muṣ‘ab Ibn Sa’d Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه) narrated that his father said: “Apropos of me four ayas came down. I acquired a sword ‘among the Badr booty’. ‘Muṣ‘ab continues’ He ‘my father’ took it to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said: “Messenger of Allah, grant it to me!” He replied: “Put it back!” When he stood, the Messenger said to him: “Put it back where you took it from!” Then he said: “Give it to me, Messenger of Allah”. He replied: “Put it back!” He then said: “Messenger of Allah, grant it to me! Shall I be treated like one who has no share ‘in the booty’?” The Messenger said to him: “Put it back where you took it from!” Then this aya came down: “*The spoils are for Allah and the Messenger. So be ‘truly’ Mindful of Allah, mend your bond ‘of brotherhood’ and obey Allah and His Messenger, if only you are ‘truly’ Believers*”” (Muslim: 1748).
- It is important to note that their question, being in such earnest and born out of eagerness, was not answered until Aya 41 below. All the ayas in between are meant to further nurture their collective Believing spirit and elevate it.
- 2 That is, the matter is left to Allah to decide, and the Messenger (ﷺ) who would make the division. So Believers are told to accede to their resolution (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Sa’dī).

So be 'truly' Mindful of Allah, mend your bond 'of brotherhood'⁽³⁾ and obey Allah and His Messenger, if only you are 'truly' Believers"⁽⁴⁾. ⁽²⁾ Indeed the 'true' Believers are the ones who when Allah is mentioned their hearts tremble with awe⁽⁵⁾, when His Signs are recited for them their Faith increases⁽⁶⁾ and they 'devoutly' put their trust in their Lord⁽⁷⁾;

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا
 اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّمَا
 الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ
 قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ
 إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٣﴾

It is telling to note that, throughout this sura the Messenger (ﷺ) is every so often joined with God Almighty (ﷻ) using the conjunctive 'and', and sometimes he is closely affiliated to God using the possessive pronoun 'His'. This is to remind the Believers to accede to his bidding which is God's will. This is especially pertinent given the Believers were naturally drawn to the spoils.

- 3 *Aṣliḥū dhāta baynikum* (lit. mend the affairs that are among you; cf. al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, al-Kafawī, *al-Kulliyāt*) means to settle disputes, set matters aright and leave the issue of the division of the spoils to God and the Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. al-Sam'ānī, al-Baidāwī).
- 4 Since they would find qualms in this broad resolution, they are reminded of what true Believers would ideally be like (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Al-Wāḥidī (*al-Wasīṭ*) sees that this is to obligate the Companions to obey the Messenger in his distribution.
- 5 Thus they heed God's commands (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "And as for he who was in awe of standing before his Lord and restrained himself from desires, *Paradise will certainly be the abode" (79: 40-41).
- 6 "Those who 'when' people said to them: "People have regrouped for you, so fear them", their Belief 'only' grew firmer and they said: "Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers"" (3: 173); "Whenever a sura is sent down, some of them say 'mockingly': "Which of you has this increased in faith?" As for the Believers, it has increased them in Faith and they rejoice" (9: 124).
- 7 They trust that their Benefactor and Protector is none but God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr). Putting one's trust in God (*al-tawakkul 'alā Allāh*) is the catalyst for all good deeds; no sincere deed exists nor can it be perfected without it. Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr said: "Putting one's trust in Allah is the culmination of sincere Faith" (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿3﴾ the ones who keep up the Prayer and ‘charitably’ spend out from what We provided them with⁽⁸⁾.

﴿4﴾ Those are truly the Believers; they have ‘elevated’ grades with their Lord⁽⁹⁾, forgiveness and generous provision.

﴿5﴾ That is like⁽¹⁰⁾ your Lord’s bringing you out of your home with the Truth, ‘while’ indeed a party of the Believers were reluctant; ﴿6﴾ they argue with you regarding the Truth⁽¹¹⁾

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَّهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾

كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكَرِهُونَ ﴿٥﴾ يُجَادِلُونَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ

- 8 These two deeply devotional acts of worship are a true translation of sincere Faith which is detailed in the previous aya (cf. Ibn Kathīr). True Believers are ever ready and humbly engaged in sacrificing their two most valuable assets: time and money.
- 9 “Look how We favour some of them over others. But the Hereafter has higher ranks and greater favours” (17: 21). Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The dwellers of Paradise will indeed see the dwellers of the chambers ‘in Paradise’ above them as you see the glowing huge planet in the horizon, either on the East or on the West; that for how of various degrees their ranks are ‘in Paradise’”. They ‘the Companions’ said: “Messenger of Allah, these are the dwelling places of the Prophets; none attains them except them!” He replied: “Nay! By Whom in Whose Hand my soul is, ‘they will be attained by’ men who Believe in Allah and accept the Messengers” (al-Bukhārī: 3256, Muslim: 2931). This is the reward that one should strive for in this life.
- 10 That is, this tentative answer to their question about the division of the spoils and how they felt disquiet about it, is comparable to their response of unwillingness when they were told that they would face clashes with their enemy. So the Messenger (ﷺ) is told not to mind their response; things will turn out for the best (al-Zajjāj, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān*, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*; exegetes held many views about the purport of this analogy, for more cf. al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*): “Fighting is prescribed for you, as much as you hate it; might you hate a thing which is good for you and might you love a thing which is evil for you – Allah knows and you do not know” (2: 216).
- 11 The Truth (*al-ḥaqq*) is that fighting was imminent (al-Sa’dī, *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*).

after it has become evident, as if they were being driven to death while staring 'at it'. ﴿7﴾ 'Remember' When Allah promised you 'either' one of the two 'enemy' sections to be yours⁽¹²⁾; you wished the one without the thorn to be yours, 'but' Allah wanted to confirm the Truth⁽¹³⁾ with His Words⁽¹⁴⁾, and utterly wipe out the Deniers⁽¹⁵⁾; ﴿8﴾ to establish the Truth and abolish falsehood, even to the acrimony of the criminals.

﴿9﴾ 'Remember' When you 'Believers' implored your Lord for assistance⁽¹⁶⁾ and He responded

بَعْدَ مَا تَبَيَّنَ كَأَنَّمَا يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ
وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَإِذْ يَعِدُكُمُ اللَّهُ إِحْدَى
الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّونَ أَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ
الشُّوكَةِ تَكُونُ لَكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَن يُحَقِّقَ
الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧﴾
لِيُحَقِّقَ الْحَقَّ وَيُطْلِعَ الْبَاطِلَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٨﴾

إِذْ لَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ

- 12 The two sections (*al-tā'ifatayn*) being the caravan (*al-'ir*), which is laden with goods, and the fighting army (*al-nafīr*), the thorny one, which is well-armed and edging for a fight (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).
- 13 *al-Haqq* is for Islam to emerge victorious, and for this to become a reality poised to endure (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīl*, Ibn Kathīr).
- 14 His command to you to fight (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīl*, Ibn Kathīr).
- 15 The outcome of the Battle of Badr brought down a huge psychological barrier, with the killing and capture of many a celebrated Qurayshite hero (cf. *al-Mukhtaṣar*). It also marked the beginning of the end of the Arab Deniers (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīl*).
- 16 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: "On the Day of Badr, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) looked at the Associators, who were 1,000 strong, and his Companions, who numbered 319 men. He then turned towards al-Qiblah, stretched his hands and started imploring his Lord: "O Allah, fulfil for me what You promised me. O Allah, make true to me Your promise. O Allah, should this Muslim band be annihilated, You shall not be 'ever' worshipped in the land". He went on imploring, stretching his hands and facing al-Qiblah until his upper garment fell off his shoulders. Then Abū Bakr came, took his upper garment and put it on his shoulders, and held him tight from his back. He said: "Messenger of Allah, enough imploring your Lord. He shall certainly make true His promise to you". Then Allah sent down: "Remember' When you 'Believers' implored your Lord for assistance and He responded to you that: "I am reinforcing you with one thousand angels, following 'one another' closely on their heels'" (Muslim: 1763).

to you that: “I am reinforcing you with one thousand angels, following ‘one another’ closely on their heels⁽¹⁷⁾”. ^{﴿10﴾} Allah made this none but a glad harbinger and that your hearts may become comforted with it; ‘but’ victory

لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُبَدِّدُكُمْ بِأَلْفٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرْدِفِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ وَإِتِّظَمْنَ بِهٖ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَمَا تَنْصُرُ

17 Scholars have held different views as to the number of angels who were sent as reinforcement to the Believers on the Day of Badr, whether they were only 1,000 or 5,000. Those who opined that they were in fact 5,000 (i.e. Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid, Qatādah), interpreted *murdifin* (lit. following ‘one another’ closely on their heels) as: “followed ‘by others’ closely on their heels”, and in light of Sura *Āl ‘Imrān*: “Indeed Allah made you ‘emerge’ victorious in Badr when you were scorned – be Mindful of Allah so that you may be thankful. *Then you ‘Muhammad’ said to the Believers: “Would it not suffice you that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand angels sent down ‘from the sky’?” *Indeed ‘this would suffice’! Yet if you hold out and are Mindful, and should they ‘your enemies’ hasten to charge ‘in full force’ against you, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels, clearly marked” (3: 123-125). Further, they find similarities between the recounting of this episode in *Āl ‘Imrān* and here in *al-Anfāl* (compare: 3: 126 with 8: 10 and 3: 127 with 8: 7). Conversely, the party that saw that only 1,000 angels were sent as reinforcement (i.e. ‘Ikrimah followed by a number of exegetes, cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*) interpreted *Āl ‘Imrān* 123-125 as being sent down regarding the Battle of Uḥud not Badr and for that it was conditional and not fulfilled. Yet, the great exegete, al-Ṭabarī concludes that there is evidence in the Qur’an that the Believers were reinforced at Badr with 1,000 angels, but there is not enough evidence to prove or disprove that they were actually reinforced with 5,000 angels or not.

Rifā‘ah Ibn Rāfi‘ al-Zuraqī, whose father fought in Badr, narrated that: “Gabriel (ﷺ) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked him: “How do you regard the people of Badr amongst you?” He replied: “Among the best of Muslims.” Then he ‘Gabriel’ said: “Likewise the angels who fought in Badr ‘are regarded’” (al-Bukhārī: 3992).

That God reinforced His Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers with angels and made them fight like men, although He could have set Archangel Gabriel on them and he would have effortlessly wiped them out with a flick of a feather from his wing, was meant, as per Ibn Ḥajar (*Faṭḥ al-Bārī*, 7/313) to cause victory at the hands of the Messenger and his Companions and not to flout the canon of the order of things and that Believers should always put their trust in God, and take the necessary preparations and measures for winning.

comes from none but Allah⁽¹⁸⁾ – Allah is verily All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿11﴾ ‘Remember’ (19) When He enwrapped you with sleepiness as assurance from Him and sent down on you water from the sky to purify you with it⁽²⁰⁾, dispel the taint of Satan⁽²¹⁾ from you, brace your hearts⁽²²⁾ and make firm with it ‘your’ feet⁽²³⁾.

﴿12﴾ ‘Mention Muhammad’ When your Lord inspired⁽²⁴⁾ the angels: “I am indeed with you⁽²⁵⁾ so make firm those who Believe. I shall cast fright in the hearts of those who Deny⁽²⁶⁾; smite then above the

إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾
 إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمْ النُّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنزِلُ
 عَلَيْكُمْ قُرْآنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ
 وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ رِجْسَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَى
 قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ ﴿١١﴾

إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنْي مَعَكُمْ
 فَشَبِّهُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَأَلْنِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ فَأَضْرِبُوا قُوقَ

- 18 The angels were nothing but a means of achieving victory. The One Who grants it is none but God Almighty Himself; so put your trust in Him (cf. Ibn ‘Atīyah, al-Qurṭubī).
- 19 Besides bolstering them with angels, God made ready for them all the means and aids of victory, both mentally and physically (cf. al-Rāzī). Some of which are mentioned here.
- 20 That is from physical impurities (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 21 His whisperings and evil insinuations (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr).
- 22 To make more daring and audacious, and filled with certitude that victory is at hand (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr).
- 23 When the rain came down it made the ground under their feet become firmer (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Sa‘dī).
- 24 This could be inspiration (*waḥy ilhām*), i.e. tacitly communicating with them, or revelation (*waḥy i‘lām*) by directly communicating with them (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*).
- 25 God’s ‘withness’ (*ma‘iyyah*) is by His support and aid (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Sa‘dī).
- 26 Psychology is a very determining factor in warfare, once fear strikes the hearts of one side, then they are sure to lose. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was given this as a privilege, among others and five in all, that none of the earlier Prophets and Messengers were given. Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “I was given five ‘privileges’ that none of the earlier Prophets before me was given; I was made victorious with

necks and smite every fingertip of theirs⁽²⁷⁾. ﴿13﴾ That for pitting themselves against Allah and His Messenger; whoever pits himself against Allah and His Messenger, then Allah is severe in punishment. ﴿14﴾ That ‘is your punishment’, so taste it then; indeed the Deniers’ is the Punishment of Hellfire.

﴿15﴾ You who Believe, when you meet the Deniers marshalled ‘in hosts’ do not show them your hind⁽²⁸⁾. ﴿16﴾ Whoever shows them his hind on that day – except one

الْأَعْتَاقَ وَأَضْرِبُوا مَتَهُمْ كُلَّ بَتَانٍ ﴿١٣﴾
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٤﴾
ذَلِكَ مَقْدُوفُهُ وَأَنَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابَ
النَّارِ ﴿١٥﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيْتُمُ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا زَحْفًا فَلَا تُولُوهُمْ الْأَدْبَارَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَمَنْ
يُولِهِمْ يُومِئِدْ بِرَّهَ رَايًا

fright at a one-month distance ‘away from the enemy’...” (al-Bukhārī: 438, Muslim: 521): “We will cast fright in the hearts of the Deniers for Associating with Allah that for which He made no authority. Their resort is Fire; dire indeed is the domicile of the Wrongdoers” (3: 151); “He brought those People of the Book who supported them down from their strongholds and cast fright into their hearts. Some of them you ‘Believers’ killed and some you took captive” (33: 26); “He is the One Who drove those of the People of the Book who Denied out from their homes at the first gathering – you ‘Believers’ never thought they would go, and they themselves thought their fortifications would protect them against Allah. Allah came up on them from where they least expected and cast fright into their hearts: their homes were destroyed by their own hands and the hands of the Believers. So take heed you of sound reason” (59: 2).

- 27 That is to aim carefully to kill by striking the necks and heads (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr) and to incapacitate by striking the joints of the fingers and toes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Sa‘dī) so that the enemy is unable to wield a weapon or stand straight and, thus, is vulnerable.
- 28 *Yuwallī duburahu* is literally to turn one’s back to someone. It is used both literally and figuratively, to communicate a shameful image, for fleeing and beating a hasty retreat during war (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Fleeing battle is one of the seven cardinal sins in Islam; it dampens morale and could cause defeat: Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Beware of the seven most cardinal sins: Associating other deities with Allah, sorcery, annihilating a soul, which Allah made sacrosanct, without having the right to, devouring usury, consuming an orphan’s money, fleeing in battle, and accusing chaste, pure in heart, Believing women ‘of lewdness’” (al-Bukhārī: 6857, Muslim: 89).

who turns round to fight back⁽²⁹⁾, or to align 'himself' with 'another' company⁽³⁰⁾ – then he goes back with Wrath from Allah and his resort is Hellfire; awful indeed is the destination.

مُتَحَرِّفًا لِقِتَالٍ أَوْ مُتَحَيِّرًا إِلَىٰ فِعْيَةٍ فَقَدَبَاءَ
بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَأَهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ
الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦﴾

﴿17﴾ You 'Believers' did not kill them, but Allah killed them⁽³¹⁾; you 'Muhammad' did not cast but Allah did the casting⁽³²⁾; to have the Believers do well by His Grace⁽³³⁾ – verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ
إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
مِنْهُ بَلَاءً حَسَنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾

- 29 *Mutaḥarrifan li qitālin* is one of the two exceptions made for showing the enemy one's hind once battle has commenced. It denotes turning round (*yataḥarrifu*) by way of manoeuvre to trick the enemy into believing that one is fleeing only then to suddenly come back at them catching them unawares (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 30 *Mutaḥayyizan ilā fi'atin*, the second of the two exceptions, is to slide back to join another unit of the army of Believers to take shelter in them and bolster their ranks (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 31 This reminds the Believers of God's great aid to them in Badr and sums up the detailing of the many facets of the help He afforded the Believers so as to draw a lesson from it and not think that their own means were the main cause of victory (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 8/18, Ibn Kathīr, Riḍā): "Indeed Allah made you 'emerge' victorious in Badr when you were scorned – be Mindful of Allah so that you may be thankful" (3: 123).
- 32 Ḥakīm Ibn Ḥizām (رحمه الله) narrated the reason for this aya's revelation being that when the Messenger of God (ﷺ) took a fistful of gravel and threw it at the Qurayshites, they retreated (cf. al-Ṭabarī, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*: 3128). The Messenger (ﷺ) performed the cause, by throwing the gravel at their faces, but it was God's doing that this cause took effect and was conducive to the Qurayshites' retreat (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). This is another manifestation of God's aid to the Believers which has not been mentioned before (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 33 That is, to afford the Believers to win the gains of victory and a great reward from their Lord (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn 'Āshūr). al-Khāzin has it that there is unanimity among exegetes that *balā'* (originally implying trial of someone's strength of Faith, cf. al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *Umdat al-Ḥuffāz*) here means bounty (*ni'mah*).

﴿18﴾ 'All' That and 'in addition' Allah will surely dull the plotting of the Deniers⁽³⁴⁾. ﴿19﴾ If you 'Deniers' seek 'Allah's' arbitration, then the arbitration has come upon you⁽³⁵⁾; but if you desist⁽³⁶⁾, it would be better for you; if you come back We shall come back. Your host will avail you nothing, numerous as it might be. And 'know' that Allah is surely with the Believers.

﴿20﴾ ⁽³⁷⁾You who Believe, obey Allah and His Messenger and do not turn away from him while you hear 'him'. ﴿21﴾ Do not be like the ones who said: "We are listening", while they listen not⁽³⁸⁾.

ذَٰلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُوهِنٌ كَيْدَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٨﴾
 إِنْ تَسْتَفْتِحُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْفَتْحُ وَإِنْ
 تَنْتَهُوا فهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نَعْدَ وَلَنْ
 نَعْنِي عَنْكُمْ فَمَنْ كُفِّرْ شَيْئًا وَلَوْ كَثُرَتْ وَأَنَّ
 اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
 وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنَّهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا
 كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

- 34 All the aforementioned causes of victory are God's own doing. Another piece of good news that this aya broke to the Believers was that, in the future, God would unravel and blunt the plotting of the Deniers, so they need not be as apprehensive about their stratagems any more (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).
- 35 Imām Aḥmad notes in his *Musnad* (no. 23661) that 'Abdullāh Ibn Tha'labah Ibn Ṣu'ayr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Abū Jahl, the head of the Deniers, sought God's judgement on the eve of Badr by praying to Him saying: "O Allah, he 'i.e. Muhammad (ﷺ)' caused severance of kinship relations and he brought us that which we do not know so annihilate him tomorrow. Then Allah sent down: "If you 'Deniers' seek 'Allah's' arbitration, then the arbitration has come upon you...".
- 36 That is, relinquish your ways of Associating with God and Denying the Message (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 37 This section and the next two are reflective moralizing passages loaded with messages to the Believers and take their roots in the events that have just unfolded. Here, the Believers are meant to feel no qualms whatsoever with regards to what the Messenger decides regarding the division of the spoils and to pay him heed (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 38 These could either be the hypocrites and/or the Deniers (cf. Ibn Kathīr). Their 'listening' is merely mechanical and lacks sincerity, nor is it imbued with the intention of acting upon what is being said (cf. al-Sa' dī).

﴿22﴾ Indeed the worst of all the creatures with Allah are the deaf and dumb – those who cannot heed⁽³⁹⁾. ﴿23﴾ Had Allah known any good in them, He would have made them listen; ‘even’ had He made them listen, they would have turned away, looking the other way⁽⁴⁰⁾.

﴿24﴾ You who Believe, respond to Allah and the Messenger⁽⁴¹⁾ when he calls you to what gives you life⁽⁴²⁾; know that Allah may intervene between a man and his heart and that to Him you shall be gathered⁽⁴³⁾.

﴿٢٢﴾ إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ
الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ
خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ
مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ
إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ
اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ
تُخْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

39 “We have indeed spawned for Hellfire many among the jinn and humans; theirs are hearts with which they comprehend naught, theirs are eyes with which they see naught and theirs are ears with which they hear naught. Those are akin to livestock, nay but they are more at loss; these are the unmindful” (7: 179).

40 It takes purity of the heart, real willingness and good intention to have one’s faculties of perception open up to receiving the Truth (cf. al-Sa’dī).

41 By obeying them; willingly submitting to their commands (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Sa’dī).

42 All that the Messenger (ﷺ) calls for leads to a better life both bodily and spiritually both in this life and in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Sa’dī). Those who respond to the Messenger will be given life: “Is the one who was dead and We caused him to come alive and bestowed upon him a light to walk in among people be like the one who is plunged in complete darkness; there is no way for him to emerge out of which? Thus what they used to do was prettified for the Deniers” (6: 122); while those who do not will be walking dead; their bodies are the graveyards of their hearts (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ighāthat al-Lahfān*, 1/22): “Nor are the dead and the living equal. Indeed, Allah ‘alone’ makes whoever He wills hear, but you ‘Muhammad’ can never make those in the graves hear ‘your call’” (35: 22).

43 This is a stark warning to the Believers to willingly listen to the Messenger and abide by his command, which is the epitome of true, sincere Faith. But those who turn away from him, with regards to certain matters, are not to be sure of their Faith afterwards; God can block them from being willing to obey (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīl*, al-Sa’dī). Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) said: “The

﴿25﴾ Beware of a trial that will befall not only the wrongdoers among you and know that Allah is severe in punishment⁽⁴⁴⁾. ﴿26﴾ Remember when you were only but few, victimized in the land, fearing that people will snatch you away; He then gave you a haven, aided you with His victory and blessed you with good provisions, so that you may be thankful⁽⁴⁵⁾.

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَعَلَّمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَذَكِّرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَسْحَطَ عَلَيْكُمُ النَّاسُ فَوَدَّعَتْكُمْ وَأَبَدَكُمْ بِبَصْرِهِ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِمَّنِ الْأَطْيَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to say the following ‘supplication’: “O You Who turns hearts, maintain my heart on Your religion!” I said: “Messenger of Allah, we Believed in you and what you came with; do you have concerns for us?” He replied: “Yes! Indeed hearts are between two Fingers of Allah’s, He turns them however He wishes” (al-Tirmidhī: 2140, Imām Aḥmad: 12107): “We keep on turning their hearts and their sights away for not Believing in it the first time and ‘thus’ We leave them to wander aimlessly in their ‘unbending’ recalcitrance” (6: 110); “Mention Muhammad’ When Mūsā said to his people: “My people, why do you hurt me when you already know I am Allah’s Messenger to you?” So when they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate; Allah does not guide the rebellious people” (61: 5).

- 44 This is another warning which goes a step further to encourage the Believers to willingly obey the call in their collectivity and not let those be among them whose Faith is shaky without admonishing them. If they fail to do so, the trial (*fitnah*) will not befall those who did wrong in society alone (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr). Believers are not only encouraged to be faithful themselves but to be the source that radiates Faith all around them: “The Deniers among the Children of Israel were damned by the tongue of Dāwūd ‘David’ and ‘Isā son of Maryam for their disobedience and persistent aggression. *They would not admonish each other over the vile deeds they committed – sordid indeed is what they used to do” (5: 78-79). al-Nu‘mān Ibn Bashīr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “The example of the one who safeguards the boundaries of Allah and he who flouts them is that of some people who drew lots as to ‘where their allotted locations would be on’ a ship. Some came at the top of the ship and others came at the bottom. Whenever the ones at the bottom wanted to get water, they would ‘inevitably’ pass by those who were at the top. They then said ‘amongst themselves’: “If we drill a hole in our ‘bottom’ part, we would not keep on troubling those above us!” ‘Now’ If they ‘the ones at the top’ let them carry out their plan, they would all perish, but if they restrain them they would be saved, all of them” (al-Bukhārī: 2493).
- 45 Here the Believers, who now emerged victorious, and realized their power, are reminded of God’s abundant favours on them: they were few in number

﴿27﴾ You who Believe, do not betray Allah and the Messenger⁴⁶, and ‘do not’ betray your trusts knowingly.
 ﴿28﴾ Know that your money and children are but a trial⁴⁷ and that with Allah is a great reward.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ
 وَتَخُونُوا أَمْنَتَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَأَعْلَمُوا
 أَنَّ أَمْوَالَكُمْ وَأَوْلَادَكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَأَنَّ
 اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

and helpless in Makkah and fearing that people would snatch them away and take them captive, God delivered them safe and provided them with a stronghold in Madinah, boosted their numbers with the Anṣār ‘Helpers’ Companions of Madinah, and made them emerge victorious and financially better-off due to their winning at Badr (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). This is all the more reason for them to pay heed and be thankful (cf. al-Rāzī). Being grateful makes one thankful and vice versa (cf. al-Qaṣṣāb, *al-Nukat al-Dāllah ‘Alā al-Bayān*, 1/469).

- 46 al-Rāzī provides a number of explanations he gathered from different exegetical sources as to what ‘betray’ (*yakhūnu*) actually alludes to here. These boil down to the fact that some Believers, being conscious of some bond that held between them and the Deniers, obliged the Deniers by passing on some news of the Messenger’s intentions, notably to Abū Lubābah and Ḥaṭīb Ibn Abī Balta‘ah (رضي الله عنه). However, he opines that ‘betrayal’ here means misappropriation of some of the spoils of the battle without being noticed. Yet, they were entrusted with these such that they were expected to relinquish them complete.

Notwithstanding, both al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr, who acknowledge such explanations, conclude that this is a general recommendation to the Believers to honour their pledges to God and His Messenger and obey their command. Falling short of this is tantamount to betrayal of the trust of a Most Benevolent Lord and a lovingly compassionate Messenger: “*Indeed, We offered trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it; they were apprehensive of it. But man assumed it; he is truly wrongful*” to himself”, ignorant “of the consequences” (33: 72).

- 47 What would tempt one to act wrongfully is the love of both one’s own children and one’s love of money (cf. al-Rāzī). This love is but a test from God to see whether they carry out His commands when they impact upon this consideration (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “*You who Believe, among your spouses and your children there is indeed an enemy to you; so be wary of them. Yet if you pardon, forbear, and forgive, then truly God is Forgiving, Merciful. *Your money and your children are only a trial; and Allah – with Him is a great reward. *So be Mindful of Allah to the best of your ability, hear and obey, and spend*” in charity” – that will be best for you. And whoever is saved from the selfishness of their own souls, it is they who are ‘truly’ successful” (64: 14-16).

﴿29﴾ You who Believe, if you are Mindful of Allah, He will grant you a distinguisher⁽⁴⁸⁾, absolve you of your foul deeds and forgive you—Allah is indeed of great favour.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٩﴾

﴿30﴾ ⁽⁴⁹⁾ Mention Muhammad' When the Deniers plotted against you to seize you, kill you or expel you; they plot and Allah plans—Allah is verily the best of planners⁽⁵⁰⁾. ﴿31﴾ ⁽⁵¹⁾ And when Our Signs are recited to them, they say: “We have listened!

وَإِذْ يَمَكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثَبِّتُوكَ أَوْ يُقَاتِلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِذْ أَنْتَ عَلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا فَاذْكُرُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ

- 48 Obeying God and His Messenger (ﷺ) and fighting against one's earthly desires, pays great rewards, i.e. being truly Mindful: a *furqān* luminous knowledge with which one can distinguish between Truth and falsehood, and a way out from the hardships of life (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*): "...whoever is Mindful of Allah, He will make a way out for him *and provide for him whereof he does not anticipate..." (65: 2-3).
- 49 Although the direct addressee here is the Noble Messenger (ﷺ), Believers are further reminded of God's favours on them, since He delivered their mentor who is also a main benefactor of theirs (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ʿAshūr).
- 50 This is a précis of how the Qurayshites plotted to rid themselves of the Messenger (ﷺ), when he became too much for them to handle, and when argumentation became futile and cumbersome for them. They schemed to: 1) tie him down and incarcerate him, to; 2) kill him, and: 3) to chase him out of Makkah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). This is not a unique incident, a great many Messengers (ﷺ) were faced with the same threat: "But those who Denied said to their Messengers: "We shall surely expel you from our land, or you shall revert to our way of life..." (14: 13).
- 51 Now to a summary of how the Qurayshites had plotted against the call of the Messenger before coming up with their most daring plan of getting rid of him once and for all (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). These people deserved to be fought against: "Will you not fight against those who have broken their oaths and conspired to expel the Messenger? They were the first to attack you. Do you fear them? Surely Allah is more deserving of your fear, if you are 'true' Believers" (9: 13).

Had we wished, we would have come up with something like this⁽⁵²⁾; this is nothing but merely 'a retelling of the' scribbles of the ancients!⁽⁵³⁾ ﴿32﴾ 'Mention Muhammad' When they 'the Deniers' said: "O Allah, if this is the Truth from You, then rain on us stones from the sky or bring us a painful punishment!"⁽⁵⁴⁾ ﴿33﴾ Allah would not have punished them while you 'Muhammad' were 'still' among them⁽⁵⁵⁾; Allah would not punish them while they 'sincerely' seek forgiveness⁽⁵⁶⁾.

لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَفُتْنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْطِيزُ
الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَوَدَّ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنَّا
هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا
حِجَارَةً مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٣﴾
وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ
اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

- 52 "Who is more wrongful than he who fabricates falsehood against Allah or says: "I was given revelation", while nothing was revealed to him, and he who says: "I will send down the like of that which Allah sent down..." (6: 93).
- 53 "Some among them would listen to you; 'but' We have put sheaths over their hearts, lest they would perceive it, and in their ears there is impairment. Even if they see every Sign, they would not Believe in it; so much so that when they come to dispute with you, the Deniers would 'willingly' say: "This is nothing but merely 'a retelling of the' scribbles of the ancients!" (6: 25).
- 54 Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: "Abū Jahl prayed: "O Allah, if this is the truth from You, then hail down on us stones from the sky or deliver to us a painful punishment!" Then this 'aya' came down: "Allah would not have punished them while you 'Muhammad' were still among them; Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness"" (al-Bukhārī: 4649, Muslim: 2796).
- 55 Exegetes agree that this means that God would never bring His punishment upon a people who have a Messenger in their midst (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr).
- 56 Seeking forgiveness (*al-istighfār*) is a sure indicator of one's realization of one's earlier bad deeds and a willingness to atone for them. One would not come to such a state of affairs unless one shrugs off all rebelliousness against God and opens up to guidance. Exegetes are of different opinions regarding this: some, i.e. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, see that this is tantamount to an invitation to the Deniers to repent and mend

﴿34﴾ But why would not Allah punish them while they turn ‘people’ away from the Sanctified Mosque; ‘although’ they were not its ‘rightful’ patrons—its ‘true’ patrons are none but the Mindful, but most of them know ‘that’ not⁽⁵⁷⁾. ﴿35﴾ Their Prayer at the House was nothing but ‘hollow’ whistling and clapping; taste then the punishment⁽⁵⁸⁾ for your ‘adamant’ Denying.

وَمَا لَهُمْ أَلَّا يُعَذِّبَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ
عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَا كَانُوا أَوْلِيَاءَهُ
إِنْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لَهُ إِلَّا الْمُتَّفِقُونَ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِنْدَ
الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا مُكَاءٌ وَتَصْدِيَةٌ فَدُفُّوا
الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

their ways. Others, who are a sizeable number (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr), see that the pronoun here refers to the Believers and that this is a parenthetical sentence meant for reflection and drawing lessons, especially after the demise of the Noble Messenger (ﷺ).

However, it is interesting to note that al-Sa’dī opines that the ones meant here are, actually, the Makkans who had prayed to God to hail stones or hasten His punishment on them. Knowing how ghastly such an invocation is, which they only declared as an acted charade meant for argument’s sake, were secretly seeking forgiveness for it in their heart of hearts. This reading throws light on how to interpret the next two ayas over which exegetes have held varying views. That is, their seeking forgiveness is not reason enough to repel their Heavenly punishment given their greatly grievous sin of deliberately turning people away from the Sanctified Mosque. This they did to the Messenger (ﷺ) and His Companions who deserved it most among people being justly its rightful ‘patrons’ for their sincerely Godly ways, as opposed to the Makkans who braggingly claimed to be its rightful ‘patrons’ while they only displayed hollow, groundless acts of worship around it: “It is not right for the Associators to ‘caringly’ tend Allah’s places of prostration while testifying to their own Denial: the deeds of such people will come to nothing and they will abide forever in Hell. *The only ones who should ‘caringly’ tend Allah’s places of prostration are those who Believe in Allah and the Last Day, keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms, and fear no one but Allah: such people may well aspire to be among the rightly guided.” (9: 17-18)

57 Most of the Qurayshites do not realize this obvious fact (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Sa’dī).

58 Their humiliating defeat, killing and captivation at Badr (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿36﴾⁽⁵⁹⁾ Verily those who Deny do spend their money to turn ‘people’ away from the path of Allah⁽⁶⁰⁾; they will spend it, then it will be ‘a cause of’ ‘bitter’ regret for them, and then they will ‘eventually’ be overpowered⁽⁶¹⁾—those who Deny will be gathered to Hellfire. ﴿37﴾ ‘This is’ For Allah to set the evil apart from the good; He will mount the evil on top of each other making it into a heap and consign it all to Hellfire—these are the ‘real’ losers⁽⁶²⁾.

﴿38﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’ to those who Deny, if they desist they will be forgiven ‘all’ what went on before⁽⁶³⁾, and if they return

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَسَيُنْفِقُونَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ
حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى
جَهَنَّمَ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِيَمِيزَ اللَّهُ الْخَبِيثَ
مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَيَجْعَلَ الْخَبِيثَ بَعْضُهُ عَلَى بَعْضٍ
فَيَرْكُمَهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَجْعَلُهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ
أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُعْفَرُوا
لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ وَإِنْ يَعُودُوا

- 59 When the Deniers used their power to their advantage and forcefully turned the pious away from the Holy Sanctuary, which proved to be futile, they mustered up their power and resources to eradicate Islam (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 60 al-Shinqīfī (*al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*) notes the common view among scholars that the Qurayshites used the very lucrative caravan (1,000 camels loaded with precious goods) that Abū Sufyān managed to steer to safety just before the Battle of Badr took place, to hit back at the Believers and take revenge on them.
- 61 “Truly those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, they will be among the abased. *Allah has decreed: “I and My Messengers will certainly prevail”. Surely Allah is All-Powerful, Almighty” (58: 20-21).
- 62 That they are unceremoniously piled on top of each other is humiliation incarnate (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “So worship whatsoever you will besides Him”. Say: “Truly the ‘real’ losers are those who lose their souls and their families on the Day of Judgement. Surely, that is the manifest loss” (39: 15).
- 63 They are called to follow the call of Islam and disown Denial (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Āṣ (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: “Did you not know that Islam abolishes all that went on before it?” (Muslim: 121): “Say ‘Allah says’: “O My servants, who have committed excesses against themselves, do not despair of Allah’s Mercy; Allah surely forgives all sins. He is truly the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful” (39: 53).

then the canon of the ancients⁽⁶⁴⁾ already came to pass. ﴿39﴾ Fight them until there is no ‘more’ trial and religion becomes wholly Allah’s⁽⁶⁵⁾. But if they desist, then Allah is surely All-Seeing of what they do. ﴿40﴾ But if they turn away, then know ‘Believers’ that Allah is your Ally; most honorable is the Ally, most honorable is the Supporter.

﴿41﴾ ⁽⁶⁶⁾And know ‘Believers’ that whatever gain you make a fifth⁽⁶⁷⁾ of it is for Allah and

فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَتَلُوهُمْ
حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ
كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا
يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ﴿٤٠﴾

*وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسُهُ

- 64 *Sunnat al-awwalin* (also found in 15: 13, 18: 55, 35: 43) or *sunnat Allāh* (as in 33: 38 and 62, 35: 43, 40: 85, 48: 23) is used invariably to caution in the Qur’an; the earlier nations who rebelled against God were destroyed. People are always encouraged to consider their fate *vis-a-vis* the fate of earlier nations and contemplate God’s time-honoured law: “... then do they await except the canon of the ancients? But you shall never find any change in the canon of Allah; you shall never find any alteration in the canon of Allah. *Have they not travelled through the land and observed how the end of those before them was; they were ‘even’ greater than them in power. Allah is not to be frustrated by anything in the Heavens or on Earth – He is All-Knowing, All-Powerful” (35: 43-44).
- 65 The Believers are bade to fight the Deniers until their hostile behaviour is curbed, and until the Believers are free to practice their religion without anyone daring to interfere with their worship or turn them away from their religion, and until people are able to freely worship God alone without Associating any with Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr al-Sa’dī, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).
- 66 Only now are the Believers answered their earnest question, which they asked of the Prophet (ﷺ) at the very beginning of the sura; after they have been sufficiently prepared for it through a number of reminders, pointers and moralizing advice.
- 67 The spoils are divided into four-fifths for the fighters and one-fifth for: 1) God Almighty (ﷻ), 2) the Messenger (ﷺ), 3) the Messenger’s close relatives, 4) the orphaned young, 5) the destitute and poor, 6) and the stranded (cf. al-Jazā’irī, *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*). It is useful to note this issue was a topic of long and detailed discussions among scholars, however some explanation, as per the scope of this translation, is given below.

the Messenger⁽⁶⁸⁾, the kith and kin⁽⁶⁹⁾, the orphans, the needy, the destitute and the stranded⁽⁷⁰⁾; 'that is'⁽⁷¹⁾ if you have truly Believed in Allah and what We sent down⁽⁷²⁾ to Our Servant⁽⁷³⁾ on the Distinguisher Day when the two hosts met⁽⁷⁴⁾—verily Allah is

وَالرَّسُولِ وَآلِهِ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ
وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ إِن كُنْتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا
أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ
الْجَمْعَاتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ

- 68 God's share is to be spent in the ways that He commanded (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). al-Baghawī concludes that most exegetes and jurists are of the opinion that God's share and the Messenger's share are one and the same. Ibn 'Ashūr further explains that most scholars are of the opinion that God's share is left to the Prophet, and the leaders of the Believers after him, to spend it as he sees fit. This part is spent for the general good of the Believing community (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*): 'Amr Ibn 'Abasah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) picked a hair from the side of a camel 'which was among the spoils' and said: "No portion of the spoils is rightfully mine – not even the measure of this 'hair' – except the fifth; even the fifth is returned to you" (Abū Dāwūd: 2755, al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 12943).
- 69 *Dhawī al-qurbā* is unanimously agreed to be the Messenger's own close relatives; namely, Banū Hāshim and Banū 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī, al-Sa'dī). Ibn Kathīr opines that this is because they, among whom were some Deniers, stood by the Messenger and those around him in the early days of his call, and especially during the hard times of the boycott that the Qurayshites imposed on the Believing community in Shi'b 'Āmir.
- 70 The Qur'an uses the expression 'the son of the road' (*ibn al-sabīl*), for those who are left without means whilst travelling, being away from home.
- 71 That is: abide by this ruling regarding the division of victory spoils (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr*, 2/213). That they magnanimously leave out this fifth is a branch of Faith (*shu'bah min shu'ab al-īmān*) (cf. al-Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab al-Īmān*, 6/169, al-Suyūfī, *al-Iklīl*. p. 135).
- 72 This could be either the Qur'anic ayas and/or the Signs of Divine support, miraculous in nature as recounted in this sura, that God sent down to His Messenger (ﷺ) and those by his side (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn 'Ashūr).
- 73 'Our Servant' (*'abdinā*) is Muhammad (ﷺ) who is God's Own sincere servant (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 74 The Day of the Distinguisher (*yawm al-furqān*) is that of the day of the Battle of Badr in which God set Truth apart from falsehood (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr). It is the day when God granted victory to those on whose side He was, i.e. the Believers, who were fewer in number, by far less well-equipped and less likely to win, over those who pitted themselves against Him, who were greater in number and always felt themselves to be the better side; this is enough as a distinguisher between Truth and falsehood (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr).

Able over everything. ⁽⁴²⁾ ⁽⁷⁵⁾When you were at the nearer bank 'of the valley' and they were at the further bank⁽⁷⁶⁾, and the mounters⁽⁷⁷⁾ were lower than you are; had you made a mutual appointment, you would have 'both' missed it⁽⁷⁸⁾, but 'that' so Allah would bring to pass a foregone affair⁽⁷⁹⁾. So that whoever perishes, perishes upon clear evidence and whoever lives, lives with clear evidence⁽⁸⁰⁾—verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤١﴾ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ
الْدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الْقُصْوَى وَالرَّكْبُ
أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَوْ تَوَاعَدْتُمْ لَا خْتَلَفْتُمْ
فِي الْمِعَادِ وَلَكِنْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ
مَفْعُولًا لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَن بَيْتِنَا
وَيَحْيَى مَنْ حَيَّ عَن بَيْتِنَا وَرَأَى اللَّهُ
لَسْمِيعٍ عَلَيْهِمُ

- 75 This is yet another reminder of God's immense support to them on that day despite all the inopportune circumstances that they were faced with; this is why they should feel no qualms about God's ruling regarding the spoils (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 76 The mention of the exact positions of each side is meant to show that their enemy chose a better position, to further drive the Message home that only by God's Mercy and His Favour did the Believers emerge victorious (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 77 That is the mounters (*al-rakb*), the guarding cavalry, on the camels of Abū Sufyān's caravan. The image being depicted here is of the extent of the Believers' disadvantage being much fewer in number, standing on treacherous, slippery ground and surrounded by enemies from two sides (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 78 Ka'b Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "The Messenger (ﷺ) and the Muslims set out intending nothing but to seize the Qurayshite caravan, until Allah joined them with their enemy without appointment" (al-Bukhārī: 3951, Muslim: 2769).
- 79 That is to bring to pass a predestined matter, the coming of which was inevitable; to make the Believers accomplish victory over the Deniers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*).
- 80 Now that the Truth has been so clearly set apart from falsehood on the Distinguisher Day no one is left with any doubt in their mind as to where each lies so that they choose to be guided and 'live' or to languish in Denial and 'perish' (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Sa'dī): "Is the one who was dead and We caused him to come alive and bestowed upon him a light to walk in among people be like the one who is plunged in complete darkness; there is no way for him to emerge out of which? Thus what they used to do was prettified for the Deniers" (6: 122).

﴿43﴾ (81) 'Remember' When Allah showed them to you 'Muhammad' few 'in numbers' in your sleep⁽⁸²⁾, had He showed them numerous to you, you 'Believers' would have faltered and disagreed over the matter, but Allah saved 'the day'—He is All-Knowing of what the chests conceal⁽⁸³⁾. ﴿44﴾ 'Remember' When He showed them to you 'Believers' few in your eyes, when you met 'each other', and He showed you few in their 'the Deniers' eyes, so that He would bring to pass a forgone affair—to Allah all matters are returned.

إِذْ يُرِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَنَامِكَ قَلِيلًا وَلَوْ أَرَاكُمْ كَثِيرًا لَفَشاكُمْ وَتَلْتَزِعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَالْكَفْرَانَ اللَّهُ سَلَّمَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَإِذْ يُرِيكُمُوهُمْ إِذِ اتَّيَبْتُمْ فِي أَعْيُنِكُمْ قَلِيلًا وَيُقَلِّلُكُمْ فِي أَعْيُنِهِمْ لِيَقْضَى اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٤٤﴾

﴿45﴾ (84) You who Believe, when you meet a force 'in battle' stand your ground⁽⁸⁵⁾ and mention Allah

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ

- 81 This passage highlights yet another means, of the many enumerated here, of how Divine intervention was decisive in the battle's result.
- 82 God showed the Messenger (ﷺ) a vision during his sleep in which the Deniers appeared fewer than their actual number (cf. al-Ṭabari, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). This vision heartened the Believers, because it was interpreted as a glad harbinger; an enemy being 'few in number' is a symbol of weakness and failing (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 83 God Knows one's inner thoughts; whisperings, fears and trepidations (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "He knows the treachery of eyes and that which conceal" (40: 19).
- 84 Here are some lessons drawn from the battle detailing the means that can help win victory in future conflicts (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). That is to: 1) stand firm; 2) mention God profusely; 3) act in accordance with the commands of God and His Messenger (ﷺ) (the Qur'an and the Sunnah); 4) maintain harmony and avoid discord; 5) remain steadfast and forbear (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Furūsiyyah*, pp. 505-506); 6) behave with due humbleness and dignity, and 7) have the best intentions at heart for the purpose of battle (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).
- 85 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Do not wish to meet your enemy, but if you do hold your ground" (al-Bukhārī: 3026, Muslim: 1741).

abundantly⁽⁸⁶⁾, may you succeed. ^{﴿46﴾} And Obey Allah and His Messenger, do not disagree⁽⁸⁷⁾ then you would falter and lose your wind⁽⁸⁸⁾ and be steadfast—indeed Allah is with those who are steadfast. ^{﴿47﴾} Do not be like the ones who set out from the homelands, full of conceit and putting on an act for people⁽⁸⁹⁾, turning ‘people’ away from the path of Allah—Allah is encompassing⁽⁹⁰⁾ of what they do.

^{﴿48﴾} ‘Mention Muhammad’ When Satan prettified their deeds for them and said⁽⁹¹⁾:

كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَتزَّنَعُوا فَمَا تَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ
رِيحُكُمْ وَأَصْبُرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾
وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ
بَطْرًا وَرِثَاءَ النَّاسِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿٤٨﴾

وَأَذَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَقَالَ

- 86 Upon meeting the enemy in battle, Believers are to engage in mentioning God (*dhikr Allāh*) with their hearts and tongues (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī); earnestly supplicating for Divine assistance (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 87 “Hold tightly to the rope of Allah all together, do not get splintered and remember Allah’s favour on you when you were enemies and He made your hearts join then you became brothers by His Grace...” (3: 103).
- 88 *Tadhhaba riḥukum* (lit. to lose your wind) is to lose purposefulness, will power and be unable to fight the enemy (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 89 These are the Qurayshites (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah). When Abū Jahl, who was at the head of the Qurayshite army, was told that the caravan was spared and that they could turn back and head to Makkah again, he replied: “Nay, by God! Not until we drink from the watering places of Badr, slaughter camels, drink wine, the songstresses play their music to us and that all Arabs will talk about our great standing among them forever” (Ibn Kathīr).
- 90 God Almighty knows all about their stratagems. He keeps a record of everything and they will eventually be held accountable. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa’dī)
- 91 It is not exactly known or agreed upon how Satan communicated with the Qurayshites. He could have just whispered into their hearts (cf. al-Sa’dī, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*). However, a great number of exegetes relate a story (cf. Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Ṭabarī; Ibn Ḥajar in *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*) deems it credible that was told by ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭalḥah whereby ‘Abdullāh

“None of all people can overcome you this day” and “I am a deliverer of yours!” When the two hosts gazed upon each other, he turned on his heels and said: “I disown you!”⁽⁹²⁾ I see that which you do not!⁽⁹³⁾ I fear Allah; Allah is severe in punishment!”⁽⁹⁴⁾ ‘Mention Muhammad’ When the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is disease⁽⁹⁴⁾ said: “These are surely hoodwinked by their religion!” But whoever puts his trust in Allah⁽⁹⁵⁾, then Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ
لَّكُمْ فَلَمَّا تَرَأَتِ الْفِئْتَانِ نَكَصَ عَلَى
عَقْبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنْكُمْ إِنِّي
أَرَى مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ وَاللَّهُ
شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤٨﴾ إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمَصْفِقُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ غَرَّ هَوَاهُمْ دِينُهُمْ
وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾

Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: “On the Day of Badr, Iblis came with his banner at the head of an army of devils. He appeared in the form of a man from Banī Mudlij, namely Surāqah Ibn Mālik Ibn Ju’shum. He then said to the Associators: “None of all people can overcome you this day” and “I am a deliverer of yours!” When people built up their lines ‘in readiness for battle’, the Messenger (ﷺ) grabbed a handful of earth and threw it at the faces of the Associators and they fell back. Gabriel approached Iblīs while his hand away was in the hand of one of the Associators. He suddenly pulled his hand and beat a hasty retreat along with his company. The man said: “Surāqah! You have just claimed to be our deliverer!” He replied: “I see that which you do not! I fear Allah; Allah is severe in punishment!” This he said when he saw the angels”: “*He promises them and makes them ever vainly wishful; Satan promises them nothing but delusion*” (4: 120).

- 92 “Like the example of Satan... who says to man: “Deny!” But when he Denies, he says: “I disown you! I fear Allah the Lord of all beings!” (59: 16).
- 93 It is reported that he saw the angels that came down to fight alongside the Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa’dī).
- 94 This further underlines the fact that by mere worldly measures, the army of the Associators appeared by far to be the most likely to win, thus the hypocrites and those of failing Belief, who would usually keep their thoughts to themselves being afraid of requital, spoke from their hearts, convinced that the Believers would be annihilated on that day (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma’ād*, 3/162, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 95 “... whoever puts his trust in Allah, then He is sufficient for them. Certainly Allah achieves His Will. Allah has set a due measure for everything” (65: 3).

﴿50﴾ If only you could see ‘Muhammad’ when the angels take the lives of the Deniers beating their faces and their backsides, and ‘say to them’: “Taste you the Punishment of burning!”⁽⁹⁶⁾ ﴿51﴾ “That for what your hands have sent forth, verily Allah never deals ‘His’ servants unjustly.”⁽⁹⁷⁾ ﴿52﴾ ‘Just’ like the habitual ways of the people of Pharaoh and those ‘who came’ before them⁽⁹⁸⁾; they Denied the Signs of Allah and Allah seized them ‘in Punishment’ for their sins⁽⁹⁹⁾—indeed Allah is All-Powerful, severe in Punishment.

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ يَتَوَفَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةُ
يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبُرَهُمْ وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ
الْحَرِيقِ ﴿٥٠﴾ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْت أَيْدِيكُمْ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَمٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٥١﴾ كَذَّابٌ
ءَالٍ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ كَفَرُوا
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَذْنُوبِهِمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٥٢﴾

- 96 al-Ṭabarī opines that this was what the angel did and said to the Associators who perished in the Battle of Badr. Ibn Kathīr, on the other hand, sees it as being of general purport: “... if only you could see ‘Muhammad’ when the wrongdoers are in the throes of death and the angels stretch their hands to them ‘saying’: ‘Give up your souls. Today you will be rewarded the Punishment of degradation for saying what is false against Allah and snubbing His Signs’” (6: 93); “How ‘horrible’ will it be when the angels take their lives, beating their faces and their backsides?” (47: 27).
- 97 Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger said that God said: “My servants, I made injustice forbidden for Myself and I made it forbidden among you. Do not treat each other with injustice” (Muslim: 2577).
- 98 This is ‘the canon of the ancients’ (see Aya 38 above) who pitted themselves against God and His Messengers (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 99 “And the people of ‘Ād and Thamūd’ met a similar fate, which must be clear to you from their ‘ruined’ dwellings. Satan prettified their deeds to them, hindering them from the path, although they were capable of seeing. *We’ also ‘destroyed’ Korah, Pharaoh, and Hāmān. Indeed, Mūsā had come to them with clear proofs, but they waxed arrogant in the land. Yet they could not escape ‘Us’. *So We seized each ‘people’ for their sin: against some of them We sent a storm of stones, some were overtaken by a ‘mighty’ blast, some We caused the Earth to swallow, and some We drowned. Allah would not have treated them unjustly, but it was they who were unjust to themselves” (29: 38-40).

﴿53﴾ That for Allah would never alter a favour He bestows on a ‘certain’ people until they alter what is in themselves⁽¹⁰⁰⁾— verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿54﴾ ‘Just’ like the habitual ways of the people of Pharaoh and those ‘who came’ before them⁽¹⁰¹⁾; they rejected the Signs of their Lord and We destroyed them for their sins and We drowned the people of Pharaoh; they all were unjust.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِّعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾ كَذَّابٌ ءَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُم بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَعْرَفْنَا ءَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَكُلَّ كَا۟نُوفٍ ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

﴿55﴾ ⁽¹⁰²⁾ Indeed the worst of all the creatures⁽¹⁰³⁾ with Allah

إِنَّ شَرَّ ٱلذَّٰوَابِ عِنْدَ ٱللَّهِ

100 “But whoever exchanges the bounty of Allah ‘for Denial’ after it came to him, ‘will come to know’ that Allah is severe in Punishment” (2: 211); “‘Mention’ When your Lord proclaimed: “If you ‘people’ are grateful, I will certainly give you more. But if you Deny then surely My punishment is severe”” (14: 7); “And Allah presents an example: a city which was safe and secure, its provision coming to it in abundance from every location, but it met the favours of Allah with ungratefulness. So Allah made it taste the pall of hunger and fear for what they had been doing. *And there had certainly come to them a Messenger from among themselves, but they denied him; so punishment overtook them while they were wrongdoers” (16: 112-113).

101 Repetition of the example of the earlier nations, prominent among whom are Pharaoh and his people, is to emphasize that what they thought was far away came to pass, especially in Badr, and that they are to take heed from it and ‘desist’. Otherwise they surely now know what is to come (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

102 This passage explains why they were ‘unjust’ and thus they deserved Divine punishment. For one thing, they doggedly Denied the Signs of God (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*): “... my son, do not Associate with Allah ‘in worship’. Indeed Association is a grave injustice” (31: 13).

103 “Indeed the worst of all the creatures with Allah are the deaf and dumb – those who cannot heed. *Had Allah known any good in them, He would have made them listen; ‘even’ had He made them listen, they would have turned away, looking the other way” (8: 22-23); “We have indeed spawned for Hellfire many among the jinn and humans; theirs are hearts with which they comprehend naught, theirs are eyes with which they see naught and

are the ones who Denied and never do they Believe. ⁽⁵⁶⁾ Among them are the ones with whom you 'Muhammad' forged 'peace' pacts, then they break their pact every time; never are they Mindful. ⁽⁵⁷⁾ Whenever you encounter them in war set them as a fearsome example to those behind them, may they reflect⁽¹⁰⁴⁾. ⁽⁵⁸⁾ Whenever you 'Muhammad' fear⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ treachery from certain people, then cast 'their pact' to them 'so that all are' on level ground—indeed Allah Loves not the treacherous.

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ الَّذِينَ
عَاهَدتَّ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ يَنْفُضُونَ عَهْدَهُمْ فِي
كُلِّ مَرَّةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَإِنَّمَا تَتَّقَنِهْمُ
فِي الْحَرْبِ فَتَرَدِّدْ بِهِمْ مَنْ خَلَفَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَإِنَّمَا تَخَافَتَ مِنْ قُوهِ
خِيَانَةً فَأَلْبِسْهُمُ عَلَى سَوَاءٍ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْخَائِبِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

theirs are ears with which they hear naught. Those are akin to livestock, nay but they are more at loss; these are the unmindful” (7: 179).

104 The Messenger (ﷺ) was commanded to treat the treacherous, who thought little of the Believers and reneged on their peace pacts, with due severity. This is just requital for those who threaten peace and flippantly break this most serious and binding commitment. It also acts as a deterrent to others who might be tempted to do the same so that they think again about breaking their pacts with the Believers (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*). This punishment is limited to the circumstance of actual war because a pact is to be honoured and upheld even though the other party could be treacherous and evasive (cf. al-Sa’dī).

105 ‘Fear’ that the other party may not uphold their commitment is not that which is based on mere surmization but here is rather that which is based on credible evidence and tell-tale signs (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Ahkām al-Qur’ān*, 8/860).

Sulaym Ibn ‘Āmir narrated that: “Mu‘āwiyah (رضي الله عنه) ‘the Caliph’ had a peace pact with the Byzantine. While he was travelling through their lands, the term of the pact had elapsed and he raided them. A rider on his horse ‘came’ shouting: “Allah is the greatest! Honour and do not break ‘the pact!’” He was ‘Amr Ibn ‘Abasah (رضي الله عنه) so Mu‘āwiyah asked him about it and he replied: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “Whoever has a pact with some people, let him not come out of it, or modify it until its period has elapsed. Or he needs to cast it to them so that everyone is on level ground”. ‘Upon hearing this’ Mu‘āwiyah pulled back along with his company” (Abū Dāwūd: 2759, al-Tirmidhī: 1580, al-Nasā’ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 8679).

﴿59﴾ Let not the Deniers think they slipped away⁽¹⁰⁶⁾; they can never frustrate 'Me'⁽¹⁰⁷⁾.

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَبَقُوا إِنَّهُمْ لَا يُعْجِزُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

﴿60﴾⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Prepare for them whatever you can of force⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ and steeds tethered⁽¹¹⁰⁾, to overawe with it Allah's enemy and your enemy, and others besides them that you know not⁽¹¹¹⁾; Allah Knows them. ⁽¹¹²⁾Whatever it is that you spend in the path of Allah will be paid back to you in full and you shall not be wronged⁽¹¹³⁾.

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهَبُونَ بِهِمْ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَءَاخِرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

106 Given the immediate context, these are especially those who came out of Badr largely unscathed (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr).

107 "Deem not those who Deny able to frustrate 'Allah' in the land; and their abode shall be the Fire; certainly evil is the resort!" (24: 57); "Or do those who commit evil deeds suppose that they will outstrip Us? Evil indeed is the judgement they make!" (29: 4).

108 The commandments in the previous passage, to be fierce in battle and to publicly denounce questionable pacts, will surely have consequences, thus the Messenger and the Believers are told here to prepare such likely forces as would make their enemies think twice before invading them (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān).

109 *Quwwah* is all which is helpful in battle, physical and mental power as well as weapons (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī). 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir (رضي الله عنه) said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah say on the minbar: "Prepare for them whatever you can of force"; verily 'force' is ranged weapons, verily 'force' is ranged weapons, verily 'force' is ranged weapons"" (Muslim: 1917).

110 *Ribāṭ al-khayl* refers to steeds tethered and readied for war (al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Baghawī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*). This is singled out of all the force that the Believing camp can muster for its special significance (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr); in those times, steeds of war epitomized sheer military prowess.

111 These are the hidden, lurking enemies that only God Knows about (cf. Riḍā).

112 Funds are necessarily required for the preparation of such a force; accordingly, Believers are called on and encouraged to donate charitably for this very worthy cause (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*).

113 "The similitude of those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah, is that of a grain 'when planted, out of' which sprouts seven ears; in every ear there are one hundred grains – Allah multiplies for whom He wishes,

﴿61﴾ (114) If they incline towards peace, incline towards it ‘Muhammad’ and put your trust in Allah—verily He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿62﴾ If they intend to trick you, then Allah is certainly sufficient for you⁽¹¹⁵⁾; He is the One Who braced you with His Help and with the Believers⁽¹¹⁶⁾. ﴿63﴾ He also made their hearts join ‘harmoniously’⁽¹¹⁷⁾; had you ‘Muhammad’ spent all that is in the Earth, you would not have joined their hearts⁽¹¹⁸⁾. But Allah joined them—verily He is All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

﴿٦١﴾ وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْتَحِ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا أَنْ يَخْدَعُوكَ فَإِنَّ حَسْبَكَ اللَّهُ هُوَ الَّذِي آتَاكَ بِبَصِيرَةٍ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَالْفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَيْعًا مَآ آتَاكَ بِبَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ آتَاكَ بِبَيْنِهِمْ إِنَّهُمُ عُزَيْرٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

*Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. *Those who ‘sincerely’ spend their wealth and do not thereafter mar what they spend with taunts and hurt; theirs is their ‘great’ reward with their Lord – they will have neither fear nor will they grieve” (2: 261-262).*

- 114 The Believers’ show of force is meant mainly as a deterrent, but also as a cause for the enemy to let go of their belligerence and opt for peace (cf. al-Rāzī, Riḍā).
- 115 Even if this offer of the olive branch was mere deception, the Prophet (ﷺ) was to put his trust in God and accept it; fully trusting that God would spare him evil (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*Is not Allah enough for His Servant?*” (39: 36).
- 116 These are two concrete examples of how God ‘sufficed’ the Prophet (ﷺ) (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 117 The joining of the hearts (*ta’līf al-qulūb*) of such people who are inherently socially fragmentary and inflammatory in nature, as the Arabians of that time were, so that they stood around the Prophet (ﷺ) as an impregnable wall, is indeed a great Divine favour (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Zajjāj, *Ma’ānī al-Qur’ān*, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 118 Such was the extent of the enmity that was rampant among them in the pre-Islamic era (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Su’ūd): “*Hold tightly to the rope of Allah all together, do not get splintered and remember Allah’s favour on you when you were enemies and He made your hearts join then you became brothers by His Grace; you were on the brink of a pit of Fire and He saved you from it...*” (3: 103).

﴿64﴾ O Prophet, Allah is sufficient for you and for the Believers who follow you⁽¹¹⁹⁾. ﴿65﴾ O Prophet, rouse the Believers to fight; ⁽¹²⁰⁾if there are twenty of you who are steadfast, they will overcome two hundred and if there are a hundred of you 'who are steadfast', they will overcome one thousand of the Deniers for their being people who grasp not⁽¹²¹⁾. ﴿66﴾ Now, Allah lightened 'your load' off of you 'for' He Knows that there is weakness in you; if there are a hundred of you who are steadfast, they will overcome two hundred and if there are a thousand of you, they will overcome two thousand with Allah's permission—Allah is indeed with the steadfast.

يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِيصٌ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
 عَلَى الْقِتَالِ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عَشْرُونَ صَابِرُونَ
 يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتِينَ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ
 يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِأَنَّهُمْ
 قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ أَلَنْ خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ
 وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ
 مِائَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ
 مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
 مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

119 Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "Ḥasbunā Allahu wa ni'ma l-Wakīlu. (Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers) was said by Ibrāhīm when he was thrown into the fire. It was also said by Muhammad (ﷺ) when they said: "Those who 'when' people said to them: "People have regrouped for you, so fear them", their Belief' only' grew firmer and they said: "Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers"" (3: 173)" (al-Bukhārī: 4563).

120 Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "When: "...if there are twenty of you who are steadfast, they will overcome two hundred..." came down, it weighed heavy on Muslims, because it dictated that one person should not flee in the face of ten. Then alleviation came and Allah said: "Now Allah lightened 'your load' off of you 'for' He Knows your weakness; if there are a hundred of you who are steadfast, they will overcome two hundred...". When Allah lessened the number, He lessened an equal measure of steadfastness" (al-Bukhārī: 4653).

121 In reality, they know nothing about God and are not hopeful of His reward; knowing not the great reward that God has prepared for those who strive in His cause, they would not fight whole-heartedly fearing they might be killed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Sa'dī): "Do not think that those who got killed in the cause of Allah are dead. Nay but they are alive with their Lord 'being handsomely' provided for" (3: 169).

﴿67﴾ (122) No Prophet should have held captives until he strikes mighty⁽¹²³⁾ in the land. You 'Believers'⁽¹²⁴⁾ want the goods of the worldly life and Allah wants the Hereafter—Allah is indeed All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أَسْرَى حَتَّىٰ
يُشْرَخَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تُرِيدُونَ عَرَصَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ
يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٧﴾

- 122 This passage turns to the affairs of Deniers who were taken into captivity by the Prophet (ﷺ) in the wake of Badr. The reason for revelation as narrated by ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) is that ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) said: “When the captives were taken, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar: “What do you think about these captives?” Abū Bakr said: “Prophet of Allah, they are our cousins and clan. I see that you take ransom from them. That will help buttress us against the Deniers. May Allah guide them to Islam”. Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “What do you think of it, son of al-Khaṭṭāb?” I said: “No, by Allah, Messenger of Allah! I do not go with Abū Bakr’s suggestion. I see that you allow us to strike their necks; you allow ‘Alī to strike the neck of ‘his brother’ ‘Aqīl and allow me to strike the neck of so and so (he named a relative of his) and I strike his neck. These are the heads of Denial and its champions”. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) liked what Abū Bakr said and did not like what I said. Then I came the day after and found the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr weeping, and I said: “Messenger of Allah, tell me why are you crying, you and your Companion? If I find reason, I will cry along with you, but if I do not find it, I will cry for your crying!” The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “I cry because of the ransom your friends proposed to take; I was shown their ‘would have been’ punishment under this tree!” ‘Pointing to’ A tree that was not far from the Prophet (ﷺ). And Allah sent down: “No Prophet should have held captives until he strikes mighty in the land... that is lawful and good...”. So, Allah made the spoils lawful for them” (Muslim: 1763).
- 123 *Yuthkhina fī al-‘arḍ* that is until he has the upper hand through eliminating his enemies, who are bent on putting out the light of guidance, by devastating them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ḥātim, al-Sa‘dī): “When you meet those who Deny, strike their necks; then, when you have struck them mighty, tighten the bonds ‘taking them as captives’. Then free them graciously or hold them for ransom, till war lays down its burdens...” (47: 4).
- 124 al-Qurtūbī relates that most exegetes are in agreement that the ones intended here are among the Companions who argued for taking ransom and that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) is not included in the address (cf. also Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿68﴾ Had it not been for a decree that had been passed⁽¹²⁵⁾, a severe punishment would have touched you for what you took. ﴿69﴾ Eat then of what you gained⁽¹²⁶⁾, that is lawful and good, and be Mindful of Allah—verily Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿70﴾ O Prophet, say to the captives under your hands: “Should Allah Know ‘any’ good in your hearts⁽¹²⁷⁾, He will grant you better than what was taken from you, and forgive you—Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”. ﴿71﴾ But if they intend to betray⁽¹²⁸⁾ you ‘Muhammad’ then surely they had betrayed Allah⁽¹²⁹⁾ in the aforesaid and He got ‘you’ the better of them—Allah is indeed All-Knowing, All-Wise.

لَوْلَا كِتَابٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقَ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيمَا أَخَذْتُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا عَنِمْتُمْ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٦٩﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُلْ لِمَن فِي أَيْدِيكُمْ مِنَ الْأَسْرَىٰ إِن يَغْلِبِ اللَّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ خَيْرًا يُّؤْتِكُمْ خَيْرًا مِّمَّا أَخَذَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَإِن يُرِيدُوا خِيَانَتَكَ فَقَدْ خَانُوا اللَّهَ مِن قَبْلُ فَأَمْكَنَ مِنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾

125 This ‘decree’ (*kitāb*) is that: God had written in the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*) that He would make taking spoils and ransom permissible, that He would not punish anyone for a matter which had not been thoroughly explained previously, and that He would not punish anyone who attended Badr with the Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

126 This includes both the spoils and the ransom (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Gains of war were not rendered lawful to any before us. That because Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, saw our destitution and helplessness and made it palatable for us” (al-Bukhārī: 3124, Muslim: 1747).

127 *Khayran* (lit. any good) here is a sincere will to embrace Islam (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*). The Messenger (ﷺ) is told to address them thus by way of calling them to Islam (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

128 That is, if these captives were deceptive and only said what they thought would placate the Messenger (ﷺ) such as: “We Believe in you”, “We testify that you are Allah’s Messenger”, “We shall be sincere to you and align ourselves with you” (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*).

129 By being ungrateful to Him, Denying and rebelling against Him before the Battle of Badr (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Sa’dī).

﴿72﴾ (130) Verily those who have Believed, migrated and strove in the path of Allah with their money and their lives⁽¹³¹⁾, and the ones who welcomed in their fold and supported⁽¹³²⁾; these are the allies⁽¹³³⁾ of one another. And those who have Believed but did not migrate, their patronage is not onerous on you in the least until they migrate⁽¹³⁴⁾.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَاوَوْا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَٰئِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُم مِّنْ وَلِيَّتِهِم مِّن شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجِرُوا

- 130 This final passage emphasizes and confirms the bond (*al-wilāyah*) that existed between Believers; united they stand. The Messenger (ﷺ) was keen on establishing a bond of brotherhood between the Makkian Migrants (*al-Muhājirūn*) and the Madinan natives, the Helpers (*al-Anṣār*), which was extremely significant especially during these early days of the establishment of the Muslim state; so much so that they were much closer to each other than their own flesh and blood. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “When Migrants first came to Madinah, a Helper would inherit an Migrants, rather than his blood relatives, because of the brotherhood that the Prophet (ﷺ) established among them” (al-Bukhārī: 6747).
- 131 These are the most honourable Migrant Companions (رضي الله عنهم) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 132 These are the most honourable Helper Companions (رضي الله عنهم), who welcomed the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Migrants in their fold, made them dwell in their own homes, shared their possessions with them and unreservedly fought alongside them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 133 *Awliyā’* i.e. they are each others’ aides and helpers against their foes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān): “*The Believing men and the Believing women; they are each others’ allies...*” (9: 71). Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “The Messenger (ﷺ) said: “A Believer to a Believer is a single construction; they brace each other!” Then he (ﷺ) ‘demonstratively’ joined his fingers” (al-Bukhārī: 2446, Muslim: 2585); al-Nu‘mān Ibn Bashīr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “The example of the Believers’ care, sympathy and mercy for each other is that of a ‘single’ body; when an organ ails, the rest of the body calls upon each other to stay awake all night and feel feverish” (al-Bukhārī: 6011, Muslim: 2586).
- 134 Believers acquitted of responsibility for the protection and aid of those Believers who remained in their lands and did not make the journey to the land of Islam (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī). In these early days, this was a really important move to make (cf. 4: 97 for more on this issue).

But if they seek your support over 'a matter of' religion⁽¹³⁵⁾ then you have to come to their help unless against some people with whom you have a binding agreement⁽¹³⁶⁾—Allah is indeed All-Seeing of what you do. ﴿73﴾ Those who Deny are allies of one another⁽¹³⁷⁾; but if you 'Believers' do not abide by it⁽¹³⁸⁾,

وَأِنْ أَسْتَصْرَوْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمْ النَّصْرُ
إِلَّا عَلَى قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُم مِّيثَاقٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ
أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۗ إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوهُ

- 135 This is an exception from the earlier acquittal of responsibility whereby if the Believers are called upon to help their fellow Believers who did not migrate, over a matter of religion, then they have to come to their aid (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī).
- 136 This caveat is thus stipulated so that the Believers, who are of great moral standing, are honouring of their pledges (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sam'ānī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 137 This is to further cement the bond of the Believers among themselves, so that they would abandon their other alliances with the Deniers, who are ever allied with each other against the Believers (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Tha'ālibī): "Fight the Associators as a whole as they fight you as a whole..." (9: 36).
- 138 That is taking each other as allies abandoning all bonds that tie them with the Deniers (cf. al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-'Adhb al-Namūr, al-Muyassar, al-Mukhtaṣar): "No Believers shall take the Deniers as allies rather than the Believers. Whoever does this, he has nothing to do with Allah; except when you seek refuge from them. Allah warns you 'to beware' of Himself – to Allah shall be the 'final' return" (3: 28); "You who Believe, whoever of you renounces his religion, then Allah will 'soon enough' bring forth 'in your stead' people whom He Loves and they 'truly' love Him, lenient to the Believers, stern towards the Deniers, they strive hard in the path of Allah fearing no reproach from anyone who reproaches; that is the Grace of Allah, He grants it to whoever He wishes – Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. *Indeed your 'true' ally is none but Allah, His Messenger and the Believers; they keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms and 'humbly' prostrate 'themselves'. *Whoever takes Allah, His Messenger and the Believers as allies then the party of Allah are ever-victorious. *You who Believe, do not take those who playfully take your religion as 'an object of' mockery and scorn among those who were given the Book before you and the Deniers as allies – be Mindful of Allah if only you were 'truly' Believers" (5: 54-57).

there will be trial in the land and great corruption⁽¹³⁹⁾. ﴿74﴾ Those who have Believed, migrated and strove in the path of Allah, and the ones who welcomed in their fold and supported; these are the true Believers⁽¹⁴⁰⁾, theirs is forgiveness and generous provision. ﴿75﴾ Those ‘who have’ Believed afterwards, migrated and strove with you ‘Believers’ are also of your own⁽¹⁴¹⁾; and close relatives have more of a right to each other ‘as’ in the Book of Allah⁽¹⁴²⁾—verily Allah has knowledge of everything.

تَكُنْ فِتْنَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٧٤﴾
 وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
 وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَتَصَرَّوْا أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
 حَقًّا لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا مَعَكُمْ
 فَأُولَئِكَ مِنْكُمْ وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَى
 بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٦﴾



- 139 Lack of unity is indeed great corruption; Deniers will have the upper hand and manage to drive people away from the path of God (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*). The evil that comes from this is immeasurable (cf. al-Sa‘dī).
- 140 “Believers are none but the ones who Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and afterward do not doubt but they strive with their wealth and their lives in the path of Allah; these are the truthful ones” (49: 15).
- 141 “And the first forerunners ‘to the Faith’ among the Migrants and the Helpers and those who followed them with good deeds; Allah is Pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens under which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever – that is the great triumph” (9: 100); “And those who came after them say: “Our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers who preceded us to Faith, and make no rancour in our hearts toward those who Believe. Our Lord! Truly You are All-Kind, Most Merciful”” (59: 10).
- 142 This is with regards to inheritance in particular (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*). It is meant to clear up the point about Believers inheriting each other by virtue of their strong bond of alliance (cf. al-Rāzī).



سُورَةُ التَّوْبَةِ

al-Tawbah
(Repentance)



al-Tawbah (Repentance)

Title: potentially there are up to 14 names for this sura (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, *Muṣḥaf al-Madīnah al-Nabawiyyah*). However, only two of these figure large: *al-Tawbah* (cf. Abū ‘Ubaydah, *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*, p. 130, al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ*: 1330) and *Barā’ah* (lit. declaration of non-responsibility over an agreement; cf. al-Bukhārī: 4605, Muslim: 1618) thus named after the first word in the sura (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣā’ir Dhawī al-Tamyīz*, 1/227, Ibn ‘Āshūr, *al-Mukhtaṣar*). However, *al-Tawbah* is the more common of the two. It is titled thus because the theme of ‘repentance’ (*tawbah*, as manifested by the derivatives of the root *t-w-b*, and mentioned 17 times) is eminently recurrent in the sura (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣā’ir Dhawī al-Tamyīz*, 1/227, Ibn ‘Āshūr, *al-Muyassar*). Between the firmness of the assertion of existence and the open door of repentance lies the essence of the *Barā’ah-cum-al-Tawbah*.

Merit: it, along with the earlier sura, *al-Anfāl*, make up the last one of the meritorious first seven lengthy suras of the Qur’an (cf. Introductions to Suras 4 and 8). al-Barā’ Ibn ‘Āzib (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “The last sura of the Qur’an that came down is *Barā’ah*” (al-Bukhārī: 4364, Muslim: 4364).

Theme: there are three major themes of this sura: 1) the course of conduct and action to take when dealing with disruptive elements of society: the Associators, the People of the Book and the hypocrites; 2) blowing the cover of the hypocrites, the remaining and most dangerous enemy element, for their seriously inimical role in society, and 3) accounting for many of the rulings and directions for the emerging Muslim state.

Key: this sura cannot be properly understood without a thorough grounding in the historical and social events that were in order at the time of its revelation. For one, it is telling to know that this was the last sura of the Qur’an to come down. It was revealed, piecemeal, after the Tabuk Expedition during the 9th year of Hijrah, which the Messenger (ﷺ) and the army of Believers undertook to face up to the northern threat posed by the Byzantine Empire. This after having seized Makkah, the Arabian metropolis, during the previous year and which ended their

long, drawn out malignant tug of war, one that threatened the Believing community's very existence. The sura calls Believers to establish their state, the stronghold of Islam, on stable grounds and to eliminate or sideline all threats that may jeopardise or compromise stability and its rising to its full potential. The accounts of the deep seated hostility, which reveals existential estrangement, and lack of respect for pacts of mutually binding nature; the lessons drawn from the Tabuk Expedition; the call to take up arms with resoluteness; the detailed exposé of the different segments of society and the all-embracing call for repentance; all fall under one overall goal; if the Believers were to secure for themselves a domain where their religion ruled unthreatened, they would have to be prepared for battle.



﴿1﴾ 'This is' A repudiation⁽¹⁾ 'declared' by Allah and His Messenger to those of the Associators with whom you have forged pacts. ﴿2﴾ Roam around then 'you Associators' in the land for four months⁽²⁾ and know that you

بَرَاءَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۖ فَسِجُّوهُمُ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ
أَشْهُرٍ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّهُمْ

❖ It is notable that this sura, of all the suras of the Qur'an, is not preceded by the usual opening statement, known as *al-basmalah*: "In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful". Scholars are of different opinions about the reason behind this. Ibn Kathīr says: "One is not to recite the *al-basmalah* at the beginning of it '*al-Tawbah*' because the 'honourable' Companions did not write it down at the beginning of this sura in the canonical codex on the behest of the leader of the Believers, 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān (رضي الله عنه)" (cf. also Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, 4/101). It is reported that 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān (رضي الله عنه) said: "Both *al-Anfāl* and *Barā'ah* were called at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), *al-qarīnatayn* (lit. the two conjoined suras). This is why I included them both in the seven lengthy suras 'in the Uthmanic codex' and did not write: "In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful" 'at the beginning of *al-Tawbah*'" (al-Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, 3/208, also al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, 7/327; other opinions also exist).

- 1 The sura begins with this unqualified declaration of non-responsibility for the pacts that the Muslims, under the leadership of the Messenger (ﷺ), had with the Associators of Arabia (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*), announcing thus that the upper hand in the land was now with the Believers (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr). Among the reasons behind this unequivocal declaration and the four months reprieve are: 1) so that the Associators would think deeply about their state of affairs and be ready for what was to come; 2) acquitting the Believers from any responsibility incumbent on the severance of any agreement, and 3) the Messenger (ﷺ) intended to perform pilgrimage (later known as the Farewell Pilgrimage) the next year and he did not want to witness the custom, outright vice (cf. 7: 28), of people circumambulating around the Ka'bah naked (cf. al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).
- 2 They were afforded unrestricted freedom of movement for four months (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Sa'dī). This, so that they could find themselves a safe place to depart to (cf. Ibn Kathīr).

shall not frustrate Allah³) and that Allah shall disgrace the Deniers.

³ And a proclamation⁴ from Allah and His Messenger on the greater day of Pilgrimage that Allah is disassociated from the Associators and His Messenger 'is disassociated from them too'. But if you repent then it is better for you and if you turn away then know that you shall not frustrate Allah; give tidings to those who Deny of a painful punishment.

⁴ Except those with whom you have forged pacts and have not failed you in anything 'agreed' nor lent support to anyone against you⁵, then observe their pact for them until the end of its term—verily Allah loves the Mindful.

عَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْزِي الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣﴾

وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَرَسُولُهُ إِن تَابْتُمْ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ عَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْقُصُوكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَمْ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَدًا فَأَتِمُّوا إِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ إِلَىٰ مُدَّتِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٥﴾

3 This is a warning that should they choose to stick to their ways, even if the Believers are not to touch them, God's punishment is ever-close. That is, they are encouraged to repent (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Sa'dī).

4 This proclamation (*adhān*) was to be delivered to all people, both the Believers and Deniers, when they are gathered from all parts of Arabia on the great day of Pilgrimage, the day on which people slaughter their sacrifices (*yawm al-naḥr*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Whenever you 'Muhammad' fear treachery from certain people, then cast 'their pact' to them 'so that all are' on level ground—indeed Allah Loves not the treacherous" (8: 58). Ḥumayd Ibn 'Abduraḥmān Ibn 'Awf narrated that Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said: "Abū Bakr sent me on that day along with other announcers to announce to people in Mina on *yawm al-naḥr* that: no Associator shall perform pilgrimage after this year and no naked person shall 'hereafter' circumambulate around the Ka'bah..." (al-Bukhārī: 4655, Muslim: 1347).

5 Those of the Deniers who upheld the terms of agreement in whole and did not lend support to the warring enemies of the Believers were to be allowed until the agreed date of the agreement had come to pass. This is an exception from the four months reprieve that was announced (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namūr*).

﴿5﴾ ⁶When the sacrosanct months are drawn away, kill then the Associators wherever you find them, seize them and enclose them, and lie for them in wait in every lookout. But if they repent⁷, keep up the Prayer and give out the prescribed alms then let them go their way—verily Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿6﴾ Should any of the Associators seek your protection ‘Muhammad’⁸, then grant him protection, may he listen to the words of Allah,

فَإِذَا انسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرْمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصِرُواهُمْ وَأَقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصَدٍ فَإِن تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾ وَإِن أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ

6 This is what needed to take place after the given four months period had elapsed. Now that fighting between the two camps had resumed, Believers were to take any (cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Iklīl*, p. 138, Ibn ‘Āshūr) of the necessary measures needed to ensure that their campaign paid dividends to: 1) to kill them wherever they were found; 2) take them captive; 3) tightly enclose them in their strongholds, and 4) keep a vigilant eye out for them in every watch post (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

Some prominent scholars of Islam are of the opinion that this applies especially to combatant Associators who pose a threat to Muslims (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Ahkām al-Qur‘ān*, al-Baidāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl*, al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī*, al-Nasafī, *Madārik al-Tanzīl*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*): “They ask you about the sacrosanct month ‘whether there is’ fighting during it! Say: “Fighting in it is grave”; ‘but’ turning ‘people’ away from the path of Allah, Denying Him and ‘preventing access to’ the Sanctified Mosque, and driving its people away from it are graver before Allah—surely trial is more grievous than killing. They will keep on fighting you until they turn you back from your religion, if they could...” (2: 217). The next few ayas reveal who these really are and what they did to deserve such retaliatory measures.

7 That is, abandon Association and become Believers themselves (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*), so that the cause of their belligerence is eliminated (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

8 Even if any of the combatant enemies sought asylum (*istijārah*), he would be granted it; the person would be delivered the Message of the Qur‘ān but not coerced into accepting it. Thereafter, if he chose not to accept it, he would be set free under a cover of security to reach the land where he felt safe (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

then deliver him to a place of safety, that for them being people who know not⁽⁹⁾. ﴿7﴾ How can there be a pact for the Associators with Allah and with His Messenger!⁽¹⁰⁾ Except those with whom you have forged a pact at the Sanctified Mosque⁽¹¹⁾; as long as they remain upright to you 'Believers', then remain upright to them—verily Allah loves the Mindful. ﴿8﴾ How 'can it be'⁽¹²⁾, when if they were to have the upper hand over you, they would have no respect for either kinship or oaths concerning you! They placate you with their mouths⁽¹³⁾,

ثُمَّ أَدْبَعَهُ مَا مَنَّهُ، ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧﴾ كَيْفَ يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ رَسُولِهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ فَمَا اسْتَقْتَمُوا لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٨﴾ كَيْفَ وَإِن يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ لَا يَرْقُبُوا فِيكُمْ إِلَّا وَاذِمَّةً يُرْضُونَكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ

- 9 Their belligerence and animosity stem from the fact they know nothing about the religion of God (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*); people are enemies to what they do not know!
- 10 Since some might wonder why their pledge was denounced, it is explained here, especially in the next aya, that these were dead set on betrayal and aggression (cf. Ibn ʿĀshūr, al-Saʿdī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*).
- 11 This is the Treaty of Hdaybiyah which was sealed in the environs of the Sanctified Mosque (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Saʿdī).
- 12 The exclamation is repeated here with an explanation (cf. al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-Durar*); should circumstances turn to the Associators' advantage, they would be ruthless with the Believers, sparing not the slightest thought to considerations of any form of relationship that tied them with the Believers (*illan*) or word of honour (*dhimmah*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Saʿdī).
- 13 However, now that the fact of the matter being that the Believers are the ones who are in a stronger position, the Associators try to appease them, only scantily hiding the pure hatred which their hearts are full of. Elsewhere, God vividly describes this state of affairs: "You who Believe, do not take as 'intimate' confidants anyone who is not of your own: they will stop at nothing to cause you destruction; they wish you hardship; hatred reeks from their mouths but what their breasts conceal is 'much' greater. We have explained the signs clearly for you, if only you are perceptive. *Here you are, you love them but they do not love you; you Believe in the whole Book; 'but' when they meet you they say: "We Believe!" yet when they are

but their hearts 'vehemently' refuse; indeed most of them are transgressors⁽¹⁴⁾.

﴿9﴾ (15) They traded off the Signs of Allah for a pittance⁽¹⁶⁾ and hence turned 'people' away from His path⁽¹⁷⁾—sordid indeed what they used to 'persistently' commit. ﴿10﴾ They respect neither kinship nor oaths concerning any Believer; these are the real aggressors!⁽¹⁸⁾ ﴿11﴾ But if they repent, keep up the Prayer and give out the prescribed alms then 'they are' your brothers in religion⁽¹⁹⁾; We expound the Signs for people who know⁽²⁰⁾.

وَتَأْتِي قُلُوبُهُمْ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨﴾

أَشْرَوْا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩﴾
لَا يَرْقُبُونَ فِي مُؤْمِنٍ إِلَّا أَوْلَادَ مَنَّهُ وَأَوْلِيَاءَهُ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ فَإِن تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ ۗ وَنَفَصِلَ الْأَيَّاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

alone they bite their fingertips out of rage at you. Say 'Muhammad': "Die of your rage"; Allah knows what lurks in the chests! *Should a good thing come your way, they become saddened by it, and it elates them if a calamity befalls you. But if you forbear and are Mindful you will not be harmed in the least by their guile—Allah encompasses what they do" (3: 118-120).

- 14 They cannot be trusted because they constantly renege on their pledges, break their promises and do not uphold their word of honour (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī): "Among them are the ones with whom you 'Muhammad' forged 'peace' pacts, then they break their pact every time; never are they Mindful" (8: 56).
- 15 More explicatory reasons are given here as to why these should be sidelined (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Nazm al-Durar*).
- 16 Although these community leaders came to know full well, especially after the Conquest of Makkah, the truthfulness of the Message, they preferred the worldly gains they reaped by virtue of their deviance (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 17 In order to maintain the status quo and their source of income, they barred their folks from embracing the call and blocked their way to it (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*).
- 18 So much so that they would not think twice about inflicting harm on anyone who was a Believer (cf. Ibn 'Aṭṭīyah, al-Sa'dī), irrespective of all ties and pledges (cf. al-Naḥḥās, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*).
- 19 No matter how vile their deeds, the door of repentance is open with no repercussions (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 20 Those who traded God's Signs for a pittance, realize that it is the Truth, and hence they are to think again (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿12﴾ But if they revoke their oaths hence 'taken' and slander your religion, then fight the heads of Denial – indeed they honour not their 'binding' oaths – so that they may desist⁽²¹⁾.

﴿13﴾ ⁽²²⁾ Would you not fight 'those' folks who revoked their oaths, were intent on expelling the Messenger⁽²³⁾; being the ones who started it off against you first! Do you fear them? Then Allah is more worthy that you should fear Him⁽²⁴⁾—that is if only you were 'truly' Believers. ﴿14﴾ Fight them; Allah will make them suffer at your hands, disgrace them, grant you victory over them, heal the hearts of 'some' Believing folks⁽²⁵⁾,

وَإِنْ نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ
وَطَعَنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ فَقَاتِلُوا أَيْمَةَ الْكُفْرِ
إِنَّهُمْ لَا أَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَالَهُمْ بِتَيْهُوتٍ ﴿١٢﴾

أَلَا تَقَاتِلُونَ قَوْمًا نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ
وَهُمْوَأَبَاخُرَاجِ الرَّسُولِ وَهُمْ بَدُّوكُمْ
أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ فَاتَّخَشُونَهُمْ فَأَلَلَهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ قَاتِلُوهُمْ بَعْدَ بَعْثِهِمْ
اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ وَيَبْصُرْ كُورَ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

- 21 This is the purpose of fighting; to curb evil and make the road to virtue and Truth easy to reach and follow (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Riḍā).
- 22 Here the Believers are encouraged and provided with further reasons as to why their campaign is legitimate and justified.
- 23 Symbolic of the forces of darkness driving away the source of guidance who, instead, merited the greatest respect. Many exegetes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn Kathīr) are of the opinion that this alludes to their plotting to expel him from Makkah (cf. 8: 30), however others (cf. Ibn 'Atīyyah, Ibn Abū Zamaṇīn, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīz*, Ibn 'Āshūr) see that they also plotted to expel the Messenger (ﷺ) from Madinah. It shows how determined these were on destabilizing the Islamic state by targeting its leader: "And surely they purposed to unsettle you from the land that they might expel you from it, but then they would not have survived after you 'had left' except for a little while" (17: 76).
- 24 "It is indeed Satan sowing fear of his allies. Do not fear them but fear Me, if you are 'true' Believers" (3: 175).
- 25 This could mean all the dispossessed who were subjected to oppression and were long aggressed against (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr). However, exegetes are of the opinion (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*) that these are the Banū Khuzā'ah clan, the allies of the Messenger (ﷺ) who were

﴿15﴾ and dispel the bitterness of their hearts. Allah relents on whoever He wishes⁽²⁶⁾—Allah is indeed All-Knowing, All-Wise. ﴿16﴾ Or you ‘Believers’ thought that you would be left ‘alone’ ere Allah Knows⁽²⁷⁾ those of you who strove and did not take any, besides Allah, nor the Messenger, nor the Believers as bosom friends⁽²⁸⁾—Allah is indeed Knowledgeable of whatever you do.

﴿17﴾ ⁽²⁹⁾It is not for the Associators to ‘devoutly’ tend⁽³⁰⁾ Allah’s places of prostration,

وَيُدْهِبُ عَذَابَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تُتْرَكُوا وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَا رَسُولِهِ وَلَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلِجَنَّةٍ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يَعْمُرُوا مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ

under his protection as per the Hodaybiyah Treaty, whom the Qurayshites and their allies, the Banū Bakr clan, had mercilessly slaughtered and traumatised, thus violating their pact with the Messenger (ﷺ).

- 26 Whoever repents of these fervent Deniers, God will accept his repentance (cf. *al-Muyassar*).
- 27 An all-evident knowledge, seen by all, on which reward and punishment are based (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Zajjāj, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn al-Jawzī): “Allah would not have left the Believers as you were, until He sorted out the bad from the good...” (3: 179); “Do people think they will be left alone after saying: “We Believe” without being put to trial?” (29: 2); “And We shall test you until We know those among you who strive ‘in the path of Allah’ and those who are patient, and We shall verify your proclamations” (47: 31).
- 28 An inner circle of close confidants (*walījah*) among the Deniers with whom they align themselves and to whom they reveal the Believers’ secrets (cf. 5: 51-53, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 29 This is in response to anyone who raises a point about the idolaters’ doing seemingly good deeds in response to God’s command of disowning them (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 30 *‘Imārat al-masājid* (tending places of prostration) is to take care of them and look after their needs. *‘Imārah* comes from the root *‘-m-r* which denotes maintaining longevity (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Ibn Rajab (*Fath al-Bārī*, 2/481) notes that tending places of prostration has two senses. Firstly, materially by building, looking after, and restoring them. Secondly, non-materially by praying, mentioning God, reciting the Qur’an and performing acts of devotional worship. He concludes, citing unanimity, that this second sense is what is meant in the aya here.

while they bear witness against themselves of Denial⁽³¹⁾. These, their deeds will come to nothing and in Hellfire they abide eternally⁽³²⁾. ﴿18﴾ (33)None truly devoutly tends Allah's places of prostration except who Believes in Allah, the Last Day, keeps up the Prayer, gives out the prescribed alms and fears none but Allah⁽³⁴⁾; may these very well be among the guided⁽³⁵⁾.

شَهِدِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ بِالْكُفْرِ أُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ وَفِي النَّارِهِمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٨﴾
 إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ ءَامِنٍ يَلَّهِ
 وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الرَّكُوعَ
 وَلَمْ يَحْشَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا
 مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

- 31 They did so by both their words and deeds. They installed idols in and around the Sanctified Mosque, even inside the Ka'bah itself, prayed to them and performed devotional acts of worship in their names, thus Associated them with God Almighty (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr). Effectively, they bore witness against themselves that they are Deniers: “Verily pure religion is owed to Allah alone. Those who take allies besides Him say”: “We worship them only so that they may bring us nearer to Allah...” (39: 3).
- 32 “Whosoever desires the life of this world and its adornment, We shall pay them in full for their deeds therein, and therein they will be deprived none of their due. *They are those for whom there shall be naught in the Hereafter but the Fire. Whatsoever they had crafted therein shall come to naught, and vain was that which they used to do” (11: 15-16).
- 33 This perspective sets the matter aright and hands guardianship over the Sanctified Mosque to its rightful owners (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr).
- 34 “Truly places of prostration are for Allah alone, so do not pray to anyone other than Allah” (72: 18); “That light shines in houses of worship which Allah has ordered to be raised, and where His Name is mentioned. He is glorified there morning and evening *by men who are not distracted, either by trade nor sale, from mentioning Allah, keeping up the Prayer, and giving out the prescribed alms, fearing a Day when hearts and eyes will turn over” (24: 36-37). ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān (رضي الله عنه) said: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “Whoever builds a mosque seeking none but the Face of Allah, Allah will build him the like of it in Paradise” (al-Bukhārī: 450, Muslim: 533); Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “There will be Seven types whom Allah will shade on the Day of Judgement, when there is no shade but His... and a man whose heart is attached to mosques...” (al-Bukhārī: 6806, Muslim: 1031).
- 35 Their guidedness will lead them to Paradise (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Baghawī).

﴿19﴾ Do you 'people' deem alike 'your' providing water for pilgrims and 'outwardly' tending the Sanctified Mosque, and who Believes in Allah and the Last Day and strives in Allah's path!⁽³⁶⁾ They are never equal before Allah—Allah never guides the unjust people.

﴿20﴾ ⁽³⁷⁾ Verily those who have Believed, migrated and striven in the path of Allah with their money and their lives are greater in rank before Allah—these are the 'true' winners⁽³⁸⁾. ﴿21﴾ Allah gives them the glad tidings of a Mercy from Him, Pleasure and Gardens in which theirs is everlasting bliss⁽³⁹⁾.

﴿١٩﴾ أَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَاجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَجَاهَدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَوُونَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

﴿٢٠﴾ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَعَلَتْ لَهُمْ فِيهَا نَجْمِيَّةً مَقِيمَةً ﴿٢١﴾

- 36 This is a rebuttal of the Qurayshites who took special pride in being responsible for maintaining the Sanctified Mosque and providing water for pilgrims. Real pride lies in purity of Faith, and sincere acts of self denial (cf. al-Ṭabari): “*Or do those who perpetrate evil deeds suppose that We will make them like those who have Believed and do righteous deeds, so that their lives and deaths will be the same? How bad their judgement is!*” (45: 21).
- 37 This passage spells out and accentuates the special privilege of the true Believers. The truly humble, devout Believers by far outweigh, in the Sight of Allah, the characteristically arrogant who think that their so-called privileges, of being historically the guardians of the Sanctified Mosque, make them better than anyone else (cf. al-Zajjāj, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah). Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Do not utter profanity against my Companions, should any of you spend ‘charitably’ the like of ‘Mount’ Uḥud in gold, that would not come close to equalling a bucket ‘charitably spent’ by any of them; not even half of that!” (al-Bukhārī: 3673, Muslim: 2540).
- 38 “*The companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise are not equal; the companions of Paradise who are the ‘true’ winners*” (59: 20).
- 39 “*My servants, there is no fear for you Today, nor will you grieve* * - ‘those’ who Believed in Our Signs and ‘devoutly’ submitted ‘to Us’ - *enter Paradise, you and your spouses, rejoicing. *Dishes and goblets of gold will be passed around them with all that their souls desire and their eyes delight in.

﴿22﴾ They last therein forever— verily with Allah lies a great reward.

﴿23﴾ (40) You who Believe, do not hold your fathers and brothers as allies should they prefer Denial over Belief. Whoever of you takes them as allies, then these are the 'real' wrongdoers. ﴿24﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "If your fathers, children, brothers, spouses, clans, 'hard' earned wealth, a trade that you fear decline for and abodes you are pleased with are dearer to you than Allah, His Messenger⁽⁴¹⁾ and striving in His path, then lie in wait until Allah brings His command 'to pass'⁽⁴²⁾—Allah never guides the transgressing people.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا ءَابَاءَكُمْ وَءِخْوَانَكُمْ ءَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْكُفْرَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَوَلِيكُم هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ إِن كَانَ ءَابَاؤُكُمْ وَءِبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَءِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرٍ ءُ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

**There you will forever remain. *Such is the Paradise which you have been made to inherit because of what you used to do; *there is abundant fruit in it for you to eat” (43: 68-73).*

- 40 al-Rāzī opines that this aya comes in response to another point raised about disowning the Deniers. Many of the Believers had Associators among their closest relatives and severance of such blood relations was argued as unworkable, and hence carrying out the Divine command, was thought, in turn, unfeasible; therefore, this categorical reply. The aya following it further drives the message home and rouses by means of a threat, since not all people are predisposed equally (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 41 Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “‘There are’ Three ‘traits’, whoever has them will experience the sweetness of Faith by their virtue: that Allah and His Messenger are dearer to him than anything else; that he loves a person for nothing but the sake of Allah; and that he loathes reverting back to Denial now that Allah has delivered him from it, as much as he fears being thrown into Fire” (al-Bukhārī: 16, Muslim: 43); He also narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “None among you ‘truly’ attains Faith, unless I am dearer to him than his children, parents and all people!” (al-Bukhārī: 15, Muslim: 44)
- 42 That is, punishment (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-’Adhb al-Namīr*).

﴿25﴾ (43) Indeed Allah granted you victory in many a field⁽⁴⁴⁾, but on the day of Ḥunayn as you gloated over your multitude⁽⁴⁵⁾, it availed you nothing and the land tightened around you despite its vastness⁽⁴⁶⁾ and you fled turning on your heels⁽⁴⁷⁾. ﴿26﴾ Then Allah sent down His tranquility on His Messenger and on the Believers. And He sent down soldiers that you did not see⁽⁴⁸⁾; He tormented the Deniers—that is the ‘just’ requital of the Deniers⁽⁴⁹⁾.

لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ وَيَوْمَ
حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبْتَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ تُكْفِرُونَ
تُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَصَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ
الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحَبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُمْ مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾
ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

- 43 What is given here is a concrete example of God’s support to those who sacrifice all in His cause (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Riḍā). Mere worldly considerations are of no use and success lies with God (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Rāzī). When people obey God and the Messenger (ﷺ) they will be helped, but they will be left alone when worldly considerations are topmost on their minds (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr).
- 44 That is the battles the Messenger (ﷺ) fought along with his noble Companions (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr).
- 45 There is a contrast here between fully putting one’s trust in God and relying on mere worldly means. God granted them victory when they fully put their trust in Him. They also acted on the necessary means for engaging in battle, little as they were. By contrast, when they thought that the means would suffice, relished their numbers and said: “We shall not be defeated today because of our number”, they were made to taste retreat (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr, *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*). Had it not been for Divine intervention, they would have been defeated.
- 46 A vivid description of their psychological state and the hardship that hit them when they saw that their enemy had got the better of them; they could not find in the vastness of the land a place to retreat to for safety (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī).
- 47 Not all the army of Believers retreated, especially the hardcore, sincerest early Migrant and Helper Companions, not to mention the noblest Prophet (ﷺ) himself. However, this naturally caused a commotion (for firsthand accounts of this battle see: al-Bukhārī: 2864, 4337, Muslim: 1059, 1775, 1776).
- 48 The angels (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 49 When they realized how much humbly in need of God they stood, He came to their aid. God will help people for as much as they realize they need Him (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, 3/198).

﴿27﴾ Then after that Allah relents on whoever He wishes; Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

ثُمَّ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

﴿28﴾ ⁽⁵⁰⁾You who Believe, the Associators are but impure⁽⁵¹⁾ so let them not come near the Sanctified Mosque after this year of theirs⁽⁵²⁾. If you fear want⁽⁵³⁾, then Allah will enrich you with His bounty, should He will⁽⁵⁴⁾—verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ فَلَا يَقْرَبُوا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَامِهِمْ هَذَا وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنْ شَاءَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَاتَّبِعُوا أَمْرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَمْرَ الْكَافِرِينَ وَلَا يَسْرَبُوا إِلَيْهِمْ فِي سَبْيِهِمْ وَلَا يُجَنِّبُوا سَبِيلَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

﴿29﴾ ⁽⁵⁵⁾Fight those who do not Believe

- 50 The result of all that came before, is that pure Faith's reign over the Sanctified Mosque, this holiest of all sites, is to be established once and for all (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).
- 51 They are called *najas* (lit. an impurity) for their Denial, belligerence, vile manners and unholy character. Impurity here is meant in an abstract, non-material sense (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Qāsimī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī).
- 52 The ninth year of Hijrah when it was declared to people during pilgrimage that no Associator should perform pilgrimage after that year and no naked person should 'hereafter' circumambulate around the Ka'bah (cf. al-Bukhārī: 4655, Muslim: 1347, Abū al-Su'ūd, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī).
- 53 That they would be severely financially affected (*'aylah*) because of loss of trade with the Deniers as a result of barring them from holy pilgrimage sites. This was the major trading season in Arabia at that time (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zajjāj, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, al-Qaṣṣāb, *al-Nukat al-Dāllah 'alā al-Bayān*).
- 54 God's willingness is conditional here because richness is not necessarily resultant on sincere Faith (*īmān*) in this worldly life, and is not a sign of God's Love (cf. al-Sa'dī).
- 55 Now that the most dangerous threat had been dealt a blow, especially with the Conquest of Makkah and victory in the Battle of Ḥunayn, and that the land had become subject to Islam, the Believers were directed to yet another no less imminent a threat; the Jews, on the one hand, who sided, right from the start, with the Associators against the Believers despite their pact with the Messenger (ﷺ) which was enshrined in the Madinah Constitution,

in Allah and the Last Day, neither do they deem forbidden what Allah and His Messenger forbade and do not abide by the religion of Truth among those who were given the Book⁵⁶ until they hand in the *jizyah* 'tax' while humbled.

بِاللَّهِ وَلَا يَأْتِيَوْمَ الْأَخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ
مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ
الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى
يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

particularly their treachery in the Battle of Aḥzāb (the Confederates), which would have proven fatal to the Believing community had God not intervened. On the other hand, the Christians, particularly in northern Arabia who were ruled by the Ghassanids, a client state to the Byzantine Empire, who had their eyes open, especially after the Messenger's (ﷺ) communiqué to Emperor Heraclius, and who were unsettled by this turn of events and were readying themselves for an offensive (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) narrates: "... I had a friend among the Helper Companions. When I was not around, he would bring me the news and when he was not around I would bring him the news. In those days we were full of dread of a Ghassanid king who was reported to be preparing to march towards us, causing us much consternation. Suddenly, my friend the Helper knocked on my door saying: "Open! Open!" I replied: "What Did the Ghassanid come?"..." (al-Bukhārī: 4913, Muslim: 3765; in another narration: "The word among us was that the Ghassanids were shoeing their horses to attack us").

- 56 This aya should be read with an eye on the next six ayas which spell out much of what is being alluded to here. The Believers are to fight those of the People of the Book who: do not Believe in God and the Last Day, a true Belief which reflects on their deeds and actions (Ayas 34-35) and leads to worshipping God alone without any form of Association (Ayas 30-31); and do not abide by the commands of God and His Messenger (ﷺ) nor follow the religion of Truth (Aya 33) (cf. al-Rāzī, *al-Muyassar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*; other interpretations of this aya abound).

That their threat is both combative (cf. the previous note) and disruptive (cf. 3: 98-103), being People of the Book, who were considered with respect and as knowledgeable, fighting is meant to continue until they are no longer a threat to the community (cf. al-Sa'dī) and that they are 'humbled'. Their 'humbling' is indicated by them paying the *jizyah* tax, which demonstrates them being subject to societal order. The *jizyah* is taken from only those who can afford it – as much as able Muslims are required to pay the zakah prescribed alms – to enjoy the privileges such as protection, freedom of religion, and fair and equitable treatment (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

﴿30﴾ The Jews said: “‘Uzayr⁽⁵⁷⁾ |

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ

57 This statement caused much speculation as to its purport among scholars early and late, Muslim and non-Muslim. Some postulated that only some of the Jews said so (this view is held by many an early scholar of exegesis), particularly among those who lived in 7th century Arabia; others speculated about this historical personality and what he was or did; some even went to the extent of theorizing about what the lexical term ‘uzayr’ really meant; yet others saw that this alludes to the famous Biblical Hebrew epithet *bənê ha-Ēlōhīm* (בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים, sons of God). All of this is discussed at length in books and articles elsewhere.

However, it is important to note that Islam emphasizes absolutely the purest form of monotheism (*tawhīd*) and warns in the strongest of terms against Associating (*shirk*) any being with God Almighty, even in the least. In the next aya Jews and Christians are condemned for practicing what is seen as *shirk*: “*They took their rabbis and their monks as Lords besides Allah – and Messiah, son of Maryam – while they were not bade except to worship Allah, the One; there is no god but Him—exalted be He over what they Associate*”. This is because they followed the laws set by their leaders and not those of God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). Of these, rabbi and monk ‘Lord’ or ‘*bənê ha-Ēlōhīm*’ Ezra could have been singled out for the Jews as, in Muhammad Asad’s words, he: “occupies a unique position in the esteem of all Jews, and has always been praised by them in the most extravagant terms. It was he who restored and codified the Torah after it had been lost during the Babylonian Exile, and ‘edited’ it in more or less in the form which it has today; and thus “he promoted the establishment of an exclusive, legalistic type of religion that became dominant in later Judaism” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1963, Vol. IX, p. 15). Ever since then he has been venerated to such a degree that his verdicts on the Law of Moses have come to be regarded by the Talmudists as being practically equivalent to the Law itself: which, in Qur’anic ideology, amounts to the unforgivable sin of *shirk*, inasmuch as it implies the elevation of a human being to the status of a quasi-divine law-giver and the blasphemous attribution to him - albeit metaphorically - of the quality of ‘sonship’ in relation to God. Cf. in this connection Exodus iv, 22-23 (“*Israel is My son*”) or Jeremiah xxxi, 9 (“*I am a father to Israel*”): expressions to which, because of their idolatrous implications, the Qur’an takes strong exception”. This fact is undeniable and it tallies with the Qur’anic outlook (and the Sunnah as in al-Bukhārī: 4581 and Muslim: 183) and is borne out by the relationship that ties Ayas 30 and 31 together and how the latter is delicately worded and reflects on our reading of the earlier: “*They said: “Allah has taken to Himself a child”. Glory be to Him! Nay! But all that is in the Heavens and Earth are His, they are all submitting to Him*” (2: 116).

is the son of Allah!” and the Christians said: “The Messiah is the son of Allah!” That is what they say with their mouths⁽⁵⁸⁾, emulating ‘thus’ the saying of those who Denied before⁽⁵⁹⁾; Allah damns them⁽⁶⁰⁾, how far do they avert ‘from the Truth’!⁽³¹⁾ They took their rabbis and their monks as Lords⁽⁶¹⁾ besides Allah

أَبْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ الْنَّصْرَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَذُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ رَبَّكَ إِنَّهُمْ وَرَثَتُهُمْ رَبَابًا مِمَّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

- 58 That is these claims have no proof, are mere word of mouth (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr); thus implicating (*kināyah*) its falsehood (cf. al-Qurtūbī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 59 Exegetes are of different opinions as to who those who Denied before them exactly were (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Māwardī, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn al-Jawzī). The point being made is how deviated in their religion they had become: “Deniers indeed are those who say: “Allah is the Messiah, son of Maryam”. ‘While’ The Messiah ‘himself’ said: “Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed whoever Associates with Allah, then Allah will surely forbid him ‘entry into’ Paradise and his home will be Hellfire—the wrongdoers will never have helpers”. *Deniers indeed are those who say: “Allah is one of three!” There never would ever be a God but One. If they do not desist from what they say, those of them who Deny will be touched by a painful Punishment. *Would they not ‘then’ repent to Allah and seek His forgiveness! Indeed Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. *The Messiah son of Maryam is no more than a Messenger who comes in a line of ‘many’ Messengers and his mother is an affirmer of Truth, they both used to eat food. Look how We lay plain the Signs for them and look how they turn away ‘from the Truth’. *Say ‘Muhammad’: “Do you worship besides Allah ‘any’ who can neither harm nor benefit you! Allah is the One who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. *Say: “People of the Book, do not take an extremely hard line on your religion, that is besides the Truth, and do not follow the desires of ‘those’ folk who ‘themselves’ had become misguided before, lead a great many astray and missed the right path ‘themselves’” (5: 72-77).
- 60 *Qātalahum Allāh* (lit. May Allah fight them!) is an interjection intended to impart incredulous amazement (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 61 ‘Adiyy Ibn Hātim al-Ṭā’iyy (☪), who was Christian before embracing Islam, narrated that he came to the Messenger (ﷺ) while he was reciting the aya: “They took their rabbis and their monks as Lords besides Allah – and Messiah, son of Maryam – while they were not bade except to worship Allah, the One; there is no god but Him—exalted be He over what they Associate”. Then he said to the Messenger: “We do not worship them!” He replied: “Do they not

– as well as the Messiah, son of Maryam – while they were not commanded except to worship One God⁽⁶²⁾; there is no god but Him—exalted be He over what they Associate ‘with Him’.

﴿32﴾⁽⁶³⁾ They want to extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah refuses ‘all’ but only to perfect His Light⁽⁶⁴⁾; even to the acrimony of the Deniers⁽⁶⁵⁾.

وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا ۗ لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحٰنَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَن يَتِمَّ نُورُهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

deem unlawful what Allah allowed and you follow them making it unlawful, and declare lawful what Allah forbade and you follow them making it lawful?” ‘Adiyy said: “Indeed!” then he (ﷺ) said: “That is their worship!” (al-Tirmidhī: 3095; also Matthew 15: 1-9, Isaiah 29:13, Jeremiah 8: 8).

- 62 “Those who were given the Book did not become divided until after the clear proof had come to them. *They were not bade but to worship Allah, devoting religion entirely to Him, rightly-oriented, and keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms—that is the upright religion” (98: 4-5).
- 63 This reveals what malicious intentions they harboured towards Islam, God’s Light to humanity, once it had come into prominence, by weaving and fabricating lies (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah); all the more reason, then to fight them (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). They did their best to prove the Messenger (ﷺ) a liar, turn people away from Islam, aiding and abetting Islam’s enemies by spreading confusion and rumours, inciting the Deniers into resisting and fighting the call. All this was done by blowing hot air from their mouths, little did they know that “light” cannot be put out by air (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Remember When ‘Isā, son of Maryam, said: “Children of Israel! I am truly Allah’s Messenger to you, confirming the Torah which came before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger after me whose name is Aḥmad.” Yet when he came to them with clear proofs, they said: “This is pure magic!” *Who could be more unjust than someone who fabricates lies against Allah when called to submit to Him? God does not guide the unjust people: *They want to extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will surely perfect His Light; even to the acrimony of the Deniers. *He is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth to make it outshine all other religions; even to the acrimony of the Associators” (61: 6-9).
- 64 “...today I have perfected your religion for you, finalized My Favour on you and I approve Islam as a religion for you...” (5: 3).
- 65 “To establish the Truth and abolish falsehood, even to the acrimony of the criminal” (8: 8).

﴿33﴾ He is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth to make it outshine all 'other' religions; even to the acrimony of the Associators.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

﴿34﴾ ⁽⁶⁶⁾You who Believe, many of the rabbis and monks devour people's money in falsehood and turn 'others' away from the path of Allah. ⁽⁶⁷⁾Those who hoard

﴿٣٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْأَحْبَارِ وَالرُّهْبَانِ لِيَآكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبِطْلِ وَيَصُودُونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ

66 This exposes the immorality of many among those whose followers take as 'Lords' others besides Allah, by following their laws instead of God's laws; they are no more than greedy money-grubbers (cf. al-Shinqīfī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

67 This is a timely moralizing parenthesis directed mainly at the Believers to encourage them to spend out of their money (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Rāzī, al-Shinqīfī, *Adwāʾ al-Bayān*). Financial resources were much needed at that time to build the Muslim state, especially as this aya came down in the aftermath of the Tabuk Expedition, also known as the Expedition of Undersupply (*al-ʿusrah*), a condition which is clearly described in the coming ayas as the sura unfolds (cf. Ibn ʿĀshūr).

"Let not those who are miserly with what Allah has 'bountifully' bestowed on them from His Grace think that this is better for them. Nay, but it is evil for them; they will be collared 'around their necks' with what they withheld on the Day of Judgement..." (3: 180). Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "They are the worst losers by the Lord of the Ka'bah!" I said: "My dearest Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)! Who are they?" He said: "They are the wealthiest. Except the one who does like this, and this, and this – 'gesturing open-handed spending' from his front, back, right and left – but few are these really. No owner of camels, cows and sheep who does not give out their due zakah, except them coming on the Day of Judgement as big and fat as they have ever been, butting him with their horns and trampling him with their hooves. When the last of them has finished doing so, the first comes around to do the same to him 'again', until the Judgement of 'all' people has finished" (al-Bukhārī: 6638, Muslim: 990); Thawbān (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "When the aya that came down regarding gold and silver was revealed, people wondered: "So what type of money shall we take?" 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: "I shall seek knowledge of this matter for you!" He then sped his camel, while I followed him, until he caught up with the Prophet (ﷺ). He said: "Messenger of Allah, what type of money shall we take?" He (ﷺ) replied: "Let one of you take a thankful heart, a tongue which mentions 'Allah all the time' and a Believing wife who helps him over matters of the Hereafter" (al-Tirmidhī: 3094, Ibn Mājah: 1856).

gold and silver and do not spend them in the cause of Allah give them 'Muhammad' the tidings of a painful Punishment. ⁽³⁵⁾ On the Day when they are heated up in Hellfire and seared with them will be their foreheads, their sides and their backs⁽⁶⁸⁾: "This is what you hoarded for yourselves; taste then what you used to hoard!"

الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٥﴾ يَوْمَ يُحْمَىٰ عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَسُرُوحُهُمْ هَذَا مَا كَرَرْتُمْ لَا تُفْسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

⁽³⁶⁾ ⁽⁶⁹⁾ Verily the number of months with Allah is twelve months – 'so ordained' in the Book of Allah⁽⁷⁰⁾ 'from the time' when He created the Heavens and Earth⁽⁷¹⁾ –

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ

- 68 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "None of the owners of gold and silver, who does not give out their due 'charity', without them, on the Day of Judgement, turned into sheets of fire and heated up in Hellfire to sear his side, forehead and back by them. Whenever they cool down, they will be heated up again for him on a Day the duration of which is fifty thousand years. 'It goes on' Until Allah judges between people and looks into his matter 'and consigns him' either to Hellfire or Paradise" (Muslim: 987).
- 69 As much as the People of the Book, the pagan Arabs also sabotaged some of God's laws to their advantage. For this they deserved a much stronger condemnation (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 70 Most exegetes agree that the Book of Allah mentioned here is the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*) (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*).
- 71 Ibn Rajab (*Laṭā'if al-Ma'ārif*, p. 112, cf. also al-Sa'dī) explains this: "Allah Almighty" Glorified be He says that since He created the Heavens and Earth...and created all that is in the sky... He made the sun and the moon swim in their 'respective' orbits. The darkness of night and whiteness of day are a result of that. Ever since then He made the year 12 months long, according to the crescent. The year in the 'Divine' law is counted after the moon's movement and its emergence": "He it is Who made the sun a radiance, and the moon a light, and determined for it stations, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning 'of time'. God did not create these, save in Truth. He expounds the Signs for a people who know" (10: 5).

four of which are sacrosanct⁽⁷²⁾. That is the upright religion; so do not wrong yourselves during them⁽⁷³⁾. ⁽⁷⁴⁾Fight the Associators as a whole as they fight you as a whole and know that Allah is with the Mindful. ⁽⁷⁵⁾Indeed 'practicing' the *nasī'* 'deferral'⁽⁷⁶⁾ is nothing but an increase in Denial with which those who Deny are mislead; they deem it lawful one year and unlawful another year so that they match the number of what Allah made sacrosanct.

مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرْمٌ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْقِيَمَةُ
فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا
الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَأَفْقَةٍ كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ
كَأَفْقَةٍ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾
إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ يُضِلُّ
بِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُحْلِفُونَ عَمَّا يُحْرَمُونَ
عَمَّا يُؤَاطُونَ عَمَّا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ فَيَحِلُّوا
مَّا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ

- 72 *al-Ashhur al-Hurum*, lit. the sacrosanct, inviolable months, in which it was agreed that no fighting, or aggression, was permissible: namely, Rajab, Dhū al-Qi‘dah, Dhū al-Ḥijjah, al-Muḥarram (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī). They were deemed so by God for Abraham (ﷺ) to make pilgrimage possible and for the benefit of people (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Allah made the Ka‘bah, the Sanctified House, a bastion of well-being; as well as the sacrosanct month, gifted offerings, garlanded sacrifices are instituted for good cause...” (5: 97).
- 73 By violating them and committing misdeeds (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*): “You who Believe, do not pronounce lawful ‘violation of the sanctity of:’ Allah’s Symbols, the sacrosanct month...” (5: 2).
- 74 God gives Believers permission to fight back should the Associators initiate aggression during these months by way of taking advantage of the loophole they, themselves, created in the law (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “The sacrosanct month is by way of ‘replacement for’ the sacrosanct month; ‘violation of’ what is prohibited is repayable. Whoever transgresses against you, transgress against them as much as they did and be Mindful of Allah and know that Allah is with the Mindful” (2: 194).
- 75 The previous aya introduces this one (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 76 *al-Nasī’* (lit. deferral) was a practice common among the pagan Arabs in which they would declare the number of four months sacrosanct, not necessarily exactly the God-ordained ones. They would accordingly defer and/or replace some of the sacrosanct months with other ones as it suited their fighting agenda. So, to just match the number four, they would declare one of these months that suited them most one year lawful and unlawful during the next year (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Muḥarrar*).

Prettified for them was made the wickedness of their deeds; Allah guides not the 'ardently' Denying people.

رُبِّينَ لَهُمْ سُوءٌ أَعْمَلِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

﴿38﴾ (77) You who Believe, what is it with you when it is said to you: "Mobilize in the path of Allah!" you sluggishly move, clinging heavily to the ground?⁽⁷⁸⁾ Are you satisfied⁽⁷⁹⁾ with the worldly life rather than the Hereafter?

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ أَنْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَتَأْتَلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الْأَرْضِيَّتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ

- 77 Now the sura turns to the lessons drawn from the Tabuk Expedition, exposing at length in the process a third type of disruptive segment amongst the population, the hypocrites, whose danger was yet more serious than the rest; they lurked among the Believers, posing as Believers themselves, all the while sabotaging society and trying to weaken it from within.
- 78 *Iththāqaltum* (translated here as: sluggishly move, clinging heavily to the ground) is a distinctly marked Qur'anic lexical phrase where sound and meaning are inseparably conflated. V. Abdur Rahim explains: "One can feel that the phonetic sequence *ith-thā* where a *sukūn* 'diacritic' is followed by a long *fathah* 'diacritic', and the heavy consonant *th* is doubled resulting in a lingering effect, more effectively suggests the idea of clinging to earth coupled with unwilling effort to get up than the original sequence *ta-thā*" (*Iththāqaltum: A study of some lesser-known phonetic and morphological changes in some Qur'anic words*, pp. 14-15; it is also discussed by al-Qurṭubī, al-Zamakhsharī and Ibn 'Āshūr). Therefore a simple translation of it is not possible, and would cloud over a beautiful aspect of Qur'anic diction. What is being captured here is the image of the languid reaction of some among the Believers to the call to arms for the Tabuk Expedition. Such unexpected reaction can only be appreciated within its context: people were of extremely meagre resources, the land was dry, the time was of sweltering heat, the palm dates 'the staple food of Madinah' were ripe for harvest, the journey was far away and required much preparation and the enemy was, by far, much greater in number and probably the best in the world at that time (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Rāzī, al-Zajjāj, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*).
- 79 *Raḍītum* (accept, agree to) is more expressive than the more likely alternatives such as *āthartum* or *faḍḍaltum* (prefer, opt for) because it denotes a willingness of the heart (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn 'Āshūr).

How 'very' little is the enjoyment of the worldly life 'compared to that' in the Hereafter⁽⁸⁰⁾. ⁽³⁹⁾ Should you not mobilize, He will inflict a severe punishment on you and replace another people in your stead⁽⁸¹⁾, and you will not harm Him in the least—Allah is indeed Able over everything. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ Should you not aid him 'The Messenger (ﷺ)', then Allah had aided him, when those who Denied expelled him⁽⁸²⁾, 'as he was' one of two in the 'small' cave⁽⁸³⁾ when he said to his Companion: "Grieve not, Allah is verily with us".⁽⁸⁴⁾

فَمَا مَتَعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ
إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ لَا تَنْفِرُوا يَعْذِبُكُمْ عَذَابًا
أَلِيمًا وَيَسْتَبَدِلُ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّوهُ
شَيْئًا وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾
إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِي اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ
إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا

- 80 al-Mustawrid Ibn Shaddād (رحمته الله) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "By Allah, this worldly life by comparison to the Hereafter is like a person who dips this finger (pointing his index finger) in the sea; see how much he draws from it!" (Muslim: 2858).
- 81 Others who would answer the call more willingly (cf. al-Tabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr): "... 'If you turn away, He will replace you with other people. And they will not be like you'. (47: 38); "You who Believe, whoever of you renounces his religion, then Allah will 'soon enough' bring forth 'in your stead' people whom He loves and they 'truly' love Him, lenient to the Believers, stern towards the Deniers, they strive hard in the path of Allah fearing no reproach from anyone who reproaches..." (5: 54).
- 82 The Deniers compelled the Messenger (ﷺ) to leave his hometown of Makkah (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr).
- 83 The Messenger (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) hid away from the Deniers in a small cave (*ghār*) in the Mount of Thawr near Makkah at the beginning of their migratory journey to Madinah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAḥb al-Namīr*; for a detailed account of how this journey commenced, see: al-Bukhārī: 3905).
- 84 Anas Ibn Mālīk (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) told him: "I looked at the feet of the Associators above our heads while we were in the small cave and said: "Messenger of Allah, if anyone of them looks down at his feet he would see us!" He said: "Abū Bakr, what do you think of two 'people' whom Allah is their third!" (al-Bukhārī: 3653, Muslim: 2381).

Then Allah sent down His tranquillity on him, braced him with soldiers that you did not see⁽⁸⁵⁾ and “thus” made the word of those who Deny the lower one; and the Word of Allah is “ever” the higher⁽⁸⁶⁾—verily Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَىٰ وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾

﴿41﴾⁽⁸⁷⁾ Mobilize, light and heavy⁽⁸⁸⁾, and strive with your money and lives in the path of Allah; that is better for you if “only” you know⁽⁸⁹⁾.

انْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

- 85 These were angels who came to the Messenger’s aid in the small cave. How they did so is disputed (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Ashūr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).
- 86 That is as God Almighty made His religion, Islam, prevail (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Muḥarrar*).
- 87 This is the call for general mobilization (*al-naḥīr al-‘āmm*) from which no able person of war age is exempted (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn ‘Ādil, Riḍā). Those who are and were exempted is mentioned in Aya 91 below.
- 88 Whether the call is facile or arduous, you are youthful or elderly, rich or poor, strong or weak, vigorous or feeling idle, have nothing to occupy you or busy. Whatever the case, the call must be answered (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Māwardī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Qurtubī). ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When you are called to mobilize, mobilize” (al-Bukhārī: 3077, Muslim: 1353).
- 89 “Fighting is prescribed for you, as much as you hate it; might you hate a thing which is good for you and might you love a thing which is evil for you—Allah knows and you do not know” (2: 216); “They are not equal: those of the Believers who are staying back – except those with hindrances – and those who strive in the path of Allah with their money and lives. Allah favours those who strive with their money and lives over the inert by a rank – ‘but’ to both Allah promises what is most pleasing; Allah favours those who strive over the staying back with a great reward: *lofty’ ranks ‘conferred’ by Him, and forgiveness and mercy—verily Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (4: 95-96); “You who Believe, shall I point to you a bargain that will save you from painful punishment? *It is that` You Believe in Allah and His Messenger and strive in the path of Allah with your money and your lives. That is best for you, if only you know. *He will forgive your sins, and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow, and` house you in` splendid abodes in the Gardens of Eternity. That is the ultimate triumph. *And` you will obtain` another` favour`

﴿42﴾⁽⁹⁰⁾ Had it been a handy 'worldly' gain or a convenient travel, they would have followed you but far away was the 'gruelling' journey for them. They will swear 'to you' by Allah: "Were we able, we would have set out with you!" They destroy themselves!⁽⁹¹⁾ Allah Knows that they are indeed liars.

﴿43﴾⁽⁹²⁾ May Allah forgive you 'Muhammad', why did you grant them permission 'to stay behind'? 'You should have not' Until it became clear to you those who are truthful and you know the liars⁽⁹³⁾.

﴿44﴾ Those who Believe in Allah and the Last Day would not seek your permission 'Muhammad' not to strive with their money and lives—Allah is All-Knowing of the Mindful.

لَوْ كَانَتْ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا وَسَفَرًا قَاصِدًا
لَاتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَٰكِن بَعَدَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الشُّقَّةُ
وَسَيَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَوِ اسْتَطَعْنَا الْخُرُوجَ
مَعَكُمْ يُهْلِكُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُمْ
لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذِنْتَ لَهُمْ
حَتَّىٰ يَتَّبِعَنَ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ
الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

لَا يَسْتَعِدُّنَا الَّذِينَ يُولُوا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ أَن يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

that you love; victory from Allah and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the Believers” (61: 10-13).

- 90 Now those whose faith was not sincere, the hypocrites, who lingered behind and did not join the Messenger (ﷺ) and the army of Believers for the Tabuk Expedition, are turned to (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 91 They expose themselves to ruination by incurring God’s Wrath and His punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, al-Sa’dī).
- 92 The hypocrites came to the Messenger (ﷺ) with all sorts of excuses, swearing that they were not able to join the campaign and he pardoned them; an action the propriety of which is gently pointed out to him by God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 93 That is those who have valid excuses and those who do not (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Shawkānī). The hypocrites were intent on not joining the campaign in any case, whether given permission to stay or not. So it is pointed out here that none should have been given permission, so as to see who set out with the Believing army, the truthful, and who did not, the liars who were smitten with doubt (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿45﴾ None will seek your permission but those who do not Believe in Allah and the Last Day⁽⁹⁴⁾ and their hearts are suspicious; so they are ‘perpetually’ fluctuating, ‘immersed’ in their suspicion⁽⁹⁵⁾.
 ﴿46﴾ Had they ‘really’ meant to set out, they would have prepared for it with ‘proper’ preparation⁽⁹⁶⁾. But Allah was averse to their arising and put a damper on them⁽⁹⁷⁾

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
 الْآخِرِ وَآزَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ
 يَتَرَدَّدُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ *وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ لَأَعَدُّوا
 لَهُمْ عُدَّةً وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ إِنْبَعَثَهُمْ فَبَطَّطَهُمْ

- 94 They do not really Believe that there will be a Day of Judgement to which they are resurrected, when they are held accountable for their deeds and after which they will be either rewarded or punished (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “Some people say: “We Believe in Allah and in the Last Day”, while, in fact, they do not Believe. *They seek to deceive Allah and the Believers—they only deceive themselves, not realizing it. *In their hearts there is disease and thus ‘because of it’ Allah has increased their disease. Theirs is a painful Punishment for their ‘persistent’ lying” (2: 8-10).
- 95 The hypocrites live in a state of perpetual quandary and constant perplexity. They are stricken with doubt and always experiencing a state of dilemma: “They are wavering; neither ‘belonging’ to these nor to these—whoever is misguided by Allah, you will surely find no way ‘out’ for him” (4: 143). ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The example of the hypocrites is that of a sheep, which comes in the middle of two herds; this time it joins this herd and shortly after it joins the other” (Muslim: 2784). The following is a description of the squalid, worry-stung lives they lead: “Their similitude is that of one who kindles a fire; as soon as it casts light on what is around him, Allah takes away their light leaving them in ‘utter’ darkness, unable to see; *deaf, dumb, and blind, they will not find their way back. *Or like a downpour from the sky, in which there is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears from thunderclaps, fearing death—Allah is surrounding the Deniers. *The lightning almost snatches away their sight; whenever it flashes they walk in its light and when the light goes, they stand still. If Allah so willed, He could have taken away their hearing and their sight—Allah is Able over everything” (2: 17-20).
- 96 Their unpreparedness highlights how unwilling they were to join the campaign in the first place (cf. al-Zajjāj, Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 97 God actually made them feel lazy and the going heavy (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

and it was said 'to them': "Sit with those who are sitting!"⁽⁹⁸⁾"
 ﴿47﴾ Had they set out among you, they would have increased you nothing but quandary and they would have hurried about in your midst⁽⁹⁹⁾; they wish you 'nothing but turbulent' trial and among you are those who 'are prone to' lend them their ears—Allah is indeed All-Knowing of the wrongdoers.

وَقِيلَ أَقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ لَوْ خَرَجُوا فِيكُمْ مَا زَادُوكُمْ إِلَّا حَبَالًا وَلَا أَوْصَعُوا حِلَالَكُمْ يَبْغُونَ كُرْهُ الْفِتْنَةِ وَفِيكُمْ سَمَّاعُونَ لَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

﴿48﴾ They had meant you 'Believers, turbulent' trial before⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ and turned matters on all sides 'hatching plots' against you 'Muhammad'⁽¹⁰¹⁾ until the Truth came⁽¹⁰²⁾ and Allah's command⁽¹⁰³⁾ prevailed to their acrimony.

لَقَدْ أْبَغَعُوا الْفِتْنَةَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَقَلَّبُوا لَكَ الْأُمُورَ حَتَّى جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَظَهَرَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ كَارِهُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

- 98 Those who are not meant to fight; the terminally weak, women and younger boys (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). They are in a way being dishonoured and their status being lowered (cf. al-Rāzī), particularly in a culture that regarded bravery with the greatest respect.
- 99 That is, no sooner than they joined the ranks of the Believers, they would have gone about spreading malicious gossip and rumours causing dissent and would have tried their best to dampen the Believers' fighting spirit (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Juzayy).
- 100 Their malicious intentions and seditious stratagems are nothing new. They have always sought to cause Believers trials and tribulations (*fitnah*).
- 101 They spared no effort to put their cunning, insidious artifice into action against the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers (cf. al-Sam'ānī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Sa'dī).
- 102 God's victory (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Shawkānī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namir*): "And say: "The Truth has come, and falsehood has withered away; for falsehood is bound to wither away" (17: 81).
- 103 The religion of God, Islam, which He commanded to be followed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, al-Sa'dī).

﴿49﴾ (104) Among them⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ are those who say: “Grant me permission and do not expose me to trial!” Nay, but into trial they have ‘really’ fallen!⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Hell is verily surrounding the Deniers.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ ﴿50﴾ Should a good thing come your way ‘Muhammad’, they become saddened by it⁽¹⁰⁸⁾, if a calamity befalls you, they would say: “We have already taken our precautions!”⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ and they turn away elated.

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَقُولُ أُنذِرْنِي وَلَا تَجِدْنِي فِي الْأَفْئِ
الْفِتْنَةِ سَقَطًا وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ
بِالْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ إِنَّ تُصَبِّكَ حَسَنَةً
تَسْؤُهُمْ وَإِنْ تُصَبِّكَ مُصِيبَةً يَقُولُوا
قَدْ أَخَذْنَا أَمْرًا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ
فَرِحُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

104 Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say to al-Jadd Ibn Qays: “Jadd, how do you feel about a scuffle with the blonde race ‘the Byzantines’?” He replied: “Or, pardon me, Messenger of Allah. I am a man who has a soft spot for women and I am afraid that I would be tried and fall for the women of the blonde race!” The Messenger (ﷺ) said to him while looking away from him: “I pardon you”. Then Allah sent down: “Among them those who say: “Grant me permission and do not subject me to trial!” Nay, but into trial they have ‘really’ fallen!” (al-Albānī deemed its chain of narration sound in *al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah*; see also Ibn ‘Abbās’s similar narration in al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr*, 2/275)

105 This is the first in a series of “among them” (*wa minhum*) phrases through which God laid bare the hypocrites’ trickery. ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: “*al-Tawbah* is *al-Fāḍiḥah* (lit. the exposer). “Among them... among them” kept on coming down until they ‘the hypocrites’ thought that it would leave none of them unmentioned!” (al-Bukhārī: 4882, Muslim: 3031)

106 The major trial of hypocrisy (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

107 “They urge you ‘Muhammad’ to hasten the punishment; Hell is verily surrounding the Deniers. *On the Day when the Punishment will cover them from above and from beneath their feet, and it shall be said: “Taste that which you used to do!”” (29: 54-55).

108 Such is the nature of dormant, bitter enemies: “Should a good thing come your way, they become saddened by it, and it elates them if a calamity befalls you. But if you forbear and are Mindful you will not be harmed in the least by their guile—Allah encompasses what they do” (3: 120).

109 By not setting out on the campaign with the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī).

﴿51﴾⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Say 'Muhammad': "Nothing will befall us except what Allah decreed for us⁽¹¹¹⁾; He is our Ally!⁽¹¹²⁾" Let the Believers put their trust in Allah. ﴿52﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Do you 'expectantly' await for us nothing but one of the two good things!⁽¹¹³⁾

قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿51﴾
قُلْ هَلْ تَرْتَضُونَ بِنَا إِلَّا أَحَدَى الْحَسَنَيْنِ

- 110 True Believers whose Faith is steely know that what is predestined (*al-qadar*) by God cannot be evaded and that whatever happens to them is God's Own decree and it can only be for the best of the Believers (cf. al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr); the wisdom of it may not be immediately obvious. Ṣuḥayb al-Rūmī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Wondrous is the affair of the Believer. His affair is all good and that is true only to a Believer. When a happy occurrence comes his way, he shows gratitude and that is better for him. And when a hurtful occurrence befalls him, he shows patience and that is better for him" (Muslim: 2999).
- 111 "No calamity befalls on the Earth or in yourselves except that it is in a Register before We bring it into being—indeed that, for Allah, is easy. *So you need not grieve for what you miss or gloat over what you gain..." (57: 22-23); "No calamity befalls 'anyone' except by Allah's Will; whoever Believes in Allah, He will guide his heart 'through adversity'—Allah is indeed All-Knowing of everything" (64: 11).
- 112 The ones whose Ally (*Mawlā*) is God, they will not be let down (cf. Ibn Rajab, *Majmū' al-Rasā'il*, 3/146).
- 113 Either martyrdom or victory (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*). Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "When your brothers were struck down in the Battle of Badr, Allah placed their souls in the 'abdominal' cavities of green fowls, they drink from the rivers of Paradise, eat from its fruits and come back at the end of the day to repose in chandeliers hung in the Shadow of the 'Majestic' Throne. For all of this, they 'the martyred Believers' said: "Who would tell our brothers about us; that we are in Paradise being handsomely provided for so that they may not give up fighting in the cause of Allah or cower in war?" Allah Almighty said: "I will tell them on your behalf". Then He revealed: "Do not think that those who got killed in the cause of Allah are dead. Nay but they are alive with their Lord 'being handsomely provided for'". (Abū Dāwūd: 2520, Aḥmad: 2388; another version is found in Muslim: 1887) Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger

But what we 'expectantly' await for you is that Allah afflicts you with a punishment from His side, or at our hands! So await, for we surely are awaiting with you!"

وَنَحْنُ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُمْ أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمُ اللَّهُ
بِعَذَابٍ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ أَوْ بَأْيَدِنَا فَوَلَّيْتُمْ
إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُتَرَبِّصُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

﴿53﴾ (114) Say: "Spend willingly or grudgingly; it will not be accepted from you⁽¹¹⁵⁾ for your being contravening people!"

قُلْ أَنْفِقُوا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا لَنْ يُتَقَبَلَ
مِنْكُمْ إِن كُمْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾
وَمَا مَنَعَهُمْ أَنْ تُقَبَلَ مِنْهُمْ نَفَقَتُهُمْ
إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَبِرَسُولِهِ وَلَا
يَأْتُونَ الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كُسَالَى
وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كَاهُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

﴿54﴾ (116) What prevented their expending being accepted from them was nothing but their Denial in Allah and His Messenger; they only come to Prayers being sluggish⁽¹¹⁷⁾ and only spend being grudging.

(ﷺ) said: "Allah has made a pledge to one who sets out in His path: "Nothing drives him except 'the pure intention of' striving in My path, Believing in Me and acceptance of My Messengers. He has got My Pledge that I will admit him into Paradise or return him back 'safe' to the home he sat out from loaded, with what he earned; reward and spoils..." (Muslim: 1876).

114 In a bid to conceal their dubious design, some hypocrites, offered financial help by way of making up for not answering the call (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Nazm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr).

115 Whatever the case might be, God will not accept this ostensibly 'pious' expenditure of theirs (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): "Indeed Allah accepts only from the Mindful" (5: 27).

116 Further reasons for God not accepting their payment are provided, this being the result of their lack of Faith (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

117 "Indeed the hypocrites seek to deceive Allah, 'but in reality' He Deceives them; when they rise up for Prayer, they rise sluggishly 'only' showing off to people and little do they 'truly' mention Allah" (4: 142); "Seek help in patience and Prayer; indeed they are hard save for the dedicated. *Those who firmly Believe that they will be meeting their Lord and that they are returning to Him" (2: 45-46).

﴿55﴾ (118) Let not 'Muhammad' their wealth nor their sons amuse you⁽¹¹⁹⁾; Allah wants nothing but to punish them with these⁽¹²⁰⁾ in the worldly life and their souls to expire while they are 'still' Deniers. ﴿56﴾ They swear by Allah that they are surely 'part' of you but they are not 'part' of you⁽¹²¹⁾, 'in reality' they are 'ever' terrified folks; ﴿57﴾ (122) should they find 'themselves just' any hideout, a cavity or a bolthole, they would have darted to it galloping.

فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَيَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُمْ لَمِنْكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِمَنْكُمُ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ يَفْرُقُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَوْ يَجِدُونَ مَلْجَأًا أَوْ مَعْدَرَاتٍ أَوْ مُدْخَلًا لَوَلَّوْا إِلَيْهِ وَهُمْ يَجْمَحُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

- 118 Whatever they might deem beneficial and are keen to keep to themselves, prominently money and sons, who were of great benefit to their fathers in those days, are nothing to be impressed with. They will be a cause of much pain and misery to those who are not willing to put them on the line for a Godly cause (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīl*, Ibn 'Āshūr). Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "The one whose topmost concern is the Hereafter, Allah places abundance in his heart, makes all his affairs easily manageable and he will have the world at his feet. While the one whose topmost concern is the worldly life, Allah places scarcity constantly before his eyes, makes all his affairs fly in his face, and he only gets out of this world as much as what was predestined for him" (Ibn Mājah: 4105, Ibn Hibbān, *al-Shāḥih*: 680).
- 119 "And do not gaze longingly at what We have given some of them to enjoy, the finery of this present life: We test them through this, but the provision of your Lord is better and more lasting" (20: 131).
- 120 "Do they reckon that, "on account of" the wealth and the children that We have provided them, *that We hasten to 'honour' them 'with' all kinds of good? Nay! They are not aware" (23: 55-56).
- 121 In their precarious situation, they adopt bare-faced lying as a line of defence, a desperate measure (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī): "When they meet those who Believe, they say: "We Believe!", but when they are alone with their devils, they say: "Surely we are with you. We are but mocking"" (2: 14); "When the hypocrites come to you 'Muhammad', they say: "We bear witness that you are verily the Messenger of Allah!" Allah Knows that you truly are His Messenger and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are 'relentless' liars" (63: 1).
- 122 This vividly depicts the lives of constant distress and anguish they lead.

﴿58﴾ Among them some who snide at you regarding 'the prescribed' alms⁽¹²³⁾; if given from it, they become contented, but if they are not given from it, they no sooner become spiteful. ﴿59﴾⁽¹²⁴⁾ If only they contented themselves with what Allah and His Messenger had given them, and said: "Allah is sufficient for us; Allah – and His Messenger – will provide for us from His Bounty. We 'only' turn to our Lord 'in hope'". ﴿60﴾⁽¹²⁵⁾ "The prescribed' Alms are but for the destitutes, the needy⁽¹²⁶⁾,

وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَلْمُكَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ فَإِن أُعْطُوا مِنْهَا رَضُوا وَإِن لَّمْ يُعْطُوا مِنْهَا إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَحْضُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ إِنَّ إِلَى اللَّهِ رَغِبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ * إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ

- 123 This is yet another section of the hypocrites who used to insinuate that the noble Messenger (ﷺ) was not fair in his division of the zakah revenues (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī). Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "While the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was dividing, 'a man known as' Dhū al-Kuwayṣirah of the clan of Tamīm stood and said: "Messenger of Allah, be fair!" The Messenger (ﷺ) replied to him: "Woe betides you! Who could 'ever' be fair, if I am not fair! You would have been lost if I were not fair...." (al-Bukhārī: 6933, Muslim: 1064).
- 124 This provides the correct course of action that the sincerely faithful would take in such a situation, which is in sharp contrast to those bereft of the sweetness of Faith (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 125 The One Who divides the zakah is God Almighty Himself. This explanation in a way addresses the accusation of the ignorant hypocrites who insinuated that the Messenger (ﷺ) was not fair (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Rāzī). Please note that the finer details of those who deserve the money fall beyond the scope of this translation. The explanations given here are only meant to clear the meaning.
- 126 *al-Fuqarā'* and *al-Masākīn* are, respectively, the destitutes who have nothing at all and the needy who hardly have anything at all (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The needy '*al-miskīn*' is not who goes about 'begging from' people and will be satisfied by a morsel or two or a palm date or two. But the needy is he who cannot find enough to suffice him, he does not appear to people as in need of charity, and he would not go about asking people" (al-Bukhārī: 1479, Muslim: 1039).

those who work on them⁽¹²⁷⁾, the heart-attracted⁽¹²⁸⁾, by way of ‘freeing’ necks⁽¹²⁹⁾, the ‘deeply’ indebted⁽¹³⁰⁾, in the path of Allah⁽¹³¹⁾ and the stranded⁽¹³²⁾; an obligation ordained by Allah—Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

وَالْعَمَلِيَّتِ عَلَيْهِا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ
وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْعَرَمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

﴿61﴾ Among them are those who hurt the Prophet and say: “He is an ear ‘credulous’!”⁽¹³³⁾ Say: “‘An ear’ for your best!”⁽¹³⁴⁾

وَمِنَهُمُ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ
هُوَ آذُنٌ قُلُّ أذُنٌ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ

127 *al-‘Āmilīna ‘alayhā* are those who are put in charge of collecting and distributing the zakah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ṭaḥāwī, *Ahkām al-Qur‘ān*, 1/365, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr).

128 *al-Mu‘allaḥah Qulūbuhum* (lit. those whose hearts are bonded) are those whose hearts are attracted and softened towards Faith (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).

129 *Fī al-riqāb*, is to use the money to emancipate slaves from bondage (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Whoever frees a Muslim ‘slave’ neck, Allah will free for every part ‘of the body of the freed’ a ‘matching’ part of his from the Fire; even the private parts for the private parts” (al-Bukhārī: 6715, Muslim: 1509).

130 *al-Ghārimīn* are those who fall into debt for a cause which is neither sinful nor from excess and who cannot pay off their debtors (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

131 *Fī sabīl Allāh* to help those who fight in the path of Allah to carry out their mission (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Sa‘dī).

132 *Ibn al-sabīl* (lit. the son of the road) is the traveller who finds himself stranded in a place with no means to provide for himself (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

133 They think of the Messenger (ﷺ) lightly and say that he is gullible and listens to all what is being said to him and accepts it at face value unquestioningly, even their own blatant lies and lame excuses (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

134 The answer dictated here is a witty repartee, a rejoinder that rebounds their own words at them in an unexpected manner; tweaking the same words to attain an originally unintended aim (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). In other words, he is an ‘ear’ who listens but to what is good and not to evil; when news of your evil reaches him, he listens and overlooks. Being of such a virtuous nature,

He Believes in Allah and believes the Believers⁽¹³⁵⁾; a mercy to those who have ‘truly’ Believed among you.⁽¹³⁶⁾” Those who hurt the Messenger of Allah, theirs is a painful Punishment.⁽¹³⁷⁾ ⁽⁶²⁾ They swear by Allah to you ‘Believers’ to reconcile with you⁽¹³⁸⁾, but Allah and His Messenger have more right to reconcile with⁽¹³⁹⁾, if ‘only’ they were Believers.⁽⁶³⁾ Did they not know that whoever takes a stand against Allah and His Messenger, his is Hellfire forever he abides therein—that is the great disgrace!⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةً
لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾ يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ
لَكُمْ لِيُرْضَوْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ
أَنْ يُرْضَوْهُ إِنْ كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٢﴾ أَلَمْ
يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَن يُحَادِدِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأَنَّ
لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا ذَلِكَ أَكْزَرُ
الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٦٣﴾

he turns a blind eye when you come to him with fabrications (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

135 In reality, the Messenger (ﷺ) was not as easily fooled as they thought. He Believes in what is revealed to him by God, among which is to pardon people and to make allowance for the ignorant (cf. 7: 199), as well as acknowledges what sincere Believers tell him, but not hypocrites or Deniers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr).

136 His listening and pardoning, which they have mistaken for incredulity, is for the best of those who when afforded the opportunity to become heedful, their hearts open up and Believe (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

137 “*Verily those who offend Allah and His Messenger Allah condemns them in this world and the Hereafter. And He has prepared for them a humiliating Punishment*” (33: 57).

138 They dishonestly swear to distance themselves from their offence of the Messenger (ﷺ) about which God has just told him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āṭīyah, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr; see also: Imām Aḥmad: 2407, al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*: 12307).

Listening to those who may not necessarily tell the truth and who swear to what they say, especially when one is not fooled by them, is considered an act of chivalry in Arabian culture befitting only the noblest. Thus, they afford the speaker the chance to save face.

139 By being honest, which is more becoming of those who claim to be true Believers (cf. Ibn ‘Āṭīyah, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

140 “*Verily those who take a stand against Allah and His Messenger will be suppressed, like those before them: We have surely sent down clear Signs;*

﴿64﴾ The hypocrites dread that a sura will be brought down on them, revealing to them what is ‘hidden’ in their hearts⁽¹⁴¹⁾; say: “Keep on mocking; verily Allah will expose what you dread”. ﴿65﴾ Should you ‘Muhammad’ ask them, they will say: “We were just ‘idly’ chit-chatting⁽¹⁴²⁾ and passing time!”⁽¹⁴³⁾ Say: “Were you mocking of Allah, His Signs and His Messenger!”

يَخْذَرُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ أَنْ تُنزَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ
سُورَةٌ نُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلْ اسْتَهْزَؤُاْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا تَخْذَرُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ
قُلْ أَيْلَ اللَّهِ وَعَآيَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَهْزِؤُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

and humiliating Punishment awaits the Deniers” (58: 5); “Verily those who take a stand against Allah and His Messenger will be among the most abased!” (58: 20).

- 141 While many hypocrites were sure that the Messenger (ﷺ) was truthful but decided not to acknowledge him, others were truly in doubt (cf. al-Qurtubi, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Or do those in whose hearts is disease think that Allah will not expose their spite? *If We willed, We would show them to you ‘Muhammad’ so that you would know them by their mark. And you will certainly know them by their tone of speech; Allah Knows your deeds” (47: 29-30).
- 142 *Yakhūdu* is to pass time in hearsay. Originally, it means to waddle in water and carries the added meaning of muddling up. Throughout the Qur’an it is used to cast negative light on what is being described (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-İşfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).
- 143 Being hypocritical, secretly maligning God, His Messenger and His Signs seems to have been their pastime of choice (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “During the Tabuk Expedition a man said in a gathering: “I never set eyes on any who are more gluttonous, lying and cowardly than these reciters ‘indicating the most noble Companions who recite the Qur’an’ of ours!” A man in the same gathering replied to him: “Liar! But indeed you are a hypocrite! I shall tell the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)!” When the news reached the Messenger (ﷺ), ‘some ayas of’ the Qur’an came down ‘regarding the incident’. The narrator continues: “I saw him clinging to the belly strap of the Messenger’s (ﷺ) she camel, saying: “Messenger of Allah! We were only chit-chatting and passing time!” While the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was reciting: “Were you mocking of Allah, His Signs and His Messenger”” (cf. Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Ṭabarī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).

﴿66﴾ “Do not apologize! You have truly Denied⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ after your ‘outwardly’ Belief! Should We pardon a bunch of you, We would ‘conversely’ punish another bunch for being staunchly criminal!”⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ إِنَّ
تَعَفُّوْا عَنْ طَآئِفَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ يُغَادِثُ طَآئِفَةٌ
بِآثِمِهِمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

﴿67﴾ The hypocrites, both male and female, take after each other⁽¹⁴⁶⁾; they enjoin what is unacceptable and advise against virtue, and clinch their fists⁽¹⁴⁷⁾. They forgot Allah and He Forgot them⁽¹⁴⁸⁾—verily the hypocrites are the contravening ones. ﴿68﴾ Allah promises the hypocrites, male and female, and the Deniers Hellfire, forever they abide therein; it is sufficient for them and that Allah Damns them—their ‘therein’ is resident Punishment.” ﴿69﴾⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ Just like the ones before them:

الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِّنْ
بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُكْرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ نَسُوا اللَّهَ
فَنَسِيَهُمْ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾
وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ وَالْكٰفِرَ
نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا هِيَ حَسْبُهُمْ
وَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَدَابٌ مُّقْتَدِرٌ ﴿٦٨﴾
كَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ

144 They have now revealed their Denial while in the past they feigned Belief (cf. al-Zajjāj, al-Sam‘ānī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shawkānī, al-Qāsimī).

145 Those who honestly repent will be forgiven, but the stubbornly, irrevocably Denying will be punished (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). The door of repentance is still open for them (cf. al-Sa‘dī).

146 They are one and the same, their deeds and motives are the same and they are each other’s allies (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī). They were a close-knit society who were up to no good, encouraging each other only to evil.

147 That is they are tight-fisted when it comes to giving. This highlights how callous they were (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr) and how less prone they were to yield to the call of Faith (cf. Riḍā).

148 “It will be said: “This Day We will Forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours! Your resort will be the Fire, and you shall have no helpers” (45: 34).

149 The following good bad examples, whom they even compare unfavorably with, are cited for them to think over their state of affairs.

“They were mightier in strength than you are and greater in wealth and children. They enjoyed their ‘worldly’ portion and you enjoyed your portion as much as the ones before you enjoyed their portion, and you indulged as much as they indulged; these their deeds were nullified in this worldly life and in the Hereafter—these are ‘the real’ losers. ﴿70﴾ Had not the news of those who came before them reached them: the people of Nūḥ, ‘the tribes of’ ‘Ād and Thamūd, the people of Ibrāhīm, the companions of Midian and the overturned⁽¹⁵⁰⁾; their Messengers came to them with clear evidences! Allah would not have wronged them but they were bent on wronging themselves.

كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرَ أَمْوَالًا
وَأَوْلَادًا فَاسْتَمْتَعُوا بِخَلْقِهِمْ فَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ
بِخَلْقِكُمْ كَمَا اسْتَمْتَعَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ بِخَلْقِهِمْ وَخُضْتُمْ كَالَّذِي
خَاضُوا أُولَئِكَ حِطَّتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾
أَلَمْ يَأْتِهِمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ
وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَقَوْمِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَأَصْحَابِ
مَدْيَنَ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ أَتَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

﴿71﴾ ⁽¹⁵¹⁾ And Believers, male and female, are ‘mutually’ each other’s allies⁽¹⁵²⁾. They enjoin virtue and advise against what is unacceptable⁽¹⁵³⁾,

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ
يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

150 *al-Mu 'tafikāt* (lit. the overturned) are the villages of the people of Prophet Lot (لوط) that were flipped upside down (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr).

151 The contrast between the Believers, both male and female, to the hypocrites, male and female, is meant to show how far away the wicked from the virtuous are so that sound human nature may prevail and they may repent (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*); they are also encouraged by being let to know what God has prepared for the virtuous.

152 Their alliance (*wilāyah*) is that of Islam, where both parties are equal and no one is a blind follower of the other; unlike the hypocrites who take their evil traits each from the other, almost blindly (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

153 “Let there be among you a legion calling for goodness; enjoining virtue and advising against what is unacceptable—those are the

keep up the Prayer and give out the prescribed alms, and obey Allah and His Messenger; those Allah will have mercy on them—verily Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ^{﴿72﴾} Allah promised the Believers, male and female, Gardens under which rivers flow forever they abide therein and comely abodes in Gardens of Eternity⁽¹⁵⁴⁾, but a Pleasure⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ from Allah is ‘ever’ greater⁽¹⁵⁶⁾; that is ‘truly’ the great triumph.

وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسْكَنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٧٢﴾

successful” (3: 104); “*You are indeed the best nation the world has seen: you enjoin virtue, advise against what is unacceptable and Believe in Allah*” (3: 110).

- 154 *Jannāt ‘Adn* (lit. Gardens of Eternal Residence) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “In the Gardens of Eternity, ‘there are’ two gardens their utensils and all that is there is made of silver; ‘and another’ two gardens their utensils and all that is there is made of gold. Nothing separates its dwellers from seeing their Lord except the Mantle of Loftiness on His Face” (al-Bukhārī: 4878, Muslim: 180).
- 155 Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Allah Almighty will call the people of Paradise: “People of Paradise!” They will reply: “All pleasure is Yours our Lord, yes!” He says: “Are you satisfied?” They reply: “Why wouldn’t we be when You gave us what You did not give any other of your creation!” He says: “I shall give you ‘yet’ better than that!” They reply: “Lord! What is better than that?” He says: “I bestow My Pleasure upon you and I shall never be Displeased with you again.”” (al-Bukhārī: 6549, Muslim: 2829)
- 156 God’s Pleasure (*Riḍwān*) is greater and better than all the bliss of Paradise (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī): “*Allah says: “This is the Day on which the Truthfulness of the Truthful avails them; for them are Gardens under which rivers flow forever after they abide therein; Allah is Pleased with them and they are pleased with Him—that indeed is the greatest gain”*” (5: 119).

﴿73﴾ (157) O Prophet, strive⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ against the Deniers and the hypocrites and be tough on them, their resort is Hellfire; dire indeed is the end⁽¹⁵⁹⁾. ﴿74﴾ (160) They swear 'to you' that they did not utter 'the word of Denial⁽¹⁶¹⁾'; surely they have uttered the word of Denial so they Denied after their 'professing' Islam⁽¹⁶²⁾.

يَتَّيِبَهَا الَّذِي جَاهِدَ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ
وَأَعْلَظَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبئسَ
الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٧٣﴾ يَخْفُونَ بِاللَّهِ مَا قَالُوا وَلَقَدْ
قَالُوا كَلِمَةَ الْكُفْرِ وَكَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِسْلَامِهِمْ

- 157 The stubbornly heedless are to be confronted and treated sternly and toughly (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 158 The command 'jāhid' (strive) is of a general purport and trying to say exactly what it entails inevitably limits its meaning, and, in turn, its application (cf. al-Rāzī). Exegetes do not agree unanimously on what 'striving' here exactly implies. However, mostly they agree that the Deniers and the hypocrites are to be striven against and confronted: the Deniers with arms and the hypocrites with argumentation (cf. *al-Muyassar, al-Mukhtaṣar, Tafṣīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*): "Fight them until there is no trial, and the religion becomes sincerely Allah's Own. If they desist, only the wrongdoers shall be transgressed against" (2: 193).
The hypocrites are conjoined together with the Deniers and treated as combatants to give them the message that should they be conspicuously disruptive and more audacious, they now know what is to come. The threat of force ensures that they remain dormant and therefore less disorderly in society (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 159 "...indeed Allah will gather the hypocrites and the Deniers in Hellfire altogether" (4: 140).
- 160 What the hypocrites said and did, their slandering and plotting, and even conspiring to assassinate the Messenger (ﷺ), amounted to outright Denial (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, *Riḍā*). They are still being forewarned and the cover over their machinations is blown in the most glaring of terms so that they may ponder and repent.
- 161 The 'word of Denial' (*kalimat al-kufr*) is the speech that indicates Denial (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr), for example, insulting the Messenger (ﷺ) and attacking the religion (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī).
- 162 By uttering the word of Denial, they revealed once and for all their true mettle; although they were Muslims to all appearances, they were in fact Deniers (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Qurtubī).
Ibn 'Aṭīyah makes a point about word choice, which further sheds light on the meaning; the word "islām" and not "īmān" (sincere Faith) is used

They resolved 'to carry out' what they failed to attain⁽¹⁶³⁾; they only bore grudges after Allah – and His Messengers – enriched them with His bounty!⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ If they repent, it would be better for them but if they turn away, Allah will inflict a painful punishment on them 'both' in the worldly life and in the Hereafter—and then' they will have no ally or helper.

وَهُمْ أَيْمَانُ يَتَّبِعُونَ وَمَا نَقَمُوا إِلَّا أَنْ
أَغْنَاهُمْ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ فَإِنْ يَتُوبُوا
يَكْ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَإِنْ يَتَوَلَّوْا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ
عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ
فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٧٤﴾

﴿75﴾ ⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ Among them are those who pledged to Allah: “Should He bestow on us from His bounty, we would 'commit to' spend charitably and 'commit to' be among the righteous”.

* وَمِنْهُمْ مَن عَاهَدَ اللَّهُ لَيْنَ آتِنَا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ
لَتَصَّدَّقَنَّ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

here because Islam can be professed with mere words, i.e. the testimony of monotheism, but *īmān* is a much further step, because it tackles what the heart holds: “*The herds people said: “We have Believed!” Say ‘Muhammad’: “You have not Believed. But say: “We have professed Islam” for ‘true’ Faith has not yet entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger ‘wholeheartedly’, He will not discount anything from ‘the reward of’ your deeds—Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful*” (49: 14).

163 They devised to assassinate the Messenger (ﷺ) upon his return from the Tabuk Expedition, but their plot was foiled (cf. al-Baghawī, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, 3/477-478, Ibn Kathīr, al-Alūsī, al-Sa‘dī).

164 A fact that should have had the opposite effect on them (cf. al-Zajjāj, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn A‘ṭiyah, Ibn Kathīr). But such is always the way of venomous people; no act of kindness will ever allay them. Whatever one does will only increase their hatred towards one. When the renowned linguist, al-Bajalī, was asked about where to find the following Arab adage in the Qur’an: “Beware of the evil of the person you have shown kindness to”, he quoted this portion of the aya (cf. al-Dhababī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 13/414).

165 The hypocritical traits spelled out earlier are reiterated here: dishonoring of pledges, repaying kindness with spitefulness, miserliness and lack of empathy, and persistent lying (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). They are also still being warned to pay heed.

﴿76﴾ But when He bestowed on them from His bounty, they became miserly with it, and ‘wilfully’ turned away paying no heed. ﴿77﴾ Then there pursued them hypocrisy in their hearts until the Day they meet Him⁽¹⁶⁶⁾; for renegeing on what they pledged to Allah and for their persistent lying⁽¹⁶⁷⁾. ﴿78﴾ Did they not know that Allah Knows their secrets and their private conversations, and that Allah is ever All-Knower of all the unseen!

فَلَمَّا آتَتْهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ بَخِلُوا بِهِ
وَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَأَعْقَبَهُمْ نِقَافًا
فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهُ بِمَا أَخْلَفُوا اللَّهَ
مَا وَعَدُوهُ وَمَا كَانَ نَايِكًا يُكْذِبُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ أَلَمْ
يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿٧٨﴾

﴿79﴾ ⁽¹⁶⁸⁾Those who snide at the ‘generously’ benefacting among the Believers regarding alms, as well as ‘the sincere’ who can find nothing ‘to give’ but their

الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ

166 Their hypocrisy will linger in their hearts until the day they die, upon which they meet God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Qurṭubī).

167 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Three are the ‘tell-tale’ indicators of a hypocrite: lying when speaking, breaking promises and betraying trust” (al-Bukhārī: 33, Muslim 59).

168 The hypocrites do not only practise what they preach themselves (“...enjoin what is unacceptable and advise against virtue, and clinch their fists...”) (Aya 67 above)), they hate to see others doing otherwise (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Abū Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “When we were bade to give charity, ‘having nothing to give’ we went on to work as porters ‘in the market, to secure the money for charity’. Abū ‘Aqīl came with half a bucket ‘of palm dates as charity’, another person came with more than that, and the hypocrites said: “Allah is in no need of this one’s charity ‘meaning Abū ‘Aqīl’, and this other one only did it to show off”. Then the aya came down: “Those who snide at the benefacting among the Believers regarding alms as well as ‘the sincere’ who can find nothing ‘to give’ but their own effort ...” (al-Bukhārī: 4668, Muslim: 1018). They hurtle sneering comments on both the well-off who give generously, saying that they do so to show off, and those who can only help out with the very little that they have, and deride them for it (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Sa‘dī).

own effort – they ridicule them – may Allah Ridicule them⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ and theirs is a painful Punishment. ﴿80﴾ (170) Ask ‘Muhammad’ for forgiveness for them, or do not ask for forgiveness for them; should you ask for forgiveness for them seventy times⁽¹⁷¹⁾, Allah will not forgive them. That for their Denying of Allah and His Messenger; Allah guides not the ‘persistently’ contravening people.

فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخِرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٩﴾ اَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ أَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ إِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

169 “When they meet those who Believe, they say: “We Believe!”, but when they are alone with their devils, they say: “Surely we are with you. We are but mocking”. *Allah mocks them and slackens the reins for them to wander aimlessly in their blindness” (2: 14-15).

170 ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “When ‘the head of the hypocrites’ ‘Abdullāh Ibn Ubayy Ibn Salūl died, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was summoned to Pray for him. As the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood up ‘for Prayer’, I sprang to him and said: “Messenger of Allah, will you Pray over Ibn Ubayy, in spite of him saying so and so on the day of so and so!” I recounted to him (ﷺ) what he said ‘of many slanders’. The Messenger (ﷺ) smiled and said: “Move away from me ‘Umar.” When I had argued a great deal with him, he said: “I was given a choice and I made my choice. Had I known that if I were to seek forgiveness for him more than seventy times he would be forgiven, I would have sought it more!” The Messenger (ﷺ) Prayed and then left. It was just a short while after that the two ayas in Barā’ah ‘i.e. al-Tawbah’ came down: “Do not ever Pray ‘Muhammad’ over anyone of them who dies ... died while in a state of contravention”...” (al-Bukhārī: 1366).

171 The number 70 is not meant to give an exact number but is rather used to denote numerosness *per se* (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Khāzin, al-Muyassar, Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah): “It is all the same for them whether you ‘Muhammad’ ask for forgiveness for them ‘the hypocrites’ or do not ask for forgiveness for them, Allah will never forgive them; verily Allah guides not the contravening people” (63: 6).

﴿81﴾ (172) The stay-backers were pleased with their station behind the Messenger of Allah; they hated to strive in the path of Allah with their money and lives and said: “Do not mobilize in the heat!” Say ‘Muhammad’: “The heat of Hellfire is surely more severe”

(173) – if only they would discern.

﴿82﴾ Let them laugh a little but weep much they shall; a ‘just’ requital for what they used to earn.

﴿83﴾ Should Allah return you back ‘Muhammad’ to a band of them⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ and they sought your permission to set out, say: “You shall never set out with me ever and shall never fight an enemy with me. You were satisfied to stay back in the first time!⁽¹⁷⁵⁾

فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خَلْفَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَكَرَهُوا أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَالُوا لَا تَنْفِرُوا فِي الْحَرِّ قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ أَشَدُّ حَرًّا لَوْ كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٨١﴾
فَإِضْحِكُوا قَلِيلًا وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيرًا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

فَإِنْ رَجَعَكَ اللَّهُ إِلَى طَائِفَةٍ مِنْهُمْ فَاسْتَدْنُوكَ لِاخْرُوجْ فَقُلْ لَنْ تَخْرُجُوا مَعِيَ أَبَدًا وَلَنْ تُقَاتِلُوا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا إِنَّكُمْ رَضِيتُمْ بِالْقُعُودِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ

172 This and the next three passages generally deal with not abiding by the command to mobilize when called upon. The depravity surrounding such an act of defiance is varyingly highlighted through the use of a defamatory label of the same root *kh-l-f*: *al-mukhallafūna* (the stay-backers, lit. the ones made to stay back), *al-khālifūna* (the fall-behinders) and *al-khawālif* (the ‘incapacitated’ stayers, which is repeated twice) (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah).

173 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “This fire of yours, which the son of Adam inflames, is ‘only’ one part of seventy parts of the heat of Hell. They ‘the Companions’ said: “By Allah it ‘the worldly fire’ is sufficient ‘as punishment’, Messenger of Allah!” He said: “It ‘Hell’ has been made severer that this one sixty nine times over. Each of them is equal to the worldly fire” (al-Bukhārī: 3265, Muslim: 2849).

174 These are the group of hypocrites who sought the Messenger’s permission without valid excuses to stay in Madinah and not join him on his way to Tabuk (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr).

175 The ‘tough’ punishments mentioned here and in the next aya, amount to naming and shaming (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr); they are being pointed out as discordant to the rest of society (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah).

Stay then with the fall-behinders!⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ ﴿84﴾ Do not ever Pray ‘Muhammad’ over anyone of them who dies and do not stand at his grave⁽¹⁷⁷⁾; they had Denied Allah and His Messenger and died while in a state of contravention. ﴿85﴾⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ Let not ‘Muhammad’ their wealth and their sons amuse you; Allah wants nothing but to punish them with these in the worldly life and their souls to expire while they are ‘still’ Deniers.

﴿86﴾⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ When a sura is brought down ‘commanding people’ to Believe in Allah and strive with His Messenger, the well-off⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ among them seek your permission and say: “Leave us to be with those who sit ‘at home’!⁽¹⁸¹⁾”

فَاقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْخَالِفِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَلَا تَصَلِّ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُم مَّا تَبَدَّ وَلَا تَقُمْ عَلَى قَبْرِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ فَسْقُوتٌ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَلَا تَعْجَبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

وَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا سُورَةً أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَجَاهِدُوا مَعَ رَسُولِهِ اسْتَأْذِنَكَ أُولُو الطَّوْلِ مِنْهُمْ وَقَالُوا ذَرْنَا نَكُنْ مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

176 *al-Khālif* (plural *al-khālifūn*) is the person who remains behind because of lack or incapacity (cf. al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). It is used here to impart a derogatory sense (cf. al-Ṭabarī).

177 To oversee the burial and/or ask for forgiveness or pray for the deceased (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr).

178 The wording of this aya is almost identical to Aya 55 above, reiterating its message and further driving it home (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Abū Ḥayyān); all the grandeur with which they are surrounded amounts to nothing but a cause of pain and misery and a deceptive illusion that haunts them until they die without repentance (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

179 Yet another subdivision of the hypocrites, i.e. the able-bodied and the wealthy, is exposed here to further chastise them (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr).

180 *Ulū al-ṭawl* (lit. those in possession of expanse/reach, cf. al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*) are those who are financially well-off (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī). Yet other commentators include, along with the wealthy, the ones who are bodily fit and healthy (cf. al-Qāsimī, Riḍā, Ibn ‘Ashūr).

181 *al-Qā’idūna* are the weak, the terminally ill and the incapacitated (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī).

﴿87﴾ They were content to be among the ‘incapacitated’ stayers⁽¹⁸²⁾ and Allah stamped on their hearts so that they would not discern⁽¹⁸³⁾.

﴿88﴾ But the Messenger and Believers alongside him strove with their money and lives; those are the ones for whom is all good ‘things’⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ and those are the winners.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Allah readied for them Gardens under which rivers flow forever they abide therein; that is ‘truly’ the great triumph.

﴿90﴾ And the permission seekers⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ among the herds people came to be pardoned, but those who

رَضُوا بِأَن يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ لَكِنَّ الرَّسُولَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ جَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْحَيْرَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٨٩﴾

وَجَاءَ الْمُعَذَّرُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ وَقَعَدَ الَّذِينَ

182 *al-Khawālif* are mainly women (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Qurtubī, cf. al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Obviously, they were known with this designation because they would not join fighting campaigns. The hypocrites, however, are still being denigrated (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

183 They were bereft of the faculty of discernment; they did not grasp the wisdom and benefits of God’s commands (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr). Also had they been discerning, they would not have been gratified with classification alongside the less bodily able segment of society (al-Sa’dī): “... *but the hypocrites discern not!*” (9: 87).

184 *al-Khayrāt* (intensive plural of *khayr*, i.e. good) denotes good aplenty both in this worldly life and in the Hereafter (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī, al-Sa’dī): “*You who Believe, shall I show you a trade that will save you from painful punishment? *That you Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and strive in the path of God with your money and lives; that is best for you, if you only knew. *He will forgive you your sins and admit you in Gardens under which rivers flow and comely abodes in Gardens of Eternity; that is ‘truly’ the great triumph*” (61: 10-12).

185 These nomad permission seekers either had valid excuses (in Ya’qūb’s Qur’anic mode of reading where it is read as: *al-Mu’dhirūna*, cf. Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2/280) or did not (in all other Qur’anic modes of reading it is read as: *al-Mu’adhdhirūna*, cf. Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2/280) (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

lied to Allah and His Messenger stayed⁽¹⁸⁶⁾; a painful Punishment shall befall those who Denied among them. ⁽⁹¹⁾ There is no guilt upon the weak, or the sick, or those who cannot find the means to spend, should they be honest to Allah and His Messenger; there is no way against the good-doers—Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ⁽⁹²⁾ Neither is there ‘a way’ against those who when they come to you to mount them ‘on riding animals’ – you ‘Muhammad’ would say: “I cannot secure what to mount you on” – they turn back with their eyes swelling with tears, deeply sorrowful that they cannot find the means to spend. ⁽⁹³⁾ The way is only ‘rightly sought’ against those who seek your permission while they are well-to-do; they were content to be among the ‘incapacitated’ stayers and Allah stamped on their hearts so that they would not know⁽¹⁸⁷⁾.

⁽⁹⁴⁾ They⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ apologize to you ‘Believers’ when you return to them.

كَذَبُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٩١﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا اتَّوَكَّلُوا لَتَحْمِلَهُمْ فُلْتٌ لَأَجِدَ مَا أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَلَّوْا وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَرَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوا مَا يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُوكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَاءُ رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

يَعْتَذِرُونَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ

186 These are the hypocrite nomads who did not even make the effort to come to the Messenger (ﷺ) to seek his permission (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

187 They did not realize the consequences of not joining the Messenger (ﷺ) in his campaign and were ignorant of the great rewards they were missing out on in this world and in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Alūsī, al-Sa‘dī).

188 The hypocrite nomads, those who did not even make the effort to seek the Messenger’s permission, are being dealt with here (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

Say 'Muhammad': "Do not apologize. We will not believe you; Allah has told us some of your news⁽¹⁸⁹⁾. Allah – and His Messenger – shall see your deeds⁽¹⁹⁰⁾, then you shall be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed and He will break the news to you about what you used to do!"⁽⁹⁵⁾ ⁽¹⁹¹⁾They will swear by Allah to you, when you come back to them so that you would turn away from them. Turn away from them then; they are filthy⁽¹⁹²⁾ and their resort is Hell; a 'just' requital for what they used to earn. ⁽⁹⁶⁾ ⁽¹⁹³⁾They swear to you so that you may reconcile with them. If you reconcile with them then Allah does not reconcile with the contravening people.

قُلْ لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكُمْ قَدْ نَبَأْنَا
 اللَّهُ مِنْ آخْبَارِكُمْ وَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ
 وَرَسُولُهُ يُنْزِلُ الرُّدُونَ إِلَىٰ عَلِيمٍ الْقَنِيبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
 فَيَتَّبِعِكُمْ يَمَّا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ سَيَحْلِفُونَ
 بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ إِذَا انْقَلَبْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لَتَعْرِضُوا
 عَنْهُمْ فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ رَجِسٌ
 وَمَا وَلِيَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا
 يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ لَتَرْضَوْا
 عَنْهُمْ فَإِن تَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِنَ اللَّهُ لَا
 يَرْضَىٰ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾

﴿97﴾ Herds people are stauncher in Denial and hypocrisy⁽¹⁹⁴⁾;

الْأَعْرَابِ أَشَدُّ كُفْرًا وَنِفَاقًا

189 Enough of their news not to believe them (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

190 Although their apology is not accepted, they are afforded a chance to repent and mend their ways (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr); what really matters are deeds not mere words (cf. al-Sa'dī).

191 This aya foretells part of their news and what they would do after the return of the Messenger (ﷺ) along with the Believers to Madinah, to emphasize that God's 'seeing' of what they do is real and that He knows the unseen as well as the witnessed (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

192 Believers are advised to remain aloof from what may rub off on them negatively (cf. al-Rāzī).

193 They are not only wishful of the Believers' not holding them to account over their treachery, moreover, they are even hopeful of complete reconciliation with the Believers as if nothing had happened (cf. al-Rāzī).

194 Being rougher in character than townspeople and freer in expressing their thoughts (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn 'Aṭīyah).

they are more likely not to know the boundaries of what Allah sent down to His Messenger⁽¹⁹⁵⁾—Allah is indeed All-Knowing, All-Wise. ⁽⁹⁸⁾ ⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ Among the herds people are those who take what they spend to be a liability⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ and lie in wait for turns of fortune against you 'Believers'; may the unfortunate turn be against them! Allah is indeed All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

﴿99﴾ Yet among the herds people are those who Believe in Allah and the Last Day and take what they spend to be reparation⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ with Allah and 'to seek' the Messenger's prayers 'for them'⁽¹⁹⁹⁾;

وَأَجْدُرُ الْأَيْعَلْمُوا حُدُودَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ مَغْرَمًا وَيَتَرَبَّصُّ بِكِبْرِ الدَّوَابِرِ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٨﴾

وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَن يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۖ وَيَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ قُرْبَانًا ۚ وَاللَّهُ وَصَلَاتُ الرَّسُولِ ﴿٩٩﴾

195 Being away from sources of knowledge by not mixing with the knowledgeable Companions of the Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr, *al-Muyassar*). The ignorant are more prone to evil than the sincere knowledgeable (al-Sa'dī).

196 This aya and the next compare and contrast two types of the nomad Arabs: the ones who are dispossessed of Faith and the ones who are devoutly faithful. This brings to the fore how Faith can change people's characters for the better and nurture their spirits no matter how rough their natures are.

197 Considering their financial contribution to society as an encumbrance (*maghram*) and spending grudgingly, not in the hope that God would reward them for it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

198 *Qurubāt* (originally from past tense verb *qaruba* to draw nearer) are good deeds done to get closer to God Almighty (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

199 *Ṣalawāt al-Rasūl* denotes the Messenger's supplications of blessing for them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī). 'Abdullāh Ibn Abī Awfā (رضي الله عنه) said: "When a clan brought their alms to the Prophet (ﷺ), he used to say: "O Allah, bless the clan of so-and-so." My father brought him his alms and he (ﷺ) said: "O Allah, bless the household of Abū Awfā"" (al-Bukhārī: 1497, Muslim: 1078).

indubitably it is a reparation for them! Allah will admit them into His Mercy⁽²⁰⁰⁾—Allah is verily All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ^{﴿100﴾} ⁽²⁰¹⁾The earliest forerunners among the Immigrants and the Helpers, and those who followed their suit in perfection 'of deeds'⁽²⁰²⁾, Allah is Pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has readied for them Gardens under which rivers flow forever after they abide therein; that is 'truly' the great triumph.

أَلَا إِنَّهَا قُرْبَةٌ لَّهُمْ سَيَدْخُلُوهَا اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٩٩﴾
وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ
وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ
اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا
ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٠٠﴾

200 "You, soul at peace: *return to your Lord well pleased and well pleasing; *join My servants, *and enter My Paradise." (89: 27-30).

201 Although the pious among the Arab nomads are commendable, it is not their example that is to be emulated but that of the bastion of pure Faith; the earliest Believers (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). They are society's best elements; the first to outrun all people to embrace Faith among those who left their own kith and kin, their worldly possessions and hometowns, and those who unreservedly welcomed and provided a safe haven to the Messenger (ﷺ) and a springboard for the call, and rallied with all their will around it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Sa'dī): "The poor Immigrants who were driven from their homes and possessions, who seek a Favor from Allah and Pleasure, those who support Allah and His Messenger – these are the ones who are true – 'shall have a share'. *And those who occupied the land and Belief before them love those who immigrated to them and find in their breasts no need for that which they were given. They prefer others over themselves, even if they be impoverished. And whosoever is shielded from the avarice of his soul, it is they who shall prosper" (59: 8-9).

202 "The ones who came after them say: "Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and do not place any ill-will in our hearts concerning those who Believe. Our Lord, Indeed You are Ever Gracious, Most Merciful!" (59: 10).

﴿101﴾ (203) Among the herds people 'who live' around you⁽²⁰⁴⁾ are 'yet' hypocrites and 'yet' among the people of Madinah are those who are mired in hypocrisy⁽²⁰⁵⁾. You 'Muhammad' do not know them, 'but' We Know them; We shall punish them twice⁽²⁰⁶⁾, then they shall be returned to a grave Punishment⁽²⁰⁷⁾. ﴿102﴾ And 'there are' others who admitted their guilt⁽²⁰⁸⁾; they mixed a good deed with another 'which is' bad. Allah may very well relent towards them—Allah is verily All-Forgiving, Most-Merciful⁽²⁰⁹⁾.

وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُم مِّنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مُتْلِفُونَ
 وَمِنَ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ مَرَدُوا عَلَىٰ النِّفَاقِ لَا
 تَعْلَمُهُمْ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ
 ثُمَّ يَرُدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَآخَرُونَ
 اعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ
 سَيِّئًا عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنِ اللَّهُ غَفُورٌ
 رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾

203 These by contrast are society's worst elements (cf. Riḍā). Shown over the past passages were four segments: two are the truly Believing among the Madinah dwellers and the herds people and two are the hypocritical among the Madinah dwellers and the herds people. Then the two Believing were joined together (Ayas 99-100) and now the two hypocritical are banded together and light is shed on their fate (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

204 Around Madinah (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

205 *Maradū* is that they have become so steeped in hypocrisy that it had become almost second nature to them; they had become so crafty at it that they were able to deceive others and remained faithful to it and would not give it up (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr).

206 Both on the face of Earth before they die and in their graves (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Muyassar*).

207 In Hellfire (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Abū al-Su'ūd): "Indeed the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire—you will never find them a helper" (4: 145).

208 Staying behind and not joining the Messenger (ﷺ) in his campaign (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī). Admitting guilt a very long way away from being "mired" in hypocrisy and thus brings one closer to what pleases God.

209 The doors of repentance are wide open for them on the assurance of none but God Almighty, the All-Forgiving, Most-Merciful: "Those 'angels' who carry the Throne and those around it glorify in gratitude to their Lord, have faith in Him, and seek forgiveness for the Believers, 'praying:'

﴿103﴾ (210) Take from their money alms with which you purify and elevate⁽²¹¹⁾ them, and pray for them; verily your prayers are restfulness⁽²¹²⁾ for them—Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

﴿104﴾ Did they not know that Allah is the One Who accepts repentance from His servants and takes ‘their’ alms, and that Allah is the One Who is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful!

﴿105﴾ (213) Say: “Do your deeds! Allah shall see your deeds, as well as His Messenger

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾ أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَأْخُذُ الصَّدَقَاتِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾

وَقُلِ اعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ

“Our Lord! You encompass everything in ‘Your’ Mercy and Knowledge. So forgive those who repent and follow Your Path, and save them from the Punishment of the Hellfire. *Our Lord! Admit them into the Gardens of Eternity which You have promised them, along with the righteous among their parents, spouses, and descendants. You ‘alone’ are truly the Almighty, All-Wise. *And protect them from the evil consequences ‘of their deeds’; he whom You protect from evil consequences that Day You will have shown him Mercy; that is ‘truly’ the great triumph” (40: 7-9).

- 210 Such is the extent of God’s boundless benevolence for those who draw nearer to Him and show sincere repentance. The acceptance of their alms indicates acceptance of their deeds as it shows how sincere they really are (cf. al-Rāzī, Riḍā).
- 211 *Yuzakkī* means to thrive, increase and elevate (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-İşfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Here it means to increase their wealth, good manners, pious deeds, and reward them both in this world and in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Charity extinguishes sins as much as water extinguishes fire” (Imām Aḥmad: 15284, Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: 1723).
- 212 *Sakan* is calm and comfort (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 213 Now that they have been given a new lease of life with the gracious acceptance of their repentance, they are to show their true mettle and make up for the chances of getting rewards for good deeds they had wasted (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

and the Believers⁽²¹⁴⁾. And you shall be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed and He will break the news to you about what you used to do! ﴿106﴾⁽²¹⁵⁾ Others 'among them' are postponed until 'the coming of' Allah's command; He either punishes them or relents on them—Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

﴿107﴾⁽²¹⁶⁾ And 'among them are' those who assumed 'for themselves' a mosque to cause damage⁽²¹⁷⁾, in Denial, to cause discord among the Believers and in anticipation

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَرَدُونَ إِلَىٰ عَلِيمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَعَآخِرُونَ
مَرْجُونَ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِمَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمْ وَإِمَّا يَتُوبُ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا ضِرَارًا وَكُفْرًا
وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِصْرًا

214 Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "They 'the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions' once came upon a funeral and spoke well of the deceased and the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "It has become rightly 'his'!" Then they came across another funeral and spoke unfavourably of the deceased and the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "It has become rightly 'his'!" 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) said: "What is it that has become rightly 'his'?" He (ﷺ) said: "This one you spoke well of him and Paradise became rightly his and this one you spoke unfavourably of him and the Fire became rightly his. You are Allah's witnesses on Earth"" (al-Bukhārī: 1367).

215 These are the ones among those who did not join the Messenger (ﷺ) on his campaign whom God did not yet relent towards (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). They are left in a state of suspense so that they may make haste to sincerely repent before God's command comes in their respect (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Riḍā).

216 These are the most conniving hypocrites who built a gathering place for them in the shape of a mosque, in which they claimed to perform sincere worship while in fact they intended it to be a base for their sabotage campaign against the community (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

217 *Ḍirāran* comes originally from damage/harm (*ḍarar*) which is the opposite of benefit (*manfū'ah*) (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). The 'mosque' they built came later to be known as *masjid al-ḍirar*; acquiring the symbolic value of dissent and discord (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Iqtidā' al-Ṣirāt al-Mustaqīm*, 2/341, al-Baghawī).

of he who had fought Allah and His Messenger before⁽²¹⁸⁾. They will surely swear: “We intended nothing but good!”⁽²¹⁹⁾ Allah bears witness that they are surely liars. ^{﴿108﴾} Do not ever ‘Muhammad’ stand ‘for Prayer’ in it! Certainly, a mosque⁽²²⁰⁾ which was founded on Mindfulness from the first day is more worthy that you stand in it⁽²²¹⁾. In it are men who love to purify themselves; Allah loves those who purify themselves⁽²²²⁾.

لَمَنْ حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَيَحْلِفْنَ
 إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ لَهُمْ
 لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا لَمَسْجِدٌ
 أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ
 فِيهِ فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا
 وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

- 218 Riḍā reports the consensus of exegetes that this person they were waiting for was a man known as Abū ‘Āmir al-Rāhib, a Khazrajite, who had rebelled against God and the Messenger (ﷺ) and promised them to bring a Byzantine army to fight the Messenger (ﷺ). They built their ‘mosque’ as a summoning of chaos, centre of disruption once this eagerly-awaited person showed up.
- 219 Their all-time favorite artifice was to swear solemnly to the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers to escape punishment; they swore that they intended it for the benefit of the less able who lived on the outskirts of Madinah, since, they reasoned, it was closer than any other mosque (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 220 The Qubā’ Mosque, which was not far from the hypocrites’ ‘mosque’ (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa‘dī). Other exegetes, notably al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī (*al-Wajīz*), state that the mosque intended here was the Prophet’s Mosque. Yet the aya is of general intent and could apply to either of these two mosques (cf. Riḍā, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 221 ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “A single Prayer in this mosque of mine is better than a thousand Prayers in any other mosque, but the Sanctified Mosque” (Muslim: 1395). Sahl Ibn Ḥunayf (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Whoever purifies himself in his home, then comes to Qubā’ Mosque and Prays in it a Prayer, his will be the like of the reward of ‘umrah ‘lesser pilgrimage’” (al-Nasā’ī: 699, Ibn Mājah: 1412).
- 222 “Verily Allah likes those who repeatedly repent and those who purify themselves” (2: 222).

﴿109﴾ (223) Is the one who finds his building on Mindfulness of Allah, and His Pleasure, better or he who finds his building on the edge of a crumbling cliff and it collapses with him in Hellfire—Allah guides not the ‘persistently unjust people’ (224). ﴿110﴾ The building they have erected will always be a nagging suspicion in their hearts until their hearts are rent apart (225)—Allah is indeed All-Knowing, All-Wise.

﴿111﴾ (226) Verily Allah has bought from the Believers their lives and their money that theirs is Paradise; they fight in the path of Allah, kill and get killed (227). A promise onus on Him in the Torah, the Evangel and the Qur’an; Who is more fulfilling of His promise than Allah! (228)

أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُيُوتَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُيُوتَهُ عَلَىٰ
شِقَاقِ جُرْفٍ هَارٍ فَأَنْهَارُ بِهِ فِي نَارٍ جَهَنَّمَ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ لَا يَزَالُ
بُنِيَتُهُمُ الَّذِي بَنَوْا رِيْبَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَّا أَنْ
تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

* إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ
وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعَدَا
عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ
وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ

- 223 There could not be a more startling contrast between the deeds and buildings of the devotedly pious and those of the resolutely irreligious, than the one described here. All deeds are built on intentions, be they pure or otherwise (cf. al-Qurtubī, al-Sa‘dī).
- 224 “‘How would Allah guide ‘those’ people who Denied after their Belief? They had borne witness that the Messenger is true and clear evidences had come to them—Allah does not guide the unjust people” (3: 86).
- 225 This construction they erected will always be a cause for hypocrisy to dwell in their hearts as long as they live (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 226 Having explained what real hypocrisy is, this passage provides an impressive backcloth against which to gauge what real Belief is (cf. Riḍā).
- 227 “‘While’ Among people are those who sell themselves seeking the Pleasure of Allah—indeed Allah is Most Kind to His servants” (2: 207).
- 228 “Whereas those who Believe and do good deeds, We will admit them into Gardens, under which rivers flow, forever they abide therein. ‘This is’ The true promise of Allah, and whose word is more truthful than Allah’s!” (4: 122).

Rejoice then in the merchandise which you have traded in—that is ‘truly’ the great triumph. ﴿112﴾ ‘These are⁽²²⁹⁾’ The ‘truly’ repentant⁽²³⁰⁾, the ‘sincere’ worshippers, the ‘ever’ grateful, the ‘observantly’ fasting⁽²³¹⁾, the ‘repeatedly’ bowing down and prostrating, the enjoiners of virtue and advisers against what is unacceptable, and the keepers of the boundaries of Allah⁽²³²⁾; give glad tidings to the Believers.

فَأَسْتَبَشِرُوا بِنُبَأِكُمْ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ
وَدَلَّكَ هُوَ الْقَوْمُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١١٢﴾ التَّائِبُونَ
الْعَابِدُونَ الْحَامِدُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ
الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ الْأَمْرُونَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٢﴾

229 The following is a list of the most predominant characteristics of sincere Believers (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Rāzī). Look how beautiful they are!

230 This relates to the title of this Sura *al-Tawbah* (Repentance) and its central theme; that the door of repentance is always open but only those who are truthful enough will see it and make the effort to cross the threshold. It is foregrounded here for its significance in this context, where many people are reluctant, stuck in their old ways and unwilling to seize the opportunity, or simply they cannot, because it takes ‘stepping out of oneself’ to make it through.

The first step of earnest repentance is sincere Faith (*īmān*) which marks one’s noticeable departure from Denial (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

231 *al-Sā’ihūn* is a complex word and here exegetes are of different opinions about it. Originally, *al-sā’ihūn* are the ones who travel the land (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Most exegetes state that it denotes the ones who fast (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī) citing in the process the opinion of many Companions (رضي الله عنهم) and rightly-guided predecessors. al-Azharī (*Tahdhīb al-Lughah*, 5/113) opines that the fasters are called *sā’ihūn* because they are like the devout worshippers who travel the land carrying no food with them, the fasting person goes about life without food when observing this form of worship. Another strong opinion is that *al-sā’ihūn* are the ones who go about the land in pursuance of good deeds, like those who travel to fight in the path of God, seeking knowledge, to perform Hajj and ‘*umrah*, etc. (cf. al-Qāsimī, Riḍā, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

232 They follow the commandments of God, and uphold religious rulings (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

﴿113﴾⁽²³³⁾ It is not for the Prophet and those who Believe to ask for forgiveness for the Associators – even if they were related – after it became clear to them that they are the companions of Hell⁽²³⁴⁾.
 ﴿114﴾⁽²³⁵⁾ Ibrāhīm’s asking for forgiveness for his father was only for a promise that he made him. When it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah,

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا
 لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أُولَىٰ قُرْبَىٰ
 مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ
 الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
 لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَنْ مَوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَّهَا
 أَيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ
 لِلَّهِ

233 The next four passages provide certain manners of conduct based on the events and personages dealt with in this sura. The Messenger (ﷺ) and Believers are told here not to seek forgiveness for the Associators who perished in a state of Denial. It establishes once and for all that the tie of creed is even stronger than the tie of blood relationship (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

234 Sa’īd Ibn al-Musayyib narrated through his father (رضي الله عنه) that: “When ‘the Messenger’s dear foster uncle’ Abū Ṭālib was on his death bed, the Messenger (ﷺ) came to him and there were ‘the hardcore Deniers’ Abū Jahl and ‘Abdullāh Ibn Abī Umayyah Ibn al-Mughīrah at his bed. The Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Say: “There is no God but Allah”, a word with which I will testify on your behalf with Allah.” Abū Jahl and ‘Abdullāh Ibn Abī Umayyah Ibn al-Mughīrah said: “Abū Ṭālib, would you abandon the creed of ‘your father’ ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib!” The Messenger (ﷺ) kept on proposing it to him and repeating the same statement, until Abū Ṭālib’s last words when he spoke to them were that he was on the creed of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, and refused to say: “There is no God but Allah”. The Messenger (ﷺ) then said: “By Allah I shall keep on asking for forgiveness for you, unless I am told to cease!” For that Allah sent down: “It is not for the Prophet and those who Believe to ask for forgiveness for the Associators – even if they were related – after it became clear to them that they are the companions of Hell”...” (al-Bukhārī: 3884, Muslim: 24).

235 This command is not exclusive to Islam as it is ever has been in effect since the time of Abraham (رضي الله عنه), whose creed is the prototypical precursor of all Heavenly-revealed religions (cf. al-Rāzī). Also this aya makes it clear that the number of ayas which mention Abraham’s seeking forgiveness for his father (cf. 14: 41, 19: 46-47, 26: 86, 60: 4) do not mean that Abraham (رضي الله عنه) was given a privilege that the most honourable Messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ) was denied (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

he disowned him—verily Ibrāhīm is ever imploring ‘with fervent prayers’, most longanimous. ﴿115﴾⁽²³⁶⁾ Allah would not misguide a people after He had guided them, until after making plain to them what they need to be Mindful of—verily Allah is All-Knowing of everything. ﴿116﴾ Verily to Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth, He gives life and causes death and you have no ally or helper beside Allah.

﴿117﴾⁽²³⁷⁾ Allah has relented towards the Prophet, and the Immigrants and the Helpers who followed him in the hour of undersupply, after the hearts of a group of them were about to swerve but He relented on them⁽²³⁸⁾;

تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَمَا
كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْمًا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَهُمْ
حَتَّىٰ يَسِيرَتَ لَهُمْ مَا يَتَّقُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ
شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٦﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١١٧﴾

لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ
وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبَ فَرِيقٍ مِّنْهُمْ
ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ

236 This aya is meant to abate the fears of the Believers who thought that they would be held to account over their asking for forgiveness for dead Associator relatives, after the command came down (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Jazā’irī). On the other hand, they are not to lament the fate of the dead Deniers because the Signs had been made clear to them but they willingly chose to stick to their ways (cf. Abū Ḥayyān): “Whoever takes sides against the Messenger, only after guidance was made clear to him, and follows a path different to that of the Believers, We will lead him ‘all alone’ towards what he headed for and We will scorch him in Hellfire—awful indeed in the destination” (4: 115).

237 Repentance is only accepted from the truthful; the door of repentance is still open given this caveat (cf. al-Zamakhsharī). This passage gives examples of these who sincerely sought repentance.

Exegetes are of different opinions as to why the Messenger (ﷺ) is mentioned alongside his Companions here. al-Qurṭubī quoting ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) who conceives that it was because the Messenger (ﷺ) granted the hypocrites permission to remain behind (cf. Aya 43 above).

238 Some within the army of Believers were about to succumb and give in under their overpowering circumstances, especially given the severe

verily He is Most Compassionate, Most Merciful towards them. ﴿118﴾ And 'He relented' towards the three who were left behind⁽²³⁹⁾, 'not' until the land tightened around them despite its vastness and their own selves straitened them, and they became certain that there was no refuge from Allah except in Him; He relented on them so that they may repent—verily none but Allah is the All-Forgiving the Most Merciful. ﴿119﴾ You who Believe, be Mindful of Allah and be among the Truthful⁽²⁴⁰⁾.

إِنَّهُ بِهِمْ رءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلَفُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا ضَاكَّتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحَبَتْ وَضَاكَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَن لَّا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١١٨﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّٰدِقِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

death of necessary supplies and procurements that the campaign endured (cf. al-Zajjāj). But God always delivers the sincere.

- 239 These are Ka'b Ibn Mālik, Hilāl Ibn Umayyah and Murārah Ibn al-Rabī', who were sincere Companions but, for one reason or another and without valid excuses, failed to join the Messenger (ﷺ) in his campaign. When he came back, they did not fabricate alibis like the hypocrites did but told the outright truth. To punish them, the Messenger imposed a ban on them; he forbade people to talk to them and ordered them to stay away from their wives. This state of affairs lasted for fifty nights until this aya came down. During this time, they endured acute mental anguish, being both sincere and ostracized by the society to which they belonged. This aya beautifully encapsulates how constrained they felt. For a very detailed firsthand account of their story see al-Bukhārī: 4418 and Muslim: 2769.
- 240 The Truthfulness of these three Companions delivered them (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah). 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Abide by truthfulness (*al-ṣidq*), as truthfulness leads to sincere piety (*al-birr*) and sincere piety leads to Paradise. A man speaks the truth and heeds it until he is recorded with Allah as an affirmer of the truth (*siddīq*). Beware of lying, as it leads to rebelliousness (*fujūr*) and rebelliousness leads to Hellfire. A man keeps on lying and sticking to lies until he is recorded with Allah as a liar" (al-Bukhārī: 6094, Muslim: 2607).

﴿120﴾ (241) It is not for the people of Madinah and the herds people around them to remain back behind Allah's Messenger nor to draw themselves away from him⁽²⁴²⁾. That because they will suffer no thirst, 'hard' toil, severe hunger in the path of Allah; nor would they tread a ground that infuriates the Deniers or get a portion of an enemy⁽²⁴³⁾ without it recorded for them as a good deed—verily Allah wastes not the reward of good-doers⁽²⁴⁴⁾. ﴿121﴾ Nor do they give out any sum, small or large, or cross a valley, without it recorded for them, so that Allah may reward them 'as much as they would be' for the best of what they used to do⁽²⁴⁵⁾.

مَا كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ
مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ أَنْ يَتَخَلَّفُوا عَنِ رَسُولِ
اللَّهِ وَلَا يَرْعَبُوا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ ذَلِكَ
بِأَنَّهُمْ لَا يُصِيبُهُمْ ظَمَأٌ وَلَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا
مَخْمَصَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَطَؤُونَ مَوْطِئًا
يَغِيظُ الْكُفَّارَ وَلَا يَنَالُونَ مِنْ عَدُوِّ
تَبَلًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ
نَفَقَةً صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً وَلَا يَقْطَعُونَ
وَادِيًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ
مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

- 241 This is a gentle encouraging reminder for the rest of the community to “be among the truthful”, the Messenger (ﷺ) and his honourable Companions, and join them in their campaign gaining great rewards in the process (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 242 “The Prophet is more worthy of the Believers than their own selves...” (33: 6).
- 243 Their overcoming their enemy, be it significant or otherwise; killing, injuring, taking captive, winning spoils or defeating (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 244 “Verily Allah does not deal ‘anyone’ unjustly as much as a mote’s weight; if it is a ‘one’ good deed done, then He multiplies it and grants from His own ‘additionally’ a great reward” (4: 40).
- 245 “Whoever does good, whether male or female, while being a Believer, We will surely cause them to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward ‘in the Hereafter’ according to the best of what they used to do” (16: 97).

﴿122﴾ (246) The Believers are not to mobilize wholly. Would there mobilize from every band of them 'only' a group so that 'the remaining ones would be able' to seek knowledge in religion and warn their folks upon their return 'to them' (247), might they be cautious. ﴿123﴾ (248) You who Believe, fight the Deniers who are nearer to you; let them find sternness in you and know that Allah is with the Mindful.

﴿122﴾ وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً
فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ
لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا
رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ
مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلِيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلَظَةً
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

﴿124﴾ (249) Whenever a sura is sent down, some among them would say: "Who of you has this one increased his Faith!" (250)

﴿124﴾ وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلْنَا سُورَةً فَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَفُؤْ
أَيُّكُمْ زَادَتْهُ هَذِهِ إِيمَانًا

- 246 This is a crucial regulatory note to the community. As much as fighting in the path of God is important to safeguard the Faith, seeking knowledge is no less important for the wellbeing of the society (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 247 The meaning of this aya is disputed, however, most exegetes interpret it in the way it is translated here with the explanatory parentheticals (cf. al-Zajjāj, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qurtubī, al-Qāsimī, al-Sa'dī, *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 248 This is yet another security procedure for the community to follow; ensuring that the borders are secure and the enemy does not think lightly of aggressing against the Believers (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 249 This passage yet again directly tackles the subject of hypocrites so that this extremely important issue is not left without being again raised at the end of the sura. The community is to be left with a clear reminder of the hypocrites' unsettling presence and is left with a message to think about and reconsider their position.
- 250 This is what some of the hypocrites would facetiously say whenever a portion of the Qur'an was sent down (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Sa'dī). They flippantly did so to ridicule the Believers and to stress their defiance because some Qur'anic ayas specifically said that they would increase the Faith of the Believers (cf. 8: 2) and/or that some of the Believers actually declared that whenever they heard a portion of the Qur'an their Faith increased (cf. al-Bukhārī: 799) (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

But those who truly Believe, it has increased their Faith and they rejoice⁽²⁵¹⁾. ^{﴿125﴾} As for those in whose hearts is disease, it has increased them filth to their filth⁽²⁵²⁾; they die as Deniers. ^{﴿126﴾} Do not they see that they are afflicted with trial once or twice every year⁽²⁵³⁾; they repent not nor are they admonished! ^{﴿127﴾} ⁽²⁵⁴⁾ Whenever a sura is sent down, they look at each other ‘as if to say’: “Can anyone see you?” Then they turn away; may Allah turn away their hearts for them being folks who discern not.

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فزَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا
وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ
فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فزَادَتْهُمْ رِجْسًا إِلَى
رِجْسِهِمْ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾
أَوَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُونَ فِي كُلِّ
عَامٍ مَرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لَا يَتُوبُونَ
وَلَا هُمْ يَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلْنَا
سُورَةً نَّظَرَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ هَلْ
يَرَاكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ ثُمَّ انصَرَفُوا صَرَفَ
اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

- 251 “O people! Indeed, there has come to you a warning from your Lord, a cure for what is in the hearts, a guide, and a mercy for the Believers. *Say: “In Allah’s grace and mercy let them rejoice. That is far better than whatever ‘wealth` they amass ”” (10: 57-58). “We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good news to all who ‘humbly` submit” (16: 89).
- 252 “We send down of the Qur’an what is healing and mercy to the Believers but it only increases the wrongdoers in loss” (17: 82).
- 253 They are being sent reminders and wake-up calls each year but little do they heed (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Were they only when Our affliction befell them to ‘sincerely` humble themselves! Nay, but their hearts became hard and Satan made what they used to do look attractive to them” (6: 43).
- 254 This aya throws light on a very crafty subtlety of the hypocrites: whenever yet another a portion of the Qur’an comes down addressing them, they would exchange discreet knowing glances as if to say to each other: “Who is this person who sees you while you plot in secret and tells Muhammad [ﷺ] about it?” (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). In fact, this aya in itself is sign enough for them that God knows what they reveal and what they hold in secret. Instead of paying heed and taking this sign for what it is, they turn away reverting to their ways: “...but the hypocrites comprehend not!” (63: 7); “Indeed the worst of the all creatures with Allah are the deaf and dumb—those who cannot heed. *Had Allah known any good in them, He would have made them listen; ‘even` had He made them listen, they would have turned away, looking the other way” (8: 22-23).

﴿128﴾ (255) There has come to you a Messenger from your own⁽²⁵⁶⁾, on whom your adversity is hard⁽²⁵⁷⁾, ‘deeply’ concerned for you⁽²⁵⁸⁾ and compassionate and merciful to the Believers⁽²⁵⁹⁾.

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ
عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ
بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

255 This final passage rounds up the sura and leaves all concerned parties with a message. Tough as the dictates and premises of this sura are, they are essential remedies for the betterment and long-term viability of society as well as the individuals who live within it. The kind of tough love needed so that people may ponder their fate and seek out the open doors of repentance. The additional advantage being that the one who oversees their implementation is one of their own, as opposed to a foreign element who is not alive to the realities and intricacies of the recipients of the reminder, and that he is inherently empathetic and compassionate “a mercy to all-beings” (cf. 21: 107, al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

256 “Our Lord send them a Messenger from among them to recite Your Signs to them, teach them the Book and Wisdom and purify them; You are the All-Prevailing, the All-Wise” (2: 129).

257 ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Āṣ (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “The Messenger (ﷺ) recited Allah Almighty’s saying in Sura *Ibrāhīm* ‘the following’: “My Lord! They ‘false idols’ have caused many people to go astray. So whoever follows me is with me, and whoever disobeys me—then surely You are ‘still’ All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (14: 36) and ‘Isā’s saying: “If you Punish them, then they are ‘only’ Your servants, but if You forgive them, then You are truly the All-Prevailing, All-Wise” (5: 118). Then he (ﷺ) raised his hands and implored: “O Allah, ‘spare’ my nation, ‘spare’ my nation!” He then cried. Upon that Allah said to ‘archangel’ Gabriel: “Gabriel go to Muhammad and –while you Lord knows best– ask him: “What makes you cry?”” Gabriel (رضي الله عنه) came to him and asked him so the Messenger (ﷺ) told him. He went back and Allah said: “Gabriel go to Muhammad and tell him that: “We shall comfort you and will not hurt you with regards to your nation”” (Muslim: 202).

258 The Messenger (ﷺ) was keen on and impassioned about guiding people and teaching them all that is good a beneficial (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “My example with my nation is that of a man who ignites a fire and moths and insects keep on falling into it. You are drawn to fall into the fire but I am holding you back by your waistbands” (al-Bukhārī: 6483, Muslim: 2284).

259 “By Allah’s Mercy you ‘Muhammad’ relented to them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have disbanded from around you. Pardon

﴿129﴾ (260) But if they turn on their heels, say ‘Muhammad’: “Allah is sufficient for me. There is no God but Him; in Him I put my trust. He is the Lord of the Grand Throne.”⁽²⁶¹⁾

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٢٩﴾



them and pray for forgiveness for them and seek their counsel in affairs...” (3: 159). ‘Abdullāh Ibn Abī Awfā (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “The Prophet (ﷺ) would not have ever disdained or scorned beating a path with a widow or a poor person to conduct their affair” (al-Tirmidhī, *al-‘Ilal al-Kabīr*: 670, al-Nasā’ī: 1414). Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “A herd’s man urinated in the mosque and some people stood up to him. The Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Leave him and do not interrupt him!” When the man was done, he (ﷺ) called for a bucket of water and poured it over it ‘the man’s urine’” (al-Bukhārī: 6025, Muslim: 284).

- 260 If the rebellious choose to pay no heed to all the reminders and the hard-hitting discourse abound in this sura and turn away from repentance, the Messenger (ﷺ) is to seek aid in God Who is sufficient enough as Helper (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): “He is ‘The Lord of the East and West, there is no god but Him, so take Him as ‘your’ Guardian’” (73: 9).
- 261 The sura ends with a comforting note to the Messenger (ﷺ), being of such a tender constitution, and, by default, the Believers in the face of all stiff opposition and unyielding resistance. He is to seek support in God and find solace in these words: ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to say when grieved: “There is no god worthy of worship except for Allah, the Most Great, the oft-Forbearing. There is no god worthy of worship except for Allah, Lord of the Great Throne. There is no god worthy of worship except for Allah, Lord of the Heavens, the Earth and the Majestic Throne” (al-Bukhārī: 6346, Muslim: 2730). Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “‘*Ḥasbunā Allāh-u wa ni‘ma l-Wakīlu* (Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers)” was said by Ibrāhīm when he was thrown into the fire. It was also said by Muhammad (ﷺ): “*Those who ‘when’ people said to them: “People have regrouped for you, so fear them”, their Belief’ only grew firmer and they said: “Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers”*” (3: 173)” (al-Bukhārī: 4563).



سُورَةُ يُونُسَ

Yūnus
(Jonah)



Yūnus (Jonah)

Title: thus titled after Prophet Jonah, *Yūnus* (ﷺ) (cf. al-Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, p. 529, al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, 4: 339, Ibn Abī al-Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaḥ*: 3566). Prophet Jonah's people were a one-off case in the history of humanity whom were spared impending Divine Punishment when they showed sincere Faith. In their story there is a pertinent lesson, one which is central to this sura's theme.

Merit: it is the first of the *al-mi'ūn* (the hundreds-numbered) suras, the ones in which there are more than one hundred ayas, the second of the four categories of Qur'anic suras (cf. Introduction, p. 28, Key 7), coming just after the seven lengthy suras which make up the first third of the Qur'an. It is also the first of the Qur'anic suras named after a Noble Prophet, of which there are six: *Yūnus*, *Hūd*, *Yūsuf*, *Ibrāhīm*, *Muḥammad* and *Nūḥ*.

Theme: Sura *Yūnus* captures the ethos of the battle that then raged between both the Believing and the Denying camps and the articles of Faith they so fervently differed upon: Allah's Godship and sole Lordship, Prophet Muhammad's (ﷺ) Messengership and the truthfulness of revelation, and resurrection and reckoning on the Day of Judgement. To this end, it cites the arguments of the Deniers and provides a number of logical and commonsense rebutting counterarguments.

Key: it is unanimously agreed that this is a Makkan sura (cf. al-Fayrūzābādī, *al-Biqā'ī*, *Riḍā*); revealed at the height of the ardent persecution campaign that the Makkan Deniers mounted against the Believers and which culminated in their three-year all out, strict embargo limiting the Believers to the narrow mountain pass of Shi'b Abī Ṭālib. During these gruelling times, Sura *Yūnus* came down to assure the Believers of the rightfulness of their cause and to promise them that their Faith would deliver them from hardship and affliction.

Equally, it tells the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers that the Deniers' hearts, being so resolutely rebellious, were sealed off, failed cases who did not present conducive ploughing ground for the call of the Message and were to be parted with. They deserved God's Wrath and Divine Punishment, and like so was the fate of all earlier Denying nations, with the single notable exception of Prophet Jonah's (ﷺ) people. Thus

it paves the way, and mentally prepares the Believing community along with their leader (ﷺ) to detach themselves from that community in search of a more receptive one; just like the Believers with Prophets Noah and Moses (ﷺ) did and whom God rescued from their tormentors, providing them with a better world because of their holding on to their Faith.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿1﴾ *Alif, Lām, Rā'* ⁽¹⁾; those⁽²⁾ are the Signs of the Wise Book⁽³⁾.
 ﴿2﴾ 'How' Is it a wonder to people⁽⁴⁾ that We have sent revelation to a man of their own⁽⁵⁾: "You shall warn people and give glad tidings to those who have Believed that they have a truthful footing⁽⁶⁾ with their Lord". Those who have Denied 'even' said: "Indeed this one is a magician⁽⁷⁾, manifestly!"

الرَّتِّلَاكَ ءَايَاتِ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١﴾ أَكَانَ
 لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى رَجُلٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ
 أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ
 صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ الْكٰفِرُونَ إِنَّ هَذَا
 لَسٰجِدٌ مِّمَّنْ ﴿٢﴾

- 1 The sura opens with these three disjointed letters that highlight the inimitable nature of the Qur'an and which are meant as a challenge to those who argue with the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers regarding the truthfulness of the Message (cf. 2: 1).
- 2 The far demonstrative pronoun *tilka* (those) is employed here to signify the loftiness of the Qur'an's ayas (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 3 *al-Kitāb al-Ḥakīm* (The Wise Book) is the Qur'an whose ayas are full of wisdom, fair rulings and guidance to the Straight Path (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). The choice of this appellation in this position along with the pointer "*tilka/those*" are meant to highlight the Qur'an's inimitability. The current sura is full of proofs testifying to monotheism and signalling the aberration of polytheism. These "Signs" and the earlier revealed ones are a living testimony to the wisdom of the Book which is a far cry from any substitute or alternative that the polytheist seeks to replace it with (as in Aya 15 below) (cf. al-Ghirmāṭī, *Malāk al-Ta'wīl*, Ibn 'Āshūr): "Alif, Lām, Rā'; 'this is' a Book whose Signs are well perfected and then fully explained, from 'the One' All-Wise, Most Knowledgeable" (11: 1).
- 4 In this instance, given the context, it means the Makkan Deniers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 5 For a refutation and a detailed discussion of their argument cf. 6: 8-9 and 17: 94-95.
- 6 *Qadama ṣidq* (lit. a foot of truthfulness); *qadam* is a sending forth (*taqdimah*) of good deeds; a person who pulls ahead of others, for good or for bad, was figuratively called *qadam* (lit. foot) by Arabians (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 2: 489, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Here it means that for the Believers is felicity as has been earlier decreed by God and written in the Preserved Tablet for their sending forth of good deeds and Believing in Muhammad (ﷺ) who guided them to the path that leads to Paradise (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī).
- 7 They could only rationalize the Message's bewildering effect by saying that it bewitches people (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Riḍā, Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿3﴾ (8) Verily your 'True' Lord is Allah Who created the Heavens and Earth in six days⁽⁹⁾ then Established⁽¹⁰⁾ Himself on the Throne; He conducts 'all' affairs⁽¹¹⁾. There is no intercessor 'with Him' except with His permission⁽¹²⁾. That is Allah, your Lord, so worship Him—do you not take heed!

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
 فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدَبِّرُ
 الْأَمْرَ مَا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ
 اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

- 8 This passage underlines the most critical issue over which the Believing and the Denying camps differ: God's Godship (*Ulūhiyyah*) and Lordship (*Rubūbiyyah*). It also shows Who the Omnipotent Almighty God really is (cf. al-Sa'dī, al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān).
- 9 This is a manifest sign of God's omnipotence, and thus worthiness of worship (cf. Abū Ḥayyān) (for a detailed discussion cf. 7: 54): "Indeed your 'True' Lord is Allah Who created the Heavens and Earth in six days, then Established Himself on the Throne; He shrouds night over day, relentlessly pursuing it; the sun, the moon and the stars are dominated by His Command; verily for Him 'alone' is the creation and the Command—glorified be Allah, the Lord of all beings" (7: 54); "Allah is He Who has created the Heavens and Earth and everything in between in six days, then Established Himself on the Throne. You have no Protector or Intercessor besides Him. Will you not then be heedful?" (32: 4).
- 10 The verb *istawā* literally means rose and ascended in a manner befitting God Almighty's Majesty only and unlike any of His creation. This Attribute of Almighty God (ﷻ) should be established as it is without *tashbīh* (drawing analogies), *takyīf* (adaptation) or *ta'fīl* (repudiation) (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī).
- 11 God Almighty runs and oversees all of the affairs of His creation (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Shawkānī): "There is no moving creature on Earth but its provision is due from Allah. He knows its residing place and its deposit; all is in a clear book" (11: 6).
- 12 This indicates God Almighty's unbridled Kingship; He is not like any sovereign with whom people, especially an inner circle of close aides and relatives, dare to intercede, relying on his need for them. Instead, God is free from any need for help or assistance (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Iqtidā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*, 2: 362): "Who is it, that is 'so daring' to intercede with Him without His permission!" (2: 255)

﴿4﴾ To Him shall be your return, all of you⁽¹³⁾. 'This is' The promise of Allah, truthful, 'for' He indeed initiates creation and then brings it back so that He rewards those who have Believed and did good deeds with justice. 'But' Those who have Denied for them are a boiling drink⁽¹⁴⁾ and a painful Punishment for their 'persistent' Denying.

إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ حَقًّا إِنَّهُ يَبْدُوَ
الْحَاقِقُ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْقِسْطِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ شْرَابٌ
مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٤﴾

﴿5﴾ (15)He is the One Who made the sun a glow⁽¹⁶⁾ and the moon a light⁽¹⁷⁾ and ordained for it⁽¹⁸⁾ stations so that you 'may' know the number of years and calculation 'of time'. Never has Allah created that except for the Truth⁽¹⁹⁾;

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا
وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ
مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ

- 13 That is on the Day of Judgement upon resurrection (cf. Ibn 'Atīyyah, al-Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 14 "Indeed We have prepared a Fire for the wrongdoers whose walls will envelop them from all sides. If they call for relief, they will be relieved with water like molten metal, scalding their faces. What a terrible drink! What a painful resting place!" (18: 29)
- 15 This passage provides concrete signs of God's Godship and Lordship (cf. al-Sa'dī, al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān).
- 16 *Ḍiyā'an* means glowing with glaring light (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 17 *Nūran* is exhuming light (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr): "...made the moon 'as' light in them and the sun a lantern" (71: 16).
- 18 Although the sun has its own stations as well, the moon is accentuated here to show people God's great grace of making them aware of the passage of time whereby they can place events and utilize it for the betterment of their living: this because the phases and stations of the moon are clearer and less confusing than those of the sun. This is why people find the lunar calendar easier to follow and more reliable than the solar calendar. This is especially the case in Islam where all events are pegged against the lunar calendar (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 19 *al-Ḥaqq* is the wisdom meant to lead people to realize the Oneness of God and the greatness of His Attributes; they were not created for some purposeless game (cf. Ibn 'Atīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): "We have not created the Heaven and Earth and everything in between without purpose;

He details the Signs for those who attain knowledge⁽²⁰⁾. ﴿6﴾ Verily in the alternation of night and day, and whatever Allah has created in the Heavens and Earth are Signs⁽²¹⁾ for the Mindful ones.

يُفَضِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ
الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْتَقُونَ ﴿٦﴾

﴿7﴾ (22) Verily those who hope not in meeting Us⁽²³⁾, contented themselves with the worldly life and took comfort in it⁽²⁴⁾; the 'very' ones who are 'deliberately' heedless of Our Signs.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَأَنَّنُوا بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا
عَتَفُولُونَ ﴿٧﴾

that is the conjecture of those who have Denied—woe to the Deniers because of the Fire "that they will suffer!" (38: 27)

- 20 "He is the One Who 'ever' cracks the dawn, and made night a repose, and the sun and the moon 'run' in 'exact' calculation – that is the measure of the All-Prevailing, All-Knowing. *He is the One Who made the stars for you 'as Signs' so that you may find the way through them amid the 'deep' darkness of the land and sea—indeed We have detailed the Signs to those who 'really' know" (6: 96-97).
- 21 These are so-called cosmic Signs (*āyāt kawniyyah*). They, along with the Qur'anic Signs (*āyāt Qur'āniyyah*), work together to prove to people the truth of the Message and thus lead them to Faith. People are encouraged to think about these Signs and use their reason when considering them (cf. al-Sa'dī, Riḍā): "Verily in the Heavens and Earth are Signs for the Believers; *in your creation and whatever moving creature He disperses are Signs for people of certitude; *in the alternation of night and day and the provision that Allah has sent down from the sky and with it He revived the Earth after its death, and the shifting of the winds are Signs for people of reason. *Those are the Signs of Allah, We recite them for you 'Muhammad' with Truth—in what speech, after Allah and His Signs do they Believe!" (45: 3-6)
- 22 Two types of people are compared and contrasted here with regards to how much attention they pay to the Signs of God: the deliberately heedless and the willingly Believing. Their state in the afterlife is also contrasted (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Rāzī).
- 23 These people do not give a second's thought to resurrection and reckoning. Being Deniers, they have no fear of it at all (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī).
- 24 This is a natural outcome of their frame of mind; the current life is all that matters to them: "They said: "It is nothing but this worldly life of ours; we die and we live and nothing annihilates us except 'the passage of' time!" They have no 'proper' knowledge 'as' of that; they only conject!" (45: 24)

﴿8﴾ These, their resort is the Fire for what they used to earn⁽²⁵⁾. ﴿9﴾ Verily the ones who have Believed and done good deeds, their Lord will guide them by their Faith⁽²⁶⁾; rivers flow under them in the Gardens of bliss⁽²⁷⁾. ﴿10﴾ Their prayer in it is “Glorified be You, our Lord”, their greeting in it is “Peace” and the concluding of their prayer is “All’ Gratitude be to Allah, the Lord of all beings!”

أُولَٰئِكَ مَا لَهُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ يَمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨﴾
 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ
 رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمَانِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ
 فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٩﴾ دَعْوَاهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ
 اللَّهُمَّ وَتَحِيَّاتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ ۗ وَءَاخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ
 أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

﴿11﴾ ⁽²⁸⁾Would Allah hasten evil to people as much as they ‘seek to’ hasten good⁽²⁹⁾, their ‘given’ term would have been terminated. ‘But they are given respite so’ We leave those who hope not in meeting Us to wander aimlessly in their blindness⁽³⁰⁾.

*وَلَوْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ أَسْرَأْتَعَجَاهُمْ
 بِالْخَيْرِ لَفَضَّى إِلَيْهِمْ أَجَلَهُمْ فَتَدَّرُ الَّذِينَ
 لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١١﴾

25 This is also a natural outcome of their state of mind.

26 Sincere Faith delivers: “Allah is the Ally of the Believers; He delivers them from darkness into light. ‘But’ Those who Deny, the allies of whom are the false idols; they take them out of light into darkness—these are the company of the Fire, therein they abide forever” (2: 257).

27 Paradise (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī). The flow of rivers is symbolic of everlasting, abundant bliss. This is also indicated by the kind of language the dwellers of Paradise use (as in the next aya), which is free from want and yearning, enwrapped in peace and full of gratitude: “Enter it ‘Paradise’ you ‘Believers’; that is the Day of Eternity. *In it they have whatever they wish for and We have more!” (50: 34-35)

28 Here light is shed on another side of the Denying mindset. Being ignorant as they are, they seek to hasten God’s Punishment whenever they are warned (cf. al-Rāzī): “Mention Muhammad’ When they ‘the Deniers’ said: “O Allah, if this is the Truth from You, then rain on us stones from the sky or bring us a painful punishment!” (8: 32)

29 “Man prays for evil as much as he prays for good; man is ever hasty!” (17: 11)

30 Ṭughyān, lit. transgression and exceeding the limits (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, 41, al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, 321): “Have you

﴿12﴾ (31) When harm touches a human, he would pray to Us "whether lying" on his side or sitting or standing, but whenever We remove his harm from him, he "no sooner" moves on as if he did not pray to Us for a harm that touched him; thus has "always" been prettified for those of excess what they used to do.

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنبَيْهِ
أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَائِمًا فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ
مَرَّ كَأَن لَّمْ يَدْعُنَا إِلَى ضُرِّ مَسَّهُ ۗ كَذَلِكَ
زَيَّنَ لِلْمُسرِّفِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

﴿13﴾ (32) Certainly We have destroyed "many of" the generations before you when they wronged; their Messengers had come to them with clear evidences yet they would never Believe!⁽³³⁾ Thus We requite the criminal people.

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونِ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا
وَجَاءَ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا
كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

seen him who takes his whims and desires to be his god; whom Allah has misguided though knowledge came "to him", sealed up his hearing and his heart and placed a cover over his eyes? Who then will guide him after Allah? So will you not pay heed?" (45: 23)

- 31 This is to show that their prayer for evil was not sincere; being frail as humans are (cf. al-Rāzī): "When We bless man, he turns away and withdraws. Yet when evil touches him, he is full of prolonged prayers" (41: 51).
- 32 Here they are invited to consider the fate of earlier nations when they Denied and thought lightly of God's punishment (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "Whatever a Sign of the Signs of their Lord comes to them; they will only turn away from it. *They have "wilfully" declared false the Truth when it came to them; the "absolute" tidings of what they used to ridicule will "certainly" reach them. *Had they not seen how many a generation before them We have destroyed? We had established them in the land "far" more firmly than how We established you "people"! We sent the sky pouring down on them profusely and We made the rivers run under their feet, "only" then We destroyed them for their sins and We brought into being another generation after them" (6: 4-6).
- 33 "Had not the news of those who came before them reached them: the people of Nūḥ, "the tribes of" 'Ād and Thamūd, the people of Ibrāhīm, the companions of Midian and the overturned; their Messengers came to them with clear evidences! Allah would not have wronged them but they were bent on wronging themselves" (9: 70).

﴿14﴾ Then We made you successors in the land after them, so that We may see how you fare⁽³⁴⁾.

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

﴿15﴾ ⁽³⁵⁾When Our Signs, distinctly evident, are recited to them, those who hope not in meeting Us say: “Come up you ‘Muhammad’ with a Qur’an different from this one, or ‘else’ modify it!⁽³⁶⁾” ⁽³⁷⁾Say: “It is not for me to modify it out of my own accord! I only follow what is revealed to me! Indeed I fear – should I disobey my Lord – the Punishment of a Great Day!⁽³⁸⁾”

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا إِنَّا بِقُرْآنٍ غَيْرِ هَذَا أَوْ بَدِّلُوهُ قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِنْ تِلْقَآئِ نَفْسِي إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابٌ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

﴿16﴾ ⁽³⁹⁾Say: “Had Allah wished,

- 34 Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Life is ‘alluringly’ lush green. Allah will instate you as successors in it and will see how you fare” (Muslim: 2742).
- 35 This passage and the next catalogue how poorly they fared in God’s sight. This passage deals with how scornful they were of the Message itself.
- 36 They hated the parts of the Qur’an that were not to their liking and did not conform to their erroneous way of life (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Shawkānī).
- 37 The following potent answer sets the matter aright by showing that Divine revelation is sacrosanct and is not to be tampered with (cf. al-Wāhidī, al-Basī, al-Baiḍāwī). The answer addresses human reason and evokes matters of Faith.
- 38 This is a proportionately pious, God-fearing answer indeed, one which stands in stark contrast to the Deniers’ demand which belies their characteristically disdainful mindset: “O people! Fear your Lord, verily the quaking of the Hour is surely a grave thing. *The Day you see it, every nursing mother will abandon what she is nursing, and every pregnant woman will deliver her burden ‘prematurely’. And you will see people drunk, though they will not be drunk; but the Punishment of Allah is ‘terribly’ severe” (22: 1-2).
- 39 This is another facet of the answer alluding to their claim that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) was a liar (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Ashūr). The Qurayshites had known the Messenger (ﷺ) very closely for forty long years before the Message came to him and he was commanded to deliver it. They knew very well that he was no liar, no poet and no man of letters (cf. al-Rāzī).

I would not have recited it to you nor made you aware of it; I had stayed among you an age before it, do you not comprehend!”
 ﴿17﴾ (40) Who does greater wrong than, he who fabricates lies against Allah or rejects His Signs—indeed the criminals are never successful!

مَا تَدْرِكُوهُ وَعَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرِكُكُمْ بِهِ
 فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِّن قَبْلِهِ
 أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى
 عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ
 الْمَجْرِمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

﴿18﴾ (41) They worship besides Allah that which neither harms nor benefits them and say: ﴿42﴾: “These are our intercessors with Allah!” Say ‘Muhammad’: “Are you informing Allah of that which He knows not neither in the Heavens nor in Earth?” ﴿43﴾

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ
 وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شَفَعَاؤُنَا
 عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أَتَشِينُونَ اللَّهَ يَمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

How would he then, out of all the artistically inspired people who could easily come up with lies, be the one to concoct such an elaborate narration? Had it not been God’s Own will, he would have never been able to produce a glorious Qur’an like the one he recited: “Do they not recognize their Messenger? So they are in denial of him. *Or do they say: “He is possessed!” Nay but he came to them with the Truth; most of them are ‘indeed’ haters of the Truth!” (23: 69-70). Ibn ‘Abbās relates the interaction that took place between the then Qurayshite leader Abū Sufyān and Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor. In a long narration, the emperor asked Abū Sufyān if they had known Muhammad (ﷺ) as a liar and the answer was in the negative. To that (among many questions he posed) he commented: “I asked you: “Did you accuse him of being a liar before he said what he said?” You said: “No!” Then I am fully aware that he would not abandon lying to people only then to lie about God!” (al-Bukhārī: 7; Muslim: 1773).

- 40 The conclusion makes a point of drawing a line under the one thing that the Prophet’s interlocutors lacked, i.e. sincere Faith, which breeds humbling piety.
- 41 “Who is more astray than one who calls, apart from Allah, upon such as who would not answer him, until the Day of Judgement; they are heedless of their calling!” (46: 5).
- 42 Their reprimand because of their idol worship is an example of what they hated about the Qur’an (cf. al-Rāzī). This is also another aspect of their straying from the straight path (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 43 That is, that He, Glorified be Him, has Associates and that they are of a position to intercede with Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Khāzin).

Glorified and exalted is He above all they Associate 'with Him'!¹⁹ (44) People had been nothing but one nation⁽⁴⁵⁾, and then they differed. Had it not been for a Word, already passed from your Lord⁽⁴⁶⁾, what they differ over would have been 'soon' settled".⁽²⁰⁾ They 'further' say: "Would only a Sign⁽⁴⁷⁾ come down to him from His Lord!"

سُبْحٰنَهُۥ وَتَعَالٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾
 وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ اِلَّا اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوْا
 وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ
 بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ
 لَوْلَا اَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا آيٰتُهُۥ مِنْ رَبِّهِۗ

- 44 This explains how people came to stray and worship idols; they differed over Faith and disobeyed God (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 45 Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "The time between Adam and Noah was ten centuries. Throughout these, people were on the right path of God, but then they started disputing 'over matters of Faith'. So, God sent Prophets bearing glad tidings – and cautioning". (al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*: 2:546, cf. also al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī): "Mankind was one nation, then Allah sent the Prophets bearing good tidings and cautioning, and He sent down with them the Book with Truth so as to arbitrate between people in what they dispute over. It was only disputed over by those to whom it was given after the clear Signs came to them, out of contravention one against the other. But Allah leads the Believers to the Truth, which they disputed over, with His Will—Allah guides those He wills to a straight path" (2: 213)
- 46 That He, Glorified be Him, gives respite to the rebellious until the Day of Judgement (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī): "Had it not been for a Word, already passed, they would already have been destroyed; 'but' their time has been set. *So be patient 'Muhammad' with what they say; glorify the praises of your Lord before sunrise and before its setting, and glorify Him in the hours of the night and at 'both' ends of the day, so that you may be pleased" (20: 129-130).
- 47 That is a miracle (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr); being deliberately heedless to the greatest miracle of all, the Glorious Qur'an: "We have certainly diversified for the people in this Qur'an from every 'kind' of example, but most of the people refused 'anything' except Denying. *They said: "We will not Believe you 'Muhammad' until you make a spring gush out of the ground for us; *or till you have a garden of date palms and grapevines, and you make streams gush forth in the midst of it; *or cause the sky to fall upon us in pieces, as you have claimed, or bring Allah and the angels before us, face to face; *or have a house made of gold; or ascend into the sky. Even then, we will not believe in your ascension until you send a 'real' book down for us to read". Say: "Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a mortal, a Messenger?" (17: 89-93)

Say then ‘Muhammad’: “The Unseen⁽⁴⁸⁾ is for Allah. Wait you then and I shall be among you waiting!⁽⁴⁹⁾”

فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا الْغَيْبُ لِلَّهِ فَانْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ
مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

﴿21﴾ ⁽⁵⁰⁾ Whenever We make humans taste mercy after a hardship that touched them, no sooner, they work their wives against Our Signs⁽⁵¹⁾! Say ‘Muhammad’ “Allah is swifter in wiles”.⁽⁵²⁾ Indeed Our messengers write down what you scheme⁽⁵³⁾.

وَإِذَا آذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِن بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّتْهُمْ
إِذَا لَهُمْ مَكْرٌ فِي آيَاتِنَا قُلْ اللَّهُ أَسْرَعُ مَكْرًا إِنَّ
رُسُلَنَا يَكْتُبُونَ مَا تَمْكُرُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

- 48 Miracles are a matter of *ghayb* (the Unseen) and only God Almighty knows and controls the Unseen (Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “They ‘the Deniers’ had sworn by Allah with their most solemn oaths that if a Sign were to come to them, they would surely Believe in it. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Indeed Signs are from none but Allah!” How would you ‘Believers’ know that when they ‘the Signs’ come, they would ‘still’ not Believe?” (6: 109).
- 49 “Do they wait for nothing but the like of the days of those bygone before! Say ‘Muhammad’: “Wait then! I shall be with you among those who wait!” *Then, We deliver Our Messengers and those who Believe; like so it is incumbent upon Us to deliver the Believers” (10: 102-103).
- 50 This passage identifies the source of the Deniers’ surety by means of which they make such foolhardy demands and toy with God’s most serious Message. They felt secure that no harm could come their way (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn ‘Āshūr). But the precariousness and transience of life as they know it, is beautifully pictured in this passage and the next one through illustrative examples, so that they may reconsider their position: “People! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you might be Mindful. *He Who made the land a carpet and the sky a roof for you, and sent water down from the sky and grew with it ‘all sorts of’ produce as provisions for you. Therefore, ‘knowing this,’ do not set up ‘rivalling’ equals for Him” (2: 21-22).
- 51 These could be the cosmic Signs (cf. al-Rāzī, Riḍā) as well as the Qur’anic Signs (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn ‘Āshūr); as they could all be denied and/or misinterpreted.
- 52 “Yet ‘in the end,’ such evil scheming engulfs none but its authors” (35: 43).
- 53 *Rusulunā* (Our messengers) are the angels who are in charge of recording people’s deeds (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān): “Or do they think We cannot hear their secret ‘thoughts’ and their private counsel? Yes indeed and Our messengers are at their sides, recording ‘everything’” (43: 80).

﴿22﴾⁽⁵⁴⁾ He is the One Who carries you⁽⁵⁵⁾ through the land and at sea⁽⁵⁶⁾, until when you are in the vessels and they run them⁽⁵⁷⁾ in favourable wind, and they rejoice in it, ‘suddenly’ a gusty gale comes upon them and come upon them waves from everywhere and they become certain that they have been surrounded, they invoke Allah being devout in religion to Him: “Should You save us from this, we shall surely be among the thankful!” ﴿23﴾ Whenever He saves them, they no sooner wrongfully transgress⁽⁵⁸⁾ in the land.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسِرُّكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِمْ بِرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَاءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ بِهِمْ دَعَوُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الْاَلَيْنَ لَئِنْ أَجَبْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَامَّا أَجْمَعُهُمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَبْعُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ

- 54 Here is a detailing of the purport of the previous aya, especially people’s reverting to their old ways of rebelliousness after having been saved by God from the ghastly grip of horror.
- 55 God Almighty is the One Who grants people the ability to walk, travel and make and use vehicles (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī): “*The One Who created the species, all of them, and has made for you of vessels and livestock those which you ride. *That you may settle yourselves upon their backs and then remember the favour of your Lord when you have settled upon them and say: “Glorified be He, Who has subjected this to us while we were not able of that. *Indeed to our Lord we are returning”*” (43: 12-14).
- 56 People’s journey in life, vulnerable and precarious as it is, is analogous to a sea voyage, where people ride and never are sure when the tide will turn against them. People need to realize that it is only God’s grace that keeps them safe from the woes and perils that stare them in the face. If they do so, they would surely humble themselves willingly to Him. How many a time have people promised God to be more devout when they are met with life’s harsher realities, only but to easily forget about this once they are delivered: “*When affliction touches you at sea those you pray to besides Him desert you, but when He brings you back safe to land you turn away—man is ever ungrateful!*” (17: 67)
- 57 This second-person plural (you) to third-person plural (them) pronoun shift alludes to the thankless Deniers (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 58 By Denying, Associating false deities with God and committing excesses and sins (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). All transgression is wrongful but it is qualified here with *bi ghayr al-haqq* (wrongfully) to emphasize its nature (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

O people, your transgression is 'only' against your own selves; 'It is no more than' a 'passing' enjoyment of this worldly life, then to Us shall be your return and We shall tell you 'the Truth' of what you used to do⁽⁵⁹⁾.

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا بَعِثُكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ مَتَّعَ
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُكُمْ
بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

﴿24﴾ ⁽⁶⁰⁾ Indeed the example of the worldly life is nothing more than water that We send down from the sky; ⁽⁶¹⁾ soon it gets mixed in the plants of the ground, the kind that people and animals consume⁽⁶²⁾, until when the land assumes its ornament and beautifies⁽⁶³⁾ itself

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنْ
السَّمَاءِ فَأَخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ
النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ
زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ

- 59 God's telling them of their deeds is a tacit threat whereby they need to mind their deeds (cf. al-Rāzī), which are shameful to say the least, since He knows everything and has a minutely detailed record of them: "And the book 'record of deeds' will be placed 'open', and you will see the criminals fearful of what is within it, and they will say: "Woe to us! What is this book that leaves nothing small or great except that it has enumerated it?" They will find what they did present 'before them'. And your Lord does injustice to no one" (18: 49).
- 60 Now that the precariousness of life has been so beautifully captured, its transient nature is depicted here through potent analogy. This is so people may realize that life is nothing but an illusory enjoyment (cf. 3: 185) and that there is no escape from God except to Him (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Riḍā).
- 61 The language employed also draws a picture of an ephemeral, cursory life; no sooner than the rain falls, plants grow to their full glory only then to wither away (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). The same expressive language is employed elsewhere but, given the context of the aya, it puts more emphasis on the transitory and brief nature of life: "And give them 'Muhammad' the example of the worldly life: like water that We send down from the sky, soon it gets mixed in the plants of the ground, 'lo' it become chaff, scattered by the winds—Allah is ever Able over everything" (18: 45).
- 62 Further, this fleeting nature of life is tangibly portrayed by likening it to the commonplace plants that are easily available for consumption by humans and animals alike; nothing hard to come by or enduring!
- 63 "And you see the land lifeless, but as soon as We send rain down on it, it stirs 'to life' and swells, and produces every type of pleasant plant" (22: 5).

and its owners become sure that they are able over it⁽⁶⁴⁾, 'there' comes upon it Our Command⁽⁶⁵⁾ at night or in the morning and We make it mowed as if it did not thrive 'only' yesterday—thus We detail the Signs for people who ponder⁽⁶⁶⁾.
 ﴿25﴾ Allah calls for the Abode of Peace⁽⁶⁷⁾ and guides whoever He wishes to a Straight Path.

﴿26﴾ ⁽⁶⁸⁾For those who do the best 'of deeds' is the best 'reward' and more⁽⁶⁹⁾;

وَوَظَنَ أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَادِرُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَن تَلْهَأَ أَمْرَنَا
 لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ تَغْنَبْ
 بِالْأَمْسِ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ
 يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ
 وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

* لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ

The depiction of plants appearing so appealing to sight suggests a beauty who wears her best and, thus, is coveted by all. Little do they know that looks are deceiving! (Cf. Ibn 'Āshūr)

- 64 That is they become sure that they will reap its harvest (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 65 God's decree of its destruction (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah).
- 66 This life is nothing but an illusory enjoyment (3: 185) that will soon come to an abrupt end by death, but the Hereafter is the real life, the everlasting abode, that those of sound reason need to strive for: "The life of this world is merely a plaything and a distraction; the true life is in the Final Abode, if only they knew" (29: 64); "Know you all that the life of this world is but a plaything, a distraction, an ornament, mutual boasting among you, and vying for increase in property and children—as the likeness of of a rain whose vegetation impresses the farmers; then it withers such that you see it turn yellow; then it becomes chaff. And in the Hereafter there shall be severe Punishment, forgiveness from Allah, and Pleasure, and the life of this world is naught but an illusory enjoyment" (57: 20); "Do you not see that Allah sends down rain from the sky and makes it flow as springs in the ground; then He produces thereby crops of varying colours; then they dry and you see them turn yellow; then He makes them crumbled to dust. Indeed in that is a reminder for those of reason" (39: 21).
- 67 Paradise, where peace is real and everlasting, unlike the worldly life (cf. al-Khāzin, al-Wāhidī, al-Basīṭ, Abū al-Su'ūd).
- 68 For those who Believe and do righteous deeds is the Abode of Peace, the "best reward" (al-ḥusnā) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah).
- 69 Exegetes have differed about what could be more than Paradise as reward for good deeds, but most of them opine that it means seeing God Almighty's

(70)neither gloom nor ignominy will overcast their faces. Those are the Companions of Paradise—forever they abide therein. ﴿27﴾ (71)But those who earn bad deeds, the requital of a bad deed is one of its kind; ignominy overcasts them⁽⁷²⁾ and there will be none to protect them from Allah. As if patches of pitch-dark night cloud their faces⁽⁷³⁾—those are the Companions of the Fire; forever they abide therein.

وَلَا يَرَهُنَّ وُجُوهُهُمْ قَدَرٌ وَلَا ذُلٌّ أُولَئِكَ
 أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
 كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا وَتَرَهُمُ
 ذُلٌّ مَّا لَهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ مِن عَاصِمٍ كَأَنَّمَا أُغْشِيَتْ
 وُجُوهُهُمْ قِطْعًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مُظْلِمًا أُولَئِكَ
 أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

﴿28﴾ (74)On the Day We gather them

وَنَوْمًا نَّخْشُرُهُمْ

Most Majestic Face without a veil (cf. al-Sa‘dī): “*On that Day* ‘some’ faces will be bright, *looking at their Lord” (75: 22-23). Ṣuḥayb al-Rūmī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “When the people of Paradise enter it, Allah, Glory be His, says: “Do you want more ‘of what’ I give you?” they say: “Did You not illumine our faces? Did You not admit us into Paradise and save us from Hellfire? He (ﷺ) adds: “Then He (ﷻ) lifts the Mantle ‘from His Face’. They are given nothing dearer to them than looking at their Lord, Glory be His”. Then he (ﷺ) recited this aya: “*For those who do the best ‘of deeds’ is the best ‘reward’ and more*” (Muslim: 181). Yet in the considered opinions of al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr it is of general purport and not limited to any bounty in particular.

- 70 That is what they will be rewarded and this is what they are spared (cf. al-Rāzī): “*So Allah spared them from the woes of that Day and gave them glow and gladness*” (76: 11).
- 71 The fate of the Deniers on that Day will be the complete opposite of that of the Believers (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 72 “*You will see them as they are exposed to it ‘Hellfire’, abject in their abasement, glancing around them furtively*” (42: 45).
- 73 “*On the Day when some faces are illumined and others are darkened; as for those whose faces become dark*” it is said: “*Did you Deny after you became Believers? Taste then the Punishment of your Denial*” (3: 106); “*On the Day of Judgement you will see those who lied against Allah; their faces pitch dark!*” (39: 60).
- 74 They mostly earned this humiliating treatment because of their Association (shirk), the worst, and only unforgiveable deed that anyone can ever perpetrate, and which is talked about in this passage (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr):

all⁽⁷⁵⁾, then We say to those who Associated: “At your spot! You and your ‘idol’ Associates!”⁽⁷⁶⁾ Then ‘soon’ We disassociated them ‘from each other’; and their Associates said: “Never were you worshipping us!”⁽⁷⁷⁾ ^{﴿29﴾} Allah is sufficient as Witness between us and you that we were ‘totally’ unaware of your worship!”^{﴿30﴾} There every soul scrutinizes what it did before⁽⁷⁸⁾; and they are returned to Allah their Master⁽⁷⁹⁾, the Real, and what they used to fabricate deserted them!

جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ
وَشُرَكَاءُكُمْ فَزَلَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَقَالَ شُرَكَاءُهُمْ مَا
كُنْتُمْ إِلَّا نَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا
بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ
لَغَافِلِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ هُنَالِكَ تَبْلَأُونَ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مِمَّا
أَسْلَفَتْ وَرُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَصَلَّى
عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

“Verily Allah does not forgive that He is Associated with, but He forgives what is lesser than that for whoever He wills. Whoever Associates with Allah perpetrates an egregious sin” (4: 48); “Allah does not forgive that He is Associated with, but He forgives what is lesser than that for whoever He wills. Whoever Associates with Allah has indeed strayed far away ‘from the right path’” (4: 116).

- 75 Humans and jinn, Believers and Deniers and those who worshipped and those whom were worshipped (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 76 This shows Who is in charge in that situation; in an authoritarian voice they are told, like the criminals that they are, to remain where they are, thus restricting their movement. They are dispossessed of their freedom, which they only used to commit the most egregious of sins.
- 77 “Then those who were followed shall disown those who followed, ‘when’ they saw the Punishment and all means were cut off from them. *Those who followed shall say: “Should we have another round, we will disown them as they disowned us”; thus Allah shows them their deeds as remorse ‘for them’—they shall not be let out from the Fire” (2: 166-167).
- 78 On that Day every soul will come to closely inspect and realize the truth of whether what it did was good or bad and will be held to account over it all (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Nahḥās, al-Baiḍāwī): “We have bound every human’s fate to his neck. And on the Day of Judgement We will bring forth to each ‘person’ a record which they will find laid open: *‘‘Read your record! On this Day, your ‘own’ self suffices as a reckoner against you’’” (17: 13-14).
- 79 “Then they are returned to Allah, their real Master; nay but to Him alone belongs the decision—He is the swiftest of Reckoners” (6: 62); “That, for Allah being the Truth and that what they invoke besides Him is falsehood!” (22: 62).

﴿31﴾⁽⁸⁰⁾ Say 'Muhammad': "Who provides for you from the sky and from the land⁽⁸¹⁾; or Who owns hearing and sight⁽⁸²⁾ and Who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living⁽⁸³⁾; Who conducts 'all' affairs?⁽⁸⁴⁾" They shall say: "Allah!"⁽⁸⁵⁾ Then say 'Muhammad' "Would you not 'then' become Mindful!"^{﴿32﴾} That then is Allah your Real Lord⁽⁸⁶⁾;

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿31﴾
فَذَالِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمُ الْحَقُّ

- 80 Some of the most potent Signs of God's sole rightfulness to worship, which the Arabs cannot deny, given that they Believed in an Omnipotent 'Allah' but Associated with Him (cf. 6: 40, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*: 13: 18), are given here (cf. Abū Ḥayyān), so that they may reconsider their position.
- 81 "He is Allah Who created the Heavens and Earth and sends down rain from the sky, causing fruits to grow as a provision for you" (14: 32).
- 82 "Say 'Muhammad': "Would you not see that if Allah were to take away your hearing and your sight; and seal your hearts, what god besides 'Allah' would restore it 'all' back to you!" (6: 46).
- 83 For a detailed discussion of what this means see 6: 95: "Verily 'Allah' is the One Who 'ever' cracks grains and seeds – 'thus' He brings the living out of the dead – and He is the One Who 'ever' brings the dead out of the living. That you see is 'Allah', whereof are you then turned away 'from the Truth'?"
- 84 God has absolute power over everything: "Indeed your 'True' Lord is Allah Who created the Heavens and Earth in six days, then Established Himself on the Throne; He shrouds night over day, relentlessly pursuing it; the sun, the moon and the stars are dominated by His Command; verily for Him 'alone' is the creation and the Command—glorified be Allah, the Lord of all beings" (7: 54).
- 85 They knew 'Allah' all too well but forgot about Him whenever it suited them (cf. 6: 91), thus they had to be faced with this fact as a reality check: "Say 'Muhammad': "Who is the Lord of the seven Heavens and the Great Throne?" *They would say: "To 'Allah' they belong." Say: "Would you not then become Mindful?" (23: 86-87).
- 86 Ibn 'Abbās narrated that: "The Messenger used to say, when rising from sleep to perform Prayer during the night: "O Allah! 'All' Gratitude is to You. You are the Guardian of the Heavens and Earth and whatever is therein. 'All' Gratitude be to You. To You belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth and whatever is therein. 'All' Gratitude be to You. You

what is beyond what is real except misguidedness!⁽⁸⁷⁾ Whereof then are you turned away! ⁽³³⁾ Thus 'Muhammad' the Word⁽⁸⁸⁾ of your Lord has come due for those who contravened; that they would never Believe!

فَمَاذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلَالُ فَأَنَّى تُصْرَفُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾
كَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا
أَنَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

⁽³⁴⁾ ⁽⁸⁹⁾Say 'Muhammad': "Are there among your Associates one who initiates creation and then brings it back⁽⁹⁰⁾?" Say: "Allah initiates the creation and then brings it back⁽⁹¹⁾; whereof are you then turned away 'from the Truth'?"

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَن يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ
قُلْ اللَّهُ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

are the Light of the Heavens and Earth. 'All' Gratitude be to You. To You belongs the Kingdom of the Heavens and Earth. 'All' Gratitude be to You. You are the True. Your promise is true. Your meeting is true. Your Saying is true. Paradise is true. Hellfire is true. The Prophets are true. Muhammad (ﷺ) is true. The Hour is true. O Allah! For You I submit. In You I Believe. On You I rely. To You I refer. By You I dispute. In accordance with You I judge. So forgive me all what I did in my life, what is private and what is public. You are the Advancer and the Deferrer. There is no god but You" (al-Bukhārī: 1120, Muslim: 769).

- 87 There is no middle ground between these two extremes. They are mutually exclusive. Whoever does not worship God Almighty has gone astray (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Alūsī). Misguidedness is the worst embodiment of falsehood (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 88 That is the pre-ordained decree; that the ardently rebellious shall never be guided (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Shawkānī, *al-Mukhtaṣar*): "Had your Lord so willed, He would have certainly made humanity one single nation" of Believers, but they will always differ - *except those on whom your Lord has mercy - for He created them to be this way, and the Word of your Lord is final: "I shall definitely fill up Hell with both jinn and men" (11: 118-119).
- 89 Now that ample evidence has been given as to the Omnipotent God Almighty's rightfulness to worship, their so-called gods are laid bare as to their utter inability and unworthiness of such names (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 90 To create anything from nothingness and return it back to life when it perishes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 91 "Say 'Muhammad': "Walk the land and how 'Allah' initiated the creation; then Allah will bring about the final creation. Surely Allah is Most Capable of everything"" (29: 20).

﴿35﴾ (92) Say: “Are there among your Associates one who guides to the Truth?” Say: “Allah guides to the Truth!” ﴿93﴾ Is the One Who guides to the Truth more worthy of being followed or the one who is not himself guided, unless he be guided. What is it with you; ‘look’ how you judge! ﴿94﴾ ﴿36﴾ Most of them only follow conjecture ﴿95﴾; indeed conjecture avails not against the Truth ﴿96﴾ in the least—verily Allah is All-Knowing of what they do.

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ قُلِ اللَّهُ
يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ أَفَمَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ
يُتَّبَعَ أَمْ لَا يَهْدِي إِلَّا أَنْ يَهْدِيَ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ
تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا إِنَّ
الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا
يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

﴿37﴾ (97) This Qur’an would never have been devised without Allah ﴿98﴾; but ‘it is’ a confirmation of what came before it ﴿99﴾ and a detailing of the Book ﴿100﴾.

وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ أَنْ يُفْتَرَى مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ الْكِتَابِ

- 92 Another failing of their idols is further exposed; not having the Divine Attribute of being able to guide to the Straight Path (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 93 “But Allah leads the Believers to the Truth, which they disputed over, with His Will—Allah guides those He wills to a straight path” (2: 213).
- 94 That is, how they errantly judge and equate between God Almighty and their false idols (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 95 The one who has no evidence only bases his thoughts, opinions, and beliefs on guesswork (cf. al-Shawkānī).
- 96 Conjecture is useless when it comes to getting at the Truth (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Nasafī, Ibn al-Jazarī).
- 97 The following few passages deal with another article of Faith over which the Believing and Denying camps differed, i.e. Prophet Muhammad’s (ﷺ) Messengership and the Truth of the Message (cf. al-Shawkānī).
- 98 This also alludes to their preposterous demand from the Prophet (ﷺ), as in Aya 15 above, to come up with another Qur’an or to modify it (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 99 What came before it (*al-ladhī bayna yadayhi*) are the earlier revealed Scriptures (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah): “And We sent down to you ‘Muhammad’ the Book with the Truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Book and a ‘supreme’ authority over it ‘all’” (5: 48).
- 100 This could mean that the Qur’an contains complete details of what God ordained (*kataba*, lit. wrote) for the Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr,

There is no doubt in it; 'it is' from the Lord of all beings. ^{﴿38﴾} Or do they say: "He made it 'all' up!" Say 'Muhammad': "Then bring about a 'single' sura of its like⁽¹⁰¹⁾ and call whoever you can apart from Allah 'for your aid' if only you were truthful!^{(102) ﴿39﴾} Nay, but they rejected what they did not come to 'fully' know⁽¹⁰³⁾ – its interpretation⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ أَفَرَبَّهُ
قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ
مَنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ بَلْ كَذَّبُوا
بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعَاجِمِهِ وَلَمَّا يَا تَهُم تَأْوِيلُهُ

al-Sa'dī): "This 'Qur'an' was not to be made up speech, but a confirmation of that which came before it and a detailing of everything; a guidance and mercy for folks who Believe" (12: 111). It could also mean that the Qur'an explains what earlier Scriptures contained (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn 'Āshūr): "People of the Book, here is Our Messenger coming to you to reveal to you much of what you used to hide of the Book and overlooks much—indeed there has come to you a Light from Allah and a clarifying Book" (5: 15).

- 101 "And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down to Our servant, come up with a single sura like it, and call 'for your aid' your witnesses apart from Allah, if only you were truthful. *But if you will not do it – and you will never 'ever' do it – be Mindful of the Fire, the fuel of which is people and stones, that has been prepared for the Deniers" (2: 23-24).
- 102 "Say: "Should all humans and jinn rally to bring the like of this Qur'an, they will not bring the like of it, even if they assisted one another"" (17: 88).
- 103 Their powers of perception were so blurred that they did not fully comprehend the Qur'an and thus wrote if off altogether (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Truly, people are enemies of what they do not know (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī): "And since they have not been guided by it, they are bound to say: "This is an antiquated falsehood!"" (46: 11)
- 104 *Ta'wīlahu* (lit. its interpretation) means the coming true and the realization (*mā ya'ūlu ilayhi*) of what they are promised in the Book, i.e. punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī): "Do they expect 'nothing' but its realization! On the Day when its realization comes, those who forgot it before would say: "Indeed the Messengers of our Lord came with the Truth. Will we then have intercessors to intercede for us, or are we to be returned so that we may do that besides what we used to do!"" (7: 53). Additionally, according to Ibn 'Āshūr it could mean the actual explanation and interpretation of the portions of the Qur'an that they did not understand given the fact that they were not used to their like. They did not care enough to put in the necessary mental effort to understand the novel ideas that the Qur'an delivered

is yet come to them; like so those who came before them rejected— look ‘Muhammad’ how was the ending of the wrongful ones. ⁴⁴⁰ Among them are those who ‘will in time’ Believe in it and among them are those who do not Believe in it; your Lord Knows best the corrupters⁽¹⁰⁵⁾.

⁴⁴¹ If they call you a liar, then say: “My doing is mine and your doing is yours⁽¹⁰⁶⁾; you are free from what I do and I am free from what you do”. ⁴⁴² Among them are those who ‘listen’ to you⁽¹⁰⁸⁾; are you to

كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ
كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يُّؤْمِنُ
بِهِءَا وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِهِءَا وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ
بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

وَإِن كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ عَمَلِكُمْ أَنْتُمْ
بَرِيءُونَ مِمَّا أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤١﴾
وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ

(cf. al-Sa‘dī). These ideas were explained over and over again and given further detail as the Qur’an was being revealed piecemeal. They, like the ones who came before them, rushed into rejecting the Message for it was not to their liking and did not conform to their way of life.

- 105 “But if they take to their heels, then Allah knows well the corrupters” (3: 63).
- 106 When argument is of no great use, given the many clear Signs and evidences they were presented with and to which they remained stubbornly defiant, they were to be disassociated with (*mutārahah*, cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): there was no need for further debate: “So to that ‘religion of Allah’ invite, ‘Muhammad’, and remain on a right course as you are commanded and do not follow their desires but say: “I have Believed in what Allah has revealed of the Book, and I have been commanded to do justice among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our deeds, and for you your deeds; there is no ‘need for’ argument between us and you. Allah will bring us together, and to Him is the ‘final’ destination” (42: 15); “Say ‘Muhammad’: “Do you argue with us regarding Allah, when He is our Lord and yours. Ours are our deeds and yours are your deeds. We are ‘ever’ devoted to Him” (2: 139).
- 107 The ones who are being addressed are either ‘dead’ or ‘blind’. In reality, they are bereft of the faculties of attaining knowledge, listening and seeing, and they have lost their will to Believe, so there is not much point interacting with them. The Messenger (ﷺ) is instructed to leave them alone and wait for God’s further command (cf. Riḍā).
- 108 “Some among them would listen to you; ‘but’ We have put sheaths over their hearts, lest they would perceive it, and in their ears there is impairment.

make the deaf hear 'you', even if they heed not!⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ ⁽⁴³⁾ Among them are those who 'look' at you; are you to guide the blind even if they 'see' not!⁽¹¹⁰⁾ ⁽⁴⁴⁾ Verily Allah wrongs people naught, but people wrong themselves.

تَسْمَعُ الصَّمَّ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ تَهْدِي الْعُمْى وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَبْصُرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنفُسُهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

⁽⁴⁵⁾ ⁽¹¹²⁾ On the Day when He gathers them – as if they had not stayed 'in life' except for one hour⁽¹¹³⁾

وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُهُمْ كَأَن لَّمْ يَلْبَسُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً

Even if they see every Sign, they would not Believe in it; so much so that when they come to dispute with you, the Deniers would 'willingly' say: "This is nothing but merely 'a retelling of the' scribbles of the ancients!" (6: 25).

- 109 The hearts behind these ears are turned away from the call of reason: *"That We might make it for you a reminder and 'that' a heedful ear would heed it" (69: 12); "Do not be like the ones who said: "We are listening", while they listen not. *Indeed the worst of all the creatures with Allah are the deaf and dumb – those who cannot heed. *Had Allah known any good in them, He would have made them listen; 'even' had He made them listen, they would have turned away, looking the other way" (8: 21-23).*
- 110 It is the blindness of the heart not the eyes that is the real blindness (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī): *"For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the chests!" (22: 46)*
- 111 Those who are adamantly defiant and unreceptive of the Message only wrong themselves. God, the All-Just, requites them for refusing to Believe (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr): *"It is not for your Lord to wrong 'His' servants" (41: 46). Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said that God said: "My servants, I made injustice forbidden for Myself and I made it forbidden among you. Do not treat each other with injustice" (Muslim: 2577).*
- 112 Another disputed article of Faith is taken up here, i.e. resurrection and reckoning, as well as the coming of what the Messenger (ﷺ) warned them against. The Deniers' snobbish attitude arises from their obliviousness to the transience of life, which was so beautifully illustrated earlier in this sura. This notion is further underlined here so as to drive the message home (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 113 Only then do they realize their fatal error; they overrated this worldly life. Now they know for real how short-lived it was and have a better estimation

of the day – they recognize one another⁽¹¹⁴⁾; those who rejected the meeting of Allah have lost—never were they ever ‘rightly’ guided. ^{﴿46﴾} And whether We show you ‘Muhammad’ some of what We promise them or terminate your life ‘before then’, their return is to Us and then Allah is Witness over what they do. ^{﴿47﴾} ⁽¹¹⁵⁾ For every nation there is a Messenger, whenever their Messenger comes, they will be judged amongst them with justice⁽¹¹⁶⁾; they are ‘never’ wronged.

مِنَ النَّهَارِ يَتَعَارَفُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ
 كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاللَّهُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾
 وَإِنَّمَا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتُوفِّيَنَّكَ
 فَإِنَّمَا مَرَجِعُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ سَهِيدًا عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾
 وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِيَ
 بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

of it, but a little too late (cf. al-Shawkānī, Riḍā): “*On the Day the Hour comes, the criminals will swear that they did not stay ‘in this world’ more than an hour; thus they have always been deluded!*” (30: 55); “*He ‘Allah’ said: ‘How many years did you stay on Earth? *They said: ‘We stayed a day or a part of a day, but ask those who keep count.’ * He said: ‘You stayed but a little, if you but knew!’*” (23: 112-114)

- 114 Although they vehemently denied life after death (“*They were insistent on the gravest of sins. *And they used to say: ‘Will we be, after we die and have turned into dust and bones, resurrected!’*” (56: 46-47)), on that Day they will gravely come to realize how misled they were when they actually see each other in the flesh and their mental abilities restored to their former pre-death state as if nothing in between had happened (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Then, their interaction is only one of mutual reproach (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah).
- 115 The message here is that there is no need to rush matters. The coming due of what they are promised is a resigned conclusion since the respite they are allowed is terminated by the coming of their Messenger. By his coming, wheat is sorted out from the chaff and evidence of the Truth is conclusively provided (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 116 Those who Believe in the Message are spared but those who deny it are doomed; they taste Divine punishment in this worldly life (cf. Abū al-Su‘ūd, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*Never were We to punish until, We send a Messenger!*” (17: 15)

﴿48﴾ They say: “When is this promise⁽¹¹⁷⁾ ‘coming’, if you are truthful?” ﴿49﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “I have no power ‘even’ to harm or do myself well, except for what Allah wished⁽¹¹⁸⁾. For every nation there is a ‘set’ term; when their term is due, they cannot put it off an hour, nor hasten it⁽¹¹⁹⁾ ﴿50﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “See you ‘not’, if His Punishment comes upon you while you are sleeping at night or in broad daylight, what of it are the criminals in a rush for!”

﴿51﴾ “Would you ‘only’ when it ‘actually’ takes place Believe in it? Is it now? When earlier you ‘indifferently’ sought to hasten it!”⁽¹²⁰⁾ ﴿52﴾ Then ‘on the Day of Judgement’ it is said to those who wronged: “Taste you the Punishment of eternity; are you not requited but for what you used to earn?”⁽¹²¹⁾

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾
 قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ
 اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ إِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَجِرُّونَ
 سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن آتَاكُمْ
 عَذَابُهُ بَيِّنَاتًا أَوْ نَهَارًا مَاذَا يَسْتَعْجِلُ مِنْهُ
 الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ أَنْتُمْ إِذَا مَا وَقَعَ مِنْكُمْ بِهِءَ الْفَنِّ
 وَقَدْ كُنتُمْ بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ
 ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ هَلْ تُجْرَوْنَ إِلَّا
 بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

117 The ‘promise’ could be the coming of the Hour or their due punishment in this worldly life (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*).

118 The Messenger (ﷺ) is no more than a human deliverer of what he is told by God. He has no control over such matters (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

119 That is, a set time for every nation to taste Divine Wrath and retribution should it persist in Denying (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, *Shinqīṭī*, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).

120 “So when they saw Our might, they said: “We Believe in Allah alone and reject all what we Associated as partners with Him.” *But their believing was of no benefit to them when they saw Our might. This has ‘always’ been Allah’s way ‘of dealing’ with His ‘rebellious’ servants; there the Deniers were in ‘utter’ loss” (40: 84-85).

121 “The Day they are shoved fiercely into the Fire of Hell. *This is the Fire that you used to deny! *Is this magic, or do you not see? Burn in it – it makes no difference whether you bear it patiently or not – you are only being repaid for what you have done!” (52: 13-16).

﴿53﴾ (122) And 'more so' they seek out news from you 'asking': "Is it 'really' true?" say 'Muhammad': "Yea! By my Lord it is definitely true; never will you outdo 'Allah'!"

﴿٥٣﴾ وَيَسْتَعِيبُونَكَ أَحَقُّ هُوَ قُلُوبِ إِي وَرَبِّي إِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

﴿54﴾ (123) Were any soul that wronged⁽¹²⁴⁾ in possession of all that there is in Earth, it would have ransomed itself with it 'on that Day'. They concealed their 'deep' regret⁽¹²⁵⁾ when they saw the Punishment. They are judged amongst those with justice and they are wronged not. ﴿55﴾ Nay, but definitely 'all' that is in the Heavens and the Earth belongs to Allah⁽¹²⁶⁾; nay, but definitely the promise of Allah is true, but most of them know 'it' not.

﴿٥٤﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَافْتَدَتْ بِهِ وَأَسْرُوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ وَوُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ الْإِنِّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْإِنِّ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ حَقًّا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

- 122 This is another of their devious machinations: once they feign that they were in a hurry for it only to show that they could not care less for it, being in total denial of it, and once they pretend to be candidly inquiring about it hoping to soften the Messenger (ﷺ) to give them an answer to their liking (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Ashūr). Thus they received the definitely affirmative answer; a rare oath (only occurring thrice in the Qur'an (cf. also: 34: 3 and 64: 7)) by the most Noble Messenger (ﷺ).
- 123 This is a fast flash forward showing graphic snapshots of the coming true of the 'definitely true' promised fate of the rebellious, to further make the case for it.
- 124 "Those who Deny and die as Deniers, 'as much as' Earth's fill of gold will not be accepted from any of them, even if he were to ransom himself with it—for those is a painful Punishment and they will have no helpers" (3: 91).
- 125 When they come face to face with their inevitable end, the Deniers will feel deeply remorseful for their Denying but try to hide it from others (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī). Profound remorse and sorrow is a type of self-punishment, which is, by no means, less severe than imposed punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).
- 126 God Almighty rules Supreme and none can stop Him from bringing His will into reality (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī); but most people are oblivious to this. Thus this aya begins with the attention-calling particle *a-lā*, translated here as 'nay' to impart a similar affective force (cf. Riḍā).

﴿56﴾ He gives life and causes death and to Him you shall be returned.

﴿57﴾ (127) O people! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord and a healing for what is in the chests; a guidance and mercy for the Believers⁽¹²⁸⁾. ﴿58﴾ Say 'Muhammad': (129) "In the Grace of Allah and in His Mercy, in that let them then rejoice; it is 'immeasurably' better than what they hoard!"

﴿59﴾ (130) Say 'Muhammad': "Would you 'not' consider what Allah sent down to you as provision and you divided it into 'some' lawful and 'some' unlawful; say: did you Allah give you permission 'for this' or do you fabricate falsities against Allah?"⁽¹³¹⁾

هُوَ الْحَيُّ وَيُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ مِّن رِّزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِّنْهُ حَرَامًا وَحَلَالًا قُلْ ءَلِلَّهِ أَذِنَ لَكُمْ أَمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

- 127 The Qur'an is pointed out here as a cautionary reminder and healing to the ailments of the heart that divert one from guidance; it is the way to avoid the dismal fate that the previous passage so vividly describes, as well as felicity in this life to those who Believe in it. Humanity are called upon to pay heed and save themselves.
- 128 Only the receptive will benefit from it (cf. al-Ṭabarī): "We send down of the Qur'an that which is a cure and a mercy for the Believers; it increases the wrongdoers in naught but loss" (17: 82); "Say 'Muhammad'" "It 'the Qur'an' is a guidance and a healing for those who Believe, and those who do not Believe have an impairment in their ears, and it is a blindness for them; such are called from a place far off" (41: 44).
- 129 Believers always need to remember God's great bounty by which He guided them to Islam and gave them the gift of the Qur'an to which any worldly gain is not even remotely comparable (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn 'Āshūr): "Your Lord's Mercy is better than what they hoard" (43: 32).
- 130 This passage points out how astray people can go when they are not guided by God through His revelations (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 131 Here the Arabs are chided for their groundless, godless laws, which only provide evidence of their foolishness: "Say 'Muhammad': "Would you

﴿60﴾ What do those who fabricate lies against Allah think 'of their fate' on the Day of Judgement!⁽¹³²⁾ Indeed Allah is bountiful to people, but most of them are thankless.

وَمَا ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَٰكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

﴿61﴾⁽¹³³⁾ Never will you 'Muhammad'⁽¹³⁴⁾ engage in an affair, nor should you recite 'some' Qur'an thereof, or you 'Believers' do a deed except Us being Witness over you, when you pour 'your hearts' into it; neither is a mote's weight – nor smaller or greater – stashed away from your Lord in Earth nor in the sky without it being in a clarifying book⁽¹³⁵⁾.

وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُوا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْآنٍ
وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُودًا
إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِثْقَالٍ
ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ
مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٦١﴾

'not' consider what Allah sent down to you as provision and you divided it into 'some' lawful and 'some' unlawful; did Allah give you permission 'for this' or do you fabricate falsities against Allah?" (10: 59); "They also said: "These are prohibited livestock and crops which are only to be consumed by those whom we wish" – so they claimed – "other' livestock the backs of which were made forbidden, and 'some' livestock over which they do not mention Allah's Name, ascribing this falsely to Him; He will requite them for what they used concoct. *They also said: "Whatever is in the bellies of these livestock 'if alive' is reserved exclusively for our males and is forbidden to our 'female' mates". But if it is 'born' dead then it is shared with them; He will requite them for their designation—verily He is Most Wise, All-Knowing" (6: 138-139).

132 "On the Day of Judgement you will see those who lied about Allah with their faces darkened. Is Hell not a 'fitting' home for the arrogant?" (39: 60)

133 This passage and the next provide a timely interval in the flow of the narrative and are meant to soothe and assuage the Believing community; that their pious deeds are well-recorded and that they are the better, more successful side (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān).

134 The Believers are also implied in this address (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Qurtubī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah).

135 "He 'Allah' has the keys of the Unseen, only He knows them. He knows 'all' what is there in the land and sea; not a leaf that falls without Him knowing about it, not a seed in the 'deepest recess of the' darkness of Earth, not a thing moist nor dry except 'it' being in a clarifying book" (6: 59).

﴿62﴾ Nay, but the allies of Allah will have neither fear nor will they grieve; ﴿63﴾ those who have Believed and are used to being Mindful. ﴿64﴾ Glad tiding⁽¹³⁶⁾ is theirs in the worldly life and in the Hereafter; there is no changing Allah's Words⁽¹³⁷⁾—that is 'truly' the great triumph.

﴿65﴾ Do not 'Muhammad' be saddened by their speech; indeed to Allah belongs all honour⁽¹³⁸⁾—He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿66﴾ Nay, but whoever is in the Heavens and whoever is on Earth belongs to Allah; what Associates do those who call 'gods' besides Allah follow? Indeed they only follow nothing but 'mere' fancies, indeed they are only guessing⁽¹³⁹⁾.

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٦٤﴾

وَلَا يَحْزَنُونَ قَوْلَهُمْ إِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦٥﴾ أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

136 "Allah gives them the glad tidings of a Mercy from Him, Pleasure and Gardens in which theirs is everlasting bliss. *They last therein forever—verily with Allah lies a great reward" (9: 21-22); "Verily those who say: 'Our Lord is Allah!' and then remain steadfast, the angels descend upon them, 'saying: 'Do not fear, nor grieve. But, rejoice in the good news of the Paradise, which you have been promised. *We are your allies in this worldly life and in the Hereafter. In it you will have anything your souls desires, and in it you will have anything you ask for; *an 'comely' accommodation from the All-Forgiving, Most Merciful 'Lord'.'" (41: 30-32).

137 "Your Lord's Word 'Muhammad' was perfected truthfully and justly; None can change His Words—He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing" (6: 115).

138 Honour ('izzah) and victory can only be found with God, the All-Powerful, Supreme Ruler over all His creation: "Whoever desires honour, then all honour is Allah's Own" (35: 10). God (ﷻ) encouragingly promises His Messenger (ﷺ) of eventual victory over the Makkan pagans (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī); he is to take heart in this glad tiding: "Most certainly We shall help Our Messengers, and those who Believe, in the life of this world and on the Day when the Witnesses will stand forth" (40: 51).

139 The idolaters in reality stand on no real grounds: "If you 'Muhammad' obey most of those on Earth, they will lead you away from the Path of Allah; indeed they only follow 'mere' fancies, indeed they are only guessing" (6: 116).

﴿67﴾ (140) He is the One Who made the night for you to rest at and the day agaze⁽¹⁴¹⁾. Indeed in that are Signs to those who listen⁽¹⁴²⁾. ﴿68﴾ (143) And they said: “Allah got Himself a child!”⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ Glory is His! He is the Free of Need⁽¹⁴⁵⁾; to Him Belongs whatever is in the Heavens and in the Earth. You have no authority to this ‘claim’, ‘or’ do you say about Allah that which you know not! ﴿69﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “Verily those who fabricate lies against Allah will never succeed”.

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالُوا أَتَخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ بِهٰذَا أْتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ قُلْ إِنْ لِلَّيْلِ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكٰذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

- 140 In many ways this passage sums up and concludes the previous ayas in this sura, by way of alluding to the major themes that have been highlighted thus far and leaving the Deniers with a stark warning.
- 141 *Mubşiran* means full of light whereby people can go about their daily lives (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 142 That is, those who heed what they are being told about the Signs of God in the Qur’an (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*He is the One Who made the sun a glow and the moon a light and ordained for it stations so that you ‘may’ know the number of years and calculation ‘of time’. Never has Allah created that except for the Truth; He details the Signs for those who attain knowledge. *Verily in the alternation of night and day, and whatever Allah has created in the Heavens and Earth are Signs for the Mindful ones*” (10: 5-6).
- 143 This macabre word utterance is a serious consequence of their false guessing about God (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 144 The Arab pagans used to claim that the angels were God’s daughters (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Baghawī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah): “*So ask them, does your Lord have daughters while they have sons! *Or did We create the angels female, while they were witnesses. *Indeed, it is one of their ‘utter’ fabrications to say*: “Allah has begotten”; indeed, they are liars!*” (37: 149-152)
- 145 Having children usually involves certain needs and expectations being fulfilled. From the obvious initial sexual liaison to larger psychological aspirations that include fulfilment and happiness, future need and assistance and continuity of name and lineage. Whatever such need for children might be, and thus by extension an imperfection, God Almighty, all Glory is His, is free from it (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿70﴾ 'For them is but' The enjoyment of the worldly life, then to Us is their return and then We make them taste the severe Punishment for their 'persistent' Denying.

مَتَّعٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ اِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ
نُذِقُهُمُ الْعَذَابَ الشَّدِيدَ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

﴿71﴾ (146) Recite to them 'Muhammad' the 'notable' news of Noah when he said to his people: "My people, if my staying 'among you' and reminding 'of you' of Allah's Signs is 'so' unbearable for you⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ – then in Allah I 'unshakably' trust – so deliberate your affair, 'collectively' you and your Associates, and find no qualms about your affair, then administer it to me and afford me no respite!⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

* وَاَتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ نُوحٍ اِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ يَتَقَوَّمُ اِنْ
كَانَ كَبْرًا عَلَيْكُمْ مَقَامِي وَتَذَكِّرِي بِآيَاتِ
اللّٰهِ فَعَلَى اللّٰهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ فَاَجْمَعُوا اَمْرَكُمْ
وَشُرَكَاءَكُمُ لَنْ يَكُنْ اَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ
اَقْضُوا اِلَيَّْ وَلَا تَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾

146 This passage and the next few over which the stories of Prophets Noah and Moses (ﷺ) are given, are a timely example of how Faith delivered the Believers and how the inevitable Divine promise utterly destroyed the stubbornly Denying, whose hearts were sealed off (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). It also marks a division between the two parts of this sura. The earlier part catalogues a long list of the Deniers' arguments and gives a detailed rebuttal of each. The next throws light on the way the Prophet (ﷺ) should take and how he should manage the critical situation in which the Believing community found itself at that juncture, giving at the same time examples for him to follow.

147 Prophet Noah's (ﷺ) mission, which lasted for 950 long years of argumentation with his people and is described in much detail in the Qur'an, came, to say the least, very hard on his people: "They said: "O Nūh, you have argued with us and argued much, so 'just' bring us what you have promised us if you are telling the Truth!" (11: 32); "They said: "Truly if you cease not, O Nūh, you shall indeed be among the stoned!" (26: 116)

148 He dared them to harm him in such a challenging manner fully trusting in God and certain of the knowledge that no one could cause him harm unless God willed it so (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Jāmi' al-Rasā'il*, 1: 69). We can learn from this that one really needs to know how to truly trust in God in this life. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ)

﴿72﴾ But if you turn away from my call, then you know that I asked you for no financial reward for it!⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ My reward is only with Allah and I was commanded to be among those who submit⁽¹⁵⁰⁾.
 ﴿73﴾⁽¹⁵¹⁾ They declared him a liar and We delivered him and those with him in the ship – and We made them successors⁽¹⁵²⁾ – and We drowned those who rejected Our Signs; look how was the end of the warned!

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَمَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾
 فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ خَلَفًا وَأَعْرَفْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

said to him: "...and know that were a whole nation intent upon doing you good, they will not do you any good that Allah did not decree for you; and know that were a whole nation intent upon doing you harm, they will not do you any harm that Allah did not decree for you. The case has been set and sealed!" (al-Tirmidhī: 267, Imām Aḥmad: 2803)

- 149 This is stated here to make them face the fact that their turning away from his call was not for any, even remotely, justifiable reason, like fearing for payment for a good extended to them (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). More over, they fully knew how sincere in his call he was, and that he was not after any worldly gain, yet they rode roughshod over his honest advice (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*).
- 150 This submission and that which Moses (ﷺ) asked his people (cf. 84 below) to hold on to is the kind of thoroughly unconditional, Faith-imbued submission (*islām*) (cf. al-Baiḍāwī) to the will of God which empowers a person to face up to the toughest situations in life; a willful submission, worlds apart from equivocation and outright Denial: "If they argue with you 'Muhammad', say: "I have devoutly submitted my face to Allah along with those who follow me". Say to those who were given the Book and the illiterates: "Do you devoutly submit?" If they devoutly submit then they are guided, but if they turn away, then you are tasked with nothing more than delivering 'the Message' and Allah is indeed All-Seeing of 'His' servants" (3: 20).
- 151 "They declared him 'Noah' a liar and We salvaged him and those with him in the ship and We drowned those who rejected Our Signs; indeed they were people smitten with blindness!" (7: 64)
- 152 God Almighty made the people who followed Noah the ones whose posterity was to last in the land (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Such a fate really deserves to be pondered upon: "The laws have come to pass before you, so walk the land and behold the end of the Deniers" (3: 137).

﴿74﴾ (153) Then We sent after him Messengers to their people; they brought them clear evidences but they would never come to Believe in what they had earlier denied⁽¹⁵⁴⁾—like so We stamp on the hearts of the aggressors⁽¹⁵⁵⁾. ﴿75﴾ Then We sent after them Mūsā ‘Moses’ and Hārūn ‘Aaron’ with Our Signs to Pharaoh and his notables but they waxed arrogant; they were indeed criminal people⁽¹⁵⁶⁾. ﴿76﴾ When the Truth from Us came to them they said: “Verily this is indeed sheer sorcery!” ﴿77﴾ Mūsā said: “Do you say to the Truth when it came to you: “this is sorcery”, but sorcerers never achieve success!”⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رُسُلًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ
فَجَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا
بِهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نَطْمَعُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِ
الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ
إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ بِآيَاتِنَا فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا
وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ
مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٧٧﴾
قَالَ مُوسَىٰ أَتَقُولُونَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَكُمْ سِحْرٌ
هَٰذَا وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

- 153 As well as connecting them, this aya encapsulates an important moral found in the two stories of Prophets Noah and Moses (ﷺ), which bears particular significance to the situation of the Prophet (ﷺ) in Makkah at the time of this sura’s revelation; the Deniers are a lost case and need to be moved on from.
- 154 “Those ‘bygone’ towns, We relate to you ‘Muhammad’ of their notable news. Indeed their Messengers came to them with clear evidences, but they would not come to Believe in what they had earlier denied; like so Allah stamps on the hearts of the Deniers” (7: 101).
- 155 *al-Mu‘tadīn* (lit. aggressors) are those who brashly overstep all limits in Associating false gods with God Almighty and Denying the Messengers; thus they well deserved this punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah).
- 156 “Then We sent after them Mūsā ‘Moses’ with Our Signs to Pharaoh and his notables and they wrongfully dealt with them; behold then what was the end of the corruptors” (7: 103).
- 157 The whole trade of sorcerers and magicians is based on deceptions and false dealings. Had Moses been one of them, he would not have taken this jibe at them (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). This is a commonsense proof of Moses’ truthfulness comparable to Noah’s pointing out to his people that he asked them for no payment for his efforts in guiding them to the path of salvation.

﴿78﴾⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ They said: “Did you come to us to divert us away from the ways of our forefathers and that eminence should be yours ‘both’ in the land; We shall never believe in you!”⁽¹⁵⁹⁾

﴿79﴾⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ Pharaoh said ‘to his aides’: “Bring me every greatly knowledgeable magician!”^{﴿80﴾} When the magicians came, Mūsā said to them: “Cast whatever you will be casting!”^{﴿81﴾} When they cast, Mūsā said: “What you bring ‘really’ is magic, but Allah will render it worthless—verily Allah does not render useful the doing of the corrupters”⁽¹⁶¹⁾.
 ﴿82﴾ Allah confirms the Truth with His Words, even to the acrimony of the criminals⁽¹⁶²⁾.

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَلْفِتَنَّا عَمَّا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ ءَابَاءَنَا
 وَتَكُونَ لَكُمْ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُمْ
 بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ أَئْتُونِي بِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٧٩﴾
 فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَى الْقَوْمَ أَمَّا أَنْتُمْ
 مُلْفُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ فَلَمَّا الْقَوْمُ قَالَ مُوسَى مَا جِئْتُمْ
 بِهِ السِّحْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَيَبْطِلُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُصْلِحُ
 عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَيُحَقِّقُ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ
 وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

158 Their power of refutation was inexhaustible; such is the nature of smitten hearts.

159 Their adamantness knew no bounds: “*They ‘further’ said ‘to Mūsā’: ‘No matter what sign you bring us to bewitch us, we shall never believe in you!’*” (7: 132).

160 Their insisting on pressing ahead with their groundless charge, shows how adamant they were and how hard they were set on Denying (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr; for a fuller discussion of this episode cf. 7: 104-112 and the explanatory notes of these).

161 His utterance of these words, in such a greatly unnerving situation, is testimony to the firmness of Moses’ Faith. Its mention as such here is meant as a lesson for those who pay heed (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

162 “*Allah wanted to confirm the Truth with His Words, and utterly wipe out the Deniers; *to establish the Truth and abolish falsehood, even to the acrimony of the criminals*” (8: 7-8).

﴿83﴾ (163) Then none but ‘a few’ of the progeny⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ of his people Believed in Mūsā; ‘yet’ with angst from Pharaoh – and their ‘own’ notables⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ – lest he should put them to trial⁽¹⁶⁶⁾—verily Pharaoh is high and mighty in the land; verily he is among the squanderers. ﴿84﴾ Mūsā said: “My people, if you have Believed in Allah, then put your trust in Him if you have ‘truly’ submitted”. ﴿85﴾ They said: “In Allah we trust! Our Lord, make us not a trial for⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ the wrongful people. ﴿86﴾ And deliver us with Your Mercy from the Denying people”.

فَمَا آمَنَ لِمُوسَىٰ إِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِّن قَوْمِهِ عَلَىٰ خَوْفٍ مِّن فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِم أَن يَفْتِنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّ لِمَن الْأُمْسُفِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يَقَوْمِ إِن كُنتُمْ ءَامِنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنتُمْ مُّسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ فَقَالُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَخِجَّتْ بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِّنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

- 163 The immediate aftermath of this stand-off is described here in light of the great show of force Pharaoh displayed to the seeing eyes of the public. Moses’ firm leadership and unwavering Faith are further highlighted here via the facts provided in this passage.
- 164 *Dhurriyyah* are one’s posterity (cf. al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). These are the youngsters who dared to attend the gathering (cf. Ibn Kathīr) and Believed in Moses (ﷺ) no sooner than he emerged victorious over his enemy (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 165 The Israelite chieftains, who could not resist Pharaoh’s authority, succumbed to his will and obeyed his bidding (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 166 That is to try to drive them away from following the Truth by inflicting hardship on them (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 167 This could have two meanings: 1) they prayed for God not to try the Deniers by making them overrun the Believers and, hence, fall into the misconception of taking this as a sign of their rightfulness and the Believers’ wrongfulness; thus giving falsehood the upper hand over the Truth (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr); and 2) that they should not be tried through the Deniers overpowering of them and making them revert from the right path to Denial (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Baiḍāwī, al-Qāsimī).

﴿87﴾ (168) And 'thus' We revealed to Mūsā and his brother that you 'both' designate 'certain' houses⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ for your people in Egypt, and make your houses 'face the' Qiblah⁽¹⁷⁰⁾, keep up the Prayer⁽¹⁷¹⁾ and give 'you Mūsā' glad tidings to the Believers. ﴿88﴾ (172) Mūsā said: "Our Lord, you have given Pharaoh and his notables ornaments and wealth in the worldly life for them 'only' to divert 'others' from Your Path.

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ أَنْ تَبَوَّءَ الْقَوْمَ مَكْمَلًا
بِمِصْرَ يُبَوِّنَا وَأَجْعَلُوا يُبَينُوكُمْ قِبْلَةَ وَأَقِيمُوا
الصَّلَاةَ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ
رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ آتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَأَهُ زِينَةً
وَأَمْوَالًا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا رَبَّنَا لِيُضِلُّوا عَن
سَبِيلِكَ

- 168 In this passage, the Israelites are told to ready themselves for exodus since it has become clear that the Deniers will never Believe in Divine Signs, numerous as they were (cf. 17: 101), and that their persecution of the Believers will know no end.
- 169 These are different from their then current homes. This is by way of readying them physically for a departure which could happen expeditiously *en masse* (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 170 The phrase *wa-j' alū buyūtakum qiblatan* (lit. make your houses into a Qiblah), can have a number of meanings since in essence it is metaphorically employed to impress upon the children of Israel that their only salvation lay in God-consciousness and unceasing devotion to Him. Most exegetes are of the opinion that here it is a command for them to turn their houses into places of worship (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qāsimī, al-Sa' dī), however others, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Atīyyah), interpret it as: "direct your homes towards the Qiblah" as Moses himself used to pray facing it (cf. al-Baiḍāwī). Ibn 'Āshūr reports on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) that Moses used to face al-Ka'bah for Prayer; that is to purify their Faith by reverting to the pristine creed of facing Makkah (Bakkah) for Prayer (for a discussion of this cf. 2: 96 and the corresponding footnote).
- 171 "Seek help in patience and Prayer; indeed they are hard save for the dedicated. *Those who firmly Believe that they will be meeting their Lord and that they are returning to Him" (2: 45-46).
- 172 Moses' praying so is not to be misunderstood as vindictiveness on his side (cf. al-Qurtūbī), but it might be taken as a statement for making a firm stand and a clear-cut announcement of departure away from the Deniers once and for all. He did the same as Noah (رضي الله عنه) did when God told him that none of his people, besides those who already did so, will ever Believe (cf. 11: 36), so he prayed for them to be utterly wiped out (cf. 71: 27).

Our Lord, obliterate their riches and tighten 'the seal' on their hearts so that they may not Believe until they 'actually' see the painful Punishment".¹⁷³ He 'Allah' said: "Your prayer has been answered 'Mūsā and Hārūn', so stay straight and do not follow the path of those who 'truly' know not".

﴿90﴾ (173) And We whisked⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ the Children of Israel across the sea, and Pharaoh and his soldiers pursued them out of 'sheer' transgression and 'unbridled' aggression⁽¹⁷⁵⁾. Until when drowning overtook him, he said: "I Believe that there is no God except the One Whom the Children of Israel Believed in; I am among those who submit!"⁽¹⁷⁶⁾

رَبَّنَا أَطْمَسْ عَلَيَّ أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ عَلَيَّ قُلُوبَهُمْ
فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٩٠﴾ قَالَ
قَدْ أُجِيبَت دَعْوَتُكُمْ مَا فَاسْتَقِيمَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعَانِ
سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩١﴾

* وَجَوَّزْنَا بِسَبِيٍّ إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَاتَّبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ
وَجُنُودُهُ بَغِيًّا وَعَدُوًّا حَتَّى إِذَا أَدْرَكَهُ
الْغَرَقُ قَالَ ءَامَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا الَّذِي ءَامَنْتُ
بِهِ ءَبْنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

173 A scene from the end of the adamantly Denying who are oblivious to God's Signs. Those who are patient will see God's promise come true (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

174 *Jāwaza* means that God made it possible as well as effortless for them to pass through the sea (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

175 This is so because the Israelites meant Pharaoh and his people no harm and only wanted to leave his land. He was not justified in pursuing them and, had he been of sound reason, should have facilitated their exodus instead of hindering it, but his villainously despotic nature got the better of him. It did not even occur to him to let go of them, even when he saw the splitting of the sea, a miracle of a singular nature, with his own eyes (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

176 This 'statement of Faith' from the drowning Pharaoh is of interest in two ways. Firstly, unlike the magicians who willingly and conditionally submitted once they saw the clearly evident Signs of God by saying: "*We Believe in the Lord of all beings; the Lord of Mūsā and Hārūn*" (7: 121-122), Pharaoh, in spite of himself, only invokes Divine Mercy by aligning himself with those whom he thought of as no more than his servants in the hope that he would be delivered as much as they were

﴿91﴾ 'Is it' Now! When you have rebelled before and you were among the corrupters! ﴿92﴾ Today We deliver you, 'only' your body⁽¹⁷⁷⁾, to be a sign to those behind you⁽¹⁷⁸⁾; 'but' many among people are oblivious to Our Signs!"⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ ﴿93﴾ (180) Verily, We have settled the Children of Israel in a truthfully laudable settlement⁽¹⁸¹⁾, and We have blessed them with good provisions⁽¹⁸²⁾, 'but' they

ءَآلِنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ
الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ فَأَلْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِجَدِّكَ لِتَكُونَ
لِمَنْ خَلَقَ آيَةً وَإِنْ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ عَنِ
آيَاتِنَا لَغَفْلُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
مُبَوَّأً صَدَقَ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ

(cf. Abū al-Su'ūd). Second, he further, in the same breath, repeated his 'statement of Faith' out of sheer desperation. He earlier missed out on his chance of admitting it, and only once would have been enough, while saving his face and dignity, irrespective of the numerous Signs that he was made to witness (cf. al-Zamakhsharī).

- 177 Pharaoh's body was thrown out of the sea after he drowned so that people could see that he had actually perished (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 178 Seeing his dead body, people would realize the extent of God's Power and so be Mindful of Him and not rebel against Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, al-Qāsimī).
- 179 This is a sad fact indeed: "Never will most people be eager as you are 'Muhammad' to Believe!" (12: 103).
- 180 This concludes the epic story of the exodus of the Israelites told here succinctly and drawing a very important lesson. That whereby those who had been victimized and then delivered by Divine Grace, fared poorly when they became masters of their own destiny; a very important lesson to be heeded by the upcoming Believing nation (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). It further echoes Ayas 13-14 above: "Certainly We have destroyed 'many of' the generations before you when they wronged; their Messengers had come to them with clear evidences yet they would never Believe! Thus We requite the criminal people. *Then We made you successors in the land after them, so that We may see how you fare".
- 181 "We shaded you with the clouds and sent down to you the manna and quails. Eat from the good things that We provided for you" (2: 57).
- 182 "And We bequeathed those people whom were down-trodden the Easts and Wests of the land that We blessed. The gracious Word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel for their steadfastness and We destroyed what Pharaoh and his people used to make and what they used to 'carefully' trellis" (7: 137).

differed 'among themselves' not until 'true' knowledge came to them⁽¹⁸³⁾—indeed your Lord shall adjudge among them on the Day of Judgement concerning what they used to differ over.

فَمَا اٰخْتَلَفُوْا حَتّٰى جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ
يَقْضِيْ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فِىْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ
يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿۹۳﴾

﴿94﴾ ⁽¹⁸⁴⁾Should you 'Muhammad' hence be in doubt about what We sent down to you, ask then

فَاِنْ كُنْتَ فِيْ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا اَنْزَلْنَا اِلَيْكَ فَسْئَلْ

183 That is, they disputed and differed over matters of religion when the Torah came to them and they became knowledgeable of it (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Shawkānī, al-Qāsimī, Riḍā).

184 This aya has caused dispute among some people (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Aḥkām Ahl al-Dhimmah*, 1: 99). A great many exegetes hold this 'doubt' to be about the Messenger's mention and description in the Scriptures of the People of the Book, on the grounds that the disputation that occurred between the Israelites, which is mentioned in the previous aya, was with regards to the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Truthfulness (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr and also: *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). Others hold that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) neither doubted nor questioned and that such language, making use of the Arab linguistic figurative repertoire, is used to imply the Denying Arabs who held the People of the Book in great esteem and who thus sought their testimony on the issue of the Prophet's Messengership (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Baghawī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

Given the context, this passage, which follows that of Moses (ﷺ) and the exodus of the Israelites (Ibn 'Āshūr), could be read as bearing a message to the Prophet (ﷺ) to follow the example of earlier Messengers of God using such shocking, direct language (*in doubt, hesitant*, and even reject *the Signs of Allah* and do not be among the losers) to psychologically brace him to be prepared to do the same and declare his stand detaching himself and the Believers from the Deniers once and for all; since, like those who came before them, their hearts were sealed and they would not Believe. This is a theme which has been touched upon in the earlier ayas of this sura but is very clearly and unequivocally stated in the following two passages. The stand to take is clearly dictated to the Prophet in Aya 104 below, which, itself, is also couched in a language that echoes the one found here. But to fully realize the meaning of this, one has to bear in mind the Noble Messenger's (ﷺ) tight situation. Being the Messenger of mercy who was very eager to save the Makkans and knowing that his departure from them meant imminent Divine Punishment, he wanted them to have another chance: "Should you 'in your compassion, Muhammad' grieve yourself to death if they are not willing to Believe in this Discourse?" (18: 6); "So let not your soul 'Muhammad' go to waste in regrets over them" (35: 8).

those who have been reading the Book before you; verily the Truth has come to you from your Lord, so be not one of the hesitant. ⁴⁹⁵ Do not 'ever' be 'Muhammad' among those who have rejected the Signs of Allah lest that you should be among the losers.

⁴⁹⁶ (185) Certainly 'Muhammad', the ones over whom the Word of your Lord has come true, will never Believe⁽¹⁸⁶⁾; ⁴⁹⁷ not ever if every Sign was to come to them, until they 'actually' see the painful Punishment. ⁴⁹⁸ (187) Never a 'single' town Believed 'when its time had elapsed', and its Belief had been of benefit to it; except the people of Yūnus 'Jonah', when they 'sincerely' Believed, We lifted 'the cover' of the Punishment of abasement off of them and We made them enjoy 'life' for a certain period. ⁴⁹⁹ Had your Lord wished, the dwellers of Earth, all of them together, would Believe; ⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ do you

الَّذِينَ بَقَرُوا مِنَ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
لَقَدْ جَاءَكَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
الْمُتَمَرِّتِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾ وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِ
اللَّهِ فَتَكُونُوا مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّكَ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَلَوْ جَاءَتْهُمْ كُلُّ آيَةٍ حَتَّى
يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٩٨﴾ فَلَوْلَا كَأَنَّ قَرْيَةً
ءَامَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَّا
ءَامَنُوا كَسَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ غَدَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٩٩﴾ وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ
لَأَمَنَّ مِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ

185 The fact of the matter is laid bare before the Messenger (ﷺ); eager as he was, they would never Believe. Guidance is in God's Hand: "Never will most people be eager as you are 'Muhammad' to Believe!" (12: 103).

186 They met the end that God decreed; they were Denying through and through (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī).

187 God Almighty only once allowed an exception to this law. The sincere Faith of the people of Jonah (ﷺ) delivered them at the very last moment.

188 This underlines the Prophet's (ﷺ) anxious stand, which God is telling him to be ready to let go of: "And what of one, the evil of whose deeds has been made to seem fair to him, such that he thinks it beautiful? Truly God leads

'Muhammad' force people 'in spite of themselves' till they become Believers! ﴿100﴾ It is not for a soul to Believe except by Allah's permission; and He places blight over those who mind not⁽¹⁸⁹⁾.

﴿101﴾ (190) Say 'Muhammad': "Look 'at' what is in the skies and the land!" But Signs and warners avail naught people who never Believe! ﴿102﴾ Do they wait for nothing but the like of the days of those bygone before! Say 'Muhammad': "Wait then! I shall be with you among those who wait!"⁽¹⁹¹⁾ ﴿103﴾ Then, We deliver Our Messengers and those who Believe; like so it is incumbent upon Us to deliver the Believers.⁽¹⁹²⁾

تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَيَجْعَلُ الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾

قُلْ أَنْظِرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا تُغْنِي الْآيَاتُ وَالنُّذُرَ عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ فَهَلْ يَنْتَظِرُونَ إِلَّا مِثْلَ أَيَّامِ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قُلْ فَانظُرُوا إِلَىٰ مَعَكُمْ مِنْ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ ثُمَّ نُنزِجُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نُنزِجُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

astray whomsoever He will and guides whomsoever He will; so let not your soul 'Muhammad' go to waste in regrets over them—truly Allah knows that which they do" (35: 8).

- 189 The blighted are those who are heedless of God's Signs and warnings (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī).
- 190 Signs and admonishments will avail them nothing, given that they turned away and their hearts are sealed off. This further establishes the hopelessness of their case: "And who does greater wrong than one who has been reminded of the Signs of his Lord, then turns away from them and forgets that which his hands have sent forth? Verily, We have put sheaths over their hearts, lest they would perceive it, and in their ears there is impairment. Even if you call them to guidance, they will never be 'rightly guided'" (18: 57).
- 191 The Messenger's (ﷺ) waiting is different from that of the Deniers'; they await nothing but Punishment, similar to that which befell bygone nations, but he will wait in expectance of deliverance (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 192 Sincere Faith delivers! This is a set law of God's (ﷻ), as in the case of earlier Messengers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr): "Verily Allah defends those who Believe" (22: 38).

﴿104﴾⁽¹⁹³⁾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “O people, if you are in doubt about my religion, then ‘I hereby declare that’ I shall not worship those whom you worship besides Allah; but I do worship Allah Who terminates your lives⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ and I was commanded to be among the Believers⁽¹⁹⁵⁾. ﴿105﴾ And ‘I was commanded’: “Devote your face⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ for the religion ‘being’ rightly-oriented, and never be among the Associators; ﴿106﴾ do not invoke those besides Allah who can neither benefit you nor harm you. If you do so, then you are ‘surely’ among the wrongdoers”.⁽¹⁹⁷⁾

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِّن دِينِي
فَلَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِن
أَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَأَنْ أَقِمَّ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ
حَنِيفًا وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَلَا تَدْعُ
مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ فَإِن
فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا مِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

- 193 This is what the sura has been building up to; a declaration that clearly sets the Believers apart and detaches them from the Deniers (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). The self-reflective language in which the statement is dictated to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) indicates a shoring up of his stand on the issue.
- 194 Power over life and death is mentioned here in particular to point out God Almighty’s unchecked Power over His creation, which comes in sharp contradiction to the idolaters’ helpless deities. It is also meant to remind them that death is not far away so that they may desist (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 195 This stand-affirming declaration, smacks of Noah’s (ﷺ) ending Aya 72 above: “I was commanded to be among those who submit”. However, sincere Belief (*īmān*) is mentioned here rather than unquestioning submission (*islām*) because the context is about Believing firmly in God’s promise that empowers taking a stand (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī).
- 196 *Iqāmat al-wajh* (lit. keeping the face forward facing) is dedicating worship only and wholeheartedly to God: “I hereby direct my face to He Who Originated the Heavens and Earth, ‘being’ rightly-oriented, and never am I one of the Associators” (6: 79). (For more on this issue cf. 7: 29.) *Iqāmat al-wajh* implies total submission to the will of God.
- 197 An all-time command for those who are hopeful and well-deserving of Divine Assistance: “Verily, it has been revealed to you ‘Muhammad’ and to those who came before you that: “Should you Associate ‘others with Allah’, your doing will be frustrated and you shall be among the losers!”” (39: 65)

﴿107﴾ If Allah touches you with affliction, none will remove it except for Him, but if He wants good for you, then there is no stopping His favour. He affects with it⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ whoever He wishes of His servants—He is verily the Most Pardoning, Most Merciful⁽¹⁹⁹⁾.

﴿108﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “O people, there has come to you the Truth from your Lord, so whoever is guided, is guided for ‘the sake of’ his own soul, and who is misguided, is misguided against it; I am not a guardian over you!⁽²⁰⁰⁾”

﴿109﴾ Follow ‘you Muhammad’ what is revealed to you and be patient until Allah passes His judgement⁽²⁰¹⁾—He is the best of those who pass judgement.

وَإِنْ يَمَسَّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَ لِفَضْلِهِ يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٠٧﴾ قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَأَصِرْ حَتَّىٰ يَخُذَكَ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿١٠٩﴾



198 Either affliction or good (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī).

199 Although people are subject to God Almighty’s will, they also need to submit themselves to Him, for His Mercy is the stronger side (cf. al-Rāzī).

200 This is the role of the Messenger (ﷺ). He is not to feel tasked with anything more than the delivery of the Message. A task which he carried out dutifully, so he did not need to feel passionately about those who listened but did not heed: “We have sent down to you ‘Muhammad’ the Book to people with the Truth so whoever is guided, is guided for his own good, and who is misguided, is misguided against himself; you are not a guardian over you!” (39: 41)

201 Now that what has been ‘revealed’ (cf. Aya 49 above) to the Messenger (ﷺ) was stated in the most direct of terms and all ‘doubt’ has been dispelled, he is well-prepared for God’s Command which he is to wait for: “Verily your Lord shall judge between them by His Judgement, and He is the Mighty, the Knowing. * So put your trust in Allah; truly you stand on the manifest Truth” (27: 78-79).



سُورَةُ هُوْدٍ
Hūd



Hūd

Title: thus titled after Prophet Hūd (ﷺ) (cf. al-Nasā'ī: 1027, Imām Aḥmad: 17418, al-Ḥākim: 3988). Of all the many Noble Prophets (ﷺ) mentioned in this sura, the name 'Hūd' is the most repeated (five times in all). In Prophet Hūd's story, as well as in the rest of the stories of the Prophets mentioned here, there are very important lessons germane to the central topic of the sura; that bearers of Truth to humanity will have it rough and must persevere in their cause.

Merit: it is notable for its mention in the hadith narrated by 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) whereby Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) said to the Messenger (ﷺ): "Messenger of Allah, I see greyness in your hair!" He (ﷺ) said: "Hūd brought greyness to my hair along with *al-Wāqī'ah*, *al-Mursalāt*, 'Ammā Yatasā'alūn and *Idhā al-Shams Kuwwirat*" (al-Tirmidhī: 3297, al-Ḥākim: 3372, al-Albānī, *al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah*: 955). This hadith points to the graveness of Sura Hūd in the eyes of the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) as also identified in Aya 120 below.

Theme: the many themes that are dealt with in this sura take after and echo those found in the previous sura, *Yūnus*. Argumentation with the Deniers and their admonition, the many stories of the woes of Prophets (ﷺ) with their peoples and the moralizing segments found in that sura are taken up and, at times, expanded upon here for relevant reasons. Sura Hūd can be classified into three broad parts. First, commenting and expounding upon the then current hotly debated issues of Faith which were a cause for a standoff between the Messenger (ﷺ) and his detractors and which caused him much consternation. Secondly, a retelling of the struggles of a number of Prophets (ﷺ) for the benefit of the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) such that he found relevance in their examples. (For a fuller understanding of these the reader is advised to check them against 7: 59-136; passages that relate in detail the stories of earlier Prophets.) The final part of the sura is a concluding one which wraps up the lessons to be learnt from the epic stories of these all-time champions of the human race and also sheds light on the way the Messenger (ﷺ) should take to withstand the adverse circumstances he was enduring.

Key: Both *Yūnus* and *Hūd* are Makkan suras (cf. al-Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣā'ir Dhawī al-Tamyīz*, 1: 246, al-Biqā'ī, *Maṣā'id al-Nazar*, 2: 170) which came down in close succession along with the next one, Sura *Yūsuf*, (cf. 'Abdulrazzāq Aḥmad, *al-Makkī wa al-Madanī fī al-Qur'ān*

al-Karīm) at the darkest hours of the call of Faith. The keyword of this sura is the command with which the previous one ends, i.e. ‘be patient’. Patience, steadfastness, endurance and perseverance are what the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) and those around him needed most to face up to the darkest hours of their days in Makkah. By this time, the Prophet’s staunchest and most instrumental allies, his wife Khadījah (رضي الله عنها) and his uncle Abū Tālib had perished, during what is known as the Year of Sorrow (*‘Ām al-Huzn*), the persecution campaign had reached its peak to the extent that he (ﷺ) ordered some of his Companions to flee to Abyssinia, the less than desired outcome of the Prophet’s mission to the tribes of Taif, which he braved on his own, had occurred and finally the fact that the call seemed to have reached a dead-end with less and less people coming into its folds. In the midst of these very trying times, Sura *Hūd* came down to lift some of this heavy burden from the shoulders of the Messenger (ﷺ) and shed light on his path.

Never is any person with a mission, who walks the precarious alleys of life, immune to the trials that it hurls wholesale at him. During these, such a person can only find solace and courage in Sura *Hūd*.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿1﴾ *Alif, Lām, Rā*⁽¹⁾; 'this truly is' a Book whose Signs are perfected⁽²⁾ and then they were spelled out; 'it comes' from 'One Who is' Most Wise, All-Knowledgeable. ﴿2﴾ 'Clearly stating'⁽³⁾ That: "You 'people' should worship none but Allah – I am 'Muhammad' being

الرَّكِبِ أَحْكَمَتْ أَيْلَتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنِّي حَكِيمِ خَيْرٍ ﴿١﴾ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي

- 1 The sura opens up with these three disjointed letters that highlight the Qur'an's inimitable nature and that are meant as a challenge to those who argue with the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers regarding the truthfulness of the Message (c.f. 2: 1); a purpose particularly served in this instance (cf. al-Shinqīī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*).
This opening passage precisely captures the essence of the Message which the Qur'an encapsulates, citing in particular the persistent contradictions between the Believing and the Denying camps.
- 2 That is the ayas of the Qur'an were made to perfection with neither deficiencies nor contradictions. They were then detailed and explained with truthful news and just rulings (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr): "*He is the One Who sent down the Book to you 'Muhammad'; among its Signs are those which are impregnable – these are the foundation of the Book*" (3: 7); "*Like so We spell out the Signs so that the path of the criminals becomes plain 'to sight'*" (6: 55); "*Indeed We have employed every kind of parable for mankind in this Qur'an; but humankind is the most argumentative of all beings*" (18: 54).
- 3 Essentially, this passage succinctly captures the general purport of the Message: people should worship God Almighty alone and none besides Him (cf. Riḍā): "*We sent no Messenger before you 'Muhammad', save that We revealed to him 'to say to people': 'Verily, there is no god but I 'Allah': so worship Me!'*" (21: 25).

It is significant to note that certain utterances/lexical items are strategically deployed and repeated throughout this sura thereby establishing connectivity and relevance. Through these the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is given strong relation to his 'brothers', the earlier Noble Messengers of God. This relationship is especially important as it gives the Messenger (ﷺ) a point of reference, a precedence in which he can find an example and it 'braces' his heart (cf. Aya 120 below) in the face of the circumstances he was enduring at the time of this sura's revelation. Among these utterances, we find in this passage: "*You should worship none but Allah*", "*Seek your Lord's forgiveness and thereafter repent to Him*", "*I fear for you the Punishment of a great Day*" and variants of: "*To Allah you shall all return—surely He is Able over everything*". The general tenor of the Message is the same throughout all ages.

to you a warner and a harbinger of good news⁽⁴⁾ – (3) ⁽⁵⁾and that you should seek your Lord’s forgiveness and thereafter⁽⁶⁾ repent to Him; ‘may’ He make you enjoy pleurably until a stated term and grant every good doer ‘the reward of’ his good doing”^{(7), (8)}

لَكُرْمِنَهُ نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ ﴿٤﴾ وَإِنْ أَسْتَعْفَرُوا رَبَّكَ
تُرْتَابُوا إِلَيْهِ يُمَتِّعْكُمْ مَتَاعًا حَسَنًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
وَيُؤْتِي كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ

- 4 “We sent you ‘Muhammad’ not, save as a harbinger of good news and a warner to mankind entirely; but most of mankind know not!” (34: 28).
- 5 This further expounds and explains the Message. Seeking forgiveness and repenting all the time is a concrete manifestation of being mindfully sincere in worshipping none but God Almighty (ﷻ) (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr). al-Agharr al-Muzanī (ﷺ) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “O people, repent to Allah for indeed I repent a hundred times every day” (Muslim: 2702). Shaddād Ibn Aws (ﷺ) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “The master of invocations for seeking forgiveness is to say: “O Allah! You are my Lord! There is no god but You. You have created me and I am your servant, and I am sincere to my pledge and my promise ‘to You’ as much as I can. I seek refuge in You from all that is evil of what I have done. I acknowledge before You all the blessings You have bestowed on me, and I confess to You all my sins. So I entreat you to forgive me, for no one forgives sins except for You. Whoever says it with conviction in the morning and dies that day before the sun sets then he is one of the people of Paradise. Whoever says it with conviction at night and dies before the sun rises then he is one of the people of Paradise”” (al-Bukhārī: 6306).
- 6 The Arabic particle implying succession at an interval of time, *thumma* (lit. then later), which indicates the elapsing of a somewhat longish period between two actions could have been employed here to show that actions (i.e. repentance) usually take place after utterances (i.e. seeking forgiveness); the latter being the tougher part of change (cf. Riḍā, Ibn ‘Ādil).
- 7 This is God’s promise to those who are Mindful of Him, it is the good news that the harbinger Messenger (ﷺ) brings to people: “I ‘Noah’ said: “Ask forgiveness of your Lord: He is Ever-Forgiving. *He will send down abundant rain from the sky for you; *and He will support you with wealth and children, and make for you gardens and rivers” (71: 10-12); “Whoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female, while being a Believer; We will give him a good life, and We shall pay them ‘such people’ their reward according to the best of what they used to do” (16: 97); “Would there be one who loans Allah a comely loan, so that Allah would multiply it for him manifold—Allah tightens and loosens, and unto Him you shall return” (2: 245). It is important to note that worldly pleasures never last; they are both temporal and timed (cf. al-Rāzī). It is also equally important to note that not all people are equal in their good deeds; thus, they are requited in equal measure to those deeds (cf. al-Ghaznawī, *Bāhir al-Ḥaqq*).
- 8 This is what the Messenger (ﷺ) warns against; painful Divine Punishment.

But if you turn away, then ‘say Muhammad’: “I fear for you the Punishment of a great Day.”⁽⁴⁾ To Allah you shall ‘all’ return—surely He is Able over everything”.⁽⁹⁾
⁽⁵⁾ Nay, but they bend their chests to hide from it. Nay, but when they cloak themselves in their garments, He Knows what they conceal and what they reveal—He is Knowledgeable of what the chests hide.

⁽⁶⁾ There is not a single moving creature on Earth except its provision being from Allah⁽¹²⁾ and He knows its place of stay and place of storage⁽¹³⁾; all ‘the details’ are in a clarifying Book⁽¹⁴⁾.

وَأَنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ كَبِيرٍ ﴿٣﴾
 إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤﴾
 إِلَّا إِنَّهُمْ يَنْتَوْنُ صُدُورَهُمْ لَيَسْتَخْفُوا مِنَّهُ إِلَّا جِئِن يَسْتَعْشُونَ نِيَابَتَهُمْ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُبْسِرُونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ إِنََّّهُ وَعَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٥﴾

* وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٦﴾

- 9 “You who Believe, guard your own selves; those who lose the path will not harm you if you find the way. To Allah you shall all return and then He will tell you ‘the Truth’ of what you used to do” (5: 105).
- 10 This simple Message only elicits a dogged a response from those whose hearts are tarnished. They are so bent on not heeding it that they literally cocoon both their hearts and themselves from it lest it so perpetrates. Little do they know that God sees what their chests hold as also their innermost thoughts.
- 11 The following passage further gives evidence of God’s Powers citing some indications of the absolute Omnipotence and Omniscience of the One and true Master of the universe, of Whom they are so irreverent (cf. Rāzī, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 12 “How many a moving creature which carries not its provision but Allah provides for it as well as you—He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing!” (29: 60).
- 13 *Mustaqarr* and *mustawda*’ are ambiguous. However, notably both al-Ṭabarī and al-Qurṭubī, among other exegetes, hold that they respectively mean: the place a creature resorts to at night and the place it is consigned to when it dies.
- 14 “He ‘Allah’ has the keys of the Unseen, only He knows them. He knows ‘all’ what is there in the land and sea; not a leaf that falls without Him knowing about it, not a seed in the ‘deepest recess of the’ darkness of Earth, not a thing moist nor dry except ‘it’ being in a clarifying book” (6: 59). The ‘clarifying book’ being The Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz*) in

﴿7﴾ He is the One Who created the Heavens and Earth in six days⁽¹⁵⁾ – while His Throne had been over Water⁽¹⁶⁾ – to test you, whom of you does better⁽¹⁷⁾. Certainly should you ‘Muhammad’ say: “You shall be resurrected after death”, those who Denied shall say: “This is nothing but evident sorcery!”⁽¹⁸⁾ ﴿8﴾ (19) But should We delay the Punishment from them for a given duration, they shall say: “What holds it back!” Nay, but on the day when it comes upon them, it shall not be warded off from them; they got hit by what they used to ridicule.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
 فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ
 لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَلَئِن قُلْتَ
 إِنَّكُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْمَوْتِ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا إِسْحَرُؤُا مِيبِنٌ ۖ وَلَئِن
 أَخَّرْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ إِلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ مَعْدُودَةٍ
 لَيَقُولُنَّ مَا يَحْبِسُهُ ۗ أَلَّا يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمْ لَيْسَ
 مَصْرُوفًا عَنْهُمْ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ
 يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٨﴾

which everything is clearly written ever since God first created the universe (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘adī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

- 15 Would the One Who created these infinitely huge creatures be unable to return such a minutely small creature as a human being to Himself after death? (Cf. al-Ṭabarī)
- 16 Mastery of the Great Throne, God Almighty’s Sovereignty and magnetic Kingship are timeless and span across eternity. Such is the God they are called to worship. That such an enormous creation as the Majestic Throne (cf. al-Albānī, *Sharḥ al-Ṭaḥāwīyyah*, p. 279) is placed over such fluid a matter as water is food for thought for those with inquisitive minds (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*); only a God of unbounded Powers could bring such a thing into reality. This Majestic feat was there even before the creation of the Heavens and Earth!
- 17 Creation and life are a test from God: “Indeed We have made all that is over Earth an adornment for it so that We may test them, who would do better among you!” (18: 7); “The One Who created death and life to test you who of you does better!” (67: 2).
- 18 Their erratic reply gives an example of what their hearts are bent on; sheer, heedless Denial in the face of God’s impregnable and beautifully detailed Signs.
- 19 This further shows how far they took their principled rejection of the Message to heart: so much so that they asked for Punishment to come upon them sooner rather than later (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿9﴾ (20) Certainly shall We make a human taste mercy from Us and then wrench⁽²¹⁾ it away from him; certainly he is despondently despairing, habitually Denying⁽²²⁾. ﴿10﴾ But should We make him taste good fortune after an adversity that touched him, he shall say surely: “Away are the worst ones from me!”⁽²³⁾ Verily he is ever exultant, ever boastful!

وَلَيْنَ أَذْقَنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِتَارِحْمَةً ثُمَّ نَزَعْنَاهَا
مِنْهُ إِنَّهُ يَكْفُرُ ۖ وَلَيْنَ أَذْقَنَاهُ
نِعْمَاءَ بَعْدَ ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ ذَهَبَ
السَّيِّئَاتِ عَنِّي إِنَّهُ لَفِجُّ فَخُورٍ ﴿١٠﴾

- 20 In this reflective passage, we are given a privileged look at human nature and how people would normally fare in the face of Divine trial (as in Aya 7 above) (cf. Riḍā). It is comforting to the caller to the Truth to realize this home truth and to know that to do otherwise is uncharacteristic and requires extra effort; literally, a testing of patience coupled with wholehearted submission to the Will of God. Yet felicity and bountiful reward are due only to these select few.
- 21 This image, evoked by the verb ‘naza‘a’, is that of forcefully tearing away something precious from the tight grip of someone holding on to it dearly. It is a very fitting image of how people are attached to their privileges and never succumb to forsaking them.
- 22 It is human nature, particularly among the well provided for who are bereft of the sweetness of Faith, to bask in the many Godly graces they are given forgetting that life is ever turbulent: in this way, they fail to seek everlasting pleasure in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “Man wearies not of supplicating for good, and if evil befalls him, he is despondent, despairing. * And if We make him taste ‘some’ mercy from Us after hardship has befallen him, surely he will say: “This is mine; I think not that the Hour will come. If I am returned to my Lord, surely with Him shall I have that which is most beautiful”. So We shall certainly inform those who had Denied of that which they had done, and We shall certainly cause them to taste of an awful Punishment* And when We bless man, he turns away ‘from Us’ and withdraws ‘haughtily’. Yet when evil touches him, he is full of prolonged supplication” (41: 49-51).
- 23 Utter ingratitude is embodied in this statement. No sooner than his troubles are over, a human turns to a new chapter in his life and sets his sights on what is next; forgetting all about Who was behind this fortunate turn of events and ascribing it to none (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr): “But if they turn away, We have not sent you ‘Muhammad’ as a keeper over them. Your duty is only to deliver ‘the Message’. Indeed, when We let someone taste a mercy from Us, they rejoice in ‘because of’ it. But when afflicted with evil because of what their hands set forth, then one becomes ever ungrateful” (42: 48).

﴿11﴾ (24) Barring those who are patient and do good deeds; these for whom are forgiveness and a great reward.

﴿12﴾ (25) Perchance may you 'Muhammad' forsake parts of what is being revealed to you and your chest feels constricted by it, should they say: "Would a treasure be sent down to him or an angel come with him!" You are none but a warner⁽²⁶⁾; Allah is Guardian over everything.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
 أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾ فَلَعَلَّكَ
 تَارِكًا بَعْضَ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَضَائِقًا بِهِءَ صَدْرِكَ
 أَنْ يَقُولُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ جَاءَ
 مَعَهُ مَلَكَ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ نَذِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
 شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ﴿١٢﴾

- 24 These select few are an exception; they constantly wage the most arduous battles against their baser selves so as to purify their souls: "By time! * Verily man is in 'constant' loss. *Except those who Believe and do good, and enjoin on each other Truth, and enjoin on each other patience" (103: 1-3). Şuhayb al-Rūmī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Wondrous indeed is the affair of the Believer! His affair is all good which applies to none but a Believer. When he comes by bliss, he becomes thankful and that is better for him; and when adversity touches him he becomes patient and that is better for him!" (Muslim: 2999)
- 25 After this comfortably assuring, fact-revealing reflection on the baser side of human nature, which stands lacking in Faith no matter the Signs it is presented with, especially in good times, the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) is gently told to adhere to the totality of the Message and not shun facing his detractors with hard facts and tough admonition, no matter what lame rebuttal they concoct or erratic reaction they pull out of their sleeves (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*): "A Book that has been sent down to you 'Muhammad' – let there not be unease in your chest about it – so that you may warn with it, and it be a reminder to the Believers" (7: 2); "We certainly know that your heart is truly distressed by what they say" (15: 97); "Be patient, 'Muhammad', and your patience is not but through Allah. And do not grieve over them and do not be in distress over what they conspire" (16: 127).
- 26 The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) is tasked with nothing but to deliver the Message and warn people with it. It is not within his remit to fulfil the whimsical wishes of those who oppose him (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī). An admonisher inevitably though experiences a backlash because his words fall hard on people.

﴿13﴾ Or do they say: “He made it ‘the Qur’an up!’” Say ‘Muhammad’: “Then bring about ten suras of its like, made up, and call ‘for aid’ whoever you can, besides Allah, if only you are truthful”.

﴿14﴾ But if they do not respond to you ‘Believers’, then know ‘for certain’ that it was sent down with Allah’s Knowledge⁽²⁷⁾ and that there is no god but Him; would you ‘not’ submit!⁽²⁸⁾

﴿15﴾ ⁽²⁹⁾Whoever cares ‘only’ for the worldly life and its adornment, We will deliver ‘the reward of’ their deeds to them in full⁽³⁰⁾; they shall not be swindled naught ‘out of it’. ﴿16﴾ These are the ones for whom is nothing but the Fire in the Hereafter; nullified are their deeds in it⁽³¹⁾ and futile is what

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ أَفَنَتَرَكُهُ فُلٌ فَآتُواْ بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيْنَ وَادْعُوْاْ مَنْ اَسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ فَاِنَّهُمْ يَسْتَعْجِلُوْا لَكُمْ فَاَعْلَمُوْا اَنْتُمْ اَنْزِلَ بِعِلْمِ اللّٰهِ وَاَنْ لّٰۤاِلهَ اِلٰهٌ اِلَّا هُوَ فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيْدُ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِيْنَتَهَا نُوْفِ اِلَيْهِمْ اَعْمَلْتُمْ فِيْهَا وَهُمْ فِيْهَا لَا يُبْحَسُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ اُوْلٰئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ اِلَّا النَّارُ وَحِطَّ مَا صَنَعُوْا فِيْهَا وَبَطِلَ مَا

27 “‘Nay’ But ‘in spite of the Deniers’ Allah ‘Himself’ bears witness to what He sent down to you – He sent it with His Knowledge – and the angels bear witness ‘to it’ too—sufficient is Allah ‘indeed’ as Witness” (4: 166).

28 They are called on not to rebel against all these glaring facts and clear evidence and to submit wholeheartedly in a way that naturally leads to guidance (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī).

29 This is another reflection on the truth of the Deniers, who only have this worldly life uppermost on their minds (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Riḍā). Knowledge of this fact serves as further soothing and assurance for the Messenger (ﷺ).

30 “Whoever cares ‘only’ for this fleeting ‘world’, We hasten in it whatever We please to whoever We will; then We destine them for Hell, where they will burn, condemned and rejected’ (17: 18).

31 That is, their good deeds in worldly life, for which they will not be rewarded in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Sa‘dī). Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Verily Allah would not deal a Believer unjustly even ‘as to’ a single good deed. He will be given for

they are used to labour 'at'.
 ﴿17﴾ Or would the one who has
 'clear' evidence from his Lord,
 which is attended by a witness⁽³²⁾
 from Him, and before it 'was'⁽³³⁾
 the Book of Mūsā, a guide
 and mercy 'be like the worldly
 inclined⁽³⁴⁾'; those 'well-guided
 ones truly' Believe in it 'but'
 whoever of the confederates⁽³⁵⁾
 Denies it then the Fire is his
 appointment.⁽³⁶⁾ So do not be
 'Muhammad' in doubt about it
 and 'know that' it is the Truth
 from your Lord but most people
 Believe not.

كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ وَيَتْلُوهُ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْهُ وَمِن قَبْلِهِ كُتِبَ مُوسَىٰ إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ مِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ فَالنَّارُ مَوْعِدُهُ فَلَا تَأْكُ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

it in this worldly life and rewarded for it in the Hereafter. But the Denier will be fed the rewards of his good deeds in this worldly life until when he comes upon the Hereafter there will be nothing for him to be rewarded for" (Muslim: 2808).

- 32 Exegetes hold different opinions as to what exactly this 'witness' is. Some have opined that it is the Qur'an itself, in which God Almighty testifies that the Believers have clear evidence from Him (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 13: 69, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, 3: 435, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī). Others say that it refers to Archangel Gabriel (ﷺ) (cf. al-Ṭabarī). Yet al-Sa'dī has it that it means pure, incorrupt innate human nature (*fitrah*).
- 33 That is, the Torah is another witness which precedes the shortly previously mentioned 'witness' (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī), being most likely the Qur'an itself.
- 34 Cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*.
- 35 *al-Aḥzāb* (lit. the confederates) are those who banded together or confederated (*taḥazzabū*) against the Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. al-Ṭafsīr *al-Muyassar*).
- 36 What is dealt with so far could be taken as a means of comforting and assuring the Messenger (ﷺ), and the Believers at large, of the rightfulness of their cause, given the very tough circumstances they were experiencing. It draws attention to the fact that people were not willing to Believe because such is human nature and he was not to take it as a fault of his own or of the call itself.

﴿18﴾ (37) Who is more unjust than he who fabricated lies against Allah⁽³⁸⁾. These will be displayed before their Lord⁽³⁹⁾ and the 'truthful' witnesses⁽⁴⁰⁾ will say: "These are the ones who lied against their Lord; nay, but indeed Allah's Damnation is 'meted' on the unjust!" ﴿19﴾ Those who turn away⁽⁴¹⁾ from the Path of Allah

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
أُولَئِكَ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَى رَبِّهِمْ وَيَقُولُ الْأَشْهَادُ
هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَى رَبِّهِمْ أَلَا لَعْنَةُ
اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

- 37 This passage rounds up and concludes the first part of this sura. It further draws a line under the conduct of the Deniers and makes a most befitting analogy between them and the Believers.
- 38 They were not short of lies such as: God has a child or an Associate, or ascribed the Qur'an to the Messenger (ﷺ), or claiming Prophethood for themselves (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī): "Who is more wrongful than he who fabricates falsehood against Allah or says: "I was given revelation", while nothing was revealed to him, and he who says: "I will send down the like of that which Allah sent down". If only you could see 'Muhammad' when the wrongdoers are in the throes of death and the angels stretch their hands to them 'saying': "Give up your souls. Today you will be rewarded the Punishment of degradation for saying what is false against Allah and snubbing His Signs"" (6: 93).
- 39 That is on the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).
- 40 They are the Prophets, the angels and the Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Wasīlī, al-Sa'dī). This is the fate of the Deniers, when they will be announced as liars to all and sundry, but the case of sincere Believers is totally different. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated that he heard the Messenger (ﷺ) say: "On the Day of Judgement, the Believer is drawn near to his Lord, Glory be His, until He puts on him His Cover 'of protection and concealment'. Then He (ﷻ) makes him confess his misdeeds and says: "Do you know 'them'?" Then he replies: "Yes, my Lord, I know". He (ﷻ) then says: "I concealed them away 'from people' in the worldly life and I absolve you from them Today". At this, he will be given his sheet of good deeds. However, the Deniers and the hypocrites will be called in front of all creation: "These are the ones who lied against their Lord!" (al-Bukhārī: 4685, Muslim: 2768)
- 41 They used to 'turn away' (yaṣuddūna) from the Truth themselves and divert other people from it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). They would always cast the religion of God in bad light, showing it as defective and

and wish it be crooked, while they 'staunchly' Deny the Hereafter. ^{﴿20﴾} These were never to frustrate 'Us' in the land and they would never have allies besides Allah⁽⁴²⁾; Punishment will be doubled⁽⁴³⁾ for them—they were never able to hear nor were they seeing⁽⁴⁴⁾. ^{﴿21﴾} Those are the ones who lost their souls and what they used to fabricate deserted them! ^{﴿22﴾} Truly in the Hereafter they are the most at loss. ^{﴿23﴾} Verily those who have Believed, done good deeds and 'devoutly' humbled⁽⁴⁵⁾ themselves to their Lord; those are the Companions of Paradise—forever they abide therein.

وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾
 أُولَئِكَ لَمْ يَكُونُوا مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا
 كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ يُضَعِفُ لَهُمْ
 الْعَذَابُ مَا كَانُوا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ السَّمْعَ وَمَا
 كَانُوا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا
 أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾
 لَاجِرًا أَنَّهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ الْآخِسُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾
 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
 وَآخَبْتُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ
 هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

imperfect (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): “And when Our Signs are recited to them as clear proofs, they say: “This is naught but a man who desires to turn you from that which your fathers used to worship”. And they say: “This is naught but a fabricated perversion”. And those who Denied say to the Truth when it comes to them: “This is naught but manifest sorcery”” (34: 43).

- 42 This is a direct warning. In this worldly life, the Deniers cannot escape God and none can save them from Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī).
- 43 “He ‘Allah’ said: “Enter you to join nations of humans and jinn, who passed away before you, in Hellfire”. Whenever a nation enters, it damns its sister; until when they are all amassed in it, the last of them says to the first of them: “Our Lord! These are the ones who misled us, so give them double the Punishment in Hellfire”. He ‘Allah’ said: “There is double ‘Punishment’ for everyone but you do not know”” (7: 38).
- 44 “Among them are those who ‘listen’ to you; are you to make the deaf hear ‘you’, even if they heed not! *Among them are those who ‘look’ at you; are you to guide the blind even if they ‘see’ not!” (10: 42-43).
- 45 This is a deed of the heart, which highlights how sincere they were. Without such heart-deeds other deeds of the senses are useless (cf. al-Shirbīnī). True Believers are both inwardly and outwardly sincere in their deeds (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *I‘lām al-Muwaqqi‘īn*, 1: 119).

﴿24﴾ The example of the two parties is like the blind and deaf, and the seeing and hearing; are they equal as an example!⁽⁴⁶⁾ Would you not 'then' heed?

﴿24﴾ مَثَلُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ كَالْأَعْمَى وَالْأَصَمِّ وَالْبَصِيرِ
وَالسَّمِيعِ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلًا أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

﴿25﴾ (47) Verily We had sent Nūh 'Noah' to his people 'and he said': "I am indeed a clarifying warner to you, ﴿26﴾ that you should worship none besides Allah; indeed I fear for you a Day's⁽⁴⁸⁾ painful Punishment!"

﴿25﴾ وَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ إِتَىٰ لَكُمْ
نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمِ الْيَوْمِ ﴿٢٦﴾

46 "Never are equal: the blind and the seeing, *nor 'utter' darkness and light *nor shade and heat waves. *Never are equal are those who are alive and those who are dead!" (35: 19-22)

47 This sura, varyingly exemplifying the obstinacy, disdainfulness and determination of the Deniers' stand against the call of Truth, thus far underlines the certain fact that they are a soil unbecoming for tillage; a theme which is highlighted in the previous sura. What comes next are ample illustrative examples of how they were not unique in their hostility but were essentially the same as almost all previous nations (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Āshūr). We then have the very significant courses that their Messengers took in the face of such entrenched resistance.

It is important to note that many of the groundless argumentations of Prophet Noah's (ﷺ) people, and in the same vein the rest of the Messengers told of here, were resonated millennia after them through those Deniers of the Noble Messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ). Indeed, their hearts are the same and their driving forces and motives are similar: "Those who have no knowledge also said: "If only Allah would talk to us or a Sign would come to us". The same was said by those who came before them; their hearts are alike. We have made the Signs clear to those who firmly Believe" (2: 118). In this, the Prophet (ﷺ) is meant to find a comforting subtext (cf. al-Qurṭubī): "And from all the notable news of the Messengers, We relate to you 'Muhammad' what We brace your heart with. Indeed in this 'sura' the Truth has come to you; and admonishment and a reminder to the Believers" (11: 120).

48 This is the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

﴿27﴾ (49) Then the notables, who Denied, among his people said: “We ‘can’ only see that you are a ‘mere’ human like us; we ‘can’ only see the ones who followed you are the riffraff among us, ‘clearly’ acting at face value⁽⁵⁰⁾; we cannot see that you are any better than us, no, but indeed we believe that you are liars!”

﴿28﴾ (51) He said: “My people! Would you ‘not’ see that if I had evidence from my Lord and ‘that’ He gave me Mercy from His Own, but you were blinded⁽⁵²⁾ ‘away’ from it, would we then charge you with it, even if you were loathing of it!⁽⁵³⁾”

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا تَرَىٰ
إِلَّا بَشَرًا مِثْلَنَا وَمَا تَرَىٰ أَتَّبَعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ
هُمْ أَرَادُوا لَنَا بَادِيَ الرَّأْيِ وَمَا نَرَىٰ لَكُمْ
عَلَيْتَنَا مِنْ فَضْلِ بَلْ نُنظِرُكُمْ كَذِبِيَّتِ ﴿٢٧﴾
قَالَ يَقَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي
وَأَتَانِي رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ فَعَمِيتَ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَنْزِمُكُمْ مَوَاهِبًا وَأَنْتُمْ لَهَا كَارِهُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

- 49 Every little bit of their reply, as noted here, belied their sheer pride whereby this was the main reason behind them not Believing in the Message. Such haughtiness was known about since the first Messenger, Noah (ﷺ), was sent to humanity: “*They said: “‘Why’ Should we Believe you ‘Noah’ when only the riffraff follow you?’ *He said: “‘What knowledge do I have of what they used to do?’ *It is for my Lord alone to bring them to account - if only you could see - *I will not drive Believers away. *I am but a clear warner’”*” (26: 111-115).
- 50 *Bādiya l-ra’y* could mean clearly, obviously, evidently (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*) or according to what appeared to their minds first, i.e. they rushed into Believing unthinkingly (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 51 This first reply of Noah’s (ﷺ) is in answer to the notables’ first accusation: that he is a mere human like themselves. That humans are alike in their bodily shape and form, does not mean that some of them do not have an advantage over the rest and are chosen for the great honour of being Prophets and Messengers (cf. Ibn ‘Adil).
- 52 The Mercy of Prophethood was not made obvious to these people as a means of punishment, but rather for their not being willing to Believe (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Qurṭubī).
- 53 Faith comes willingly and no one can be forced into it, especially those who are principled in their opinion. Had they had their eyes open and their senses unclouded, they would have seen the Truth clearly for what it really was (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr).

﴿29﴾ My people! I am not asking you ‘any’ money for it⁽⁵⁴⁾. My reward is only with Allah and I shall not turn away⁽⁵⁵⁾ those who have Believed, they shall ‘come to’ meet their Lord⁽⁵⁶⁾, but I ‘can’ see that you are ignorant people!⁽⁵⁷⁾ ﴿30﴾ My people! Who shall come to rescue me from Allah if I were to turn them away; do you not heed! ﴿31﴾⁽⁵⁸⁾ And I would not say to you that I have Allah’s treasure troves with me; I have no knowledge of the Unseen.

وَيَقَوْمٍ لَّا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا إِنِ اجْتَبَىٰ إِلَّآ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدٍ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُّلتَقُوا رَبَّهُمْ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَىٰ لَكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَيَقَوْمٍ مِّن بَيْنِكُمْ يَسْتُرْنَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِن طردْتَهُمْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خِزْيَانٌ مِّنْ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ

- 54 This is stated here to make them face the fact that their turning away from his call was not for any, even remotely, justifiable reason, like fearing for payment for a good extended to them (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Moreover, they fully knew how sincere in his call he was, and that he was not after any worldly gain, yet still they rode roughshod over his honest advise (cf. al-Wāhidi, *al-Basīf*). Furthermore, had it been money he was after, he would have obliged the wealthy and influential, rather than the poor and down-trodden (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 55 That the upper echelons of society, out of sheer egotism, despised those who sincerely Believed, who were mostly from among the underprivileged societal denominations, is not justification enough for a Divinely inspired character like Prophet Noah (ﷺ) to do such an ignorant act of turning people away (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 56 The Most Knowledgeable God Almighty will judge them, and all other humans for that matter, according to their deeds not their wealth and lineage (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zajjāj, al-Qāsīmī).
- 57 Indeed, nothing but absolute ignorance made them judge matters in such a superficial manner (Abū al-Su‘ūd, Ibn ‘Āshūr). Truth is known for and by itself not by those who follow it (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 58 This is a stand-making, detailed reply to the people of Prophet Noah (ﷺ); a categorical answer, which sets matters aright once and for all: “Say ‘Muhammad’: “*I would not say to you that I hold the treasures of Allah, I do not know ‘about’ the Unseen, I would not say to you that I am an angel; I only follow what is revealed to me*”. Say ‘Muhammad’: “*Are the blind and the seeing in the downloadable you write: ‘persons’ alike? Would you ‘Deniers’ not reflect!’*” (6: 50).

I would not say that I am an angel and I would not say about the ones who are despised in your eyes that Allah will grant them no good; Allah knows best what their hearts hold. 'If I were to say this' Then I would be among the wrongdoers!"

﴿32﴾ They said: "Noah! You have argued with us and argued much! Bring forth what you promise us if 'only' you were among the truthful!" ﴿33﴾ He said: "None will bring it forth to you except Allah, if He wills; you shall not frustrate 'Him'!" ﴿34﴾ My advising will benefit you naught, though I intended to be honest with you, if Allah wants to lead you to stray; He is your Lord and to Him you shall return!" ﴿35﴾ (59) Or do they say: "He made it up". Say 'Muhammad': "If I made it up, then the crime I commit is 'held' against none but me and I 'solemnly' disavow the crimes you commit!"

﴿36﴾ (60) And it was revealed to Nūḥ that none, any more, of your people will Believe beside those who have already Believed,

وَلَا أَقُولُ لِي مَلَكٌ وَلَا أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

قَالُوا يَنْوُحُ قَدْ جَدَلْنَا فَاكْثَرْتَ جِدْلَنَا قَاتِنًا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ إِنْ شَاءَ وَمَا أَنشُمُ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَلَا يَفْعَلُكُمْ نُصْحِي إِنْ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَنصَحَ لَكُمْ إِنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُغْوِيَكُمْ هُوَ رَبُّكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ إِنْ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَعَلَيْ إِجْرَامِي وَأَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تَجْرُمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ نُوْحٍ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ إِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ آمَنَ

59 This is reflective interposition bringing relevance to the face of the narrative; it draws the attention of the Deniers to rethink their stand since the story of long-gone events, given in minute details in the Qur'an, are a testimony to the Messenger's (ﷺ) Truthfulness (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

60 This is a core, message-bearing, passage in Noah's (ﷺ) story. The call has reached a standstill which requires both psychological forbearance in the face of the verbal onslaught and oppression of its enemies and a taking of practical steps to move it elsewhere, in anticipation of God's Command.

so be saddened not by what they are used to doing. ﴿37﴾ Build the ship under Our Eyes⁽⁶¹⁾ and 'according to' Our Inspiration, and do not address Me regarding those who committed injustice⁽⁶²⁾; they shall be drowned. ﴿38﴾ And 'as' he was making⁽⁶³⁾ the ship; whenever a group of the notables of his people passed by him, they ridiculed him. He said: "If you ridicule us, then we ridicule you as you ridicule 'us'". ﴿39﴾ You shall come to know who will come by a punishment that shall disgrace him⁽⁶⁴⁾ and shall be afflicted by an everlasting Punishment!⁽⁶⁵⁾"

﴿40﴾ Until when Our Command came and the clay oven spurted 'water'⁽⁶⁶⁾, We said 'to Nūḥ': "Carry into it a pair of every kind⁽⁶⁷⁾,

فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَأَصْنَعِ الْفُلَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيُنَا وَلَا تَخْطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَيَصْنَعِ الْفُلَ وَكُلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَأَ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُ قَالِ إِنْ تَسْخَرُونَ مِنِّي فَإِنِّي أَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَسَوْفَ نَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَيَحْمِلُ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُورُ قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ

- 61 That is, being seen, cared for and protected by God Almighty (ﷻ) (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar, al-Tafsīr Mukhtaṣar, Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).
- 62 Addressing Noah in such a direct manner prepares him for psychological detachment from those who did not respond positively to the call but who, in fact, rallied against it, thus, committing themselves an injustice (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī). Understandably, a Patriarchal Prophet, as Noah (ﷺ) was, would not come easy by such a state of mind, especially when he spent 950 long years (29: 14) calling them to guidance and earnestly praying for it.
- 63 *Wa yaṣna'u* (lit. and he makes) is a present simple verb used rhetorically to immediately bring an image to the listener's mind; he then 'sees' Noah (ﷺ) working on his weighty task (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 64 This disgraceful punishment was to come in this worldly life (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr).
- 65 The Punishment that will come in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 66 As a sign of the imminent coming of the promised punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīfī*).
- 67 The result of the relationship between male and female is the basic nucleus of life; without it, life would not be sustainable and, hence, such a Divine command for a life that was to be established anew after the deluge.

‘members of’ your household – except the ones regarding whom the word was already passed⁽⁶⁸⁾ – and the ones who have Believed” – but only few have Believed with him. ⁴⁴¹ He said: “Get aboard; in the name of Allah is its sailing and its lying at anchor⁽⁶⁹⁾—verily my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” ⁴⁴² While it was sailing them in mountain-like waves, and Nūḥ called out to his son⁽⁷⁰⁾ – while he was keeping away: “My ‘dear’ son! Get aboard with us and do not be with the Deniers!” ⁴⁴³ He said: “I shall seek a mountain that should safeguard me from the water!” He ‘Nūḥ’ said: “There is no safeguarding from Allah’s Command this day, except whom He has mercy on!” The waves came between them and he was amongst the drowned⁽⁷¹⁾.

وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَن سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ ءَامَنَ
وَمَا ءَامَنَ مَعَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ﴿٤١﴾ * وَقَالَ اذْبَرُوا
فِيهَا بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ مَجْرِبَهَا وَمُرْسَاهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي
لَعَزِيزٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَهِيَ تَجْرِي بِهِمْ فِي
مَوْجٍ كَالْجِبَالِ وَنَادَى نُوحٌ ابْنَهُ وَكَانَ
فِي مَعْرَلٍ يَبْتَئِي اذْبَكُ مَعَنَا وَلَا تَكُنْ مَعَ
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ قَالَ سَتَأُوذَىٰ إِلَىٰ جِبَلٍ يَّعِصْمُنِي
مِنَ الْمَآءِ قَالَ لَا عَاصِمَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللّٰهِ إِلَّا
مَن رَّحِمَ وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ
الْمُعْرَقِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

68 Those among Noah’s family who did not Believe with him and whom God decreed that they should thus be destroyed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’ dī).

69 The whole affair of the safe deliverance of the ship and its cargo is run by none but God Almighty (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’ dī). al-Qurtubī opines that *al-basmalah* (*bism Allāh al-Rāḥmān al-Raḥīm*; in the Name of Allah, The Most Gracious, Most Merciful) is to be said before all the affairs that one engages in.

70 This son of Noah’s was a Denier (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’ dī).

71 How this episode is worded here signifies that the deluge occurred and developed quickly, allowing no time for escape (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿44﴾ (72) And it was said: “Earth! Swallow your water! Sky! Cease off!” And the water sunk ‘into the ground’, the affair was settled and it ‘the ship’ settled on ‘Mount’ Jūdī. And it was said: “Away with the wrongful people!”

وَقِيلَ يَا أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَاءَكِ وَيَسْمَاءُ أَقْلَعِي
وَعِضَّ الْمَاءَ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَاسْتَوَتْ عَلَى
الْجُودِيِّ وَقِيلَ بَعْدَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿44﴾

﴿45﴾ (73) Nūḥ called out to his Lord and said: “My Lord! My son is amongst ‘the members of’ my household and your Promise⁽⁷⁴⁾ is the Truth; You are the Wisest of arbiters!” ﴿46﴾ He said: “Noah! He is not among your household⁽⁷⁵⁾;

وَنَادَى نُوحٌ رَبَّهُ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي
وَإِنَّ وَعْدَكَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿45﴾
قَالَ يَنْوُحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ

72 The great Classical Arabic linguist ‘Abdulqāhir al-Jurjānī, who is one of the most highly regarded all-time figures who specialize in Qur’an stylistics, considers this aya the single-most inimitable aya in the whole Qur’an and the very pinnacle of the grandeur of Qur’anic stylistics (cf. al-Jurjānī, *Dalā’il al-’Ijāz*, p. 32-33). Different stylists and linguistically inclined exegetes point out the choice of lexis, fluency, the majestic employment of the passive voice, terseness, among other facets of the weaving of this aya (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Qāsimī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

Needless to say, such grandeur of style is both Godly and language-bound and simply cannot be replicated in any other language.

73 The substance of this passage, and indeed Noah’s whole story, is captured in its last aya, Aya 49: to further prove through such detailed accounts of events and nations long gone the truthfulness of the Message, and to help the Messenger (ﷺ) remain steadfast during those unbearably difficult times, and whereby stories, being the main form of entertainment in those days, had and still have a tremendous effect on people’s mental state, especially those strongly identified with. To this effect, it is also important to see that there is a likeness between these stories, which finds reflection in the choice of words and expressions, and those of the Noble Messenger (ﷺ).

74 Alluding to God’s Promise to save his family members from drowning (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

75 Although he was surely Noah’s son, he was not counted among Noah’s family members that were promised Divine deliverance because he was a Denier (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

he is not a righteous deed⁽⁷⁶⁾, so ask Me not what you have no knowledge of⁽⁷⁷⁾; I admonish you lest you be amongst the ignorant!”⁽⁴⁷⁾ He said: “My Lord, I seek refuge by You that I should ask You that which I have no knowledge of. Should You not forgive me and have Mercy on me, I shall be among the losers!”⁽⁴⁸⁾ It was said: “Nūḥ! Disembark in peace by Us, and blessings on you and on nations ‘coming’ from those who are with you⁽⁷⁸⁾; but ‘other’ nations, We will make them enjoy⁽⁷⁹⁾ ‘life’, then a painful Punishment from Us touches them!⁽⁸⁰⁾”

إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾
 قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَسْأَلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَإِلَّا تَغْفِرْ لِي وَتَرْحَمْنِي أَكُنْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ قِيلَ يَا نُوحُ اهْبِطْ بِسَلَامٍ مِنَّا وَبَرَكَاتٍ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّمَّنْ مَعَكَ ۚ وَأُمَّرُ سَمْعِيئَهُمْ ثُمَّ يَمْسُهُمْ مِنََّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٤٨﴾

- 76 That is, his deeds were not righteous (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī, al-Qāsimī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). Other exegetes, basing their opinion on the referent of the pronoun with which *inna-hu* ends (which could refer to either a person or an action), have it that the deed which is not righteous is Noah’s intervention on behalf of his son (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Sa‘dī).
- 77 Noah (ﷺ) is being told not to ask God (ﷻ) about the reasons behind His Deeds of which he has no knowledge and not to ask about the permissibility of that which he has no knowledge and over which he does not know for sure whether its taking place is wise and favourable (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīl*, Abū al-Su‘ūd, al-Sa‘dī).
- 78 That is, the nations that will form from the offspring of the Believers who were aboard the ship (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Khāzin, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “O descendants of those We carried ‘in the ship’ with Noah. Indeed, he was a grateful servant!” (17: 3).
- 79 Granted that even the Deniers will also be provided for by God in this life, theirs is only a transitory enjoyment which, no matter how great it might seem, is dwarfed by comparison to the everlasting provision and reward for Believers in Paradise (cf. 31: 23-24, 47: 12; al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī).
- 80 Many other nations, who will come, will Deny God so that they too will be punished (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa‘dī, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).

﴿49﴾ These are among the notable news of the Unseen; We reveal them to you ‘Muhammad’. Neither you nor your people had knowledge of it before this. So be steadfast; indeed the final round is for the Mindful⁽⁸¹⁾.

﴿50﴾ And to ‘Ād ‘We sent’ their brother Hūd. He said: “My people, worship Allah ‘alone’, there is no god for you besides Him; you are none but lies weavers⁽⁸²⁾ ﴿51﴾ My people! I am not asking for payment for it⁽⁸³⁾; indeed my reward is with none but the One Who originated me⁽⁸⁴⁾—do you mind not!

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ الْعَقِيبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

وَالِىٰ عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا قَالَ يَتَقَوَّمُوا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ آلِهَةٍ غَيْرُهُ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا مُفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ يَتَقَوَّمُوا لَمْ أَنْسَلِكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ جَبْرًا إِنْ أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَىٰ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

- 81 God Almighty wants to hearten the Believers and remind them of the Divine canon that no one nation remains dominant indefinitely: “*Those are the days We rotate them between people!*” (3: 140); “*Mūsā said to his people: “Seek help in Allah and be steadfast. Indeed the land is for Allah, He bequeaths it to whom He wills among His servants; the final round is for the Mindful!”*” (7: 128).
- 82 Their claim to worship other deities alongside God Almighty was a groundless lie (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa’dī).
- 83 Guidance is the priciest gift that any human can be presented with, yet it is vehemently rejected. People had to be reminded of the paradoxical nature of this situation. In Sura *al-Shu‘arā’*, Prophets Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot and Shu‘ayb all pointed this out to their people: “*I do not ask you for a payment for it. Indeed my reward is with the Lord of all beings!*” Other instances also highlight the same, for example, “*Then from the furthest end of the city a man came, rushing. He said: “My people! Follow the Messengers. *Follow those who ask not of you any payment and who are guided!”*” (36: 20-21).
- 84 This implies God’s most unique ability of creation; a quality their so-called gods are especially dispossessed of: “*O mankind! A parable is set forth, so hearken to it! Truly those upon whom you call apart from God will never create a fly, even if they gathered together to do so; if the fly should rob them of aught, they could not rescue it from it. Feeble are the seeker and the sought!*” (22: 73).

﴿52﴾ ⁽⁸⁵⁾My people! Seek your Lord’s forgiveness and thereafter repent to Him; He shall send the sky pouring down on you profusely and add power to your power; turn not away as criminals!” ﴿53﴾ They said: “Hūd! You have come to us with no proof and we shall not abandon our gods based on your saying; we shall never Believe in you! ﴿54﴾ We ‘shall’ only say that some of our gods overcame you with harm!⁽⁸⁶⁾” He said: “‘Then’ I certainly call Allah to bear witness, and bear witness you ‘also’ that I disavow that which you Associate⁽⁸⁷⁾ ﴿55﴾ besides Him. So conspire against me, altogether, and afford me not respite! ﴿56﴾ Verily, I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord⁽⁸⁸⁾.

وَيَقَوْمٍ أَسْتَعْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ
يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا وَيَزِدْكُمْ
قُوَّةً إِلَى قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾
قَالُوا يَا هَيْهْدُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ
بِتَارِكِيَّ الْهَيْتِنَا عَنْ قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ
بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ إِنْ نَقُولُ إِلَّا اعْرَابًا مِمَّا بَعْضُ
ءَالِهَتِنَا يُسْوِئُ قَالَ إِنِّي أَشْهَدُ اللَّهَ وَأَشْهَدُ وَأَنِّي
بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَكَيْدُونِي
جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ لَا تُنظِرُونِ ﴿٥٥﴾ إِنِّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ
رَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ

- 85 First, he invited them to worship God Almighty and here he invites them to repent from Associating, the gravest of all sins, and to expect the immediate good reward for this pious action (cf. al-Rāzī). God will bless those who devoutly follow the path He charted out with plentiful provisions, rain and all sorts of produce which grows because of it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī). This is God’s lasting promise: “*Had the people of the towns Believed and become Mindful, We would have opened up for them blessings from Heaven and Earth*” (7: 96); “*I ‘Noah’ said, ‘Ask forgiveness of your Lord: He is Ever-Forgiving. *He will send down abundant rain from the sky for you; *and He will support you with wealth and children, and make for you gardens and rivers*” (71: 10-12).
- 86 That is, they superstitiously believed that a god of theirs ‘touched’ him with madness for speaking ill of them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 87 This is a resolute reply that shows how little he cares for their idols, which they falsely believe are able to inflict harm (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 88 This firm stand is akin to that of Prophet Noah’s (ﷺ); such is the unshakable Faith of these beacons of guidance: “*Recite to them ‘Muhammad’ the ‘notable’ news of Nūḥ when he said to his people: ‘My people, if my staying*

There is not a moving creature without Him taking it by the forelock⁽⁸⁹⁾; verily my Lord is on a Straight Path⁽⁹⁰⁾. ⁴⁵⁷ "But" If you turn away, then I have delivered to you what I was sent to you with⁽⁹¹⁾. My Lord shall bring to succeed you other people and you shall not harm Him in the least—verily, My Lord is Trustee⁽⁹²⁾ over everything!"

مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَيْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفُ رَبِّي قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّوهُ شَيْئًا إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيفٌ ﴿٥٧﴾

'among you' and reminding 'of you' of Allah's Signs is 'so' unbearable for you – then in Allah I 'unshakably' trust – so deliberate your affair, 'collectively' you and your Associates, and find no qualms about your affair, then administer it to me and afford me no respite!" (10: 71).

- 89 *Nāṣiyah* (lit. forelock), and, in particular, the 'taking by it' as is this instance, is metonymous for God's wielding control over His creatures. God Almighty has Perfect Power over His creation and, thus, Prophet Hūd clearly communicated to his people that none of their gods could harm him naught (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). This realization has got to be felt and lived by, by the Believers at all times. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to bid us when we went to sleep to say: "O Allah! Lord of the Heavens, Earth, and the Great Throne; Our Lord and the Lord of everything; Splitter of the seed and the date stone; Sender down of the Torah, the Evangel and the Furqān *the Qur'an*: I seek refuge in You from the evil of every creature You are taking by the forelock. You are the First, nothing is before You; You are the Last, nothing is after You; You are the Obvious, nothing is more obvious than You; You are the Near, nothing is nearer than You: Settle our debts for us and spare us from poverty"" (Muslim: 2713).
- 90 That is the path of Truth and Justice. God Almighty does not deal anyone wrongfully and His Speech and Deeds are always accurate and wise in both His decrees and law setting (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 14: 177, al-Sa'dī).
- 91 Through this delivery he established the case against his people and whether they heeded or not he was not to be held to account over their choice of path (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 92 *al-Ḥāfīz* is one of the Most Beautiful Names of God Almighty. It derives from the verb *hafīza* which has the dual meaning of to keep record of and to preserve and protect from harm. Here, Prophet Hūd (رضي الله عنه) intended both meanings: that God keeps a record of the speech and deeds of His servants and will hold them to account over them, and that God is his Protector from peoples' harm should they intend him evil (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

﴿58﴾ When Our Command came, We delivered Hūd and those who have Believed with him by Mercy from Us; We delivered them from a dense punishment⁽⁹³⁾.

﴿59﴾ That was ‘Ād; they renounced the Signs of their Lord, disobeyed His Messengers, and followed the command of every mulish tyrant.

﴿60﴾ ‘So’ They were pursued by Damnation in this worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection ‘as well’. Nay, but ‘Ād did indeed Deny in their Lord; nay, but away with ‘Ād, the people of Hūd.

﴿61﴾⁽⁹⁴⁾ And to Thamūd ‘We sent’ their brother Šāliḥ. He said: “My people, worship Allah ‘alone’, there is no god for you besides Him. He initiated you from Earth⁽⁹⁵⁾ and made you its cultivators so seek His forgiveness and thereafter repent to Him: verily, my Lord is All-Near, All-Answering⁽⁹⁶⁾.”

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا هُودًا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ
رِحْمَةً مِنَّا وَخَيَّبْنَاهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ﴿٥٨﴾
وَتِلْكَ عَادٌ جَحَدُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَصَوْا
رُسُلَهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ كِبَارِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي
هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةُ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَّا إِنْ عَادَا
كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَّا بَعْدَ الْعَادِ قَوْمُ هُودٍ ﴿٥٩﴾

﴿٥٨﴾ وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا
اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوا لَهُمْ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ
إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُّجِيبٌ ﴿٦١﴾

93 This punishment could be either the Punishment that will come in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī), or the frightful punishment that actually befell the ‘Ād (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Sa’dī).

94 The Thamūd, besides the ‘Ād, was yet another Arabian tribe who rebelled against their Messenger and, thus, were destroyed (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Nazm al-Durar*).

95 This is a reminder of the great bounty of the creation of their father, Adam (ﷺ), the father of humanity who was created from the clay of Earth (cf. 6: 2, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr); an everlasting Sign of God Almighty’s worthiness of devoted worship.

96 “Should My servants ask you about Me, I am near. I answer the Prayer of the one who prays. Let them ‘then’ respond to Me and Believe in Me so that they might be guided” (2: 186).

﴿62﴾ They said: “Şāliḥ, we had hopes in you before this!⁽⁹⁷⁾ Do you instruct us against worshipping that which our fathers ‘used to’ worship! Indeed, we surely are in greatly unsettling doubt about what you call us to!” ﴿63﴾ He said: “My people! Would you ‘not’ see that if I had evidence from my Lord and ‘that’ He gave me Mercy from His Own⁽⁹⁸⁾, who would then come to my aid before Allah if I disobey Him; you increase me nothing but ‘perdition’, losing. ﴿64﴾ My people! This is the she-camel of Allah⁽⁹⁹⁾, a Sign for you, so let it graze ‘freely’ in the land of Allah and touch it not with ‘any’ harm⁽¹⁰⁰⁾; else a close by punishment will betake you”. ﴿65﴾ They slayed her, and he said ‘to them’: “Enjoy ‘staying’ in your land for three days; that is a promise, not lied!”

﴿66﴾ When Our Command came, We delivered Şāliḥ and those who Believed with him by Mercy from Us from the disgrace of that day—verily ‘Muhammad’ your Lord is the All-Powerful, All-Prevailing!⁽¹⁰¹⁾

قَالُوا يَصْلِحُ قَدْ كُنْتَ فِينَا مَرْحُوًّا قَبْلَ هَذَا ۗ
 أَتَنْهَانَا أَنْ نَعْبُدَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا وَإِنَّا لَفِي
 شَكٍّ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ يَتَقَوْمِ
 آرَاءَ يَسْتَمُّونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَعَٰتِنِي
 مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً ۖ فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ عَصَيْتُهُ ۗ
 فَمَا تَزِيدُونَنِي غَيْرَ تَخْسِيرٍ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَيَقَوْمِ هَذِهِ
 نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ ۖ فَذُرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ
 فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ
 عَذَابٌ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَقَالَ تَمَتَّعُوا
 فِي دَارِكُمْ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ وَعَدُّ
 غَيْرِ مَكْدُوبٍ ﴿٦٦﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا لِنَجِّنَا
 صَالِحًا وَآلِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ ۖ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَمِن
 خِزْيِ يَوْمٍ ۖ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ ﴿٦٦﴾

97 That is to say: “We are disappointed in you”. This is to show their strong disapproval of his call and give vent to their rebuke of it (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

98 The Message from God Almighty is mercy to humans (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī).

99 For more of the miracle of the she-camel and the story of Şāliḥ in general, see 7: 73-79.

100 “He said: “Here is a she-camel ‘as a Sign for you’. She will have her turn to drink as you have yours, each on an appointed day. *And touch her not with harm, lest you be taken by the Punishment of a tremendous day” (26: 155-156).

101 This reflective imposition brings relevance from the story of Prophet Şāliḥ (ﷺ) to the adverse circumstances that the Messenger (ﷺ) was enduring.

﴿67﴾ The ‘mighty’ shout betook the wrongful ones and they became ‘dead’ fallen prone in their ‘very’ land; ﴿68﴾ as if they had not ‘ever’ thrived in it. Nay, but Thamūd did indeed Deny in their Lord; nay, but away with Thamūd!

وَأَخَذَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي
دِيَرِهِمْ جَثْمِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ كَانَ لَمْ يَعْنُوا
فِيهَا إِلَّا إِنْ تَمُودًا كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَّا
بَعْدَ التَّمُودِ ﴿٦٨﴾

﴿69﴾ ⁽¹⁰²⁾ Verily, Our messengers came to Ibrāhīm with the glad tidings⁽¹⁰³⁾. They said: “Peace!”⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ and he said: “Peace!” Little did he linger to bring a roasted calf.

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا
سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ أَنْ جَاءَ بِعِجَلٍ
حَنِيدٍ ﴿٦٩﴾

102 The ‘messengers’ spoken of in this passage and the next are angels sent by God for the punishment of Lot’s people; such is their coming upon the wrongful. This is by way of answering the Makkan Deniers’ request for the coming of an angel with the Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Angels descending to Earth have only one job: to deliver what is ‘true’; “either a Message to a human Messenger or a Punishment from God upon those who Deny it” (Mujāhid, quoted in al-Ṭabarī). “*They ‘brashly’ say: “O you to whom the Reminder is revealed! You must be insane! *Why do you not bring us the angels, if what you say is true?” *We do not send down the angels, save in Truth ‘Punishment’, and were We to do so, they would be granted no respite!*” (15: 6-8).

103 The good news that he was about to have children of his own (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*). However, al-Shinqīṭī, based on Ayas 51: 32-33 and 29: 3, also points out the possibility of this piece of good news being the imminent destruction of the people of Lot, whose sin was of a most singular, earth-shattering nature (for more on them see 7: 80-84), especially as their Messenger Lot (ﷺ) was Abraham’s own nephew who did not live too far from him at that given time (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr). This fact may shed new light on our reading of the passage at hand.

104 This greeting is a becoming prelude to good news (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr); put nicely and simply as a nominal sentence which, in Arabic, is more affirmative than the verbal sentence (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Abū Ḥayyān) which would also allay fears immediately. People in those times had no cover of protection besides themselves and so they placed great importance on the show of others’ goodwill, especially strangers; a peace greeting put so bore special significance.

﴿70﴾ When he saw 'that' their hands did not reach out for it, he deemed them strange and became apprehensive of them⁽¹⁰⁵⁾. They said: "Fear not. We have been sent to Lot's people". ﴿71﴾ His woman⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ was standing; she laughed⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ and We gave her the glad tiding of 'the coming of' Ishāq and after Ishāq 'the coming of' Ya'qūb⁽¹⁰⁸⁾. ﴿72﴾ She said: "How bizarre! Shall I give birth when I am an old woman and this, my husband, is an old man! This, indeed, is a really strange thing!" ﴿73﴾ They said: "Do you find Allah's Command bizarre!⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Allah's Mercy and Blessings on you,

فَلَمَّا رَأَىٰ أَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ نَكِرَهُمْ
وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَتَخَفْ إِنَّا
أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِ لُوطٍ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَأَمْرَاتُهُ قَائِمَةٌ
فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ إِسْحَاقَ
يَعْقُوبَ ﴿٧١﴾ قَالَتْ يَتُوبَلَىٰ إِيَّاهُ الَّذِي أَنَا عَجُوزٌ
وَهَذَا بَعْلِي شَيْخًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ
عَجِيبٌ ﴿٧٢﴾ قَالُوا أَتَعْجِبِينَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ
رَحِمَتُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ

105 He read their refraining from eating his food as an ill sign of malicious intent as the custom, a kind of chivalric code, was in those societies to distance themselves from ties, which could be as easily established by, for instance, accepting someone's invitation or eating his food, that could see them morally indebted to the person concerned. If one turned down a good gesture it meant that one did not want peace and/or that one was ungrateful to a benefactor (cf. Ibn 'Āshur).

106 His wife.

107 Exegetes have speculated as to why she laughed, but mostly they agree that this was because she wondered at how ignorant she thought the people of Lūt were of their imminent fate (cf. al-Ṭabarī), or for her elation at their well-earned doom (cf. Ibn Kathīr).

108 She was given the happy news of a child, Isaac, and a grandchild, Jacob (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī), in person and pointedly because she had no children of her own, unlike Abraham (ﷺ) who had a son, Prophet Ishmael (ﷺ) through Hagar. This, then, was particularly happy news for Sarah (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

109 Such is God Almighty's Omnipotence: "She 'Mariam' said: "My Lord, how can I have a child, while no human 'has ever' touched me?" He said: "Thus Allah creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says: "Be!" and it is"" (3: 47).

people of the house⁽¹¹⁰⁾—He is verily All-Praiseworthy, Most Glorious. ^{﴿74﴾} When alarm left Ibrāhīm and the glad tidings came to him, he argued with Us about Lūṭ’s people. ^{﴿75﴾} Verily Ibrāhīm is most long-suffering ever imploring ‘with fervent prayers’ and devotedly repentant. ^{﴿76﴾} ‘The angels said:’ “O Ibrāhīm, leave this ‘behind’⁽¹¹¹⁾. Indeed your Lord’s Command has already come! Indeed a punishment against which there is no fending shall come upon them!”

^{﴿77﴾} When Our messengers came to Lūṭ, he became distraught and found them insufferable⁽¹¹²⁾, and said: “This ‘truly’ is a tough day!”

أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ ۖ إِنَّهُرَّحِيمٌ مَّجِيدٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ
عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَاءَتْهُ الْبَشْرَىٰ يُخْبِرُنَا
فِي قَوْمِ لُوطٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَخَلِيمٌ ۖ وَأَوْهٌ مُّنبِتٌ ﴿٧٥﴾
بِأَيِّرْهِيمِ اعْرُضْ عَنْ هَذَا ۖ إِنَّهُ قَدْ جَاءَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ
وَإِنَّهُمْ عَنِهِمْ عَدَابٌ عَيْرٌ مُّرْدُوذٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ
بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَقَالَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيبٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

110 Abraham’s (ﷺ) household (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī). ‘Abdul Raḥmān Ibn Abī Laylā said: “Ka‘b Ibn ‘Ujrah (رضي الله عنه) met me and said: “Shall I not present you with a gift I heard from the Prophet (ﷺ)”. I said: “Yes!” He said: “We asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): “Messenger of Allah! In what way can supplicating for blessings and peace upon you and your family be conveyed? Allah has told us how to greet each other”. He said: “Say: “O Allah! Descend Your *ṣalāh* ‘peace and blessings’ on Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You descended your *ṣalāh* on Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm. Indeed, You are the Laudable, the Glorious. O Allah! Bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You blessed Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm. Indeed, You are the Laudable, the Glorious”” (al-Bukhārī: 3370; Muslim: 406).

111 Compassionate as Abraham was to intercede on behalf of such gravely wrongful people, he was told by the angels to cease; the matter had been set and sealed (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

112 He feared the worst for them whereby his people would want to physically violate them. Knowing how hooked on their vileness they were, he rightly predicted their reaction (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

﴿78﴾ His people came to him rushing in a hustle⁽¹¹³⁾ – they were used to committing many a grave evil; he said: “My people, these are my daughters⁽¹¹⁴⁾, they are purer for you! So be Mindful of Allah and do not bring shame upon me as to my guests! Is there not among you a level-headed man!” ﴿79﴾ They said: “You very well know that we have no right to your daughters. You exactly know what we want!” ﴿80﴾ He said: “If only I had power against you or could seek the support of unflinching backing!⁽¹¹⁵⁾” ﴿81﴾ They said: “Lūṭ, we are the messengers of your Lord;

وَجَاءَهُمْ قَوْمُهُمْ يَهْرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ قَالَ يَتَقَوَّمُونَ عَنَّا وَإِنَّ هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُخْزُونِ فِي ضَيْفِي ۗ أَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ زَكِيٌّ ﴿٧٨﴾ قَالُوا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَمَا لَنَا فِي بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا تُرِيدُ ﴿٧٩﴾ قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِيَكُمْ قُوَّةٌ أَوْ آوَى إِلَىٰ رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ ﴿٨٠﴾ قَالُوا يَلُوْطُ إِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ

113 This imagery vividly captures how far they were gone in their wild lustfulness: “*The people of the city came in ‘mad’ joy* [at news of the new arrivals]. *He said: “*These are my guests: disgrace me not! *Fear Allah, and shame me not!*” (15: 67-69).

114 Exegetes hold different opinions as to who Prophet Lot (ﷺ) exactly meant by ‘my daughters’. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Riḍā and Ibn ‘Ashūr have it that he meant by these, given that a Prophet is the patriarch of his nation, the assaulters’ own women. On the other hand, other exegetes, for example, al-Baghawī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Jawāb al-Kāfi*, p. 172, are of the view that he actually meant his own biological daughters. al-Qāsimī further explains that this was to show that he was ready to protect his guests from defilement by whatever means was available, as a gesture of honour befitting a Prophet’s dictates, and in full realization that these men were only and wholeheartedly lusting after those of their own sex and that no such mere face-saving offer would lure them. Yet, Ibn al-Jawzī has it that this was an offer of marriage.

115 He thought he lacked the necessary cover of protection, especially that of his own clan (cf. al-Baiḍāwī, al-Shawkānī). But, in that dire situation, his Protector was none but God Almighty. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “May Allah bless Lūṭ; he sought the support of ‘true’ Unflinching Backing!” (al-Bukhārī: 3372; Muslim: 151).

they shall not reach you⁽¹¹⁶⁾. So travel with your household in the small hours⁽¹¹⁷⁾ and let not any of you look back except your woman⁽¹¹⁸⁾; she shall be afflicted with what they are 'to be' afflicted with. Their appointment is the morn. Is not the morn near?"

﴿82﴾ When Our Command came, We turned it upside-down⁽¹¹⁹⁾ and We hailed them with stones of hard-set clay 'raining' in close succession; ﴿83﴾ 'labelled and' sealed⁽¹²⁰⁾ with you Lord!" Nor are they 'the stones' far from the wrongful!⁽¹²¹⁾

﴿84﴾ And to Midian 'We sent' their brother Shu'ayb. He said: "My people, worship Allah 'alone', there is no god for you besides Him.

لَنْ يَصِلُوا إِلَيْكَ فَأَسْرِ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا أَمْرَاتُكَ إِنَّهُ مُصِيبُهَا مَا أَصَابَهُمْ إِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ أَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيبٍ ﴿٨١﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِّن سِجِّيلٍ مَّنضُودٍ ﴿٨٢﴾ مَّسْومَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ وَمَاهِي مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ بِبَعِيدٍ ﴿٨٣﴾

* وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ

116 At this point, God blinded their sights (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "They surely solicited his guests of him, so We sealed their eyes" (54: 37).

117 They made their escape very late at night at the time of *saḥar*, i.e. when dawn was about to break: "...except the house of Lūt; We delivered them 'just' before dawn" (54: 34).

118 "So We saved him and his family, except for his woman; We destined her to be among the laggards" (27: 57).

119 Their villages were turned upside-down (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Their human nature was twisted and, thus, their punishment was of its like (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*).

120 It is said that each carried the name of the person it was meant to pelt (cf. al-Qurṭubī). Such was the care taken of each individual among them for the vileness of their deeds.

121 This closing reflection on the story of Lūt's people is a direct warning for those who follow their rebellious suit (cf. al-Sa'dī, Ibn Kathīr), especially the aggressing Qurayshites who tormented the Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī).

Do not give short measure and weight 'for others'⁽¹²²⁾; I see that you are well off and I fear for you an enveloping⁽¹²³⁾ day's punishment". ^{﴿85﴾} "My people, give full measure and weight fairly, do not swindle people out of the things that are 'rightly' theirs and do not set about the land with 'most' egregious corruption⁽¹²⁴⁾; ^{﴿86﴾} what Allah leaves out for you is better for you⁽¹²⁵⁾, if only you 'truly' Believe—I am not a keeper⁽¹²⁶⁾ over you."

وَلَا تَقْصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنِّي أَرَأَيْكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُّحِيطٍ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَتَقْوُوا أَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ بَقِيَّتُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ۗ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ ﴿٨٧﴾

122 Whereas the cardinal sin of Lot's people was lust, the people of Shu'ayb's major sin was greed (cf. al-Sa'dī); they did not trade fairly with others. For background information on the story of Prophet Shu'ayb (ﷺ) see 7: 85-93.

123 Of which there is no way out (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī).

124 *al-'Uthuww* (*ta'thaw* being the jussive form, second person plural verb) is the worst kind of corruption (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah).

Although, the ramifications and repercussions of financial fraud are widespread and seriously socially disruptive and its unchecked spread generates a most dire consequence on the prosperity and sustainability of any community (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr), it was not by any means their only sin: "Do not also sit 'in ambush' at every path threatening and turning away from the road of Allah those who Believe wanting it to be crooked" (7: 86).

125 After giving full measure, whatever is left, no matter how little it might be, is better and purer than whatever is fraudulently gained (cf. al-Ṭabarī). This can only be realized by those whose Faith comes between them and fraud; this is why Prophet Shu'ayb (ﷺ) made it conditional (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī): "Say: "The evil and the good are not equal even though the abundance of the evil may fascinate you". So fear Allah, people of sound reason, so that you might be successful" (5: 100).

126 The Prophet's (ﷺ) mission is to deliver the Message clearly and it is for whom he bears it to either heed it or not: "...your duty 'Muhammad' is only to deliver the Message; the Reckoning is Ours" (13: 40).

﴿87﴾ They said: “Shu‘ayb! Does your Prayer⁽¹²⁷⁾ bid you that we are to abandon what our fathers ‘used to’ worship or to do with our money whatever we please! ‘What?’ You! Who is the most sagacious, sensible ‘one’!⁽¹²⁸⁾”

﴿88﴾ He said: “My people! Would you see that ‘I would deviate’⁽¹²⁹⁾ if I had evidence from my Lord and ‘that’ He provided for me handsomely!⁽¹³⁰⁾ I do not seek to turn around your backs to commit that against which I bid you; I only seek to set matters aright, whatever I can. My success is only with Allah; in Him I trust and to Him I devoutly repent!”⁽⁸⁹⁾ “My people! Let not your opposition to me drive you into being afflicted with what befell the people of Nūḥ or the people of Hūd or the people of Ṣāliḥ; ‘yet’ the people of Lūṭ are not far off from you!”

قَالُوا يَشْعِيبُ أَسْلَوْنَاكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ تَتْرَكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا وَأَنْ نَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ ﴿٨٧﴾ قَالَ يَتَقَوَّمُ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَرَزَقْنِي مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَمْلِكُمْ إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْهَكُمُ عَنْهُ إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَيَقَوْمُ لَا يَجْمَعُونَ شِقَاقِي أَنْ يَصِيبَكُمْ مِثْلَ مَا أَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ هُودٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ صَالِحٍ وَمَا قَوْمَ لُوطٍ مِنْكُمْ بِبَعِيدٍ ﴿٨٩﴾

127 Prayer (*ṣalāh*) was topmost on their minds because it so sharply contradicted their practices the most (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

128 This marks a deriding undertone in their reply (cf. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Sa‘dī*). Their line of argument, as transpires in this aya, belies that they genuinely believed they held higher moral ground corresponding with what they thought was commonsense reason. By *al-ḥalīm al-rashīd* (the most sagacious, sensible ‘one’) they actually meant the total opposite, i.e. *al-safīḥ al-jāhil* (the feeble-minded, witless) (cf. *al-Shawkānī*, *Riḍā*, Ibn ‘Āshūr). In linguistics such usage is known as antiphrasis or verbal irony.

129 Cf. *al-Ṭabarī*, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, *al-Sa‘dī*.

130 Although they fully understood what he was saying, they replied to him in such a manner so as to drive the message home once and for all and to show how bullishly adamant they were in their opposition. In this way, they thought he would desist from admonishing them (cf. *al-Biqā‘ī*, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿90﴾ “Seek your Lord’s forgiveness and thereafter repent to Him—verily my Lord is Most Gracious, Most Benevolent.”

وَأَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأُوبِيكَ إِنِّي إِلَيْهِ تُوبُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾
رَجِيمٌ وَدُودٌ ﴿٩١﴾

﴿91﴾ They said: “Shu‘ayb! We do not grasp much of what you say! We can ‘only’ see that you are powerless amongst us. Had it not been for your ‘immediate’ clan, we would have stoned you!⁽¹³¹⁾ ‘Besides’ You have no ‘great’ regard in our sights!”^{﴿92﴾} He said: “My people, do you have more regard for my ‘immediate’ clan than Allah; and you staunchly put Him behind you! Verily, My Lord encompasses⁽¹³²⁾ what you do!”

قَالُوا يَشْعَبُ مَا نَفَقَهُ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا نَقُولُ
وَإِنَّا لَنَرُّكَ فِيْنَا ضَعِيفًا ۖ وَلَا رَهْطَكَ
لَرَجَمْنَاكَ وَمَا أَنتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيزٍ ﴿٩١﴾ قَالَ يَنْقُورُ
أَرَهْطَىٰ أَعَزُّ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُ
وَرَاءَ كُمْ ظَهْرِيًّا ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
مُحِيطٌ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَيَنْقُورُ أَعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَاتِكُمْ
إِنِّي عَمَلٌ سَوْفٌ تَعْلَمُونَ ۖ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ
عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَذِبٌ ۖ وَأَرْتَقِبُوا إِنِّي
مَعَكُمْ رَقِيبٌ ﴿٩٣﴾

﴿93﴾ My people labour in the state in which you are⁽¹³³⁾ as I will be labouring ‘my own way’, for ‘sure’ you will come to know to whom will come disgracing punishment and who is the liar! Await and I shall lie in wait with you!”

131 They could only use threats in the face of the numerous powerful arguments that Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) put forward to them (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

132 God knows all about their stratagems. He records them and they will be held accountable for them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa‘dī).

133 That is to say, continue in your current state of Denial, refusing to heed the Signs of God with which you are satisfied, just as I will continue following the dictates of God and the path that leads to His Pleasure and I will not be hurt by your intransigence (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). This statement marks a firm stand and a clear break from the Deniers (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “Say ‘Muhammad’: My people labour in the state in which you are, as I will be labouring ‘my own way’, for sure you will come to know to whom belongs the last round in the land—indeed the wrongdoers do not prosper” (6: 135).

﴿94﴾ When Our Command came, We delivered Shu‘ayb and those who Believed with him by Mercy from Us and the ‘mighty’ shout⁽¹³⁴⁾ betook the wrongful ones and they became ‘dead’ fallen prone in their ‘very’ land; ﴿95﴾ as if they had not ‘ever’ thrived in it⁽¹³⁵⁾. Nay, but away with Midian as much as the Thamūd were cast away!

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا شُعَيْبًا وَالَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَأَخَذَتِ
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ فَأَصْحَوْا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ
جَاهِلِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ كَأَن لَّمْ يَعْنُوا فِيهَا آلَا بَعْدًا
لِّمَدْيَنَ كَمَا بَعَدَتِ ثَمُودُ ﴿٩٥﴾

﴿96﴾ Verily, We have sent Mūsā⁽¹³⁶⁾ with Our Signs and with compelling authority⁽¹³⁷⁾

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٩٦﴾

134 The people of Shu‘ayb, as evident from the different Qur’anic ayas, were hit by different types of punishment. In Sura *al-A‘rāf* it is said that they were hit by *al-rajjah* (the quake), here they are said to have been hit by *al-ṣayḥah* (the shout) and in Sura *al-Shu‘arā* it is said that the ‘day of the overshadowing’ (*yawm al-zullah*) overtook them. Ibn Kathīr explains that they were hit by all these types of punishment, and that mention of the type of punishment in each of these instances is relevant to the context in which it occurs. In *al-A‘rāf* mention was made of the ‘quake’ because they threatened Shu‘ayb and the Believers alongside him of eviction from their land and, thus, they were hit by a quake in that very land. In this aya, they were punished with the ‘shout’ because of the disdainful discourse that they threw at their Messenger, so the punishment was to ‘shut them’ up with a much ‘louder’ reply. Finally, in *al-Shu‘arā* they were overcome by the horrible punishment of the ‘day of the overshadowing’ because they asked for ‘chunks’ to fall on them from the sky: “Look how We diversify the Signs so that may they discern!” (6: 65).

135 This is a much greater loss indeed than that of deviously seeking out financial gain: “The ones who declared Shu‘ayb a liar ‘ended’ as if they did not thrive in it ‘their land’; the ones who declared Shu‘ayb a liar were indeed the ‘real’ losers!” (7: 92).

136 A glimpse at the story of Prophet Moses (ﷺ) is given here for its relevance to the story of Prophet Shu‘ayb (ﷺ). They lived during the same period of time, in not too far places from each other and Moses was wed to Shu‘ayb’s daughter (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). So to mention them in succession, especially given how large Moses figures in the Qur’an, is to be somewhat expected (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

137 That is the nine Signs that Moses came with (cf. 17: 101 and 27: 12) and his powerful arguments (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Sa‘dī).

﴿97﴾ to Pharaoh and his notables but they followed the command⁽¹³⁸⁾ of Pharaoh; indeed Pharaoh's command was never well-guided. ﴿98﴾ He heads his people on the Day of Judgement and have them come upon the Fire; awful indeed is the coming upon. ﴿99﴾ They were pursued in this one 'life' by Damnation⁽¹³⁹⁾ and on the Day of Judgement; awful indeed is 'the' mounting 'of Damnsions'!

إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ فِرْعَوْنَ
وَمَا أَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيدٍ ﴿٩٧﴾ يَقْدُمُ قَوْمَهُ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ وَبِئْسَ الْوَرْدُ
الْمُورِدُ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَاتَّبِعُوا فِي هَذِهِ لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ بِئْسَ الرَّفْدُ الْمَرْفُودُ ﴿٩٩﴾

﴿100﴾⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ That 'is' of the notable news of towns, We relate to you 'Muhammad'; among them there are ones still standing and other ones mowed down⁽¹⁴¹⁾. ﴿101﴾ We did not do them injustice, but they did themselves injustice.

ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْقُرَىٰ نَقِصُهُمْ عَلَيْكَ
مِنْهَا قَائِمٌ وَحَصِيدٌ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ
وَلَكِنْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ﴿١٠١﴾

138 The word *amr* used here is polysemous. It could mean 'command' as chosen in this translation based on both *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar* and *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar* alluding to the aya: "So he 'Pharaoh' made fools of his people and they obeyed him" (43: 54). It could also mean someone's affairs and way of life. This meaning was chosen by al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr in their interpretation.

139 After their drowning (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).

140 What remains of the sura concludes it and points out the moral focus of the stories of the Noble Prophets told in it; God Almighty's Noble Messengers (ﷺ) were sent to their peoples to guide them and, thus, they were to be obeyed. Those who obeyed were spared ghastly punishment in this life and will be treated honorably in the Hereafter, while those who rebelled were seized by destructive punishment in this life and will have humiliating treatment in the Hereafter. People need to be heedful of the Message and treat it with the due seriousness that it deserves.

141 Some of the towns talked of here had remains still standing at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), and may very well still be extant today, that is they are 'still standing' (*qā'im*). On the other hand, other towns were totally obliterated, or to use the Qur'anic imagery, 'mowed down' (*hasīd*).

Their gods, whom they prayed to besides Allah, availed them nothing when your Lord's Command came; indeed they increased them nothing but carnage. ﴿102﴾ Such is the seizing of your Lord when He seizes the towns while they are doing wrong; surely His seizing is painful, severe! ﴿103﴾ Indeed in that is a Sign to whoever fears the Punishment of the Hereafter; that is a Day⁽¹⁴³⁾ for which people will be gathered—that is a witnessed⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ Day! ﴿104﴾ We only delay⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ it for a counted term; ﴿105﴾ a Day on which no soul will utter 'a word' except with His permission⁽¹⁴⁶⁾;

فَمَا أَغْنَتْ عَنْهُمْ آلِهَتُهُمُ الَّتِي يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ لَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ وَمَا زَادُهُمْ إِلَّا تَتَابَعُوا ۚ وَكَذَلِكَ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ إِذَا أَخَذَ الْقُرَىٰ وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ آتٍ أَخَذَهُ بِأَيْمُرٍ شَدِيدٍ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِمَنْ خَافَ عَذَابَ الْآخِرَةِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَجْمُوعٌ لَهُ النَّاسُ وَذَٰلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَسْهُودٌ ۚ وَمَا تُوخَّرُونَ إِلَّا لِأَجَلٍ مَعْدُودٍ ۚ يَوْمَ يَأْتِ لَا تَكْفُرُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ

142 Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "My Lord, gives respite to the wrongdoer, until when He seizes him, He would never let go of him!" Then he (ﷺ) read: "Such is the seizing of your Lord when He seizes the towns while they are doing wrong; surely His seizing is painful, severe!" (al-Bukhārī: 4686; Muslim: 2583).

143 The Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

144 All of God's creation will come to witness that Day (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr): "There is not a single moving creature on Earth or a bird flying with its two wings except them being nations like you – We left nothing unaccounted for in the Book – and then to their Lord they shall be gathered" (6: 38).

145 The Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr): "Say: "Verily, those of old and these latter ones * shall certainly be gathered on an appointed time of a known Day!" (56: 49-50).

146 This is to indicate the seriousness of that grave Day and to show false the idolaters' belief that their idols will intercede with God Almighty on their behalf on that Day (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr): "On the Day the Spirit and the angels stand in rows, none speaking, save one whom the Most Gracious permits and who speaks aright" (78: 38). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) in the long Hadith of Intercession (al-Shafā'ah) said: "None will speak on that Day except for the Messengers; their prayer on that Day is: "O Allah, spare! Spare!" (al-Bukhārī: 7437; Muslim: 182).

among them are the wretched and the cheerful⁽¹⁴⁷⁾. ^{﴿106﴾} As for the wretched, they are in the Fire; in it they have ‘such ghastly’ inhaling and exhaling!⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ ^{﴿107﴾} They will abide therein forever – as long as the Heavens and Earth last⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ – except whomever⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ your Lord

فَمِنْهُمْ سَعِيدٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقُوا فَنفِي
التَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَسَهيقٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا
دَامَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ ۗ

147 The ‘wretched’ are the Deniers, while the ‘cheerful’ are the Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

148 This painful image, which actively engages both the sense of hearing and imagination, warns against such dismal a fate (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

149 Exegetes have postulated about what exactly is meant by *al-samāwātu wa al-arḍu* (Heavens and Earth/land and skies) here, given that the Qur’an clearly states that both the present Heavens and Earth will be replaced by others on the Day of Judgement: “*On that Day the Earth shall be changed into other than the Earth, and the Heavens ‘too’, and they will appear before Allah, the One, the All-Conquering*” (14: 48). Ibn Kathīr, Ibn al-Anbārī, and Ibn ‘Āshūr said that this could mean one of two things. First, that this is a Qur’anic expression which follows a rhetorical trope and that the Arabians of the time of revelation were used to saying such an expression in a hyperbolic manner. Secondly, that the *al-samāwātu wa al-arḍu* meant here are the land and skies of the Hereafter.

150 *Illā mā shā’a* could be translated as except ‘whatever’ or ‘whomever’ because the Arabic relative pronoun *mā* is usually used to refer to non-intelligent objects whereas *man* is used for humans. Given that it is used elsewhere in the Qur’an to refer to humans (cf. 4: 3) a substantial number of exegetes took *mā* here to refer to ‘*uṣātu al-muwaḥḥidīn*, the sinners among those who testify ‘the declaration of monotheism’ (*Lā ilaha illā Allāh* (there is no god but Allah)) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sam‘ānī, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). Whereas, those who took it to refer to non-intelligent objects interpret this exception to mean the period that takes place prior to their actual accession into Hellfire, i.e. they abide in Hellfire at all times with the exception of the time that elapsed before they were admitted into it (cf. al-Sa‘dī), or that it is used by way of pressing the point of the eternity of their stay in Hell, and that is so not because of itself *per se* but rather because of the Will of God Almighty and that nothing is ‘eternal’ unless God Almighty Wills it so (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Alūsī, al-Qāsimī).

Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Whoever says: “*Lā ilaha illā Allāh* (there is no god but Allah)” and has the weight of a single grain of barley of goodness in his heart will get out of Hellfire. Whoever says: “*Lā ilaha illā Allāh* (there is no god but Allah)” and has the

wishes—indeed ‘Muhammad’ your Lord is surely Doer of what He wants! ﴿108﴾ As for those who are made cheerful, ‘they are’ in Paradise; therein they abide forever – as long as the Heavens and Earth last – except whomever⁽¹⁵¹⁾ your Lord wishes—a giving which is never cut off!

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ ﴿١٠٧﴾ * وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سَعَدُوا فَفِي الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ عَطَاءٌ غَيْرَ يُجْدُودٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾

﴿109﴾⁽¹⁵²⁾ So, do not be ‘Muhammad’ in doubt about what these worship⁽¹⁵³⁾.

فَلَا تَكُ فِي مَرِيئَةٍ مِّمَّا يَعْْبُدُ هَؤُلَاءِ

weight of a single grain of wheat of goodness in his heart will also get out of Hellfire. Whoever says: “*Lā ilaha illā Allāh* (there is no god but Allah)” and has a mote’s weight of goodness in his heart will also get out of Hellfire” (al-Bukhārī: 44; Muslim: 139). Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “The Companions of Paradise will enter it; He (God Almighty) will admit into it whomever He wishes by His Mercy. And the Companions of Hellfire will enter into it. Then He (ﷺ) says ‘to the angels’: “Go looking and whomever you find in it ‘Hellfire’ who has the weight of a mustard seed of Faith in his heart; get him out!” They will then be brought out ‘looking like’ bitumen, charred and thrown into the River of Life and they grow like a seed grows by the side of a stream; do you not see that it grows yellowish and twisted!” (al-Bukhārī: 22; Muslim: 184).

- 151 This is the same as in the previous aya. However, exegetes took the exception here to refer to the sinners among those who testify the declaration of monotheism (*Lā ilaha illā Allāh* (there is no god but Allah)), because of the time they have to spend in Hellfire (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sam‘ānī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). Yet in the considered opinion of Ibn Kathīr, their eternal stay is not an obligation in and of itself but is due to God Almighty’s boundless Grace. This is why, Ibn Kathīr opines, the Companions of Paradise are inspired with Glorification (*al-tasbīh*) and Praise (*al-tahmūd*) as much as they are inspired to breathe. Yet this Divine Grace, as in the next aya, is everlasting and will never come to an end (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Hādī al-Arwāh*, p. 345).
- 152 Having thrashed out the heart of the matter in this passage, the Messenger (ﷺ) is given directions as to what immediate course of action to take to face up to the surrounding adverse circumstances.
- 153 Firmness of stand naturally springs from unshakable belief in one’s rightfulness and the erroneousness of one’s foes; this is the surest first step. They blindly take the same course as their fathers and the many nations that God destroyed (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

They only worship as their fathers used to worship in aforesaid times. We shall bestow upon them their share⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ in full, undiminished. ﴿110﴾⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ We had indeed given Mūsā the Book and it was differed upon. Had it not been for a Word, already passed from your Lord⁽¹⁵⁶⁾, they would have been 'soon' judged amongst—verily they are in eerie doubt about it!⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ ﴿111﴾ All 'of these' your Lord shall surely requite them 'for' their deeds⁽¹⁵⁸⁾—verily, Allah is Knowledgeable of what they do!

مَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُهُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَأَنَا لَمُوفٍ لَهُمْ نَصِيْبَهُمْ غَيْرَ مَنْقُوصٍ ﴿١١٠﴾
وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَآخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ
وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ لَمِنَ الْمُقْتَلِينَ ﴿١١١﴾ وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَمَنَّا
لِنُؤْفِقَنَّهُمْ رِبِّيًّا أَنْ نَعْمَلَهُمْ إِنْهَ رَبِّمَا يَعْمَلُونَ
حَيْرٌ ﴿١١١﴾

- 154 Their full share (*naṣīb*) of whatever good was destined for them in this worldly life and the share of Punishment in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 155 This is to show by the significant illustration of one of the greatest Messengers that ever came to humanity that it is the nature of people at all times to differ upon the Message with some accepting it and others rejecting it (cf. al-Rāzī). So the Messenger needed not to be saddened by the fact that his people rejected him (cf. al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 156 That He, Glorified be Him, will give respite to the rebellious until the Day of Judgement (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Sa’dī): “*Had it not been for a Word, already passed, they would already have been destroyed; ‘but’ their time has been set. *So be patient ‘O Muhammad’ with what they say; glorify the praises of your Lord before sunrise and before sunset, and glorify Him in the hours of the night and at ‘both’ ends of the day, so that you may be pleased*” (20: 129-130).
- 157 This is how much pain and suffering the Qur’an is causing them. Although outwardly they treat it disdainfully, their minds are not at ease about it; quite the contrary (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar, al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 158 This is an assuring note ending the first step the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) was to take in dealing with his circumstances as they stood at that particular juncture, espoused in the most binding language (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr), emphasizing the surety of the concept of recompense and/or retribution for one’s deeds and that God Almighty has Perfect Knowledge of people’s deeds.

﴿112﴾ So be upright⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ 'Muhammad' as you were commanded as well as those who repented⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ with you and do not transgress⁽¹⁶¹⁾— verily He is All-Seeing of what you do! ﴿113﴾ And do not be titled towards⁽¹⁶²⁾ those who committed injustice lest that the Fire touches you; you 'would' have no allies besides Allah and then you would not be helped.

فَأَسْتَقِمُّ كَمَا أُمِرْتُ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ
وَلَا تَطْعَمُوا إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَا
تَرَكُّوْا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ
وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ ثُمَّ
لَا تُنصَرُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

159 *Istaqim* (lit. be straightforward), is a command from God Almighty to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Believers to be steadfast in their religion (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). Sufyān Ibn 'Abdillāh al-Thaqafī (رحمته الله) narrated: "I said: "Messenger of Allah, tell me something about Islam that I shall never 'have need to' ask anyone besides you after it!" He (ﷺ) said: "Say: I Believe in Allah" and then be upright!" (Muslim: 38). This is the second step in the course of action that God charted out for him and the Believers with him (cf. Riḍā).

160 The verb 'repented' (*tāba*) is strategically deployed in this place, given that the command to 'seek the Lord's forgiveness and thereafter repent' (*istaghfirū rabbakum thumma tūbū ilayhi*) is a command that many of the Messengers of God bade their people to follow and is repeated throughout the sura. This shows that the true Believers, the Noble Companions of the Messenger (ﷺ), devoutly realized it in themselves and in their actions, hard as it is on the less devout. Belief itself is repentance from Association (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

161 That is, be in keeping with the uprightness that was ordained for you and do not overstep the limits in this respect (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī). In other words, be moderate and within bounds, neither inclining towards any of the two extremes (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Nabawīyah*).

162 *Tarkanū* (lit. to be tilted towards) is to be inclined towards the other camp who are deviant from the straight path (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). Both 'transgressing' the limits and leaning to the other side grind against devout uprightness. It is widely reported that the great scholar al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: "Allah placed the 'upright' religion between two 'do not's': "Do not transgress" and "Do not be tilted towards"" (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿114﴾ (163) And keep up the Prayer at both ends of the day and at closely succeeding hours of the night; indeed good deeds dissipate the bad ones⁽¹⁶⁴⁾—that⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ is a reminder for those who remember! ﴿115﴾ And be ‘steadfastly’ unwavering as Allah wastes not the reward of good doers.

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفِي النَّهَارِ وَرُفُقًا مِّنَ
الَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ
ذَلِكَ ذِكْرٌ لِّلذَّكِرِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَأَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾

﴿116﴾ (166) Never had there been among the generations before you

فَلَوْلَا كَانِ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ

163 Of all other types of devotional worship, Prayer could have been singled out here for two reasons. First, it was a great source of comfort to the Messenger (ﷺ), which was much needed given the circumstances. Ḥudhayfah Ibn al-Yamān (رضي الله عنه) said: “Whenever something caused the Messenger (ﷺ) gloominess, he would Pray” (Abū Dāwūd: 1319); Sālim Ibn Abī al-Ja’d narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) used to say: “Bilal! Announce Prayer! Console us with it!” (Abū Dāwūd: 4985). Secondly, it is a statement making, an observable manifestation of adhering to the ‘upright’ path that the Messenger was bade to abide with (cf. Riḍā). As we have seen earlier in Aya 87, the people of Shu‘ayb (رضي الله عنه) significantly pointed out Prayer to him because it deviated the most from their crooked way of life.

The times through which the Messenger (ﷺ) is bade to keep up the Prayer, are the times when one is the least occupied with matters of daily life and thus most likely to be flooded with thoughts.

164 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that he heard the Messenger (ﷺ) say: “Would you see if there were a river at the door of anyone of you and he were to wash in it five times a day. Would there remain any dirt on him? ‘Then he added’ Like so are the five ‘mandatory’ Prayers; Allah expunges sins with them” (al-Bukhārī: 528, Muslim: 667). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated the Messenger (ﷺ) used to say: “The five Prayers, the Jum‘ah ‘Prayer’ to the Jum‘ah ‘Prayer’ and ‘the fasting of’ a Ramadan to the next Ramadan are an atonement for ‘the sins that are committed’ between them; given that the major sins are avoided” (Muslim: 233).

165 *Dhālīka* (lit. ‘all of’ that) refers to what the Messenger and the Believers were just commanded to do (cf. al-Khāzin, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

166 This is a reflective passage which draws a very important lesson from the stories so far related and points out its relevance to the then current situation of the call to Faith. It constitutes a direct warning to the Makkans (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). God Almighty’s Wrath is only incurred when corruption becomes rife and rampant, and people are happy as they busy themselves away with their lives’ findings, unwilling to make amends (cf. al-Rāzī).

those of 'enduring' virtue⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ who admonish against corruption in the land, except but few of them whom We had delivered among them! And those who did wrong 'only' pursued what they were made to live lavishly in⁽¹⁶⁸⁾; they surely were criminals!⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ ﴿117﴾ 'Muhammad' Your Lord would not have unjustly destroyed towns when its people were into reforming 'their deeds'⁽¹⁷⁰⁾. ﴿118﴾ Had your Lord wished, He would have made people into one nation⁽¹⁷¹⁾ but they will ever be different⁽¹⁷²⁾;

أُولُو بَقِيَّةٍ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الْأَرْضِ
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّمَّنْ آجِنَاتَا مِنْهُمْ وَأَتَّبِعَ الَّذِينَ
ظَلَمُوا مَا آتَرَفُوا فِيهِ وَكَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١١٦﴾
وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِیُهْلِكَ الْقَرْیَةَ الظَّالِمِ وَأَهْلِهَا
مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَأَوْشَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً
وَاحِدَةً وَلَا یُرِیُونَ مُخْتَلِفِینَ ﴿١١٨﴾

- 167 *Baqiyyah* is a complex word. Here it refers to those who possess virtue, sound minds and rectitude (cf. al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī). Virtue is called *baqiyyah* (lit. what remains) because people tend to hold on until last to the best of what they have to offer. *Baqiya*, the original verb from which the noun *baqiyyah* is derived, means to last for a long time (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyis al-Lughah*, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 168 They preferred life's luxuriant findings over the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Samarqandī, al-Qurtubī).
- 169 Being wholly absorbed in life's treasures and forgetting about the Hereafter and consequently committing injustice, is an act of criminality because it is a cause for injustice to prevail (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*).
- 170 "That, for your Lord will not destroy towns unjustly while their people are unaware" (6: 131); "Verily Allah wrongs people naught, but people wrong themselves" (10: 44).
- 171 "If their aversion is too hard on you, then if you can seek out a tunnel in the ground or ladder to the sky, so that you may bring them a Sign 'then do it'; 'but' if Allah so wished He would have banded them all together around guidance, so be not among the ignorant" (6: 35); "Had your Lord wished, the dwellers of Earth, all of them together, would Believe; do you 'Muhammad' force people 'in spite of themselves' till they become Believers!" (10: 99).
- 172 They will ever be followers of different religions, ways of life and opinions (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr). God Almighty in His Infinite Wisdom has already destined some people for Hellfire, but as long as they live, being none the wiser of their own fate, they are free to ponder over and

﴿119﴾ except for those whom your Lord has mercy on⁽¹⁷³⁾. For that He had created them⁽¹⁷⁴⁾—your Lord’s Word has been consummated: “I shall certainly fill Hell from both jinn⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ and humans ‘none exempted’!”

إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ رَبُّكَ وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ وَتَمَّتْ
كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لِأَمْلَانِ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ
وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

﴿120﴾⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ And from all the notable news of the Messengers, We relate to you ‘Muhammad’ what We brace your heart with⁽¹⁷⁷⁾. Indeed in this ‘sura’⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ the Truth has come to you;

وَكَلَّا نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ
بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَجَاءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ

reconsider their position (cf. al-Suyūfī, *al-Iklīl*, p. 152) being innately fitted with enough intellectual ability to do so: “*They will shriek screechingly therein ‘Hellfire’*: “*Lord, let us out, and we will do righteous deeds, not what we did before!*” Their answer from Allah will be: “*Did We not give you a life long enough to have heeded if you were going to? The Warner ‘Messenger’ came to you, now taste ‘the Punishment’.*” *The evildoers will have nobody to help them*” (35: 37).

- 173 These are those whom God guides by His Mercy to Believe and follow the Messengers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 174 God Almighty, in His Infinite Wisdom, created people different, some cheerful and others wrenched so that His Wisdom and Justice are manifest to His servants and that strife and devoted worship, which can only be tested through trial and hardship, find their champions and the good and evil in human nature can be set apart (cf. al-Sa‘dī): “*He is the One Who created you; among you are Denier and among you are Believer—Allah is All-Seeing of what you do!*” (64: 2).
- 175 Beings, alongside humans, endowed with the faculty of discerning good and evil; the Deniers among the jinn will also be admitted into Hellfire (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Nubuwwāt*, 2: 1009).
- 176 This passage rounds up and concludes the sura (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr), Divinely lighting the way forward for the Noble Messenger and the Believers around him.
- 177 Thus the Messenger (ﷺ) would draw lessons from earlier Messengers and be more patient in the face of his peoples’ vigorous opposition (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 178 Although the Truth is indeed found in the whole Qur’an, Sura *Hūd* was of particular significance to the Messenger (ﷺ). This is why he said: “*Hūd brought greyness to my hair ...*” (al-Tirmidhī: 3297, al-Ḥākim: 3: 343, al-Albānī, *al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah*: 955).

and admonishment and a reminder to the Believers⁽¹⁷⁹⁾. ﴿121﴾ Say to those who do not Believe: “Labour in the state in which you are for surely we will be labouring ‘our own way’!”⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ ﴿122﴾ “Wait for We are surely waiting!” ﴿123﴾ To Allah belongs the Unseen of the Heavens and Earth; all affairs shall be returned to Him. So ‘Muhammad’ worship Him and put your trust in Him—verily your Lord is not unaware of what you ‘people’ do!

وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَقُلِ الَّذِينَ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ أَعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَاتِكُمْ إِنَّا عَمِلُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾
وَانْتَظِرُوا إِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ فَاعْبُدْهُ
وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾



179 “O people! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord and a healing for what is in the chests; a guidance and mercy for the Believers” (10: 57).

180 This statement, which is the same as that said by Prophet Shu‘ayb to his people in a similar situation (cf. Aya 93 above) amounts to a final declaration that things between the two parties will remain at the current state for the time being, each being firm in their stand, until God brings His Command. It, along with the next two ayas, are meant to put the Messenger’s mind at ease, whereby he rests assured knowing that none but God Almighty dispenses affairs.

سُورَةُ يُوسُفَ

Yūsuf
(Joseph)



Yūsuf (Joseph)

Title: thus titled after Prophet Yūsuf (Joseph) (cf. al-Nasā'ī: 953, Imām Aḥmad: 17418, Ibn Ḥibbān: 1842, al-Ḥākim: 3988). It is only here that we find the longest and most detailed account of the story of Prophet Yūsuf (ﷺ) in the Qur'an. (Besides this, he is only mentioned in passing in 6: 84 and 40: 34.)

Merit: whereas all the other Prophetic stories are recurrent in the Qur'an to underline the very important Qur'anic theme that people who reject their Messengers and declare them liars will inevitably meet their doom, the story of Yūsuf has no such theme but rather serves the aim of demonstrating that the end result of steadfastness, patience and perseverance is indeed desirable (cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, 3: 231). Additionally, it is the longest Prophetic story in the Qur'an, told as a whole in one place (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, *Riḍā*).

Theme: the sura is divided into three distinct parts. The first three ayas are introductory and scene setting. Then comes Yūsuf's (ﷺ) epic story elucidated over seven episodes or scenes: his dream, his brothers' malicious stratagem, the wiles of the Chief Minister's wife, his term in prison, the King's dream, his brothers' coming to Egypt for supplies, and the arrival of his parents in his court and the actualization of his dream. The last part of the sura is the conclusion which is covered over 11 ayas.

Key: this sura came down in succession after Sura *Hūd*, which emphasizes patience, and is couched in the same tough atmosphere. This 'best of stories' contains all the elements of entertainment aimed at alleviating the mental state of its immediate recipients (and, by the same token, all those who read it). The story being of such an intricate and engaging nature, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Believers around him were meant to be entertained by it and find relief and reflection in it (al-Ghirmāṭī, *al-Burhān fī Tanāsub Suwar al-Qur'ān*, p. 227, Ṭanṭāwī, *al-Taḥsīn al-Wasīṭ*, 7: 311). There are many lessons to be drawn from this great story, not the least of which are: to fully trust that God will deliver His sincere servants in the face of all hardship, not to despair and that patience pays. God's hidden Wisdom is exemplified for the benefit of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers who were eagerly anticipating a breakthrough; God's Command (cf. 10: 109). It also tacitly points the

way forward to the Believing community to start migrating to Madinah, as much as Jacob (ﷺ) did with his household when they moved to Egypt (cf. *al-Taḥsīn al-Muyassar*); it being a better place (cf. Aya 100 below).

This story of Yūsuf, the human being who so handsomely endured all that life threw his way, is a living testament that those who are devoted to God will never be let down.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿1﴾ *Alif, Lām, Rā* ⁽¹⁾; those⁽²⁾ are the Signs of the Elucidating Book⁽³⁾.

﴿2﴾ We have indeed sent it down,

الرَّ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿١﴾
إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ

- 1 The sura opens up with these three disjointed letters to highlight the Qur'an's inimitable nature and is meant as a challenge to those who argue with the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers regarding the Truthfulness of the Message (c.f. 2: 1).
- 2 The far demonstrative pronoun *tilka* (those) is employed here to signify the loftiness of the ayas of the Qur'an (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 3 *al-Kitāb al-Mubīn* (The Elucidating Book) is the Qur'an whose ayas are clear with regards to its language and rulings, and all its meanings. A Book whose Truth is evident and which clears up that which is ambiguous and vague (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr).

The appellative/qualifying adjective 'elucidating' is expressive because what is being detailed here is a previously unknown story to the Arabs at the time of revelation who were only generally aware of the stories of other Prophets, especially, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Ibrāhīm, Lūṭ and Shu'ayb, who were either Arabians or had lived along their caravan routes. That this sura came down in Makkah, before the migration of the Messenger (ﷺ) to Madinah and his coming into contact with the Jewish community there is indication enough of the Truthfulness of the Message (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). (To be aware of the significance of this choice see 10:1 where we find the appellation 'The Wise Book' employed.)

So the scene for it had to be set in the right way and particularly so because of this narration's single most significance. It would be hard to imagine let alone claim, that an illiterate man like Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) had at his disposal the scholarly apparatus, especially during his period of isolation in Makkah, to compile such an immaculate, unitary account of the life of a Hebrew Prophet. Thus focus is placed on: the 'elucidating' nature of the Qur'an and its 'Arabicness' so that its immediate recipients might pay heed, that its source is Divine and that the Messenger (ﷺ) was 'uninformed' before this revelation. In a nutshell, what we find here is a previously and totally unknown story beautifully and minutely detailed in a language alien to that in which any record of it had been anywhere in existence as a whole in Makkah.

Moreover, the detailed recounting of the narrative provided here is not the only side of it that is striking for additionally how it was formulated to be 'the best of stories' is another astounding aspect, as will transpire as the story unfolds.

‘as’ an Arabic Qur’an⁽⁴⁾ so that you may pay heed. ﴿3﴾ ‘Only’⁽⁵⁾ We recount to you ‘Muhammad’ the best of stories⁽⁶⁾ by Our having revealed to you this Qur’an; indeed before it you were among those who are uninformed⁽⁷⁾.

قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣﴾ مَحْبُ
نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا
إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ
لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٣﴾

- 4 Part of its elucidating nature is that it has been sent down in the tongue of its immediate recipients (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Āshūr) so that they may reflect and realize the Truth.
- 5 The foregrounding of the Pronoun of Majesty, ‘We’, which refers to none other than God Almighty (ﷻ), is meant to indicate the exclusiveness of the Qur’an’s source and is a pre-emptive response to the accusations of the Deniers, who always cast doubt on the source of the Qur’an (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). What could have been a more apt answer than this very story!
- 6 *al-Qaṣaṣ* could mean either the act of narration or the story itself (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 17/39). Compressed into no more than 1,698 words, this is indeed a story narrated in such an intricate manner, full of subtleties and laden with meanings. It is a wisdom novella with an exciting plot, fascinating characters, vivid descriptions and majestic language that suck the readers into its flow. It animatedly captures the most intense of human emotions: burning jealousy, inflaming lust and a fatherly love so real that it actually causes bodily damage. Yet all this emotional investment is meant for a cathartic effect. It is a multi-layered narration fraught with subtexts, conflict, intrigue and resolution where the end result is given before it even begins. Then we are told how it happens in a captivating mix of subtle voices. All of this is divided into seven fulsome scenes seamlessly jumping from one to the next without leaving much out. Moreover, it is not a fictional account, not a figment of imagination, but a real life story and one that is really striking. It is authored, both in the world and in narrative by none other than the Shaper of destiny Himself, God Almighty (ﷻ). This is how we get to know a behind the scenes glimpse of what really took place and drove events; “*You were not with them as they resolved their matter while they were plotting*” (Aya 102 below). In short, it is a perfect story that needs neither supplements nor additions (cf. al-Sa‘dī).
- 7 *al-Ghāfilīn* (plural of *ghāfil*; the oblivious, unaware, cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). The Prophet (ﷺ) was raised among an illiterate nation with next to no scholarly engagement at all and, on the whole, that had no knowledge, and was thus ‘uninformed’, of such events taking place in the past (cf. al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*).

﴿4﴾ When Yūsuf⁽⁸⁾ said to his father: “O father! I have seen ‘in a dream’ eleven planets and the sun and the moon; I ‘actually’ have seen them prostrating to me!”⁽⁹⁾ ﴿5﴾ He ‘his father, Ya‘qūb, ‘Jacob’” said: “My child! Do not recount your vision⁽¹⁰⁾ to your brothers lest they would plot some mischief against you; verily Satan is an open enemy⁽¹¹⁾ to man”.

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ
أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ
لِي سَاجِدِينَ ﴿٤﴾ قَالَ يَبْنَى لَا تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ
عَلَى إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ
لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥﴾

- 8 Prophet Joseph (ﷺ) is a very special character in history. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The most noble human is Yūsuf, Allah’s Prophet; son of Allah’s Prophet ‘Jacob’, son of Allah’s Prophet ‘Isaac’, son of Allah’s close friend ‘Abraham’” (al-Bukhārī: 4689, Muslim: 2378). As we will see in what comes to be revealed in this story, he is both outstandingly beautiful both inside and outside. Throughout the different stages of his life, his ups and downs as recounted here, Prophet Joseph’s staple characteristic is of him being among the outstanding ‘perfectors’ (*al-muḥsinīn* cf. Ayas: 22: 36, 56, 78 and 90).
- 9 The story opens with a first line that attracts interest and makes people want to know more and edging to discover. The striking vision of the sun, the moon and eleven planets prostrating captures attention and raises questions that the receiver wants to know the answer to; knowing that some dreams are coded messages. Notably, this dream is only interpreted, by Joseph (ﷺ) himself, whom God bestowed with the knowledge of interpreting ‘expressions’, at the very end of the story (cf. Ayas: 99-100).
By showing him this vision which promises the great things in store for him, Joseph was being prepared for hard times to come so that he would rest assured that the end would be bright (cf. al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 10 It is a well-known fact among scholars that the vision of Prophets is truthful (*ru’yā al-anbiyā’ ḥaqq*) (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Aḍb al-Namīr*). This is why when Prophet Abraham (ﷺ) saw in a dream that he kills his son, he went on to fulfil this command for it was as if it had been communicated to him in the dream (cf. 37: 102; *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated: “The first form of revelation which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was given was Truthful vision. He never saw a vision without it becoming a reality like the crack of dawn” (al-Bukhārī: 3). So Prophet Jacob (ﷺ) knew then that his son was poised for greatness.
- 11 “Say to My servants to say what is best; indeed Satan sows discord among them. Satan is open enemy to man” (17: 53).

﴿6﴾ “Thus your Lord elects you⁽¹²⁾, teaches you the interpretation of expressions⁽¹³⁾ and perfects His Favour⁽¹⁴⁾ on you and the house of Ya‘qūb⁽¹⁵⁾ like He perfected it on your fathers Ibrāhīm ‘Abraham’ and Ishāq ‘Isaac’ before; indeed your Lord is All-Knowing, All-Wise.”

وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ
الْأَحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى
ءَالِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَا أَتَمَّهَا عَلَىٰ أَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦﴾

﴿7﴾ Verily, there had been signs in Yūṣuf and his brothers for those who ask!⁽¹⁶⁾ ﴿8﴾ When they said:

*لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٌ
لِّلسَّالِئِينَ ﴿٧﴾ إِذْ قَالُوا

- 12 Such a noble family was understandably anticipating the selection of a Prophet from among this fourth generation in this noble line of descent. Of all his ten half-brothers and one sibling brother, Joseph was the one to be singled out for this truly lofty station, the highest that God will ever bestow on a human being. Thus, his father saw the significance of his dream (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 13 *Ta’wīl al-aḥādīth* (lit. the interpretation of speech/talk/discourse). Almost all exegetes agree that this means that Prophet Joseph (ﷺ) was given the ability of dream divination or interpretation, given that some dreams are coded messages (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sam‘ānī). Dreams are called *aḥādīth* (pl. talk/speech/discourse) because they could be a person talking to himself, or an angel or a devil talking to him during sleep (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*), or, as some exegetes have it, because people tell each other about them (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Yet, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī and Ibn ‘Āshūr see that this gift is not limited to the faculty of dream divination, but rather that *ta’wīl al-aḥādīth* is wider than this and could, in addition, entail the ability to analyse discourse and discern its real significance.
- 14 Although *ni‘mah* means all the favours that God showers people with both worldly and religiously, it could also mean these and that of Prophethood as well (cf. al-Ṭabarī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 15 Indeed this single-most great honouring of a member of the family encompasses the whole family (cf. al-Sa’dī).
- 16 *al-Sā’ilīn* (those who ask) are those who ask about their news (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). But, in al-Ṭabarī’s considered opinion, it quietly alludes to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to whom this sura was sent down to console and hearten him. For just as much as the Prophet was harassed and persecuted by his polytheistic clan, so was Yūṣuf (ﷺ) done great harm by at the hands of his own brothers – this out of envy. Yet all occurred whilst he was very young and had done no one any harm.

“Certainly, Yūsuf – and his brother⁽¹⁷⁾ – are more beloved to our father than us though we are a hardy band!⁽¹⁸⁾ Verily, our father is in clear error!”⁽⁹⁾ “Kill Yūsuf or cast him away in a ‘faraway’ land and your father’s face⁽¹⁹⁾ will be all yours and you shall be after him good doing folks!⁽²⁰⁾”⁽¹⁰⁾ A voice among them said: “Do not kill Yūsuf but ditch him in the ‘hidden’ cavity of the ‘unlined’ well; some wayfarers will pick him up. That is if you are ‘really’ bent on doing ‘it!’”

يُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْنَا مِمَّا وَخَبْ
عُصْبَةً إِنَّ أَبَانَا لَنِي صَلِيلٍ مُّيِينٍ ﴿٨﴾
أَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ
وَجْهَ آيَاتِكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا
صَالِحِينَ ﴿٩﴾ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لَاتَتَّخِذُوا
يُوسُفَ وَالْقَوْهَ فِي عَيْدَتِ الْجَبِّ يَلْتَقِظُهُ
بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَعَلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

- 17 That is, his sibling brother (Benjamin); the conspirators being his half-brothers from a different wife of Jacob’s (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 18 ‘*Uṣbah* (hardy band) refers to a group numbered from ten to forty. It derives from ‘*aṣaba*, i.e. to tie up tightly together; so ‘*usbah* denotes a tightly tied bunch (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*). Thus they pointed out that they were fully grown men, who were of much greater use to a father than were mere children (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī). This is especially telling if one realizes the secluded location and harsh environment in which Jacob was settled (cf. Aya 100 below), where his household relied only on themselves for protection and provision for themselves and their livestock. There could also be a deeper and more complex latent reason that sparked the jealousy/envy of these hardy, independent men, which was that they took their fathers’ favouring of Joseph to mean that he was the one singled out for greatness, namely, Prophethood. This explains the drastic measures they proposed to rid themselves of him; no less than manslaughter, though they were indeed righteous (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr) and directly descended from the most noble human lineage ever.
- 19 Metonymically used to mean his undivided attention (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 20 They either meant to morally justify (cf. al-Sa’dī, *Fawā'id Mustanbaṭah min Qiṣṣati Yūsuf ‘Alayhi al-Salām*, p. 20) their grievous wrongdoing and encourage themselves to it by reminding themselves that they would repent thereafter and abstain from doing further evil (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr) and/or worldly justify it by being better off after they got rid of this most irksome issue (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿11﴾ (21) They said: “Father! What is it with you; you do not trust us with Yūṣuf! (22) We are indeed honest to him!” ﴿12﴾ “Send him tomorrow with us to regale and play (23); verily, we shall indeed be his protectors!” ﴿13﴾ He said: “Indeed it saddens me that you would take him away (24), and I fear that some wolf would eat him while you are unaware of him!”

﴿14﴾ They said: “Should some wolf eat him with us being a hardy band, then we are truly losers!”

﴿15﴾ Then, when they took him away and they made up their mind to put him in the ‘hidden’ cavity of the ‘unlined’ well ‘they put him there (25)’, and We (26)

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْتِنَا عَلَى يُونُسَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ
لَنَصِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾ أَرْسَلَهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَرْتَعُ وَيَلْعَبُ
وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَفِظُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنَّ
تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَأَنْتُمْ
عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ قَالُوا لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ
وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّا إِذًا لَآخِسِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَجْمَعُوا أَنْ يَجْعَلُوهُ فِي غِيَابِ
الْحِجَابِ

- 21 Here is how they put their plan into action (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 22 They carefully formulated this challenging and somewhat threatening exclamation, in order to throw their father off guard (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 23 Joseph (ﷺ) might have been present there and then for they could have said no more potent keywords than could strike a chord with a young boy, or soften the heart of a loving father (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah).
- 24 This he said in order to discourage them from taking their brother away, knowing that good sons, as they were, won’t do anything that causes a parent sadness (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). But they were so bent on their course of action that they did not give such a nicety much attention.
- 25 This interpolation is implied in the Qur’anic structure which begins with the time adverb *lamma* (when) (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 26 God in His infinite Mercy and Compassion assuaged this distraught child who had been betrayed and consigned to this desolate place by his own brothers with this uplifting inspiration; that he would come out the better for it and he would have the upper hand in times to come (cf. al-Sa’ dī, *Fawā’id Mustanbatah min Qiṣṣati Yūṣuf ‘Alayhi al-Salām*, p. 52). It is heartening to know that one will emerge victorious from a difficult circumstance and that the person who was conduit to it will be tipped off balance and whereby one will witness this with one’s own eyes.

inspired him that you shall indeed tell them about this affair of theirs 'only' when they are none the wiser⁽²⁷⁾. ^{﴿16﴾} And they came to their father 'late' in the evening⁽²⁸⁾, weeping. ^{﴿17﴾} They said: "O father, we went racing and we left Yūsuf back with our belongings, and the wolf ate him. But you would never believe us although we speak the truth!" ^{﴿18﴾} And they brought 'out' his tunic with false blood on it; 'and' he said: "Nay, but yourselves have lured you into some matter⁽²⁹⁾. Then 'it' shall be a comely patience⁽³⁰⁾ 'I hold on to' and Allah is the One Whose help is sought as to what you describe⁽³¹⁾!"

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِمْ هَذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَجَاءُوا أَبَاهُمْ عِشَاءً يَبْكُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا يُوسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَاعِنَا فَأَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَجَاءُوا عَلَى قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا نَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

- 27 They would be none the wiser as to who the person would be that would, in the future, tell them about their grievous action (Aya 89 below). They would not realize that he was their brother because they had very long ago thrown him in the well, out of which they never thought he would emerge; they could not see the unimaginably very high position he would come to hold (cf. al-Shawkānī).
- 28 That they came late in the evening could have been in perfection of their plan and to cloak their awkwardness in the darkness of the night (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 29 He saw that the bloodied tunic was intact; a sure sign of their lying (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 30 *Ṣabrun jamīl* (comely/handsome patience) is a patience that knows no complaining or panic (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zajjāj, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān*, al-Sa‘dī). Although he knew for sure that their story was false, Jacob (ﷺ) received the news so quietly because he was too old to go out and search for Joseph on his own and furthermore his helpers would only be the culprits behind his disappearance (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 31 *Wasf* (description) is often used in the Qur’an to denote lying (cf. al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *Umdat al-Ḥuffāz*, 4:317).

﴿19﴾ Some wayfarers⁽³²⁾ 'later' came and they sent their water boy 'to draw water'; he lowered his bucket 'then' said: "O what welcome news! This is a boy!⁽³³⁾" They hid him as merchandise⁽³⁴⁾; 'but' Allah is All-Knowledgeable of what they do!⁽³⁵⁾ ﴿20﴾ And they sold him off⁽³⁶⁾ for a meagre sum, a few dirhams; they were indeed not keen on him. ﴿21﴾ ⁽³⁷⁾The one from Egypt who bought him said to his wife:

وَجَاءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَأَرْسَلُوا وَارِدَهُمْ فَأَدْلَى دَلْوَهُ قَالَ يَبُشْرَىٰ هَذَا غُلَامٌ وَأَسْرُوهُ بِضْعَةَ دِينَارٍ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍ بَخِيسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الزَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِي اشْتَرَاهُ مِنْ مِصْرَ لَا مِرَّةَ

- 32 These were regular wayfarers who frequented this trading route between Egypt and the Levant. This is why his brothers deliberately placed him in that particular well and any wayfarers would know of its whereabouts (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 33 That Yūṣuf (ﷺ) was at a very tender age, about 6 or 7, is evident from his father's fear that he could not ward off harm from himself, the water boy's saying that he found a 'boy' (*ghulam*), the wayfarers taking him for merchandise, and the Chief Minister's saying to his wife that they would find him of use or adopt him as a son (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 34 That is, they did not, even at least, declare him to those living in the vicinity of the well or search for his family to return him to them and saw him only as merchandise because, given his handsome appearance, they thought him of some value (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 35 That God Almighty knew about this affair is all-evident, but it is highlighted here to indicate that He (ﷻ) did not intercede to alter this course of action, full of deceit, lies, pain and sorrow as it was, because, in His Infinite Wisdom, He wanted His decree to come to pass (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr). In other words, this was the event that lead to subsequent events (cf. al-Qinnawjī).
- 36 Exegetes are of two different opinions as to who the sellers were. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sam'ānī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr and al-Sa'dī are of the opinion that these were his brothers who caught up with the caravan and told them that Yūṣuf was an eloping slave boy whom they then sold to the wayfarers for a pittance. On the other hand, Ibn Juzayy, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Biqā'ī, Riḍā and Ibn 'Āshūr, given the context and the flow of events, see that these were the wayfarers themselves. They wanted to rid themselves of their felony, a veritable hot potato, as soon as possible (cf. Riḍā, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*) or they were just unaware of his true worth (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 37 A new chapter in his life begins here.

“Make his stay courtly; he may come to be of use to us or we may take him as a son⁽³⁸⁾”. Thus We made it becoming for Yūsuf in the land⁽³⁹⁾, and that We would teach him to interpret expressions⁽⁴⁰⁾; Allah is overruling in his affair⁽⁴¹⁾ but most people know not!⁽⁴²⁾

أَكْرِمِي مَثْوَاهُ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَنْفَعَنَا أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ
وَلَدًا ۖ وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ ۖ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ
عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِ ۗ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

- 38 He obviously saw in him something that made him expect good things from him (cf. al-Ṭabarānī: 8829).
- 39 This was the first transitional station in Yūsuf’s journey to greatness. His coming into the caring folds of one of Egypt’s mightiest houses at the time, second to none but the King himself, was by way of preparing him for the great stately affairs he was to assume in the future (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 40 Despite the artifice designed by his brothers to gain the upper hand and alter the inevitable course of events, God was there to have this vision realized (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 41 God ran Yūsuf’s affairs and cared for him so that he would not be harmed by anyone’s ruse (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī), of which his life knew no shortage.
- 42 Evident as it is, most people are, to their own detriment, unaware of the fact that God rules Supreme over all affairs (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
The expression “but most people do not know/thank/Believe” (*wa lākinna akthara l-nāsi lā ya‘lamūn/yashkurūn/ya‘minūn*) is to be found 19 times throughout the Qur’an. No less than 4 of these, by far the highest concentration in any single sura, are to be found in this sura; Ayas: 21, 38, 40 and 68. Given the circumstances in which this sura came down, it constitutes a message loaded with meaning giving the Prophet (ﷺ) a wise look at how humans are in order to make him take heart from this fact and not be saddened by the denial with which those around him received the Message. This could also be a hidden message to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to strengthen his position, strengthen his forbearance knowing that God is in charge of the events that were taking place at that time and that He would make him emerge victorious and make the land ‘becoming’ for him as much as He made it so for Joseph, despite all that he was going through (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

﴿22﴾ (43) When he reached his prime, We bestowed upon him 'sound' judgement⁽⁴⁴⁾ and knowledge; thus We reward the well-doers⁽⁴⁵⁾. ﴿23﴾ And the one 'woman' in whose house he was⁽⁴⁶⁾ 'tried to' entice him to herself⁽⁴⁷⁾; she tightly locked the doors⁽⁴⁸⁾ and said: "Come onto me!" He said: "Allah forbid!" He is my lord⁽⁴⁹⁾; he made my stay comely!⁽⁵⁰⁾ Never will the wrongdoers succeed!⁽⁵¹⁾

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَرَدَدْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَنِ نَفْسِهِ وَعَلَقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

- 43 In this passage and the following, we get to the third episode of Yūsuf's (ﷺ) story: the wiles of the Chief Minister's wife; his second predicament.
- 44 This is a literal translation of *al-ḥukm*. Exegetes hold different opinions as to what exactly this means. Whereas al-Ṭabarī opines that it means sound judgement, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī and Ibn 'Āshūr observe that it means Prophethood.
- 45 al-Ṭabarī sees a hint in this to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ); an assuring note that he would be delivered and given the advantage over his tormentors: "Indeed Allah's Mercy is ever close to the well-doers" (7: 56).
- 46 That he was 'in her house' shows that all circumstances were favourable to this affair taking place secretly without drawing attention or causing trouble: they were in the house alone (cf. al-Sa'dī) and she was the mistress of the house who could easily command him to do her bidding (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 47 That is, she worked her wiles on him, seeking to trap him into an amorous liaison with her (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 48 To prepare the ground for her plan, she *ghallaqat* (hyperbolic for *aghlaqat*: tightly shut and bolted (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr)) all the doors of the house (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 49 That is, the master of the house, her husband (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Joseph's great sense of duty and gratitude to his benefactor, is revealed in full colour in Ayas 52-53 below.
- 50 Being of such a pious, grateful nature, he saw the darker side of betraying his benevolent master, who was like a father to him, by amorously liaising with his wife (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Shawkānī).
- 51 He also saw that such an affair would be wrongful and unfair (*zulm*) and that its perpetrators would not do well eventually.

﴿24﴾ She indeed made for him⁽⁵²⁾ and he for her⁽⁵³⁾ had he not seen the clear proof⁽⁵⁴⁾ of his Lord. Thus We ward off from him bad doing and vice; indeed he is one of Our chosen servants. ﴿25﴾ They raced to the door and she ripped off his tunic from the back and "by chance" they found her master⁽⁵⁵⁾ at the door and she said:

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَى
بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ كَذَلِكَ لَتَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ
وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾
وَأَسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ مِنْ دُبُرٍ
وَأَلْفَيْتَا سَيْدَهَا لَدَا الْبَابِ قَالَتْ

- 52 *Hammat bihi* (translated here as: ‘made for him’) means that she acted on what her heart was bent on, i.e. to have sex with him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Juzayy, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Taḥfīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Taḥfīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 53 Exegetes old and new have debated long and hard about what *hamma bihā* (translated here as: ‘and he for her’) exactly means. A party said that he had only a momentarily passing thought (*hammu khaṭratīn ‘arīḍah*), which was not coupled with intent and purpose, being only a human made of flesh and blood (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Juzayy, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*, *al-Taḥfīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Taḥfīr al-Mukhtaṣar*). On the other hand, other highly regarded exegetes have it that Joseph (ﷺ) did not even have the first thought about having an affair with her, because the ‘clear proof of his Lord’ was on his mind all along (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shawkānī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). Thus it is read as follows: “*Had he not seen the clear proof of his Lord, he would have made for her*”. ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Allah decreed good and bad deeds, then He made them distinct. Whoever means to do a good deed but does not carry it out, Allah writes it down for him as a complete good deed. If he means to do it and does, Allah writes it down for him as ten good deeds up to seven hundred fold and up to many folds yet. But whoever means to carry out a bad deed, Allah writes it down for him as a complete good deed. Yet if he means it and carries it out, then Allah will write it down for him as only one bad deed” (al-Bukhārī: 6491, Muslim: 131).
- 54 The exact nature of this *burhān* (clear proof) is not known, what is sure though is that it is a Sign from God that made him hold back (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī). However, Ibn Taymiyyah (*Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 10: 101) alludes to the fact that it was his robust and very much alive conscience that made itself appear concrete to him at that critical moment and which came between him and his heart (cf. also al-Sa‘dī).
- 55 That is, her husband (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). This is how they used to call a husband in that culture (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

“What punishment is due for he who intends your spouse bad doing but he be jailed or a painful punishment ‘meted out on him!’”⁽⁵⁶⁾ ⁽²⁶⁾ He said: “She ‘tried to’ entice me to herself!” A witness of her ‘own’ folks professed⁽⁵⁷⁾: “If his tunic is ripped off from the front then she tells the truth and he is among the liars; ⁽²⁷⁾ but if his tunic is ripped off from the back then she lies and he is among the truthful!” ⁽²⁸⁾ When he ‘her husband’ saw his tunic ripped off from the back, he said: “It is verily ‘one’ of your ‘women’s’ guiles. Indeed your guile is great!” ⁽²⁹⁾ “Yūṣuf, put this behind you⁽⁵⁸⁾ and you ‘woman’ seek forgiveness for your sin; indeed you are among the wrongful!”

⁽³⁰⁾ And some women in the city said: “The woman of the Chief Minister is enticing her boy to herself! He impassioned her with love!

مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ
أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ هِيَ رَاوَدَتْنِي عَنْ نَفْسِي
وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ
قُدَّ مِنْ قُبُلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾
وَإِنْ كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ
مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَلَمَّارَةً أَقَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِنْ
دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ مَن كَذَبَ كُنَّ إِذْ يَبْكُ كُنَّ
عَظِيمَةً ﴿٢٨﴾ يُوسُفُ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ هَذَا وَاسْتَغْفَرَ
لِذُنُوبِكُ إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

* وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ
تُرَاوَدُّهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا

56 This very composed statement shows just how calculated that woman was. She did not even falter in such a very unnerving commotion and came to pass a very judicial-like verdict (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Her steely nerves played into her calculations both in this situation and when the women cast aspersions on her as we will see shortly. But when God decreed to reveal the Truth, she broke down without any interlude (Aya 51 below).

57 This is a prime example of evidence-based judgement (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). That his tunic was ripped off from the back meant that he was escaping from her, otherwise, it would have been ripped from the front as a sign of her struggles against him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

58 He asked him to overlook this matter and make no mention of it! (Cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī.)

Indeed we deem her in clear error!”⁽⁵⁹⁾ ﴿31﴾ When she heard of their cunning, she sent out for them and ‘carefully’ prepared⁽⁶⁰⁾ for them recliner couches and ‘deliberately’ handed out each of them a knife⁽⁶¹⁾, and said: “Come out before them!” When they saw him, they highly admired him, cut their hands and said: “Nay, by God! This is no human being; this is nothing but a noble angel!”⁽⁶²⁾ ﴿32﴾ She said: “That you see is the one whom you censured me for!”⁽⁶³⁾ I indeed tried to entice him but he held himself aloof. Yet, if he would not do what I command him to, he shall verily be jailed and be among the despicable!”

إِنَّا لَنَرُّهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣١﴾ فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مَتَكِنًا وَآتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سِكِّينًا وَقَالَتِ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٣٢﴾ قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ وَلَقَدْ رَاودْنَاهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ فاستعصم وَلَئِن لَّا يَفْعَلْ مَاءَ امْرَأَةٍ لَّا يَسْجَنَ وَلَئِن لَّا يَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الصَّغِيرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

- 59 Their speech is fraught with insinuations and gossip (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr; here is a woman who is married, and not to just anyone but rather the Chief Minister himself, who seduces not a man of high-standing ‘worthy of her’, but her own servant (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, 2: 115). That their speech is called *makrihinna* (their cunning) shows that they did not intend well with what they said (cf. al-Samarqandī). In effect, they meant to say: “Look how low she stooped!”
- 60 She went to great pains to prepare the scene for the effect she wanted to achieve. This can be read from the marked (special) lexical items employed here to describe her doing: *a’tadat muttaka’an* (carefully prepared recliner couches), deliberately handed out (*ātat*) knives, and told Joseph (ﷺ) *ukhruj ‘alayhinna* (lit. come out on them) by way of taking them by surprise. All this care paid off and their reaction was to her great satisfaction; they were awestruck and wounded their hands in the process; a tell-tale mark of their culpability (as we will come to see in Aya 50 below).
- 61 The knives were for the food that their host served them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Sa’dī).
- 62 In the long hadīth of the Nocturnal Journey and Ascension (*al-isrā’ wa al-mi’rāj*), Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) described Prophet Joseph when he met him as a man who is: “Endowed with ‘a whole’ half of ‘all human’ handsomeness” (Muslim: 162).
- 63 Seeing that they were equally besotted by his beauty, and their reaction justifying her actions, stood them on an equal footing with her, she bore it all out in front of them (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Riḍā).

﴿33﴾ He said: “My Lord, the jail is preferred to me over what they invite me for! And if You do not chase away their conniving from me, I may be swayed towards them and be among the ignorant!”

﴿34﴾ His Lord answered him and chased their conniving away from him—verily He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿35﴾ Then it appeared to them, after they saw the signs, that they should jail him for a while⁽⁶⁴⁾.

﴿36﴾ ⁽⁶⁵⁾And entered the jail with him two youths. One of them said: “Indeed I see me pressing wine ‘in a dream’!” And the other said: “Indeed I see me ‘in a dream’ carrying over my head bread out of which birds eat!” “Tell us of its interpretation; verily we see you among the well-doers!”

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونِي إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَّا
نَصَّرَفَ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَكُن مِّنَ
الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ فَصَّرَفَ عَنْهُ
كَيْدَهُنَّ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٤﴾ ثُمَّ
بَدَأَهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا رَأَوْا الْآيَاتِ لَيْسَجْنَتَهُ
حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَيَانٍ قَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا إِنِّي
رَأَيْتُنِي أَعْصِرُ خَمْرًا وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُنِي
أَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي خُبْزًا تَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ
بَسْمَاتٍ أَوْ بَنَاتٍ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

64 This, along with the earlier verdict of the Chief Minister when he hushed up the matter and asked Joseph (ﷺ) to simply forget about it and his wife just to feel some sort of regret, gives a glimpse into the workings of high societies; they allow for nothing that threatens their political aspirations and gains and a spouse’s extramarital amorous adventures is one such singularity. Here, upon seeing this potential threat, now that the affair had been publicly noted, the Chief Minister and his aides decided to ‘sweep it under the rug’ and throw Joseph (ﷺ) into jail, if only for a while, until there was no more interest in the matter (cf. al-Wāhidi, *al-Basīṭ*).

65 The story of Joseph’s (ﷺ) time in jail, which given was a hard time, is presented here in light of how advantageous it was in God’s grand plan for him (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). So it begins with the dreams of his jail mates, the interpretation of which was to become the reason behind his victorious release and appointment as Chief Minister.

﴿37﴾ (66) He said: “There shall not come to you ‘any’ food, you are provided with, unless I shall tell you of its interpretation before it comes to you⁽⁶⁷⁾. That, you see, is ‘part’ of what my Lord taught me⁽⁶⁸⁾; indeed I have left behind the religious way of folks who do not Believe in Allah; and verily they are Denying in the Hereafter!”

﴿38﴾ “And I followed the creed of my fathers: Ibrāhīm, Ishāq and Ya‘qūb⁽⁶⁹⁾; we were not to Associate with Allah a thing of any sort.⁽⁷⁰⁾ That is of the Grace of Allah on us and on people⁽⁷¹⁾, but most people thank not”⁽⁷²⁾.

قَالَ لَا يَأْتِيكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقَانِيهِ إِلَّا نَبَأُكُمَا
بِتَأْوِيلِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمَا ذَلِكَ مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِي
رَبِّي إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَهُمْ
بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَاتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ
آبَائِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ مَا كَانَ
لَنَا أَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ذَلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ
اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ
لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

- 66 He did not answer them immediately but saw a chance, since they were in a very receptive state and eager to hear what he had to say, to guide them to the right path, which was his purposeful mission in life (cf. al-Ras‘anī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 67 Since they were in jail and had no means of telling the time, they used to gauge time by the most recurrent, everyday event, i.e. meal times. They also knew that the next meal should not be too far away. Thus, in effect, he meant to say that what he was to tell them was not going to take long before they would be provided with the answer they were so eager to hear; in other words, he did not want to lose their interest in the process (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 68 Thus saying that he acquired such knowledge not out of some sort of magic or necromancy, but because he was Divinely Inspired (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīl*). The interpretation of dreams is, by no means, the only knowledge that God bestowed on Yūsuf (ﷺ) (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 69 Thereby saying that he came from a line of Prophets and was consequently worthy of their close attention (cf. al-Zamakhsharī).
- 70 Here is an explanation of the reason behind this great favour: by way of calling them to God (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 71 The favour of guidance to worshipping none but Almighty God (ﷻ) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 72 That is, they are heedless of this great favour and do not Believe and worship God duly (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shawkānī).

﴿39﴾ “My ‘two’ jail mates, are diverse lords better ‘worshipped’ or Allah ‘Alone’, the One, the Overpowering?”⁽⁷³⁾ ﴿40﴾ “You worship besides Him none but mere names you have named, you and your fathers⁽⁷⁴⁾, for which Allah has sent down no authority; the decision is for none but Allah⁽⁷⁵⁾. He decreed that you shall worship none but Him—that is the upright religion⁽⁷⁶⁾ but most people know not⁽⁷⁷⁾.” ﴿41﴾⁽⁷⁸⁾ “My two jail mates; one of you will serve wine to his lord⁽⁷⁹⁾ and the other one will be crucified and birds will eat from his head! The matter that you ask about has been ‘thus’ settled.”

يَصْجِي السِّجْنَ ءَأَرْبَابٌ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ
أَمَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدَ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿٣٩﴾ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ
مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا الْأَسْمَاءَ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ
وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ
أَحْكَمْتُمْ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمْرٌ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ
الَّذِي الْقَيُّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ يَصْجِي السِّجْنَ أَمَا أَحَدُكُمْ
فَيَسْقِي رَبَّهُ خَمْرًا وَأَمَا الْآخَرُ فَيُصَلَّبُ
فَتَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَضَى الْأَمْرُ
الَّذِي فِيهِ تَسْتَفْتِيَانِ ﴿٤١﴾

- 73 He now endearingly calls them his ‘jail mates’ and presents them with a logical argument that sound human nature establishes; that one is better off worshipping One God Who has Absolute Power than an amalgam of powerless gods (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn al-Jawzī).
- 74 This is how humans set up their own gods; they worship their own illusions (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā’i’ al-Fawā’id*. 1: 19): “They are none but mere names you have named, you and your fathers for which Allah has sent down no authority; they follow naught but conjecture and that which their souls desire, though guidance has surely come to them from their Lord” (53: 23).
- 75 “Only Allah has a decision; He declares the Truth – He is the best of adjudicators” (6: 57).
- 76 “They were not commanded but to worship God, devoting religion entirely to Him, ‘being’ rightly-oriented, and to keep up the Prayer, and to give out the prescribed alms—that is the upright religion!” (98: 5).
- 77 Peoples’ sheer ignorance is what leads them to Associate partners with God (ﷻ) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 78 This, now, is the interpretation of their dreams. Joseph (ﷺ) gave a considerate answer by not pointing out whose dream was which, given the horrific fate of the one who would be crucified (cf. al-Shawkānī).
- 79 That is the King (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

﴿42﴾ And he said to the one he thought would be spared of the two: “Mention me in your lord’s presence”. But Satan made him forget to mention ‘Yūsuf to’ his lord, so he ‘Yūsuf’ stayed in jail for several years!”

وَقَالَ لِلَّذِي ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ نَاجٍ مِّنْهُمَا اذْكُرْنِي
عند ربِّكَ فَأَنسَاهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهِ
فَلَيْثَ فِي السِّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

﴿43﴾ ⁽⁸⁰⁾ And the King said: “I see ‘in a dream’ seven fat cows eaten up by seven lean cows and seven green ‘grain’ ears and other dry ones⁽⁸¹⁾. Enlighten me, O notables, as to my vision; if you ‘really’ can interpret visions!⁽⁸²⁾”
﴿44﴾ They said: “Jumbled dreams; we have no knowledge of the interpretation of ‘such’ dreams!”⁽⁸³⁾

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ
يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعَ سُنبُلَاتٍ
خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي
رُؤْيَايَ إِن كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّؤْيَا تَعْبُرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾
قَالُوا أَضْغَثُ أَحْلَمٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَأْوِيلِ الْأَحْلَمِ
بِعِلْمِيَّتٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

- 80 What comes is the fifth episode of Prophet Joseph’s (ﷺ) story, which marks his turn of fortune from imprisonment to high status and authority.
- 81 Many exegetes, basing their opinion on the case of the cows, say that the King saw the dry grain ears were doing harm to the green ones and this was not just present in the dream (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Baghawī, al-Qāsimī, al-Zamaksharī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa’dī).
- 82 Dream interpretation was prevalent in that culture and was considered an art requiring intelligence and, sometimes, divine inspiration. Historical evidence gleaned from studies of Egyptology bear out this fact (cf. Hughes, J.D. *Dream Interpretation in Ancient Civilizations*. Dreaming 10, 7–18 (2000)). So the King’s alarm at his dream and seeking out the help of his most knowledgeable powerful courtly aides was for good reason (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). That Yūsuf (ﷺ) was able to interpret it correctly while all the notables of the land failed to do so was of singular importance and effectively played into his coming to prominence (cf. al-Sa’dī); God had prepared him all along for this.
- 83 In effect their knowledge was not adequate enough to decode the King’s dream, so they gave him this easy answer. Since they did not know what it meant, they tried to downplay its significance by calling it merely ‘jumbled dreams’ (*adghāthu ahlām*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zajjāj, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Sa’dī).

﴿45﴾ The one of the two who had been spared⁽⁸⁴⁾ – and he ‘only’ recalled after a ‘very’ long period⁽⁸⁵⁾ – said: “I shall tell you its interpretation so send me!” ﴿46﴾ “Yūṣuf, O ever-truthful one, enlighten us regarding ‘a dream in which’ seven fat cows are eaten up by seven lean cows and seven green ‘grain’ ears and other dry ones; may I go back to the people so that they may know!” ﴿47﴾⁽⁸⁶⁾ He said: “You will plant for seven consecutive years ‘as usual’. Whatever ‘grains’ you harvest leave them in their ears; except the little that you eat!⁽⁸⁷⁾” ﴿48﴾ “Then come seven tough ones; they eat what you had set aside for them; except the little that you keep secure.”⁽⁸⁸⁾

وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنْتَكُمُ بَيِّنًا وَيَلَهُ فَأَرْسِلُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ يُونُسُ أَيُّهَا الصَّادِقُ افْتِنَا فِي سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعِ سُنبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ لَعَلِّي أَرْجِعُ إِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأَبًا فَمَا حَصَدتُّهُ فَذَرُوهُ فِي سُنبُلِهِ إِلا قَلِيلًا وَمِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلا قَلِيلًا وَمِمَّا تَحْصِنُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

84 Prophet Joseph’s (ﷺ) former jail mate to whom he had interpreted his dream, which was realized and whereby he became a wine server at the King’s court (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī).

85 This happening in the court made him remember Prophet Joseph’s request so that he mentioned him to his lord (Aya 42 above) even after a very long period of time had elapsed (*ummah*, cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, al-Iṣfahānī, al-Mufradāt).

86 He decoded the dream thus: the seven fat cows and green grain ears as seven lush years with abundant rain during which they could grow their crops without interruption. These would be followed by seven tough years of drought, i.e. the seven lean cows and dry grain ears (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

87 This shows the extent of the great knowledge that God bestowed upon Prophet Joseph (ﷺ). He not only interpreted this complex dream so nicely, but he told them of the right course of action to take in the face of the tough years that were to come so that they could survive them and thrive thereof. They were to keep the grains sheathed so as to expose them as little as possible to corrupting elements and thus preserve them longer and were to consume as little as possible of the harvest in readiness for the tough years ahead (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

88 That is, all the harvest that you have preserved for consumption during these years will be eaten by people, except the little that you hold in their granaries (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

﴿49﴾ (89) “Then after that comes a year in which people will be showered⁽⁹⁰⁾ and in which they press⁽⁹¹⁾.”

﴿50﴾ And the King said: “Bring him to me!”⁽⁹²⁾ When the messenger came to him, he ‘Yūsuf’ said: “Go back to your lord and ask him what of the affair of the women who cut their hands⁽⁹³⁾; indeed my Lord is All-Knowledgeable of their conniving!”⁽⁹⁴⁾ ﴿51﴾ He ‘the King’ said ‘to the women’:

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ
وَفِيهِ يَعْصِرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ أَتُونِي بِهِ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ الرَّسُولُ
قَالَ أَرْجِعْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَمَسَلَهُ مَا بِالْأُنثَىٰ
الَّتِي قَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ إِنَّ رَبِّي بِكَيْدِهِنَّ
عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ قَالَ

89 This lush year that was to come was not part of the King’s dream, but rather resulted from the knowledge that God gave Joseph (ﷺ). This only emphasizes further the extent of his knowledge and that he could even foretell future events; something unique to him that others could not even dream of (cf. Abū al-Su‘ūd).

90 *Yughāthu* (lit. to be helped out from difficulty) in the opinion of most exegetes, is that they will be showered with rain in abundance to make up for the years of drought (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

91 Due to the succulence of the crops, people would be able to extract the juices from them by pressing (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

92 The King now took note of Joseph (ﷺ) and wanted to inspect him further.

93 Indeed, to underline Joseph’s fortitude, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said: “Had I stayed in jail as long as Yūsuf did, I would have answered the caller!” (al-Bukhārī: 3372, Muslim: 151). Understandably, any person in Yūsuf’s most desperate position would have rushed out at the first opportunity. Yet he wanted the end of his imprisonment on favourable grounds and to prove his innocence (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr).

Further, Joseph (ﷺ) was tactful when he asked about the women in general and not the Chief Minister’s wife, the main instigator of his turn of bad fortunes. This because the King would have wanted to protect the reputation of his closest aide, the Chief Minister, and he might have had second thoughts about having her brought before him for interrogation (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

94 One cannot help noticing the additional information that Prophet Joseph provided for the benefit of the wine server about his Lord’s All-Encompassing Knowledge of the affair of the women, which nods at a comparison between a human deity, “your lord”, as Kings were indeed considered in ancient Egypt, and Joseph’s own Lord (“my Lord”), Almighty God, the Omnipotent, Omnipresent. Essentially, this can be taken for a continuation which lays emphasis on the call to guidance that he extended to him when he was still his jail mate and the latter asked him about his dream (cf. Ayas 37-40 above).

“What was your business when you ‘tried to’ entice Yūṣuf to yourselves?”⁽⁹⁵⁾ They said: “Nay, by God! We know of no bad doing of his!” The woman of the Chief Minister said: “Now the truth has become crystal clear⁽⁹⁶⁾. I did indeed ‘try to’ entice him to myself; he surely is among the truthful!⁽⁹⁷⁾” ﴿52﴾⁽⁹⁸⁾“That so

مَا خَطْبُكُمْ إِذْ رَأَوْتُمْ يُوسُفَ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ
قُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ سُوءٍ قَالَتْ
أَمْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ الْفَنَّ حَصَّصَ الْحَقُّ أَنَا رَأَوْتُهُ
عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ ذَلِكَ

- 95 The King must have deduced Prophet Joseph’s innocence from his refusal to leave jail, whereas any other person would have rushed into the opportunity especially when summoned by none other than the King himself. Such assumption is also supported by the fact that the King summoned the women, Joseph’s oppressors, to his lofty presence (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Thus the King made such a direct charge at them and tipped them off balance to get the desired result.
- 96 No doubt the Chief Minister’s wife had some pangs of guilt during the time Joseph (ﷺ) was wrongfully imprisoned for her sake and especially since the secondary culprits had tacitly freed themselves of the charge (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr) and pointed the finger at her (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*) whereby she had already once declared her ulterior intentions publicly in the heat of the moment (cf. Aya 32 above); hence, it was high time to come clean.
- 97 This is a full confession of sole culpability on her part and a clearing up of Prophet Joseph’s pristine reputation (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). The slate was now clean for him to come out from jail on favourable grounds.
- 98 Given that what follows is to all appearance an uninterrupted continuation of the woman’s confession, many exegetes are of the opinion that she was the one who said the following two statements (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Qāsimī, Riḍā, al-Sa’dī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). Thus, some say that, she wanted to categorically have her husband know that she did not defile his bed. On the other hand, many great exegetes are of the opinion that the two statements are made by Prophet Joseph (ﷺ) (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Wāhidī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Jalālayn, al-Alūsī, al-Shawkānī).
Given the pious charge with which the statements are laden, one feels it unlikely that a heathen woman who led such an irreligious life and had no source of guidance would be able to come to such righteous conclusions about God and the deviousness of human nature. Taken from this standpoint, the statements could be seen as a cathartic release of what had been weighing on Prophet Yūṣuf’s (ﷺ) chest ever since he was thrown

he may know that I did not betray him behind his back; that Allah Guides not the conniving of the treacherous!” ﴿53﴾ “I do not absolve myself ‘thus’. Indeed the self is ever commanding of bad doing, except those my Lord has Mercy on—indeed my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

﴿54﴾ (99) And the King said: “Bring him to me. I shall have him solely for myself!⁽¹⁰⁰⁾” When he spoke to him, he ‘the King’ said⁽¹⁰¹⁾: “You are to us today of a great status⁽¹⁰²⁾; worthy of trust!” ﴿55﴾ (103) He ‘Yūsuf’ said:

لِيَعْلَمَ أَنِّي لَمْ أَخْنُهِ بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي
كَيْدَ الْفَاطِنِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَمَا أَتَّبِعُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ
لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالْسُوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ أَتُؤْتِنِي بِهِ ۗ اسْتَخْلَصَهُ لِنَفْسِي ۗ
فَلَمَّا كَسَمَهُ قَالَ إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَبِئًا مَكِينٌ
أَمِينٌ ﴿٥٥﴾ قَالَ

into jail: his great sense of gratitude to his master who took him for a son and ‘made his stay comely’ (Aya 23 above), fearing that he thought him ungrateful and that whereby he experienced some sort of guilt for a very passing thought (Aya 24 above) that was not becoming of a person of his great moral standing.

- 99 When the King saw how knowledgeable, steadfast and unwavering in the face of temptations particularly that of the flesh (which may be the strongest of all) Joseph (ﷺ) was, he wanted to draw him near and entrust him with responsibility (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 100 Given his worthy attributes, using this expression (*astakliṣhu li nafsi* (lit. have him all for my own)), the King wanted to show that he intended to have close contact with him such that they could work side by side (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 101 Having discovered more to Joseph (ﷺ) from their talk than what he had originally found out about him, the King liked him even more and bestowed upon him a particularly great status (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 102 *Makīm* has two meanings and both apply in this case, considering his status with the sovereign of the land. *Mutamakkin*, having the capability of and command over whatever he wanted and *dhū makānah*, i.e. having a specially great position (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī).
- 103 So that he might be in charge of affairs in preparation for the difficult days ahead. He, thus found himself in a better position than anyone else to carry out the task successfully, and hence why he offered his services (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sam‘ānī, al-Sa’dī).

“Put me in charge of the treasuries of the land; I am indeed a good keeper; full of knowledge!”⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ ^{﴿56﴾} Thus We made it becoming for Yūṣuf in the land⁽¹⁰⁵⁾; he dwells thereof wherever he wishes⁽¹⁰⁶⁾. We impart Our Mercy on whomever We want and We do not lay to waste the reward of the good-doers!⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ ^{﴿57﴾} Verily, the reward of the Hereafter is better for those who have Believed and have been Mindful⁽¹⁰⁸⁾.

أَجْعَلِنِي عَلَىٰ خَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلَيْهَا ۗ وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ ۗ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۗ وَلَا أَجْرَ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ۗ

^{﴿58﴾} ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ And ‘when’ Yūṣuf’s brothers came and they entered upon him, he recognized them while they identified him not. ^{﴿59﴾} When he furnished them with their supplies, he said: “Bring me a brother of yours from your father”⁽¹¹⁰⁾.

وَجَاءَ إِخْوَةُ يُوسُفَ فَدَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ ۗ وَلَمَّا جَهَرُوا بِهِمْ مَجَاهَرَهُمْ قَالَ آتُونِي بِأَخٍ لَكُمْ مِنَ أَبِيكُمْ أَلَّا تَرَوْنَ أَنِّي أُوْفِي الْكَيْلَ وَأَنَا خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ ۗ

104 These are the two attributes most needed in a treasurer (cf. al-Qurṭubī).

105 This is the second and final transitional station in Joseph’s journey to greatness. The first being his becoming a member of the Chief Minister’s household in his tender years (Aya 21 above).

106 This is exemplar of the extent of the power that was imparted on him; all of the land came under his command, nowhere was out of bounds for him (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

107 God tells us here the lesson to be learned and heeded from Joseph’s (ﷺ) example: “For those who do good in this world is good; but the abode of the Hereafter is better—distinguished indeed is the abode of the Mindful!” (16: 30).

108 No matter how great the riches and status a person might achieve in this worldly life, they are nothing compared with what lies in store in the Hereafter, provided that a person Believes and acts Mindfully (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī).

109 When they were hit by the drought, Joseph’s brothers went to Egypt for supplies (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). And so the events of this intriguing story continue.

110 Given that Joseph (ﷺ) did not want to immediately reveal himself to his brothers (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr), exegetes deduce from this request that they

Can you not see that I give full measure 'of provisions' and I am the best of those who accommodate!⁽¹¹¹⁾” ^{﴿60﴾} “If you do not bring him⁽¹¹²⁾, there will not be any 'further' measure 'of supplies' for you with me and 'do' not 'ever' approach me!” ^{﴿61﴾} They said: “We will argue about him with his father; we shall surely do!⁽¹¹³⁾” ^{﴿62﴾} He said to his servants: “Place their commodities in their saddlebags so that they may know them when they return back to their people. Perhaps they may return”. ⁽¹¹⁴⁾

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَأْتِنِي بِهِ فَلَا كَيْلَ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي
وَلَا تَقْرُبُونِ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالُوا سَرُودٌ عَنْهُ أَبَاهُ وَإِنَّا
لَفَاعِلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَقَالَ لِفَتْيَانِهِ اجْعَلُوا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ فِي
رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْرِفُونَهَا إِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَى
أَهْلِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

must have told him in some interaction that had taken place between them earlier that they had a half-brother from their father's side, especially when numbers counted and supplies were given per capita (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'ādī).

- 111 By playing up these two pieces of information, namely, that he was both-open handed and especially accommodating to them, Joseph meant to encourage his brothers to bring their half-brother with them the next time, such that his plan could be carried out (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shawkānī). He coupled this with a warning as in the next aya.
- 112 That is, the next time they were to come for supplies (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 113 They knew how difficult it would be to obtain their father's permission to escort their half-brother to Egypt with them. But they still made a promise to do their best (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Su'ūd).
- 114 Besides enticement and threat, Joseph (ﷺ) wanted to make especially sure that they would be encouraged to return with the half-brother so he ordered his men to secretly place the commodities his brothers had brought with them in exchange for supplies back in their baggage. He wanted them to realize how generous and magnanimous he was to them this first time so that they would be tempted to return (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). Doing so, he wanted to expedite this return by giving them their commodities back, which they would then seek to exchange for more supplies, and this sooner rather than later (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿63﴾ When they returned to their father, they ‘no sooner’⁽¹¹⁵⁾ said: “O father, provisions have been withheld from us!⁽¹¹⁶⁾ So send our brother with us, may we obtain our measure; verily, we shall indeed guard him!”⁽¹¹⁷⁾ ﴿64﴾ He said: “Shall I entrust you with him only as I entrusted you with his brother before! Allah is a better Guard⁽¹¹⁷⁾; He is the Most Merciful of all the merciful!”⁽¹¹⁸⁾ ﴿65﴾ When they opened their saddlebags, they found their commodities returned to them! They said: “O father, what more could we want! Our commodities have been returned to us, we ‘can further’ cater for our households, protect our brother⁽¹¹⁹⁾ and we get a camel’s load ‘of provision’ more!⁽¹²⁰⁾ That is an easy measure ‘of provision to get by⁽¹²¹⁾!’”

فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا إِلَىٰ أَبِيهِمْ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مُنِعَ مِنَّا الْكَيْلُ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا آخَانَ نَكْتَلُ وَإِنَّا لَءَلَّاحِفُطُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ هَلْ ءَامَنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا كَمَا ءَامَنُكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَخِيهِ مِن قَبْلُ فَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ حَافِظًا وَهُوَ رَحِيمٌ الرَّحِيمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَمَّا فَتَحُوا مَتَاعَهُمْ وَجَدُوا بِضَعَتَهُمْ رُدَّتْ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا نَبُغِي هَذِهِ بِضَعْتَنَا رُدَّتْ إِلَيْنَا وَنَمِيرُ أَهْلَنَا وَنَحْفَظُ آخَانَ وَنَزِدُكَ كَيْلَ بَعِيرٍ ذَلِكَ كَيْلٌ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٦٥﴾

115 Joseph’s (ﷺ) plan had the desired effect. No sooner than they arrived home, even before unloading their saddlebags, they broached the difficult subject of their half-brother with their father (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

116 That is, in the future (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

117 That he told them that God is the best Guard has led exegetes to consider this as an indication of a softer position taken by Jacob (ﷺ) on the issue (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Alūsī). Thus his sons did not persist in their request (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

118 That is, God Knows how old and bereaved I, Jacob, am that He will undoubtedly have Mercy on me and protect my son and return him to me (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

119 They pointed this out to further cajole and assure their father of their good intentions (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

120 That is, their half-brother’s share (cf. al-Baghawī).

121 That is, given Joseph’s, the Chief Minister of Egypt, overwhelming generosity (cf. al-Zajjāj, al-Wāḥidī, al-Khāzin).

﴿66﴾ He said: “I shall not send him with you unless you give me a pledge by Allah that you shall bring him ‘back’ to me unless you are surrounded!⁽¹²²⁾” When they gave him their pledge, he said: “Allah is Keeper over what we say!”

﴿67﴾ ⁽¹²³⁾ He ‘Ya‘qūb’ said: “My sons, do not enter ‘the town together’ from one gate, but enter ‘it’ from separate gates!⁽¹²⁴⁾ I can ward off from you naught coming from Allah⁽¹²⁵⁾. Verily the decision is for none but Allah; in Him I put my trust and in Him shall the trusting put their trust”.
 ﴿68﴾ When they entered whereupon their father bade them, that would not have availed them to naught against Allah, except it being a matter in Ya‘qūb’s ‘innermost’ self that he fulfilled.

قَالَ لَنْ أَرْسِلَهُ مَعَكُمْ حَتَّى تُؤْتُونِ مَوْثِقًا
 مِنْ اللَّهِ لَتَأْتُنِي بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يُحَاطَ بِكُمْ فَلَمَّا
 آتَوْهُ مَوْثِقَهُمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ ﴿٦٦﴾

وَقَالَ يَبْنَئِي لَا تَدْخُلُوا مِنْ بَابٍ وَاحِدٍ وَادْخُلُوا
 مِنْ أَبْوَابٍ مُتَفَرِّقَةٍ وَمَا أُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ مِنَ
 اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ
 وَعَلَيْهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَلَمَّا
 دَخَلُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَهُمْ أَبُوهُمْ مَا كَانَ يُغْنِي
 عَنْهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا حَاجَةٌ فِي نَفْسِ
 يَعْقُوبَ قَضَاهَا

122 That is, in the face of overpowering circumstances that would prevent them from fulfilling their contract with him; a *force majeure* (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

123 In this passage, one finds a very edifying note. Along with putting one’s trust fully in God, one nonetheless needs to take precautions (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurtubī).

124 Most exegetes perceive that he bade his sons so because he feared the evil eye for them (cf. al-Sam‘ānī, al-Rāzī). They were an eleven-strong, very handsome bunch of men (cf. al-Qurtubī). ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “The evil eye is true. If anything was to come faster than ‘God’s’ decree, it is the evil eye” (Muslim: 2188).

125 This is just a precaution, a fatherly direction. What God decrees, however, will surely come to pass no matter how careful the person is (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

He was indeed knowledgeable as We had made him know⁽¹²⁶⁾; but most people know not!⁽¹²⁷⁾

وَإِنَّهُ لَذُو عِلْمٍ لِّمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

﴿69﴾ When they entered upon Yūṣuf, he drew his brother close to him. ‘And’ He said: “I am indeed your brother; do not feel ‘anymore’ miserable because of what they used to do”.⁽¹²⁸⁾ ﴿70﴾ When he furnished them with their supplies, he placed the drinking cup⁽¹²⁹⁾ in his brother’s saddlebag. Then a caller shouted out: “O you caravan! You have indeed stolen!”^{﴿71﴾} They said – as they⁽¹³⁰⁾ advanced towards them: “What do you miss?”^{﴿72﴾} They said: “We miss the King’s measure⁽¹³¹⁾

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ ءَاوَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَخَاهُ
قَالَ إِنِّي أَنَا أَخُوكَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَآكَأَنُؤُا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُم بِمَآزِهِمْ جَعَلَ
السِّقَايَةَ فِي رَحْلِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ أَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ أَيَّتُهَا
الْعِيرُ إِنَّكُمْ لَسِرْفُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالُوا وَقَبِلُوا
عَلَيْهِمْ مَاذَا تَفْقِدُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ قَالُوا لَنَفَقْدُ صُوعَ
الْمَلِكِ

126 This is a laudation by God about Prophet Jacob (ﷺ) for practically demonstrating his knowledge and thereby directing his sons to the course of action (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

127 Most people are oblivious of the fact that matters need both sincere trust in God and careful preparation (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Such neglect results from either lack of faith or mistaken beliefs.

128 By privately conversing with his brother, Joseph (ﷺ) sent him an assuring note about both his identity and also information to prepare him for what was to unfold next (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

129 *al-Siqāyah* (lit. the watering cup) is the utensil/gauge which was used for drinking and measuring (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Sa‘dī).

The story, from here on, moves at quick pace but still takes the time to fill in the blanks in order to bring to life the strong emotions lived by some of the characters.

130 The ones who advanced could be either the brothers or Joseph’s (ﷺ) foot soldiers (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*).

131 *Ṣuwā’* (a variation of *ṣā’*, i.e. measure) is the proper noun for the instrument, while *siqāyah* (watering cup) is more of a description of it (cf. al-Rāzī). It is called ‘the King’s measure’ here to impart importance as the circumstance requires so (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

and for whoever brings it, is a camel's load". "And I am guarantor of it!"⁽¹³²⁾ ﴿73﴾ They said: "By Allah, you know that we did not come 'here' to sow corruption in the land, neither were we 'ever' thieves!" ﴿74﴾ They said: "Then what is his penalty if you are lying?" ﴿75﴾ They said: "His penalty – whoever's saddlebag it is found in – he himself is its penalty⁽¹³³⁾; thus we penalize the wrongdoers!" ﴿76﴾ He 'Yūsuf' began with their luggage before his brother's luggage⁽¹³⁴⁾; then he extracted it from his brother's luggage. Thus We planned for Yūsuf⁽¹³⁵⁾; he would never have been able to take his brother as per the King's religion⁽¹³⁶⁾, except by Allah willing it so. We raise in rank whoever We will⁽¹³⁷⁾; above each possessor of knowledge an All-Knowledgeable One⁽¹³⁸⁾.

وَلَمَنْ جَاءَ بِهِ حِمْلُ بَعِيرٍ وَأَنَا بِهِ رَعِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾
 قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَاجِئَنَا النُّفْسَ فِي
 الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سِرِّينَ ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالُوا فَمَا جَزَاؤُهُ
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كَذِبِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾ قَالُوا جَزَاؤُهُ مَن
 وُجِدَ فِي رَحْلِهِ فَهُوَ جَزَاؤُهُ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي
 الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَبَدَأَ بِأَوْعِيَتِهِمْ قَبْلَ وِعَاءِ
 أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ وِعَاءِ أَخِيهِ
 كَذَلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوسُفَ مَا كَانَ لِيَأْخُذَ
 أَخَاهُ فِي دِينِ الْمَلِكِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ تَرْفَعُ
 دَرَجَاتٍ مَن يَشَاءُ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ
 عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٦﴾

132 Understandably, this was said by the senior figure among Joseph's (ﷺ) soldiers, who was vested with authority (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

133 That is, to be taken in captivity. This was the penalty for thieves as per Jacob's (ﷺ) religion (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*).

134 So that to avert suspicion that they were tripped into a setup all along (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

135 The immaculate, well-calculated plan that has just unfolded so that Joseph (ﷺ) was able to extract his brother from the others, was inspired by God (ﷻ) (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Shawkānī, al-Qāsimī).

136 The judgement of enslaving thieves was not part of the Egyptian penal code (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

137 Both with knowledge and the means of achieving worthy goals (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī).

138 Above and beyond every possessor of knowledge, there is one more knowledgeable until all knowledge ends up with God Almighty, the

﴿77﴾ They ‘the brothers’ said: “If he steals, then a brother of his had stolen before!”⁽¹³⁹⁾ Yūṣuf stifled it⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ within himself and did not express it to them; he said: “But you are indeed in a worse position; Allah Knows best what you describe^{(141)!}”

﴿77﴾ قَالُوا إِن يَسْرِقَ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ أَخٌ لَّهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَأَسْرَهَا يُوْسُفُ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ قَالَ أَنْتُمْ شَرُّ مَكَّانًا وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَصِفُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

﴿78﴾ They said: “O Chief Minister, his is a father who is a very old man, so take one of us in his place⁽¹⁴²⁾; verily we see you among the well-doers!⁽¹⁴³⁾” ﴿79﴾ He said: “Allah forbid that we take anyone except the one with whom we found our property with; so we would be unjust!”⁽⁸⁰⁾ When they ‘fully’ despaired, they took themselves aside in conference.

﴿78﴾ قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ إِنَّ لَهُ أَبًا شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا فَخُذْ أَحَدَنَا مَكَانَهُ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَن نَأْخُذَ إِلَّا مَن وَجَدْنَا مَتَّعِنَا بِهِ وَإِنَّا إِذَا ظَلَمْنَا لَمُوتٌ ﴿٧٩﴾ فَلَمَّا أَسْتَيْسُوا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوا نَجِيًّا

Omnipotent, Omnipresent Who possesses the knowledge of the seen and the Unseen (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). That Joseph (ﷺ) was able to draw upon his brothers to use their knowledge to his own benefit, gives a practical illustration of this. This was only possible by God’s will and inspiration.

139 Due to lack of historical evidence of what exactly was the ‘stealing’ the brothers ascribed to Joseph (ﷺ), it is safe to proper that this was merely a ploy to avert blame and that it was nothing but a lie (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Shawkānī).

140 A cataphoric reference to Joseph’s (ﷺ) upcoming monologue (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zajjāj, al-Baghawī).

141 *Wasf* (description) is often used in the Qur’an to denote lying (cf. al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *Umdat al-Huffāz*, 4:317).

142 They described their father as ‘a very old man’ to soften the Chief Minister’s heart; knowing that an old father is usually deeply attached to the younger ones among his children (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). They called him by his honorific title, *al-‘azīz* (Chief Minister), for the same purpose (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

143 They further wanted to appeal to his honourable nature (cf. al-Zajjāj).

Their senior said: “Do you not know that your father took from you a pledge by Allah and before that you had relinquished Yūsuf!⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ I shall not leave the land until my father permits me so or Allah passes a judgement for me—He is the best of judges!”

قَالَ كَيْفَ يُرْهِمُ آلَ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ أَبَاكُمْ قَدْ أَخَذَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَوْثِقًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمِن قَبْلُ مَا فَرَّطْتُمْ فِي يُوسُفَ فَلَنْ أَبْرَحَ الْأَرْضَ حَتَّى يَأْذَنَ لِي أَبِي أَوْ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ لِي وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

﴿81﴾ “Go back to your father and say: “O father, your son has stolen!⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ We bear witness only to what we knew ‘for certain’⁽¹⁴⁶⁾; we were never keepers over the unseen!⁽¹⁴⁷⁾”
 ﴿82﴾ “Ask the town at which we were and the caravan that we came with; we are indeed truthful!”⁽¹⁴⁸⁾
 ﴿83﴾ He said: “Nay, but yourselves have lured you into some matter⁽¹⁴⁹⁾.”

أَرْجِعُوا إِلَى آبَائِكُمْ فَقُولُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّا نَبَأْتُكَ سَرَقَ وَمَا شَهِدْنَا إِلَّا بِمَا عَلِمْنَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِلْغَيْبِ حَفِظِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَسَعَلْنَا الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعِيرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّاتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَمْرًا

- 144 By this he gave them a stark reminder of their father’s deep mistrust of them, especially when they had betrayed his trust with Joseph once before. So by offering to stay back, he wanted to send their father a message that this situation was different from Joseph’s and that it was for real; he would not have been prepared to remain in alien lands had he not been keen on his father’s trust nor would his sibling brothers have willingly forsaken him as they would a half-brother (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 145 Thus he bade his brothers to give their father the fact as it occurred in the hope that he would believe them (cf. Ibn Kathīr).
- 146 That the measure was actually taken out from his belongings (cf. al-Ṭabari, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah).
- 147 The intended meaning of this statement is vague and was interpreted differently by exegetes. But two readings are found more frequently than others: we were unaware of what was lying in store when we gave you our pledge to bring him home (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*), or that he would steal (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*).
- 148 Asking him to verify their account of events and their strong affirmation of their truthfulness, indicate that they fully realized how shaky their father’s trust of them was.
- 149 Judging on their precedent with Joseph (ﷺ) and knowing all too well that his son who would not commit such a vile deed as stealing, Jacob (ﷺ), understandably, suspected foul play (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

Then 'it' shall be a comely patience 'I hold on to'; may Allah well bring them all to me⁽¹⁵⁰⁾—He is verily the All-Knowing, All-Wise!"^{﴿84﴾} ⁽¹⁵¹⁾He turned away from them and said: "Woe is me over Yūṣuf!" His eyes turned white with grief⁽¹⁵²⁾; he had been stifling 'it up'!^{﴿85﴾} They said: "By Allah, you will never cease to remember Yūṣuf until you are withered away or you are one of the dead!"^{﴿86﴾} He said: "But I only moan my anguish and sorrow to Allah and I know via 'revelation from' Allah that which you do not know."⁽¹⁵³⁾ ^{﴿87﴾} ⁽¹⁵⁴⁾"O my sons, go and feel out for⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ Yūṣuf and his brother. Do not give up on Allah's relief; none gives up on Allah's relief except the Denying folks!"⁽¹⁵⁶⁾

﴿88﴾ ⁽¹⁵⁷⁾When they entered upon him, they said: "O Chief Minister,

فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا سَفَى عَلَى يُونُسَ وَأَبْصَتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٨٤﴾ قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ تَفْتُونََا تَذَكُرُ يُونُسَ حَتَّى تَكُونَ حَرَصًا أَوْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُوا بَنِي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾ يَبْنِي أَذْهَبُوا فَحَسَسُوا مِنْ يُونُسَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَأْتِسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْتِسُ مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ

150 Intending his three missing sons (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī).

151 This fresh incident opened up an old wound (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

152 He became blind or almost blind because of so much quiet, bereaved weeping (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn Juzayy, Ibn 'Āshūr).

153 He alluded here to his good hope in God Who had always been Kind to him or to the fulfilment of Joseph's vision (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah).

154 He thus acted upon this knowledge and hope (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

155 *Taḥassasū* (lit. grope) is to tune up one's senses and be extra vigilant in search for something (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Alūsī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

156 The more Believing the spirit is, the more rightly hopeful of God's relief it is (cf. al-Sa' dī).

157 Although their main aim was not to obtain more supplies and provisions, they started off by a heart tendering appeal by describing how badly-off they were. This so that Joseph (ﷺ) would empathetically engage with them making it opportune for them to reveal their purpose (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Qāsimī). This had the desired effect indeed! (cf. al-Sa' dī)

we, and our households, have been touched by adversity and we have come with 'some' paltry commodity so give us full measure 'of provisions' and show us benefaction⁽¹⁵⁸⁾; indeed Allah rewards the benefactors". ^{﴿89﴾} He said: "Do you know what you did to Yūsuf and his brother when you were 'still' ignorant?⁽¹⁵⁹⁾" ^{﴿90﴾} They said: "But' Indeed, it is you, Yūsuf!" He said: "Yes' I am Yūsuf and this 'indeed' is my brother⁽¹⁶⁰⁾. Allah has done us kindness. Indeed whoever is Mindful and shows patience, then Allah wastes not the reward of the well-doers". ^{﴿91﴾} They said: "By Allah, Allah has favoured you over us⁽¹⁶¹⁾.

مَسَنَا وَأَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَجِئْنَا بِبِضْعَةٍ
مُرْجَلَةٍ قَلِيلٍ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾ قَالَ هَلْ
عَلِمْتُمْ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ بِيُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ
جَاهِلُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ يُوسُفُ
قَالَ أَنَا يُوسُفُ وَهَذَا أَخِي قَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْنَا إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ
أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ
ءَاثَرَكَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا

158 *Taşaddaq 'alaynā* (lit. give us charity) by giving them full measure of goodly provisions in lieu of their 'paltry commodity' (cf. al-Ṭabarī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar, al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*).

159 This beautifully brings to light the magnanimous nature of Prophet Joseph (ﷺ). Nasty as the brothers were to him and his brother, he provided them with a face-saving excuse by saying that they were *jāhilūn* (lit. ignorant) when they did what they did (cf. al-Sa'dī). The extent of Joseph's spirit of forgiveness is shown in full colour in this passage.

160 Although they knew who his brother was, Joseph wanted to make the point that he also underwent a good turn of fortune after oppression (cf. al-Rāzī). Which is evidence enough for the point he wanted to make next.

161 Most exegetes are of the opinion that this 'favouring' (*ūthār*, of which the verb used in the aya, *āthara*, is the past tense) pertains to knowledge, long-suffering, sterling manners, good looks and Kingship (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr). However, al-Rāzī sees that by this 'favouring' they somehow meant Prophethood above the aforementioned favours. This interpretation ties in with the ulterior motive behind Joseph's grown up half-brothers burning jealousy of him (cf. note on Aya 8 above) which drove them into the desperate measure of plotting to kill him but then

Indeed, we were mistaken!”⁹² He said: “There is no reprimanding you today. May Allah forgive you; He is the Most Merciful of all the merciful!”⁹³ “Take this tunic of mine, cast it on my father’s face and he will regain his sight. And bring to me all ‘members of’ your households.”

وَإِن كُنَّا لَخٰطِئِيْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ رَحِيْمٌ ﴿٩٢﴾ اَذْهَبُوْا بِقَمِيْصِيْ هٰذَا فَاَلْقُوْهُ عَلٰى وُجُوْهِ اٰبِيَ بَصِيْرًا وَاْتُوْنِيْ بِاَهْلِكُمْ جَمْعِيْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾

94 When the caravan pulled ahead, their father said¹⁶²: “Certainly, I perceive Yūṣuf’s smell; if only you would not think me senile¹⁶³!”⁹⁵ ¹⁶⁴They said: “By Allah, you are still in your error of old!”⁹⁶ When the bearer of glad tidings¹⁶⁵ came, he cast it on his face and he regained his sight. He said:

وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعَيْرُ قَالَ اَبُوْهُمُ اِنِّيْ لَاجِدُ رِيْحَ يُسُفٰ لَوْلَا اَنْ تَفْنَدُوْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ اِنَّكَ لَفِيْ ضَلٰلِكَ الْقَدِيْمِ ﴿٩٥﴾ فَلَمَّا اَنَّ جَاءَ الْبَشِيْرَ اَلْقَاهُ عَلٰى وُجُوْهِهٖ فَارْتَدَّتْ بَصِيْرًا قَالِ

they threw him, young as he was, into the darkness of a well. It also relates to the prophecy his father foresaw for him that he would be the ‘chosen one’ when he told him of his vision (cf. Aya 6 above), thus he warned him not to tell his brothers of it. So when they saw the great status that he came to achieve, they gave in and admitted what he was; the ‘favoured one’.

162 As his sons left Egypt heading towards the Levant, Prophet Jacob (ﷺ) sensed his long lost son’s smell from a distance (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr). God Almighty inspired him so indicating thus that the difficult times were over (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

163 *Tufannidūn* derives from *fanad* which means dotage or weakness of mind due to old age (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).

164 Those who were around him, but not his sons who were still on their way back, judging according to mere human calculations, reproached him as he anticipated for his ‘error of old’ (*dalālīka al-qadīm*), that of anticipating the return of his long-lost son (cf. al-Sam’ānī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

165 The one of his sons who was entrusted with this task (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī). This was nothing but welcome news and its bearer was deservedly called so.

“Did I not tell you that I know via ‘revelation from’ Allah that which you do not know”.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ ﴿97﴾ They said: “O father, seek forgiveness for our sins⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ on behalf of us; we were indeed wrongful!”⁽⁹⁸⁾ He said: “I will ask my Lord to forgive you; He is verily the Most Pardoning, Most Merciful!”

﴿99﴾ When they entered upon Yūsuf, he drew his parents close to him and said: “Enter Egypt safe, by Allah’s will”.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ And he raised his parents upon the throne, and they fell prostrate to him⁽¹⁶⁸⁾. He said: “My father, this is the interpretation of my earlier vision. My Lord has made it true! He did me well when he got me out of prison⁽¹⁶⁹⁾”

أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾
 قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا
 خَاطِئِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾ قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي
 إِنَّهُ رَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٩٨﴾

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ آوَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَبَوَيْهِ
 وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوا مَعِيَ مِصْرَ ۚ إِنَّ شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ ﴿٩٩﴾
 وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا
 وَقَالَ يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ مِن قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا
 رَبِّي حَقًّا وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ

166 Referring to his telling them to go and search out for Joseph as in Aya 87 above.

167 This unequivocal admission of guilt and along with their admitting of Joseph’s (ﷺ) favouring over them show that they sincerely wanted to come clean and repent (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*), hence turning a new page.

168 His parents and eleven brothers, i.e. the sun and the moon and the eleven planets he saw in his childhood vision (cf. Aya 4 above) prostrated themselves to him. This prostration (*sujūd*) was one of homage and appreciation and not that of worship as is the unanimous agreement of exegetes (cf. al-Qurtubī). Although such show of appreciation and demonstration of respects could have been approved of in other religious traditions, Islam denounces prostrating to any creature besides God Almighty Himself, great as they might be; this to show that all humans are equal before God (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr: “*O Mankind! We have created you from a ‘single’ male and a ‘single’ female and We made you into peoples and tribes, so that you may know each other; indeed the most honourable of you with Allah is the most Mindful of you! Verily Allah is All-Knowing, Most Knowledgeable!*” (49: 13).

169 Although Joseph’s time in the well was no less difficult than his time in prison, he specifically mentioned his emancipation from prison because

and brought you from the 'land of the nomads⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ after Satan has stirred 'bad blood'⁽¹⁷¹⁾ between me and my brothers. Indeed my Lord is Subtle⁽¹⁷²⁾ in what He wills—verily, He is the All-Knowledgeable, Most Wise”. ﴿101﴾ ⁽¹⁷³⁾“My Lord, You have given me some Kingship and taught me some 'of the' interpretation of expressions⁽¹⁷⁴⁾.

وَجَاءَ بِكُمْ مِنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ نَزَعَ الشَّيْطَانُ
بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِمَا يَشَاءُ
إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٠١﴾ رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي
مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ

upon that he came to prominence. Essentially, he was considerate enough not to mention the incident of the well in front of his brothers now that they had made up and all the past had been forgiven (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Sa‘dī).

- 170 That is the countryside of the Levant, where Jacob (ﷺ) and his sons used to live (cf. al-Ṭabarī). To move from the hardship and scarcity of sources of the outposts to a city where it is less harsh and sources readily abound, is obviously something to be thankful for (cf. al-Qāsimī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Ashūr).
- 171 The nobleness of Prophet Joseph’s character still shows itself clearly in this instance. He so kindly implicated himself in the ‘bad blood’ that had taken place between him and his brothers even though he was no more than the victim of their plotting (cf. al-Sa‘dī).
- 172 *Laṭīf* in that He (ﷻ) makes good easy for His servants in subtle ways which they do not perceive and/or expect (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). Indeed in the story that has just unfolded there is ample evidence of this as well as of God’s Knowledge and Wisdom.
- 173 Here, in a humbling conclusion to this most beautiful story, Prophet Joseph (ﷺ) counts his blessings and shows his great gratitude to God Almighty and prays to Him to make him steadfast in his religion until death comes (cf. al-Sa‘dī) knowing that the blessings of this worldly life unlike those of the Hereafter never last (cf. Ibn ‘Adīl, *al-Lubāb*).
- 174 The preposition *min* as in *min al-mulk* (lit. some Kingship) and *min ta’wīl al-aḥādīth* (lit. some ‘of the’ interpretation of expressions) could mean that it either denotes a portion of something, i.e., partitive (*tab’iḍḍiyah*) but not its entirety, i.e. thus meaning that his Kingship and knowledge were only partial (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Bayḍāwī) or the *min* that implicates and precedes a generic noun (*ism jins*) (as in 22: 30) thus meaning Kingship and interpretation proper (cf. al-Zajjāj, Ibn al-Jawzī). Taking it to mean that his influence and knowledge were only limited accords with this noble Prophet’s really humble character and is more becoming here, where he is paying homage to God Almighty and imploring him for deliverance.

O Originator of the Heavens and Earth, you are my Ally in the worldly life and in the Hereafter; bring my term 'on Earth' to an end being devoutly submitted and join me with the pious⁽¹⁷⁵⁾".

فَاطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ وَلِيِّ لِي فِي
الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي
بِالصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٧٦﴾

﴿102﴾ ⁽¹⁷⁶⁾These are some accounts of the unknown⁽¹⁷⁷⁾, We reveal them to you 'Muhammad'⁽¹⁷⁸⁾. You were not with them⁽¹⁷⁹⁾

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا
كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ

- 175 Given that Prophets and Messengers are in a higher rank than the pious both in this world and in the Hereafter (4: 69), exegetes take it that by these 'pious' ones Joseph (ﷺ) meant his forefathers Isaac and Abraham as well as the previous Prophets and Messengers (ﷺ) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).
- 176 The remaining ayas mark the conclusion of the sura, highlighting the relevance of the story that has just been concluded to the situation in which Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) found himself at the time of its revelation and was thus able to draw lessons from it.
- 177 *al-Ghayb*, lit. the Unseen, that which is beyond the reach of perception. Such stories, in the manner and detail told here, were not known to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his community. This is a Sign from God signifying that Muhammad (ﷺ) conveyed nothing of his own and that all was inspired by Him; the accounts given here are different from the narratives of Prophet Joseph's story that had been prevalent at the time. They were also meant to hearten the Messenger (ﷺ) and bolster his position (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 178 This fact corresponds with Aya 3, which preceded the account of Prophet Joseph's story, to show that the Messenger (ﷺ), and his people, were totally oblivious to these stories before the revelation of the Qur'an; all the more reason to Believe him but the home truth is that 'most people Believe not!'
- 179 The referent of the pronouns in *ladayhim* (with them), *ajma'ū amrahum* (they resolved their matter) and *wa hum yamkurūn* (while they were plotting) although their being the same is not specified here but many exegetes take it to mean Joseph's (ﷺ) brothers who did the most plotting against him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī). However, given the 'plotting' that went on in the story, Ibn 'Āshūr believes that it is of a general nature: thus, tacitly implicating the brothers who plotted to get rid of Joseph, the wayfarers who plotted to sell him off as merchandise instead of returning him to his folks and the few women of the city who 'plotted' against the Chief Minister's wife to exploit her moment

as they resolved their matter while they were plotting. ^{﴿103﴾} ⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ And most people, despite your best efforts, will not Believe! ^{﴿104﴾} You do not ask them for any reward for it; it is no more than a reminder to all beings! ⁽¹⁸¹⁾ ^{﴿105﴾} Just like any 'other' Sign in the Heavens and Earth, they pass by it while they 'deliberately' turn away from it! ⁽¹⁸²⁾. ^{﴿106﴾} Most of them Believe not in Allah without them Associating! ⁽¹⁸³⁾

إِذْ أَجْمَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَمَا أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَمَا تَسْأَلُهُمْ
عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٥﴾
وَكَأَيِّن مِّنْ آيَةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
يَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَمَا
يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

of weakness. The story is strung with plots, mechanizations and guiles by different parties. These were obviously secret, incriminating conferences and none was in on them besides the closed circle and God Almighty Who revealed them to his Messenger (ﷺ) as conclusive proof of his Truthfulness (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*). The account of the story does not fail to reveal the minutest detail of what actually occurred (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

- 180 This home truth, hard to accept as it was for the Prophet (ﷺ), had to be broken down and presented through different angles over the next few ayas just to make it fathomable.
- 181 Had they been receptive to guidance, they would have easily realized that the Messenger (ﷺ) meant only to deliver them from doom, and did not go to all this trouble for a mere worldly end even though they offered him all the money he could ask for and the leadership of the Quraysh to abandon the call (cf. among many other books of biography al-Mubārakfūrī's *al-Rahīq al-Makhtūm (The Sealed Nectar)*): "Say 'Muhammad': 'I am not asking for payment for it; it is nothing less than a reminder to all beings'" (6: 90): "Indeed there has come to you a Light from Allah and a clarifying Book; *by it Allah guides those who follow His Pleasure to the path of peace and delivers them from utter darkness into light with His permission; He guides them to a Straight Path" (5: 15-16).
- 182 This is what happens when people's senses are clouded over and they become mindless of path guiding facts: "If you 'Muhammad' obey most of those on Earth, they will lead you away from the Path of Allah; indeed they only follow 'mere' fancies, indeed they are only guessing" (6: 116).
- 183 That is, most people Associate others with God Almighty in worship though they acknowledge His Lordship (*Rubūbiyyah*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*). 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: "The Associators used to say: "We willingly answer You 'Allah', there is no Associate of Yours!" The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would say to them

﴿107﴾ Do they feel secure that a shrouding of Allah’s punishment will come upon them or that the Hour comes upon them all of a sudden while they do not realize ‘it’!⁽¹⁸⁴⁾

أَفَأَمِنُوا أَن تَأْتِيَهُمْ غَشِيَةٌ مِّنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ أَتَوَاتَتْهُمُ السَّاعَةُ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

﴿108﴾ (185) Say ‘Muhammad’: “This is my path. I call to Allah, being clear-sighted⁽¹⁸⁶⁾; I and whoever follows me. Glory be to Allah⁽¹⁸⁷⁾; I am not among the Associators!”⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ (188) We have sent before you none but men – to whom We reveal – among the dwellers of towns.

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعِيَ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رَجَالًا نُوحِيَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ ﴿١٠٩﴾

then: “Woe to you! Enough, Enough!” But they would say: “Except one Associate of Yours; You own him and all that he owns!” they say this while circumambulating around the Ka’bah” (Muslim: 1185).

- 184 The adamantly heedless shall expect nothing but Divine punishment (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Do the townspeople feel secure that Our Might would not come to them at night while they are sleeping? *Do the townspeople feel secure that Our Might would not come to them in the forenoon while they are playing? *Do they feel secure from the planning of Allah? Verily none feels safe from the planning of Allah except the losers” (7: 97-99).
- 185 After the fact has been laid bare and the Truth made clear, the Messenger (ﷺ) is to pronounce this stand affirming statement and to declare to others that they should join the path of Truth.
- 186 ‘*Alā baṣīrah*’ (lit. on clear sightedness) is semantically complex. It is taken to mean certitude, and/or evidence and authority but originally it means clarity (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*). It also means the heart’s ability to realize (cf. al-Iṣfahānī). Ibn ‘Āshūr sees a figure of speech in it; the one who has evidence is clear sighted about the Truth.
- 187 God Almighty (ﷻ) should be glorified up and above all imperfections; having Associates, a match, a wife or posterity (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). That is, unlike the way of the Associators (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 188 This is to express wonder at the affair of the Qurayshite Deniers, who, having seen and acknowledged that earlier Prophets, mere men, were sent by God to towns they knew very well and had seen with their own eyes how they Denied and were destroyed (cf. note on 6:6), yet thought it wonderful that a Messenger of their own (cf. 10: 2), Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent to them and so declared him a liar (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr)! Such Deniers are heedless!

Have they not walked the land and beheld how was the end of those before them! But verily the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who are Mindful; do they heed not! ¹¹⁰ (189) Until the Messengers have 'fully' despaired and they have become certain that they were lied to, Our victory comes to them and We deliver whomever We will. Our Might is not to be warded off from the criminal folks. ¹¹¹ (190) Indeed there has been a lesson in their stories to those of sound minds. It 'the Qur'an' has never been fabricated speech, but a confirmation of what came before it, a detailing of everything and a guide and mercy to Believing folks.

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ
كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَدَارُ
الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا اسْتَيْسَسَ الرُّسُلُ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ
قَدْ كُذِّبُوا جَاءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا فَنُجِّيَ مِنْ نَشَأِهِمْ
وَلَا يَبْزُدُ بَأْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١١١﴾ لَقَدْ
كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ مَا
كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَىٰ وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي
بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى
وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾



189 The affairs of earlier Messengers (ﷺ) are to be taken heed from not only by the Deniers but also by the Believing camp; this to be assured that God's victory is sure to come, far as it might seem, and that none can stand between His Might and those who pit themselves against Him and His Messenger (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*): "Or you think that you will enter Paradise without the example of those who came before comes to pass you! They were touched by turmoil and affliction, and fiercely shaken, until the Prophet and those who Believed with him exclaim: "When is Allah's victory?"—verily Allah's victory is ever near" (2: 214).

This, and the following aya, is an assuring note at the end of the sura given the difficult patch the Messenger (ﷺ) and Believers were going through.

190 The Believers are to draw precious lessons, and find solace and assurance from the stories of earlier Prophets (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 15: 178). The story given here, that of Joseph (ﷺ), with all its intricacies and embedded messages, being an example at hand (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Rāzī).

سُورَةُ الرَّعْدِ

al-Ra'd
(Thunder)



al-Ra'd (Thunder)

Title: thus titled at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) (cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, Ibn 'Āshūr). This sura throws into relief Truth and dispels falsehood with numerous Signs and evidences which come down as clamorous thunder claps and lightning bolts that should awaken all the senses to the Truth; but most people contemplate/heed/Believe not! (al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

On a deeper level, 'thunder' is a constant reminder that Truth and falsehood are ever co-existent and will always be so (cf. 11: 118-119). As much as any other interconnected dualism (with which this sura abounds, for example, hope and fear, day and night, white and black, the blind and the seeing, scum and real substance, good and evil, darkness and light) is inextricably bound so there will ever be Belief and Denial vying against one another. Thus 'thunder', in a sense, is a reminder of this truth of life. It is a very loud herald of the one thing that epitomizes this dualistic relationship most, clouds, where fire (thunderbolts) and water (rain) are co-existent so much so that they can never be separated. The Believers, therefore, are to come to terms with this fact and give up their hope that Denial will cease to exist, and thereby embrace the call in their totality (Aya 31 below).

Theme: the sura abounds with ample clear proofs of the Truthfulness of the Message and the very shaky grounds on which its detractors stand. It underlines God Almighty's sole rightfulness to worship and the Truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad's (ﷺ) Messengership. This through giving many examples of God's unparalleled Ability which is to be found steeped into every corner of life around people. It also draws revealing comparisons between Truth and falsehood and their respective followers, showing in the process how guided or far astray one party or the other is.

Key: although scholars are of different opinions as to whether it is a Makkan (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Kathīr) or a Madinan sura, (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Rāzī), it is believed to be more of a late Makkan sura than a Madinan one (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn 'Āshūr, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). This is evidenced by its echoing of the heated debate (arguments and counter arguments) with the Makkan pagans that bore on the Prophet's (ﷺ) mind and which he endured during his Makkan days (cf. Ayas 7, 38, 40 and 43).

One of their arguments is singled out and refuted at length, to wit, their request that the Prophet (ﷺ) show them a concrete 'miracle' or *āyah* (Sign) (Ayas 7 and 27) thus casting aspersions on his Truthfulness. This rises to a crescendo in the form of an outright declaration that his Messengership was groundless in the very final aya of the sura. To this effect and to assure the Messenger (ﷺ) and make firm his stance on the issue (Aya 37), this sura carries out and expounds on the sad truth emphasized in the previous sura (Sura *Yūsuf*, Aya: 103) whereby despite all the proofs they are provided with, and the Prophet's (ﷺ) keenness on it, people will still choose to Deny (Aya 1 below); the Messenger (ﷺ) has not to feel grief over or be unsettled by this as God Himself and those who possess real knowledge bear witness to the Truthfulness of the Message (Aya 43 below).

The Truth, thunderous and striking as it is, will only be realized by a few; this is a sad fact of life but a very real one that everyone needs to come to terms with.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿١﴾ *Alif, Lām, Mīm, Rā*⁽¹⁾; those⁽²⁾ are the Signs of the Book; 'verily' what was sent down to you 'Muhammad' from your Lord is the Truth⁽³⁾ but most people Believe not. ﴿٢﴾ 'Allah'⁽⁴⁾ is He Who elevated the Heavens – without pillars you see them⁽⁵⁾ – then Established⁽⁶⁾ Himself on

الْمَرَّةَ تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ
مِن رَّبِّكَ الْحَقُّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ
عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ

- 1 The sura opens with these four disjointed letters so as to highlight the Qur'an's inimitable nature and which are meant as a challenge to those who argue with the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers regarding the Truthfulness of the Message (c.f. 2: 1).
- 2 The far demonstrative pronoun *tilka* (those) is employed here to signify the loftiness of the Qur'an's ayas (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 3 This aya, as much as the very last aya of this sura, sends a firmly assuring message to the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) that he stands on solid ground and needs not be worn out by the criticism of his adversaries and their preposterous demands. What follow are further supporting Signs and argumentations.
- 4 As in Sura *al-An'ām*, given that the ones being implicated as Denying are the Makkān pagans, who knew 'Allah' but had a distorted perception of Him, the Majestic Name 'Allah' is employed here as much as it is there to set aright their misconception and make them appreciate His Signs (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr); this is most clearly apparent in Aya 16 below.
- 5 Exegetes give *bi ghayri 'amadin tarawnahā* (lit. without pillars you see them) two explanations. First, and the more agreed one, is that which signifies that the Heavens are actually raised without pillars as is plain to the eye (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Adwā' al-Bayān*). This reasoning accords with Aya 22: 65: "And 'He' holds off the Heavens not to fall on Earth except by His permission!" and is the more becoming in highlighting God's unmatched Ability. So, accordingly, *tarawnahā* (lit. you see them) is meant to emphasize the nonexistence of pillars (cf. Ibn Kathīr). The second reading is that there are pillars but invisible ones (cf. Ibn Kathīr and Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, who account for this reading).
- 6 The verb *istawā* literally means rose and ascended in a manner befitting His Majesty only and unlike any of His creation. This Attribute of Almighty God (ﷻ) should be established as it is without *tashbīh* (drawing analogies), *tak'yīf* (adaptation) or *ta'tīl* (repudiation). (Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī)

the Throne and subjected the sun and the moon – each runs until a specified term⁽⁷⁾; He conducts ‘all’ affairs⁽⁸⁾. ‘Thus’ He details the Signs—may you ‘people’ be certain of meeting your Lord⁽⁹⁾. ⁽³⁾ ⁽¹⁰⁾He is the One Who spread out the Earth⁽¹¹⁾ and made in it firmly-set ‘stabilizers’ and rivers⁽¹²⁾; and of all fruits,

الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوقِنُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ

- 7 This ‘specified term’ is the end of the world and the coming of the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 8 God Almighty, in His infinite Ability, runs and oversees all of the affairs of His creation (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Shawkānī): “*There is not a single moving creature on Earth except its provision being from Allah and He knows its place of stay and place of storage; all ‘the details’ are in a clarifying Book*” (11: 6).
- 9 The Signs are detailed over and over again so that Believers may find enough assurance in them, but Deniers are bent on not paying heed: “*He is the One Who made the sun a glow and the moon a light and ordained for it stations so that you ‘may’ know the number of years and calculation ‘of time’. Never has Allah created that except for the Truth; He details the Signs for those who attain knowledge. *Verily in the alternation of night and day, and whatever Allah has created in the Heavens and Earth are Signs for the Mindful ones. *Verily those who hope not in meeting Us, contented themselves with the worldly life and took comfort in it; the ‘very’ ones who are ‘deliberately’ heedless of Our Signs*” (10: 5-7).
- 10 Now that the heavenly (extra-terrestrial) Signs have been talked of, other earthly (terrestrial) Signs are provided here (cf. Ibn Kathīr).
- 11 A great bounty of God’s (ﷻ) whereby He made the planet on which humans exist conducive to their living: “*He Who made the land a carpet and the sky a roof for you, and sent water down from the sky and grew with it ‘all sorts of’ produce as provisions for you*”. (2: 22)
- 12 Part of making Earth fit to live on is that its crust is maintained with stabilizing mountains and flowing rivers, which carry water, the substance of life to all creatures, easily running through it (cf. al-Qurtubī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*He cast into Earth firmly-set ‘stabilizers’ – lest it should shift with you – and ‘made’ rivers and paths that you may be guided*” (16: 15); “*We made in it ‘Earth’ soaring firmly-set ‘stabilizers’ and gave you sweet water to drink*”. (77: 27)

He made in it 'Earth' a pair, two, of each⁽¹³⁾; He shrouds night over day. Indeed in that are Signs to people who 'ever' contemplate! (14) And on Earth there are adjacent plots 'of land', gardens of grapes, 'different' plants, and date palms – joined at the trunk and unjoined – irrigated with the same water but We make some better than others in fruit⁽¹⁵⁾; indeed in that are Signs to people who heed!

جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشَى اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ
 إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَفِي
 الْأَرْضِ قَطْعٌ مَّتَّجُورَاتٌ وَجَعَلْتُ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ
 وَرَزْغًا وَنَخِيلًا وَسُنَّوْنَ وَعَيْرٌ صُنَّوْنَ يُسْقَى
 بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنُفِصِلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي
 الْأُكُلِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾

(5) Should you 'Muhammad' be astonished, then astonishing indeed is their saying: "Should we become dust, are we to be created anew!" Those are the ones who Denied their Lord;

وَإِن تَعْجَبَ فَعَجَبٌ قَوْلُهُمْ أَءِذَا كُنَّا
 تُرَابًا أَءِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ

- 13 *Zawjain* means a pair of divergent nature; sweet and sour, hot and cold, black and white (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Shawkānī). This is both a bounty and a cause for contemplation; how then would the same nature be able to produce two things of contrasting natures, yet complementing each other, had not God Almighty (ﷻ) willed it so! (Cf. al-Rāzī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*.) This is followed by mention of the obvious complementary/contrasting dualism of night and day.
- 14 This is a parable of the hearts of people who are all showered with the same life giving water, the Message. Although existing next to each other, and prone to the same conditions, they receive it differently, like adjacent plots of land whose soil is different. Some will thrive, flower and flourish while others will only turn salty and foul! (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah).
- 15 Fruits are the produce of plants (*al-ukul*, lit. what is eaten) varying in taste, shape, colour, smell, benefit and use (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 16 This passage is interpolative, reflecting on the intransigence and lack of willingness to Believe that marred the Deniers (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr) and that much troubled the Messenger (ﷺ); further underlining the Deniers' lack of Truth, by projecting some of their aberrations and absurd demands.

those in whose necks are yokes⁽¹⁷⁾; those are the Companions of the Fire—in it they abide forever! ⁽⁶⁾ They ‘further’ ask you ‘Muhammad’ to hasten the evil before the good⁽¹⁸⁾, while the examples have come to pass before them⁽¹⁹⁾; indeed your Lord extends forgiveness to people despite their wrongfulness; indeed your Lord is severe in punishment!⁽²⁰⁾

وَأُولَئِكَ الْأَعْلَلُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٦﴾
وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ
وَقَدْ خَلَّتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمُ الْمَثَلُتُ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لَدُوٌّ مَعْفَرٌ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ظُلْمِهِمْ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لَشَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٦﴾

- 17 Exegetes interpret these *aghlāl* as material yokes which will collar their necks on the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī). Others see it as the ‘yokes’ of misguidedness which tightly surround their necks so that they cannot see the Truth for what it is (cf. al-Baiḍāwī, al-Sa’dī). al-Qāsimī opines that it means the ‘yokes’ of their minds which prevent them from seeing God’s Signs!
- 18 This just shows the utter disregard with which they treated the Message (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “Mention Muhammad’ *When they ‘the Deniers’ said: “O Allah, if this is the Truth from You, then rain on us stones from the sky or bring us a painful punishment!”*” (8: 32)
- 19 The Qurayshites had many of the ruins of previous, much more prosperous, nations all around them, which the Qur’an always points out to them: “*Verily You ‘Makkans’ pass by their ruins morning *and night. Will you not use your reason?*” (37: 137-138). They could also see many more of these majestic ruins, especially those of the wealthy Nabateans in Hegra (al-Ḥijr) and Petra (al-Batrā’) respectively, during their famed winter and summer journeys (cf. 106: 2); “*Have they not travelled throughout the land to see what was the end of those ‘destroyed’ before them? They were far superior in might; they cultivated the land and developed it more than these ‘Makkans’ ever have. Their Messengers came to them with clear proofs. Allah would have never wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves*” (30:9).
- The fact that they fully knew about what befell other nations before them when they Denied is called to attention three times in this sura; here and in Ayas 30 and 42 (at the beginning, middle and end of the sura). Among the many rational arguments and irrevocable facts that were presented before them, they were also shown the fate of the Deniers of the Truth before them as ‘social proof’ and yet they still would not heed!
- 20 This replies to their request about why God Almighty does not hasten evil on them; rain stones on them from the sky or bring about a painful punishment on their heads (cf. 8: 32). That their punishment is delayed is

﴿7﴾ (21) And the Deniers say: “If only a sign⁽²²⁾ were sent down to him from his Lord!” You are none but a warner⁽²³⁾; for each people there is a guide⁽²⁴⁾.

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

﴿8﴾ (25) ‘Allah’ Knows what each female is pregnant with⁽²⁶⁾ and what

اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ أُنْثَىٰ وَمَا

not a sign of the incapacity of the warner, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), but rather of the boundless Mercy of His Lord, Who wants them to reason and repent (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “If they call you a liar then say ‘Muhammad to them’: ‘Your Lord is of vast Mercy and His affliction is never to be warded off away from the criminal people’” (6: 147).

- 21 This is yet another cause for wonder; their asking for a ‘sign’ while they had already been amply presented with many Signs, both Qur’anic and cosmic, given that Signs are all the same in proving the Truthfulness of the Message (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 22 *Āyah* (sign) means a miracle here (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “And they ‘the Makkan Deniers’ say: “We shall not Believe in you ‘Muhammad’ till you make a spring gush forth for us from the ground; *or till you have a garden of date palms and grapevines, and you make streams gush forth in the midst of it; *or till you make the sky fall upon us in pieces, as you have claimed, or you bring Allah and the angels before us; *or till you have a house of gold ornament, or you ascend to Heaven. And we shall not Believe in your ascension till you bring down unto us a book we can read”. Say: “Glory be to my Lord! Am I aught but a human being, a Messenger?” (17: 90-93)
- 23 That is, a Messenger not a miracle worker! (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 24 The sending of Messengers is mainly meant to invite people to look at evidences (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “We surely sent a Messenger to every nation ‘saying’: “Worship Allah and shun false idols!” Some of them were guided by Allah, while among them were ‘others’ whom misguidedness was their rightful lot” (16: 36).
- 25 In this passage and the next two the Makkan pagans’ misconception about ‘Allah’ is set aright; so that they may let go of their ‘yokes’ and gain a new perspective on the Message. Here God Almighty’s (ﷻ) Omniscience is the focal point.
- 26 God Knows what each and every female, human and otherwise, carries in her womb: the fetus’s gender, physical characteristics, fortune and fate in life, etc. (cf. al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “Indeed nothing, neither in Earth nor in the Heavens, is hidden from Allah. *He is the One Who forms you in ‘your mothers’ wombs as He wills – there is no god but Him, the All-Prevailing, All-Wise” (3: 5-6).

the wombs recede and increase with⁽²⁷⁾, and everything with Him is in 'precise' measure⁽²⁸⁾; ⁽⁹⁾ the Knower of the Unseen and the witnessed; the Grand, the Ever-Lofty. ⁽¹⁰⁾ The same of you is any who keeps speech secret and who announces it⁽²⁹⁾, and who hides 'imprecipitibly' at night and who comes forth openly in daytime⁽³⁰⁾.

تَغِيضُ الْأَرْحَامِ وَمَا تَزِدَادُ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ
عِنْدَهُ بِمِقْدَارٍ ﴿٨﴾ عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالِ ﴿٩﴾ سَوَاءٌ مَنكُم مَّن
أَسْرَأَ الْقَوْلَ وَمَن جَهَرَ بِهِ وَمَن هُوَ مُسْتَخْفٍ
بِالْأَيْلِ وَسَارِبٍ بِالنَّهَارِ ﴿١٠﴾

'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Each of you is gathered in his mother's belly for forty days, then he becomes a clinging clot 'of blood' for as much 'i.e. forty days', then he becomes a lump of flesh for as much 'i.e. forty days'. Then Allah sends an angel with four words 'and' he records his 'the fetus's' deeds, lifespan, provision of sustenance, and whether fortunate or unfortunate. Then he blows the soul into it 'i.e. the fetus'" (al-Bukhārī: 3332; Muslim: 2643).

- 27 That is, what swells up and subsides in the wombs, these most secret loci of creation, especially, the volume of the fetus and the duration of pregnancy. The 'receding/decrease' is in, among other things, the number of fetuses, the limbs and size of the fetus and the duration of pregnancy or whether the baby is born prematurely. Conversely, the 'increase' is in all these and whether the duration of pregnancy lasts longer than what is naturally the case (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Tuḥfat al-Mawdūd bi Ahkām al-Mawlūd*, p. 268, al-Shinqīfī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*). Yet, most exegetes agree that the decrease and increase are in the duration of pregnancy (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*).
- 28 Given the context exegetes see this as referring to the duration of pregnancy, which also indicates that nothing goes beyond or falls short of its stated limit (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān). In a way, it reflects on the timing of punishment which the Deniers challengingly were in a hurry for. This is supported by the fact mentioned in the closing of this thematic unit, Aya 11 below.
- 29 The statement of this fact here, as also the next, implicates the Makkan Deniers, essentially warning them that their evil plotting does not go unnoticed (Ibn 'Āshūr): "Keep your speech secret or proclaim it; truly He knows what lies within chests. *Does He Who created not Know—He is the Most Subtle, All-Knower!" (67: 13-14)
- 30 "Nay, but they bend their chests to hide from it. Nay, but when they cloak themselves in their garments, He Knows what they conceal and what they reveal—He is Knowledgeable of what the chests hide" (11: 5).

﴿11﴾ For him⁽³¹⁾ are alternating 'angels' from his front and his back⁽³²⁾, guarding⁽³³⁾ him by Allah's Command⁽³⁴⁾; Allah alters not what a people are in unless they alter what is in themselves⁽³⁵⁾. Should Allah will evil for a people then there is no warding it off—theirs is no ally besides Him⁽³⁶⁾.

لَهُ مُعَقَّبَاتٌ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ
يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا
بَقِيَ حَتَّىٰ يَحْكُمَ مَا بِنَفْسِهِمْ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ
اللَّهُ يَقُومَ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ
دُونِهِ مِنْ وَاٍلٍ ﴿١١﴾

- 31 That is, the human, thus referring to the state in which he is depicted in the previous aya, i.e. being secretive or open about his thoughts (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zajjāj, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 32 These are the angels tasked with each human; they alternate and take day and night shifts (cf. al-Ṭabarī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*). *Min bayni yadayhi wa min khalfihi* (lit. from between his hands and from his behind) could mean either from these two sides exclusively (cf. al-Ṭabarī) or from all sides with the front and back implying the other sides (cf. al-Shawkānī, Ibn 'Āshūr). Ibn Kathīr gives some details and further explains that each person has angels who keep alternating day and night shifts over him. There are four in each shift: one from the front and another from the back protecting him from evil, and one from the right keeping record of his good deeds and another on the left side recording his misdeeds: "When the two receivers 'i.e. angels' receive, seated on the right and on the left" (50: 17).
- 33 *Yahfazūnahu* could mean either to guard and protect, i.e. what are referred to here are the guardian angels which is the more generally agreed meaning (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*); and/or to keep record of a person's deeds (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 34 But when it is time for this cover of protection to be lifted, these guardian angels will no longer intervene (cf. Ibn Abī Zamanīn, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Baghawī).
- 35 As long as people are aware of God's Grace on them and are dutifully thankful to Him, God Almighty will not show them other than mercy, and vice versa (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Adwā' al-Bayān*): "That for Allah would never alter a favour He bestows on a 'certain' people until they alter what is in themselves—verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. *Just like the habitual ways of the people of Pharaoh and those 'who came' before them; they rejected the Signs of their Lord and We destroyed them for their sins and We drowned the people of Pharaoh; they all were unjust" (8: 53-54).
- 36 All what has been said in this passage, amounts to a warning to the Qurayshites, who rebuffed the Message and treated it with nothing but

﴿12﴾ (37) He is the One Who shows you lightning in fear and 'hopeful' anticipation⁽³⁸⁾, and builds up the heavy clouds⁽³⁹⁾. ﴿13﴾ Thunder glorifies Him⁽⁴⁰⁾ in Gratitude and the angels out of fear of Him⁽⁴¹⁾;

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا
وَيُنزِلُ السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ
بِحَمْدِهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِ

ridicule, that the great bounty that God shows them (cf. Sura 106) is not an earned right but is given only out of God Almighty's boundless Mercy to His servants. They have to do their best to earn it, i.e. Believe in the Message (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). But, if they persist in Denial, then let them not be fooled by the respite they are given, for Allah's Command can come at any minute.

- 37 This passage carries on and builds upon the threatening note found in the previous passage, but further reinforces it.
- 38 "In fear" of being hit by thunderbolts and "'hopeful' anticipation" for rain (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). Such is the subtlety of God Almighty's Wisdom where one thing both instigates fear and sparks hope (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*); no one knows whether an eventuality turns out to be for better or for worse.
- 39 The clouds that are floating above our heads like balloons filled with helium are not weightless but rather very heavy. Researchers have calculated that the average cumulus cloud - which is that nice, white fluffy kind you see on a sunny day - weighs an incredible 500,000 kg (or 1.1 million pounds!) (cf. https://www.usgs.gov/special-topic/water-science-school/science/how-much-does-a-cloud-weigh?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects): "We will show them Our Signs in the horizons and in themselves, so that they may realize that it is the Truth!" (41: 53). Not less impressive is the detailed description of how clouds are formed, a scientific fact which was only recently discovered with all the sophisticated equipment that the wonder of modern technology has made available to humans: "Do you not see that Allah gently drives the clouds, then joins them together, piling them up into masses, from which you see raindrops come forth? And He sends down from the sky mountains 'of clouds' loaded with hail, pouring it on whoever He wills and averting it from whoever He wills. The flash of its lightning nearly takes away eyesight" (24: 43).
- 40 "Glorify Him the seven Heavens and the Earth and whatever is there in them; there is not a 'single' thing but glorifies in gratitude to Him, but you 'people' discern not their glorification!" (17: 44).
- 41 'Abdullāh Ibn al-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) used to hold off from talking once he heard thunder and would say: "Thunder glorifies Him in Gratitude and the angels out of fear of Him!" This threat to the people of Earth is formidable indeed!" (Quoted in al-Baghawī.)

He sends thunderbolts and strikes with them whoever He wishes, yet they 'still' argue regarding Allah—He is of mighty smites⁽⁴²⁾. ﴿14﴾ To Him 'Alone' is the Call of Truth⁽⁴³⁾ but those whom they call besides Him do not ever answer them with a thing; except like he who stretches out his hand for water to reach his mouth and it shall never reach it⁽⁴⁴⁾—the calls of the Deniers are but lost.

﴿15﴾ ⁽⁴⁵⁾To 'Allah' prostrates⁽⁴⁶⁾ 'all' who are in the Heavens and Earth, willingly and unwillingly⁽⁴⁷⁾,

وَيُرْسِلُ الصَّوَاعِقَ فَيُصِيبُ بِهَا مَن يَشَاءُ
وَهُمْ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ شَدِيدُ الْمِحَالِ ﴿١٣﴾
لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ
لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا كَبَسِطَ كَفْتَهُ إِلَى الْمَاءِ
لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِبَالِغِهِ ۗ وَمَا دَعَا الْكٰفِرِينَ إِلَّا
فِي ضَلَالٍ ﴿١٤﴾

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَن فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ طَوْعًا
وَكَرْهًا

- 42 *al-Mihāl* is sematically complex; it means seizure, punishment, destruction, power and also scheming (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Qutaibah, *Gharīb al-Qurʿān*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).
- 43 This Call of Truth (*daʿwatu al-ḥaqq*) is said to be the very Declaration of Monotheism: “*Lā ilāha illā Allāh* (There is no god but Allah)”; He is the only One truly deserving worship (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Saʿdī). However, al-Wāḥidī (*al-Basīṭ*) says that, given the context and the comparison that follows with the prayers of the Deniers, the Call of Truth is collective for all the invocations, supplications and prayers that are rightfully addressed to God Almighty for answer. Essentially, he who turns to Him will never be let down, for God Almighty is Able over everything.
- 44 This imagery beautifully depicts the desperate state of the Deniers; their thirst will never be quenched (cf. al-Zamaksharī, Abū al-Suʿūd, Ibn ʿĀshūr).
- 45 After all the many Signs that have been expounded already, the debate with the Deniers comes to a head in this passage with the argumentative *qul* (Say!), by which the Messenger is directed to steer the argument, repeated no less than five times; this also highlights the clarity of evidence so far provided against the Deniers (cf. Ibn ʿĀshūr). It also equips the Messenger (ﷺ) with the defences to confront the barrage of criticism that was hurled at his call.
- 46 As much as invocation and prayers are a sign of need and acknowledgement, prostration is the greatest sign of submission to God Almighty (cf. Ibn ʿĀshūr).
- 47 The ‘unwilling’ (*karhan*, lit. forced) prostration is that of the Deniers who outwardly disdain God Almighty’s worship and their innate nature (*fiṭrah*) belies them (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*), they too being subject to the natural order of how things work in life

and their shades early and late in the day⁽⁴⁸⁾⁽⁴⁹⁾. ﴿16﴾ Say 'Muhammad':

وَوَلَّوْهُمْ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ ﴿١٦﴾ قُلْ

(cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 8: 49) and especially at times of hardship (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*). At times like these, they turn to God Almighty, to Whom belongs the 'Call of Truth': "And whenever affliction befalls you at sea, forgotten are those whom you would call upon, save for Him. Then when He has delivered you 'safely' to land, you turn away; man is ever ungrateful!" (17: 67).

Ibn 'Uthaymīn further makes a distinction between two types of prostration: *sujūd shar'iyy* (doctrinal prostration, i.e. prescribed by law) and *sujūd qadariyy*, i.e. that which is subjected to Divine Power. 'Unwilling prostration' falls squarely within this second category (*Sharḥ Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, 5: 442): "Would they seek other than the Religion of Allah while to Him devoutly submitted whoever is on Earth and the Heavens willingly and unwillingly—and to Him they shall return?" (3: 83).

- 48 This reflects the elongation and contraction of the shadows of concrete objects as the sun moves along its course during the different times of the day; a reflection which mimics that of standing up and prostrating. Though some people do not prostrate themselves willingly to God Almighty, being disdainful or busy prostrating to their false idols, their very own shadows bear constant witness to His rightfulness to being worshipped in spite of them (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr: "Have they not considered how the shadows of everything Allah has created incline to the right and the left 'as the sun moves', prostrating to Allah in a state of abject humility? * And to Allah prostrates whatever is in the Heavens and whatever is on Earth of moving creatures, and the angels 'as well'; they do not wax arrogant!" (16: 48-49).
- 49 Given this *sajdah* sign, it is very significant to note that one is to, only all too 'willingly', prostrate oneself to God Almighty, which is the embodiment of one's humbleness and devotion. Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: "When the Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite the Qur'an, and come upon a sura in which there is prostration, he would prostrate and we would prostrate with him; some among us would not 'even' find a place for his forehead" (Muslim: 575); 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to say when prostrating while reading the Qur'an at night: "My face has prostrated to He Who created it and slit in it its hearing and sight with His Ability and Power (*sajada wajhī li-lladhī khalaqahu wa shaqqa fīhi sam'ahu wa baṣarahu bi-hawlihi wa quwatihi*)" (al-Tirmidhī: 580). In another hadith (al-Tirmidhī: 3424), the supplication said during such a prostration is: "O Allah, record for me this one as a reward, eliminate me with it a sin of mine, make it a deposit for me with You and accept it from me as You have accepted it from Your servant, Dāwūd (*Allāhumma ktub lī bihā 'indaka ajran, wa da' annī bihā wizran, wa j'alhā lī 'indaka dhukhran, wa taqabbalhā minnī kamā taqabbaltahā min 'abdika Dāwūd*)".

“Who is the Lord of the Heavens and Earth?” Say: “Allah!”⁽⁵⁰⁾ Say: “Do you then take for yourselves, besides Him, allies who neither possess benefit for themselves nor are they able of warding off harm!⁽⁵¹⁾” Say: “Are the blind and the seeing persons alike⁽⁵²⁾; or darkness and light?⁽⁵³⁾”⁽⁵⁴⁾ Or do they set up Associates for Allah who had created the like of His creation and then the creation confused them ‘which is whose’! Say: “‘Allah’ is the Creator of everything; He is the One, the Overpowering!”

مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ اللَّهُ قُلْ
 أَفَاتَّخَذْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ
 لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى
 وَالْبَصِيرُ أَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمَاتُ وَالنُّورُ أَمْ جَعَلُوا
 لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ خَلَقُوا خَلْقَهُ فَتَشَبَّهُ الْخَلْقَ عَلَيْهِمْ قُلْ
 اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهْدُ ﴿٥٠﴾

- 50 Amidst all these evidences against them, here is most clearly where the Qurayshite idolaters’ misconceptions about ‘Allah’ is set aright.
- 51 “They worship besides Allah that which neither harms nor benefits them and say: “These are our intercessors with Allah!” Say ‘Muhammad’: “Are you informing Allah of that which He knows not neither in the Heavens nor in Earth? Glorified and exalted is He above all they Associate ‘with Him’!” (10: 18).
- 52 Those who are being contrasted here are the Deniers who are ‘blind’ to the Truth and the Believers who can see it plainly for what it is (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 53 The expression *al-zulumāt wa al-nūr* (lit. darknesses and light) is quite recurrent throughout the Qur’an. ‘Darkness’ is invariably always found in the plural form (*zulumāt*) whilst ‘light’ is conversely always in the singular (*al-nūr*). Here they could mean both tangible and abstract darkness and light; ignorance, Association and sin as opposed to knowledge, Belief and obedience (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 54 There is no excuse for their Association to be found anywhere (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr). Their so-called ‘gods’ could not answer their prayers or do them good or harm, let alone perform such a great act as that of creation; utter darkness indeed is what they languish in: “O mankind! A parable is set forth, so hearken to it! Truly those upon whom you call apart from Allah will never create a fly, even if they gathered together to do so. And if the fly should rob them of aught, they could not rescue it from it; feeble are the seeker and the sought” (22: 73).

﴿17﴾ ⁽⁵⁵⁾He sends water down from the sky and valleys flow according to their scope⁽⁵⁶⁾, and the flood carries floating scum⁽⁵⁷⁾; and scum like so is of what they stoke up fire on seeking ornaments and utensils⁽⁵⁸⁾. Thus Allah illustrates ‘the example of Truth and falsehood; as for the scum, it goes disposed of but as for what benefits people, it settles into the ground—thus Allah illustrates examples. ﴿18﴾ For those who responded to their Lord is the best ‘reward’⁽⁵⁹⁾. But those who did not respond to Him, if they had in their possession all that the Earth holds and double the measure, they would surely ‘seek

أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا
فَأَحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَابِيًا وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ
فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَاءَ حِلْيَةٍ أَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِثْلَهُ
كَذَلِكَ يَصْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْحَقُّ وَالْبَاطِلُ فَاَمَّا الزَّبَدُ
فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ
فِي الْأَرْضِ كَذَلِكَ يَصْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ ﴿١٧﴾
لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا
لَهُ لَو أَنَّ لَهُم مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ

- 55 Here is where ‘wheat is separated from the chaff’, figuratively. Truth being of ‘real substance’ and use runs deep and stays put but falsehood, being superficial and at surface level, no sooner bubbles away and it is gone!
- 56 The example of the knowledge and guidance that God Almighty sent down to the hearts of people is that of water which pours down from the sky. The hearts that carry these are like valleys; some are wide and great while others are narrow and small (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 57 *Zabad* (also called *ghuthā’* and *raghwah*, cf. al-Shawkānī) is the froth/scum that floats on the surface of flooding water. The example given here is that of Truth and falsehood. Truth is the water that stays put and people benefit from it, whereas falsehood is the dispensable scum, jetsam, which soon dissolves and disappears (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Wajīz).
- 58 That is, the different minerals (gold, silver, copper, iron, etc.) that people set fire on to be able to form it into different ornaments and utensils. This process results in the surface removal of impurities (the *zabad*, scum of slag) in these minerals which are then discarded leaving only the ‘pure’ substance (cf. al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī).
- 59 *al-Ḥusnā* (lit. the best ‘reward’) is good reward in this life and Paradise in the Hereafter (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “For those who do the best ‘of deeds’ is the best ‘reward’ and more” (10: 26).

to 'ransom themselves 'from the Fire' with it⁽⁶⁰⁾; those for whom is the worst 'of calling to' account⁽⁶¹⁾, their resort is Hellfire—ghastly indeed is this bed!⁽⁶²⁾

﴿19﴾ ⁽⁶³⁾Is the one who knows that what has been sent down to you 'Muhammad' from your Lord is the Truth like he who is blind; only people of sound reason ponder 'this'. ﴿20﴾ ⁽⁶⁴⁾Those who fulfill 'their obligations to' Allah's commitment nor do they renege on the pledge⁽⁶⁵⁾;

لَا تَقْتَدُوا بِهِ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْحِسَابِ
وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَيَسَّ الْمِهَادُ ﴿١٨﴾

﴿١٩﴾ أَفَمَن يَعْلَمُ أَنَّمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ الْحَقُّ كَمَنْ هُوَ
أَعْمَىٰ ۚ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يُوَفُّونَ
بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَنْقُضُونَ الْعِمَّةَ ﴿٢٠﴾

- 60 "Those who Deny and die as Deniers, 'as much as' Earth's fill of gold will not be accepted from any of them, even if he were to ransom himself with it—for those is a painful Punishment and they will have no helpers" (3: 91).
- 61 *Sū' al-ḥisāb* is 'the worst of calling to account' on the Day of Judgement; wherein they will be held accountable for all their sins both major and minor, of which they will be forgiven none. Their good deeds will not be accepted from them and they will be asked about their minutest misdeeds (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "And the Book 'of deeds' will be laid 'open', and you will see the criminal in fear of what is 'recorded' in it. They will say: "Woe to us! What kind of Book is this that does not leave any sin, small or large, unaccounted for?" They will find whatever they did present 'before them'; your Lord will never wrong anyone" (18: 49).
- 62 "Say to the Deniers: "You shall be overpowered and herded to Hellfire—indeed it is the worst of beds!" (3: 12)
- 63 In this passage, the Believers, who opened up their eyes and 'responded to their Lord', and the Deniers, who remained blind and 'did not respond' to Him, are compared, contrasted and set apart so as to enumerate the reasons behind their fates (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Nazm al-Durar*).
- 64 The following detailed description of the conduct of both the faithful and the faithless is by way of providing observable evidences that sound human nature vouches for whereby the two parties are not equal (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 65 Believers are committed to honouring and upholding God's commands and steering away from what is forbidden. They are also committed to the pledges they have with fellow humans in all their transactions and being dutiful to what they are entrusted with (cf. al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).

﴿21﴾ those who join what Allah ordained to be joined⁶⁶, fear their Lord and are apprehensive of the worst 'of calling to' account; ﴿22﴾ those who endure patiently 'only' seeking their Lord's Face⁶⁷, keep up the Prayer, spend 'charitably' out of what We provided them with secretly and openly, ward off the evil with the good⁶⁸; those for whom is the 'desired' alternation of the Abode⁶⁹;

وَالَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَيَخَافُونَ سُوءَ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢١﴾
وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَبْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً وَيَدْرءُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عِزِّي الدَّارِ ﴿٢٢﴾

66 *Mā amara Allāhu bihi an yūsala* (lit. what Allah ordained to be joined) is of a general sense, applying to all ties and relationships that one is to be committed to (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr). It is also said to be specific in the sense that it only pertains to blood relationships (*silat al-arḥām*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

67 They are truly sincere and seek only God's Pleasure, aiming for nothing but to enter Paradise to actually see God's Most Beautiful Face, which is the greatest Bounty ever (cf. al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

68 In one sense, this general expression means that the Believers do good deeds in the wake of their bad ones so that the earlier are overruled (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī, *al-Taḥfīr al-Muyassar*): "Indeed good deeds dissipate the bad ones" (11: 114).

Another strong sense of the meaning of this phrase is that they do not meet the harm done by them with an equal measure but are rather of a magnanimous forgiving nature (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah): "Good and evil cannot be equal. Repel 'evil' with what is best, then the one you are in a feud with will be like an intimate friend" (41: 34).

69 *'Uqbā al-dār* (lit. the alternation of the Abode, cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*) is interpreted to be Paradise (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī). On the other hand, in a general sense, Ibn Kathīr interprets it as good outcome both in this life and in the Hereafter. This is a critical expression given the context of revelation, with the Deniers being then in command; it is a promise, both a threat and a glad tidings, of the outcome of the then current state of affairs, which significantly is brought up five times (in Ayas: 22, 24, 35, 42) throughout the sura. There is an assuring note underpinning it. It both says that the turn of fortune will eventually be for the best for Believers and the worst for their tormentors: "Never are equal the Companions of the Fire and the Companions of Paradise; the Companions of Paradise are the winners!" (59: 20).

﴿23﴾ Gardens of Eternity⁽⁷⁰⁾. They enter them – and whoever is righteous among their parents, spouses and posterity – and the angels enter upon them from every gate; ﴿24﴾ ‘greeting’ “Peace be upon you for enduring patiently; how excellent is the alternation of the Abode! ﴿25﴾ Whereas those who renege on ‘their obligation to’ Allah’s commitment after it has been set as binding, sever what Allah ordained to be joined, and sow corruption in the land; those for whom is Damnation and for them is the worst of Abodes.

جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ ﴿٢٣﴾ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُوا عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَاللَّهُ سَوَاءٌ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٢٥﴾

﴿26﴾ ⁽⁷¹⁾ Allah expands fortune for whoever He wills and He tightens;

اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ

- 70 *Jannāt 'Adn* (lit. Gardens of Eternal Residence) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “In the Gardens of Eternity, ‘there are’ two gardens their utensils and all that is there is made of silver; ‘and another’ two gardens their utensils and all that is there is made of gold. Nothing separates its dwellers from seeing their Lord except the Mantle of Loftiness on His Face” (al-Bukhārī: 4878, Muslim: 180): “Allah promised the Believers, male and female, Gardens under which rivers flow forever they abide therein and comely abodes in Gardens of Eternity, but a Pleasure from Allah is ‘ever’ greater; that is ‘truly’ the great triumph” (9: 72).
- 71 This is by way of answering the anticipated question as to why God Almighty would provide wealth and power for the Deniers given their defiance and wrongdoing (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). It is also a warning to them and those who are fooled by their obvious well-being: “Let not their wealth nor their sons amuse you; Allah wants nothing but to punish them with these in the worldly life and their souls to expire while they are ‘still’ Deniers” (9: 55); “And do not gaze longingly at what We have given some of them to enjoy, the finery of this present life: We test them through this, but the provision of your Lord is better and more lasting” (20: 131); “Do they reckon that, ‘on account of’ the wealth and the children that We have provided them, *that We hasten to ‘honour’ them ‘with’ all kinds of good? Nay! They are not aware” (23: 55-56).

‘yet’ they are pleased with the worldly life⁽⁷²⁾ whereas the worldly life, compared to the Hereafter, is but ‘a little’ enjoyment⁽⁷³⁾. ﴿27﴾ (74) And the Deniers say: “If only a Sign were sent down to him from his Lord!” Say: “Verily Allah misguides whoever He wills and guides to Him whoever returns ‘repentant’”⁽⁷⁵⁾.

وَفَرِحُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فِي
الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مَتَعٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا
أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ يُضِلُّ
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ أُنَابَ ﴿٢٧﴾

﴿28﴾ (76) Those who have Believed

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

- 72 Theirs is a pleasure full of conceit and smugness, so much so that they forget about the Reckoning of the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr): “Verily those who hope not in meeting Us, contented themselves with the worldly life and took comfort in it; the ‘very’ ones who are ‘deliberately’ heedless of Our Signs. *These, their resort is the Fire for what they used to earn” (10: 7-8).
- 73 “Are you satisfied with the worldly life rather than the Hereafter? How ‘very’ little is the enjoyment of the worldly life ‘compared to that’ in the Hereafter” (9: 38).
al-Mustawrid Ibn Shaddād (☪) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “By Allah, this worldly life by comparison to the Hereafter is like a person who dips this finger (pointing his index finger) in the sea; see how much he draws from it!” (Muslim: 2858).
- 74 Their deceptively comfortable lives, with which they are pleased, lead them to airily demand miracles, truly being heedless of the Hereafter.
- 75 “But He only misguides the Transgressors; *those who break the covenant of Allah after it has been set as binding, sever what Allah ordained to be joined, and sow corruption in the land. These are, indeed, the Losers. *How could you Deny Allah, while you were dead and He made you alive; He then will take your lives, then bring you to life again, and after that you will be returned to Him again? *He is the One Who created for you all that there is in Earth, then made for the sky and formed it into seven skies. He has knowledge of everything” (2: 26-29); “Allah designates for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back ‘to Him in repentance’” (42: 13).
- 76 This further sheds light on the ones whom God guides to Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī). These are those who, unlike the boisterous Deniers, who are bereft of sweet Faith, do not ask for gratuitous miracles but who are ever close to Believing and are satisfied with and comforted by God’s mention (*dhikr Allāh*), being the Qur’an itself, the most glaring miracle of all (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). *Dhikr Allāh* (lit. mentioning Allah/remembrance),

and their hearts find comfort in mentioning Allah; nay, but in mentioning Allah do hearts find comfort! ﴿29﴾ Those who have Believed and did good deeds, the Comely⁽⁷⁷⁾ is for them and the best of returns. ﴿30﴾ (78) Thus We sent you 'Muhammad' in a nation before whom many nations have

وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ
الْقُلُوبُ ﴿٢٩﴾ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
طُوبَى لَهُمْ وَحَسُنَ مَا فِي كِتَابِكَ ﴿٣٠﴾ كَذَلِكَ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ
فِي أُمَّةٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا أُمَمٌ

a lofty act of worship indeed, is of a general sense, but the most prominent of it is the Qur'an itself (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

al-Sa'dī further explains: "When hearts know its 'the Qur'an's' meanings and rulings, they find contentment in them; these point to the Truth which is supported by evidence and proof. Thus hearts find comfort in it because hearts are only content with knowledge and certainty. This is guaranteed in the Book of Allah to the highest and most perfect degrees. Other books besides it, 'especially those' which are not based on it, are not endowed with this characteristic. Hearts will always be in a doubtful state because of antithetical proofs and contradictory rulings".

- 77 *Ṭūbā* (translated here as 'the Comely') derives from *ṭayyib* which is the opposite of *khābiṭh*, i.e., foul, evil, bad, wicked (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Ṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). It has both general and specific senses. In the general sense, *ṭūbā* means a good and comely life or goodness and what the heart desires. In the specific sense, it denotes a specific tree in Paradise called *Ṭūbā* (cf. Muslim: 2828) and/or all that is good and comely in Paradise (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 78 The Message was not totally unheard of, given the many nations that had similar Messages before the Makkans, about whom they were very much aware, so they needed not to find it a cause for wonder and demand their Messenger (ﷺ) produce so-called miracles in testimony to its Truth. In fact, they only needed to heed the fate of those who came before them (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr): "Just like the ones before them: "They were mightier in strength than you are and greater in wealth and children. They enjoyed their 'worldly' portion and you enjoyed your portion as much as the ones before you enjoyed their portion, and you indulged as much as they indulged; these their deeds were nullified in this worldly life and in the Hereafter—these are 'the real' losers. *Had not the news of those who came before them reached them: the people of Nūh, 'the tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd, the people of Ibrāhīm, the companions of Midian and the overturned; their Messengers came to them with clear evidences! Allah would not have wronged them but they were bent on wronging themselves" (9: 69-70).

come to pass, so that you may recite to them what We revealed to you⁽⁷⁹⁾ but they Deny the Most Gracious⁽⁸⁰⁾. ⁽⁸¹⁾Say: “He is my Lord, there is no god but Him; in Him I put my trust and to Him repentant return!”

لَتَسْتَلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ
يَكْفُرُونَ بِالرَّحْمَنِ قُلْ هُوَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ
تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ مَتَابِ ﴿٣٠﴾

﴿31﴾ ⁽⁸²⁾Had there ‘ever’ been a Recitation ‘Qur’ān’⁽⁸³⁾ with which

وَلَوْ أَنَّ قُرْءَانًا

79 The Qur’an, being the greatest of miracles, which they very well realized, could not have been made up by the Messenger (ﷺ), but instead could only have been a revelation from God Almighty so that they may be guided. The Messenger (ﷺ) was a deliverer of the Message and was not meant to respond to their demands for miracles so they may Believe (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

This is further explained in the next passage where the very weighty nature of the Qur’an, and the nature of the derisive response with which it has been received come into focus.

80 This is the reality of their entrenched stance no matter what: “When it is said to them: “Prostrate yourselves to the Most Gracious”, they would say: “What is ‘the Most Gracious’!”” (25: 60).

The choice of the Divine Name *al-Raḥmān* (the Most Gracious/Merciful) is meant to further underline the sheerness of their straying; because the Most Gracious/Merciful is the One Who has ever been so magnanimous to them and especially sent to them His most merciful Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. 21: 107) with the Qur’an as a mercy, which they shun and rebuff (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

81 In the face of unyielding Denial, the Messenger (ﷺ) is to declare his stance in a very clear manner (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, al-Sa’ dī), which is: God is the One Who is well-deserving of my reliance on Him; the One you Deny, I hereby declare that I Believe in Him and approve of His Godship and Lordship, He is the Lord Who created me and made me thrive by His Grace, I shall not Deny Him as you did. There is none worthy of worship except Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). It is also a stand affirming declaration.

82 This is how significant the Qur’an (*recitation*) of which they are heedless is. No other miracle can match it, or even come close to it! (cf. Abū Ḥayyān)

83 That is, amongst all of the Divine Books that were ever sent down that was more than a mere source of guidance and through which tangible miracles could have been realized, it would truly have been this Qur’an (*recitation*). How then could they, when there has never been a Divine Book like it, ask for other Signs! (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’ dī).

mountains are removed⁽⁸⁴⁾ or the ground rent asunder or the dead talked to 'it would have surely been this Qur'an!'; nay, but all affairs pertain to Allah⁽⁸⁵⁾. ⁽⁸⁶⁾Did not the Believers give up hope 'yet' that had Allah wished, He would have guided all people! ⁽⁸⁷⁾For what they made, the Deniers would all the time be hit with a clamorous clout⁽⁸⁸⁾, or would it strike nearby their home⁽⁸⁹⁾, until

سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ أَوْ قُطِعَتْ بِهِ الْأَرْضُ
 أَوْ كَلِمَةٍ بِهِ الْمَوْتِيُّ بَلَّ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ جَمِيعًا أَفَلَمْ
 يَأْتِسِبِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْ لَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَهْدَى
 النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَا يَزَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا تُصِيبُهُمْ
 بِمَا صَنَعُوا قَارِعَةٌ أَوْ تَحُلُّ قَرِيبًا مِّنْ دَارِهِمْ

84 "If We had sent this *Quran* down to a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and split apart in its awe of Allah!" (59: 21).

85 No miracle can be realized without God Almighty willing it so (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Had We sent down the angels 'successively' to them, made the dead talk to them and congregated everything right before them, they would not have Believed unless that Allah wills it so; but indeed most of them are ignorant" (6: 111).

86 This shows the agony the Believers, and the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) at their head, felt that their people would not see Truth for what it is and subscribe to it.

87 This is to draw attention and open eyes that the hardships and disasters they are constantly inflicted with, are from God Almighty to forewarn them against their intransigence and seeking to hasten Divine Punishment (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

88 *Qāri'ah*, calamitous clout or sudden disaster, derives from the root *q-r-* which denotes hitting something with something (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*); as knocking on the door (*qar' al-bāb*) produces a sudden disturbing sound, *qar'* (hitting, knocking) is used figuratively to denote suddenness and surprise (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). It is also called so because it 'knocks down' people (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*).

This tacitly brings to mind the hard side of the cloud (thunder claps which are loud, sudden and mighty, as opposed to the good side, i.e. rain) that thunder (after which this sura is titled) heralds.

89 That such a sudden, mighty disaster hitting close by is reason enough for people to feel startled that they had such a narrow escape and should take heed (cf. al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

Allah's appointment⁽⁹⁰⁾ comes—
 verily Allah does not break
 His appointment. ⁽³²⁾ ⁽⁹¹⁾Indeed,
 Messengers before you
 'Muhammad' were ridiculed, and
 I allowed the Deniers time then I
 took them⁽⁹²⁾; how was then My
 Punishment!⁽⁹³⁾

حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِعَادَ ﴿٣١﴾
 وَلَقَدْ أَسْتَهْزِئُ بِرُسُلٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَمَلَيْتُ
 لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ أَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ
 عِقَابِ ﴿٣٢﴾

⁽³³⁾ ⁽⁹⁴⁾Is He Who is Overseeing
 every soul for what it earned⁽⁹⁵⁾
 'be like who is not!'; yet
 they set up Associates with
 Allah! Say 'Muhammad':
 "Give them 'attributive' names!⁽⁹⁶⁾

أَفَمَن هُوَ قَائِمٌ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ
 وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ قُلُوبًا سَمُوهُمْ

- 90 Their lives would thus be restless all the time for their Denying until the coming of God's appointed time for what they are being promised and forewarned against. This could be: their demise or the coming of the Hour upon which they will taste severe Punishment (cf. al-Zamaksharī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shawkānī); the fall of Makkah into the hands of the Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Qāsimī); or their defeat and herding into Hellfire (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr): "Say to the Deniers: "You shall be overpowered and herded to Hellfire—indeed it is the worst of beds"" (3: 12).
- 91 This is a comforting note to the Messenger (ﷺ) in the face of his detractors' onslaught (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 92 Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Indeed Allah allows the wrongful time, but when He seizes them, He will not let them off". Then he (ﷺ) recited: "Such is the seizing of your Lord when He seizes the towns while they are doing wrong. Surely His seizing is painful, severe!" (11: 102). (al-Bukhārī: 4686, Muslim: 2583)
- 93 "Have they not walked the land and beheld how those who came before them met their end? They were stronger than them and had more impressions on the land, yet Allah destroyed them for their sins; they had no shield against Allah. *That because their Messengers 'repeatedly' came to them with clear evidences and still they Denied. Allah destroyed them—He is truly Powerful, severe in Punishment" (40: 21-22).
- 94 This carries on debunking the Deniers' tenuous narrative (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 95 God Almighty (ﷻ) Oversees all the affairs of His servants; He Knows the sustenance and the deeds they earn, and will reward or hold them accountable for them good and bad (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 96 Here the Deniers are put in a tight spot. They are demanded to give identity

Or are you 'Deniers' informing Him of that about which He does not Know in the land?⁽⁹⁷⁾ Or 'are you claiming this' out of apparent discourse?⁽⁹⁸⁾ Nay, but the stratagems of those who Denied were prettified for them so they were turned away from the Path; whoever Allah sends astray, there is no guide for him! ⁽³⁴⁾ Theirs is a punishment in the worldly life; but verily the Punishment of the Hereafter is more stringent—there will be none to shield them from Allah.

أَمْ تُتَّبِعُونَهُمْ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ بَيِّنُوا
مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بَلْ زَيْنٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَكْرَهُمْ
وَصُدُّوا عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ
مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَعَذَابُ
الْآخِرَةِ أَشَقُّ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَاقٍ ﴿٣٤﴾

revealing attributive names to the idols they worshipped and claimed were Associates with 'Allah'. In other words, they are to give them labels which betray their intrinsic qualities, like the Most Beautiful Names of God Almighty: the Creator, the Sustainer, the Life Giving, Life Taker, the All-Hearing, All-Seeing, the Self-Sustaining, etc. Knowing that their so-called 'gods' are no more than lifeless inanimate objects, which possess no such qualities, or any qualities besides what their superstitions make them believe, they would not rise to this most straightforward and outwardly simple challenge. Had they had sound reason, they would have realized how much in the wrong they were (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr). This is how humans set up their own 'gods'; they worship their own illusions (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i' al-Fawā'id*, 1: 19): "They are none but mere names you have named, you and your fathers for whom Allah has sent down no authority; they follow naught but conjecture and that which their souls desire, though guidance has surely come to them from their Lord" (53: 23).

- 97 That is, that God Almighty, the All-Knowing, has Associates about whom He has no knowledge! (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 98 *Zāhirun min al-qawl* (apparent discourse) is speech which has no substance but is rather based on conjecture and falsification (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 15: 195, al-Sa'dī). This was exactly the reality of their claims.

﴿35﴾ (99) The example⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ of the Paradise that the Mindful were promised, under which rivers flow; its fruits and its shades are everlasting⁽¹⁰¹⁾—that is the alternation ‘of the Abode’ of those who are Mindful, but the alternation ‘of the Abode’ of the Deniers is the Fire! ﴿36﴾ (102) Those to whom We had given the Book delight at what was sent to you ‘Muhammad’; and among the confederates⁽¹⁰³⁾ those who deny some of it. (104) Say ‘Muhammad’:

*مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كَالْمَاءِ دَابِّهُ وَظِلُّهَا تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَعُقْبَى الْكَافِرِينَ النَّارُ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَالَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ مَنْ يُكْفِرُ بَعْضَهُمْ بِقَلِيلٍ

- 99 This passage reflects on the then hardly bearable status quo to bolster the position of the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believing community around him, bearing messages which are both assuring and position confirming.
- 100 *Mathal* (lit. example) is taken to mean the ‘description’ by most exegetes in this instance (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 101 These are metonyms of everlasting abundance; water is imminent and ceaselessly flowing, and plantations are ever-fruitful and so thick that light does not pass through them (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*Extended shades, *poured water, *plenty of fruits; *never ceasing nor withheld!*” (56: 30-33).
- 102 This is yet another assuring, position confirming note. The people of the Book, whom were regarded with high esteem as learned in Arabia, provide the needed social evidence for the Truthfulness of the Message. The truly sincere among them will find the Qur’an so: “*That is because among them are ‘sincere’ priests and monks and that they do not disdain ‘the Truth’.*” *When they hear what was sent down to the Messenger, you will see their eyes swell with tears because of the Truth they knew. ‘Hence’ They say: “*Our Lord we Believe, so count us among the witnesses*”” (5: 82-83).
- 103 Exegetes hold different opinions as to who these *aḥzāb* (confederates/factions) exactly were, but they mostly agree that it refers to some of the unsympathetic among the people of the Book. These people find qualms with the portions of the Qur’an that do not conform with, or outrightly debunk some of their beliefs (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 104 This dictate, almost literally, duplicates Aya 30 above (“*He is my Lord, there is no god but Him; in Him I put my trust and to Him repentant return!*”)

“I was commanded to only worship Allah, Associating none with Him; to Him I call and to Him is my return!” ﴿37﴾⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Thus We have sent it ‘the Qur’an’ down as an Arabic Criterion; ⁽¹⁰⁶⁾should you follow their whims after the knowledge that has come to you, there will not be an ally or shield for you from Allah.

إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا أُشْرِكَ بِهِ إِلَهًا
أَدْعُو وَإِلَيْهِ مَتَابٌ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ حُكْمًا
عَرَبِيًّا وَلَئِن تُبَتِّعْتَهُمْ بَعْدَ مَا جَاءَكَ
مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا وَاقٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

but the addressees are different. Whereas in the aya above the addressees are the pagan Associators, the ones addressed here are the People of the Book (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*). The same unalterable Message is being delivered to both parties irrespective of the differences between them. It further resonates with the pristine Message with which all Prophets came, of which the People of the Book were particularly aware: “Say ‘Muhammad’: “People of the Book, come to a common word between us and you, that we will not worship anything besides Allah; do not Associate anything with Him; do not take each other as Lords besides Allah. If they take to their heels, then say ‘Believers’: “Bear you witness that we are devoutly surrendered ‘to Him’ ”” (3: 64). This is the core Message that the Messenger is to deliver and live by, no matter the party whom he confronts (for a detailed discussion of this declaration cf. al-Rāzī).

- 105 As much as earlier Books were sent down in the languages of their immediate receptors, the Qur’an is Arabic, being the native tongue of its immediate community of reception (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Sa’dī*).

This indication implicates the Arabs who although it was sent in their own language to a Messenger of their own, to set aright their affairs, with its just rulings and moral dictates, and cause them to rise from the ashes, they, despite all the good that it brought them, demonstrated such poor reception of it (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

- 106 This is to shore up the position of the Messenger (ﷺ), and the Believing community, and to further affirm their clear-cut stance: “Neither the Jews nor the Christians will ever be pleased with you unless you follow their religion; say: “It is Guidance from Allah that is the ‘true’ Guidance”. If you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, there will not be a guardian or protector for you from Allah” (2: 120): “Surely if you follow their whims after the knowledge that came to you, indeed then you are one of the wrongdoers” (2: 145).

﴿38﴾ ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾Indeed We have sent Messengers before you 'Muhammad' and We made for them wives and posterity. No Messenger can bring a Sign except with Allah's permission⁽¹⁰⁸⁾; for every term there is a 'set' record⁽¹⁰⁹⁾. ﴿39﴾ Allah erases what He wills and stipulates⁽¹¹⁰⁾ and with Him is the Mother of the Book⁽¹¹¹⁾.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ
 أَزْوَاجًا وَذُرِّيَّةً وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ
 إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ يَمْحُوهُ
 اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُنَبِّئُ عِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ ﴿٣٩﴾

107 Although the Deniers might have fancied that they were in on some weak point through which they could get to the Messenger (ﷺ), i.e. being a human who fulfills his needs through marriage and children and not 'angelic', this is not to be heeded as there had been many Noble Messengers before, not the least of whom was the Patriarch of the Prophets, Abraham, from whom the Qurayshites were descended, who had wives and children. Moreover, their requests are not to be answered, just as earlier Prophets did not succumb to the demands of their Denying peoples (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Ashūr).

This fact also draws attention to the reality that it was only by God Almighty's command that they were able to show their people miracles, they being mere humans who were not greatly different from other humans in respect of showing weakness.

108 Being mere humans who are only tasked with delivering the Message; such matters are in God Almighty's Hands and He allows miracles to happen whenever He wishes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

109 Nothing can be hastened or delayed, as every time of happening is recorded with God Almighty (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).

110 Although everything is set in a record with God Almighty, He decrees whatever He wishes and the angels erase and write down in the scrolls in their hands whatever He dictates to them (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 14: 492, Ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Sharḥ al-Arba'in al-Nawawīyyah*, p. 66).

111 That is, the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī); in which there is no deletion or addition (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 14: 492, Ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Sharḥ al-Arba'in al-Nawawīyyah*, p. 66).

﴿40﴾ (112) 'No matter' Should We show you 'Muhammad' some of what We promise them or bring your life to termination 'afore', you are only tasked with delivering 'the Message' and on Us is the reckoning!

وَإِنَّمَا نُرِيَّتَكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ
أَوْ تَوَفَّيْنَاكَ فَأَلَمَّا عَلَيَّكَ الْبَلْغُ وَعَلَيْنَا
الْحِسَابُ ﴿٤٠﴾

﴿41﴾ (113) Could they not see that We come to the land and dwindle it from its sides⁽¹¹⁴⁾; Allah decrees and there is none to repeal His decree; He is 'indeed' swift in reckoning⁽¹¹⁵⁾. ﴿42﴾ Those before them indeed plotted,

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ
أَطْرَافِهَا وَأَلَّهْ يَحْكُمُ لَمْ يَعْقِبْ لِحُكْمِهِ
وَهُوَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٤١﴾ وَقَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ

- 112 This is both a masked threat to the Deniers that they need not be so sure about the promise not coming true, given the fact stated in the previous aya, and, on the other hand, the Messenger, knowing this, needs not to worry himself with anything except delivering the Message (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "Remind 'Muhammad'; you are only a reminder, *you are not overpowering over them. *But whoever turns away and Denies, * then Allah inflicts upon him the major Punishment. * Surely to Us is their return, *then surely with Us is their holding to account" (88: 21-26).
- 113 This passage is a Divine comment on what this sura has unravelled so far whereby the Deniers are forewarned, given their heedlessness and barefaced defiance, and the Messenger is assured (ﷻ) that what is being promised is not by any means far-fetched, as precedence for their example can be found in the case of earlier Denying nations.
- 114 Exegetes have differed on what this 'land' (*ard*) exactly refers to. Those who opined that this sura came down in Madinah took this aya to mean the ground that the Deniers lost in battle to the Believers after the establishment of their state (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Shawkānī). Others took it to be of a general sense. It, thus, means any land that God Almighty usurps from the Deniers through destruction and laying to waste (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīfī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*): "We certainly destroyed the town around you, having varied the Signs so perhaps they would return 'to the Right Path'!" (46: 27)
- 115 This implies that the evil that they seek to hasten upon themselves only shows how unbelieving they were of the Message (Aya 6 above); whatever draws near is near (cf. al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

but all planning is Allah's own⁽¹¹⁶⁾; ⁽¹¹⁷⁾He knows what every soul earns and the Deniers shall know for whom will be 'desired' alternation of the Abode. ⁴³ ⁽¹¹⁸⁾The Deniers say: "You 'Muhammad' have not been sent!" Say: "Sufficient is Allah as Witness between me and you, and he who has knowledge of the Book!⁽¹¹⁹⁾"

فَلِلَّهِ الْمَكْرُ جَمِيعًا يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ۗ وَسِعَعِلْمُ الرَّكُوفِ لِمَنْ عَقِبَى الدَّارِ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا قُلْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ ﴿٤٣﴾



- 116 For more on the significance on quoting earlier nations as proof, see the note on Aya 6 above: "They plotted some plot and We planned some plan, while they perceived not. *Behold then what the consequence of their plot was; We 'utterly' destroyed them and their people all together. *Those are their homes, deserted, for their persistent injustice; in these are 'indeed' Signs for those who realize" (27: 50-52).
- 117 God, Whom they disregard and set up Associates with (cf. Aya 33 above), will come to pass His Judgement among people and then the Deniers will know who was in the right all along (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Wajīz, al-Baghawī).
- 118 This, very final aya, nicely wraps up the argument underpinning the sura: the Deniers do not mince their words about how they perceive the Message; the Believers need not be much worried about this or be unduly unsettled by it; God is enough as Witness to its Truthfulness as are those who possess real knowledge, who can readily realize this fact!
- 119 These are especially the Godly among the people of the Book (as in Aya 36 above), who, unlike the ignorant Arabian idolaters, are endowed with knowledge (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Should you 'Muhammad' hence be in doubt about what We sent down to you, ask then those who have been reading the Book before you; verily the Truth has come to you from your Lord, so be not one of the hesitant" (10: 94).

سُورَةُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

Ibrāhīm
(Abraham)



Ibrāhīm (Abraham)

Title: thus titled after Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (ﷺ) (cf. al-Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣā'ir Dhawī al-Tamyīz*, 1: 268, al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, Ibn 'Āshūr), the forefather of the most ardent enemies of the Call to Monotheism, the Qurayshites, a lineage which provided them with the most prestigious status throughout Arabia. This was a great favour which they took for granted. Both his name and what he did in Makkah as he settled his family there is a reminder of the pristine creed of Abraham (ﷺ), known as *ḥanīfiyyah*, of which some remnants still lingered before the advent of Islam, and which called for the unadulterated worship of God Almighty Alone (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*), and to which the Message of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) relates and on which it builds.

Theme: the sura brings up themes to the same effect: affirming the status of the Qur'an as the surest way to God Almighty's Path; stories of the Messengers who aimed for delivering their people from darkness into light and how they were denied and their people were punished, thus giving the necessary historical example to comfort the Prophet and to warn the Deniers (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*); showing through graphic imagery and real-time dialogue the dreadful fate of the Deniers in the Hereafter so as to make them reconsider their position and to send a reassuring note that the tide will eventually turn in favour of those who responded to their Lord.

Key: it is agreed among exegetes that this is a Makkan sura (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Kathīr); probably revealed during the ninth year of the Prophetic mission (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). The sura delivers two messages with regards to the stalemate that held between the Messenger (ﷺ) and those who fiercely opposed the Message and were entrenched in their opposition, bent on diverting people away from it through tactics of fear, oppression and persecution. The first is to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ), who was naturally distressed by the maltreatment, to forbear and be prepared for the long run and to rest assured in the realization that God Almighty is not unaware of the aggressors' cunning stratagems and for which He will surely hold them to account; He will not break His Promise to His Messenger. The second is a stark warning to the Qurayshites, over whom God's bounties are innumerable, that they should heed the Message in order not to meet the inauspicious end of earlier nations in this life and the dreaded end so realistically portrayed in the Hereafter.

People should not easily forget about God's multitudinous bounties and blessings on them, nor should they take them for granted. They ought to always remember the blessed Days of God, adhere to the Good Word and be ever grateful to Him in order to sustain God's favours on themselves.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿1﴾ *Alif, Lām, Rā*⁽¹⁾; 'this is' a Book 'that' We sent down to you 'Muhammad', so that you 'may' deliver people from 'compounded' darkness into light⁽²⁾, with the permission of their Lord⁽³⁾, to the Path⁽⁴⁾ of the All-Prevailing, the All-Praiseworthy; ﴿2﴾ Allah to Whom belongs whatever is in the Heavens and whatever is in Earth⁽⁵⁾; woe betides the Deniers

الرَّكَتِبُ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ
مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى
صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿١﴾ اللَّهُ الَّذِي
لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَوَيْلٌ
لِّلْكَافِرِينَ

- 1 The sura opens with these three disjointed letters so as to highlight the Qur'an's inimitable nature and which are meant as a challenge to those who argue with the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers regarding the Truthfulness of the Message (c.f. 2: 1).
- 2 The expression *al-zulumāt wa al-nūr* (lit. darknesses and light) is quite recurrent throughout the Qur'an. 'Darkness' is invariably always found in the plural form (*zulumāt*) whilst 'light' (*al-nūr*) is conversely always in the singular. They could mean both tangible and abstract darkness and light; ignorance, Association and sin as opposed to knowledge, Belief and obedience (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).
Indeed the Straight Path of God to which the Messenger (ﷺ) was calling is glaring 'light' but they rejected the call, turned against it and stuck to the 'darknesses' they were used to: "*Indeed there has come to you a Light from Allah and a clarifying Book; *by it Allah guides those who follow His Pleasure to the path of peace and delivers them from utter darkness into light with His permission; He guides them to a Straight Path*" (5: 15-16).
- 3 "*Allah is the Ally of the Believers; He delivers them from darkness into light. 'But' Those who Deny, the allies of whom are the false idols; they take them out of light into darkness*" (2: 257); "*It is not for a soul to Believe except by Allah's permission; and He places blight over those who mind not*" (10: 100).
- 4 This 'Path' is the 'light' that leads to Almighty God, the All-Prevailing, Who is not to be resisted or fought against, the All-Praiseworthy, Whose laws and decrees are praiseworthy, free from error (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī). The one who follows this Path will both be safe, by God's protection, and on to a desirable end (cf. al-Baiḍāwī, Abū al-Su'ūd).
- 5 This is the God, the 'Allah' they claimed they worshipped (cf. 39:3), to Whom they are being called; the Real Sovereign of the Heavens and Earth, but they mind not (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'adī).

from a severe Punishment that awaits! (3) (6) Those who favour the worldly life over the Hereafter, and divert away⁽⁷⁾ from the Path of Allah and wish it be crooked; those are in error, far-off!

مِنْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ ۝ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَحِبُّونَ
الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَيَصُدُّونَ
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ
فِي ضَلٰلٍ بَعِيْدٍ ۝

(4) (8) Never had We sent a Messenger except in the tongue of his people⁽⁹⁾ so that he may clarify 'the Message' to them. Allah then misguides whom He wills and guides whom He wills—He is the All-Prevailing, All-Wise⁽¹⁰⁾.

وَمَا اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ اِلَّا بِلِسٰنٍ قَوْمِهٖ
لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ فَيُضِلَّ اللّٰهُ مَنْ يَشَآءُ
وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَآءُ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ۝

- 6 'Severe Punishment', which is so swiftly mentioned here at the beginning of the sura and is so graphically described throughout this sura, is what the then severely aggressed against Believers were expecting to befall their persecutor, the *zālimūn* (unjust).
- 7 They not only used to 'turn away' (*yaṣuddūna*) from the Truth themselves but also did their best to divert other people from it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). They would always cast the religion of God in bad light, showing it as defective and imperfect (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): "And when Our Signs are recited to them as clear proofs, they say: "This is naught but a man who desires to turn you from that which your fathers used to worship". And they say: "This is naught but a fabricated perversion". And those who Denied say to the Truth when it comes to them: "This is naught but manifest sorcery"" (34: 43).
- 8 The passage and the next two, up to Aya 18, provide the necessary precedent to drive home both main messages of the sura; to hearten the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers and warn the enemies of the Message.
- 9 Ibn 'Ashūr opines that this could be in reply to the Deniers who out of sheer intransigence demanded that the Qur'an be sent down in a foreign tongue (cf. 41: 44; al-Ṭabarī); they thought that Divine Writs had a special language like Syriac or Hebrew and so they had superstitious beliefs in them. But Messengers are only sent to clarify to their people not to confound them: "Had We made it a Qur'an in a foreign tongue, they would say: "If only its Signs were expounded. What! A foreign tongue and an Arab 'Messenger'?" Say: "It is a guidance and a healing for those who Believe, and those who do not Believe have a deafness in their ears, and it is a blindness for them" (41: 44).
- 10 In His Infinite Wisdom, Almighty God guides and misguides only those who are deserving of either one of the two (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr,

﴿5﴾ (11) ‘Thus’ We had indeed sent Mūsā ‘Moses’ with Our Signs⁽¹²⁾ that ‘you shall’: “Deliver your people from darkness into light and remind them of the Days of Allah!⁽¹³⁾” Indeed in that are signs for whoever is vastly patient, gratefully thankful!⁽¹⁴⁾

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا أَنْ أَخْرِجْ قَوْمَكَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَذَكِّرْهُمْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿٥﴾

al-Sa‘dī: “Say: “Verily Allah misguides whoever He wills and guides to Him whoever returns ‘repentant’” (13: 27); “But He only misguides the Transgressors; *those who break the covenant of Allah after it has been set as binding, sever what Allah ordained to be joined, and sow corruption in the land. These are, indeed, the Losers” (2: 26-27).

- 11 The Messages of Prophets Moses (ﷺ) and Muhammad (ﷺ) are inherently alike; they both came with God’s Signs to deliver people from darkness into light (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). A notable difference though is that Prophet Muhammad’s Message is global, to deliver ‘people’ (*al-nās*) from darkness into light, while that of Prophet Moses was specific to his people (*qawmaka*).
- 12 Although exegetes are of different opinions as to what these ‘Signs’ (*āyāt*) refer to, whether the miracles of Moses or the Torah itself, Abū Ḥayyān, given the co-text and in provision of supportive evidence, sees that it means the Signs (verses) of the Torah which were sent in Hebrew, the tongue of his people, as much as the Signs (ayahs) of the Qur’an which came down in Arabic, the tongue of Prophet Muhammad’s people.
- 13 *Ayyām Allāh* (lit. the Days of Allah) are the days on which God Almighty showered them with favours, as well as the days of His Wrath and Punishment; so that they may heed and be grateful and/or be warned (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr; see also Muslim: 2380). These Days were well known to them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Mention’ *When Moses said to his people: “My people, remember Allah’s favour on you when He made amongst you Prophets and kings and He gave you that which He had not given any humans “besides you”*” (5: 20).
- 14 Such are times; they are either difficult or easy (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). A true Believer needs to be persistent in both circumstances, to be ever grateful for God’s favours and to always endure patiently in difficult times (cf. al-Rāzī). Ṣuhayb al-Rūmī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Wonderous is the affair of the Believer. His affair is all good and that is true only to a Believer. When a happy occurrence comes his way, he shows gratitude and that is better for him. And when a hurtful occurrence befalls him, he shows patience and that is better for him” (Muslim: 2999).

﴿6﴾ (15) As Mūsā said to his people: “Remember Allah’s favour on you, when He salvaged you from Pharaoh’s people as they subjected you to the worst of suffering; slaughtering your sons and keeping your womenfolk alive—in that indeed is a great trial from your Lord!” ﴿7﴾ (16) “Remember’ When your Lord declared: “Should you be thankful, I shall grant you more; ‘but’ should you deny, ‘then’ verily My Punishment is severe!” ﴿8﴾ And Mūsā said: “Should you, along with all those on Earth, Deny, then ‘know that’ Allah verily is Free of Need, All-Praiseworthy!”⁽¹⁷⁾

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ أَنْجَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ وَيَدْعُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكَ بَلَاءٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِن تَكْفُرُوا أَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا قَاتَ اللَّهُ لَعْنَتِي حَمِيدٌ ﴿٨﴾

﴿9﴾ (18) Had not the ‘notable’ news

الَّتِي آتَاكُمْ نَبَأُ

- 15 Moses (ﷺ) thus reminded them of that Day of God (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Sa’ dī).
- 16 This is a timely reminder of God Almighty’s declaration that gratitude for His favours will cause them to increase but ingratitude will cause an adverse effect, so that people may heed (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 17 Gratefulness or ingratitude are only of use or detriment to the person in question, but God Almighty is ever Free of Need from any of these (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 18 After the example of Moses (ﷺ) whose Message was similar to that of Prophet Muhammad’s (ﷺ), here are further examples of earlier nations which are drawn to warn against being ungrateful to God Almighty (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*): “Just like the ones before them: “They were mightier in strength than you are and greater in wealth and children. They enjoyed their ‘worldly’ portion and you enjoyed your portion as much as the ones before you enjoyed their portion, and you indulged as much as they indulged; these their deeds were nullified in this worldly life and in the Hereafter—these are ‘the real’ losers. *Had not the news of those who came before them reached them: the people of Nūh, ‘the tribes of’ ‘Ād and Thamūd, the people of Ibrāhīm, the companions of Midian and the overturned; their Messengers came to them with clear evidences! Allah would not have wronged them but they were bent on wronging themselves” (9: 69-70).

of those who came before you reached you 'people': the people of Nūḥ, 'the tribes of' ʿĀd and Thamūd, and those who came after them – none knows them except Allah⁽¹⁹⁾; their Messengers came to them with clear evidences but they returned their hands into their mouths⁽²⁰⁾ and said: “We 'absolutely' Deny what you have been sent with; we are verily in doubt about what you call us for, seriously unsettling!”^{﴿10﴾} Their Messengers said: “Is there doubt about Allah the Originator of Heavens and Earth! He calls you to absolve you of your sins and give you respite for a stated term!⁽²¹⁾” They said: “You are but humans like us; you want to bar us from what our fathers used to worship!

الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ
وَتَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ
إِلَّا اللَّهُ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
فَرَدُّوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فِي أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَقَالُوا إِنَّا كَفَرْنَا
بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ وَإِنَّا لَفِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَنَا
إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ ﴿١٠﴾ قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِى اللَّهِ شَكٌّ
فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَدْعُوكُمْ لِيَغْفِرَ
لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرَكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ
مُسَمًّى قَالُوا إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلَنَا تُرِيدُونَ
أَنْ تَصُدُّونَنَا عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُ آبَاءَنَا

19 “A great many generations We have destroyed after Nūḥ; sufficient is your Lord as All-Knowing, All-Seeing of the sins of His servants!” (17: 17)

20 This is an almost literal translation of the Qur’anic expression: *fa-raddū ‘aydiyahum fī afwāhihim*. The motion being depicted here could mean that: they pushed back their hands into their mouths to bite them out of rage at the Message being scathing of their so-called gods and critical of their reasoning (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Naḥḥās, al-Qurtubī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*); or they covered their mouths with their hands to conceal their jeering laughs at the Message (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr); or to motion to them to say no more by putting their index fingers over their mouths, or they put their hands over the mouths of their Messengers (ﷺ) to silence them (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*). The motion is symbolic of the extent of the Deniers’ opposition to the Message.

21 That is, for the duration of their lives and God Almighty will not hasten their punishment before then (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr): “And that you should seek your Lord’s forgiveness and thereafter repent to Him; ‘may’ He make you enjoy pleurably until a stated term and grant every good doer ‘the reward of’ his good doing” (11: 3).

Bring us then evident authority!⁽²²⁾”
 ﴿11﴾ Their Messengers said to them: “We are indeed but humans like yourselves but Allah bestows Favour on whoever He wishes among His servants⁽²³⁾. It is not for us to bring you evident authority except by Allah’s permission!⁽²⁴⁾ In Allah let the Believers put their trust”. ﴿12﴾ “But” Why would we not put our trust in Allah, when He guided us to our ‘right’ paths. We shall surely endure your harming us patiently. In Allah let those who trust put their trust!”⁽²⁵⁾

فَأْتُوا بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾ قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ اِنْ نَحْنُ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَمُنُّ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَآءُ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِۦ وَمَا كَانَ لَنَا اَنْ نَّاتِيَكُمْ بِسُلْطٰنٍ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ وَعَلَىٰ اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَا لَنَا اَلَّا نَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَىٰ اللّٰهِ وَقَدْ هَدٰنَا سَبِيْلًا وَلِنَصِرَنَّ عَلَىٰ مَا ءَاذٰنُ مُؤْمِنًا وَعَلَىٰ اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

﴿13﴾ ⁽²⁶⁾ And those who Denied then said to their Messengers: “We shall expel you from our land or you shall revert to our way of life!”⁽²⁷⁾

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِرُسُلِهِمْ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكُمْ مِّنْ اَرْضِنَاۤءٍ اَوْ لَنُعُوْدَنَّ فِيْ مَلٰئِكًا

- 22 By *sulṭānīn muḥīn* (evident authority) they meant a miracle or damning proof of their Truthfulness (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). al-Sa’dī sees that what they demanded is ‘proof’ of their own suggesting, as it has already been said, that their Messengers came to them with ‘clear evidences’!
- 23 That is with the great favour of Prophethood and/or Messengership (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 24 This, out of piety, draws a line under the limits of a Messenger’s mandate (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 25 Here is a direct, assuring message to the Believers who were going through very difficult times at this juncture.
- 26 In Ibn ‘Ashūr’s considered opinion, given the change of the direction of discourse from the absent to the present, speech here strongly implicates the Qurayshites and reflects on the situation at hand. By the same token, the closing statement of the previous passage directs the Believers to reflect on their state at that time and follow the suit of those past role models and be heartened by them; they were facing the worst persecution campaign that the Qurayshites had ever mounted.
- 27 The Truth just did not settle well with them; they just wanted it gone: “*The notables among his people who waxed arrogant said: “We shall expel you, Shu’ayb, and those who Believed with you from our town or you shall revert back to our way of life!”* (7: 88)

Their Lord then revealed to them: “We shall surely destroy the unjust⁽²⁸⁾; ^{﴿14﴾} and We shall surely make you dwell in the land after them⁽²⁹⁾—that for whoever fears My Standing⁽³⁰⁾ and fears My cautioning!” ^{﴿15﴾} They sought out a breakthrough⁽³¹⁾ ‘from Allah’, and ‘so’ let down was every headstrong tyrant; ^{﴿16﴾} Hell awaits him and he is given water of pus!⁽³²⁾

فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ لَنُهْلِكَنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٣﴾
 وَلَنُسَكِّنَنَّكُمْ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
 ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامِي وَخَافَ وَعَبَدَ ﴿١٤﴾
 وَأَسْتَفْتَحُوا وَخَابَ كُلُّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ﴿١٥﴾
 مِّنْ وَرَائِهِ جَهَنَّمُ وَيُسْقَىٰ مِنْ مَّاءٍ صَدِيدٍ ﴿١٦﴾

- 28 Note that *al-zālimūn* (lit. the unjust ones) is repeated seven times in this sura in addition to another instance where the Deniers are spoken of as the ones who did themselves injustice. It is particularly significant here as it is the time of revelation when Believers were fiercely prosecuted by ‘headstrong tyrants’.
- 29 “*Mūsā said to his people: “Seek help in Allah and be steadfast. Indeed the land is for Allah, He bequeaths it to whom He wills among His servants; the final round is for the Mindful. *They said: “We suffered harm before you came to us and ‘now’ after you came to us”. He said: “Hopefully your Lord may well destroy your enemy and make you successors to the land, so that He sees how you fare”*” (7: 128-129).
- 30 *Maqāmī* (lit. My Standing) is agreed by exegetes (cf. al-Sam‘ānī) to mean the standing before God Almighty on the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr). al-Shawkānī opines that it means: “My Standing and watch over him”. al-Rāzī lists other meanings.
- 31 *Istafṭahū*, translated here as: ‘they sought out a breakthrough’, means they prayed to God Almighty for *al-faṭḥ*, i.e., victory (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 32 This sura, as in this aya, depicts a truly horrid picture of Hell. Realistic and repulsive imagery deliver a vivid picture that appeals to imagination more than any general, abstract language could. It makes a direct impression on the mind and heart, resulting in a ‘visualization’ of the consequences of one’s evil actions. What the evildoers will come to experience after resurrection and reckoning is well and truly ‘out of this world’; a humiliating and painful ordeal that affects all the senses: visual, tactile and gustatory. A stark ‘cautioning’ indeed against their wrongful course of action.

﴿17﴾ He sups it and can hardly gulp it 'down'; death comes to him from everywhere and never is he to die⁽³³⁾, and yet 'more' harsh Punishment awaits him!

﴿18﴾ ⁽³⁴⁾The example of those who Denied their Lord: their deeds⁽³⁵⁾ are like ashes which the wind fiercely blows away on a gusty day; they can capture naught of what they earned—that indeed is misguidedness, far-off!⁽³⁶⁾

﴿19﴾ ⁽³⁷⁾Have you not seen that Allah had created the Heavens and Earth with the Truth⁽³⁸⁾;

يَتَجَرَّعُهُ وَلَا يَكَادُ يُسِغُهُ وَيَأْتِيهِ الْمَوْتُ
مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٌ وَمِنْ
وَرَأْيِهِ عَذَابٌ غَلِيظٌ ﴿١٧﴾ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
بِرَبِّهِمْ أَغْمَالُهُمْ كَمَا أَشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ
فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا
عَلَى شَيْءٍ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلَالُ الْبَعِيدُ ﴿١٨﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
بِالْحَقِّ

33 "As for those who Denied, theirs is the Fire of Hell; 'where' there will be no decree so that they may die, nor will its Punishment be lightened for them; this is how We requite every resolute Denier!" (35: 36)

34 Whatever good deeds they do in this life will not spare them from this ghastly torment (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). The imagery being drawn here of the utter loss of their deeds is the absolute picture of desperation (cf. al-Rāzī).

35 These are their good deeds of which they are hopeful (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*).

36 Their deeds were not based on solid ground nor were they on a straight path but were rather far astray from it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn Kathīr); a losing deal indeed (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 8: 165).

37 This passage and the next two begin with the interrogative *a-lam tara* ('Have you not seen?'), which calls for reflecting on matters and 'seeing' with the heart (*ru'yah qalbiyyah*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī). The addressee/s being the Messenger (ﷺ) but where his nation is also implied, or every one of the Deniers, or anyone who is concerned. In fact everyone who is wondering about the possibility of the destruction of the Deniers (cf. Aya 13 above) is called on to consider what follows (cf. al-Baiḍāwī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

38 God Almighty, Who created the Heavens and Earth (which are greater than humans, cf. 40: 57) without aid for good reason, i.e. that He be worshipped, is Able to create all anew on the Day of Judgement; He did not create them, to begin with, in vain but 'with the Truth' (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Sa'dī): "We had not created the Heavens and Earth and what is in

if He wills 'it', He would do away with you 'people' and bring about a new creation!⁽³⁹⁾ ⁽²⁰⁾ That is not beyond Allah. ⁽²¹⁾ ⁽⁴⁰⁾ And they, all of them, have emerged⁽⁴¹⁾ for Allah and the downtrodden said⁽⁴²⁾ to those who waxed arrogant: "We had indeed been your 'dedicated' followers, will you shield any of Allah's Punishment away from us?" They said: "Had Allah guided us, we would have guided you! It is the same for us to bewail or bear patiently, there is no diversion for us!"

إِنْ يَشَاءُ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ ﴿٢١﴾ وَبَرُّوْا لِلَّهِ جَمِيْعًا فَقَالَ الضُّعَفَاءُ لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا اِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَاَهْلَ اَنْفُسِكُمْ مَّغْنُوْنَ عَنَّا مِنْ عَذَابِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ قَالُوْا لَوْ هَدٰنَا اللّٰهُ لَهَدٰيْنٰكُمْ سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْنَا اَجْرِنَا اَمْ صَبَرْنَا مَا لَنَا مِنْ مَّحِيصٍ ﴿٢١﴾

between them out of` pointless` play; We had not created them but with the Truth, yet most of them know not!" (44: 38-39)

- 39 If God Almighty were not to be obeyed, He could easily destroy people and bring about others who are better and more obedient (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): "If you turn away, He will replace you with others; they will not be like you!" (47: 38)
- 40 The pain of these 'headstrong tyrants' is not only physical, ghastly as it is, but also psychological when their very subordinates will realize how lowly they really are and address them in a disparaging manner and yet they will only give credence to this address (cf. al-Rāzī); this is how ignoble they will become!
- 41 This emergence will be from the graves on the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). 'Emergence' (*burūz*) also connotes that everything, no matter how hard they tried to conceal it, will be laid bare before Allah (cf. al-Shawkānī).
- 42 "If only you could see when the unjust were stood before their Lord, throwing 'blameful' speech at each other! The downtrodden will say to those who waxed arrogant: "Had it not been for you, we would certainly have been Believers!" *Those who waxed arrogant said to the downtrodden: "Did we ever hinder you from guidance after it came to you? In fact, you were 'yourselves' criminals!" *The downtrodden said to those who waxed arrogant: "Nay! But it was your plotting by day and night—when you ordered us to Deny Allah and to set up 'rivalling' equals with Him!" They 'all' hid 'their' remorse when they saw the Punishment. And We put shackles around the necks of the Deniers; are they requited except for what they used to do?" (34: 31-33)

﴿22﴾ (43) And Satan, when the affair has been settled⁽⁴⁴⁾, said: ⁽⁴⁵⁾“Indeed Allah promised you the promise of Truth and I promised you but I failed you. I had not any authority over you⁽⁴⁶⁾, except that I called you and you responded to me. Blame me not ‘then’ but blame yourselves. I shall not answer your shouts ‘for help’ and you shall not answer mine. I hereby Deny your Associating of me ‘with Allah’ aforetime⁽⁴⁷⁾”; “the unjust shall have a painful Punishment!⁽⁴⁸⁾”

وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعَدَ الْحَقِّ وَعَدْتُكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلَا تَلُومُونِي وَلُومُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِيَّ إِنِّي كَفَرْتُ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمُونِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

- 43 Here, the source of all misguidance and misery, Satan, speaks out; it is as if they would turn to him to partake in their vindictive exchange (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr).
- 44 That is, when the people of Paradise have entered it and the people of Hell have entered it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 45 Here, Satan lays the blame squarely on his followers, who willingly and thoughtlessly tagged along behind him, only based on his most deceitful word of mouth! This scene is thus depicted in order to make these mindless followers reconsider their position and beware of the life to come in which Satan will abandon them completely (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr): “*He promises them and makes them ever vainly wishful; Satan promises them nothing but delusion!*” (4: 120).
- 46 He provides them with no proof whatsoever, yet they blindly follow him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī!).
- 47 “*Did I not enjoin you, Children of Adam, not to worship Satan? He verily is an open enemy to you! *And that you must worship Me; this ‘Mine’ is a Straight Path! *He had indeed led a great multitude of you astray; were you not taking heed!*” (36: 60-62).
- 48 This for obeying he who is not to be obeyed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Basī, al-Sa’dī)! Who says these words is not identified. He could be Satan himself, to hit his followers with this revelation, or the angels guarding Hell, or even God Almighty (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

﴿23﴾ (49)And those who have Believed and done good deeds were admitted into Gardens under which rivers flow, forever they abide therein with their Lord's permission; their greeting therein is: "Peace!"

وَأُدْخِلَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

﴿24﴾ (50)Have you⁽⁵¹⁾ not seen how Allah sets as example a Good Word⁽⁵²⁾ as a good tree⁽⁵³⁾; its root is firm and its branch is 'shot up' in the sky⁽⁵⁴⁾,

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ صَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٢٤﴾

- 49 To all the more awaken the senses, this ghastly end is immediately contrasted to that of the Mindful servants of God, who will have a truly 'peaceful' existence in the Hereafter which is full of abundant good (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Rāzī): "Verily the ones who have Believed and done good deeds, their Lord will guide them by their Faith; rivers flow under them in the Gardens of Bliss. *Their prayer in it is "Glorified be You, our Lord", their greeting in it is "Peace" and the concluding of their prayer is "All Gratitude be to Allah, the Lord of all beings!" (10: 9-10).
- 50 Light is shed here on the two fate-determining 'words', i.e., that of Belief, which leads the Believers to 'peace', and that of Denial, which leads the Deniers to damnation (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 51 The addressee here could be Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī) and/or anyone who merits being appealed to in such a manner (cf. al-Shawkānī, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 52 *Kalimatan tayyibatan* (lit. a good word) is the testimony of monotheism: the ultimate declaration, that there is only One God worthy of worship, Allah (ﷻ): *lā ilāha illā Allāh* (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 53 *Shajaratīn tayyibatīn* literally means: a good tree. Most exegetes cite the palm tree as an example for this 'good tree' (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basī*). 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: "We were sitting at the Messenger's (ﷺ) and he said: "Tell me! Which tree is similar to or like a Muslim? Its leaves do not fall!" Then Ibn 'Umar carried on to narrate: "I felt it in my heart that it was the palm tree, but I saw neither Abū Bakr nor 'Umar answering so I shrank from answering. When they did not answer, the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "It is the palm tree!" (al-Bukhārī: 4698, Muslim: 63).
- 54 Such is Faith to Believers; its foundation is unshakable in the heart and its branches, the good deeds, are high up in the sky, being constantly raised to God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿25﴾ it yields its fruit all the time with its Lord's permission⁽⁵⁵⁾; Allah gives examples to people, may they heed!⁽⁵⁶⁾ ﴿26﴾ And the example of a foul word⁽⁵⁷⁾ is that of a foul tree⁽⁵⁸⁾ torn up by from the ground; having no stability. ﴿27﴾ Allah makes firm those who have Believed with firm speech⁽⁵⁹⁾

تُوفِّيٰ كُلَّهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ
 اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾
 وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ
 اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ ﴿٥٦﴾
 يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ

- 55 The good produce of this tree is, by God's permission, wholesome and plentiful and yields at all times, day and night, summer and winter. Likewise is the testimony of Monotheism, it never ceases to yield good deeds for the Believer all the time, and all the time a good deed of his is being raised to Heaven (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī).
- 56 *Amthāl* (examples/similes/similitudes/parables) provide people with descriptive images and stir the mind and, hence, they encourage thinking which, in turn, leads to realization (cf. al-Samarqandī): "Verily We have given people examples of everything in this Qur'an so that they may heed!" (39: 27). Trees have roots, a trunk, branches, leaves and fruits and so has the 'tree of Faith'. Its roots are knowledge, realization and certitude; its trunk is true-heartedness; its branches are devoted deeds; its fruits are the yields of devoted deeds: praiseworthy outcomes, admirable bearings, laudable manners and commendable conduct. A tree's firmness in the heart is known through these fruits. If such is the case, then its root is firm and its branches are truly high up in the sky (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn 'an Rabb al-'Ālamīn*, 1: 133).
- 57 *Kalimatin khabūhatin* (lit. a foul/nasty word) is that of Denial and Association (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 58 *Shajaratīn khabūhah* means: a foul/nasty tree. Many exegetes give the example of a colocynth (bitter apple); it has no stable root and its stalks are so feeble that they cannot sustain its bitter fruit; such is Denial which is shaky in its heart, and whereby the deeds of the Deniers are not raised for them to benefit from in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr).
- 59 *al-Qawl al-thābit* (lit. the firm speech) is what is firm and unyielding in the hearts of the Believers, i.e., the testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His Messenger. Allah thus makes them firm in their Belief in Him and His Messenger (ﷺ) and drives doubts and vain desires away from them in the worldly life and in their graves, the first station of the Hereafter, when asked by the two angels (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Basīṭ, Ibn Juzayy, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

in the worldly life and in the Hereafter and Allah misguides the unjust⁽⁶⁰⁾; Allah does what He wishes.

فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ وَيَفْعَلُ اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ ﴿٢٧﴾

﴿28﴾ ⁽⁶¹⁾Have you ‘Muhammad’ not seen those who traded off Allah’s favour⁽⁶²⁾ for Denial and settled their folks into the Abode of ‘utter’ Ruination⁽⁶³⁾; ﴿29﴾ Hell, they taste it’s scorching – ghastly is the residence. ﴿30﴾ They set up ‘false’ equals for Allah to divert ‘others’ away from His Path.

*الَّذِيْنَ اٰتٰنَا اِلٰهِيْنَ بِالَّذِيْنَ
وَاَحَلُّوْا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ ﴿٢٨﴾ جَهَنَّمَ
يَصْلُوْنَهَا وَيَنْسُ الْقَرَارَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَجَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ
اَنْدَادًا لِّيُضِلُّوْا عَن سَبِيْلِهِۦ

al-Barā’ Ibn ‘Āzib (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When a Muslim is asked in the grave, he testifies that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. That is ‘the meaning of’ His Saying: “Allah makes firm those who have Believed with firm speech in the worldly life and in the Hereafter”” (al-Bukhārī: 4699, Muslim: 2871).

- 60 For doing themselves and others wrong, God Almighty casts doubts and blindness in the hearts of the Deniers and does not guide them to saying what is truthful whether in this life or in their graves when they are held to account by the two angels (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī).
- 61 This is a reflective passage which wonders at the ruinous end of the Deniers, recaps on the reason behind their ghastly end, and points the way out to the Believers (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 62 This *ni‘mah* (favour) is of a general sense; indeed God’s favours are innumerable (Aya 34). However, given the context of revelation and the immediate addressees, many exegetes see it as the sending of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to them and the Message he brought them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
Yet both *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar* and *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar* add that this favour also denotes the great bounty of the safety of the Sanctuary in which they resided (cf. Aya 35 below): “And Allah sets forth the example of a town which was safe and at peace, receiving its provision in abundance from all directions. But it ‘its people’ met Allah’s favours with ingratitude, so Allah made them taste the garment of hunger and fear for what they used to do *a Messenger of their own came to them but they denied him so the punishment overtook them as they were unjust!” (16: 112-113).
- 63 Hellfire is the Abode of Ruination (*dār al-bawār*) which they will come to occupy (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa‘dī).

Say: “Enjoy!⁽⁶⁴⁾ For indeed your return is to the Fire!” ⁽⁶⁵⁾ Tell My servants who have Believed to keep up the Prayers and spend ‘charitably’ out of that which We provided for them – both privately and openly – before a Day comes, when there will not be trading, nor bonds⁽⁶⁶⁾.

‘Allah’ ⁽⁶⁷⁾ Who ⁽⁶⁸⁾ created the Heavens and Earth; sent water down from the sky

قُلْ تَمَتَّعُوا فَإِن مَّصِيرَكُمْ إِلَى النَّارِ ﴿٣٠﴾
 قُلْ لِعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
 وَيُؤْتُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً مِّن قَبْلِ
 أَن يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خِلَالٌ ﴿٣١﴾

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَنْزَلَ
 مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً

- 64 That is they are called upon to enjoy their worldly life while it lasts. Nobody needs to be fooled or deceived by the good fortunes of the Denier (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Do not be deceived by the revelling of those who Deny in the land; *this is but a passing enjoyment, then their resort is Hellfire – ghastly indeed is this bed!” (3: 196-197).
- 65 In order to steer away from such an undesirable end and keep a safe distance from it, Believers are encouraged to uphold their upright religion, which is encapsulated in these two great forms of worship, Prayer (*salāh*) and Zakat (prescribed alms); great indications of ones’ triumph over one’s baser self (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). These are also practical applications of being grateful to God Almighty for His favours (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 66 *Khilāl* is the plural of *khullah*, which means very intimate friendship (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). On the macabre Day of Judgement there will be no trade-offs, bargains nor a close friend’s favour of kindness; everyone will have enough on their plate, busied away with their own affairs (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr). Nothing on that Day will avail a person, wits and relations notwithstanding, except his record of good deeds. People, and especially Believers, need to be very heedful of that great Day (cf. al-Sa’dī): “You who Believe! Spend of what We provided for you before a Day comes, when there will not be trading, nor bonds or intercession” (2: 254).
- 67 This is a timely reminder of the most Gracious, Bountiful God, ‘Allah’, Whose favours are immeasurable, to Whom people are ungrateful and set up rivalling equals to. What follow in this passage are general Divine favours which no one can afford to deny, and in the next passage Quraysh-specific favours are spoken of, going back to the very root of their then current privileged status (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 68 The enumeration of these favours begin with the all-encompassing favour of creating the realms of existence and sustenance; life and livelihood (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

and grew with it 'all sorts of' produce as provisions for you; (69)subjected to you vessels running in the sea with His command⁽⁷⁰⁾; and subjected rivers to you!⁽⁷¹⁾ ⁽³³⁾ And He subjected to you the sun and the moon unceasing⁽⁷²⁾; and He subjected to you night and day!⁽⁷³⁾

فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْفَلَكَ لِتَجْرِيَ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْهَارَ ۝ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَائِبَيْنِ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۝

- 69 Then comes the equally evident Divine favour of subjecting (*taskhīr*) great creations which are central for human living and upkeep.
- 70 By God Almighty's command people were made able to build ships and vessels to run floating over the surface of the seas, and made the winds blow them in the direction they are intended for and prevented storms from drowning them. All this so that people may go about their lives travelling and carrying their shipments in them from one place to another across the face of the potently wild but subjected sea (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Do you not see that ships run through the sea by the favour of Allah that He may show you of His Signs? Indeed in that are Signs for everyone greatly patient and devoutly grateful!" (31:31).
- 71 Rivers are subjected to the benefit of humans in that they were made to run from one place to another covering great stretches of land spreading life along their banks; people drink from them along with their livestock, grow crops, and travel fore and aft (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī).
- 72 The sun and the moon are unceasingly ever-orbiting the Earth bringing with them renewed benefits to humans, livestock and crops (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "He is the One Who made the sun a glow and the moon a light and ordained for it stations so that you 'may' know the number of years and calculation 'of time'. Never has Allah created that except for the Truth; He details the Signs for those who attain knowledge. *Verily in the alternation of night and day, and whatever Allah has created in the Heavens and Earth are Signs for the Mindful ones" (10: 5-6).
- 73 Apropos to the sun and the moon are the day in which people go about their living and the night during which they get rest (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī): "Say: "Would you not see that if Allah were to make the night perpetually unceasing over you till the Day of Judgement, what god besides Allah could bring you light; will you not listen!" *Say: "Would you not see that if Allah were to make the day perpetually unceasing over you till the Day of Judgement, what god besides Allah could bring you night in which you rest; will you not see!" *Out of His Mercy He made night and day for you, so that you may rest in it 'the former' and seek out His favour 'during the latter'; will you be thankful!" (28: 71-73).

﴿34﴾ And He granted you out of everything that which you asked Him for⁽⁷⁴⁾. Should you 'endeavour to' enumerate Allah's Favour⁽⁷⁵⁾, you shall never round it up⁽⁷⁶⁾— verily man is gravely unjust, ever ungrateful!

وَمَا تَسْأَلُونَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ وَإِن تَعَدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ فَلَا تحْصُوهَا إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

﴿35﴾ (77) 'Mention Muhammad' When Ibrāhīm said⁽⁷⁸⁾: "My Lord,

وَإِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهٖمُ رَبِّ

74 It is not only these grand favours that God Almighty grants people, but they are answered their prayers, be they uttered or merely wished for (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

75 The many blessings and favours mentioned here are one and the same and thus they are expressed in the singular (*ni'mah* (favour)) and not in the plural *ni'am* (favours) (cf. Abū al-Su'ūd). This singular noun is generic in nature and thus all-encompassing. Blessings are bundled up in one exhaustive favour which makes breaking it down to its basic constituents simply unattainable (cf. al-Sha'rāwī), especially when he who counts is inevitably oblivious to them. How many a blessing with which we are surrounded are we unaware of!

76 If a person were to ever try to count God's blessings on him, he would never be able to take account of them, let alone be duly grateful for them; how ungrateful then are those who show Denial in return for Divine blessings or would they not use them as a means of showing gratitude! (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr)

77 This is a central passage in the sura given those who were being directly addressed; the Qurayshite Associators, the sworn enemies of the call of the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) who, being the descendants of Prophet Abraham (ع) through his son Ishmael, were guardians of the holy shrine in Makkah and, thus, held a very high status throughout Arabia with all the privileges and blessings that came with it. Here, they are reminded of their origins and the central favour for which they are being so unceasingly Denying (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

One cannot help but note that the overall tone of Abraham's (ع) prayer is the very portrait of humbleness and sincerity; an invocation strung with gratefulness and meekness just as how a devout, thankful servant of God should be, which is a far stretch from the insolent utterances of the Deniers who proudly ascribe themselves to him!

In a way this Abrahamic prayer is meant to remind the Qurayshites of the prayer of their forefather to which they owe the great favours they enjoyed so that they may be thankful and shun idol worshipping (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

78 "Mention Muhammad' When Ibrāhīm said: "My Lord! Make this town safe and provide its people with 'all sorts of' produce, 'especially' those

make this town safe⁽⁷⁹⁾ and steer me, and my children⁽⁸⁰⁾, away lest we worship idols”⁽⁸¹⁾. ﴿36﴾ “My Lord, they have led astray many a human! Whoever follows me, then he is of my own⁽⁸²⁾, but whoever disobeys me⁽⁸³⁾ then You

أَجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ ﴿٣٥﴾ رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ أَضَلَّانِ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي ۖ وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ

of them who Believe in Allah and the Last Day”. He ‘Allah’ said: “As for those who Deny, I will make them enjoy a little and then force them into the Punishment of Hellfire—miserable is their destination!” (2: 126)

- 79 ‘This town’ being Makkah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr). That they enjoyed safety and security, while people around them were bereft of it, is notably one of the greatest favours that the Makkans met with Denial (cf. Aya 28 above): “Or have they not considered that We have secured for them a safe sanctuary while people are snatched away all around them? Do they believe in that which is false? And are they ungrateful for God’s Blessing” (29: 67).
- 80 *Baniyya* (plural of *ibn*, i.e., son) literally means ‘my sons’. Both Ibn ‘Āshūr and Ibn ‘Uthaymīn (in *al-Qawl al-Mufīd ‘alā Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, 1: 114) are of the opinion that it is not exclusive to his direct sons, Isaac and Ishmael, who were only two thus he could have prayed for them as *ibnayya* (my two sons), but, by extension, all their offspring. This prayer was not answered regarding some of his offspring (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*).
- 81 Even this all-time paragon of Monotheism, God’s own ‘close friend’ (cf. 4: 125), was concerned about idol-worshipping, seeing their greatly misleading effect on people. Indeed, people of sound reason ought to take example from this and pray that God will keep them on the straight path until death comes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭṭīyah)
- 82 Only those who follow the righteous creed of Abraham (ﷺ) can have a claim over him. but the Denying Qurayshites who did not follow his creed could not rightly claim that privilege (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 83 Exegetes have grappled with the question as to how Abraham (ﷺ) would ask God Almighty to forgive Associators and show them mercy if this ‘disobedience’, given the context, meant Association, knowing that God forgives anything but Association (cf. 4: 48 and 116). With this in mind, some exegetes have opined that this ‘disobedience’ is meant for matters less than Association (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Sa’dī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). However, others took this ‘obedience’ to mean Association itself (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭṭīyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārīj al-Sālikīn*, 1: 60, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*). As for why he prayed so, the following opinions were given: 1) that it is a prayer for them to be

certainly are All-Forgiving, Most Merciful!” ^{﴿37﴾} ⁽⁸⁴⁾“Our Lord⁽⁸⁵⁾, I have settled down some of my posterity in a plantless valley by Your Inviolable House; Our Lord, so that they may keep up the Prayer⁽⁸⁶⁾, so make hearts of some people fall for them⁽⁸⁷⁾

عَمُورٍ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٣٧﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ
ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ
الْمَحْرَمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ
أَفئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ

given respite until they heed, Believe and be guided (cf. Ibn ‘Atīyah); 2) that such a humble manner of prayer is reflective of Abraham’s (ﷺ) devoted character, and that he only could pray for what is good and agreeable (cf. al-Ṭabarī); 3) that he refers their affairs to God Almighty, showing Abraham’s (ﷺ) prudence and his fear for the disobedient among his offspring to be eradicated (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Āṣ (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “The Messenger (ﷺ) recited Allah Almighty’s saying in Sura *Ibrāhīm* the following: “My Lord, they have led astray many a human! Whoever follows me, then he is of my own, but whoever disobeys me then You certainly are All-Forgiving, Most Merciful!” (14: 36) and ‘Īsā’s saying: “If you Punish them, then they are ‘only’ Your servants, but if You forgive them, then You are truly the All-Prevailing, All-Wise” (5: 118). Then he (ﷺ) raised his hands and implored: “O Allah, ‘spare’ my nation, ‘spare’ my nation!” He then cried. Upon that Allah said to ‘Archangel’ Gabriel: “Gabriel go to Muhammad and – while our Lord knows best – ask him: “What makes you cry?”” Gabriel (ﷺ) came to him and asked him so the Messenger (ﷺ) told him. He went back and Allah said: “Gabriel go to Muhammad and tell him that: “We shall comfort you and will not hurt you with regards to your nation”” (Muslim: 202).

- 84 This prayer is a reminder to the heathen Qurayshites of God’s great bounties on them and the origins of their existence in the place they called home, and why it was made so agreeable to them (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 85 The prayer here is in the plural, ‘our Lord’, unlike the earlier two that were in the singular, ‘my Lord’, because this prayer specifically pertains to his posterity who were most in need of it (cf. Abū al-Su‘ūd).
- 86 Prayer (*al-ṣalāh*) is specifically mentioned here because it is the best, most comprehensive act of worship and that it is key to all good (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). Moreover, whoever ‘keeps up the Prayer’ usually keeps up other acts of worship, it being the most demanding (cf. al-Sa‘dī).
- 87 What a tender prayer from a loving father! The body follows where the heart goes (cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, 5: 48). He prayed

and provide for them from 'all sorts of' produce, may they be thankful!⁽⁸⁸⁾ ﴿38﴾ ⁽⁸⁹⁾“Our Lord, You verily Know what we hide and what we make public”; ⁽⁹⁰⁾nothing ever is hidden away from Allah neither on Earth nor in the Heavens!”

وَأَرْزُقُهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾
 رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نُخْفِي وَمَا نُعْلِنُ وَمَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٣٨﴾

that tender, longing hearts not only ‘go to’ them but strongly ‘fall’ (*tahwī*) for them; a beautiful metaphor for love and eagerness (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

The partitive *min* as in ‘hearts of ‘some’ people’, is by way of exception lest people crowd over them (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Su‘ūd).

- 88 Abundance is prone to breed gratitude and obedience (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr). But the Denying Qurayshites were oblivious of these blessings, taking them for granted: “*And they say: “If we follow guidance along with you ‘Messenger’, we shall be snatched away from our land!” Have We not secured for them a safe Sanctuary, to which the fruits of all things are brought, as a provision from Us? But most of them know not!*” (28: 57).
- 89 Exegetes have their opinions as to why Abraham (ﷺ) makes a point of this. al-Qurṭubī, quoting the great exegetical authorities of Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) and his student Mujāhid, sees that this is in allusion to the Patriarch’s heart found, but hidden anxiety about Ismael and his mother, whom he leaves behind in an arid, deserted land. al-Sa‘dī sees that he meant to say: “You, Glorified be You, have more knowledge about us from us. So we ask You to take care of our affairs regarding all matters; that we know of and that which we have no knowledge of”. And/or it means: “You know what we hide in our hearts when we pray to You and all our affairs besides that, and You know what we pronounce when we pray to You and all our affairs besides that” (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*).
- 90 Most exegetes see that this is an affirmative interpolation maintaining the Truthfulness of Abraham’s utterance (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Shawkānī). Others, notably al-Ṭabarī and Abū Ḥayyān, take it to actually be a continuation of the Patriarch’s prayer. The pronouncement of God’s Most Majestic Name, Allah, is meant to instil fear of Him in the hearts of the listeners who need to realize this eye opening fact (cf. Abū al-Su‘ūd). It also reflects on the very crucial statement to come about ‘Allah’ not being unaware about the criminalities of the unjust (Aya 42 below).

﴿39﴾ (91)“All’ Gratitude be to Allah Who granted me Ismā’īl ‘Ishmael’ and Ishāq ‘Isaac’ in ‘my’ old age—verily my Lord is All-Hearing of prayers!”

﴿40﴾ “My Lord, make me adhere to keeping up the Prayer⁽⁹²⁾ and ‘some’ of my posterity too. Our Lord, accept ‘my’ prayers!⁽⁹³⁾”

﴿41﴾ “Our Lord, forgive me and my parents, and the Believers on the rising to Account ‘on the Day of Judgement’!”

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ
إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٩﴾
رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي
رَبَّنَا وَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءِ ﴿٤٠﴾ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ
وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ ﴿٤١﴾

91 This is a practical demonstration of gratitude to God Almighty for His blessings, from a devout servant who was granted posterity after desperation (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). It is also a practical demonstration of the power of sincere prayer.

On another hand, it is very important to note that one of the etiquettes of invocation (*du‘ā’*) is to begin by earnestly expressing gratitude (*al-ḥamd*) to Allah (cf. al-Abū Dāwūd: 1481; al-Tirmidhī: 3477). ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: “The Messenger (ﷺ) used to say, when rising from sleep to perform Prayer during the night: “O Allah! Gratitude be to You; You are the Guardian of the Heavens and the Earth and what is therein. Gratitude be to You; to You belongs the dominion of the Heavens and the Earth and what is therein. Gratitude be to You; You are the Light of the Heavens and the Earth. Gratitude be to You; You are the King of the Heavens and the Earth. Gratitude be to You; You are the True. Your promise is true. Your meeting is true. Your Saying is true. Paradise is true. Hellfire is true. The Messengers are true. Muhammad (ﷺ) is true. The Hour is true. O Allah! To You I submit. In You I Believe. On You I rely. To You I refer. By You I dispute. In accordance with You I judge. So forgive me all what I did in my life, what is private and what is public. You are the Advancer and the Deferrer. There is no god but You”” (al-Bukhārī: 1120; Muslim: 769).

92 This lays emphasis on the gravity of this most important act of worship. Needless to say that Abraham (عليه السلام) was persistent in keeping up Prayer yet he prayed for staying on this right course indefinitely (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah). Keeping up Prayer, an epitome of sincere devotion to God, was the main purpose behind the original inhabitation of Makkah, the plantless valley (Aya 37 above) (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

93 That is, these prayers that I am asking of You (cf. al-Baiḍāwī, Ibn Kathīr).

﴿42﴾ (94) So think not 'Muhammad' that Allah is unaware of what the unjust commit⁽⁹⁵⁾; He only delays them for a Day⁽⁹⁶⁾ on which sights stare upwards 'wide open'⁽⁹⁷⁾
 ﴿43﴾ 'They will be' dashing forward⁽⁹⁸⁾, heads 'fixed' up⁽⁹⁹⁾,

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفْلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ
 إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِیَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ ﴿٤٢﴾
 مُهْطِعِينَ مُقْنِعِي رُءُوسِهِمْ

- 94 This direct message to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), which is central to the sura (see the "key" in the Introduction above), drives it home that God Almighty is not unaware of the devious stratagems and egregious crimes of the aggressors and will surely exact justice on them in a way befitting their crimes.
 It serves both as comfort to the aggressed against and as a warning to the aggressors (cf. Ibn 'Aṭṭīyah).
- 95 Let the wrongful not be fooled by their bountiful living and the peace they revel in (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr), for it is the way of God Almighty to allow ample time for the wrongful until the time comes for exacting justice on them. Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "My Lord, gives respite to the wrongdoer, until when He seizes him, He would never let go of him!" Then he (ﷺ) read: "*Such is the seizing of your Lord when He seizes the towns while they are doing wrong; surely His seizing is painful, severe!*" (al-Bukhārī: 4686; Muslim: 2583)
- 96 The Day of Judgement. The following depiction of the state of the Deniers on that Day is the very picture of striking terror at the horrifying sights they see (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "*And the True Promise draws nigh 'for fulfilment' and, behold, the sights of the Deniers shooting upwards 'wide open in horror': 'Ah! Woe to us! We were indeed heedless of this; nay, we truly had been unjust!'*" (21: 97)
 It is important to note that the lexical items chosen to describe this picture of horror are very marked, standing out from their more common synonyms, and need to be spelled out and explained as in the following notes.
- 97 *Tashkhashu fihī al-abṣār* (lit. sights stare upwards); unblinkingly staring upwards in horror (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, al-Qurṭubī).
- 98 *Muḥṭi'ina*, dashing forward, having no control over their steps as if pulled forward, to the gathering place of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 99 *Muqni'ī ru'ūsihim*, i.e., their heads turned up fixed to what they are looking at without turning left or right (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Sijjānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*).

their blinks never coming back to them⁽¹⁰⁰⁾, and their hearts gaping!⁽¹⁰¹⁾ ^{﴿44﴾} ⁽¹⁰²⁾Warn people ‘O Muhammad of’ a Day when Punishment comes to them, then the unjust say: “Our Lord, delay us for a short while, may we respond to Your Call and follow the Messengers!”⁽¹⁰³⁾ “Had you not sworn before, that there would be no parting⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ for you!” ^{﴿45﴾} “And you dwelt in the dwellings of those who did themselves injustice, ‘only’ when it became clear to you how We dealt them; and We gave you ‘many’ examples!”⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

لَا يَرْتَدُّ إِلَيْهِمْ طَرْفُهُمْ وَأَفَعَدْتُهُمْ
هَوَاءً^{﴿٤٤﴾} وَأَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمُ الْعَذَابُ
فَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رَبَّنَا أَخِّرْنَا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ
قَرِيبٍ نُّحِبِّ دَعْوَتِكَ وَتَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ لَوْلَا
تَكُونُوا أَقْسَمْتُمْ مِن قَبْلِ مَا كُنتُم مِّن
زَوَالٍ^{﴿٤٥﴾} وَسَكَنْتُمْ فِي مَسْكِنِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُم كَيْفَ فَعَلْنَا بِهِمْ
وَضَرَبْنَا لَكُمُ الْأَمْثَالَ^{﴿٤٥﴾}

- 100 *Lā yartaddu ilayhim ṭarfuhum*, means that their sights are out of their control and never are they going back to their normal state so that they can avert them, looking in the direction they choose, their eyelids are wide open and they cannot blink (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Qurṭubī, Riḍā).
- 101 Their terror-struck hearts are gaping empty; perceiving nothing (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 102 Although the Messenger (ﷺ) is to rest assured of Divine Justice, he is still to carry out his mission (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr) of delivering the Message clearly: “*But should you turn away, then know that Our Messenger’s duty is nothing but clear delivery*” of the Message” (5: 92).
- 103 “*If only you could see ‘Muhammad’ when they were stood at the Fire and then said: “How we wish we could be returned then we would ‘surely’ not deny the Signs of our Lord and would be among the Believers!”*” (6: 27).
- 104 *Zawāl* (lit. parting, removal); this statement parodies their abnegation of life and resurrection after death (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī): “*And they swore with their most solemn oaths that: “Allah never resurrects he who dies!”*” (16: 38).
- 105 The Qurayshites were particularly aware of the example of earlier Denying nations due to their famed winter and summer journeys. The former to Yemen on which they would pass by the ruined dwellings of the ‘Ād tribe, and the latter to the Levant on which they would pass

﴿46﴾ They plotted⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ their 'macabre'⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ plot, 'but' their plot is with Allah⁽¹⁰⁸⁾; ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾'but' even if their plotting was to remove mountains 'it would not have unravelled the religion'!

وَقَدْ مَكَرُوا مَكْرَهُمْ وَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَكْرُهُمْ
وَإِنْ كَانَ مَكْرُهُمْ لِتَزُولَ مِنْهُ الْجِبَالُ ﴿٤٦﴾

by ruined dwellings of the Thamūd tribe and use it as a resting post, enough time to draw lessons (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Ṭaṇṭāwī, *al-Wasīt*); they did themselves the injustice of Denial and Association and thus were destroyed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī): "We have set out all kinds of examples for people in this *Qur'an*; yet most people refuse but to persist in Denying" (17: 89).

- 106 Exegetes have differed over who these were and what their plot (*makr*) exactly was. As to who these were, both al-Ṭabarī and al-Shawkānī allude that these are the earlier nations who did themselves an injustice by Denying and Association. al-Rāzī and Abū Ḥayyān, on the other hand, perceive these to be the Qurayshites, who lived in their dwellings.

The 'plotting' is taken to be: their Association with Allah and lying against Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī); intending and plotting harm and evil for others (cf. al-Baidāwī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr); and taking these to be the Qurayshites both al-Wāhidī (*al-Wajīz*) and al-Rāzī perceive this to mean their plotting to kill the Messenger (ﷺ), incarcerate him or expel him (cf. 8: 30).

The upcoming Sura *al-Ḥijr* sheds light and gives a tangible example of these earlier nations, the Thamūd, the people of Prophet Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ), whose gift was with the shaping of mountains and whose plotting against their Messenger and his Message was indeed macabre.

- 107 Cf. al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn 'Āshūr.
- 108 That is, the knowledge of and requital for their plotting; and that He (ﷻ) will punish them accordingly (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Shawkānī).
- 109 The grammatical structure, *in kāna li*, could have two meanings: the one as found in the translation and that: 'their plotting was never to remove mountains due to its feebleness' (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sam'ānī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar* who give account of both readings): "They want to extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah refuses 'all' but only to perfect His Light; even to the acrimony of the Deniers. *He is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth to make it outshine all 'other' religions; even to the acrimony of the Associators" (9: 32-33).

﴿47﴾⁽¹¹⁰⁾ So think not 'Muhammad' that Allah would 'ever' renege on His Promise to His Messengers⁽¹¹¹⁾— verily Allah is All-Prevailing, capable of vengeance⁽¹¹²⁾; ﴿48﴾ on the Day⁽¹¹³⁾ when Earth will be changed to another Earth and the Heavens 'as well'⁽¹¹⁴⁾ and 'when' they have emerged for Allah⁽¹¹⁵⁾, the One, the Overpowering.

فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخَلِّفًا وَعْدِهِ رُسُلَهُ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ يَوْمَ تَبَدَّلَ
الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَوَاتُ وَبُرُزُوا
لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ﴿٤٨﴾

- 110 This concluding passage encapsulates the essence of the sura: to send an assuring message to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), that God Almighty is with him and the Believers and will make true His promise to them and punish their persecutors. In essence it is a direct warning to the heedless Deniers.
- 111 That they would emerge victors both in this world and in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): *"We certainly grant victory to Our Messengers and those who have Believed in the worldly life and on the Day when witnesses arise!"* (40: 51).
- 112 *Dhū intiqām* (having of revenge, vengeance, retribution), is not an absolute Attribute or Name of Almighty God, but it is bound by limitation to certain instances of rebellion against the Almighty's will (Ibn 'Uthaymīn). The severe persecution campaign that the Makkans mounted against the Believers deserves such severe revenge as depicted here.
- 113 God Almighty's revenge will be on the mighty Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Rāzī, al-Sa'dī); the Day on which sights stare upwards wide open in horror (Ayas 42-44 above) as revenge is displayed in its most drastic form (cf. al-Biqā'ī, Naẓm al-Durar).
- 114 In preparation for the Day of Judgement, Earth will be replaced with another one which is pristine and white as silver and the Heavens will also be replaced (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*). Sahl Ibn Sa'd al-Sā'idī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "People will be gathered on the Day of Judgement on a land that has not been treaded on before, like a pure, white 'dislike' loaf of bread, on which there will be a mark for no one!" (al-Bukhārī: 6521; Muslim: 2790). Many exegetes, based on the many Qur'anic ayas that talk about what befalls Heavens and Earth on that Day, are of the opinion that the replacement here is of the characteristics (*ṣifāt*) but not the quintessence (*al-dhāt*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 115 People will emerge from their graves, alive and totally conspicuous with nothing to hide behind before God Almighty (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr).

﴿49﴾ And you shall see the unjust bound on that Day in shackles⁽¹¹⁶⁾;
 ﴿50﴾ their vestures are of tar and the fire overlays their faces!⁽¹¹⁷⁾
 ﴿51﴾ That for Allah rewards every soul for what it earned; Allah is swift in reckoning! ﴿52﴾⁽¹¹⁸⁾This is a declaration to people, that they may be warned by it and to 'fully' know that He is but One God, and that those of sound reason may remember!

وَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّقْرَّبِينَ فِي
 الْأَصْفَادِ ﴿٤٩﴾ سَرَابِيلُهُمْ مِنْ قَطْرَانٍ وَتَعَسَى
 وُجُوهُهُمْ النَّارِ ﴿٥٠﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ
 مَّا كَسَبَتْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٥١﴾ هَذَا
 بَلَاغٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا بِهِءِ وَيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ مَا هُوَ
 إِلَهُ وَحْدٌ وَلِيَذَّكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٥٢﴾



116 "Those who deny the Book and what We sent Our Messengers with then shall know; *as yokes are 'locked' tight around their necks, and 'with' chains they are dragged; *in boiling water and then in the Fire they are scorched!" (40: 70-72).

117 "The Fire sears their faces and therein they grimace horribly 'their lips drawn back from their teeth'" (23: 104).

118 This sura is indeed a stark enough admonition for rational people to pay heed (cf. al-Baiḍāwī).



سُورَةُ الْحَجْرِ

al-Hijr
(Hegra)



al-Ḥijr (Hegra)

Title: this title calls to mind the ruined dwellings of the Thamūd tribe (cf. al-Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, 2: 316, al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 1: 48, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). Most likely, they are the ones who ‘devised the macabre plot’ to rid themselves of their Messenger, Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ), mentioned in 14: 45, and for which they were destroyed. It was at their very homes that the Qurayshites used to stop for rest en route along their famed journey north of Makkah, and where there was considerable evidence of other ruined nations on this well-known path (cf. Ayas: 76 and 79 below). These bygone nations, especially, the closer, well-known ones like these, are a recurrent theme in the Qur’an. The Thamūd is mentioned no less than 26 times in 22 Qur’anic suras (cf. “Thamūd”, *Mawsū‘at al-Tafsīr al-Mawḍū‘ī li al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*). As with all these destroyed nations that the Qur’an makes mention of, the Deniers are to be forewarned by their example, and the Believers should be certain of their tormentors’ fateful end.

Theme: the themes of this sura correspond to the late Makkan blueprint; namely, affirmation of the Truthfulness of the Message as encapsulated in the Qur’an; addressing an immediate issue at hand (here how mocking the idolaters were of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ)); providing evidence of God’s sole worthiness to worship through myriad signs; recounting stories of the Messengers (ﷺ) who aimed to deliver their people from darkness into light and how they were denied and their people punished, thus giving the necessary historical example to comfort the Prophet (ﷺ) and to warn the Deniers; retackling the immediate issue for which the sura was revealed, and finally advising the Messenger (ﷺ) on a certain course of action to take to deal with the situation.

Key: this is unanimously a Makkan sura (cf. al-Māwardī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Khāzin). During the Makkan period of the call to Faith, matters were always difficult but simply became unbearable towards the end (cf. Introduction to Sura *Hūd*). At the height of the onslaught by the Makkan idolaters, and their deriding and ridicule of the Message, the Messenger (ﷺ) and the few Believers around him needed Divine guidance as to how to face up to this and remain steadfast (cf. Ṭaṇṭāwī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). The Deniers are also called upon to see reason and be heedful of the fate of the destroyed nations with whom they were quite well acquainted.

At difficult times, when matters become unbearable and one is being scorned, one needs only to find solace in God Almighty and in His Words, prostrate oneself to Him, glorify Him in praise and dedicate one's whole existence to Him at all times (cf. Ayas 97-99 below).

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿1﴾ *Alif, Lām, Rā*⁽¹⁾; those⁽²⁾ are the Signs of the 'perfect'⁽³⁾ Book and a clarifying Recitation⁽⁴⁾. ﴿2﴾ It maybe that⁽⁵⁾ those who Denied wish that they were Muslims⁽⁶⁾. ﴿3﴾ Leave them 'Muhammad' to eat, enjoy and 'vain' hope⁽⁷⁾

الرَّتِّلِكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَقُرْءَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١﴾
رُبَّمَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوِ كَانُوا
مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٢﴾ ذَرَّهُمْ يَأْكُلُوا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوا
وَيَأْهَبُهُمُ الْآمَلُ

- 1 The sura opens with these three disjointed letters so as to highlight the Qur'an's inimitable nature and which are meant as a challenge to those who argue with the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers regarding the Truthfulness of the Message (c.f. 2: 1).
- 2 The far demonstrative pronoun *tilka* (those) is employed here to signify the loftiness of the Qur'an's ayas (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 3 Cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn Juzayy, al-Sa'dī.
- 4 Both the Book (*al-Kitāb*) and the Recitation (*Qur'ān*) mentioned here refer to one and the same thing, the Qur'an itself; the Book that was to be and the then present recited ayas. Its double mention, as given here, is meant to draw special attention to the evidences it provides to the Truthfulness of the Message (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 5 The particle *rubba-mā* (translated here as: *it maybe that*) has proven problematic for both grammarians and exegetes given the interpretation of the meaning of the aya (discussed below). In and of itself, it denotes *taqlīl*, a weak probability, of something happening, and thus does not exactly fit the interpretation that it is given in this aya. Consequently, scholars also took it to denote *al-takthīr*, strong probability, of such an occurrence (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Suyūfī, *al-Iklīl*). Ibn 'Āshūr sees that the use of this particle in the case of a given occurrence that will take place is rhetorical; weak probability is used to impart mocking and fear. That is, even if this were to happen on only a few occasions, it would nonetheless happen at times when this regret was felt stronger! (Cf. also al-Zamakhsharī, al-Baiḍāwī, Abū al-Su'ūd)
- 6 It is not specified as to when this wish will actually take place: when they taste defeat at the hands of the Believers, upon their death, on the Day of Judgement and/or when the sinful among the Believers are exited from the Fire in the Hereafter and the Deniers are left behind to languish in it. However, all this boils down to them regretting not Believing all the time when the Truth was clearly revealed to them (cf. al-Shawkānī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*).
- 7 False hope of a long life, accomplishment of one's aspirations, a peaceful life, a fortunate turn of events, etc., that makes one distracted from the purpose and heedless to it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Alūsī).

beguiles them; they shall come to know!⁽⁸⁾ ^{﴿4﴾} ⁽⁹⁾Never have We destroyed a town without it having a known record⁽¹⁰⁾; ^{﴿5﴾} never will a nation precede its 'stated' term nor are they to remain behind⁽¹¹⁾.

^{﴿6﴾} ⁽¹²⁾And they said: "O you to whom the Reminder⁽¹³⁾ has been 'successively' sent down!⁽¹⁴⁾ You are surely mad!" ^{﴿7﴾} "Wouldn't you bring to us the angels if you are among the truthful!"⁽¹⁵⁾

فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرِيْبَةٍ
إِلَّا وَهِيَ كَاتِبٌ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿٤﴾ مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ
أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَخِرُونَ ﴿٥﴾

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِي نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ
إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٦﴾ لَوْ مَا تَأْتِيْنَا بِالْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ إِن
كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾

- 8 That is, when they are hit with the Truth: "Enjoy! For indeed your return is to the Fire!" (14: 30).
- 9 They need not be deceived by the happy life they are leading, their punishment is sure to come as with other earlier nations whose suit they are following (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 10 That is, a specified time is recorded in the Preserved Tablet with God Almighty (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Sa'dī).
- 11 "For every nation there is a 'set' term; when their term is due, they cannot put it off an hour, nor hasten it" (10: 49).
- 12 In this passage we get to see how deriding the Qurayshite idolaters were of the Messenger (ﷺ). This ridicule and deriding was very hard on the Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. Aya 97 below), and this sura came down to console him (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*).
- 13 *al-Dhikr* (the Reminder) is the Qur'an (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "And this is a blessed Reminder 'that' We have sent down" (21: 50).
The Qur'an is *dhikr* in that it constantly makes "mention" of what people need for the betterment of their affairs and lives; it also "reminds" people of God Almighty and the Last Day; and that it is a cause of "laudable mention" and high repute (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 14 Exegetes unanimously agree that they would say such a statement mockingly (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). All this seemed to the Messenger (ﷺ) as if they were opening up to the call, only to then momentarily hurl at him harsh words such as: You are mad!
- 15 This, among other ruses like brazenly seeking to hasten Divine punishment, was a usual "proof of truthfulness" they were incessantly asking for. Although the Qur'an answers them each time, they would not give up on this line of argument; they thought they were onto something. As matters

﴿8﴾ We only bring down the angels with the Truth⁽¹⁶⁾; ‘and then’ never will they be waited for!⁽¹⁷⁾
 ﴿9﴾ (18)Verily, We are Who⁽¹⁹⁾ have ‘successively’ sent down the Reminder and verily for it We are Preservers!⁽²⁰⁾

مَا نُنزِلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا كَانُوا إِذَا
 مُنظَرِينَ ﴿٩﴾ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ
 لَحٰفِظُونَ ﴿٨﴾

eventually turned out, it was for their own good as they mostly became Believers, especially after the liberation of Makkah: “*They ‘further’ said: ‘Had only there been an angel sent down to him!’ Had We sent down an angel, the whole matter would have been ‘immediately’ settled and they would not be given respite. *Had We made him an angel, We would have ‘certainly’ made him ‘in the form of ‘ a man and then We would have confused them for what they ‘contrive to’ confuse. *Indeed, Messengers before you were ridiculed, but those who used to ridicule them got hit by what they ridiculed. *Say ‘Muhammad’: ‘Travel the land and look what was the fate of the deniers!’*” (6: 8-11); “*And they say ‘mockingly’: ‘What kind of messenger is this who eats food and goes about in market-places ‘for a living’? If only an angel had been sent down to him to be his co-warner!’*” (25: 7).

- 16 *al-Ḥaqq* (the Truth) meant here is whatever is truthful and necessary (like revelation to a Messenger (ﷺ) or Divine punishment) in a way that is imbued with wisdom and serving a purpose. Angels do not come down upon the request of Deniers! (Cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sam‘ānī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa‘dī).
- 17 If, as upon their request, they were actually made to see the angels and still would not Believe, they would be destroyed on the spot (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Juzayy, al-Khāzin, al-Sa‘dī): “*Had We sent down an angel, the whole matter would have been ‘immediately’ settled and they would not be given respite*” (6: 8).
- 18 This statement is a quick rejoinder to the Deniers’ mention of the ‘Reminder’ in their deriding earlier use of the word (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). This also affirms the Divine source of the Qur’an to bolster the position of the Messenger (ﷺ) in the face of his people’s ridicule (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Baiḍāwī).
- 19 *Innā Naḥnu* (We are Who) signifies both majesty (cf. Abū al-Su‘ūd) and confirmation in the strongest of terms (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Baiḍāwī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 20 *La-ḥāfiẓūn* (lit. We shall indeed be Preserving ‘it’) strongly affirms the Qur’an’s preservation from deletion, addition, alteration and loss (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar, al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*): “*It is verily a glorious Qur’an; *in a Tablet preserved!*” (85: 21-22).

﴿10﴾ (21) Indeed We have sent 'Messengers' before you for companies⁽²²⁾ of old; ﴿11﴾ never does a Messenger come to them without them ridiculing him⁽²³⁾. ﴿12﴾ (24) Like so We give it 'Denial' passage in the hearts of criminals⁽²⁵⁾; ﴿13﴾ never are they to Believe in it 'the Reminder',

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي شِعَابِ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾
 وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ
 يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿١١﴾ كَذَلِكَ نَسْلُكُهُ فِي قُلُوبِ
 الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٢﴾ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ

This preservation is of two stages: during its descent, it is preserved from devils ever eavesdropping on it and mixing it up with their own words (cf. Ayas 16-18 below), and after its descent from undergoing any change (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "It is verily a sublime Book. *Falsehood approaches it not from before it, nor from behind it; 'it is' a sending down successively from The Wise, The Worthy of Praise!" (41: 41-42).

By God Almighty's preserving it, the Qur'an is and will always remain an everlasting miracle up to the Day of Judgement. Whereas all other signs and miracles which were proven so to their contemporaries, and later generations through narration, and yet still did not have the same effect on those who received news of it no matter how Believing they are, the Qur'an is amongst us; we hear it, we see it, we feel it and we recite it. This is why it is a Sign for all people and all times (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

- 21 The pressing issue of ridicule is tackled again only to assure the Messenger (ﷺ) that Messengers before him were also treated in a similarly deriding manner; so he was no exception in this regard (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīlī*, al-Sam'ānī). Essentially, his detractors used such a stratagem not to gain sincere knowledge but rather to confound matters, no matter what evidences they were provided with (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 22 *Shiya'* (companies) means groups and nations. Originally, it denotes mutual help and support (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*).
- 23 In the face of reasonable evidences, the haters of the Truth will always find mockery a comforting escape: "Indeed, Messengers before you were ridiculed, but those who used to ridicule them got hit by what they ridiculed" (6: 10); "Woe be the servants! Whenever a Messenger comes to them, they ridicule him!" (36: 30)
- 24 This is in answer to those who may ask about why all the different nations throughout times met their Messengers in this very same manner (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "Did they advise each other to it? Nay, but they are transgressing people!" (51: 53).
- 25 These 'criminals' (*muḥrimūn*) rebelled against the Truth and did not submit to it (cf. al-Khāzin, al-Qurṭubī).

though the canon of the ancients⁽²⁶⁾ already came to pass! ﴿14﴾ ⁽²⁷⁾ ‘Even’ Had We opened up for them a door of the sky and they remained ‘constantly’ ascending through it; ﴿15﴾ they would surely say: “Our sights have been closely shut⁽²⁸⁾. Nay but we are bewitched people!⁽²⁹⁾”

﴿16﴾ ⁽³⁰⁾ Verily, We have set positions⁽³¹⁾ in the sky and we

وَقَدْ خَلَّتْ سُنَّةُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ
بَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَظَلُّوا فِيهِ يَعْرُجُونَ ﴿١٥﴾
لَقَالُوا إِنَّمَا سُكِّرَتْ أَبْصَارُنَا بَلْ نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ
مَّسْحُورُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا

- 26 *Sunnat al-awwalīn* (also found in 8: 38, 18: 55, 35: 43) or *sunnat Allāh* (as in 33: 38 and 62, 35: 43, 40: 85, 48: 23) is used invariably to caution in the Qur’an; in essence, the earlier nations who rebelled against God were destroyed. People are always encouraged to consider their fate *vis-a-vis* the fate of earlier nations and contemplate God’s time-honoured law: “... what then do they await except the canon of the ancients? But you shall never find any change in the canon of Allāh; you shall never find any alteration in the canon of Allāh. *Have they not travelled through the land and observed how the end of those before them was; they were ‘even’ greater than them in power. Allāh is not to be frustrated by anything in the Heavens or on Earth – He is All-Knowing, All-Powerful” (35: 43-44).
- 27 This is to show that the Deniers’ request for so-called evidences was only to parry the Truth. Even if a door to the sky was to open up for them and they ascended, at will, through it to see God Almighty’s dominion, power, authority and angels, they would still say that they were being bewitched (al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 28 That is, that their sights were forcefully prevented from seeing! (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 29 Seeing how unconvincing outright denial would be, they hasten to correct themselves by comfortably saying, as they always do, that being under the effect of magic they could not conceive the things they were seeing nor could they see them properly (cf. al-Baghawī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Sa‘dī): “Whenever they see a Sign, they turn away and say: “Fading magic!”” (54: 2).
- 30 The ‘sign/miracle’ they were asking after, which they would still have denied, is not, by any means, the only sign that the universe is full of, but to which they are still mindless (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah).
- 31 *Burūj* (sing, *burj*) is a polysemous word. Here, it means the positions of celestial bodies. The word is derived from the rise and conspicuousness of a thing; positions of celestial bodies are called *burūj* because they are

adorned it for the onlookers⁽³²⁾.
 ﴿17﴾ And We preserved it from every outcast devil⁽³³⁾; ﴿18﴾ except one who eavesdrops, then follows him a flaring comet⁽³⁴⁾. ﴿19﴾⁽³⁵⁾ And the Earth, We have spread⁽³⁶⁾, cast in it firmly-set 'stabilizers'⁽³⁷⁾

وَرَزَقْنَا لِلنَّظِيرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَحَفَظْنَاهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ ﴿١٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ أَسْرَقَ السَّمْعَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٩﴾ وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَالْقِيَامَاتِ فِيهَا رُوسِي

high and clear to the sight (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). It also means towers/edifices (cf. 4: 78).

- 32 Those whose hearts are perceptive enough to be full of awe of God's wonderful creation and are led by that to Believe in the Oneness and Ability of the Creator (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī): "Have they not looked at the sky above them; how We have built it, adorned it and that it is 'faultless' without loopholes!" (50: 6).
- 33 This so that they would not eavesdrop on the Highest Assembly (*al-mala' al-a'lā*; the angels that are in the Heavens (cf. al-Sa'dī, *al-Tafsīr Muḥarrar*)) who talk about news in the Heavens (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr). This is so that the Reminder (the Qur'an, as in Aya 9 above) is protected against their confounding whisperings and the lies they drop in the ears of their allied soothsayers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr). "The Jinn said: 'And we touched the sky and found it filled up with formidable guards and comets. *We had used to take seats in it for listening, but whoever listens now, will get himself a comet in ready waiting.'" (72: 8-9).
- 34 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "When Allah decrees an affair in the Heavens, the angels fold their wings in submission to His Saying, 'which sounds' like a chain hitting a hard rock. When their hearts regain consciousness, they would say: "What did your Lord say?" They say to the one who asked: "The Truth. He is the Most High, the Grand!" The eavesdroppers hear it 'What Allah said' and these are like this, one above the other. The comet may hit the eavesdropper and burn him before he throws it down to his companion. It may not hit him and he drops it to the one after him, and the lower one until they drop it to Earth where it gets dropped in the mouth of the sorcerer and he mixes it with a hundred lies. He gets believed in. People would say: "Did he not tell us that on day so and so, such and such a thing will happen and we found it truthful!" That because of the word he heard from the Heavens!" (al-Bukhārī: 4701).
- 35 Now the terrestrial signs, closer to home, are dealt with (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 36 "He Who made the land a carpet" (2: 22).
- 37 Part of making Earth habitable is that its crust is maintained with stabilizing mountains (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr): "He cast into Earth firmly-set 'stabilizers' – lest it should shift with you" (16: 15); "We made in it 'Earth' soaring firmly-set 'stabilizers'". (77: 27)

and grew in it everything in balance⁽³⁸⁾. ﴿20﴾ And We made for you in it livelihoods and those for whom you provide not!⁽³⁹⁾ ﴿21﴾ There is not a thing the treasures of which are not with Us and We send it down only in a known measure⁽⁴⁰⁾. ﴿22﴾ We sent the winds as pollinators⁽⁴¹⁾, and We sent down water from the sky and watered you with it; you would not 'be able to' reserve it⁽⁴²⁾. ﴿23﴾ ⁽⁴³⁾ Verily, We are Who gives life

وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْزُونٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعْيِشًا وَمَنْ لَسْنَا لَهُ بِرِزْقِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِلُ إِلَّا بِالْقَدَرِ مَعْلُومٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ لَهُ بِخَازِنِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَإِنَّا لَآتِحُونَكُمُ

- 38 A well-calculated measure in balance with the needs of all creatures (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*) as per God Almighty's infinite wisdom (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*): "Everything with Him is in 'precise' measure!" (13: 8); "The making of Allah Who perfected everything!" (27: 88).
- 39 The children, servants and livestock that one is blessed with and for whom only God Almighty, not their so-called masters, furnishes their provisions (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 40 The keys and troves of everything (provisions and livelihoods, destinations, rain, etc.) are with God Almighty. He is the Owner of everything and He is Able over it coming into being whenever He wishes. There is a precisely calculated measure in which it gets sent to Earth (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī): "Had Allah given abundant provisions to His servants, they would have certainly transgressed throughout the land. But He sends down whatever He wills in perfect measure—He is truly All-Aware, All-Seeing of His servants" (42: 27).
- 41 Winds, by the grace of God Almighty, pollinate clouds and thus help generate the water that the clouds carry (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Qurṭubī).
- 42 No matter what people used to do, they could hardly preserve fresh water, this most precious resource, had it not been for the favour of God Almighty (cf. Ibn Abī Zamanīn, al-Rāzī, al-Sa'dī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*): "And We sent water in due measure and lodged it in the ground—We have the power to take it all away if We so wish!" (23: 18); "Say: "Have you considered: if your water was to become 'deeply' sunken 'into the ground', then who 'besides Allah' could bring you flowing water?'" (67: 30).
- 43 The water which is sent down by God Almighty to give life and whose reserves are with Him, is a subtle reminder to the Deniers of God's Ability over life and death. A fact which is plainly stated here (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr).

and causes death and We are the Inheritors⁽⁴⁴⁾! ﴿24﴾⁽⁴⁵⁾ And We surely know those of you who preceded and We surely know those who will come later. ﴿25﴾ Verily, your Lord 'Muhammad'; He gathers them⁽⁴⁶⁾—He is All-Knowing, All-Wise!

وَنُمِيتُ وَنَحْيُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَأْخِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَشْرَهُمْ إِنَّهُ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

﴿26﴾⁽⁴⁷⁾ Verily We have created man from 'clinking' dried clay, altered in colour and smell⁽⁴⁸⁾;

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

- 44 None will remain except God Almighty after all the creatures on Earth have perished and He will come to 'inherit' it and them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī): "Verily, We Who shall inherit the Earth and whoever is on it and to us they shall return!" (19: 40); "All who are on it shall perish *and there remains the Face of your Lord—the Full of Glory, the Boundlessly Generous!" (55: 26-27).
- 45 As much as God Almighty's Ability is infinite, His Knowledge is boundless. He keeps record of everything and has knowledge of those who have died since the creation of Adam, the father of humanity, and all those that will come to die until the Day of Judgement (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*).
- 46 There is no escaping Him. The One Who gives life and causes death, and has a record of every soul that has died since the first creation of humans, is Able to gather them for Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Baiḍāwī).
- 47 This passage, which only after they have been told of their future reminds people of the origin of their creation (cf. Abū Ḥayyān), brings home two messages: that true submission to the will of God is best reflected in unquestioning obedience and that Satan, the sworn archenemy of humans, will stop at nothing to divert them away from the Straight Path, and that only the truly devout servants of God will be spared from him.
- 48 This is the most detailed description of the substance from which the father of humanity, Adam, was created to be found in the Qur'an. It is *ṣalṣāl*, i.e. clay that has been left to ferment and turn hard so that it clinks when tapped on (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Baiḍāwī, al-Sa'dī); *ḥama*, i.e. transformed, blackened clay (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr); *masnūn*, i.e. the smell of which has turned foul and/or been left for some time for these alternations to take place (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿27﴾ (49) and the concealing one⁽⁵⁰⁾ We had created before from the fire of pores⁽⁵¹⁾. ﴿28﴾ 'Mention Muhammad' When your Lord said to the angels: "I shall create a human 'of skin'⁽⁵²⁾ from 'clinking' dried clay, altered in colour and smell". ﴿29﴾ "When I had fashioned him and breathed in him of My 'created' spirit⁽⁵³⁾, then fall prostrate for him!"

وَالْجَانَّ خَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ نَارِ السَّمُومِ ﴿٢٧﴾
 وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّىْ خَلِقُ بَشَرًا مِنْ صَلْصَلٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَاِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيْهِ مِنْ رُّوحِىْ فَقَعُوْا لَهٗ سٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾

Note that this exact description is repeated three times in the course of this short passage, so as to draw attention to God's infinite Ability of creation in making such a magnificent being out of such a lowly substance (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). But it could also be to highlight that what is to be obeyed with true humbleness is the Command of God Almighty itself no matter what misgivings one finds in oneself about it. This is what the Makkans found in themselves, thus they 'ridiculed' the Messenger (ﷺ), especially for being a poor orphan despite his most noble lineage: "And when those who Denied see you 'Muhammad' they take you not except in ridicule, 'saying': 'Is this the one who insults your gods?'" (21: 36); "And they said: 'Why was this Quran not sent down to a great man from one of the two towns?'" (43: 31). They, thus, followed in the footsteps of Satan about whose rebelliousness against God's Command, essentially for the same reason, we are told about here. They were oblivious to the magnificent thing that was to come out of the Message.

- 49 By comparison, we are told here about the substance of Satan's creation by way of prelude as to how the enmity started between him and his offspring, on the one hand, and Adam and his offspring on the other (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 50 *al-Jānmu*, is Satan, the father of the jinn, who hides (*yajinnu*) from seeing eyes (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*).
- 51 *Nār al-samūm*, is the fire that seeps into the pores of the skin because of its extreme heat (cf. *al-Shinqīṭī, Adwā' al-Bayān*, *al-Sijistānī, Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*).
- 52 *Bashar* basically means human; humans are called *bashar* because of the skin (*basharah*) that covers their bodies, unlike animals and birds who are covered in feathers, hair, fur, wool, etc. (cf. *al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, 'Umdat al-Ḥuffāz*, *al-Iṣfahānī, al-Mufradāt*). Since mention here is of the origin of creation and what was to appear before the angels was this new creation covered in skin, I added the explication, 'of skin', in my translation to give credence to the origin of the word.
- 53 *Min rūḥī* (lit. from My spirit) is unanimously agreed upon (cf. *al-Naisābūrī, Ibn al-Qayyim, al-Rūḥ*, pp. 154-156) not to refer to God Almighty's Own

﴿30﴾ The angels then ‘immediately’ prostrated all of them, except none⁽⁵⁴⁾; ﴿31﴾ but Iblīs⁽⁵⁵⁾. He ‘vehemently’ refused to be among the prostrated ones!⁽⁵⁶⁾ ﴿32﴾ He ‘Allah’ said: “Iblīs! What makes you not among the prostrated ones?” ﴿33﴾ He said: “I was not to prostrate to a human ‘of skin’ whom You have created from ‘clinking’ dried clay, altered in colour and smell!⁽⁵⁷⁾” ﴿34﴾ He ‘Allah’ said: “Then get out of it⁽⁵⁸⁾; you are outcast!”

فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ إِلَّا
إِبْلِيسَ ابْتِئَانَ يَكُوتَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالَ
يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا لَكَ أَلَّا تَكُونَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾
قَالَ لَمْ أَكُنْ لَأَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ خَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ
صَالِصٍ مِنْ حَمِئٍ مَسْنُونٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ قَالَ فَأَخْرِجْ
مِنْهَا فَإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

Spirit, as some will take it, but rather to the spirit that He honoured by creating. It is possessively added to God as in *nāqatu-Llāhi* (The she-camel of Allah, cf. 7: 73, 11: 64 and 91: 13) out of holding it in high regard (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān).

- 54 This comprehensive show of unhesitating obedience is the core characteristic of true servants of God. It is very much in sharp contrast to the reaction of the rebellious as we will see through Satan.
- 55 *Iblīs* is Satan. Etymologically, *iblis* comes from *iblas*, i.e. having no hope in good things, grief and sadness caused by utter despair (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, al-İşfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). This choice of name in this instance is meant to project these meanings onto the desperate state in which he has put himself (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 56 He refused to obey God’s Command out of arrogance and envy for the honouring of Adam (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Khāzin, Ibn Kathīr): “Mention Muhammad’ *When We said to the angels: “Bow down to Adam!”; they bowed down except Iblīs; he refused, became arrogant and was one of the Deniers*” (2: 34).
- 57 He thought himself the better of the two based on the substance of their creation and, thus, more worthy of honouring: Adam, the human, who was created from such a lowly substance as dried clay which has turned dark and smelly, and himself who had earlier been created from powerful, illuminating fire (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Abū al-Su’ūd, al-Sa’dī): “*He ‘Allah’ said: “What prevented you from prostrating as I commanded you!” He said: “I am ‘surely’ better than him! You created me from fire and created him from clay!”*” (7: 12).
- 58 The third person pronoun could refer to Paradise as per al-Baghawī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Khāzin, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*; or the Heavens as per al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr; or the lofty status in which he was among the dwellers of the Heavens as per Abū al-Su’ūd and Ibn Kathīr.

﴿35﴾ “And upon you is Damnation until the Day of Reckoning!”

﴿36﴾ He said: “Then my Lord grant me ‘time’ until the Day when they are resurrected!”

﴿37﴾ He ‘Allah’ said: “Then you are among the ones granted ‘time’⁽⁵⁹⁾; ﴿38﴾ until the Day of the known time!⁽⁶⁰⁾”

﴿39﴾ He said: “My Lord! Then for Your misguiding of me⁽⁶¹⁾, I shall make certainly ‘alluringly’ adorned for them ‘life’ on Earth⁽⁶²⁾ and shall misguide them all, ⁽⁴⁰⁾ except Your servants among them; the ones made ‘truly’ devout!”

﴿41﴾ He ‘Allah’ said: “This is ‘then’ a Straight Path ‘leading’ onto Me⁽⁶³⁾;

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٣٥﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ

فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ

مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ ﴿٣٨﴾

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمْ

الْمُخْلِصِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ

مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾

59 God Almighty’s granting Satan his request is a trial for His servants so that those who obey their Lord against all the tricky machinations of the Devil are sifted out from those who, on the contrary, obey the Devil (cf. al-Sa’ dī).

60 Most scholars consider this ‘day’ to be the day on which the first blow of the Trumpet (*al-naḥkhat al-ūlā fī al-ṣūr*) will be sounded and all creatures both in the Heavens and on Earth will be struck dead (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*). Only God Almighty Knows when this day will be (cf. al-Rāzī). However, both Ibn Kathīr and al-Shawkānī deem the ‘day’ mentioned here to be the Day of Judgement.

61 By citing predestination (*al-qadar*), that God had already decreed him to be misguided, Satan sets the record for being the first to use *al-qadar* as a pretext for not following God’s command (*al-amr*), basically as an excuse to justify his rebelliousness against Him (ﷻ) (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū’ al-Rasā’il wa al-Masā’il*, 5: 134; Ibn al-Qayyim, *Rawdat al-Muḥibbīn*, p. 62).

62 “Allah Damned him, and he retorted: “I shall surely take to myself from Your servants my due share!” *”I shall surely mislead them, make them ever vainly wishful, and I shall command them to cut off the ears of livestock, and I shall command them to alter the creation of Allah!” Whoever takes Satan as a patron instead of Allah, has indeed suffered a tremendous loss. *He promises them and makes them ever vainly wishful; Satan promises them nothing but delusion. *The resort of those is Hellfire; they will find no escape therefrom” (4: 118-121).

63 “Verily, I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is not a moving creature without Him taking it by the forelock; verily my Lord is on a Straight Path!” (11: 56).

﴿42﴾ indeed on My servants you shall have no authority, except who follows you from among the stray ones!⁽⁶⁴⁾ ﴿43﴾ “Verily, Hellfire is their gathering place— all of them⁽⁶⁵⁾; ﴿44﴾ for it there are seven doors. For each door is a portion⁽⁶⁶⁾ designated!”

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ إِلَّا مَنِ
اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمَوْعِدُهُمْ
أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ لَهَا سَبْعَةُ أَبْوَابٍ لِكُلِّ بَابٍ
مِّنْهُمْ جُزْءٌ مَّقْسُومٌ ﴿٤٥﴾

﴿45﴾ ⁽⁶⁷⁾Verily, the Mindful are in Gardens and springs. ﴿46﴾ “Enter it in peace, secure!⁽⁶⁸⁾” ﴿47﴾ And We have rooted out whatever ill-will in their chests⁽⁶⁹⁾. “So that” They

إِنَّ الْمُنْقِبِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿٤٦﴾ أَدْخُلُوهَا
بِسَلَامٍ آمِنِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَزَعَمْنَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ
مِّنْ غَلٍ

- 64 “Verily he ‘Satan’ has no authority over those who have Believed and are reliant of their Lord. *His authority is over none but those who take him as patron and those who are Associating him ‘with Allah’” (16: 99-100).
- 65 “He ‘Allah’ said: “Then the Truth and the Truth I say: “I shall fill up Hell from you ‘Satan’ and from those who follow you, all of them!” (38: 84-85).
- 66 The doors of Hell are plenty enough to enter each and every denomination of Satan’s followers through a certain door according to their crime (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 67 Now that the ultimate destination of the Deniers has been explained, the totally contrasting destination of the Believers is told of here, so that people may reason (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 68 Any abode, let alone this most desirable of Abodes, can only be felt at home in by feeling safe and secure (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). The dwellers of Paradise will be safe from all ills, away from troubles, and all matters that might put a dent in their happiness and sense of security (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr).
- 69 This is in perfection of their bliss. A human being can only find comfort in the company of his likes; but this is only made wholesome by having no ill-will whatsoever, which would cast a shadow over the relationship, in one’s heart against the other (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Such ill-will would inevitably take root in people’s hearts, given the jealous, spiteful weak nature of humans, so, to completely rid them of it, it has to be forcefully uprooted or stripped away (*naza‘a*) (cf. al-İṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*): “And We had stripped away the ill will that is in their chests; rivers flow from under them. And they said: “All gratitude be to Allah, Who guided us to this. We would not have been guided had Allah not guided us. Surely the Messengers of our Lord came with the Truth”. They were called out: “That is Paradise; you were made to inherit it for what you used to do” (7: 43).

are brothers on divans facing each other!⁽⁷⁰⁾ ﴿48﴾ ⁽⁷¹⁾No fatigue shall touch them in it, nor shall they be ousted from it! ﴿49﴾ ⁽⁷²⁾Notify ‘Muhammad’ My servants that I am the All-Forgiving, the Most Merciful; ﴿50﴾ and that My Punishment is indeed the Painful Punishment!”

﴿51﴾ ⁽⁷³⁾And notify them ‘Muhammad’ about the guests of Ibrāhīm⁽⁷⁴⁾;

إِخْوَانًا عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ فِيهَا
نَصَبٌ وَمَا هُمْ مِنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾
*نَبِيِّ عَبْدِي أَيُّ أَنَا الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٤٩﴾
وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْأَلِيمُ ﴿٥٠﴾

وَنَبِّئُهُمْ عَن صَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٥١﴾

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When the Believers are done with the Fire after passing over the Straight Path, they will be held back at a bridge between the Fire and Paradise. ‘There’ Justice will be exacted on some of them over the grievances of others that took place in the worldly life. Only when they have become refined and purer, are they given permission to enter Paradise”. (al-Bukhārī: 6535)

- 70 This manifests how completely the spite of their hearts has been banished. The dwellers of Paradise do not avert each other’s gaze, as one naturally would not bear the sight of a person whom one severely dislikes, but rather they communicate in a most candid manner (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*), in this most comfortably luxurious state of theirs.
- 71 Their stay is perfect, untainted by drawbacks of any kind: lack of security, ill-feelings, toil and hard work or uneasiness about the future: “*And they said all Gratitude be to Allah Who has kept away from us all ‘causes of sorrow—Our Lord is indeed All-Forgiving, Most Appreciative. *He is the One Who—out of His Grace—has settled us in the Home of Everlasting Stay, where we will be touched by neither fatigue nor weariness’*” (35: 34-35).
- 72 The following announcement is to ensure that people are doubly aware, and certain of this fact whose various aspects have just been spelled out (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 73 This passage draws attention to some relevant historical precedence so as to extract lessons from it.
- 74 The take given here on the story of the ‘guests of Abraham (عليه السلام)’ is different from any in the Qur’an. There the Patriarch of Prophets is shown in a buoyant and very hospitable light (cf. cf. 11: 69, 51: 26) but here his troubled state of mind is underlined for the benefit of the Prophet (ﷺ) who was at the time of this revelation in a similar state, being heavy-hearted with what the idolaters were hurling at him (cf. Aya 97 below), so that he may identify with his forefather and find heart in his grief.

﴿52﴾ when they entered upon him and said: “Peace!” He said: “We are ‘very’ wary of you!”⁽⁷⁵⁾ ﴿53﴾ They said: “Do not be wary. We give you glad tidings of a greatly knowledgeable boy!”⁽⁷⁶⁾ ﴿54﴾ He said: “Do you give me glad tidings ‘of a son’ just when old age has touched me; what are you giving me glad tidings about!”⁽⁷⁵⁾ They said: “We gave you glad tidings of the Truth, so do not be among the despondent!”⁽⁷⁷⁾ ﴿56﴾ He said: ⁽⁷⁸⁾“Who would grow despondent of his Lord’s Mercy except the ⁽⁷⁹⁾lost ones!”⁽⁷⁹⁾ ﴿57﴾ He said: “And then what is your grave news, you sent ones?”⁽⁸⁰⁾ ﴿58﴾ They said:

إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ إِنَّا مِنْكُمْ وَجُلُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوا لَا تَوْجَلْ إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٥٣﴾ قَالَ أَبَشَّرْتُمُونِي عَلَىٰ أَن مَسَّنِيَ الْكِبَرُ فِيمِ تَبَشِيرُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ قَالُوا بَشِّرْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْقَانِطِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ قَالَ وَمَن يَقْنَطُ مِن رَّحْمَةِ رَبِّهِ إِلَّا الضَّالُّونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قَالُوا

75 Since they came at a time when guests were not usually expected, he doubted their motives and wanted them to assure him of peace, which they promptly did (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

76 That is a son, Isaac (ﷺ), who attains great religious knowledge (cf. ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “His woman was standing; she laughed and We gave her the glad tidings of the coming of ‘Ishāq and after Ishāq ‘the coming of ‘Ya‘qūb’” (11: 71).

77 Abraham (ﷺ) might have shown signs of doubt and hesitation at believing such news, so that they replied to him in this assertive, yet properly gentle, manner (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Jazā’irī, *Aysar al-Tafāsīr*).

78 He might have shown a sign of some hesitation at their news, but this reply from Abraham (ﷺ) disproves the assumption that he was ‘despondent’ of God’s Mercy, a very unbecoming trait from a true servant of God’s and of such very lofty status (cf. al-Khāzin, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*).

79 *al-Dāllūn* (lit. the lost ones) are those who have no knowledge of God Almighty’s Ability nor the expanse of His Mercy (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). Those who have no good faith in God cast doubt on His Ability as well as on His Mercy and this is why they are ‘lost’ (cf. Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 10: 682).

80 Seeing that they did not come to him in the form that they usually assume when delivering revelation and fully cognizant that angels only come with the Truth (cf. 15: 8), he asked them about their ‘grave news’ so that he might completely ease his own mind (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

“We have been sent to ‘some’ criminal folks!”^{﴿59﴾} “Except Lūt’s family; we shall deliver them all;”^{﴿60﴾} “except his woman, we have deemed her among those remaining in doom⁽⁸¹⁾”.

^{﴿61﴾} ⁽⁸²⁾ When the sent ones came to Lūt’s family; ^{﴿62﴾} He said: “You are unknown folks!”^{﴿63﴾} ⁽⁸³⁾ They said: “Nay, but we came to you ‘with punishment’ over what they used to doubt!”^{﴿84﴾} ^{﴿64﴾} “And We came to you with the Truth; we are verily truthful!”^{﴿65﴾} ⁽⁸⁵⁾ So travel with

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِ مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ إِلَّا
 ءَالَ لُوطٍ إِنَّا لَمَنْجُوهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾ إِلَّا
 أَمْرَاتَهُنَّ قَدَرْنَا إِنَّمَا لِمَنِ الْغَابِرَاتُ ﴿٦٠﴾

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ ءَالَ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ
 إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّكَرُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالُوا بَلْ جِئْنَاكَ بِمَا
 كُنَّا نُوَفِّيهِ بِمَتْرُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَأَتَيْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ
 وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَأَسْرِ

- 81 She was so condemned because she condoned the morally degrading behaviour of her people, not for practically partaking in it (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 15/344). It is amazing to see how the Qur’an makes special mention of this fact, i.e. that of all of Prophet Lot’s household she was to ‘remain in doom’ with her likes (cf. for instance: 7: 83, 15: 60, 26: 171, 27: 57, 29: 32 and 33, 37: 135). This sends a clear message that sympathizing with and condoning vice is as good as being implicated in it!
- 82 Details are given here of the first of three examples of nations who were destroyed and were completely conspicuous to the Qurayshites en route on their famed trading journeys; the people of Prophet Lot, those of the thicket and those of Hegra.
- 83 Seeing them young and handsome and knowing what his people were like, Lot (ﷺ) became very distraught by this unannounced visit (cf. al-Khāzin): “When Our messengers came to Lūt, he became distraught and found them insufferable, and said: “This ‘truly’ is a tough day!”” (11: 77)
- 84 That is Divine Punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtūbī, Ibn Kathīr). The very same punishment that the Makkan idolaters were doubtful of: “When they ‘the Deniers’ said: “O Allah, if this is the Truth from You, then rain on us stones from the sky or bring us a painful punishment!”” (8: 32)
- 85 What follows is a meticulous, four-step salvation plan. The detailing of it brings to light how God Almighty takes special care of His devout servants. First, they are commanded to travel very late at night, ‘in the small hours’, so that due to people being asleep they would not attract unwanted attention which may hamper their advance (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). Secondly, the figurehead of the household, Prophet Lot (ﷺ), is told to walk behind his family to: make sure that no one is left behind and is

your household in the small hours⁽⁸⁶⁾, and follow 'them up' in their heels, let not any of you look back and proceed 'to the place' where you are commanded. ⁽⁸⁷⁾ And We decreed to him that these folks will be utterly obliterated 'to the last one of them' at daybreak! ⁽⁶⁷⁾ And the people of the city came to him full of high hopes⁽⁸⁸⁾. ⁽⁶⁸⁾ He said: "These are verily my guests, so cause me no scandal!"

بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ وَاتَّبِعْ أَدْبَارَهُمْ
وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ وَامْضُوا حَيْثُ
تُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ ذَلِكَ الْأَمْرَ أَنَّ
دَابِرَهُمْ لَآئِيَاءٌ مَّقْطُوعٌ مُّصْحِحَاتٍ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَجَاءَ
أَهْلَ الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالَ إِنَّ
هَؤُلَاءِ صِيفِي فَأَلَّا تَفْضَحُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

afflicted by the punishment (cf. al-Qurṭubī), so that he may set a physical as well as a psychological barrier between them and the place of horror (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*), for him not to be anxious about any of them (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*), and/or for them not to look back, as they were commanded, realizing that he will be keeping watch over them (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Thirdly, they are commanded 'not to look back' so that they would be more persistent and purposeful in their walk and strike some distance before dawn caught up on them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī), or that they might not be frightened and traumatized by catching sight of the horrific punishment of their folks (cf. al-Sam'ānī). Lastly, they are told to go to a certain destination where they were to find a new home and not remain refugees for even a single night. Moreover, the present continuous verb *tu'marūn* ('to where' you are commanded'), gets the feeling across that some of the angels would be in their company as a greater measure of assurance (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

- 86 They made their escape very late at night at the time of *saḥar*, i.e. when dawn was about to break: "...except the house of Lūt; We delivered them 'just' before dawn" (54: 34).
- 87 This assertive 'decree' further assures Lot (ﷺ), who was eagerly awaiting their downfall (cf. al-Sa'dī), of the imminent fate of his 'criminal' people, seeing that he was so troubled by what they were about to do to his guests. In 11: 81, Lot (ﷺ) receives the same fully assuring message: "Their appointment is the morn. Is not the morn near!"
- 88 They were hopeful of fulfilling their aberrantly lustful desires (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī) having been given notice, probably by Lot's (ﷺ) treacherous wife of the arrival of these extremely handsome young men (cf. al-Khāzin).

﴿69﴾ “Be mindful of God and do not disgrace me!” ﴿70﴾ They said: “Did we not forbid you from ‘paying host to’ any person!” ﴿71﴾ He said: “These are my daughters⁽⁸⁹⁾, if you are bent on it!” ﴿72﴾ – ﴿90﴾ by your life ‘Muhammad’, they are verily wandering aimlessly ‘lost’ in their drunkenness! ﴿73﴾ The cry betook them at their sunrise! ﴿74﴾ We then turned it upside-down⁽⁹¹⁾ and We hailed them with stones of hard-set clay. ﴿75﴾ Verily in that are Signs for ⁽⁹²⁾those who read signs!

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تَحْزُونِ ۚ قَالَُوا أَوْلَيْتَنَّهُكَ
عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ هَؤُلَاءِ بَنَاتِي إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ فَعَلِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ لَعَمْرُكَ إِنَّهُمْ لَفِي سَكْرَتِهِمْ
يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَأَخَذْتَهُمُ الصَّيْحَةَ مُسْرِقِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾
فَجَعَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً
سِنِينَ سِجِّيلٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّأُمَّتٍ وَسِيمٍ ﴿٧٥﴾

- 89 Exegetes hold different opinions as to whom Prophet Lot (ﷺ) exactly meant by ‘my daughters’. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Riḍā and Ibn ‘Āshūr have it that he meant by these, given that a Prophet is the patriarch of his nation, the assaulters’ own women. On the other hand, other exegetes, for example, al-Baghawī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Jawāb al-Kāfī*, p. 172, are of the view that he actually meant his own biological daughters. al-Qāsimī further explains that this was to show that he was ready to protect his guests from defilement by whatever means was available, as a gesture of honour befitting a Prophet’s dictates, and in full realization that these men were only and wholeheartedly lusting after those of their own sex and that no such mere face-saving offer would lure them. Yet, Ibn al-Jawzī has it that this was an offer of marriage.
- 90 That God Almighty swears by the Noble Messenger’s (ﷺ) life (*la-‘amruka*) is the greatest honoring ever as it is not known that He swore by any other’s life (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Tibyān fī Aqsām al-Qur’ān*, p. 429) and that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) is the most honoured among God’s creation (cf. al-Rāzī). This interpolation by God Almighty for the benefit of the Messenger (ﷺ), though reflective on how carried away these criminals were in their madness, signals both proximity and closeness and, thus, further assurance. That God swears thus could also be taken to mean that no admonition no matter how reasonable it is, is ever useful with a person who is so drunk in his lust (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 91 Their villages were turned upside-down (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’ dī). Their human nature was twisted and, thus, their punishment was of its like (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*).
- 92 *al-Mutawassimūna* are those who take stock of details and think conscientiously; those who look deeply into signifying signs. Originally

﴿76﴾ And verily it is on a well-trodden path! ﴿77﴾ Verily in that is "enough" Sign for the Believers⁽⁹³⁾.

وَأِنَّهَا لَلسَّبِيلِ مُقِيمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً
لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

﴿78﴾ ⁽⁹⁴⁾Verily the people of the thicket were unjust! ﴿79﴾ We 'at once' took vengeance on them.

وَإِنْ كَانَتْ أَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾
فَأَنْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ ﴿٧٩﴾

wasm denotes a trace and a mark (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Such 'sign readers' are mentioned laudably here to imply that the Makkani idolaters are not counted among these mindful people. This closely pertains to the next aya where these ruins (marks and signs) are clearly visible on a 'well-trodden path' (*sabilin mubīn*), i.e. in Palestine (now Jordan), which is on their trading route to the Levant, but they fail to read them properly (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*, Ibn 'Āshūr).

- 93 The Believers are the real 'sign readers' (*al-Mutawassimūna*) who are prone to take both notice and stock of these signs (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). That Believers were genuinely *mutawassimūn* is borne out by their judicious reading of the Signs and ayas of God and, thus, their embracing Islam.

The Qur'an stresses the importance of reading signs and not taking things at face value. Indeed, God Almighty calls those who do not heed them and come to deduce conclusions thereof as 'ignorant' (*jāhilūn*): "Give out 'To the poor who are wholly wrapped up in the path of Allah; as they cannot move about the land. The ignorant thinks them well-off because of their reticence; you will know them by their signs—they do not beg of people importunately'" (2: 273); "And if We willed, We could show them 'the hypocrites' clearly to you 'Muhammad', and you would know them by their sign; but you will surely know them by the tone of 'their' speech" (47: 30).

- 94 The three ruined peoples who are mentioned in this sura have one notable thing in common; their ruins are 'signs' which were very familiar to the Qurayshites who used to frequently pass by them on their famed trading journey, but they failed to read them. This fact is specifically pointed out here: the ruins of the people of Lot (لوط) are said to be 'on a well-trodden path' (elsewhere the Makkans are said to pass by them 'day and night' yet take no heed of them (cf. 37: 137-138)), that of the people of the thicket (*aṣḥāb al-aykah*) (i.e. the people of Prophet Shu'ayb (شعيب) who lived in Madian, not far from the people of Lot) along with Lot's are said to be 'on a clearly discernible road' (*la-bi-imāmin mubīn*) and the most familiar of all, the people of Prophet Ṣāliḥ, who dwelled in Hegra (after which this sura is titled), not particularly far from Makkah, at whose very homes, a fact pointed out elsewhere (cf. 14: 45), the Makkans used to 'settle' and rest on their journey.

Indeed both of them⁽⁹⁵⁾ are on a clearly discernible road!⁽⁹⁶⁾ ^{﴿80﴾} Verily the people of al-Hijr called the Messengers liars. ^{﴿81﴾} We gave them Our Signs but they were 'constantly' turning away from them. ^{﴿82﴾} They were used to carve homes out of mountains 'feeling thus' secure!⁽⁹⁷⁾ ^{﴿83﴾} But the cry betook them at their daybreak. ^{﴿84﴾} Never was 'then' what they used to earn to avail them!

^{﴿85﴾} ⁽⁹⁸⁾We have created the Heavens and Earth with nothing but the Truth⁽⁹⁹⁾; the Hour is indeed coming⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

وَأَتَيْنَهُمَا لِيَامِرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أَصْحَابُ
الْحِجْرِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَإِذْ تَتَذَمَّرُ أَهْلُهَا فَأَكْرَأُوا
عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَكَانُوا يُنْحِتُونَ مِنَ
الْجِبَالِ مِيُونًَا مُّؤْتًا ءَامِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَآخَذَهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ
مُضْجِعِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا
يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَأْتِيَةٌ

- 95 That is, both the dwellings of the people of Prophet Lot (ﷺ) and the people of Prophet Shu'ayb (ﷺ) (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, Abū Ḥayyān). Both peoples were not contemporaries, but they resided in places which were aligned (cf. Ibn Kathīr) and were located on the trade route taken by the Qurayshites (cf. Ibn Kathīr).
- 96 *Imām Mubīn* (lit. a clear lead). The road is called *imām* (lit. leader) because travellers follow its lead to reach their destination (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyis al-Lughah*, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*).
- 97 These mountainous 'strongholds' gave them a false sense of security against, what they perceived as, all evils. Thus they felt shielded against any eventuality; be it God Almighty's Punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī); that they would cave in on them (cf. al-Qurṭubī); of death itself (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī), and/or from all fears and calamities (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī). Thus, they falsely felt untouchable (cf. al-Baidāwī).
- 98 This final passage puts things into perspective, addresses the current pressing issue and points out the way to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ). First, there is an assuring message to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) that God Almighty, the Just Creator of Heavens and Earth, Who exacted justice on these earlier nations as has been just detailed, will take revenge on his enemies on the Day of Judgement and will not abandon his case (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 99 The Heavens and Earth were not created in vain but rather for great benefits and wisdom; their creation is built on justice not on injustice and aggression (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī).
- 100 On this Hour, i.e. the Day of Judgement, people, including those who tormented the Noble Messenger (ﷺ), will be justly held accountable for their deeds (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).

so overlook 'Muhammad' a gracious overlooking⁽¹⁰¹⁾. ^{﴿86﴾} Verily your Lord 'Muhammad'; He is the Creator of everything, the All-Knowing⁽¹⁰²⁾. ^{﴿87﴾} ⁽¹⁰³⁾ Verily We have given you seven of the oft-repeated ones and the Grand Qur'an⁽¹⁰⁴⁾.

فَأَصْفَحَ الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيلَ ﴿٨٥﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ
الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ
الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْءَانَ الْعَظِيمَ ﴿٨٧﴾

101 Thus the Messenger (ﷺ) is to overlook their taunts and not to censure them for it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).

102 God Almighty, the Creator of everything, is Able to recreate His servants to stand up on the Day of Judgement, fully Knowing the scattered particles of their bodies and Who has an immaculate record of their deeds (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

103 A person who is contentedly aware of God's great favours on him, experiences inner peace and is more able of genuine forgiveness (cf. al-Rāzī).

104 Most exegetes deem this 'seven of the oft-repeated ones' to be Sura *al-Fātiḥah*, itself (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qurṭubī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, al-Shawkānī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*). Abū Sa'īd Ibn al-Mu'allā (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to him: "I shall inform you of the greatest sura of the Qur'an before you leave the mosque". Abū Sa'īd continues: "He took me by the hand and as he was about to leave the mosque, I said: "Messenger of Allah! You said: "I shall inform you of the greatest sura of the Qur'an". He said: "*Gratitude be to Allah the Lord of all beings*"; it is *al-sab' al-mathānī* (the oft-repeated seven) and *al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm* (the grand Qur'an) that I have been given"" (al-Bukhārī: 4703). Thus al-Qurṭubī and al-Shinqīṭī are of the opinion that *al-Fātiḥah* is also the 'grand Qur'an' mentioned here. The particle *wa* used here is not conjunctive, as much as it is, specifying (*takḥṣīṣiyyah*) (cf. al-Khaṭṭābī, *A'lām al-Ḥadīth*: 3: 1798).

Indeed *al-Fātiḥah* is a cure to the suffering heart and the ailing body (cf. al-Bukhārī: 2276).

Yet, another, well-considered opinion sees that these 'seven of the oft-repeated ones' to be the seven lengthy suras found at the beginning of the Qur'an, viz, *al-Baqarah* up to *al-Tawbah*, and that *al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm* (the grand Qur'an) is the rest of the Qur'an (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

Indeed the whole Qur'an is a cure to the suffering heart and the ailing body: "O people! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord and a healing for what is in the chests; a guidance and mercy for the Believers" (10: 57); "It 'the Qur'an' is a guidance and a healing for those who Believe" (41: 44).

﴿88﴾ (105) "Thus Muhammad' Do not linger your eyes on what We have made parties⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ of them enjoy, do not feel sad over them⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ and lower your wing⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ for the Believers. ﴿89﴾ (109) Say: "I am the clarifying warner!"⁽¹¹⁰⁾

لَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا
مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ
لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَقُلْ إِنِّي أَنَا النَّذِيرُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٩٠﴾

- 105 The great favour of the Qur'an far surpasses and overshadows all other favours and worldly gains (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): "And do not linger your eyes to what We have given parties of them to enjoy – the flower of the worldly life – that We may test them therein; the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring" (20: 131).
These, with their wealth and social standing, would have surely been a welcome addition to the ranks of Muslims, who were at that juncture of the call of Faith only few and mainly from a poor or disadvantaged background.
- 106 *Azwājan* literally means pairs; *zawj* is a one of an inseparable set of two (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). Here, it means those who are alike in prosperity (cf. al-Zajjāj quoted in al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*). Obviously, not all the Deniers were rich and prosperous.
- 107 The compassionate Noble Messenger (ﷺ) felt sad that these folks would not come to Believe and save themselves from Hellfire (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*): "But, perhaps you 'Muhammad' will grieve yourself to death over them, if they 'continue to' Deny in this Discourse" (18: 6); "Should you 'in your compassion, Muhammad' grieve yourself to death if they are not willing to Believe in this Discourse?" (18: 6); "So let not your soul 'Muhammad' go to waste in regrets over them" (35: 8).
- 108 That is humbling one's self to others, and being affable and kind to them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). This is a beautiful imagery of a bird lowering its wing as when it does to hug its young or draw its mate closer (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 109 This aya precludes Aya 94 below which very significantly marks a turning point in the Prophet's (ﷺ) mission (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 110 Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "My example and what Allah commissioned me with is like a man who comes upon certain people and says: "I saw an 'attacking' army 'closing in on you' with my own eyes! I am then the 'top' naked warner! Rush to safety! Rush to safety!" A group of them heeded his words, made their exit unhurriedly early in the night and were saved. Another group thought him a liar, the army came upon them early in the day and ran them over!" (al-Bukhārī: 6482; Muslim: 2283).

﴿90﴾ 'Against a Punishment⁽¹¹¹⁾'
 Like 'the one' We sent down
 on the dividers⁽¹¹²⁾; ﴿91﴾ those
 who separated the Qur'an into
 divisions. ﴿92﴾ By your Lord then
 'Muhammad', We shall ask them
 all ﴿93﴾ about what they used to do.
 ﴿94﴾ Declare forthrightly⁽¹¹³⁾ then
 what you are being commanded
 with and turn away from the
 Associators⁽¹¹⁴⁾. ﴿95﴾ ⁽¹¹⁵⁾We have

كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الْمُقْتَسِمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ الَّذِينَ
 جَعَلُوا الْقُرْآنَ عِضِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ فَوَرَّيْنَاكَ
 لَسْتَ لَهُمْ آجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾
 فَأَصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ إِنَّا

111 Cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī.

112 *al-Muqtasimīn* (lit. the dividers) were, as per many an exegete, a group among the Makkan idolaters who separated the Qur'an into divisions claiming each division to be either poetry, magic, scribbles of the ancients, soothsaying, or a pack of lies, etc., but never did they acknowledge its Divine source.

On the other hand, *al-muqtasimīn* could also mean the people of the Book who divided their *Qur'ān* (Recitations; the Torah and the Evangel) into parts; some they would reveal and believe in and some they would conceal and disbelieve in for which they deserved Divine punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Shinqīṭī, Ibn 'Āshūr). But it has also to be said that 'the dividers' are any group or nation, not any people in particular, who lacked respect for Divine Revelation and deserved punishment for this (cf. al-Ṭabarī).

This constitutes a direct warning to the Qurayshites, that they needed to treat the Qur'an respectfully, or they would be unpreventably punished (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr); especially the mockers who were forewarned in such a manner of their future destruction, as in the Battle of Badr and other instances (cf. al-Ras'anī).

113 *Iṣḍā'* is a command, a very robust one, to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) to declare his call openly in full view of people. The root *ṣ-d-'* denotes a crack and an opening in something (cf. cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*); that is to break apart Truth from falsehood so that everyone is in no doubt about where they stand (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

114 The Messenger (ﷺ) is to carry out this command in spite of all the opposition and derision of the Associators that he was up against (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

115 Since this command will inevitably be very tough for the Messenger (ﷺ), given the sustained opposition campaign he was witnessing, God Almighty gave him this assurance (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*): "O Messenger, convey what came down to you from your Lord 'fully', but if you do not do 'that', then you would have failed to deliver His Message; Allah will 'certainly' shield you from people" (5: 67).

indeed sufficed you against the ridiculers; ﴿96﴾ who set up with Allah another god—they shall come to know! ﴿97﴾ We may very well know that your chest constricts over what they say⁽¹¹⁶⁾. ﴿98﴾ (117) So glorify your Lord in gratitude and be among those who (118) prostrate ‘themselves’; ﴿99﴾ (119) and worship your Lord until what is certain⁽¹²⁰⁾ comes to you.

كَفَيْتَكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِئِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾ الَّذِينَ يَجْعَلُونَ
مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ
نَعَّمْنَا أَنْتَ بِصِدْرِكُ مَا يَقُولُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾
فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾
وَأَعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ ﴿٩٩﴾



- 116 This is how very hard their words fell on the Prophet’s (ﷺ) ears and how heavy his compassionate heart became with their taunts; he suffered greatly at their hands (cf. Muslim: 1795): “We ‘surely’ know that what they say saddens you” (6: 33).
- 117 The following is a recipe providing the remedy (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī): “So bear patiently ‘Muhammad’ that which they say and glorify your Lord in gratitude before the rising and setting of the sun, and during the night, and at the beginning and end of the day, so that you may find contentment!” (20: 130); “So bear patiently ‘Muhammad’ – verily the promise of Allah is true - ask for forgiveness for your sin and glorify your Lord in gratitude late and early ‘in the day’” (40: 55); “You who Believe, seek help in patience and Prayer—indeed Allah is with the patient!” (2: 153).
- 118 Prostrate in Prayer (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 119 Both glorification (*tasbīh*) and Prayer are of great merit but worship is not exclusive to them (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 120 It is unanimously agreed upon by well-respected exegetes that *al-yaqīn* (what is certain) here is death itself (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “We used to indulge with those who indulged ‘in falsehood’ *and we used to deny the Day of Reckoning *until what is certain came to us!” (74: 45-47). Umm al-‘Alā’ al-Anṣāriyyah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that when ‘Uthmān Ibn Maz‘ūn (رضي الله عنه) died the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “As for ‘Uthmān, by Allah, what is certain has come to him!” (al-Bukhārī: 2687; cf. also Muslim: 1889). The Messenger (ﷺ) is enjoined to worship God until death (cf. Abū Ḥayyān), and, by the same token, so are all devout servants of God.



سُورَةُ النَّحْلِ

al-Nahl
(Bees)



al-Naḥl (Bees)

Title: thus titled, *al-Naḥl* (Bees), after this wondrous little creature (cf. al-Bukhārī: 1077 and 3700, al-Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣā'ir Dhawī al-Tamyīz*, 1: 278). It is also known as *Sūrat al-Ni'am* (The Sura of Bounties; cf. Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn 'Āshūr) for the many God-given bounties that are enumerated within it. Throughout, this sura alternates between the counting of blessings and an invitation to open up one's eyes to the Signs of God. The 'bees' (mentioned in Ayas: 68-69), small insects that usually go unnoticed, are a great bounty from God, providing cure and sustenance for people and can be taken to underline how much we need to open up our eyes to feel God's bountiful mercy all around. The bees also showcase how rewarding and bountiful life would be for those who heed God's innate inspiration in their nature and follow the routes He has set for them.

Theme: it arrays the familiar themes of a late Makkan sura aimed mainly at dealing with Denial and exposing lack of Faith. It enumerates the many evidences of God's creation of the universe (the Heavens and the Earth, human beings and livestock, the moon and the sun, night and day, mountains and seas, fruits and plants) and His ability over everything and, thus, His deservedness of being worshipped alone; citing the many bounties and blessings that God has given to humans, and thereby discrediting all falsely claimed deities; warning against a comeuppance similar to that of past nations; underlining the great merit and infallibility of the Qur'an, being the guiding Message of God, and, drawing attention to some of the sterling manners that this Call of Truth is inviting people to.

Key: this is a unanimously Makkan sura (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Māwardī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Zamakhsharī). The backdrop here is that of the Makkan idolaters' stiff, violent opposition, outright arrogance and entrenched rejection to the Call of Monotheism, i.e., to worship God Almighty Alone, Associating none with Him. This explains the constant reminder of God Almighty's sole worthiness to worship through the evidence of the many Signs of which they were willingly heedless and the countless blessings with which He showers people (the ones mentioned here were very relevant to their way of life). It also reminds of the threat of subtle, unperceivable destruction for their Associating false deities with Him, their scorning the revelation and being ungrateful for His great bounties as also causing their Messenger (ﷺ) great hardships in the process.

On the other hand, the Noble Messenger (ﷺ), and, by the same token, the Believers around him, are directed to bear patiently and to carry on with delivering the Message, undaunted.

al-Nahl is a clear call to open up the eyes, free up the mind and use the intellect to come to Believe and be truly thankful to God for His innumerable blessings; if people do not come to Him in gratefulness and servitude, they will come to Him spurred by hardship and vicissitude.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿1﴾ Allah's Command has come⁽¹⁾ so do not seek to hasten it; Glorified and High Aloof is He above all they Associate⁽²⁾ 'with Him'!

إِنَّا أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١﴾

- 1 The sura opens up with this urgent, yet subtle threat; a threat that runs throughout the sura to underline the fact that God's Punishment is ever overshadowing those who incur His Wrath (cf. Ayas: 26, 33, 45-47, 77 and 112). This is so that the Deniers may see reason and become mindful (another theme that the sura emphasizes).

This aya could be taken as a direct reply to the Makkan idolater's 'insistent' request from the Noble Prophet to 'bring upon' them (*i'tinā*, bring us; an imperative form of *atā*) what he was promising them, i.e. God's Command as in Aya 8: 32. It is also revealing to note that many earlier rebellious nations, who, to mark their utter denial, requested the expedition of their Punishment, by addressing their Messengers with the very same brazen words, cf. 7: 70 and 77, 8: 32, 11: 32, 29: 29, 46:22).

The expression used here is very much similar in its sense and sensation to that used in Sura *al-Naml*, which marks the very same dire circumstances, i.e. the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) being saddened by the stance his tribe took to his call, in essence being troubled by their plotting against it (there Aya 70, which describes the Messenger's (ﷺ) state of mind is exactly parallel (*mutashābih*) with Aya 127 at the end of this sura). There, they requested him to bring upon them the 'promise' of punishment and the just as subtle reply came: "*It may be well that, some of what you seek to hasten is closing in on you!*" (27: 72). The verb *atā*, used in this aya also marks the imminence and certainty of the coming (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). The situation in Makkah at the time of revelation, and the zenith of the persecution campaign mounted by the Deniers, was so dire that only such an urgently worded statement could have driven the message home.

Amru Allāh could either mean (among other lesser senses of the expression, cf. Ibn 'Aṭṭīyah) the infliction of punishment (cf. Aya 33 below; al-Wāḥidi, *al-Wajīz*, *al-Taḥsīn al-Mukhtaṣar*) or the Day of Judgement, which is said to be 'akin to a blink of an eye or 'even' faster' (cf. Aya 77 below; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). That neither one of them is clearly stated further emphasizes the subtlety of the threat being posed as also clouds its exact nature in ambiguity by way of imparting upon it the magnitude that it merits (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Ibn 'Āshūr also notes that elsewhere in the Qur'an it is called *wa'du Allāh* (Allah's Promise; cf. among others: 10: 4 and 55, 13: 31, 30: 9, 45: 32) and *ajalu Allāh* (Allah's Term; cf. for instance: 29: 5, 71: 4).

- 2 This most egregious of all sins, Associating (*shirk*) other deities with God, is what made them incur His Wrath (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). What follows is a thorough detailing of God's sole worthiness of worship, which in the process, discredits all other so-called deities they invoke besides Him (cf. al-Biqā'i, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

﴿2﴾ He 'successively' sends down angels with the Soul⁽³⁾ – by His Command⁽⁴⁾ – to whoever He wishes of His servants⁽⁵⁾, that: “You ‘Messengers’ should warn ‘people’ that there is no God but Me, so be Mindful of Me!”⁽⁶⁾ ﴿3﴾ He created the Heavens and Earth⁽⁷⁾

يُنزِلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى
مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرُوا أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ
إِلَّا أَنَا فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٣﴾ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ

- 3 *al-Rūḥ* (lit. soul, spirit) is Divine revelation (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). It is called so because it breathes life in people after going through the ‘death’ of Denial, just as a soul does to a body, and/or because in revelation do souls find life (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*): “Thus We have revealed to you ‘Muhammad’ a Soul – by Our Command – ‘when’ you were aware of neither the Book nor Belief, but We made it a light with which We guide whoever We wish of Our servants!” (42: 52). This is the first bounty (*ni’ mah*) of the many accounted for here in this sura of bounties (*sūrat al-ni’am*) (cf. Ibn Rajab, *Majmū’ al-Rasā’il*, 3: 74).
- 4 *Min amrihi* literally means: from His Command. Exegetes are of two opinions as to what the particle *min* means: the partitive *min* (*al-tab’iyyah*), i.e. a portion of it, i.e. the Command, but not its entirety (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*), or that this action of revelation happens by virtue of God’s Command (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Qurṭubī).
- 5 The notification that God singles out whomever He wills of His servants for the lofty status of Prophethood and Messengership is in reply to the Makkan Deniers who held the opinion that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) was not worthy of it (cf. 43: 31; al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*).
- 6 This is the core message of all revelation; that people are to Associate none with God in worship: “We have not sent any Messenger before you ‘Muhammad’ but We reveal to him that: “There is no God but Me, so worship Me ‘Alone’!”” (21: 25). Stating this fact here is by way of warning people against God’s Punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). Fully heeding the warning of God’s sole worthiness of worship and having perfect knowledge of what it really means, will surely lead to the perfection of one’s deeds through being ‘mindful’ of Him at all times (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). It is important to note that the “Mindful”, as opposed to the “unmindful”, are, especially, taken notice of in this sura, cf. Ayas: 30 and 128; with Mindfulness (*taqwā*) being this lofty status that truly devoted servants of God strive to achieve.
- 7 God’s foremost undisputed sign of Power is that of creation, especially that of the largest humanly perceivable creations, the Heavens and Earth, over which none else is capable (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Is the One Who creates ‘then be’ like the one who does not create; do you not think!” (16: 17).

with the Truth⁽⁸⁾; High Aloof is He above all they Associate 'with Him'! ⁽⁴⁾ He created man⁽⁹⁾ from a 'mere' drop and lo, he is an articulate, 'ardent' opponent!⁽¹⁰⁾

بِالْحَقِّ تَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ
مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٤﴾

⁽⁵⁾ ⁽¹¹⁾And livestock He created; for you 'people' in them you have warmth⁽¹²⁾ and 'numerous' benefits, and from them you eat⁽¹³⁾.

وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ
وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٥﴾

- 8 The creation of the Heavens and Earth is for a valid reason (the Truth); so that people will come to realize the greatness and omnipotence of their Creator, and that He is not be Associated with in worship: "High Aloof is He above all they Associate 'with Him'!" (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 9 This is another great sign of God's wondrous omnipotence; the creation of humans, who most remarkably metamorphose from mere semen, "contemptible water" (77: 20), to a being who is fully able to articulate his thoughts and stand up for a cause (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "May man perish! How 'ardently' Denying is he! *From what thing did He create him?* From a drop He created Him!" (80: 17-19).
- 10 The ones who are meant here are, especially, the Associators who deny God's Ability over resurrection, argue against the Truth and are ungrateful for God's favours and blessings (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān): "Could not man see that We created him from a drop and lo, he is an articulate, 'ardent' opponent; * he poses an example to Us, forgetting his 'own' creation, and says: "Who gives life to bones when they are 'but' crumbled to dust!"" (36: 77-78).
- 11 This passage underlines the bounty of livestock, which is, especially to the Arabs at the time of revelation, central to people's lives and livelihoods (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). This very practical bounty is most worthy of gratefulness (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 12 The benefits of warmth, gained from clothing and homes made from animal hair and hide, is singled out and foregrounded because it is the most constant use that humans find for livestock at all times (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 13 The benefits of livestock abound and are too many to be listed. They were considered as currency and a sign of wealth, used for tillage, riding, drawing water from wells, etc. (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīl*, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Rāzī). However, warmth and food are the most essential benefits, so that they are singled out here (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). That warmth is mentioned first is because it lasts longer than food (cf. al-Rāzī).

﴿6﴾ For you in them is ‘pleasure-inducing’ beauty⁽¹⁴⁾ when you return back ‘late in the day’ and when you set off ‘early in the morning’⁽¹⁵⁾. ﴿7﴾ They⁽¹⁶⁾ too carry your weights⁽¹⁷⁾ to a town that you would not have reached except with great pain⁽¹⁸⁾—verily your Lord is Ever-Kind, Ever-Merciful. ﴿8﴾ And horses, mules and donkeys ‘are created⁽¹⁹⁾ for you’ to ride on and ‘as’ an adornment⁽²⁰⁾ ‘for you’; He creates that which you know not of!⁽²¹⁾

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرْجَعُونَ وَحِينَ تَسْرَحُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَتَحْمِلُ أَوْقَالَكُمْ إِلَى الْبَلَدِ لَمْ تَكُونُوا بِلَاغِهِ إِلَّا بَشِقِ الْأَنْفُسِ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨﴾

- 14 *Jamāl* (lit. beauty) conveys a pleasure-inducing beauty (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). For Arabs, the sight of these animals brought unparalleled joy and satisfaction; they were a sign of opulence and status (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīt*, al-Rāzī): “Wealth and children are the adornment of the worldly life!” (18: 46).
- 15 Their returning back from grazing pasture late in the day is mentioned before their setting off to pasture early in the morning, because that is when their udders, waists and humps are at their fullest and thus more pleasing to the eye of the beholder, especially their proud owner (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 16 Especially, the camels in the Arabian Peninsula (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Āshūr) but also oxen in other parts of the world (cf. Ibn Abī Zamanīn, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).
- 17 People and their luggage (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 18 *Shiqqu al-anfusi* (lit. the breaking of the breath) is the state human beings experience after exerting great effort when they can hardly draw breath (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).
- 19 Cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr.
- 20 They are both eye-pleasing in and of themselves (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr) and impart adornment to their riders (cf. *al-Taḥsīn al-Muyassar*, *al-Taḥsīn al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 21 This could be with regards to the creatures mentioned here themselves, i.e. that God’s creation is not to be thought of as limited to them, or specifically their usage for riding and transportation (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Bayḍawī, al-Khāzin, *al-Taḥsīn al-Muyassar*). Latter-day exegetes, notably, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Sa’dī and al-Shinqīṭī, see that it could also include modern-day means of transportation (cars, planes and trains).

﴿9﴾ (22) 'However' The showing of the 'straight' path is on Allah⁽²³⁾, but some 'paths' are skewed⁽²⁴⁾. Had Allah wished, He would have guided all of you⁽²⁵⁾.

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَائِرٌ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَىٰكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩﴾

﴿10﴾ (26) He is the One Who sends down water⁽²⁷⁾ from the sky for you; in it for you is drink and from it 'He grows' the vegetation⁽²⁸⁾

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ

- 22 Now that the physical roads that people ride on their mounts to travel to reach their destinations have been mentioned, the great bounty of the abstract 'straight path' that God makes clear in the Qur'an to reach His Pleasure, is no less germanely, turned to (cf. Ibn Kathīr).
- 23 This translation is a reflection of the choice of most exegetes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*) for the meaning of the Arabic wording, *'alā Allah-i qaṣd al-sabīl*. An equally strong interpretation, held by such exegetes as Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, sees it to mean: "the taking of the 'straight' path leads to Allah"; "*verily my Lord is on a Straight Path!*" (11: 56).
- 24 *Jā'ir* (lit. tilted) is the opposite of straight leading (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-İṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*): "*Indeed this is My path, Straight, so follow it and do not follow the 'diverse' roads and get driven away from His road; that He bade you so that you may become Mindful!*" (6: 153).
- 25 God Almighty guides whomever He wills with favour and misguides whomever He wills with justice (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī). The blighted are those who are heedless of God's Signs and warnings (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī): "*Had your Lord wished, the dwellers of Earth, all of them together, would Believe; do you 'Muhammad' force people 'in spite of themselves' till they become Believers! *It is not for a soul to Believe except by Allah's permission; and He places blight over those who mind not!*" (10: 99-100).
- 26 This passage details further bounties from God that people are to be rightfully mindful of and grateful for (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Note that the adverbial phrase *lakum* (for you) is repeated in the next four ayas by way of underscoring the bounties that God Almighty has provided people with.
- 27 Water is the greatest bounty after that of creation; it is essential for the sustenance of life for both humans and their animals, as well as the fruits and crops that need it for growth (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 28 *Shajar* literally means trees, but by extension it means all the vegetation that grows after rain; all that grows on the ground is *shajar* (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*).

to which you send out 'your cattle grazing fodder'. ⁴¹¹ He grows thereof for you plants, olives, palm trees, grapes and of all 'sorts' of produce⁽²⁹⁾; indeed in that is a Sign⁽³⁰⁾ to folks who contemplate! ⁴¹² He subjected to you night and day and the sun and the moon⁽³¹⁾; and the stars are subjected⁽³²⁾

فِيهِ تُسْمَوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ يُثْبِتُ لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالنَّخِيلَ وَالْأَعْنَابَ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١١﴾ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ

- 29 The examples of plants given here were to the Arabs at the time of revelation their most used staple foods (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Such an assortment of products is also given here to highlight the great wonder that although all these are irrigated with the same water, they come in different kinds, tastes, smells, colours and shapes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).
- 30 *Āyah* (Sign) is singular here because all of these products are the result of one thing, i.e. the water that God Almighty sends down from the sky (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*), thus they are included within this one Sign (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa'adah*, 1: 213).
- 31 The day in which people go about their living and the night during which they get rest are great bounties of God's: "Say: "Would you not see that if Allah were to make the night perpetually unceasing over you till the Day of Judgement, what god besides Allah could bring you light; will you not listen!" *Say: "Would you not see that if Allah were to make the day perpetually unceasing over you till the Day of Judgement, what god besides Allah could bring you night in which you rest; will you not see!" *Out of His Mercy He made night and day for you, so that you may rest in it 'the former' and seek out His favour 'during the latter'; will you be thankful!" (28: 71-73).
This much are the sun and the moon by which people find their ways, know about time and timings, and whereby the sun ripens crops. They are unceasingly co-orbiting along with the Earth bringing with them renewed benefits to humans, livestock and crops (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr): "He is the One Who made the sun a glow and the moon a light and ordained for it stations so that you 'may' know the number of years and calculation 'of time'. Never has Allah created that except for the Truth; He details the Signs for those who attain knowledge. *Verily in the alternation of night and day, and whatever Allah has created in the Heavens and Earth are Signs for the Mindful ones" (10: 5-6).
- 32 The stars and their stations are crucial for people to know the directions to exact locations in the darkness of the sea and the land (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr): "He is the One Who made the stars for you 'as Signs' so that you may find the way through them amid the 'deep' darkness of the land and sea—indeed We have detailed the Signs to those who 'really' know!" (6: 97).

by His Command—indeed in that are Signs to folks who heed! ﴿13﴾ And all that He scattered for you in the land of different colours⁽³³⁾; indeed in that is a Sign to folks who reason! ﴿14﴾ He is the One Who subjected the sea⁽³⁴⁾ so that you may eat from it tender flesh⁽³⁵⁾ and from it you bring out ornaments that you wear⁽³⁶⁾; and you see vessels cavitating⁽³⁷⁾ through it⁽³⁸⁾; ‘He subjected it’

مُسَخَّرَاتٌ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَا ذَرَأْنَا لَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لِتَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَتَرَى الْفُلَكَ مَوَازِرَ فِيهِ

- 33 The landmark bounties scattered all over the sky are no less matched by those to be found in the land; be they animals, minerals, plants and inanimate objects (cf. Ibn Kathīr). These are of different colours, shapes, types and benefits (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Qurtubī): “*He is the One Who fashioned gardens, trellised and untrellised, palm dates and greenery of various edibles, and olive and pomegranate resembling each other but are not similar, eat ‘you’ of its fruits when it yields and give out the given right out of it on the day of its harvest; and do not squander, for He does not like the squanderers*” (6: 141).
- 34 The sea being no less important than both the sky and the land, has also been subjected by God Almighty for the benefit of humans (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 35 Such is the extent of the subjection of the sea, that people are able to get out of it such succulent, perfectly palatable flesh as that of fish when the water they live off and die in is so saline and unpalatable (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Food is the most salient benefit of the sea, so much so that this is emphasized above the other benefits (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). Bringing out such opposites from each other violates the nature of things and, thus, is indicative of a Sign of the Ability of the Creator (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 36 “*Out of both come forth pearls and coral!*” (55: 22).
- 37 *Mawākhirā* (translated here as cavitating) describes both the manner and sound of how these vessels travel: their breaking through water (ploughing) and the sound produced as a result of it (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, al-Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-Balāghah*, 2: 198).
- 38 Yet another great sign and bounty from God, that ships and vessels, heavy as they are, run smoothly on the face of as delicate a substance as water without sinking (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Khāzin, Ibn Kathīr): “*And among His Signs are the ships that sail like ‘floating’ mountains through the seas;*

so that you may seek out His favours⁽³⁹⁾ and that you may become thankful! ﴿15﴾ He cast⁽⁴⁰⁾ in Earth firmly-set ‘stabilizers’, so that it may not quake with you⁽⁴¹⁾, and rivers⁽⁴²⁾ and paths⁽⁴³⁾ so that you may find your way; ﴿16﴾ and marks and by the stars do they find their way!⁽⁴⁴⁾

وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾
وَأَلْقَى فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ
وَأَنْهَارًا وَسُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَعَلَّمَتِ
وَالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

** if He so wills, He stills the wind, and then they lie motionless on its surface - ‘and’ herein, there are signs indeed for all who are wholly patient ‘in adversity’ and deeply grateful ‘to Allah’; *or He can wreck them ‘the ships’ for what they ‘people’ have committed—though He forgives much!”* (42: 32-34).

- 39 By the grace of God Almighty, the benefits of the sea are immeasurable and, thus, especially merit thankfulness and gratitude (cf. Abū al-Su‘ūd, al-Sa‘dī).
- 40 *Alqā* (to cast, throw) could mean that mountains were not originally created as part of the Earth but came in later (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah). Also it could mean that because mountains, rivers and paths are complimentary to Earth, the verb *alqā* is used as if they were ‘thrown in’ later on (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 41 Part of making Earth habitable is that its crust is maintained with stabilizing mountains (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*And the Earth, We have spread, cast in it firmly-set ‘stabilizers’ and grew in it everything in balance*” (15: 19).
- 42 Rivers are placed on Earth to the benefit of humans in that they are like bloodlines made to run from one place to another covering great stretches of land spreading life along their banks; people drink from them along with their livestock, grow crops, and travel fore and aft (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Basīṭ, al-Qurṭubī): “*Allah Who created the Heavens and Earth; sent water down from the sky and grew with it ‘all sorts of’ produce as provisions for you; subjected to you vessels running in the sea with His command; and subjected rivers to you!*” (14: 32).
- 43 Easy to go along paths are essential for human life and are also used for guidance and to get one’s bearings (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 44 As much as using paths for directions, people are served with landmarks to find their way during the daytime and the stars to locate the direction at night (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Rāzī). God Almighty, the Most Merciful, would not leave His servants without guidance, either Heavenly or worldly.

﴿17﴾ Is the One Who creates 'then be' like the one who does not create; do you not think!⁽⁴⁵⁾ ﴿18﴾ Should you 'endeavour to' enumerate Allah's Bliss, you shall never round it up; verily Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful⁽⁴⁶⁾.

أَفَمَن يَخْلُقُ كَمَن لَّا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾
وَأَن تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾

﴿19﴾ ⁽⁴⁷⁾ Allah knows what you hide and what you make public. ﴿20﴾ Those whom they invoke besides Allah create nothing, but they 'themselves' are 'being' created⁽⁴⁸⁾;

وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُسْرُوتَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ﴿١٩﴾
وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

- 45 This is the natural conclusion that sound minds would cull from contemplating (Aya 11), heeding (Aya 12), reasoning (Aya 13) and thinking (Aya 17) about all these bountiful signs (cf. al-Rāzī); that far apart is the One True God Who is Able over creation and those false so-called gods that the Associators pray to besides Him: “*They took besides Him deities who create nothing, but they ‘themselves’ are created; nor do they own for themselves neither harm or benefit, nor do they own death, life nor resurrection!*” (25: 3).
- 46 God Almighty’s favours on people are by no means limited to the one’s mentioned here (cf. al-Zamaksharī). People can never count up all of God’s blessings on them, let alone be duly thankful for them; but God is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī). The mention of this fact here may serve two purposes: for those who Believe to be truly grateful to God Almighty for His many bounties on them and, thus, profusely thank Him for it all. It could also be taken to show how egregious the Denial of the Associators is, when they denied the favours of All-Bountiful God (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 47 Since the Makkan Associators are implicated in all of that which preceded, i.e., are chastised for Associating with God Almighty and denying His infinite favours, they are being directly addressed here to warn them against their secret plotting to thwart the call of Faith (cf. al-Rāzī). Moreover, that God Almighty Knows their secrets and what they publicly disclose is yet another Sign of His limitless Ability; a far cry from the so-called gods they have set up beside Him, who themselves are but created! (Cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*.)
- 48 This fact goes on to further underline the unworthiness of their deities and strip them of their feigned ‘godhood’. They are no more than the creation of their own worshippers who are themselves created by the One True God (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*He said: “Do you worship that which you ‘yourselves’ carve!”*” (37: 95).

﴿21﴾ 'they are' dead not alive⁽⁴⁹⁾ and they know not when they will be resurrected!⁽⁵⁰⁾ ﴿22﴾ Your God is One God⁽⁵¹⁾; yet those who do not Believe in the Hereafter, their hearts are in denial and they are being 'inherently' snobbish⁽⁵²⁾. ﴿23﴾⁽⁵³⁾ Without a doubt, Allah knows what they hide and what they make public; verily He loves not the snobbish!⁽⁵⁴⁾ When it is said to them: "What has your Lord sent down?"

أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ
يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَالَّذِينَ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مُنْكَرَةٌ وَهُمْ
مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ لَاجِرَمَ آتَى اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
مَا لَيْسَ رَوَى وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُسْتَكْبِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ مَاذَا أَنْزَلَ
رَبُّكُمْ

- 49 Even this most basic characteristic of whomever is to be thought of as 'god', that is life itself, is not possessed by their gods, who are no more than inanimate objects (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 50 Gods who are worthy of the name can at least know what the future holds for themselves as well as for their worshippers (cf. *al-Taḥsīn al-Muyassar*, *al-Taḥsīn al-Muḥarrar*).
- 51 This is the reasonable conclusion reached after all these proofs and arguments (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). But the Deniers, who do not Believe in the Hereafter, or that they will be brought to account over their deeds, will disdainfully refuse to admit it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, Abū Ḥayyān): "The Deniers said: "Did he 'their Messenger' turn all of the gods into a One God; this is truly an astonishing thing 'to claim'!" (38: 5).
- 52 Their arrogance (*takabbur*) and snobbery (*istikbār*) is the real underlying reason why they deny God's Signs, and rebut the Truth. Pride, vanity, conceit, vainglory and ego are but shields that stand between a person and their sound reason. They are diseases which are stashed up in the heart but no matter how hard a person tries to conceal them will inevitably show in their behaviour. Al-Qurṭubī reports that: "The sages agree that: 'Every sin can be concealed and suppressed except arrogance. It is a transgression that necessitates announcement; it is the origin of all rebellion!'"
- 53 The fact already stated in Aya 19 above, but in general terms, is being vigorously asserted and reiterated here with its direct intendants being revealed. This constitutes a direct threat to the Associators (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*) that God Almighty, Who Knows all their secret and public deeds and beliefs, will hold them to exacting account over them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Sa'dī). This is due to their arrogance and snobbishness (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr): "Indeed they have become too proud of themselves and excessively insolent!" (25: 21).

They would say: “Scribbles of the ancients!”⁽⁵⁴⁾ ⁽²⁵⁾ Let them ‘then’ carry all their ‘burdensome’ sins on the Day of Judgment, and some of the ‘burdensome’ sins of those whom they mislead⁽⁵⁵⁾ out of ignorance; sordid indeed is the burden they carry!⁽⁵⁶⁾

⁽²⁶⁾ ⁽⁵⁷⁾ Those before them indeed plotted, then Allah came to their building⁽⁵⁸⁾ from the bases and the roof fell on them from the top; the punishment came on them whereof they knew not.

قَالُوا السَّطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ لِيَحْمِلُوا أَوْزَارَهُمْ
كَأَمَلَةٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمِنْ أَوْزَارِ الَّذِينَ
يُضِلُّوهُمْ بَعِيرٌ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَسَاءَ مَا يَزِرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَأَتَى اللَّهُ بُنْيَانَهُمْ
مِنَ الْقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَّ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّقْفُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ
وَأَنَّهُمْ الْعَادَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

- 54 “And when Our Signs are recited to them, they say: “We have listened! Had we wished, we would have come up with something like this; this is nothing but merely ‘a retelling of the` scribbles of the ancients!’” (8: 31).
- 55 Their plotting involved, among other things, driving people away from the Call of Faith (c.f. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Whoever calls to guidance will have a reward in equal measure to that of whoever follows him; none of their reward will be subtracted. Whoever calls to misguidance will incur as much of ‘burdensome’ sin as that of whoever follows him; none of their ‘burdensome’ sins will be subtracted” (Muslim: 2674).
- 56 “Losers indeed are those who deny the meeting of Allah, until when the Hour comes upon them all of a sudden, they would say: “Woe be us for wasting it ‘our lives’!” They would carry their “burdensome’ sins over their backs—sordid indeed is what they carry!” (6: 31).
- 57 Their plotting will only have them meet the inauspicious fate of those who came before them. Their plotting will come to nothing and collapse (cf. al-Shawkānī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 58 This ‘building’ is taken to mean both a real (as the ones built by earlier nations) and an allegorical one (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). God will, while they are absolutely unaware of it, come to their structure of deceits and lies, undermine its foundations to topple it, sending the roof, which they thought their protection, tumbling down over their heads: “They plotted some plot and We planned some plan, while they perceived not. *Behold then what the consequence of their plot was; We ‘utterly’ destroyed them and their people all together” (27: 50-51).

﴿27﴾ Then on the Day of Judgement, He disgraces⁽⁵⁹⁾ them and says: “Where are My Associates whom you used to pit yourselves against the Prophets and Believers⁽⁶⁰⁾ for their sake?” The ones who were given knowledge then⁽⁶¹⁾ said: “Verily disgrace and evil are today on the Deniers;”⁽²⁸⁾ whom the angels take their lives, being unjust to themselves! They then conceded defeat and said: “We did not do any evil!” Nay, but Allah is fully aware of what you used to do! ﴿29﴾ Enter you then the gates of Hell; forever you abide therein—miserable indeed is the domicile of the arrogant!

﴿30﴾⁽⁶²⁾ And it is said to those who had been Mindful: “What has your Lord sent down?” They said:

ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُخْزِيهِمْ وَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ
شُرَكَاءِى الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تُشْتَقُونَ فِيهِمْ
قَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ إِنَّ الْآخِرَى الْيَوْمِ
وَالْأُولَى عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ الَّذِينَ تَوَقَّعْتُمْ
الْمَلَائِكَةَ ظَالِمِيْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ فَاَلْقَوْا التَّسْلِمَ مَا
كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ مِنْ سُوْءٍ بَلَىٰ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَاَدْخَلُوْا الْاَبْوَابَ
جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا فَلَيْسَ مَثْوًى
لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾

* وَقِيلَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا مَاذَا أَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا

59 *al-Khizy* is disgrace tinged with humiliation and shameful exposure (cf. al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *Umdat al-Huffāz*). “Disgrace” is a most befitting punishment for arrogance as it kills its substance (cf. al-Sha‘rāwī). God Almighty will disgrace them on the Day of Judgement by exposing, before all, what they used to hide (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

60 Cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*.

61 Exegetes are of different opinions as to who “the ones who were given knowledge” exactly are. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah has it that these are those to whom God has given knowledge, humans, angels, etc., and are witness to this event. While Ibn ‘Ashūr sees them to be the ones given knowledge of the Truth among the Messengers, Prophets and the Believers. However, they are mostly agreed to be the godly scholars (*al-‘ulamā’ al-rabbāniyyūn*) (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*). al-Sa‘dī says: “This is how meritorious are the knowledgeable who speak out the Truth in this life and in the Hereafter; they have their well-considered opinion before Allah and before His creation!”

62 The fate of the arrogant, who denied the Truth and pitted themselves against it, is totally different from that of the Mindful, who embraced the Truth, willingly submitted themselves to it and translated it into their daily lives and actions (cf. al-Sa‘dī).

“What is ‘abundantly’ good!”⁽⁶³⁾ For those who do well⁽⁶⁴⁾ in the worldly life is a comely ‘reward’. Yet the Abode of the Hereafter is ‘even’ better⁽⁶⁵⁾—admirable indeed is the Abode of the Mindful! ⁽³¹⁾ Gardens of Eternity⁽⁶⁶⁾ they enter; under which rivers flow. For them therein whatever they wish for⁽⁶⁷⁾—thus Allah rewards the well-doers. ⁽³²⁾ ⁽⁶⁸⁾Those whom the angels take their lives, being ‘full of’ good⁽⁶⁹⁾.

خَيْرًا لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً
وَلَدَارًا الْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَلَنِعَمَ دَارَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾
جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ كَذَلِكَ
يَجْزِي اللَّهُ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمْ
الْمَلَائِكَةَ طَيِّبِينَ

- 63 As opposed to the reply of the Deniers whom when asked about the Qur’an that God Almighty sent down to His Messenger would disdainfully say: “Scribbles of the ancients”, the Believers’ reply was always truthful: “What is abundantly good”. A ‘good’ that is a mercy, advantageous, and a beam of light to those who come to Believe in it and follow it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 64 Those who do well (*aḥsanū*) in their worship and do good to other servants of God, will have the comely reward (*ḥasanah*) of leading a good, plentiful and satisfying life in this world (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Ashūr): “And that you should seek your Lord’s forgiveness and thereafter repent to Him; ‘may’ He make you enjoy pleasurable until a stated term and grant every good doer ‘the reward of’ his good doing!” (11: 3)
- 65 The ever-lasting abode of the Hereafter is way better than that of this mayfly life (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*).
- 66 *Jannātu ‘Adn* (lit. Gardens of Eternal Residence) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “In the Gardens of Eternity, ‘there are’ two gardens their utensils and all that is there is made of silver; ‘and another’ two gardens their utensils and all that is there is made of gold. Nothing separates its dwellers from seeing their Lord except the Mantle of Loftiness on His Face” (al-Bukhārī: 4878, Muslim: 180).
- 67 Very much unlike this worldly life, the dwellers of Paradise can have it all (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 68 This is another comparison that distinguishes between the Mindful, who, even at the time of their deaths, are “full of good”, and the arrogant who, even at the time of their deaths, are “unjust to themselves” (Aya 28 above) (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 69 They are *ṭayyibūna* (full of good) in that they are purified from Associations, sins and all that dents their Faith (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *Adwā’ al-Bayān*).

They say: “Peace be upon you! Enter Paradise for what you used do!”⁽⁷⁰⁾

﴿33﴾ ⁽⁷¹⁾Do they ‘the Associators’ expect ‘nothing’ but that the angels come upon them⁽⁷²⁾, or that your Lord’s Command⁽⁷³⁾ comes! Like so did those who came before them do⁽⁷⁴⁾—Allah did not wrong them but they used to wrong themselves. ﴿34﴾ The evils of what they did befell them and they got hit by what they used to ridicule⁽⁷⁵⁾.

﴿35﴾ ⁽⁷⁶⁾Those who Associate say:

يَقُولُونَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ أَمْرٌ رَبِّكَ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَاصْبِرْ لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتٍ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا

- 70 “And those who had been Mindful of their Lord will be led towards Paradise in throngs and when they come upon it, its gates open, and its keepers will say to them: “Peace be upon you! Good you are; so enter it to abide eternally therein!” *They will say: “All Gratitude be to Allah, Who has fulfilled His Promise to us and made us inherit the land ‘so’ we may settle in Paradise wherever we will—how excellent is the reward of ‘righteous workers!’” (39: 73-74).
- 71 This urgent yet obscure threat relates to and sheds light on the opening aya of this sura, where they are told that God’s Command “has come”.
- 72 To take their souls while they are “being unjust to themselves” (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 73 “Your Lord’s Command” (*amru Rabbika*) could mean the Command of their punishment in this worldly life (cf. Muqātil, al-Wāhidī, al-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, Abū al-Su’ūd, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 74 They persisted in their Denial and went too far with their Association until they met their demise (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). “Indeed, Messengers before you were ridiculed, but those who used to ridicule them got hit by what they ridiculed. *Say ‘Muhammad’: “Travel the land and look what was the fate of the Deniers” (6: 10-11).
- 75 “Indeed, Messengers before you ‘Muhammad’ were ridiculed, and I allowed the Deniers time then I took them; how was then My Punishment!” (13: 32).
- 76 This goes on to show how they used to endlessly argue with the Messenger of God (ﷺ) in order not to get at the Truth but rather to thwart his sincere arguments against their preposterously heathen ways (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr); yet making his mission all the more arduous.

“Had Allah wished, we would not have worshipped anything besides Him, neither us nor our fathers; we would not ‘even’ have forbidden anything without Him!”⁽⁷⁷⁾ Like so did those ‘who came’ before them do! Are the Messengers, then, tasked with anything but clear delivery ‘of the Message!’⁽⁷⁸⁾ ﴿36﴾ Verily, We had sent a Messenger in every nation, ‘to deliver’ that: “You should worship Allah and shun false idols!”

لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا عَدَدْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
نَحْنُ وَلَا آبَاءُ آبَائِنَا وَلَا أَحْرَامَنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَهَلْ عَلَى الرَّسُولِ
إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ
أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنْ عَبَّدُوا اللَّهَ وَأَجْتَبُوا
الطَّغُوتَ

77 They argue by citing predestination (*al-qaḍā' wa al-qadar*), yet they were given the ability to choose the path to follow in life whilst being sent Messengers to show them the right path: “*And pointed out to him ‘man’ the two clear ways ‘of good and evil’?*” (90: 10); “*We showed him the way, be he thankful or be he ardently Denying*” (76: 3); “*And by the soul and how He formed it; *And inspired it ‘with discernment of’ its wickedness and its righteousness*” (91: 7-8). Thus endowed, blaming their evil doings on God’s Will is nothing more than scapegoating, a weak ploy meant merely for the sake of arguing back. Al-Sa’dī explains: “With their saying this, they only intended to throw back the Truth that the Messenger came to them with, fully realizing the fallacy of their argument. Allah bade them and forbade them, made them able to carry out their duties, and gave them the ability and the will that drives their actions. Their citing of predestination stands for nothing for everyone knows through experience that a person has the ability over what he wants, without anyone holding him back!” “*Those who Associate will say: “Had Allah wished, we would not have Associated, neither we nor our fathers; neither would we have prohibited anything!” Likewise the ones before them denied until they tasted Our affliction. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Do you have knowledge that you may produce for us? Indeed you only follow ‘mere’ fancies, indeed they are only guessing”. *Say ‘Muhammad’: “The conclusive argument belongs to Allah; had He wished, He would have guided you all”. *Say: “Bring forth your witnesses who bear out that Allah prohibited this”. If they bear witness, then do not bear witness with them and do not follow the vain desires of those who rejected our Signs and those who do not Believe in the Hereafter while they set up ‘false’ equals to their Lord*” (6: 148-150).

78 The Messenger is not to bog himself down with such distracting arguments, which are laden with emotions, but to clearly deliver God’s Message (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

Among them were those whom Allah guided and among them were those whose dutiful lot was misguidance!⁽⁷⁹⁾ So walk the land and behold how was the end of the deniers. ⁽³⁷⁾ Keen as you are 'Muhammad' on their guidance, Allah guides not whomever He sends astray; they will have no helpers!

⁽³⁸⁾ They even swore by Allah with their most solemn oaths⁽⁸²⁾ 'that': "Allah resurrects not those who die!" Nay! It is a promise 'due' on Him⁽⁸³⁾ to bring true, but most people know not.

فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ فَمِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكذِبِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾
 إِنَّ تَخْرُصَ عَلَىٰ هُدَاهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ يُضِلُّ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَّاصِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَا يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ مَن يَمُوتُ بَلَىٰ وَعَدَّآ عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

79 "Indeed, those who revert 'to Denying' after guidance has become clear to them; Satan has tempted them, luring them with false hope!" (47: 25); "Say: "Shall I inform you who are the greatest losers in respect to their deeds? *Those whose efforts go astray in the worldly life, while they reckon that they are virtuous in their works. *It is they who Denied the Signs of their Lord and their meeting with Him, their deeds became void, so We will not give their deeds any weight on the Day of Judgement"" (18: 103-105); "A party 'of you' He guides, and another party misguidedness is their rightful lot; they betook the devils as allies besides Allah and they think that they are guided!" (7: 30)

80 This is to ascertain to the Messenger (ﷺ) the scope of his mission, "the clear delivery of the Message", and that he should not be hard on himself in this regard (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*).

81 The list of their fallacious arrogance-spurred arguments goes on (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

82 Thus marking their impassioned opposition to the Message (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

83 That He brings the dead back to life (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Allah said: 'The son of Adam has accused Me of lying, while he has no right to do so, and he insulted Me, while he has no right to do so. His accusing Me of lying is his saying: "He shall not recreate me as He created me at first!" The first creation is by no means easier for Me than recreation!' His insulting Me is his saying: "Allah has taken a son 'to Himself'", when I am the One, the Oft-Beseeched, I begot none, nor was I begotten. *None is equal to Me!'" (al-Bukhārī: 4974).

﴿39﴾ So that He shall explain to them that over which they differ, and so that those who Denied come to realize that they had been liars!⁽⁸⁴⁾ ﴿40﴾ Our Saying to anything We want is only: “Be!” and it is!⁽⁸⁵⁾

لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي يُخْتَلَفُونَ فِيهِ وَيُعَلِّمَهُ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَذِبِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ إِنَّمَا
قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ أَنْ نَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٠﴾

﴿41﴾ ⁽⁸⁶⁾Those who migrated for ‘the sake of’ Allah⁽⁸⁷⁾ after they had been dealt unjustly⁽⁸⁸⁾, We shall settle them a comely ‘settlement’⁽⁸⁹⁾ in the worldly life; ‘but’ the reward of the Hereafter is verily greater⁽⁹⁰⁾, if only they knew!

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا
لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ۖ وَلَا جَزَاءَ لَآخِرَةٍ
أَكْبَرَ لِمَنْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

- 84 After resurrection on the Day of Judgement God Almighty will explain to people what they used to differ on in this worldly life, including the issue of resurrection, pass judgement among them, and whereby every doer will get the reward or punishment for their deeds (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sam‘ānī, al-Bayḍawī).
- 85 God’s Absolute Power is highlighted here. The realization of His Will and His Ability to create are carried out by this two-lettered command, (Be!) (cf. 3: 47 and 59, 19: 34-35, 36: 81-82). People’s lack of knowledge of the extent of His Power fooled them into believing in the impossibility of resurrection (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 86 This could be understood as a Divine permission to the Believers to migrate from Makkah, given the entrenched opposition the Call of Faith faced, as has just been highlighted, and that the Deniers would stop at nothing to quash it and persecute its supporters. Thus doing, they would be better off both in this worldly life and, better still, in the Hereafter (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 87 This signifies their devotion to God (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 88 Given that this is a Makkan sura, which came down before the Prophet’s migration to Madinah, the ones intended here could be either the Companions who fled persecution to Abyssinia (cf. Ibn Kathīr and Ibn ‘Āshūr) or the very early migrants to Madinah, who did so before everyone else (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 89 They will be rewarded with a better town to settle in, provided for generously, lead a pleasant life and be rewarded handsomely (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 90 “Verily those who have Believed, migrated and striven in the path of Allah with their money and their lives are greater in rank before Allah—these are the ‘true’ winners. *Allah gives them the glad tidings of a Mercy from Him, Pleasure and Gardens in which theirs is everlasting bliss. *They last therein forever—verily with Allah lies a great reward!” (9: 20-22)

﴿42﴾ Those who bore patiently and 'devoutly' put their trust in their Lord⁽⁹¹⁾.

الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

﴿43﴾ ⁽⁹²⁾We had sent before you 'Muhammad' only 'mere' men, to whom We reveal; ask then the people of the Reminder⁽⁹³⁾, if you 'people' know not. ﴿44﴾ 'We sent them' With clear evidences, the 'Sacred' Writs, and We sent down the Reminder⁽⁹⁴⁾ to you 'Muhammad'

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوْحِي إِلَيْهِمْ فَسَأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾
بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ

91 They trust that their Benefactor and Protector is none but God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr). Putting one's trust in God (*al-tawakkul 'alā Allāh*) is the catalyst for all good deeds; no sincere deed exists nor can it be perfected without it. Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr said: "Putting one's trust in Allah is the culmination of sincere Faith" (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'ādī).

92 This passage retells the intransigent stance of the Associators and reiterates the subtle yet urgent threat that God's Command is hanging over their heads. It further captures the method used in this sura; alternating between stirring up emotions (sincere gratitude, chilling fear) and addressing the mind (with stout arguments).

All the Signs told of thus far are by way of highlighting the Associators deep rejection of the Messenger (ﷺ) and his call and denying that he is sent by God and that the Qur'an is God's Message (Aya 24). Their false arguments have all been refuted with persuasive evidence. The ploy they revert to here, that there cannot be a human Messenger of God's, is rebutted by citing the example of earlier human Messengers (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

93 People of the Reminder (*ahl al-dhikr*) are the People of the Book, the Jews and Christians (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'ādī). They are made a point of reference for the Makkian Arabs because they were generally held with great esteem as possessors of knowledge. They had their own Messengers, such as Abraham, Moses and Jesus (ﷺ), so when asked they would confirm their humanness (cf. al-Khāzin).

94 Exegetes are unanimous in their opinion that the Reminder (*Dhikr*) mentioned here is the Glorious Qur'an: "cf. Ibn al-Jawzī: "And this is a blessed Reminder that We have sent down" (21: 50). The Qur'an is *dhikr* (reminder) in that it constantly makes "mention" of what people need for the betterment of their affairs and lives; it also "reminds" people of God Almighty and the Last Day; and that it is a cause of "laudable mention" (*dhikr*) and high repute (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

so that you may make clear to people what was 'successively' sent down to them and so that they may ponder⁽⁹⁵⁾. ⁴⁴⁵ ⁽⁹⁶⁾Do those who plotted evil 'plots' feel secure that Allah would not make the ground give way with them or that the Punishment comes upon them whereof they perceive not! ⁴⁴⁶ Or that it should betake them during their goings hither and thither⁽⁹⁷⁾; never will they outdo 'Allah'! ⁴⁴⁷ Or that it should betake when they are apprehensive 'of it'⁽⁹⁸⁾;

لَتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٤٥﴾ أَفَأَمِّنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ
أَنْ يَحْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ
مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٤٤٦﴾ أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ
فِي تَقَلُّبِهِمْ فَنَاهُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٤٤٧﴾ أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ
عَلَى تَخَوُّفٍ

- 95 "A Book that We have sent down to you 'Muhammad', blessed, so they may meditate its Signs and that people of reason may be reminded!" (38: 29).
- 96 Given their bellicose position and unwavering animosity that went on for so long (knowing that this is a late Makkan sura) they deserved God's Wrath and are living under the shadow of His Command, i.e. punishment. Here, the recurrent theme of this sura detailing the subtle yet urgent threat (cf. Ayas: 1, 26, 33, 77 and 112) to the belligerent Qurayshites, is detailed and pronounced in Ayas 45-47 (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 97 *Taqallubihim* (lit. their constant turning from one side to another) means their recurrent travels between lands and going about their lives (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). The word *qalb* originally means flipping something over from one side to the other (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*): "Do the townspeople feel secure that Our Might would not come to them at night while they are sleeping? *Do the townspeople feel secure that Our Might would not come to them in the forenoon while they are playing? *Do they feel secure from the planning of Allah? Verily none feels safe from the planning of Allah except the losers" (7: 97-99); "But those who denied Our Signs, We will lure them 'gradually' whereof they know not; *I will allow them time—verily My Machination is robust" (7: 182-183); "Let not those who Deny think that the rein We give them is better for them. We only give them allowance so that they would accumulate sins; theirs is a humiliating Punishment" (3: 178).
- 98 *Takhawwuf* could be of two meanings (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*): being in a state of anticipation of an impending danger (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Qāsimī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*); or (as in the

then indeed your Lord is verily
Compassionate, Merciful!⁽⁹⁹⁾

فَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ لَرُؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥٧﴾

﴿48﴾ ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾Did they not consider all
the things that Allah created,
their shadows veering to the
right and 'the directions of
left'⁽¹⁰¹⁾; 'compliantly' prostrating
to Allah while being subjugated⁽¹⁰²⁾.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يَتَفَيَّؤُا
ظِلَالُهُ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَالشَّمَائِلِ سُجَّدًا لِلَّهِ وَهُمْ
دَاخِرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

language of the Arabian tribe of Hudhail (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr) in a state of gradual dwindling in land and souls through killing, death and seizure (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

In all their states, whether unaware or anticipating peril, the threats as found here are worded in such a way as to blow off the cover of false security under which they went about their daily lives; now that they have pitted themselves against the Truth, they should feel less/least secure!

- 99 God being Compassionate and Merciful is the reason why He does not hasten His servants with punishment; to allow them time to repent (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "None puts up with a harm heard more than Allah. They set up rivals to Him and ascribe children to Him, yet He provides for them, keeps them safe and gives them!" (al-Bukhārī: 6099, Muslim: 2804).
- 100 Now that fear has been instilled in them, they are urged to use their intellects to consider the extent of the Ability of the God Whom they should be fearful of; the threat is kept up!
- 101 *al-Shamā'il* (the plural the left (direction), i.e. lefts). Scholars have deliberated the question why the right direction is in the singular and the left direction is in the plural in this aya and they arrived at a number of possible rationalizations but the following stand out. First, *al-yamīn* (the right) is also plural and the definite article, *al*, is generic and, thus, it stands for the plural (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*). Secondly, that the 'right' is the direction of the righteous (56: 27) and the path of the guided is one, which is the Path of God, so it is singular and by contrast the 'left' is the direction (56: 41) of the wrongful whose paths are divergent and they are lost in them (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i' al-Fawā'id*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, al-Suyūṭī, *Mu'tarāk al-Aqrān fī I'jāz al-Qur'ān*): "Indeed this is My path, Straight, so follow it and do not follow the 'diverse' roads and get driven away from His road; that He bade you so that you may become Mindful" (6: 153).
- 102 Prostration is the greatest sign of submission to God Almighty. The movement depicted here reflects the elongation and contraction of the shadows of concrete objects as the sun moves along its course during the

﴿49﴾ And to Allah prostrates⁽¹⁰³⁾ whatever is in the Heavens and whatever is on Earth of a moving creature and the angels 'do so'; they disdain not 'from it'⁽¹⁰⁴⁾. ﴿50﴾ They fear their Lord, 'Who is' above them and they do what they are Commanded to ﴿105﴾. ﴿51﴾ Allah said:

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَهُمْ لَا يُسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿49﴾
 يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا
 يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿50﴾ * وَقَالَ اللَّهُ

different times of the day; a reflection which mimics that of standing up and prostrating. Though some people do not prostrate themselves willingly to God Almighty, being disdainful or too busy prostrating to their false idols, the shadows of all objects about them and their very own shadows bear constant witness to His rightfulness to being worshipped in spite of them (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "To 'Allah' prostrates 'all' who are in the Heavens and Earth, willingly and unwillingly, and their shades early and late in the day!" (13: 15).

- 103 Along with the actual prostration, 'prostration' could be figurative in that it denotes surrender and submission (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Shawkānī, Ibn 'Āshūr). al-Ras'anī reports that exegetes generally agree that the 'prostration' of rational beings is their worship of and submission to God Almighty; however, the 'prostration' of irrational beings is their falling in with God Almighty's subjection of them, the execution of His Command in them and the showing of His Making on them. al-Sa'dī comments: "The prostration of creatures to Allah is of two kinds: a prostration of necessity (*iḍṭirār*) which is evidence of His Perfect Attributes. This prostration is general for all creatures; whether Believers or Deniers, pious or rebellious, articulate or inarticulate, etc. The other kind is the prostration of willingness (*ikhtiyār*) which is specific to Allah's near and dear and His Believing servants; the angels and other creatures": "Do you not see that to Allah prostrates whoever is in the Heavens and whoever is on the Earth and the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the moving creatures and many humans?" (22: 18).
- 104 "The Messiah would not disdain to be a servant of Allah, nor would the drawn-near angels. Whoever disdains from worshipping Him and becomes arrogant, He will rally them all to Him 'on the Day of Judgement'" (4: 172).
- 105 This prostration (*sajdah*), which is the embodiment of humbleness and devotion, is so placed such that the devout Believers who recite this aya willingly enact their subjection to God Almighty's Command. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "When the son of Adam recites 'an aya with' a prostration and prostrates, Satan moves aside and weeps saying: "Woe is me! The Son of Adam was commanded

“Do not take up ‘worshipping’ two gods. He is only but One God; so only Me be apprehensive of!”
 ﴿52﴾ To Him belongs whatever is in the Heavens and Earth and to Him belongs the religion eternally⁽¹⁰⁶⁾; Would you ‘then’ dread any other besides Allah!
 ﴿53﴾ ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾Whatever bliss you are ‘revelling’ in is from Allah; then when you are touched by adversity to Him you bawl⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ ‘out for help’!

لَا تَتَّخِذُوا إِلَهَيْنِ إِلَّا مَا هُوَ إِلَهُ وَحْدٌ
 فَإِنِّي فَأَرْهَبُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَلَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 وَلَهُ الدِّينُ وَاصْبَاءً أُوغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَمَا
 يَكْفُرُونَ بِعَمَلِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ إِذَا مَسَّكَ الضُّرُّ
 فَإِلَيْهِ تَجْعَرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

to prostrate and he did, and his ‘for it’ is Paradise. I was commanded to prostrate and I refused and mine ‘for it’ is Hellfire!” (Muslim: 81). It is the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) to prostrate when reciting these: Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: “When the Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite the Qur’an, and came upon a sura in which there is prostration, he would prostrate and we would prostrate with him; some among us would not ‘even’ find a place for his forehead” (Muslim: 575); ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to say when prostrating while reading the Qur’an at night: “My face has prostrated to He Who created it and slit in it its hearing and sight with His Ability and Power (*sajada wajhī li-lladhī khalaqahu wa shaqqa fihi sam‘ahu wa baṣarahu bi-ḥawlihi wa quwwatih*)” (al-Tirmidhī: 580). In another hadith (al-Tirmidhī: 3424), the supplication said during such a prostration is: “O Allah, record for me this one as a reward, eliminate me with it a sin of mine, make it a deposit for me with You and accept it from me as You have accepted it from Your servant, Dāwūd (*Allāhumma ktub lī bihā ‘indaka ajran, wa ḍa‘ ‘amni bihā wizran, wa j’alḥā lī ‘indaka dhukhran, wa taqabbalḥā minnī kamā taqabbaltahā min ‘abdika Dāwūd*)”.

106 *Wāṣiban* means internally, conclusively and unchangingly; the root *w-s-b* denotes perpetuity (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*): “Or have they other Associates who have ordained for them a religion to which Allah has not consented?” (42: 21)

107 This is a jolting reminder that should bring them to their senses, if they have any.

108 *Taj‘arūna* is to shout out for help; it originates from the *ju‘ār* sound that the bull makes when it raises its voice out of hunger or pain (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). What an ugly image befitting of the Deniers, who are only worldly prone and are quick to despair!

﴿54﴾ Then when He removes adversity from you, lo a group of you Associate with their Lord!⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

﴿55﴾ Let them be ungrateful for what We bestowed on them; enjoy, for you shall come to know!⁽¹¹⁰⁾

﴿56﴾ ⁽¹¹¹⁾They dedicate to whatever they ‘truly’ know not about a share of what We provided them with⁽¹¹²⁾; by Allah, you shall be asked about what you used to fabricate!

ثُمَّ إِذَا كَشَفَ الضَّرْعَ عَنْكُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْكُمْ
بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ
فَتَمَتَّعُوا فَسَوْفَ نَعْتَابُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ نَصِيبًا مِّمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
تَاللَّهِ لَأَسْأَلَنَّ عَمَّا كُنتُمْ تَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

109 “He is the One Who carries you through the land and at sea, until when you are in the vessels and they run them in favourable wind, and they rejoice in it, ‘suddenly’ a gusty gale comes upon them and come upon them waves from everywhere and they become certain that they have been surrounded, they invoke Allah being devout in religion to Him: “Should You save us from this, we shall surely be among the thankful!” *Whenever He saves them, they no sooner wrongfully transgress in the land” (10: 22-23).

110 The threat is sustained (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

111 Here are yet more details of what their mindless Association led them into; which is also evidence of their denial of God’s favours on them (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

112 They used to devotionally allot for idols, whom they do not know the truth of; their infliction of harm or bringing of good (“They are none but mere names you have named, you and your fathers for which Allah has sent down no authority” (53: 23)) a share of the provisions, harvest or livestock, which God Almighty blessed them with (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Juzayy, Abū Ḥayyān): “They professed for Allah a share in crops and livestock which He generated and said: “This is for Allah – so they claimed – and this is for our Associates”; whatever is allocated for their Associates does not reach Allah, but whatever is allocated for Allah reaches their Associates—sordid indeed how they judge” (6: 136).

Alternatively, *limā lā ya‘lamūna* (translated here as: “to whatever they ‘truly’ know not about”) could mean: “to who know not”, i.e. the idols themselves who are dispossessed of knowledge, a very basic divine attribute (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Sa‘dī, *al-Taḥsīn al-Muyassar*, *al-Taḥsīn al-Muḥarrar*). The cause of these two alternative readings is that the word *ya‘lamu* (lit. knows), as opposed to *ta‘lamu*, is normally used for rational beings, whereas their idols are no more than inanimate objects, but could have been figuratively used to mimic the idolaters’ perception of their so-called gods, whom they see as rational (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī).

﴿57﴾ And to Allah they ascribe the daughters – *Glory be His!* – but to themselves ‘they own’ what they like ‘most’!⁽¹¹³⁾ ﴿58﴾⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Whenever one of them is given the news of a female ‘newborn’, his face stays clouded over while stifling ‘it up’!⁽¹¹⁵⁾ He cowers away from the folk⁽¹¹⁵⁾, for the enormity of what he was given news of; shall he hold on to it in degradation⁽¹¹⁶⁾, or slip it in the dust—sordid indeed how they judge!⁽¹¹⁶⁾ ﴿60﴾ For those who do not Believe in the Hereafter

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ الْبَنَاتِ سُبْحَانَ وَلَهُمْ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾
 وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا
 وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِن سُوءِ مَا
 بُشِّرَ بِهِ ۚ أَيُمْسِكُهُ عَلَىٰ هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي
 التُّرَابِ ۗ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
 بِالْآخِرَةِ

- 113 That is they out of blatant disregard used to claim that the angels were God Almighty’s daughters, while they claimed the sons, whom they liked most, for themselves (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “*So inquire of them, ‘O Muhammad’,: “Does your Lord have daughters while they have sons. *Or did We create the angels as females while they were witnesses?” Unquestionably, it is out of their ‘invented’ falsehood that they say” * “Allah has begotten!”—indeed, they are liars!*” (37: 149-152).
- 114 This is yet another probing glimpse into the heathen way of life they used to lead; how they considered female posterity, which is a blessing from God, such bad news. But also to highlight, using their own line of logic, their utter disregard for God Almighty when they ascribe what they least like to Him (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, 3: 302).
- 115 In what is widely known as the age of ignorance, *al-jāhiliyyah*, i.e. before Islam, when the wife goes into labour, the husband would hide away until he knew the sex of the child. If the child was a boy, he became elated but if it was a girl, he became downcast and miserable. He, would then remain in hiding, to weigh his options as to what to do with her, whether to hold on to her ‘in degradation’ or to bury her alive, (or, ‘slip her in the dust’) (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*).
- 116 Exegetes are of two opinions as to whom the ‘degradation’ refers to (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*): the father who considers himself, given their heathen social norms, disgraced by her birth (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭiyyah), or the daughter whom he holds on to but only to degrade her by humiliating her, not looking after her, treating her male brother preferentially and depriving her of her inheritance (cf. al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī).

is the example of sordidness⁽¹¹⁷⁾, but to Allah is the highest example⁽¹¹⁸⁾; He is the All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

﴿61﴾ (119) If Allah were to hold people to account over their injustice, He would not leave a single moving creature⁽¹²⁰⁾ on its 'the Earth's' face. But He delays them until a specified term⁽¹²¹⁾; when their term is due, they will not be delayed an hour nor will they be hastened⁽¹²²⁾.

مَثَلُ السَّوْءِ وَلِلَّهِ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦١﴾

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِم مَّا تَرَكَ
عَلَيْهَا مِن دَابَّةٍ وَلَٰكِن يُؤَخِّرُهُم إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّى فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَجْرُونَ سَاعَةً
وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

117 *Mathal al-Saw'* (lit. the example of sordidness) is the quality of despicableness of needing children to redress their weaknesses, ignorance and Denial (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).

118 *al-Mathal al-A'lā* (lit. the highest example) is the Highest Qualities and Attributes of perfection, lack of need, and Knowledge (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).

God Almighty Who is free from all imperfections, especially those of mere humans, should be glorified over what they disdain to ascribe to themselves (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 3: 302).

119 This passage captures the character of the whole sura: people aggressed against the Message and ridiculed it; they deserved God Almighty's punishment but He only delays it for a stated term; the Messenger's mission is to deliver the Message clearly and to bear patiently and not feel too sad over this state of affairs.

120 God's annihilating punishment would be all-encompassing of all humans and moving creatures alongside them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). Other scholars, notably al-Qurtubī and al-Wāhidī, opine that the *dābbah* (moving creature) referred to here specifically means the Deniers. However, in a long discussion, al-Shinqīṭī (*Aḥwā' al-Bayān*) gives ample textual evidence that the first opinion is the more acceptable of the two. This is how corrupting humans can be to the world.

121 "So think not that Allah is unaware of what the unjust commit; He only delays them for a Day on which sights stare upwards 'wide open'!" (14: 42).

122 A set time for it to taste Divine Wrath and retribution should it persist in Denying (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namūr*). The ones who are directly meant by this warning are the Arabs of that time who stood against the Message. Their attention is being drawn to what befell those who came before them (Ibn 'Ashūr): "Indeed, Messengers before you were ridiculed, but those who used to ridicule them got hit by what they ridiculed. *Say 'Muhammad': 'Travel the land and look what was the fate of the Deniers'" (6: 10-11).

﴿62﴾ They ascribe to Allah that which they abhor⁽¹²³⁾ and their tongues describe falsehood: that theirs is the comely 'outcome'⁽¹²⁴⁾—without a doubt theirs is the Fire and that they will languish 'forever therein'!⁽¹²⁵⁾ ﴿63﴾ ⁽¹²⁶⁾By Allah, We had indeed sent 'Messengers' to nations before you 'Muhammad' but Satan made their doings look attractive to them⁽¹²⁷⁾ so he is their ally this Day—for them is a painful Punishment! ﴿64﴾ ⁽¹²⁸⁾We have only sent down the Book to you 'Muhammad' to explain to them that over which they differ, and a guidance and mercy to people who Believe.

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ مَا يَكْرَهُونَ وَتَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُهُمُ
الْكُذِبَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ الْحُسْنَىٰ لَا جُرْمَ إِنَّ لَهُمُ
النَّارَ وَأَنَّهُمْ مُّفْرَطُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا
إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَمِيزَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ
أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ
لَهُمُ الَّذِي ائْتَفَقُوا فِيهِ وَهَدَىٰ وَرَحْمَةً
لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

- 123 That is, their saying that the angels are God's daughters, while they abhor owning them (cf. Ayas 57-59 above; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Wāḥidī).
- 124 That eventually they will be rewarded handsomely both in this world and in the Hereafter (cf. 41: 50, 18: 35-36, 19: 77-78; Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Adwā' al-Bayān*): "Say: "Shall we inform you of the greatest losers as to 'their' deeds? *'They are' Those whose efforts go astray in the life of this world, while they reckon that they are virtuous in their works" (18: 103-104).
- 125 "Today We forget them as they had forgotten their meeting of this Day of theirs and for denying Our Signs" (7: 51).
- 126 Historical example is cited here as evidence of the Truth of what is being promised. This is also meant to assuage the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 127 Denial, Association and rejecting the Messenger (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 128 This statement of mission echoing the one found earlier is meant to comfort the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. Aya 35: "Are the Messengers, then, tasked with anything but clear delivery 'of the Message!'" who was greatly saddened by their actions. The sura concludes with a directly comforting message directed at the Messenger (ﷺ): "Bear patiently 'O Muhammad', but your patience is only through Allah, do not feel sad over them and do not feel troubled by their plotting; *verily Allah is with those who are Mindful and those who do good" (Ayas: 127-128 below).

﴿65﴾ (129) Allah sends water from the sky to enliven the earth with it after its death⁽¹³⁰⁾; indeed in that is a Sign to those who listen!⁽¹³¹⁾
 ﴿66﴾ (132) Verily, for you in livestock is ponderous consideration⁽¹³³⁾:

وَاللّٰهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾
 وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً

- 129 As with many other sections in this sura here is another run through God's blessings to make them heed and see reason; Allah delays them punishment so that they may ponder His Signs. The signs told here are especially important for the direct addressees' lives and livelihoods (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 130 Water brings life to the land after it has become dry and barren (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Shawkānī, Ibn 'Āshūr): *“And We send down blessed water from the sky whereby We grew gardens and the harvested grain *and the date palms towering ‘loaded’ with clustered fruit * as provision for the servants. And We revive a dead land therewith—likewise shall be the emergence ‘from the graves’”* (50: 9-11).
- 131 That is, those who listen and heed such evidence of God's Ability over resurrection (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): *“He is the One Who made the sun a glow and the moon a light and ordained for it stations so that you ‘may’ know the number of years and calculation ‘of time’. Never has Allah created that except for the Truth; He details the Signs for those who attain knowledge. *Verily in the alternation of night and day, and whatever Allah has created in the Heavens and Earth are Signs for the Mindful ones”* (10: 5-6).
- 132 With rain grows herbage and fodder plants on which livestock feed. Livestock was a very important element for the Arabian lifestyle and its sustenance (cf. Ayas 5-8 above; Abū Ḥayyān).
- 133 *‘Ibrah* (ponderous consideration) is a state in which the witnessed leads to knowing what is unwitnessed. Originally, *‘ibrah* (deriving from *‘abara*; to cross from one place to another) is transitioning from one state to another (cf. al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). That is, by ponderously considering livestock, they transition from their state of utter denial into realizing God Almighty's Wisdom, Mercy, Ability, Compassion and Greatness and, thus, His deservedness of being worshipped alone (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): *“And livestock He created; for you ‘people’ in them you have warmth and ‘numerous’ benefits, and from them you eat. *For you in them is ‘pleasure-inducing’ beauty when you return back ‘late in the day’ and when you set off ‘early in the morning’. *They too carry your weights to a town that you would not have reached except with great pain—verily your Lord is Ever-Kind, Ever-Merciful”* (16: 5-7).

We make you drink off of what is in their bellies – ‘coming’ from between digested fodder and blood⁽¹³⁴⁾ – ‘perfectly’ pure milk; palatable for those who drink ‘it’.⁽⁶⁷⁾ And from the fruits of palm trees and grapes you take intoxicants⁽¹³⁵⁾ and comely provision⁽¹³⁶⁾; indeed in that is a Sign to those who are heedful!

تَسْقِيَكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ قَرْتٍ وَدَمٍ لَبَنًا
خَالصًا سَائِغًا لِلشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَمِنْ قَمَرَاتِ النَّخِيلِ
وَالْأَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَرِزْقًا حَسَنًا
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

134 This livestock-related sign is more ponderous than any already mentioned. This palatable, enjoyable and pure drink, which is milk, comes from between the smelly fully digested cud (*farth*; dissolved or digested food material as long as it is in the stomach, cf. al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qurʿān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*), and the garish coloured, metal smelling blood (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Saʿdī).

For modern-day readers, the metabolism of milk making in cattle alluded to here, which was not known until recently, thanks to the advancements in anatomy given the many instruments and research methods put at the disposal of scientists, had many see this ponderous sign as evidence of the Divine source of the Qurʿan (for a detailed discussion see: Maurice Bucaille, *The Bible, the Qurʿan and Science*). To put it briefly, once the fodder is consumed and digested, it moves into the small intestine, in which nutrients and excess water are absorbed into the bloodstream and then circulate to the mammary glands in the udder where milk is formed.

135 One needs to note that this is a Makkan sura which came down before the prohibition of intoxicants for their many demerits (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): “*You who Believe, intoxicants, gambling, altars of idolatry and casting lots for divination are nothing but defilement of the making of Satan, so steer clear from it all, so that you might be successful. Satan wants nothing but to sow enmity and hatred among you through intoxicants and gambling, and repel you from the remembrance of Allah and Prayer, will you not then desist?*” (5: 90-91). Also note that the direct addresses here are the Makkan pagans who used to relish their intoxicants and considered them a ‘blessing’ (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn ʿĀshūr). Further, this ‘benefit’ has been counted out of the ‘comely provision’ to indicate that it is not condoned of for consumption (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Qaṣṣāb, *al-Nikāt al-Dāllah al-ʿalā al-Bayān*).

136 *Rizqan ḥasanān* (comely provision/good sustenance) is that which is harmless to both body and mind like palm dates, grapes and raisins, and juice and vinegar (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Saʿdī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwāʾ al-Bayān*).

﴿68﴾ (137) Your Lord ‘O Muhammad’ inspired⁽¹³⁸⁾ the bees that: “Take up homes in mountains, and in trees and in what they ‘people’ raise!⁽¹³⁹⁾”
 ﴿69﴾ “Then eat off of all fruits⁽¹⁴⁰⁾, then take the routes of your Lord, abated!⁽¹⁴¹⁾” There comes from their bellies a drink of different colours⁽¹⁴²⁾; in it is cure for people⁽¹⁴³⁾.

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ
 بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ كُلِي مِنْ
 كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا يَخْرُجُ مِنْ
 بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ

- 137 Although the mentioned favours are enough as compelling evidence of the existence of an Omnipotent and Wise Creator of the world, the wondrous creation of the bees, out of which honey comes, is even more evidence of that (cf. al-Rāzī). The care being taken of this particular Sign/favour reflects in the style in which it is recounted; the mention of how God Almighty inspired the bees indicates the magnificence and uniqueness of it (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 138 Although the word used here is *awhā* (lit. He revealed) exegetes unanimously agree that here it means *alhamā* (lit. inspired) (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah). Such is the ‘inspiration’ of animals and insects to do what is beneficial and avoid what is harmful for themselves (cf. al-Shawkānī).
- 139 What people prepare and build for bees to establish their hives in, i.e. apiaries (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī).
- 140 *Min kulli al-thamarāt* (lit. from all fruits) could mean that *min* is partitive, where bees only feed on flowering fruits, or that ‘from all the fruits’ that you like (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī).
- 141 This shows how the task of bees is made easy for them; God Almighty made their routes *dhulalan* (abated/humbled) for them to take so that they may seek provision whatever direction they take (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī). The routes of their Lord are the routes that God inspired them to take (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*) so that they are made easy to take and not hard to find no matter how far they wander away from the hive (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*).
- The word *dhulalan* could refer to both the bees themselves, who are made obedient and submit to what they have been created for, or for the routes themselves that are made easy to take (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī).
- 142 Honey is different in colours, ranging from very light to quite dark, according to the grazing fields where the bees extract the nectar from (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 143 Only two things are said to be *shifā’* (cure) in the Qur’an; the Qur’an itself (cf. 10: 57, 17: 82, 41: 44) and honey. They are, thus, the two cures (*al-shifā’ān*): one for the hearts and the other for the bodies. But the Qur’an

Indeed in that is a Sign to those who ponder!⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

﴿70﴾ ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾And Allah created you and then He terminates your lives. 'But' Some of you are deferred until the worst age⁽¹⁴⁶⁾,

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَوَفِّكُمْ بِهِ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ

is said to be a cure in and of itself and honey possesses the ability to cure (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Miftāḥ dār al-Sa'ādāh*, 1: 250).

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: "My brother is suffering from his stomach!" He 'the Prophet (ﷺ)' said: "Give him honey to drink". Then he came back 'complaining' a second time and he said: "Give him honey to drink". Then he came back 'complaining' a third time and he said: "Give him honey to drink". Then he came 'yet' again and he said: "I did!" He (ﷺ) said: "Allah has spoken the Truth and your brother's stomach is lying! Give him honey!" He did and his brother was cured". (al-Bukhārī: 5684; Muslim: 2217.)

People old and new and from all cultures have known and experienced the many curative characteristics of honey (for a detailed discussion see: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5424551/>).

144 The sign of the bees as told here could be read with reference to Aya 9 above ("The showing of the 'straight' path is on Allah, but some 'paths' are skewed"); the bees humbled themselves on the abated routes that God inspired them to take, which made their lives easy, beneficial and in tune with His great plan. How would the lives of humans be if they humbled themselves on the path of God, and did not pursue their own skewed routes!

145 After all the signs and favours that are around them are made note of here, they are then reminded of the signs and favours that are found within themselves (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

Note also that the Unique Name of God, Allah, is repeated at the beginning of each of the three ayas in this section. Ibn 'Āshūr opines that this is because the Makkan idolaters, although polytheist, believed that 'Allah' was the Benefactor of all these favours, thus his Name was brought up to strongly remind them of this fact, opening their eyes to how deviated from the path, the route of their Lord, they had become (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

146 *Ardhal al-'umur* (the worst age) is that ripe age when the powers of a human, both physical and mental, diminish (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Thus people are reminded to use their power of intellect to realize the Truth before they lose their capabilities to do so (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

Muṣ'ab Ibn Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with his father, reported that his father said: "Seek refuge in Allah with some words that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to seek refuge in Allah with: "O Allah! I seek refuge in You from

so that he knows nothing after the 'much' knowledge gained⁽¹⁴⁷⁾—verily Allah is All-Knowledgeable, All-Capable⁽¹⁴⁸⁾. ﴿71﴾⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ And Allah favoured some of you above others in provision; those whom are favoured would not partake their provision with those whom their right hands possess⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ and thus they become equal in it—do they deny 'then' Allah's favour!⁽¹⁵¹⁾

لِكَيْ لَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عَلْمِهِ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾
وَاللَّهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الرِّزْقِ
فَمَا الَّذِينَ فَضَّلُوا بَرَّادَى رَزَقَهُمْ عَلَى مَا
مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ أَفَبِعِزَّةِ اللَّهِ
يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

cowardice. I seek refuge in You from miserliness. I seek refuge in You from being relegated to incapacitating old age. I seek refuge in You from the trials in this life and the torment of the grave” (al-Bukhārī: 6374).

- 147 The One Who relegates humans to such a sorry state is Able over taking life, resurrection and holding to account (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). They are reminded of God Almighty’s Absolute Power not only on giving and taking lives but also on the quality of life, which diminishes with progressing age and the lack of intellectual and physical power as well as lack of wealth and the means to lead a happy life. God’s ability over humans extends from the beginning to the end and everything that happens in between.
- 148 Unlike that of His creation, God’s Knowledge and Ability are ever-lasting and unchanging (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 149 This is another strong indication of God’s limitless Ability over humans; their provision is not dependent on their merit or capabilities but on God’s favouring of any of them for hidden, unseen reasons not fathomed by them (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). It is also for those who were given wealth, like the well-to-do Makkan idolaters who stood in the face of the Call to Truth, such that they would consider the source of their wealth and why they were favoured over others, especially the slaves who were no less human than themselves (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 150 *Mā malakat aymānukum* are one’s male and female slaves.
- 151 If they would not agree to equally partake of their wealth with their slaves, how would they set up Associates with God Almighty whom they share His worship with, while they have no ownership over them whatsoever! (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sam‘ānī, al-Sa‘dī). God Almighty is the only Benefactor of humans and Who has Absolute Power over their lives and destinies; so He will accept no Association from them in their devotional acts.

﴿72﴾ (152) And Allah made for you spouses out of your own selves⁽¹⁵³⁾ and made for you out of your spouses children and grandchildren⁽¹⁵⁴⁾, and blessed you with 'some' good provision—do they believe 'then' in falsehood⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ and in Allah's favour they are resolutely denying!⁽¹⁵⁶⁾

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ
لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُمْ
مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَتِ
اللَّهِ هُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

- 152 Another no less important Godly act of benevolence is brought to the fore here; namely, the blessings of life partners and posterity (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, which affect one's quality of living considerably: "*Wealth and children are the adornment of the worldly life!*" (18: 46).
- 153 *Min anfusikum* (lit. from yourselves) means from your own kind (species) who look just like you (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*). Thus it entails humans in general, but could also mean the original creation of Eve out of Adam (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Ras'anī), and whereby the meaning extends to their posterity: "*He is the One Who created you from a single soul and from it He made its mate so that he may find assuagement in her*" (7: 189); "*And of His Signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find assuagement in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who reflect*" (30: 21).
- 154 *Ḥafadah* are one's grandchildren, who swiftly and unhesitatingly come to one's aid, as suggested by the Arabic word used for them which derives from *ḥ-f-d* denoting lightness in service and gathering for it (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah). There is no doubt that one's children and grandchildren are the 'adornment' of one's life (18: 46).
- 155 The godship of their Associates (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*): "*They are none but mere names you have named, you and your fathers for which Allah has sent down no authority; they follow naught but conjecture and that which their souls desire, though guidance has surely come to them from their Lord*" (53: 23).
- 156 They deny God's favours on them, do not thank Him for them, set up false partners with Him, ascribe these favours to others besides Him, use it in rebelling against Him and Denying Him (cf. al-Wāḥidī, al-Baghawī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī).

﴿73﴾ (157) They worship besides Allah those who possess no provision⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ for them ‘neither’ from the skies nor from the ground, nothing⁽¹⁵⁹⁾; never are they ever able ‘over that’!⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ ﴿74﴾ So do not pose ‘any’ as similar to Allah⁽¹⁶¹⁾; verily Allah Knows and you do not know⁽¹⁶²⁾. ﴿75﴾ (163) Allah poses as example: a bondage slave who is able over nothing, and he for whom We have provided handsomely so that he spends out of it ‘both’ secretly and openly; are they equal?⁽¹⁶⁴⁾

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ رِزْقًا
مِّنَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾
فَلَا تَضُرُّوهُ بِاللَّهِ الْأَمْثَالُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾ *ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا أَمْلُوكًا
لَّا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَمَن رَّزَقْنَاهُ مِنَّا رِزْقًا حَسَنًا
فَهُوَ يَنْفِقُ مِنْهُ سِرًّا وَجَهْرًا هَلْ يَسْتَوُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

- 157 This passage further debunks their feeble arguments (cf. al-Rāzi, Ibn ‘Ashūr) through two illustrative examples/parables and warns them about the consequences of the ‘skewed path’ they have chosen for themselves.
- 158 This highlights their utter irrationality; worshipping those who bring no benefit and are of no worth at all! (Cf. Abū Ḥayyān.)
- 159 Neither rain from the sky nor plants from the ground (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 160 Their so-called gods are even bereft of ability altogether (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 161 “Nothing is like Him; He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing” (42: 11).
- 162 God Almighty Knows the Truth of things; that He has no Associate, that nothing is like Him and none of the deeds of people is hidden from Him. The Associators meanwhile do not fully realize His Greatness and through their ignorance they fall into Association claiming a likeness between Him and their idols (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Su‘ūd, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*). *Yaḍribu mathalan* carries both meanings of “pose as similar”, as in claiming that something is a representation of something else (their gods as similar to God Almighty) or to “pose as example”, as in to give examples that illustrate analogies through parables.
- 163 Among what God Knows is how to really give illustrative examples while they do not know how to do this (cf. al-Shawkānī). The following are two illustrations as to how to pose meaningful, moral-setting parables which are full of reason.
- 164 God Almighty poses the example of their idols, the “bondage slave who is able over nothing” and His Most High Self, Who has great resources and has full power over them, spending out of them both secretly and openly

'All' Gratitude be to Allah, but most of them know not!⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ ﴿76﴾⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ And Allah poses as example two men:⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ one of them is 'born' mute, able over nothing, and is a liability to his master⁽¹⁶⁸⁾; wherever he directs him, he brings nothing of worth⁽¹⁶⁹⁾.⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ Is he equal to he who enjoins justice while being on a straight path!⁽¹⁷¹⁾ ﴿77﴾⁽¹⁷²⁾ To Allah belongs the Unseen of the Heavens and Earth⁽¹⁷³⁾—the matter of the Hour

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾
 وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَا أَبْكَمٌ
 لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلَى مَوْلَاهُ أَيْتَمًا
 يُوجِّهُهُ لَا يَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي هُوَ
 وَمَنْ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَهُوَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ
 مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَاللَّهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 وَمَا أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ

as He wills (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah al-Qurṭubī, al-Bayḍāwī, Ibn Juzayy, al-Sa'dī). No person of sound reason would, in their best judgement, equate the two (cf. al-Shawkānī, al-Alūsī).

- 165 They are oblivious of the fact that God Alone is worthy of worship and thankfulness, and thus they worship and pay homage to others besides Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Qurṭubī).
- 166 To further drive the point home, a more elaborated example of the heavily disadvantaged person and that who is greatly advantaged is given here. They could not argue against such a potent parable (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 167 These are their idols who are mute, deaf, mindless and able over nothing (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 168 *Kallun 'alā* (lit. a heavy impairment on) originates from being heavy (cf. al-Wāhidī, Ibn 'Āshūr). *Mawlā* is the person under whose care this person is (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*). Such are idols who are a heavy burden on those who tend them (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 169 That is being of no use at all!
- 170 The following is the example of God Almighty Himself (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr); to Him belongs the highest example.
- 171 Unlike the just described person of no worth or use at all, here is an altogether different one. The person described here is of a use that extends well beyond his own personal cycle to that of society at large, while at the same time being of a sterling character himself (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī), i.e. a social reformer of the greatest character who practices what he preaches.
- 172 Now that their reasons have been addressed with all sorts of signs and examples, the subtle threat that runs throughout this sura (cf. note on Aya 1) is brought to their attention again.
- 173 The most serious matter of the Hour, the great secret as to when the Day of Judgement is going to take place, is only known to God Almighty Himself:

is akin to the blink of an eye or 'even' faster; verily Allah is Able over everything!

﴿78﴾ (174) And Allah brings you out of your mothers' bellies⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ knowing nothing⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ and He made for you the hearing, sights and hearts so that you may become thankful⁽¹⁷⁷⁾.

إِلَّا كَلِمَاحَ الْبَصَرِ أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ ۗ إِيَّاكَ اللَّهُ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ
لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ
وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۗ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

“They ask you ‘Muhammad’ about the Hour: “When is its materialization?” Say: “This knowledge is with none but my Lord. None reveals it at its ‘due’ time except Him. Heavy it is in the Heavens and on Earth. It will come to you naught but all of a sudden”. They ask you ‘Muhammad’ as if you were too keen on it! Say: “Its knowledge is with none but Allah”—indeed most people know ‘that’ not” (7: 187).

al-Rāzī has it that the time when the Day of Judgement takes place is called ‘the Hour’ because it strikes people with its suddenness and they fall dead with only one shout!

- 174 Now that they have been forewarned, they are made here to use their intellects to see God’s Signs and come to Believe (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr).
- 175 It is telling to note that the word *butūn* (bellies) is used three times in this sura: 1) milk coming out of the ‘bellies’ of livestock, 2) honey coming out of the ‘bellies’ of bees, and 3) babies coming out the ‘bellies’ of human females. The word ‘bellies’ is repeated so that a connection may be established; otherwise the obvious ‘wombs’, ‘udders’, and ‘hinds’ could have been used instead. One can read the underlying message that God Almighty is the One capable of creating something wondrous out of nothing; bringing it out of the caldron of formation the ‘belly’. Had it not been for God’s Will, nothing, let alone as wonderful a thing as these, would have come out of them and this is sign enough for people. What He creates is inherently good and useful: babies, honey, milk, only lack of care (not following the straight path) and mishandling can spoil them.
- 176 The magnificent creation of humans out of mere “gushing water” (86: 6) is a strong reminder of both God’s Ability over re-creation by the same measure (“Or were they created out of nothing; or were they themselves the creators!” (52: 35); cf. Abū Ḥātim, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*) and His great favour over them, of bringing them into being and providing abundantly for them.
- 177 Humans should use these faculties and powers of perception (ears, eyes and brains) to see God’s Signs and become thankful for Him; using them to worship Him alone without Association (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn al-Jawzī).

﴿79﴾ (178) Did they not consider the birds, made prone to flying in the air of the sky, none holds them 'from falling' except Allah—verily in that are Signs for those who Believe. ﴿80﴾ (179) And Allah made for you out of your houses 'sources of' settlement⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ and made for you from the hide of livestock houses that you conveniently handle during your roaming and on the day when you set up camp⁽¹⁸¹⁾. And from their wool, fur and hair furnishings and an enjoyment until a while⁽¹⁸²⁾. ﴿81﴾ (183) And Allah made for you shades out of what He created⁽¹⁸⁴⁾, made out of the mountains dens for you⁽¹⁸⁵⁾,

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ فِي جَوِّ السَّمَاءِ
مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ
سَكَنًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ جُلُودِ الْأَنْعَامِ بُيُوتًا
تَسْتَخِفُّونَهَا يَوْمَ ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ إِقَامَتِكُمْ
وَمِنْ أَصْوَابِهَا وَأَوْبَارِهَا وَأَشْعَارِهَا أَثْنَا وَمِثْعًا
إِلَى حِينٍ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ مِمَّا خَلَقَ
ظِلَالًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَكْنَانًا

- 178 This is an example for how a thankful person uses these powers to come to Believe. Seeing the signs (the birds flying in the air) with open hearts and pondering minds (how do they not fall down?) leads to realizing that there is One Who is Able to sustain them in midair, namely, God Almighty Himself (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 179 Protective homes and useful artifacts are bounties which are the fruits of human brains, which is a favour from God Almighty (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 180 Homes in which to settle, find comfort, protection from harsh weather and harmful creatures, and to keep away from prying eyes, etc. (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 181 This is how fruitful the human brain can be to make life easy and accommodating when put to good use.
- 182 *Ilā hīn* (until a while) could be until one's death or until one is no longer in possession of them (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah); or until these things are no longer useful due to wear and tear (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn al-Jawzī).
- 183 God further inspires humans to find benefits for what He makes available in their surroundings (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 184 All shadowy things: trees, mountains, houses, clouds, etc. (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa'dī). They are reminded of the especially great bounty of shade in the extremely hot weather that pertains in Arabia (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah).
- 185 Caves and grottoes sheltering humans from the weather and their enemies (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

and made out for you apparel protecting you from heat and apparel that protects you from your 'own' might⁽¹⁸⁶⁾—thus that He would perfect His favour upon you and that you may 'devoutly' submit⁽¹⁸⁷⁾. ⁽⁸²⁾ But if they turn away, then you 'Muhammad' is tasked with nothing but clear delivery 'of the Message'!⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ ⁽⁸³⁾ They recognize the favour of Allah then they deny it; most of them are the 'true' Deniers⁽¹⁸⁹⁾.

وَجَعَلَ لَكُم سَرَائِلَ تَقِيكُمْ مَرَّ الْحَرِّ
وَسَرَائِلَ تَقِيكُمْ بِأَسْكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يُتِمُّ
نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾
فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَّغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٨٢﴾
يَعْرِفُونَ نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنْكِرُونَهَا
وَكَتَرَهُمُ الْكُفْرُوفُ ﴿٨٣﴾

⁽⁸⁴⁾ ⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ 'Mention' The Day when We raise a witness from each nation⁽¹⁹¹⁾, ⁽¹⁹²⁾ then those who Denied will not be granted permission nor will they be allowed to appease 'their Lord'.

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا ثُمَّ
لَا يُؤْذَنُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

- 186 Armour that protects against harm from weapons (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī).
- 187 Being thankful for God's favours (Aya 78) leads to considering His Signs and Believing (Aya 79) and sincere Belief, which is based on ponderous consideration, leads to unhesitating, unquestioning submission to the Will of God.
- 188 The scope of the Noble Prophet's mission is reiterated (cf. Aya 35 above) to alleviate his suffering from stubbornness and the snobbishness of his people (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 189 Their interaction with the world led them to realize the Truth but their stubbornness and snobbishness stood between them and Believing!
- 190 No reason but only fear can bring these ardently Denying folks to their senses; the Day of Judgement and what happens on it is evoked to this end (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 191 This is their Messenger who is to bear witness as to how his nation answered his call (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "How 'will they fare', when we bring forward a witness from every nation, and We bring you 'Muhammad' as witness against these!" (4: 41).
- 192 The following is a description of how desperate the state of the Associators will be on that grievous Day (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "This is the Day when they utter not 'a thing'; *nor are they allowed so that they may apologize!" (77: 35-36).

﴿85﴾ When those who committed injustice⁽¹⁹³⁾ come to see the Punishment; ⁽¹⁹⁴⁾it will not be lightened for them neither will they have respite. ﴿86﴾ ⁽¹⁹⁵⁾When the Associators see their Associates, they say: “Our Lord, these are our Associates whom we used to invoke besides You.” They ‘their Associates’ then throw the speech back at them: “You are but liars!”⁽¹⁹⁶⁾

وِإِذَارَاءَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الْعَذَابَ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ
عَنَّهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَإِذَارَاءَ الَّذِينَ
أَشْرَكُوا شُرَكَاءَهُمْ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ
شُرَكَائُنَا الَّذِينَ كُنَّا نَدْعُوا مِن دُونِكَ
فَأَلْقُوا إِلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ إِنَّكُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

193 The description of the Associators as *al-ladhīna zalamū* is an incriminating one, which befits their sentence once it has been pronounced after their Judgement and they are about to taste their Punishment (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

194 When they see their Punishment they will ask for leniency and/or delay (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

195 Then the following incriminating bitter exchange will take place: “*On the Day We gather them all, then We say to those who Associated: “At your spot! You and your ‘idol’ Associates!” Then ‘soon’ We disassociated them ‘from each other’; and their Associates said: “Never were you worshipping us!”*” (10: 28).

Note that they are called *mushrikūn* (Associators) which is another incriminating description for them (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

196 Exegetes offer different opinions as to why the idols, whom God made talk (cf. 41: 21), would declare their worshippers liars, when in fact they actually used to worship them. They are as follows: first, to accentuate their scandalous predicament, that they worshipped those who had no idea that they were being worshipped by them (cf. al-Anṣārī); secondly, that their reply concerns the claim that they were actually gods, whom are truthfully worshipped and their worship would draw their worshippers nearer to God Almighty (cf. al-Shinqīṭī); thirdly, that these idols were not happy about the devotional acts of worship they received, thus it is as if they did not take place at all (cf. al-Zamakhsharī): “*Then those who were followed shall disown those who followed, ‘when’ they saw the Punishment and all means were cut off from them. *Those who followed shall say: “Should we have another round, we will disown them as they disowned us”;* thus Allah shows them their deeds as remorse ‘for them’—they shall not be let out from the Fire” (2: 166-167).

﴿87﴾⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ And they concede defeat to Allah on that Day and what they used to fabricate deserts them! ﴿88﴾ Those who⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ Denied and turned ‘people’ away from the path of Allah, We have increased them Punishment over the Punishment for the corruption they used to spread. ﴿89﴾⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ ‘Mention’ The Day when We raise a witness from each nation against them of their own and We bring you ‘Muhammad’ as witness against these! We have sent down the Book as explanation for everything⁽²⁰⁰⁾, a guidance and mercy, and glad tidings to the Muslims⁽²⁰¹⁾.

وَالْقَوَا إِلَى اللَّهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَالسَّلَامُ وَصَلَّ عَنْهُمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ زِدْنَاهُمْ عَذَابًا فَوْقَ
الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يُفْسِدُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَيَوْمَ
نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ
أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَيَّ هَؤُلَاءِ
وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيِينًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

- 197 Then the truth sinks in and they struggle no more and stop trying to wriggle out of their inevitable end; they then realize that they deserved their Punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): “*Why don’t you come to each other’s aid? *Nay, but they have surrendered on this Day!*” (37: 25-26).
- 198 Yet a third incriminating description. This is so that they may consider and desist and whereby it justifies this kind of Punishment.
- 199 This is a repetition of the future projected promise mentioned in Aya 84 above which is meant to ascertain the threat that it includes (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). It adds that the ‘witness’ is *min anfusihim* (of their own) because such a witness would know more about his people than anyone else (cf. al-Sa’dī) and so they cannot discredit his testimony (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr); thus, making it binding.
- 200 The witness Messenger was given a very detailed Message, the Qur’an, explaining everything to people (as enumerated here in this sura and throughout the Qur’an) and he delivered it clearly (cf. Ayas 35, 82), hence undermining any excuse they might have (cf. Abū Ḥayyān): “*It ‘the Qur’an’ has never been fabricated speech, but a confirmation of what came before it, a detailing of everything and a guide and mercy to Believing folks*” (12: 111).
- 201 *al-Muslimūn* (lit. the submitters) are the ones who have contemplated their Lord’s Qur’anic and cosmic Signs, Believed in Him, and submitted

﴿90﴾ (202) Verily Allah enjoins justice, the perfection 'of deeds', imparting on relatives 'their dues', and He proscribes 'committing' vice⁽²⁰³⁾, what is condemnable and aggression; He admonishes you to it 'all', so that you may heed.

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَايَ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾

themselves to God's Judgement and humbled themselves in obedience to His Commands (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr). These are the willing ones who will truly find the Book "a guidance and mercy, and glad tidings": "O people! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord and a healing for what is in the chests; a guidance and mercy for the Believers. *Say 'Muhammad': "In the Grace of Allah and in His Mercy, in that let them then rejoice; it is 'immeasurably' better than what they hoard!" (10: 57-58).

202 This section provides samples of the detailing of guidance found in this Glorious Book (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Nazm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr); all are indeed perfectors of a strong moral character. al-'Izz Ibn 'Abdu-l-Salām (*Qawā'id al-Aḥkām fī Maṣāliḥ al-Anām*, 2: 189) and al-Suyūṭī (*al-Iklīl*: 164) have it that this aya is the most comprehensive of all Qur'anic ayas as to what is commanded and forbidden, in general terms.

"Perfect 'your deeds'—surely Allah likes those who perfect!" (2: 195); "Worship Allah 'alone' and Associate none with Him, and be beneficent to your parents, to relatives, to orphans, to the needy, to the close 'relative' neighbour, to the adjoining neighbour, to the companion at your side, the stranded and those whom your right hands possess—verily Allah does not like any who is proud and boastful" (4: 36); "Indeed Allah commands you that you should hand over trusts to their 'rightful' owners and should you judge among people, judge fairly. Exalted indeed is what Allah exhorts you to—verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing" (4: 58); "You who Believe, be firmly upright for Allah, witnesses of justice, and do not let your resentment for 'some' people hold you back from being just; be just, that is closer to Mindfulness. Be Mindful of Allah—Allah is indeed Knowledgeable of what you do" (5: 8); "When you say 'something' say it fairly, even against a next of kin" (6: 152).

203 "Do not come near vices, both open and secret" (6: 151); "Say 'Muhammad': "My Lord only forbade vices, both open and secret, sinning, aggressing unrightfully, that you Associate with Him that for which He sent down no authority, and that you say about Allah what you have no knowledge of"" (7: 33).

﴿91﴾⁽²⁰⁴⁾ And fulfill the pledge of Allah⁽²⁰⁵⁾ when you make pledges and do not violate ‘your’ oaths after they have been set as obligatory and that you made Allah as Guarantor over you—verily Allah Knows what you do. ﴿92﴾⁽²⁰⁶⁾ Do not be like she who unknits her weaving, after its strength,

وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا
الْأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ
عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٩١﴾
وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّتِي نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَهَا مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ

- 204 While virtue and vices have been dealt with, what follows specifically enjoins honouring pledges in the strongest of terms. Honouring one’s pledges is the truest translation of morality.
- 205 The ‘pledge of Allah’ is that where God’s Name is involved; it is the most deserving of fulfillment (cf. al-Rāzī). Although of a general nature applying to all pledges (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa’dī, al-Shawkānī, al-Shinqīṭī) some exegetes deem the ‘pledge’ mentioned here to be specific to the pledge of allegiance that one gives to God’s Messenger (ﷺ) upon becoming Muslim (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Baghawī, al-Alūsī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

As we will now see all the way through up to Aya 111 this issue was of the greatest importance at the time of revelation. Those who joined the ranks of the Believers, seeing how poor and persecuted they were and how affluent and mighty their enemies were, are vehemently admonished against temptation to break away from them and join the other party. Al-Zamakhsharī states: “Some among those who Believed in Makkah were tempted by Satan as they were greatly alarmed when they saw that the Quraysh had the upper hand and how they persecuted the Muslims and harmed them. They were also promised to be rewarded ‘by the Qurayshites’ should they renege on their oaths and break their pledge of allegiance with Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), but Allah made them steadfast”. That is through strongly warning them against such a course of action, and paying heed to the whisperings of the devils; “Allah brought this to their attention, warned them against it, and so they were delivered” (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

This, at this juncture of the Call of Faith, would have dealt a painful blow, and made the situation even more unbearable. Thus is it being told against in the strongest and most affirmative of terms.

- 206 This is an illustrative example highlighting through imagery how one unravels one’s work by renegeing on a pledge and how wasting this kind of behaviour is. The woman who ‘unknits her weaving, after its strength, into shreds’ posed as the example here, is well-known among the Makkans of the time, whom they jeered for her folly in so doing (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

into shreds, 'by' taking your oaths 'as a means' to gain leeway amongst you, 'until' may 'another' group, greater than 'the' one 'earlier' group 'becomes ready for alliance'⁽²⁰⁷⁾. Allah tests you with it⁽²⁰⁸⁾ and so that He may explain to you what you differ over on the Day of Judgement⁽²⁰⁹⁾.

﴿93﴾ Had Allah wished, He could have made you into one nation⁽²¹⁰⁾

أَنْكُنَّا تَتَّخِذُونَ أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ أُمَّةٌ هِيَ أَرْبَىٰ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِنَّمَا يَبُلُوكُمْ اللَّهُ بِهَاءٍ وَلَا يَسِينَنَّ لَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً

207 They are warned against the treacherous action of entering into treaties with other parties through solemn oaths, while intending all along to break them should the opportunity of forging another with a stronger party present itself even if it were in conflict with the earlier one, and would require betraying the party signatory to it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

208 The binding pledge and the alluring pact with a stronger party is but a test that separates those who follow God's Commands and those who flout them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Sa'dī). Both Ibn Juzayy and Ibn 'Āshūr interpret this taking the 'greater' party as the Qurayshite idolaters and the ones addressed here as those who might be tempted to break away from the Muslim community, for the reason explained.

209 Those who violate such treaties will naturally convince themselves of the morality and/or pragmatism of their action by finding some 'convincing evidence' to this effect. But on the Day of Judgement, when all falsehoods are unmasked, people will realize that Islam is pure good and Denial is sheer evil (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "To each of you 'nations' we have given a 'different' law and way 'of life'; had Allah wished, He could have made you into one nation but He wants to test you by what He gave you. Then vie in a race to good deeds, to Allah you shall all return and then He will tell you 'the Truth' of what you used to differ over!" (5: 48)

210 God, through His Boundless Power and Infinite Wisdom, could have made all people Believers, but then how would their Faith be tested and they be held accountable for their deeds (cf. al-Rāzī): "Had your Lord wished, the dwellers of Earth, all of them together, would Believe; do you force people 'in spite of themselves' till they become Believers! *It is not for a soul to Believe except by Allah's permission; and He places blight over those who mind not!" (10: 99-100); "He is the One Who created you; among you are Deniers and among you are Believers—Allah is All-Seeing of what you do!" (64: 2).

but He misguides whoever He wills and guides whoever He wills⁽²¹¹⁾; you shall be asked about what you used to do!⁽²¹²⁾

وَلَا يَكُن يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَلَتَسْأَلَنَّ عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

﴿94﴾⁽²¹³⁾ Do not take your oaths 'as a means' to gain leeway amongst you, lest a foot slip after it has become firm⁽²¹⁴⁾, and then you shall taste ugliness for your turning away from the path of Allah⁽²¹⁵⁾—yours will be a great Punishment! ﴿95﴾ Do not trade off Allah's pledge for a pittance⁽²¹⁶⁾—what is with Allah is best for you, if only you knew⁽²¹⁷⁾.

وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ فَتَزِلَّ
قَدَمٌ بَعْدَ ثُبُوتِهَا وَتَذُوقُوا السُّوءَ بِمَا صَدَدْتُمْ
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَكُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٩٤﴾
وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا إِنَّمَا عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

- 211 God Almighty in His Infinite Wisdom has already destined some people for Hellfire, but as long as they live, being none the wiser of their own fate, they are free to ponder over and reconsider their position (cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Iklīl*, p. 152) being innately fitted with enough intellectual ability to do so: "They will shriek screechingly therein 'Hellfire': "Our Lord, let us out, and we will do righteous deeds, not what we did before!" Their answer from Allah will be: "Did We not give you a life long enough to have heeded if you were going to? The Warner 'Messenger' came to you, now taste 'the Punishment'." The evildoers will have nobody to help them" (35: 37).
- 212 But those who might feel tempted are yet again reminded and warned against God's Reckoning, on the Day of Judgement.
- 213 Given its significance at that point in history, this passage recaps on and reaffirms the vileness of renegeing on one's pledges (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 214 That is, after their feet became firm in Islam and on the straight path (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). The imagery involved is that of slipping and falling (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 215 Their doing so is turning away from the straight path of God (that is Islam (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr) and causing others to turn away from it (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, al-Sa'dī). No doubt such an action would have adverse effects on the Call of Faith.
- 216 To win worldly gains (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).
- 217 That is, the reward of the everlasting Hereafter is much greater than that of the ephemeral life in this world (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ḥātim, Ibn Kathīr).

﴿96﴾ What is with you depletes, but what is with Allah is everlasting⁽²¹⁸⁾; We shall confer upon those who endure patiently their reward 'as much as they would be' for the best of what they used to do⁽²¹⁹⁾.
 ﴿97﴾⁽²²⁰⁾Whoever does good, male or female, while being a Believer, We shall make them live a good life⁽²²¹⁾ and We shall confer upon them their reward 'as much as they would be' for the best of what they used to do.

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَ
 الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا
 يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ مِنْ عَمَلٍ صَالِحًا مَنْ
 ذَكَرَ أَوْ أَنْتَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُ
 حَيَوَةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ
 مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

﴿98﴾⁽²²²⁾When you 'Muhammad, are about to' recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from the outcast Satan. ﴿99﴾⁽²²³⁾Verily, he has no authority over those who Believe and are reliant on their Lord⁽²²⁴⁾.

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ
 الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٩٨﴾ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
 ءَامَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

- 218 "Nay! But you opt for the worldly life; *whereas the Hereafter is better and more lasting!" (87: 16-17).
- 219 That is, for their most laudable deed of staying firm in Islam, while enduring painful trials from the Associators (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr).
- 220 Not only those who withstand sedition, but all who remain firm in Faith will be granted such a great reward (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr).
- 221 A good life is a happy life that can be found through the sweetness of Faith, finding solace in God Almighty, comfort in the heart, and also through the comely provision that God provides and being satisfied with it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). The Noble Messenger of God said: "Contentment is a bliss!" (Ibn Mājah: 2141).
- 222 This shows how to rid oneself from the insinuations of the Devil (cf. al-Rāzī): "Should Satan somehow stir you, seek refuge with Allah—indeed He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing" (7: 200).
- 223 This goes to show that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) was not exclusively meant by the command in the previous aya (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr).
- 224 No doubt is to be left in anyone's mind over whom the accused Satan has any power, besides whisperings (cf. al-Rāzī). Nor has he any authority in what he calls them for (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī): "You 'Satan' shall have no authority over My servants; enough is Your Lord as an Ally!" (17: 65).

﴿100﴾ His authority is over none but those who take him as ally⁽²²⁵⁾ and by him they are Associators⁽²²⁶⁾.

﴿101﴾ ⁽²²⁷⁾When We replace a Sign with another Sign⁽²²⁸⁾ – Allah Knows best what He ‘successively’ sends down⁽²²⁹⁾ – they ‘would’ say: “You ‘Muhammad’ are a fabricator!” Nay, but most of them know not! ﴿102﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “It has been ‘successively’ brought down by the Holy Spirit⁽²³⁰⁾”

إِنَّمَا سُلْطَنُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

وَإِذَا بَدَلْنَا آيَةً مَّكَانَ آيَةٍ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا نُنزِلُ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُفْتَرٍ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾ قُلْ نَزَّلَهُ رُوحُ الْقُدُسِ

225 Those who take him as ally besides God, follow him and willingly obey his commands (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*).

226 That is, they became Associators by his means and through his machinations (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Juzayy, al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī): “Indeed, Iblīs’ assumption about them has come true, so they ‘all’ follow him, except a group of ‘true’ Believers. *He does not have any authority over them, but ‘Our Will is’ only to distinguish those who Believe in the Hereafter from those who are in doubt about it—your Lord is a ‘vigilant’ Keeper over all things.” (34: 20-21)

227 Through the insinuations of Satan, aspersion is cast on the Divine Source of the Qur’an so as to shake Belief in it and drive people away from it (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

228 That is, the act of abrogating one Qur’anic aya and replacing it with another (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*). Of the two types of abrogation (*naskh*), i.e. that of abrogating the ruling of the aya while maintaining its wording in the Qur’an or replacing it altogether with a new one, most exegetes agree that the latter is what is meant here (cf. al-Qāsimī).

229 There is infinite Wisdom behind the revelation that God Almighty sends down both in the timing and circumstances of the revelation, and its accommodating benefit for God’s servants (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Basīṭ, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah): “Whatever Sign We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We replace it with one which is better or equal to it. Did you not know that Allah has power over everything?” (2: 106).

230 Exegetes unanimously agree that *Rūḥ al-Qudus* (lit. The Sanctified Spirit) is Archangel Gabriel (*Jibrīl*) who is purified from any treachery, ill-will and defect (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

from your Lord with the Truth to make firm those who Believe⁽²³¹⁾, and a guidance and glad tidings to the Muslims⁽²³²⁾. ﴿103﴾ We may very well know that they say: “He is taught by none but a human!”⁽²³³⁾ ‘How so when’⁽²³⁴⁾ The tongue of he to whom they slant⁽²³⁵⁾ is non-Arabic, while this ‘Qur’an’ is an especially lucid Arabic tongue.

مِن رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُنَبِّتَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَهُدًى وَيُبَشِّرَ لِّلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَقَدْ
نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ
لِّسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَبِي وَهَذَا
لِّسَانُ عَرَبِيٍّ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٠٤﴾

- 231 The successive revelation of the ayas of the Qur’an time after time, whereby the Truth is confirmed and reconfirmed all the time, would surely make their Faith all the more stronger. Also, through the replacement of an aya with yet another and better one, makes them realize all the more how caring their Lord is of them (cf. al-Sa’dī).
- 232 *al-Muslimīn* (those who submit), although said to be a variant term of honour along with that of ‘those who Believe’ mentioned here (cf. al-Alūsī, Ibn ‘Āshūr), the circumstance of revelation, and the thematic context of this aya (comprising Ayas 91-111) in this sura, indicate that these are two different segments of the community; i.e. those who needed to be made firm in religion (called ‘those who Believe’ here, as has been explained in Aya 91 above) and those who are above and beyond any of this. i.e. the ‘submitters’ who willingly and unquestioningly surrendered themselves to the Will of God. In Aya 89 above the Qur’an is to be “a guidance and mercy, and glad tidings to the Muslims” but not a means of making them firm in religion.
- 233 Another ruse meant to cause quandary (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 234 Being influenced by teachings in another language, would inevitably cloud over how meanings are perceived and relayed, and have bearings on the foreignness of the diction and style of the message. The Qur’an, however, comes in unparalleled, most magnificent Arabic (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Bayḍāwī, al-Shawkānī).
- 235 *Yulḥidūna* (third person masculine plural indicative verbal form from the root *l-ḥ-d*) means to incline towards; originally, it denotes slanting away from what is straight (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). The Makkans, out of their digression from the straight path, used to claim that a non-Arab used to teach Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Bayḍāwī, al-Sa’dī).

﴿104﴾ (236) Verily, those who do not Believe in Allah's Signs, Allah would not guide them and theirs is a painful Punishment! ﴿105﴾ None fabricates lies but those who do not Believe in Allah's Signs— those are truly the liars! (237)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَا يَهْدِيهِمْ
اللَّهُ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٤﴾ إِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي
الْكُذِبَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَذِبُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

﴿106﴾ (238) Whoever Denies Allah after Believing – except the one who is coerced while his heart is comforted with Belief⁽²³⁹⁾ – but he who opens up his heart with Denial, then on them is Wrath from Allah and theirs is a great Punishment.

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ
أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَٰكِن
مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ عَذَابٌ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾

- 236 The fabricators of such lies, which knew no end, are dead set against Believing, and thus are punished by not being guided to the path of Truth in this life and a painful Punishment in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Sa' dī). Although the aya is general in nature, in Ibn 'Āshūr's opinion, the ones meant here, are the staunchest, hardcore Qurayshites like Abū Jahl and al-Walīd Ibn al-Mughīrah who were denied guidance and met their demise as Deniers.
- 237 The expression, *ulā'ika hum*, denotes exclusivity (*al-ḥaṣr*, cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa' dī), i.e. none is lying except them and not Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as they claim (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 238 This passage rounds up and climaxes the issue that was raised in Aya 91 and the ensuing ayas. The ones addressed here are those who are feared may depart Islam and revert to Denial and Association. They are warned against being fooled by how prosperous the Deniers were (and conversely, how straitened the Believers were at that time in Makkah) and their unsettling fabrications against the Message, as encapsulated in the Qur'an (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 239 One such person was the great Companion, 'Ammār Ibn Yāsir (رضي الله عنه), who especially, along with his parents, underwent particularly hellish torture (cf. al-Ghazālī, *Fiqh al-Sīrah*, p. 111). His son Muhammad, narrates: "The Associators seized 'Ammār Ibn Yāsir and did not let go of him until he cursed the Prophet (ﷺ), and praised their idols and then they left him. When he came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he said: "What befell you?" 'Ammār replied: "Evil, O Messenger of Allah! I was not let go of until I got at you and lauded their idols". He said: "How do you find your heart?" He replied: "Comforted with Belief!" He then replied: "If they revert to it, repeat the same"" (al-Ḥākim: 3362; al-Bayhaqī: 17350).

﴿107﴾ That for they prefer the worldly life over the Hereafter, and that Allah guides not the Denying people. ﴿108﴾⁽²⁴⁰⁾ Those are the ones on whose hearts, hearing and sights Allah stamped; those are the truly unmindful⁽²⁴¹⁾. ﴿109﴾ Without a doubt, they are the 'truly' losing ones in the Hereafter!⁽²⁴²⁾ ﴿110﴾ Then verily 'Muhammad' your Lord is to those who migrated after they had been subjected to 'severe' trial then they strived and bore patiently⁽²⁴³⁾, then your Lord after that is verily All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿111﴾ On the Day⁽²⁴⁴⁾ when every soul comes arguing for itself and every soul is given the full measure of 'its' deeds; they shall not be dealt 'with' unjustly!

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُوا الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَأُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ
عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَسَمِعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَرِهِمْ
وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَافِيُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ لَآ جَرَمَ
أَنَّهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾
ثُمَّ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ لِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ هَاجِرًا وَآثِرًا
بَعْدَ مَا قَسَمْنَا لَهُمْ فَجْرًا فِئْتَابًا
رَبِّكَ مِن بَعْدِ هَٰذَا فَجُورٌ رَّجِيمٌ ﴿١١١﴾ يَوْمَ
تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمِثْلِ نَفْسِهَا وَتُوْفَىٰ كُلُّ
نَفْسٍ بِمَا عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

- 240 They were denied guidance because they did not use the means they were endowed with to see it, i.e. their faculties of perception; hearts, ears and eyes (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 241 Unmindful of both the reason for their creation and the Punishment that awaits them in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Jazā'irī).
- 242 For missing out on the pleasure of Paradise, which would have been theirs to enjoy had they remained steadfast in Islam, and for not being spared the ghastly torment of Hellfire (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Sa'adī).
- 243 These are the Companions who were victimized, and forced to utter the word of Denial, which they did with their tongues to save their lives, but then migrated to Madinah and fought against their tormentors, while being steadfast in Faith (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). Taking this as a Makkan aya, as with the rest of the sura, Ibn 'Āshūr interprets the 'migration' mentioned here as that to Abyssinia, quoting Ibn Ishāq's famous biography of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ), and whereby their jihad was their engagement in a struggle with the Associators, lest they further forced them into Denial.
- 244 The Day of Judgement, when justice is meted out in full measure (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).

﴿112﴾⁽²⁴⁵⁾ Allah poses as example a village⁽²⁴⁶⁾ that was secure and assured 'with' its provision coming plentifully from everywhere, then it denied Allah's favours⁽²⁴⁷⁾ so Allah made it taste the overcast of hunger and fear⁽²⁴⁸⁾ for what they were used to doing. ﴿113﴾ Indeed there had come to them a Messenger of their own⁽²⁴⁹⁾

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ ءَامِنَةً
مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِّن كُلِّ
مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ اللَّهِ فَأَذَاقَهَا
اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَصْتَعُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْهُمْ

245 This is a direct warning to the Makkans; they are being warned against Divine punishment in this worldly life as much as they have just been warned against the one in the Hereafter (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Āshūr). As much as deeds are accounted for in the Hereafter they are like so in this life (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

246 Exegetes are of different opinions as to which exactly was the *qaryah* (village/town) pointed to here. Although some see it as Makkah itself (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Jawzī, al-Shinqīṭī), others deem it as an unidentified town, posed hypothetically as such for the Makkans, where the people enjoyed a lush life (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Shawkānī). The town is not named because the description given is enough to get the message across (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

247 The use of *jam' qillah* (plural of small quantity/fewness) from *an'um* could be interpreted here to highlight that deriding God's most precious favours will bring about His Punishment, no matter what the derision consists of (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shirbīnī).

248 *Libāsa al-jū' wa l-khawf* (lit. the garment of hunger and fear) strikes an imagery of people who are overcast and overcome with fear and hunger (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Abū Ḥayyān, Abū al-Su'ūd). They have become ghastly, pale, and deplorable; this after the lush life they used to bask in because of their ardent Denial (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "The Quraysh overwhelmed the Prophet (ﷺ) and rebelled against him, and he said: "O Allah, help me against them with seven parched years like those of 'Prophet' Yūsuf 'Joseph'!" They were then hit with drought and out of ruination they ate bones and carcasses. One of them would see the like of smoke between him and the sky out of wasting hunger!" (Cf. al-Bukhārī: 4822; Muslim: 2798)

249 Their rebelliousness was totally unjustified as they very intimately knew the Messenger that came to them, and knew how sincere he was (cf. al-Wāḥidī, al-Wasīl, al-Bayḍāwī): "There has come to you a Messenger from your own, on whom your adversity is hard, 'deeply' concerned for you and compassionate and merciful to the Believers" (9: 128).

but they declared him a liar so the Punishment betook them for they were unjust. ﴿114﴾⁽²⁵⁰⁾ Eat of what Allah provided for you, that is lawful and good, and be thankful for Allah's favour; if only you do 'truly' worship Him. ﴿115﴾⁽²⁵¹⁾ Indeed He 'Allah' made unlawful for you but carrion, blood⁽²⁵²⁾, swine flesh, and what was intended 'as sacrifice' for others besides Allah; 'yet' whoever is forced 'by necessity' – neither transgressing⁽²⁵³⁾ nor going to excess⁽²⁵⁴⁾ – then certainly Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿116﴾⁽²⁵⁵⁾ Do not say

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾
 فَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا
 وَأَشْكُرُوا لِعَمَّتِ اللَّهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِتَاءَهُ
 تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ
 وَالذَّمَّ وَاللَّحْمَ الْخَنِزِيرِ وَمَا أَهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ
 بِهِ مِنْ أَضْطَرَّ غَيْرِ سَبَإٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
 عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَلَا تَقُولُوا

250 In order to avoid such a ghastly fate, people need to be grateful to the All-Bountiful God and devote their worship to Him (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

251 Indeed the All-Merciful God, Who is solely worthy of worship, bids nothing but good and means His servants no hardship: "He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion!" (22: 78). What He made lawful fades in comparison to what He forbade, which way outweighs it (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*): "Say 'Muhammad': "I find none in what is revealed to me forbidden for any eater to eat thereof, except it being carrion, flowing blood, swine flesh then it is a defilement, or 'further' an act of contravention intended 'as sacrifice' for others besides Allah" (6: 145).

252 What is unlawful is flowing blood but not the blood captured in vessels after slaughter, cf. 6: 145. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīfī)

253 By eating any of these without being in such a circumstance where one is hard pressed into it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī).

254 Even in pressing circumstances, eating more than what is absolutely necessary (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī).

255 The Qurayshites were so deviated from the right path that they set their own bogus laws out of sheer fancy (cf. al-Rāzī): "They also said: "These are prohibited livestock and crops which are only to be consumed by those whom we wish" – so they claimed – 'other' livestock the backs of which were made forbidden, and 'some' livestock over which they do not mention Allah's Name, ascribing this falsely to Him; He will requite them for what they used to concoct. *They also said: "Whatever is in the bellies of these livestock 'if alive' is reserved exclusively for our males and is forbidden to our 'female' mates". But if it is 'born' dead then it is shared with them;

to what your tongues describe⁽²⁵⁶⁾, the falsity: “This is lawful and this is unlawful!” As such you fabricate lies against Allah. Verily those who fabricate lies against Allah will never succeed. ﴿117﴾ “For them is but” A passing enjoyment, and theirs is a painful Punishment. ﴿118﴾⁽²⁵⁷⁾ And for those of Jewish faith, We prohibited what We narrated to you ‘Muhammad’ before; We did not do them injustice, but they were unjust to themselves. ﴿119﴾⁽²⁵⁸⁾ “But” Then your Lord, ‘O Muhammad’, to those who commit evil out of ignorance, then they repent afterwards and make amends, then Your Lord after that is certainly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

لِمَا تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتَكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هَذَا حَلَلٌ
وَهَذَا حَرَامٌ لَتَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾
مَتَّعٌ قَلِيلٌ وَأَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا
حَرَمًا مَّا قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمَا ظَلَمْتَهُمْ
وَلَٰكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِ
رَبِّكَ لِلَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السُّوءَ بِجَهَلَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابُوا
مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا
لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١١٩﴾

*He will requite them for their designation—verily He is Most Wise, All-Knowing” (6: 138-139); “Say ‘Muhammad’: “Would you ‘not’ consider what Allah sent down to you as provision and you divided it into ‘some’ lawful and ‘some’ unlawful; say: did Allah give you permission ‘for this’ or do you fabricate falsities against Allah?” *What do those who fabricate lies against Allah think ‘of their fate’ on the Day of Judgement! Indeed Allah is bountiful to people, but most of them are thankless” (10: 59-60).*

- 256 *Wasf* (description) is often used in the Qur’an to denote lying (cf. al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, ‘*Umdat al-Ḥuffāz*, 4: 317).
- 257 The ones who rebel against God’s laws will surely fall into hardship, thus they are warned (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). God intends no one hardship, but people do transgress and go to extremes and, thus, are punished (cf. Ibn Kathīr): “*And for those of Jewish faith, We prohibited all animals of nails, and from cattle, sheep and goats We prohibited for them their fat except what their backs hold or the entrails or what mixes with bone; that We imposed on them for their transgression—Indeed We are all but Truthful*” (6: 146).
- 258 Since Islam was then new and most Muslims, before embracing the call to Faith, were of such ignorant declension, this aya calms their fears that they would be included with those who remained faithful to their devious laws (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). It also signals to people that the door of repentance will always be open.

﴿120﴾ (259) Ibrāhīm ‘Abraham’ was truly a leading paragon⁽²⁶⁰⁾, devoutly committed to Allah, righty-oriented, and he was ‘surely’ not from among the Associators. ﴿121﴾ ‘He was’ Thankful for His favours; He picked him and guided him to a straight path⁽²⁶¹⁾. ﴿122﴾ And We bestowed upon him ‘all’ what is good in the worldly life, and verily in the Hereafter he is among the Righteous⁽²⁶²⁾.

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ
مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ شَاكِرًا لِّأَنْعُمِهِ اجْتَبَاهُ
وَهَدَيْنَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا
حَسَنَةً وَوَعَدْنَاهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لِمَنِ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

259 This is to falsify their claims that their heathen practices follow after the Abrahamic creed, the forefather of the Qurayshites, and to relate Islam to this most pristine creed (cf. al-Rāzī).

260 *Ummah* is a teacher who possesses all sterling characteristics, one who is taken as an example (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī); it derives from the root *a-m-m* which denotes origin and reference (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyis al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). *Ummah* also roughly means nation or a group of people sharing common characteristics. In this sense, Abraham (ﷺ) was a ‘nation’ on his own because there was a time when he was the only Believer on the face of the Earth and everyone else was an idolater (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Maǧmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 11: 436). Abū Hurayrah narrates that Prophet Abraham said to his wife Sarah that: “There are no Believers on the face of the Earth except you and I!” (al-Bukhārī: 3358): “Mention Muhammad’ *When Ibrāhīm* was tested by his Lord by certain words which he fulfilled. He ‘The Lord’ said: “I will make you a leader to humanity!”” (2: 124).

261 “*And We granted him* ‘Ibrāhīm’ *Ishāq* ‘Isaac’ and *Ya‘qūb* ‘Jacob’; *all these We guided – and We guided Nūh* ‘Noah’ *before – and from his posterity ‘We guided’: Dāwūd* ‘David’, *Sulaymān* ‘Solomon’, *Ayyūb* ‘Job’, *Yūsuf* ‘Joseph’, *Mūsā* ‘Moses’ and *Hārūn* ‘Aaron’ – *like so We reward the good doers – *Zakariyyā* ‘Zachariah’, *Yaḥyā* ‘John’, ‘Isā ‘Jesus’, *Ilyās* ‘Elijah’ – *everyone* ‘of them’ *is among the righteous – *Ismā‘īl* ‘Ishmael’, *al-Yasā‘* ‘Elisha’, *Yūnus* ‘Jonah’ and *Lūṭ* ‘Lot’ – *everyone of them We preferred to all other humans – *and* ‘were guided some’ *from among their fathers, posterity and brothers; We picked them and guided them to a Straight Path. *That is the guidance of Allah; He guides with it whomever He wills from among His servants. Had they Associated, what they used to do would have been laid to waste*” (6: 84-88).

262 *al-Ṣāliḥīn* are God’s Prophets and Messengers, who hold the highest ranks in Paradise (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

﴿123﴾ (263) Then We revealed to you 'Muhammad' that you are to follow the creed of Ibrāhīm, 'who was' rightly-oriented and 'verily' not from among the Associators. ﴿124﴾ (264) The Sabbath⁽²⁶⁵⁾ was made 'an obligation' only upon those who differed over it⁽²⁶⁶⁾; verily your Lord, 'O Muhammad', will judge between them concerning what they used to differ over, on the Day of Judgement⁽²⁶⁷⁾.

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ
السَّبْتُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لَيَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا
فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

263 Such laudation reflects on Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and the religion of Islam, being the rightful, God-ordained heir of this great legacy. This is in contrast to any of the Arabs who claimed such honour but who were way off the mark (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

The 'creed of Ibrāhīm', *millata Ibrāhīm*, known as *Hanīfiyyah*, is the most primordial, pristine, uncorrupted precursor to all heavenly-revealed religions. The Qur'an underlines Islam's close relation to it in various places: 2: 135, 4: 125, 6: 161 and 16: 123.

264 Many are the claimants of this great honour, being the rightful inheritors of Prophet Abraham (ﷺ). Not only the Qurayshites claimed him theirs but also the Jews (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "*Ibrāhīm was neither a Jew nor was he a Christian, but he was rightly oriented, devoutly surrendered and was not among the Associators. *Indeed those who can claim Ibrāhīm most are those who 'truly' followed him, 'as well as' this Prophet and the Believers—Allah is the Ally of the Believers*" (3: 67-68).

265 The day of Sabbath (Saturday) and their veneration of it, is symbolic of how deviated they are from the pristine creed of Prophet Abraham (ﷺ) (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

266 The veneration of the Sabbath, was made obligatory on the Jews as punishment for their dispute over it and whether to consider it holy, as the best day of the week. They were made to miss Friday and its process and prefer Saturday instead when, in fact, it was not mentioned so in the creed of Abraham (ﷺ) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah).

267 "*Verily, We have settled the Children of Israel in a truthfully laudable settlement, and We have blessed them with good provisions, 'but' they differed 'among themselves' not until 'true' knowledge came to them—indeed your Lord shall adjudge among them on the Day of Judgement concerning what they used to differ over*" (10: 93).

﴿125﴾ (268) Call to the Path of your Lord, 'O Muhammad', with wisdom⁽²⁶⁹⁾ and gentle admonition⁽²⁷⁰⁾, and argue with them in the best manner⁽²⁷¹⁾; verily your Lord Knows best whoever has strayed away from His Path and He Knows best the guided⁽²⁷²⁾.
 ﴿126﴾ (273) When you 'Believers come

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ
 الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدْ لَهُم بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
 هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ
 بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ

- 268 Given the circumstances this last passage of the sura points out the best way of conduct to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ). It truly encapsulates great manners. Here he is encouraged to bear patiently in the face of his detractors calumny (saying that he is a fabricator, Aya 101, and that he is being taught by a human being, Aya 103 among many other such aspersions found in the Qur'an) and to carry on with his call to the straight path of God (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 269 *al-Ḥikmah* is the wise way that God Almighty revealed to him both in the Qur'an and the Sunnah (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*); taking into account the state of the addressees in terms of their understanding and willingness to obey or not (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 270 *al-Maw'izah al-ḥasanah* is the advice that endears good to people and repels them against evil (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*).
- 271 *al-Latī hiya aḥsan* (lit. the one which is best), i.e. the best manner of argument being considerate and kind, well-spoken, tolerant and adhering to conduct which is sure to win hearts (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Bayḍāwī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 272 This is stated to ease the pressure off of the Noble Prophet's mind; he is only tasked to deliver the Message and the rest is with God, Who Knows His creation best (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 273 Exegetes have debated the occasion of this aya's revelation and whether it is a Makkan or a Madinan one. A good number (cf. al-Qurṭubī notes that most exegetes are of this opinion) see it as having been sent down on the day of the conquest of Makkah. In the aftermath of the Battle of Uḥud, when the Qurayshites got the better of the Muslims killing and maiming some of them, especially the great Companion Ḥamzah (رضي الله عنه), the dear uncle of the noble Prophet (ﷺ) at whose sight he suffered painful anguish (cf. al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*: 2869), the Muslims were so irate that they vowed to kill more Qurayshites than those Believers they had killed. So the occasion came when the Believers conquered Makkah, but God Almighty sent this aya down, and the Messenger instructed them to hold off their hands and only to exact justice on four people, saying: "We shall be patient and not punish!" (cf. al-Albānī, *al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, 5: 491; al-Tirmidhī: 3129). But given that the whole sura is Makkan, others (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Naḥḥās, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Māwardī, Ibn 'Āshūr) have taken it to be a Makkan aya. So, they interpret it to be closely related to the previous

to inflict punishment, then inflict a punishment equal in measure to the punishment that was inflicted on you; but should you endure patiently then that is better for the patient⁽²⁷⁴⁾. ﴿127﴾ Bear patiently 'O Muhammad', but your patience is only through Allah, do not feel sad over them⁽²⁷⁵⁾ and do not feel troubled by their plotting⁽²⁷⁶⁾; ﴿128﴾ ⁽²⁷⁷⁾verily Allah is with those who are Mindful and those who do good.

فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ ۗ وَلَئِنَّ
صَبْرَكُمْ لَمُوحِيذٌ لِّالصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ وَأَصْبِرْ
وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ۗ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ
فِي ضَلَالٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ
اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾



instructions regarding how to deliver the call. Whoever calls for the Truth in this manner will inevitably touch a nerve with people regarding what they hold as sacred and would provoke retaliation, by inflicting harm and bodily or verbal abuse, which would make the caller bitter and wanting revenge, and, thus, is the Divine instruction given to not be only just and fair in this respect, but rather to better forgive and overlook.

The great scholar and Qur'an interpreter, Ibn Sīrīn (following Mujāhid and al-Nakha'ī) strongly debunks the earlier (Madinan) interpretation as it casts doubt over the order of the revelation of the Qur'an.

- 274 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Forgiveness adds nothing to a servant but honour!" (Muslim: 2588).
- 275 The compassionate Noble Messenger (ﷺ) felt sad that these folks would not come to Believe and save themselves from Hellfire (cf. al-Zamaksharī, al-Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīfī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*): "Should you 'in your compassion, Muhammad' *grieve yourself to death if they are not willing to Believe in this Discourse!*" (18: 6); "So let not your soul 'Muhammad' go to waste in regrets over them" (35: 8).
- 276 Given the immensity of their unsettling plotting, the command is given not to be bothered or distracted from the cause by it. In this way, the earlier instruction given in Aya 70 of this sura is restated here for affirmation.
- 277 Knowing that God Almighty is on their side, the Mindful well-doers will be all the more enduring of harm (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). This sura opens up with the command not to be hasty and concludes with the command to be patient (cf. al-Suyūfī, *Marāsid al-Maṭālī'*, p. 53).



سُورَةُ الْاِسْرَاءِ

al-Isrā'
(Night Travel)



al-Isrā' (Night Travel)

Title: *al-Isrā'* (Night Travel) also known as *Banī Isrā'īl* (The Children of Israel) (cf. al-Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣā'ir Dhawī al-Tamyīz*, 1: 288, Ibn 'Āshūr) opens up with the mention of the Night Journey (*al-isrā'*), which the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) was taken on, to be followed by the Ascension to the Heavens (*al-mi'rāj*). Both the Night Journey and the Ascension to the Heavens are so closely associated with each other almost to a synonymous extent. In this journey, the Prophet (ﷺ) was whisked in the dead of the night out of the darkest hours of his mission to the Farthest Mosque (*al-Masjid al-Aqṣā*), which is the rock bed of Divine Messages, and from there he was ascended to Heaven (for a detailed account of this journey see: al-Bukhārī: 349; Muslim: 162; Imām Aḥmad: 12505) where he was shown some of God's most magnificent Signs to prove to him and all who are addressed by him that his Message was beyond any doubt and that he has God Almighty's support.

Merit: this is a very meritorious sura: the Messenger (ﷺ) used to recite it each night before going to bed. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would not sleep on his bed until he had recited *Banī Isrā'īl* [another name for *al-Isrā'*] and *al-Zumar* [each night]" (al-Tirmidhī: 2920, Imām Aḥmad: 24433; al-Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 11444). It is one of the most cherished suras of the Glorious Qur'an. The great Companion, 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) said: "*Banī Isrā'īl*, *al-Kahf*, *Maryam*, *Ṭā Hā*, *al-Anbiyā'* are among the early vintage suras; they are among the earliest I learned!" (al-Bukhārī: 4739).

Theme: the sura touches on several themes but all relate to the Message of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*), as encapsulated in the Qur'an (which, more than any other sura, is referred to no less than 13 times throughout *al-Isrā'*); namely, its high standing, sterling teachings, Divine source, infallibility, completeness, healing power, inimitability, life-giving power, its precedents, how it was received, and instructions to the Messenger as to how to deal with it.

Key: this is an unanimously Makkan sura (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣā'ir Dhawī al-Tamyīz*, 1: 288, al-Biqā'ī, *Maṣā'id al-Nazar*. 2: 228). In the latter days of the Makkan period of the Prophet's (ﷺ) mission, (most probably one and a half years before the Prophet's migration to

Madinah (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr), the outlook for the Muslims was at its bleakest (cf. ‘Key’ to Sura *Hūd*). The idolaters’ onslaught and opposition campaign did not stop at the physical and the material means of standing in the face of the Call of Faith but also became aggressively argumentative. At this time, the Night Journey and Ascension incident took place, thus comforting the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers around him, assuring him of the great nature that his Message bears and that it shall come to prevail.

Despite all the darkness around, the Message of Muhammad (ﷺ) goes further and rises higher than all other codes of morality; through it, the truly righteous inherit their rightful place in the land.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿1﴾ Glorified⁽¹⁾ be He Who set His servant⁽²⁾ on nocturnal travel⁽³⁾, by night⁽⁴⁾, from the Sanctified Mosque⁽⁵⁾ to the Farthest Mosque⁽⁶⁾

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا

- 1 *Subhāna* (lit. glorified/exalted/elevated) is an infinitive form (known in Arabic grammar as *maṣdar*, unbound in terms of circumstance or time) of the verb *sabbaha* denoting unquantifiably holding God Almighty way above all imperfections and flaws (cf. al-Alūsī, al-Shawkānī). Notably, words deriving from the root *s-b-h* (to glorify) are repeated five times in this sura (Ayas: 1, 43, 44, 93, 108) so much so that this sura is also called Surah *Subhāna* (cf. Ibn Abī Zamanīn, 5: 3, al-Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣṣ'ir Dhawī al-Tamyiz*, 1: 228).
God Almighty Who sent His Messenger (ﷺ) is exalted and High above all of the doubts that the Deniers cast at the Message and hurtful words they say about it and its honoured bearer. It also signifies that what will come to be said is of the greatest magnitude (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 2 'His servant' is unanimously agreed by exegetes, old and new, to be Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Khāzin). This is a term of the greatest honour ever conferred on a human, as it signifies Divine ownership and recognition. This is why the station of servanthood, not Messengership or Prophethood, is used here in lieu of this unparalleled Sign (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*, al-Anṣārī, *Faṭḥ al-Raḥmān*).
- 3 This most wondrous journey known as *al-isrā'* (lit. night travel) and *al-mi'rāj* (heavenly Ascension) and the Signs which Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was made to see in them are detailed in a long hadith documented by Muslim (No. 162) and Aḥmad (No. 12505). The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) was taken on it both in his body and spirit, on both *al-isrā'* and *al-mi'rāj*, not only by spirit or during sleep as some would have it, otherwise it would not be miraculous and a Sign of his Prophethood (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr and al-Shinqīṭī among others argue this point at length).
- 4 Although 'by night' is semantically included in the verb *asrā* (travel by night), it is separated here and delivered in the indefinite form *laylan* to underline that this incident happened during only a part of a single night although the journey between Makkah and Jerusalem at that time used to take up to 40 days (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Anṣārī, *Faṭḥ al-Raḥmān*, Darwīsh, *I'rāb al-Qur'ān wa Bayānuhu*, 5: 394).
- 5 *al-Masjid al-Harām* also known as *al-Bayt al-'Atīq* (the Ancient House) is the Holy Mosque of Makkah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 6 *al-Masjid al-Aqṣā* (lit. the Farthest Mosque) is agreed to be *Bayt al-Maqdis* (lit. the House of Holiness) (cf. al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Juzayy, al-Shawkānī, al-Shinqīṭī) in Jerusalem. Ibn 'Āshūr pointedly notes that this

around which We have blessed⁽⁷⁾, so that We may show him of Our Signs⁽⁸⁾; indeed He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing⁽⁹⁾. ⁽²⁾ ⁽¹⁰⁾ And We had given Mūsā "Moses" the Book⁽¹¹⁾ and made it guidance for the Children of Israel that: "You should not take any Trustee⁽¹²⁾ besides Me!"

الَّذِي بَدَرْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ
السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿٢﴾ وَآتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ آلَا تَتَّخِذُوا
مِنْ دُونِي وَكِيلاً ﴿٣﴾

is a previously unknown 'innovative' Qur'anic nomenclature. It is called the 'farthest' mosque because of its great distance from the Holy Mosque in Makkah (cf. al-Wāhidi, *al-Basī*).

Ibn 'Āshūr takes this journey from *al-Masjid al-Harām* to *al-Masjid al-Aqṣā* to be symbolic of how Islam encompasses all the monotheistic creeds in their most pristine state since the time of Abraham (ﷺ) whose creed (*millah*) set its roots in Makkah and then branched out from *Bayt al-Maqdis* only to be topped off and sealed once again in Makkah with the advent of Islam. Prophet Muhammad's (ﷺ) leadership of other Prophets and Messengers (ﷺ) in Prayer, during the night journey, in *Bayt al-Maqdis* (cf. Muslim: 162) in fact symbolizes his higher status than all of them (cf. Ibn Kathīr). This brings into relevance the high moral grounds on which Islam stands as found in this sura (Ayas: 22-39 below).

- 7 *Bāraknā ḥawlahu* (lit. around which We have blessed), i.e. the environs of which have been blessed with an abundance of water, greenery and crops, as well as it being a cradle for many a Prophet and a chosen person (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr al-Sa'dī).
- 8 On that night, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) (as related in al-Bukhārī: 349; Muslim: 162; Imām Aḥmad: 12505) came to see some of the great wonders which are pieces of evidences of God's limitless ability (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī).
- 9 God Almighty was All-Hearing of His Messenger's (ﷺ) supplications in that dark hour of his and answered them. Furthermore, He was All-Seeing whereby He protected him in the darkness of the night (cf. al-Sam'ānī).
- 10 Reference is given here to the Message of Prophet Moses (ﷺ), which was a great blessing to his people, through which they thrived in their land and by the dereliction of duty towards the dictates of which they earned God Almighty's Wrath. The Believers are to take note of this and cherish their own Message (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 11 That is, the Torah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 12 *Wakīl* denotes one who is entrusted with the management of another person's affairs (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-İṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Here, they were specifically told

﴿3﴾ “You who are the offspring of those We carried ‘in the ark’ with Nūḥ ‘Noah’⁽¹³⁾; verily he was a greatly thankful servant!”

ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا ﴿٣﴾

﴿4﴾ (14) We had declared in the Book⁽¹⁵⁾ to the Children of Israel that:

وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فِي الْكِتَابِ

not to entrust their affairs to any other besides God Almighty because this necessitates total servitude and submission and not doing so amounts to Associating others with Him (ﷻ) (cf. al-Sa’dī, Ibn Kathīr).

al-Rāzī explains, the importance of this particular dictate, and its relevance in this context: “Allah mentions His honouring of Muhammad (ﷺ) through the night travel (*isrā’*), then immediately after that, He mentions His honouring of Mūsā (ﷺ) by sending the Torah down to him, then He describes the Torah as ‘guidance’, then He explains that the Torah was guidance because it contained the prohibition not to take a Trustee (*Wakīl*) besides Him. That is Monotheism. The total sum of what has been said boils down to the fact that no ‘ascension (*mi’rāj*), or degree, or loftiness is higher than Monotheism. A person is to entrust none of his affairs to any besides Allah! One should always remember the command: “Put your trust in Allah—sufficient is Allah ‘indeed’ as Trustee!”” (4: 81).

- 13 Prophet Noah (ﷺ) being a truly dutiful servant to God is given here as a point of reference to the Children of Israel; they needed to be like him, thank God for His favour and Associate none with Him. (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī). Inheritance of and prominence in the land are dependent on emulating such a great example (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Uddat al-Ṣābirīn*, p. 118). He from all their godly forefathers, who were no less than the Prophets Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (ﷺ), is brought to the fore here because his case gives a potent example; salvation in the ark with him was given only to his pious sons but his rebellious son who refused to follow him was ruined. Should the Children of Israel be like their forefathers who mounted the ‘ark of Divine guidance’, they would be safe, if not then ruination would be their inevitable end (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 14 This passage describes in a nutshell, the peaks and valleys of the cycle of life of the Jewish people and what they are tied to; they would thrive as long as they follow the guidance as found in God’s Message to them (cf. al-Rāzī. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 15 In his translation, Muhammad Assad opines: “...probably applying to predictions contained in the Torah, Leviticus xxvi, 14-39 and Deuteronomy xxviii, 15-68...”. However, since the Torah (*al-Tawrah*) that was sent down to Moses (ﷺ) is nowhere to be found in its intact original language and form, we cannot point out these passages for sure, especially given their sensitive nature.

“You will surely sow corruption⁽¹⁶⁾ twice⁽¹⁷⁾ in the land and you will surely become greatly domineering”.
⁽⁵⁾ “When the promise of the first⁽¹⁸⁾ one has come, We would set upon you servants of Ours of steely mettle⁽¹⁹⁾ and they would diffuse through the lands⁽²⁰⁾; verily that is a promise coming to pass!”⁽⁶⁾ “Then We would make the turn ‘of fortune’ for you over them⁽²¹⁾;

لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوًّا
 كَبِيرًا ﴿٥﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ أُولَئِهِمَا بَعَثْنَا
 عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَنَا أُولَى بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ فَجَاسُوا
 خِلَالَ الدِّيَارِ وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُولًا ﴿٦﴾
 ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ

16 That is through rebelling, sinning and riding roughshod over the dictates of the Torah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

17 Exactly which incidents these two are has proven, given the political situation of the time, to be a very hotly contested issue among exegetes old and, especially, new, with some believing that both have come to pass, others believing that at least the ‘latter one’ is yet to come. However, God Almighty’s never changing Canon, the natural law of cause and effect, and promise to them is that whenever they ‘sow corruption in the land’ God will have them humbled and subdued at the hands of others.

Throughout history such incidents did actually take place: the Assyrians under King Sennacherib overran Palestine in the seventh century B.C. and caused the disappearance of the greater part of the Hebrew nation (the ten lost tribes), and the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar II, about one hundred years later, pillaged the city and destroyed the Temple and carried off the remainder of the Children of Israel into captivity. Also the Romans, under Emperor Titus (Flavius Vespasianus), in the year 70 C.E. later on, ransacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple.

Corruption and domineering in the land are not befitting of a nation that bases its rule on Divine Revelation. Such betrayal of the Message and the corruption of ‘the homeland of revelation’ naturally brings about the grave consequence of foreign occupation driven by humiliation and subversion.

18 That is, when the punishment for such rebellion is due (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

19 *Ulī ba’s shadīd*, that is of terrible might and toughness (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

20 *Fa-jāsū khilāla al-diyāri*, i.e. these ‘soldiers of God’ would move freely to and fro between houses pillaging and ransacking (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).

21 This turn of fortune happens after self-appraisal, sincere repentance and mending of their ways (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Qurtubī, al-Nasafī).

We would supply you with money and children, and make you of greater summoning!⁽²²⁾ ﴿7﴾ (23) “If you do well, you do well to yourselves and if you commit mischief, you commit it against them ‘yourselves’⁽²⁴⁾. When the promise of the latter one was due, they (Our servants) would defile your faces⁽²⁵⁾, enter the *Masjid*⁽²⁶⁾

وَأَمَدَدْنَاكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ أَكْثَرَ نَفِيرًا ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّ أَحْسَنَكُمْ أَحْسَنَكُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِن أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسْتَوْفُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ

- 22 *Akthara nafīran*, that is you mobilize more soldiers in war than your enemy (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa’dī). Originally, it means those who rally (*yanfuru*) with a person, his clan and kith and kin (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 23; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).
- 23 This is a moral, lesson-drawing interpolation, between the telling of the two promises, underlining the law of cause and effect. They were made to gain the upper hand over their enemy because they did well by repenting, but should they revert to their old ways, then they have only themselves to blame for the consequences: “*Had the People of the Book ‘truly’ Believed and were Mindful, We would have surely absolved them of their misdeeds and admitted them into the Gardens of bliss; *and had they upheld the Torah and the Evangel and what was sent down to them from their Lord, they would have eaten ‘blissfully’ from above them and from under their feet; among them there is an upright nation, yet many of them are vile indeed for what they commit*” (5: 65-66); “*And that you should seek your Lord’s forgiveness and thereafter repent to Him; ‘may’ He make you enjoy pleurably until a stated term and grant every good doer ‘the reward of’ his good doing*” (11: 3).
- 24 “*Whenever He saves them, they no sooner wrongfully transgress in the land. O people, your transgression is ‘only’ against your own selves*” (10: 23).
- 25 *Yasū’ū wujūhakum* (defile your faces), is to make the effect of hurt (*masā’ah*) show on the affected person’s face (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*); through killing, taking hostage, submission and humiliation (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). This is how desperate they would be as they would not be able to put on a brave face and hide from each other and/or their enemies how bad they feel.
- 26 It would be inappropriate to translate *masjid* here as ‘mosque’ as the word is only said of Muslim places of worship in English, whereas in Qur’anic Arabic it could mean any place where God is worshipped and prostrated (*yusjudu*) to (cf. commentary on 2:114, al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Baghawī, among others). Besides, this would exclude other readings. Here, it obviously denotes a dearly cherished ‘place of prostration’ for the Jews, which has a great symbolic value. Most exegetes identify this

as they had entered it the first time, and they would utterly wreck whatever they mount upon!"⁽²⁷⁾
 ﴿٨﴾ May your Lord have mercy on you! But shall you go back, We shall then go back⁽²⁸⁾—We have made Hell an enclosure⁽²⁹⁾ for the Deniers!⁽³⁰⁾

كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَلِيُتَّبِرُوا مَا عَزَلُوا
 تَبِيرًا ﴿٧﴾ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَكُمْ مَكْرَهُمْ وَإِنْ غَدَّتْ
 غَدَاةٌ وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ حَصِيرًا ﴿٨﴾

with *Bayt al-Maqdis* (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Juzayy, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).

Translating it as 'temple', on the other hand, equally misses another possible reading, i.e. that it would become a *masjid* (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*) and amounts to outright superimposing of one's views on what is found in the Qur'an itself. It would also break the intertextual connection with *al-Masjid al-Aqṣā* that is found in Aya 1 above.

27 It would be a total, unsparing and remorseless wreckage (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).

28 God Almighty would show them mercy after this great infliction, make them thrive and give them back their sovereignty (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī); only if they repent and mend their ways. But should they revert back to their old rebellious ways then God Almighty's Canon is never changing (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*). Sinning and rebelliousness bring about destruction and humiliation, but repentance and obedience only result in prosperity and abundance: "Mention Muhammad' When your Lord declared 'that' He would certainly send against them, until the Day of Judgement, 'those' who would subject them to the worst of suffering—indeed your Lord is swift in reprisal and He certainly is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. *And We cut them into 'separate' nations 'asunder' in the land; among them are those who are righteous and those who are less so. We tested them with the good and bad 'fortune' so that they might return" (7: 167-168).

They will always stand to face a new test. If they fail it, they should expect nothing but the same dire consequence.

29 *Ḥaṣīran* is a place of imprisonment (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Abū al-Su'ūd, al-Shawkānī), that is when taken to derive from *ḥaṣr* which means to enclose and imprison (as in 25: 13; cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). But it could mean 'carpet' if taken from *ḥaṣīr* which is what Arabs call a small carpet (as in 3: 205, 3: 12 and 197; cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).

30 This might imply that this worldly punishment is for rebelling against the Message and not heeding its dictates, but the Punishment for Denying the

﴿9﴾ ⁽³¹⁾ Verily this Qur'an guides to what is more straight⁽³²⁾, and gives the glad tidings to the Believers, who do good deeds, that theirs is a great reward; ﴿10﴾ and that for those who do not Believe in the Hereafter, We have 'particularly' prepared for them a painful Punishment⁽³³⁾. ﴿11﴾ ⁽³⁴⁾ Humans pray for evil as much as they pray for good—indeed humans are ever rash.

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ
أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٩﴾ وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ
أَعَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَيَدْعُ الْإِنْسَانُ
بِالْفِتْرِ دُعَاءَهُ بِالْخَيْرِ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ عَجُولًا ﴿١١﴾

Messengers, as they did with Prophets Jesus and Muhammad (ﷺ), will be in the Hereafter (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr); or that the worldly punishment could be escaped by some but that of the Hereafter is utterly inescapable (cf. al-Rāzī).

- 31 God's Pleasure is attained through following His Commands which are found in His Books. The Qur'an, being the surest guide to the Straight Path, ensures being spared such dire consequences in this world and in the Hereafter (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr).
- 32 The Qur'an came as straightforward guidance. Nothing stands between it and sound reason. It leaves no area of human nature untouched, either through encouragement or admonition. No one who contemplates it will come out empty-handed, but rather will emerge much wiser than before. Although, it shares the same goal with earlier Divine Books, the path that it shines light on guides to the straightest of all paths. Should the Believing community uphold it, they will never go astray (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Jāmi' al-Masā'il*, 5: 162, Ibn 'Ashūr).
- 33 The Believers who were, at that time severely persecuted by their Makkan tormentors, were naturally anticipating 'good news' of their punishment (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*).
- 34 Although such news, which are harbingers of punishment, will come to be true sooner or later, none, neither Believers or Deniers (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Alūsī, Ibn 'Ashūr; 10: 48, 21: 38, 28: 71, 34: 28, 36: 48, 67: 28), should rashly pray for its hasty coming: "Would Allah hasten evil to people as much as they seek to hasten good, their given term would have been terminated. But they are given respite so We leave those who hope not in meeting Us to wander aimlessly in their blindness" (10: 11).

﴿12﴾⁽³⁵⁾ We have made the night and day 'as' two Signs. ⁽³⁶⁾ Then We effaced the sign of the night and We made the sign of day agaze⁽³⁷⁾, so that you may seek favour from your Lord and know the number of years, and calculation 'of time'⁽³⁸⁾—indeed We have particularly detailed everything!⁽³⁹⁾

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ آيَاتَيْنِ ۖ فَمَحَوْنَا آيَةَ اللَّيْلِ
وَجَعَلْنَا آيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِّن
رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ وَلِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ ۗ
وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلْنَاهُ تَفْصِيلًا ﴿١٢﴾

- 35 Time is ever-changing and never is the same for both nations and individuals. People are not to be rash in anticipation of the befalling of God Almighty's universal Canons (cf. al-Ghazālī, *al-Tafsīr al-Mawḍū'ī li Suwar al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*); the universe is ever-changing, light is followed by darkness which is soon to be followed by light and so on (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). These are two very tangible Signs of the presence of the One and Only Creator, and His Boundless Ability. They are, besides, two great favours that God bestowed on His creation. People might hate night with its darkness and seek to hasten daybreak. But as sure as the alternation of the sun and the moon, darkness and light will ever exist alongside each other. They are opposites that reveal God's favour; people seek their livelihoods in the day and rest and comfort at night. Had time been all day or all night, people would not have known the difference between them and the lessons that each brings with it: "*He is the One Who made the night for you to rest at and the day agaze. Indeed in that are Signs to those who listen!*" (10: 67)
- 36 'The sign of the night' and 'the sign of the day' are the moon and the sun, respectively. The moon was made dim, 'effaced', not illuming by itself, and the sun is light exuding, 'agaze' (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī).
- 37 *Mubṣirah* (agaze) means full of light whereby people can go about their daily lives (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). This description is figuratively employed to highlight the function of the day (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 38 "*He is the One Who made the sun a glow and the moon a light and ordained for it stations so that you 'may' know the number of years and calculation 'of time'. Never has Allah created that except for the Truth; He details the Signs for those who attain knowledge. *Verily in the alternation of night and day, and whatever Allah has created in the Heavens and Earth are Signs for the Mindful ones*" (10: 5-6).
- 39 The Message, the Qur'an, explains everything to people, hence undermining any excuse they might have (cf. Abū Ḥayyān): "*It 'the Qur'an' has never been fabricated speech, but a confirmation of what came before it, a detailing of everything and a guide and mercy to Believing folks*" (12: 111).

﴿13﴾ (40) To every human We have tethered his fate⁽⁴¹⁾ to his neck; and on the Day of Judgement, We bring out to him a book⁽⁴²⁾ which he finds spread wide! ﴿14﴾ “Read your book, yourself is enough as a reckoner over you this Day!”⁽⁴³⁾ ﴿15﴾ Whoever is guided, is guided for himself and whoever strays, he only strays against it⁽⁴⁴⁾;

وَكُلَّ إِنسَانٍ أَلَمْنَهُ لَطْفَ رِجْلِهِ فِي عُنُقِهِ ۖ وَنُجِّجُ لَهُ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنْشُورًا ﴿١٣﴾ أَقْرَأُ كِتَابَكَ
كَفَى بِتَفْسِيقِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا ﴿١٤﴾ مَنْ
أَهْتَدَى فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ
فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا

- 40 No human has any excuse after this Message, which details the evidences of God’s sole worthiness to worship, the truthfulness of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) and the coming of the Hereafter, and that they have been recurrently admonished and encouraged; they have only themselves to blame for their fate (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 41 *Tā’irahu* (lit. his bird) hints at Arabian augury whence they used to employ birds as an omen of one’s fate and/or luck (cf. Abū ‘Ubaydah, *Majāz al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*). Their custom, in what was known as *zajr al-tayr* (the scaring off of the bird), was to pelt a bird with a stone when deciding upon something; if it flew to the right then this was considered a good omen that augured well and they would go ahead with the matter, but if it flew to the left then it was taken to be a bad omen that augured ill and they would decide against it (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr). Here, it means a person’s deeds which he commits willingly and none will be held accountable for it besides him (cf. Ibn Juzayy, Ibn Kathīr al-Sa’dī). However, al-Shinqīṭī (*Adwā’ al-Bayān*) explains that the word *tā’ir* here has two well-known interpretations. The first being a human’s deeds (as said here) and the second is a person’s lot in life both auspicious and/or inauspicious. Given their free will, people have no excuse to blame fate for what befalls them.
- 42 That is, the record of deeds, on which each person will be held accountable, minutely detailing their deeds whether good or bad (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “: “*And the book of deeds will be laid open, and you will see the criminal in fear of what is recorded in it. They will say: “Woe to us! What kind of book is this that does not leave any deed, small or large, unaccounted for?” They will find whatever they did present before them; your Lord will never wrong anyone*” (18: 49).
- 43 None will be dealt with unjustly, in the least (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 44 A person’s ‘fate’ (*tā’ir*) could be both good, when one finds the right path, or bad, when one strays (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr). This further drives the message home, a person is only held accountable for his own deeds, and none else’s (cf. al-Rāzī): “*Whoever does good, it is to his own benefit; whoever does evil, it is to his own loss. Your Lord is never unjust to His servants*” (41: 46).

no burdened soul shall carry the burden of another—We would Punish unless We send a Messenger⁽⁴⁵⁾.

﴿16﴾ (46)When We want to destroy a town, We command⁽⁴⁷⁾ its pampered ones⁽⁴⁸⁾, they transgress⁽⁴⁹⁾ in it and then the saying becomes true to it and We completely devastate it! ﴿17﴾ (50)How many a generation have We destroyed after Nūḥ 'Noah'! (51)Sufficient is your Lord 'O Muhammad' as All-Knowledgeable, All-Seeing of the sins of His servants.

وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۗ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ
حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا ﴿١٥﴾

وَإِذَا أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نُهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً أَمَرْنَا فِيهَا مَفْسِدُوها
فِيهَا فَبَقِيَ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَّرْنَاهَا تَدْمِيرًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَكَمْ
أَهْلَكْنَا مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِنْ بَعْدِ نُوحٍ ۗ وَكُنْ بِرَبِّكَ
بِدُونِ عِبَادِهِ خَيْرًا بَصِيرًا ﴿١٧﴾

- 45 That is, the Deniers will be left no excuse whatsoever (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Juzayy, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 46 After the detailing of God Almighty's complete Justice, this shows how the rebellious come to be punished for their misdeeds (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Nazm al-Durar*).
- 47 *Amarnā* (We command), could mean that God Almighty commands, through a Messenger, that He be obeyed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Nasafī, al-Qāsimī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). In Ya'qūb's Qur'anic mode of reading, the verb reads as *āmarnā*, meaning to make plenty and luxuriant (some exegetes take this to be what is meant here; cf. al-Shawkānī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*).
- 48 *Mutrafīhā* (its pampered ones) are the privileged notables who are usually in positions of power. The majority of people are but followers of these (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn 'Āshūr, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*). Most of the influential and well-to-do Makkan idolaters belonged to this category, while the Believers were mostly the poor and unprivileged (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr: "Like so We made into each town its chief criminals so that they may spread 'conniving' plots in it; they only weave plots against themselves but they are not aware of it" (6: 123).
- 49 By rebelling and not obeying God's commands (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Nasafī, al-Qāsimī).
- 50 To warn against denying the Messenger and disobeying God's command, people are notified of the numerous towns and communities that God destroyed in this life ever since Prophet Noah, the second father of humanity, whose salvaged posterity were all true Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 51 The address shifts here to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to assure him that God, the All-Knowledgeable, All-Seeing, is aware of the transgressions of his enemies and that they will be brought to account over them (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿18﴾⁽⁵²⁾Whoever wants the instant one⁽⁵³⁾, We hurry for him in it whatever We wish to whomever We want⁽⁵⁴⁾, then We give him Hell, he roasts in it, reproachful and routed⁽⁵⁵⁾. ﴿19﴾⁽⁵⁶⁾But whoever wants the Hereafter, and labours for it, its 'true' labour, while being a Believer, then the labour of these is verily appreciated⁽⁵⁷⁾. ﴿20﴾⁽⁵⁸⁾Both We provide for, these

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ
 لِمَنْ نُرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصَلُّهَا
 مَذْمُومًا مَدْحُورًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَى
 لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ
 سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا ﴿١٩﴾ كَلَّا نُمَدُّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ

- 52 The following draws attention to the fact that the reason behind people not heeding the Message is people's (who are 'ever rash', cf. Aya 11 above) eagerness for worldly gain, wealth and privilege (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 53 *al-‘Ājilah* (the instant one) is this worldly life. The worldly-oriented, who have only this life in mind, and crave instant gratification, will be, out of God's complete Justice, given a portion of it and, rebellious as they are, will not be completely denied what they covet most (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter, We will increase their harvest; whoever desires ‘only’ the harvest of this world, We will give them some of it, but they will have no share in the Hereafter” (42: 20).
- 54 This caveat, goes to show that such giving is bound by God Almighty's will and is not unbound (cf. Ibn Kathīr). Those who think that they would win this world over by trading off the life to come for this one, need to be mindful that they might lose both in the process (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 55 That is, reproached by God and His servants for his corrupt intention and vile deed, and turned away from God's Mercy (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*): “Whoever cares ‘only’ for the worldly life and its adornment, We will deliver ‘the reward of’ their deeds to them in full; they shall not be swindled naught ‘out of it’. * These are the ones for whom is nothing but the Fire in the Hereafter; nullified are their deeds in it and futile is what they are used to labour ‘at’.” (11: 15-16)
- 56 By contrast, these are the well-intentioned, true Believers, to whom the reward of the Hereafter is topmost on their minds and work hard for it (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Suyūfī, *al-Iklīl*, al-Sa‘dī). They willingly heed the Message, and thus are handsomely rewarded.
- 57 God Almighty would accept their labour, multiply their reward, overlook their misdeeds and reward them handsomely (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī).
- 58 God's provision in this life is withheld from neither those who labour solely for the gains of this worldly life nor those who seek the reward of the Hereafter (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).

and these from your Lord's giving 'O Muhammad'; your Lord's giving is not ever withheld! ﴿21﴾⁽⁵⁹⁾ Look how We favoured some of them over others; indeed the Hereafter is greater in stations and greater in favouring!⁽⁶⁰⁾

وَهُؤُلَاءِ مِنْ عَطَاءِ رَبِّكَ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَاءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا ﴿٢١﴾ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ۚ وَالْآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا ﴿٢١﴾

﴿22﴾⁽⁶¹⁾ Do not take 'O Muhammad'

لَا تَجْعَلْ

- 59 Attention is drawn here to consider how people are favoured over each other and to draw lessons from this fact (cf. al-Alūsī). People are of varying degrees with regards to God's bounty on them: beauty, strength, character, wealth, intellectual ability, power, knowledge, etc. (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī). This is to see what they do with what they are endowed with (cf. Riḍā). They are being tested; to be thankful for what they were given and patient over what they have been deprived of: "Indeed He is the One Who made you successors in the land and raised some of you ranks above others so that He may test you through what He bestowed upon you" (6: 165).
- 60 The bestowal of worldly life, being imperfect as it is, is not based on such criteria as good deeds and purity of Faith, but it is so in the Hereafter (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr): "We will set up the scales of justice on the Day of Judgement, so no soul will be wronged in the least. And 'even' if a deed is the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth; sufficient are We as a 'vigilant' Reckoner" (21: 47); "But whoever comes to Him as a Believer, having done righteous deeds, will have the highest ranks." (20: 75)
- 61 Ayas 22-39 concisely chart the foundation of the truly Godly society, which fulfils its duty on Earth and is spared God's Wrath (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr, al-Sha'rāwī). To be spared what inevitably befalls the wrongful, such a society heeds these pieces of advice so that they may gain God's Trusteeship (cf. al-Ghazālī, *al-Tafsīr al-Mawḍū'ī li Suwar al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*). These are so significant that it is narrated that the great Qur'anic exegete, 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه), said about them that the whole Torah is contained in 18 ayas of the Qur'an (i.e., these ayas, cf. al-Ṭabarī). They contain the foundations of Divine creedal and moral codes. The significance of these fundamental dictates, which safeguard a society's uprightness and cohesion, is underlined in a number of Qur'anic passages: "Mention When We took the pledge of the Children of Israel that: you should worship none but Allah; be kind to your parents, relatives, orphans and the needy; speak nicely to people; and keep up Prayer and give out the prescribed alms; then you turned away – save a few of you – paying no heed". (2: 83); "Worship Allah 'alone' and Associate none with Him, and be beneficent to your parents, to relatives, to orphans, to the needy, to the close 'relative' neighbour, to the adjoining neighbour, to the companion at your side, the

besides Allah another god⁽⁶²⁾;
lest you 'ever' remain
blameworthy and let down!⁽⁶³⁾

مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَتَقَعُدَ مَذْمُومًا مَّخْذُولًا ﴿٢٢﴾

*stranded and those whom your right hands possess—verily Allah does not like any who is proud and boastful” (4: 36); “Come ‘you’ along so that I may recite what your Lord ‘really’ forbade for you: that you do not Associate anything with Him, and being kind to ‘one’s’ parents; do not kill your children out of ‘desperate’ destitution – We shall provide for both of you and them; do not come near vices, both open and secret; do not kill the soul that Allah forbade, except with a right to it. That He bade you to, so that you may reason. *‘‘Do not ‘neither’ come near the money of the orphan – except in a comely manner – until his coming of age; give weights and scales their full measure with equity – We shall only task a soul with that which it could bear; when you say ‘something’ say it fairly, even against a next of kin; and fulfil your duty to Allah. That He bade you so that you may remember. *Indeed this is My path, Straight, so follow it and do not follow the ‘diverse’ roads and get driven away from His road; that He bade you so that you may become Mindful. *Then ‘know that’ We had given Mūsā ‘Moses’ the Book in perfection ‘for Our bounty’ for he who did well and detailing everything; a guidance and mercy so that they may Believe in meeting their Lord. *And this ‘Qur’an’ is a Book We sent down, blessed, so follow it and be Mindful so that you may be shown mercy. *Lest that you may say: ‘‘But this Book was sent down to two ‘other’ groups before us; indeed we are totally oblivious to their studying!’’ *Or you may say: ‘‘Had we had the Book sent down to us, we would have been more guided than they are!’’ Surely then a clear evidence has come to you from your Lord, a guidance and mercy” (6: 151-157).*

- 62 Both the first and the last (cf. Aya 39 below), and surest of these foundations are to purify one’s Faith and Associate none with God Almighty in worship (cf. al-Shawkānī). This is the Believer’s starting point of departure in wanting to do good which makes one successful in the Hereafter. Association is the fountainhead of confusion and being misled (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*Their gods, whom they prayed to besides Allah, availed them nothing when your Lord’s Command came; indeed they increased them nothing but carnage*” (11: 101).
- 63 That is, having none to thank them for it, and that they will find no helper or supporter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr). Associators are reproachful (*madhmūman*) for not being discerning and worshipping whatever is of no use to them, and are ever let down (*makhdhūlan*) because these so-called gods of theirs do not answer their prayers (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*To Him ‘Alone’ is the Call of Truth but those whom they call besides Him do not ever answer them with a thing; except like he who stretches out his hand for water to reach his mouth and it shall never reach it—the calls of the Deniers are but lost*” (13: 14).

﴿23﴾ Your Lord has decreed that you 'people' should worship none but Him⁽⁶⁴⁾ and be beneficent to your parents⁽⁶⁵⁾. ⁽⁶⁶⁾Should one of them or both of them grow old in your care, do not say to them 'even' "ugh!"⁽⁶⁷⁾, do not tell them off, but say what is 'considerately' respectful to them⁽⁶⁸⁾.

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ
إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا
أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا آفٌ وَلَا تَنْهَرَهُمَا
وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾

- 64 Given the significance of the purity of Faith and worshipping none but God Almighty Alone, it is reiterated and reemphasized in other, more direct words, thus no one is left in doubt about it (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Purity of Faith is the driver of good deeds because it implicates the reform of the heart and the mind. Such a heart and mind are ever heedful and willing to do good (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 65 The same Godly decree extends to parents; one's first benefactors after the life-giving, sustenance-providing Benefactor of all creatures, God Almighty. Through His Will parents are the reason for one's coming into existence and rearing and the caring for one as a small child and beyond. They are the most deserving of one's beneficence (*ihsān*) (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr). The graveness of their right is highlighted through its almost invariable joining with none but that of God's in many Qur'anic instances (cf. 2: 83, 4: 36, 6:151). In fact, Nufay' Ibn al-Ḥārith al-Thaqafī (ؓ) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Shall I inform you of the gravest of the gravest sins? They are three: Associating with Allah, being undutiful to one's parents and perjury!" (al-Bukhārī: 2754; Muslim: 87).
- 66 Especially when they are old and frail and in need of their children's service, they should be taken great care of and treated with utmost consideration and upmost respect (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīl*, Ibn Kathīr). Abū Hurayrah (ؓ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Woe to him, then woe to him, then woe to him!" It was then said: "Who, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "Whoever lives to find his both parents, or one of them, in their old age and fails to enter Paradise 'due to lack of dutifulness towards them'!" (Muslim: 2551).
- 67 One is not to show disgruntlement in their service even in as small a word as "ugh", let alone what is beyond that. They are not to be hurt in the slightest (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 68 One should not only not hurt one's parents with words, but one should make sure to say only good words to them (cf. al-Rāzī); words that please their hearts (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).

﴿24﴾ Lower the wing of humbleness out of mercy⁽⁶⁹⁾ to them and say: “My Lord! Show mercy to them for they nurtured me when I was young!”⁽⁷⁰⁾

﴿25﴾ ⁽⁷¹⁾Your Lord Knows best what your intentions are, ⁽⁷²⁾if you are righteous, then He is All-Forgiving for the sincerely repenting!

﴿26﴾ ⁽⁷³⁾Bestow on the relative his due right⁽⁷⁴⁾ as well as the destitute

وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾ رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ إِن تَكُونُوا صَادِقِينَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ لِلأُولَئِكَ عُقُورًا ﴿٢٥﴾

وَأَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَى حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ

- 69 This is a metaphor for the utmost humbleness that one has to assume when dealing with one's parents. This is a beautiful imagery of a bird lowering its wing as when it does to hug its young or draw its mate closer (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Abū al-Su'ūd): “*And We have commanded every human to 'honour' his parents. His mother bore him through hardship upon hardship, and his weaning takes two years. So be grateful to Me and your parents. To Me is the final return. *But if they pressure you to Associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them. Still keep their company in this world courteously, and follow the way of those who turn to Me 'in devotion'. Then to Me you will 'all' return, and then I will inform you of what you used to do*” (31: 14-15).
- 70 One is to invoke God's Mercy for one's parents, whether dead or alive, for their charity towards one during one's most weak and needing phase in life, i.e. early childhood (cf. Abū Ḥayyān Ibn Kathīr, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*).
- 71 One's dutifulness to one's parents should be carried out with sincerity and good intention. God Almighty knows what hearts harbour and will hold people accountable for it, so they need to guard their intentions towards their parents (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Qurṭubī).
- 72 Should the child be of good intentions and sincerely repenting, and carries out his duties to his parents, then God Almighty will forgive the little mishaps and errors that might have been shown towards parents (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 73 This passage talks about the very important issue of economic security both in its social and financial aspects. Social security is accomplished through members maintaining bonds and partaking in wealth in the form of charity, and financial security is attained through wise management of finances (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr).
- 74 As much as one's relatives branch off from ones' parents, they are to be given their “due right” of maintaining ties, empathy and sympathy (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Samarqandī). Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever wishes his provision expanded and his mark more enduring, let him maintain the ties of the womb!” (al-Bukhārī: 2067; Muslim: 2557).

and the wayfarer⁽⁷⁵⁾; ⁽⁷⁶⁾but do not waste 'your money' away! ⁽²⁷⁾ ⁽⁷⁷⁾Verily wasters are the brothers of devils; indeed the devil is ever ungrateful⁽⁷⁸⁾ to his Lord! ⁽²⁸⁾ ⁽⁷⁹⁾Should you turn away

وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا ﴿٢٧﴾ إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ
كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ ۖ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ
كَفُورًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَإِنَّمَا غَرَضُ

- 75 This "due right" which springs from a Divine dictate and a sense of social bond is also to be given to the less advantaged segments of society, the financially straitened. Whereas dutifulness to the wayfarer (*ibn al-sabīl*, lit. the son of the road) comes out of nurturing empathy and building a society on a spirit of dutifulness shown even to those outside the family and close community (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr).
- 76 Giving charity is a great human trait, but squandering and wasting away money is an unhealthy one; mention of one calls for the other (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). *Tabdhīr* comes from throwing seeds on the ground (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*), however, here it acquires the added meaning of doing so carelessly and indiscriminately (as opposed to the careful act of seed sowing *al-badhr*, cf. Abū al-Su'ūd). Given the context, exegetes differ on what is meant by it here. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-'Uqūd*, pp. 18-19, opines that here it could mean giving the right-owners mentioned here lavishly and more than they need yet ignoring those who are more needing of it. On the other hand, many other exegetes see that the word *tabdhīr* here refers to generally spending money on no good causes, especially in sinning against God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Abū al-Su'ūd, al-Alūsī). Because, no matter how generous the charity is, it is not considered a waste of money (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr).
- 77 This is how frowned upon wasting money away is. Wasters are the likes of the devils (cf. al-Shinqīfī, *al-Taḥsīn al-Muyassar*). They are called the "brothers" of the devils because they follow their footsteps; being up to no good and doing whatever they wish for without check (cf. al-Qurṭubī, *al-Taḥsīn al-Mukhtaṣar*). However, it remains that Islam is a religion of moderation and good consideration: "The true worshippers of the Most Merciful are those who spend neither wastefully nor stingily, but moderately in between" (25: 67).
- 78 *Kafūran* (ever ungrateful) because of his constant denial of God Almighty's favours on him and that he is never thankful for them; thus he leaves behind obedience to God's command and indulges in rebelling against it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 79 This relates to how one is to deal with the mentioned charity right-owners in case one has nothing to give them, and is still hopeful of God's favour of good future provision. One should soothe their hearts through good words, extend an apology to them, give a promise of spending on them

from them – anticipating mercy from your Lord that you hope for – then say to them something lenient. ⁽²⁹⁾ ⁽⁸⁰⁾ Do not keep your ‘giving’ hand shackled to your neck, nor stretch it all out, ⁽⁸¹⁾ lest you become blameworthy, restrained! ⁽³⁰⁾ ⁽⁸²⁾ Verily your Lord expands fortune for whoever He wills and He tightens ‘it’—indeed He is always All-Knowledgeable, All-Seeing of His servants. ⁽³¹⁾ ⁽⁸³⁾ Do not kill your children fearing destitution;

عَنْهُمْ اتَّبِعَاءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا فَقُلْ لَّهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّيْسُورًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسِطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَّحْسُورًا ﴿٣٠﴾ إِنَّ رَّبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا ﴿٣١﴾ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ

when things are better and offer a good prayer for better sustenance for them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). One should also note that when going through tough times, a true Believer’s heart always swells with hope in what God has to give.

- 80 Moderation is explained through this imagery; while stinginess is likened to shackling one’s hands to one’s neck, like a captive, squandering is linked to one stretching one’s all out without restraint (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 81 The outcome is sad in both cases. The miserly person is deserving of blame by God Almighty, other people and even himself, while the wasteful will remain stuck with nothing to spend and unable to handle the necessities of life (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 82 This is how God Almighty nurtures the believing spirit (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). The Arabic *rabb* translated here as “Lord” is semantically and lexically related to *tarbiyah*, which means to nurture, but with much care and attention (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). God Almighty, All-Knowledgeable, All-Seeing, wisely runs the affairs of His servants. Out of His Knowledge, He gives and withholds according to what is best for the person concerned and what they would do with wealth if provided with it (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Qāsimī). Those who fear spending charitably need to be aware that tight-fistedness will not make them better off (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 83 God Almighty, Who wisely provides, warns against the heinous act of killing one’s children fearing destitution (cf. al-Rāzī). The Arabs used to practice this heathen way, especially with girls, who were of less utility in that harsh culture (cf. al-Ṭabarī). The one who does this falls into the great sin of despairing from God’s Mercy, and that He would change their fortunes (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Who would grow despondent of his Lord’s Mercy except the lost ones!” (15: 56).

We shall provide for them and you; indeed their killing is ever a grievous mistake!⁽⁸⁴⁾

نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ إِنْ قَتَلْتُمْ كَاتِبًا
خَطَاً كَبِيرًا ﴿٣١﴾

﴿32﴾ ⁽⁸⁵⁾Do not come near adultery; verily it is a vice and sordid is the path 'to take'⁽⁸⁶⁾ ﴿33﴾ ⁽⁸⁷⁾Do not 'neither' kill the soul that Allah forbade, except with a right to it; whoever is unjustly killed, We have made for his agent⁽⁸⁸⁾ an authority so let him not go to excess in killing⁽⁸⁹⁾;

وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الزِّنَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَجِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيَّهِ سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يَسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ

- 84 This criminal act leads to extremely dire consequences; thus it is considered a “grievous mistake” (*khiṭ'an kabīran*). It leads to the destruction of the world (cf. al-Qāsimī) through the interruption of human multiplication which is a prerequisite for the thriving habitation (*'imārah*) of the Earth: “When he turns away, he sets about the land to sow corruption and devastate tillage and progeny—surely Allah likes not corruption” (2: 205). ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) reported: “I said: “Messenger of Allah, what is the greatest sin?” He said: “That you set up rivals with Allah, when He is the One Who created you!” Then I said: “What then?” He said: “That you kill a child of yours because he eats with you!” (al-Bukhārī: 6811).
- 85 This passage deals with a very important aspect of the Godly society which is that it is marked by virtue. A society that lacks virtue is not based on solid foundations and is prone to fall into decay. Here, preserving three of the Five Primary Necessities (*al-Darūriyyāt al-Khams*), i.e. honour (*al-'ird*), life (*al-dam*) and property (*al-māl*), which pertain to the rights of others, is very strongly emphasized.
- 86 People are not to even come near adultery through avoiding the preliminaries that lead to it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). It is a path that leads to many devastating consequences: cheating, pain and suffering, family breakdowns, paternity fraud, illegitimate children, social decay, among many others (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Khāzin). It also leads to shame and Punishment in the Hereafter (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī).
- 87 As much as honour is safeguarded, the sanctity of life is guarded too, unless the society, through its legal representatives, has a right to it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “Whoever kills a person – unless for killing another or spreading corruption in the land – it shall be as if he killed all people and whoever saves a life then it is as if he gave life to all people” (5: 32).
- 88 *Waliyy* is a person’s closest blood relative who has the greatest right to inherit from him (cf. al-Sa‘dī).
- 89 Society is to be preserved against falling into chaos through indiscriminate killing and vengeful retaliation.

he will surely be made to prevail!⁽⁹⁰⁾
 ﴿34﴾ ⁽⁹¹⁾Do not 'neither' come near
 the money of the orphan – except
 in a comely manner⁽⁹²⁾ – until
 his coming of age⁽⁹³⁾; ⁽⁹⁴⁾fulfil the
 pledge; verily a pledge will be
 asked after! ﴿35﴾ ⁽⁹⁵⁾Give weights

إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنصُورًا ﴿٣٤﴾ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ
 إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا
 بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا ﴿٣٥﴾ وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ

- 90 That is by law and by God Almighty's help and support (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 91 Society's chasteness is to be ensured by emphatically warning against infringing on the property of even the weakest segments of its members, i.e. young and unassuming orphans: "Those who devour the money of orphans unjustly, only consume fire in their bellies—they will experience a Fiery Furnace" (4: 10).
- 92 Those in charge of the affairs of orphans, need to deal with their money very piously: "'Guardians!' Give out to the orphans their money, do not exchange the bad for the good, and do not devour their money along with yours—indeed this is a heinous sin!" (4 :2)
- 93 "Test the orphans, so that when they reach maturity – if you perceive them discerning – give them their money. Do not hastily devour or squander it fearing that they should 'in time' grow up. Whoever of you is well off, let him forbear 'in dignity'; whoever of you is needy let him eat off 'of it' proportionately. Should you hand over their money to them, let there be witnesses to bear this—Allah is sufficient as Reckoner" (4: 6).
- 94 Guardianship is a kind of pledge, so it has to be upheld and honoured (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Nazm al-Durar*). Honouring pledges, in general, is a basic founding principle of the Believing society which makes it impregnable to decay and defeat (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
 Given that guardianship pertains to the rights of unprotected children who are wholly placed under one's discretion, honouring its demands will surely nurture the Believing spirit, which is more likely to honour other pledges with the people and the state: "You who Believe, honour obligations!" (5: 1).
- 95 For traders to give weights their full measure, is akin to guardians' control over the inheritance of the orphans in their care; there are many hidden aspects to all this that only meticulous inspection can disclose (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Nazm al-Durar*). They both require Mindfulness (*taqwā*), thus nurture the Believing spirit and help build a virtuous society from within: "Do not come near the money of the orphan – except in a comely manner – until his coming of age; give weights and scales their full measure with equity – We shall only task a soul with that which it could bear; when you say 'something' say it fairly, even against a next of kin; and fulfil your duty to Allah. That He bade you so that you may remember. *Indeed this is My path, Straight, so follow it and do not follow the 'diverse' roads and get driven away from His road; that He bade you so that you may become Mindful!" (6: 152-153)

their full measure when you weigh and measure with a straight scale; ⁽⁹⁶⁾that is better and is best in outcome.

إِذَا كَلَّمْتُمْ وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ
وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٣٥﴾

﴿36﴾ ⁽⁹⁷⁾Do not 'neither' pursue that of which you have no 'sure' knowledge⁽⁹⁸⁾; ⁽⁹⁹⁾indeed the hearing,

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ

- 96 Fair dealing is best in this life because one finds in it, among other effects, blessing and psychological calm and reward from God Almighty in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Kathīr): “My people, give full measure and weight fairly, do not swindle people out of the things that are ‘rightly’ theirs and do not set about the land with ‘most’ egregious corruption; *what Allah leaves out for you is better for you, if only you ‘truly’ Believe” (11: 85-86).
- 97 This passage completes and rounds up the bases on which a Divinely-inspired society should be built. First, here the fourth and fifth of the Five Primary Necessities (*al-Darūrāt al-Khams*), i.e. the intellect (*al-aql*) and *al-dīn* (religion) are called into attention.
- 98 People are cautioned against basing their speech and/or actions on mere guesswork and following that for which they have no sure knowledge or solid evidence (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): “You who Believe! Shun much conjecture. Indeed, ‘even’ some conjecture is a sin!” (49: 12)
- 99 These three faculties, i.e. hearing (*al-sam’*), sight (*al-baṣar*) and the heart (*al-fu’ād*), which refers to the heart (*al-qalb*) when in a state of intellectual engagement (cf. al-İṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, Ibn ‘Āshūr) are the greatest human faculties as they rule over all other faculties. They are especially mentioned here because a person’s success or misery depends on them both in this life and in the Hereafter. God Almighty has given humans: hearing so that they may listen to His commands, prohibitions and pledges; sight so that they may see the Signs of their Lord, and hearts so that they may heed these, abide by them and come to realize the Oneness of God Almighty. They are bestowed with these so that they may gain knowledge, draw conclusions and abide by them (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa’ādah*, 1: 107): “Allah brings you out of your mothers’ bellies knowing nothing and He made for you the hearing, sights and hearts so that you may become thankful” (16: 78).
Ibn ‘Āshūr further explains the significance of preserving these three faculties: “In this is great nurturing of the manners. It is also an intellectual reform of high standing; it teaches the nation how to differentiate between what comes to mind so that it may not mix up an absolute fact with conjecture or mere fallacies. This entails a great social reform which steers the nation away from falling into harm and destruction by founding its actions on fallacious evidence!”

the sight and the heart, all of this, 'you' will be asked about!

- ﴿37﴾ (100) Do not 'neither' walk about the land grandly; you shall not cleave the ground nor shall you top the mountains in height! (101)
 ﴿38﴾ All of that – the worst of which (102) – is resented by your Lord.
 ﴿39﴾ That is (103), of what your Lord

وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا ﴿٣٦﴾
 وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ
 وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولًا ﴿٣٧﴾ كُلُّ ذَلِكَ كَانَ سَيِّئُهُ
 عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ مَكْرُوهًا ﴿٣٨﴾ ذَلِكَ مِمَّا أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ

- 100 The Believing spirit which has been nurtured, as in the previous commands, through a fostering of the ethos of magnanimity, compassion, equity and justice is told against the repulsive trait of haughtiness and looking down upon people. This trait, which is ruinous to the person's character and his relationship with others around him, was rampant among the heathen Makkans at that time (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Members of the Believing community, which bears a Message and is built on piety, have to be a far cry from that both in their demeanour and how they bear themselves: "*The 'true' servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk about the land humbly, and when the foolish address them 'improperly', they only respond with peace!*" (25: 63)
 Ḥārithah Ibn Wahb al-Khuzā'ī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "May I tell you who the Companions of Paradise are? 'They are' Every meek person who bears himself meekly. If they were to adjure in the Name of Allah, Allah would certainly honour them. May I tell you who the Denizens of Hell-Fire are? 'They are' Every tough, rough, rude and haughty person" (al-Bukhārī: 4918).
- 101 Such a 'high and mighty' person who walks about as if he owns the world needs to remember that he is neither able to pierce the ground on which he so mightily treads nor come near the mountains in height with his nose stuck up in the air (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr). The image drawn here of such a person is mocking of his foolishness and the futility of how he bears himself (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, Abū Ḥayyān). 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "None who has a mote's weight of arrogance in his heart shall enter Paradise!" (Muslim: 91)
- 102 That is the bad issues that God Almighty bade the Believers against in the previous ayas (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 103 The issues that God Almighty Commanded the Believers to and the things that He bade against in the previous ayas. They are to be abided by, given their wisdom and comely outcomes (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr): "*He 'Allah' gives wisdom to whoever He wishes; whoever*

'O Muhammad' revealed to you of wisdom; ⁽¹⁰⁴⁾do not take besides Allah another god lest you may be thrown in hell; blameworthy, routed!⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ
فَتُؤْفَقَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَلُومًا مَّدْحُورًا ﴿٣٩﴾

﴿40﴾ ⁽¹⁰⁶⁾Did your Lord 'O Deniers, specifically' confer sons upon you, and took 'for Himself' the angels as females 'daughters'?⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ What you utter is verily a grievous saying!

أَفَأَصْفَقُوا رَبُّكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ وَالنَّحْتِ مِنَ
الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِن تَشَاءُ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُولُونَ قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٤٠﴾

is given wisdom, has been endowed with plentiful goodness—none will contemplate except those of good reason” (2: 269).

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “I was only given my mission to perfect sterling manners!” (Imām Aḥmad: 8952; al-Ḥākim: 221).

- 104 Given its utmost importance, these great Commandments (contained in Ayas: 22-39) begin and finish with the very important Command of purifying one’s Faith and Believing only in the One and True God, Allah (ﷻ) (cf. note on Aya 22 above).
- 105 That is, self-reproached and blamed by others for this miserable end, and shut away from all good (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 106 In what follows the then immediate issue of how poorly the Qurayshite Deniers received the Message is addressed. Their feeble arguments are debunked beginning with the most important issue of purity of Faith and Monotheism.
- 107 Following their line of reasoning and heathen way of preferring male over female children, their claim that God Almighty took Upon Himself daughters, while they themselves were given sons is refuted. How would God, the Omnipotent Creator, accept for himself what they do not accept for themselves (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*)? “Now inquire from them: are the daughters for your Lord, whereas sons are theirs! *Did We create the angels females and they were witness to it? *Nay, but out of utter fabrication of theirs do they say: *‘‘Allah has begotten’’; they are verily liars! *Has He chosen daughters over sons! *What is the matter with you? How do you form your judgement? *Do you not reason?” (37: 149-155).

This claim is debunked so that a deeper one consequently falls apart; i.e. their worship of the angels based on the claim that they were God’s daughters (cf. 43: 19-20). This is the aya’s relevance to the previous one, i.e. the command not to take so-called gods besides Allah (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿41﴾ (108) We have indeed spelled out 'all matters' in this Qur'an, so that they may remember; 'but' it increases them in nothing but aversion⁽¹⁰⁹⁾. ﴿42﴾ (110) Say 'Muhammad': "If there are other gods with Him – as they say – they would have 'carefully' sought a path to the Owner of the Throne!" ﴿43﴾ Glorified and far exalted be He from what they say!

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِيَذَكَّرُوا وَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا ﴿٤١﴾ قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ مَعَهُ آلِهَةٌ كَمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذًا لَآتَعُوا إِلَىٰ ذِي الْعَرْشِ سَبِيلًا ﴿٤٢﴾ سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا ﴿٤٣﴾

108 Although the Qur'an, which was sent down in their midst, is enough evidence for sound reason to prevail, they, being averted to the Message, still make such preposterous claims (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

109 "We 'successively' send down of the Qur'an that which is a cure and mercy to the Believers; yet it increases the unjust in nothing but loss!" (17: 82)

110 This goes on to debunk yet another related fallacy of theirs, i.e. that there are so-called gods besides God Almighty. Exegetes are of two equally valid opinions as to how this was logically addressed (cf. al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīfī). The first is that these lesser deities would naturally seek a path/means (*ibtaghaw sabīlan*) to please the Almighty Throne-Holder by being no more than servants to Him. Being in submission to God themselves, why then would anyone worship the servant and leave out the Master (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Jawāb al-Kāfi*: 203-204)! Besides no god worthy of the name, is in need of another whom they seek a means to, and hence their so called gods (cf. ibn 'Āshūr): "Those, to whom they pray, 'themselves' seek a means to their Lord – 'vying' whom of them get nearer 'to him' – hope of His mercy and fear His Punishment; verily His Punishment ever guarded against!" (17: 57)

The second interpretation is that these lesser deities would naturally seek a path/means (*ibtaghaw sabīlan*) to vie against the Greater One trying to dethrone Him and take His place. Disarray and chaos would have ensued, in the aftermath of this heavenly conflict, yet nothing happened and the cosmos remains, as it has always been perfectly calm and orderly (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "Allah has taken not to Himself any child, nor has there ever been any other god but Him. 'Had there been', then each god would have taken aside what he created, and some among them would have sought to overcome the others—may Allah be exalted in His Glory, far above what they ascribed to Him!" (23: 91); "Verily have there been in them 'the Heavens and Earth' gods besides Allah, they would have been ruined!" (21: 22)

﴿44﴾ (111) The seven Heavens and the Earth, and all that is therein, glorify Him; (112) there is not a thing but glorifies Him in Gratitude, but you 'people' discern not their glorification (113)—verily He is ever All-Forbearing (114), All-Forgiving.

تَسْبِيحُ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ
وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ
لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَرِيمٌ
حَلِيمًا عَافُوًّا ﴿٤٤﴾

﴿45﴾ (115) When you 'Muhammad' recite the Qur'an We set between you and those who do not Believe in the Hereafter, a concealed veil (116).

وَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَسْتُورًا ﴿٤٥﴾

- 111 The seven Heavens, the Earth and all that is within them, glorify (*yusabbiḥu*) God Almighty way and above all that does not befit His Majesty (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Shawkānī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*): "They say: "The Most Merciful has taken a son to Himself!" *Verily you have come up with something horribly disastrous*. The Heavens would almost crack up, the Earth split, and the mountains fall down wrecked." (19:88-90).
- 112 There is not a thing or being, whether animate or inanimate, in all the worlds that does not glorify the praise of the Lord of all beings in exaltation accompanied with an Attribute of God Almighty's Perfection along with love for Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Do you not see that Allah is glorified by all those in the Heavens and the Earth, even the birds as they soar? Each 'instinctively' knows their manner of prayer and glorification—Allah All-Knowing of all they do" (24: 41).
Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that he heard the Messenger (ﷺ) say: "An ant bit a Prophet. He ordered that the 'whole' ant village be burnt down and it was. Then Allah revealed to him: "An ant bites you and you burn down a nation that glorifies 'Me'!" (al-Bukhārī: 3019; Muslim: 2241.)
- 113 People are not able to perceive the glorification that is all around them, because they are spoken in languages they do not understand (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 114 Grievous as their Association is, God Almighty forbears and forgives (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 115 Their aversion to and heedlessness of the Message has a reason (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Their hearts are so smitten that they just could not hear it.
- 116 Those who do not Believe in resurrection and the reckoning that takes place afterwards, will have a veil set up between them and the recitation that prevents them from understanding the Qur'an and benefitting from it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Bayḍawī, Ibn Juzayy): "Some among them would listen to you; 'but' We have put sheaths over their hearts, lest they would perceive it, and in their ears there is impairment. Even if they see

﴿46﴾ And We put sheaths over their hearts lest they would perceive it, and in their ears there is impairment⁽¹¹⁷⁾; when you mention your Lord 'being' Alone, in the Qur'an, they turn on their heels in aversion⁽¹¹⁸⁾. ﴿47﴾ We Know best what they listen through⁽¹¹⁹⁾, when they listen to you, as they consort with each other, so the evildoers say: "You are only following a bewitched man!"⁽¹²⁰⁾

وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِذَا ذُكِرْتُ رَبِّكَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَحَدَّهُ وَلَوْ أَعْلَىٰ
 أَذْبَرْتَهُمْ نَفُورًا ﴿٤٦﴾ مَخْنُوعَةً يَمَا يَسْتَمْعُونَ بِهِ إِذْ
 يَسْتَمْعُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِذْ هُمْ نَجْوَىٰ إِذْ يَقُولُ الظَّالِمُونَ
 إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا ﴿٤٧﴾

*every Sign, they would not Believe in it; so much so that when they come to dispute with you, the Deniers would 'willingly' say: "This is nothing but merely 'a retelling of the 'scribbles of the ancients!'" *They strongly caution 'people' against it 'the Truth' and they 'themselves' strike a distance away from it; they only destroy themselves unwittingly"* (6: 25-26).

- 117 This they earn in return for their ardent Denial (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*) and because their hearts are smitten with the disease of doubt: "In their hearts there is disease and thus 'because of it' Allah has increased their disease" (2: 10); "We keep on turning their hearts and their sights away for not Believing in it the first time and 'thus' We leave them to wander aimlessly in their 'unbending' recalcitrance" (6: 110); "As for those in whose hearts is disease, it has increased them filth to their filth" (9: 125).
- 118 This shows how much they hate the Truth and how deeply mired they are in their heathen ways (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): "When Allah Alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not Believe in the Hereafter shrink with disgust, but when those other than Him are mentioned, they suddenly rejoice!" (39: 45)
- 119 This is a translation of the marked Arabic expression *mā yastami' ūna bihi* (lit. what they listen through). The expression indicates that their 'listening' to the recitation is mediated with unhealthy intentions, to find fault, and is not purely meant to reach an understanding. They do not simply listen, but they 'listen through' their murky inner dialogue, and beclouded intellects (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 120 Their conspiratory assembly, resultant of their clouded listening, leads them to reach this grossly erroneous conclusion: "Whatever new reminder comes to them from their Lord, they only listen to it with playful amusement, *their hearts set on passing delights. The evildoers would consort secretly, 'saying: 'Is this 'one' not human like yourselves? Would you fall for 'this' witchcraft, even though you can 'clearly' see?'" * He 'The Prophet' said: "My Lord 'fully' knows every word spoken in the Heavens and the Earth. For He is the

﴿48﴾ Look 'Muhammad' how they pose examples to you! They have strayed, so they cannot find a path!⁽¹²¹⁾

﴿49﴾ ⁽¹²²⁾ And they said: "Should we, when we are mere bones and remains, be resurrected as new creation?" ⁽⁵⁰⁾ Say: "Be 'even' rocks or iron!" ⁽⁵¹⁾ "Or something created that you find great in your chests⁽¹²³⁾ 'you shall even then be resurrected!'" Then they would say: "Who would return us!"⁽¹²⁴⁾ Say 'Muhammad': "The One Who originated you the first time!"⁽¹²⁵⁾ They would then jerk their heads at you and say: "When will it be?"⁽¹²⁶⁾ Say:

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا
فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٤٨﴾
وَقَالُوا آءِذَا كُنَّا عِظْمًا وَّرُفَاتًا آءِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ
خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا ﴿٤٩﴾ * قُلْ كُونُوا حِجَارَةً أَوْ حَدِيدًا ﴿٥٠﴾
أَوْ خَلْقًا مِمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِي صُدُورِكُمْ
فَسَيَقُولُونَ مَنْ يَعِيدُنَا قُلِ الَّذِي فَطَرَكُمْ أَوَّلَ
مَرَّةٍ فَسَيُنْغِضُونَ إِلَيْكَ رُءُوسَهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ
مَتَى هُوَ قُلْ

All-Hearing, All-Knowing. " *Yet they say: "This 'Quran' is a set of confused dreams! No, he has fabricated it! No, he must be a poet! So let him bring us a 'tangible' sign like those 'Prophets' sent before!" (21: 2-5)

- 121 This is the natural outcome of the wrongful steps they took: they could not find their way out of straying into guidance let alone reach the Truth (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).
- 122 Their besmirched logic, that the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) was a bewitched man who has something wrong in his head, leads them to make such a tenuous argument (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 123 Whatever creation they think of as great and impregnable to resurrection (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 124 This is a rhetorical question posed mockingly so that they would build on the notion that if the returner is nowhere to be found, the returning is then not going to happen (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Pursuing their erroneous judgement, they conveniently overlooked the fact of their own first creation; Whoever is able over that is able over creating them anew.
- 125 That is the Almighty God Who originated (*faṭara*) them out of nothing without a pre-set model (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 126 Wallowing in their misguidedness, even this conclusive response is not enough for these ardent Deniers (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'in*, 1: 111). So they pose their next equally fallacious question showing their utter derision of the Truth through a thus confirming gesture of their heads

“May it be close!”⁽¹²⁷⁾ ﴿52﴾ On the Day when He calls you and you respond in gratitude⁽¹²⁸⁾ to Him, and you reckon that you only stayed a little!⁽¹²⁹⁾

عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَرِيبًا ﴿٥١﴾ يَوْمَ يَدْعُوكُمْ فَتَسْتَجِيبُونَ بِحَمْدِهِ ۖ وَتُظُنُّونَ إِن لَّبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٥٢﴾

﴿53﴾ ⁽¹³⁰⁾Say ‘Muhammad’ to My servants to say what is best⁽¹³¹⁾, verily Satan stirs ‘bad blood’ among them—verily Satan is ever an open enemy to humans⁽¹³²⁾.

وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزِعُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

(*yunghidūna*) (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “*But the Deniers ‘mockingly’ say: ‘Shall we show you a man who claims that, when you have been utterly torn to pieces, you will be raised in a new creation!’*” (34: 7)

- 127 The answer, which is shocking in nature, is meant to put an end to their attitude (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*People ask you about the Hour. Say: ‘Allah Alone has knowledge of it.’ How could you ‘Muhammad’ know? The Hour may well be near!*” (33: 63).
- 128 Their ‘gratitude’ goes on to show how willing they are to respond to the call of their Creator (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Ras’anī). Their insolence deserts them and they thank Him in submission having experienced for true the extent of His Ability (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭṭīyah).
- 129 Given the horrors they will encounter in the Hereafter (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*), they think little of their worldly life for which they gave up the ever-lasting one: “*He will say: ‘How many years did you remain on Earth?’ *They will say: ‘We remained ‘only’ a day or part of a day. But ask those who kept count.’ *He will say: ‘You only remained for a little while, if only you knew!’ *Did you then think that We had created you without purpose, and that you would never be returned to Us!’*” (23: 112-115)
- 130 Given the inherently flawed arguments of the Deniers and the decisive rebuttal that the Qur’an meets these with, the Believers, so armed, could be tempted to engage in debate with them and may incite acrimony in the process, being carried away in impassioned speech, so they are cautioned against overstepping the limits of courteous discourse (cf. al-Marāghī, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*): “*Call to the Path of your Lord with wisdom and gentle admonition, and argue with them in the best manner; verily your Lord Knows best whoever has strayed away from His Path and He Knows best the guided*” (16: 125).
- 131 *al-Latī hiya aḥsan* (lit. the one which is best), i.e. the best manner of argument: being considerate and kind, well-spoken, tolerant and adhering to conduct which is sure to win hearts (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Bayḍāwī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 132 Not conducting debates in this manner is half doing Satan’s job for him (cf. Abū al-Su‘ūd).

﴿54﴾ Your Lord 'people' Knows you best; if He wishes, He shows you mercy and if He wishes, He punishes you⁽¹³³⁾. We have not sent you 'Muhammad' as guarantor over them.⁽¹³⁴⁾ ﴿55﴾ ⁽¹³⁵⁾Your Lord 'Muhammad' Knows best those in the Heavens and Earth; We have favoured some Prophets over some and We granted Dāwūd 'David'⁽¹³⁶⁾

رَبِّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِنَّ يَشَاءُ يَرْحَمَكُمُ أَوْ إِن يَشَاءُ يُعَذِّبِكُمْ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلًا ﴿٥٤﴾ وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّبِيِّينَ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ

133 This marks the starting point of departure for those who engage in debate with the Deniers; their final fate is in the Hand of God Alone. The odds are that they would embrace the call if talked to gently and be averted to it if talked to harshly, so Believers are to abide by the command of their Sustainer (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "A kind word is charity" (al-Bukhārī: 2891; Muslim: 1009).

134 The limits of the mission of the Messenger (ﷺ) stand at the clear delivery of the Message; their finding guidance and holding to account is up to God Almighty (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī): "It is not 'incumbent' for you 'Prophet' to guide them, but Allah guides whoever He wills" (2: 272); "No matter 'Should We show you 'Muhammad' some of what We promise them or bring your life to termination 'afore', you are only tasked with delivering 'the Message' and on Us is the reckoning!" (13: 40)

135 In His Infinite Wisdom, God Almighty knows about His creation in the Heavens and Earth; the purity or otherwise of their intentions, conditions, their deeds, life terms, what is best for them, those who deserve guidance and thus mercy, and those who deserve misguidance and thus punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sam'ānī, Ibn Kathīr).

Some also deserve to be favoured over others in both moral and physical traits. This is a known fact, so why would the Deniers disrespect the fact that Muhammad (ﷺ) was given Prophethood and the Book (cf. al-Sa'dī): "And they said: "Why was this *Qur'ān* not sent down to a distinguished man, from either of the two towns 'Makkah and Taif'?" (43: 31) God Almighty knows best who deserves to be honoured with Messengership (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "Allah knows best where He places His Message!" (6: 124)

136 Given the fact that not all the Noble Messengers were of the same calibre and people acknowledge the most notable of them, to wit, Abraham and Moses, the question is why was David cited here as a revealing example. It is said that this is so because David made a good case of God's favouring of whomever He wishes with the great honour of Messengership. He was

a 'Sacred' Writ⁽¹³⁷⁾. ﴿56﴾ ⁽¹³⁸⁾ Say
 'Muhammad': "Call on those⁽¹³⁹⁾
 you claim besides Him; they
 do not possess the ability to
 remove harm from you, nor
 would they be able to divert it!"

زُبُورًا ﴿٥٦﴾ قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ
 فَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ كَشْفَ الضَّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٥٧﴾

a mere shepherd who tended the sheep of the Children of Israel, thus coming from a very humble background, but when he killed Goliath, with God's will, he was given this great honour: "They defeated them with Allah's permission; Dāwūd 'David' killed Jālūt and Allah gave him kingship and Wisdom and taught him of whatever He willed" (2: 251). Hence there is no point in the Makkans' wonder at the Messengership of Muhammad (ﷺ) whom they only saw as a poor orphan who used to tend their sheep (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

Another deep reasoning as to why David and His Psalms are taken as a case in hand, is that it hints at the Believers inheriting the land from their enemies as such a fact finds mention in the Psalms (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn 'Āshūr, Psalms 37:29): "Indeed We wrote in the Psalms, as We did in the 'earlier' Scripture: "My righteous servants shall inherit the land"" (21: 105).

137 *al-Zabūr* is the Book revealed to Prophet David (ﷺ) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Originally *al-zabūr* is every book that contains wisdom (*zabur* for plural, 3: 184), a Sacred Writ.

138 This goes on to further debunk the myths on which the Deniers base their stand. The so-called gods they pray to are not able to remove, change the state of, or divert harm away from them, so it begs credulity as to why they worship such helpless beings and pray not to God Almighty (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr): "If you ask them 'O Muhammad' who created the Heavens and the Earth, they will certainly say: "Allah!" Say: "Consider then whatever 'idols' you pray to besides Allah: if it was Allah's Will to harm me, could they undo that harm? Or if He willed 'some' mercy for me, could they withhold His mercy?" Say: "Allah is sufficient for me. In Him 'Alone' the trusting put their trust"" (39: 38).

139 The angels, the pious people and jinn they worship besides God Almighty, themselves are devoted in their worship of Him (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*).

It is reported that the great Qur'anic exegete, 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه), was asked about the reason for the revelation of this aya and he replied: "A group of jinn, whom were worshipped, became Muslim, but those who worshipped them kept on worshipping them!" (al-Bukhārī: 4715; Muslim 3030).

﴿57﴾ Those, to whom they pray, 'themselves' seek a means to their Lord – 'vying' whom of them gets nearer 'to Him' – hope of His mercy and fear His Punishment; verily His Punishment ever guarded against!⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ
وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ
مَحْذُورًا ﴿٥٧﴾

﴿58﴾ ⁽¹⁴¹⁾There is no town⁽¹⁴²⁾ which We would not destroy before the Day of Judgement, or Punish it a severe Punishment; that is ever noted in the Book!⁽¹⁴³⁾

وَأَنَّ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُوهَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْفَيْتَمَةِ
أَوْ مُعَذِّبُوهَا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا كَانَ ذَلِكَ
فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا ﴿٥٨﴾ وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَنْ

﴿59﴾ ⁽¹⁴⁴⁾Nothing withholds Us from

140 "Those who are in dread of the Punishment of their Lord; *truly there is no security from the punishment of their Lord!" (70: 27-28)

141 Now argument is alternated with a direct threat (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). But even this is not enough for their Denial-smitten hearts.

142 Many exegetes Believe that this promise applies to only the towns that rebel against the ordainments of God Almighty (cf. al-Qaṣṣāb, al-Khāzin, Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Su'ūd, al-Shawkānī, al-Qāsimī, al-Sa'dī). Others believe that is of a general purport and that it applies to all towns. The good town perishes through death and the evil one through Punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zajjāj, al-Sam'ānī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Alūsī).

Nothing lasts forever; history bears enough witness to this: "How many a town engaged in wrongdoing have We shattered, and then brought into being another people after them! * And when they felt Our Might, behold, they ran away from it! * "Do not run away! But return to the luxury you have been given and to your dwellings, that haply you may be questioned!" * They said, "Oh, woe to us! Truly we have been wrongdoers!" * And that did not cease to be their cry, till We made them a mown field, stilled!" (21: 11-15)

143 That is, all is written in the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawh al-Mahfūz*) and will inevitably come to pass (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).

144 As defensive strategy, the Makkan idolaters used to ask the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) to provide them with miracles. They were not obliged out of mercy, because if they were to be given what they asked for and still did not Believe, Punishment was sure to come as it did with the Thamūd tribe (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

sending with the Signs, except that the ancients denied them: We gave the Thamūd the she-camel, a Sign clear 'to the sight', yet they wronged through her⁽¹⁴⁵⁾—We only send the signs to instil fear⁽¹⁴⁶⁾.
 ﴿60﴾ (147) "Mention, Muhammad' When We say to you that your Lord has encompassing people.

نُرْسِلَ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْأَعْيُنَ
 وَءَاتَيْنَا ثَمُودَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا وَمَا
 نُرْسِلُ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَخْوِيفًا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ إِنَّ
 رَبَّكَ أَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ

The great Qur'anic exegete, 'Abdullāh Ibn al-'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) gives the reason for the revelation of this aya as follows: "The Makkans asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to turn Mount Şafā into gold and that he should drive the mountains away from their town so that they may have more land for planting. He was told: "If you want you can delay them, but should you wish, you may give them what they ask for. But if they still Deny, then they shall be destroyed as those before them were destroyed". He replied: "No! But I shall delay them". Then Allah (ﷻ) revealed this aya". (Imām Aḥmad: 2333; al-Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 11226.)

- 145 *Zalamū bihā* (lit. they wronged through her) is that they committed an injustice by slaughtering the she-camel (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr. Al-Sa'dī: "They then slayed the she-camel, insolently rebelled against their Lord's Command and said: "Şāliḥ, bring down on us what you promise us if 'only' you are 'truly' one of the ones who were sent 'the Messengers'!" *Then the quake 'soon' betook them and they became 'dead' fallen prone in their 'very' land" (7: 77-78).
- 146 Whatever, 'Sign' which should be a cause for cogitation, God makes perceptible, is meant to instil fear in people, so that they may Believe and/or mend their ways (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Ras'anī, Abū Ḥayyān). Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "The sun eclipsed and the Prophet (ﷺ) rose alarmed, fearing that the Hour had come! Then he went to the mosque and Prayed observing the longest standing and prostrating I ever saw him observe. Then he (ﷺ) said: "These signs that Allah sends are not caused by anyone's death or birth. But through them Allah instils fear in His servants. When you see any of them, rush to remembering, invoking and asking Him for forgiveness" (al-Bukhārī: 1059; Muslim: 912).
- 147 When their demand for tangible miracles was not answered, they slighted the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) for it, but God Almighty comforts Him with this (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān). God Almighty is encompassing people with His Ability and Knowledge; they are in His Fist and under His Will. He will guard His Messenger (ﷺ) against their harm so that he may deliver the Message. There is no need for fear of anyone, and the Messenger (ﷺ) needs only to carry on with his mission (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *Adwā' al-Bayān*).

We have made the vision⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ that We made you see nothing but a trial for people and 'We made' the accursed tree 'mentioned' in the Qur'an⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ 'nothing but a trial for people'; We intimidate them⁽¹⁵⁰⁾, but it increases them in nothing but excessive rebelliousness.

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرَّؤْيَا الَّتِي اَرٰىنَاكَ اِلَّا فِتْنَةً
لِّلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُوْنَۙةَ فِي الْقُرْءٰنِ
وَمُخَوِّفُهُمْۙ فَمَا يَزِيْدُهُمْ اِلَّا طَعْنًا كَبِيْرًاۙ ﴿٦٠﴾

148 *al-Ru' yā* (the vision) is what the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) saw with his own eyes on the night he ascended to the Heavens and the wonders he came to witness. In his telling people of these, their faith was being tested. Essentially, those who Believe would be separated from those who Deny (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Adwā' al-Bayān*): “The sight ‘of the Messenger’ did not swerve, nor did it transgress ‘its limit’. *He certainly saw ‘some’ of the greatest Signs of his Lord!” (53: 17-18).

149 *al-Shajarat al-mal'ūnah* (lit. the accursed tree) which is mentioned in the Qur'an is the infernal *Shajarat al-Zaqqūm*, which is mentioned time and again in the Qur'an (cf. 37: 62-67; 44: 43-46; 56: 51-56). The Associators who were warned against it said: “Muhammad tells us that there is a tree in Hellfire. Fire consumes trees. How then can a tree grow in fire!” (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): “Is this ‘bliss’ a better accommodation or the tree of Zaqqūm? *We have surely made it a test for the wrongdoers. * Indeed, it is a tree that grows in the bottom of Hell, * bearing fruit like devils’ heads. * They ‘the evildoers’ will certainly ‘be left to’ eat from it, filling up ‘their’ bellies with it. * Then on top of that they will be given a blend of boiling drink. * Then they will ultimately return to ‘their place in’ Hell!” (37: 62-68)

Belief is a matter of the heart. It is achieved through sincere Faith and not passing sensory effects no matter how ‘miraculous’ they are. If what the Noble Messenger tells them, such as his nocturnal journey and Ascension to the Heavens and the accursed tree which grows in Hell, has proven to be so difficult for them to Believe in, they would not really come to Believe in anything else. The stories of earlier nations who were provided with tangible miracles bear witness to this.

150 Through threats of Punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): “Surely what was sent to you ‘Muhammad’ from your Lord will increase many of them in rebellion and Denial!” (5: 64)

﴿61﴾⁽¹⁵¹⁾ 'Mention' We said to the angels: "Prostrate to Adam!⁽¹⁵²⁾" They all prostrated except Iblīs⁽¹⁵³⁾. He said: "Should I prostrate to whom You created 'as' clay!"⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ ﴿62﴾ He 'also' said: "Do You see this whom you honoured over me, should you delay me until the Day of Judgement, I shall certainly chew up his offspring⁽¹⁵⁵⁾, barring few!"

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ قَالَ أَأَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِينًا ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَكَ هَذَا الَّذِي كَرَّمْتَ عَلَيَّ لَئِنْ أَخَّرْتَنِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَأَحْتَنِكَنَّ ذُرِّيَّتَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٦٢﴾

- 151 To ease the Noble Messenger's (ﷺ) mind at that very difficult time in the course of his mission, given the great opposition he was facing, God Almighty reminds him of the reason why the Makkan idolaters are being so adamant in their stand against the call of Faith; they are 'chewed up' by the Devil. He manages to get under their skin through envy and arrogance very much like what he felt when he saw God's honouring of Adam (ﷺ) (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 152 The command to the angels to bow down to Adam is an act of worship to God and reverence to Adam who was honoured by God Himself. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīfī.)
- 153 *Iblīs* is Satan. Etymologically, *iblis* comes from *iblas*, i.e. having no hope in good things, grief and sadness caused by utter despair. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, p. 23; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, p. 143.)
- 154 Clay is the original substance of human creation (cf. 15: 26, 55: 14, 37: 11); Adam, the father of humanity, was created from clay, processed earth. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Su'ūd, al-Sa'dī.)
- 155 *Ahtanikanna* (lit. shall chew up) means to completely overtake. Originally it comes from locusts chewing up (*yahtaniku*) the herbage leaving the land totally barren in their wake, or tying cattle by the jawbone (*hanaka al-dābbah*) so that they are easily led on totally at one's will (cf. al-Nahhās, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). This imagery so succinctly captures the essence of how far astray this greatest sworn enemy of humans is willing to go to, to sway the offspring of Adam and lead them far off course: "Indeed, *Iblīs*' assumption about them has come true, so they 'all' follow him, except a group of 'true' Believers!" (34: 20) He spares no effort to fulfil his life's mission: "Allah Damned him, and he retorted: "I shall surely take to myself from Your servants my due share!" * "I shall surely mislead them, make them ever vainly wishful, and I shall command them to cut off the ears of livestock, and I shall command them to alter the creation of Allah!" (4: 118-119); "He said: "Allow me respite 'then' until the Day when they are resurrected". *He said: "You are among

﴿63﴾ He 'Allah' said: "Go forth!⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ Whoever of them follows you, then Hell is your requital, a full measure requital!" ﴿64﴾⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ "Rouse whomever you can of them with your voice, charge against them with your mounted horses

قَالَ أَذْهَبَ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَاءُكُمْ جَزَاءً مَوْفُورًا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَأَسْتَفِزُّ مَنْ أُسْطِطَعَتْ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبَ عَلَيْهِم بِخَيْلِكَ

those given respite". *He said: "Then for Your misguiding of me, I shall certainly lie in wait for them on Your Straight Path!" *"*Then I shall come to them from their fronts, backs, rights and lefts, and You shall not find most of them thankful*" (7: 14-17); "He said: "Then my Lord grant me 'time' until the Day when they are resurrected!" *He 'Allah' said: "Then you are among the ones granted 'time'; *until the Day of the known time!" *He said: "My Lord! Then for Your misguiding of me, I shall make certainly 'alluringly' adorned for them 'life' on Earth and shall misguide them all, *except Your servants among them; the ones made 'truly' devout!" (15: 36-40)

156 This command and the next ones are issued threateningly (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*).

157 Every call for sinful deeds is the Devil's voice, every caller for sinful deeds is the Devil's army, all sinful deeds regrading children (having and raising them sinfully) and wealth (earning and spending them sinfully) are the Devil's share in them (cf. al-Sa'dī): "They professed for Allah a share in crops and livestock which He generated and said: "This is for Allah – so they claimed – and this is for our Associates"; whatever is allocated for their Associates does not reach Allah, but whatever is allocated for Allah reaches their Associates—sordid indeed how they judge. *Like so the Associates made alluring for many of the Associators killing their 'own' children to ruin them and confound them in their religion. Had Allah wished, they would not have done it, so leave them 'Muhammad' and what they concoct. *They also said: "These are prohibited livestock and crops which are only to be consumed by those whom we wish" – so they claimed – 'other' livestock the backs of which were made forbidden, and 'some' livestock over which they do not mention Allah's Name, ascribing this falsely to Him; He will requite them for what they used to concoct. *They also said: "Whatever is in the bellies of these livestock 'if alive' is reserved exclusively for our males and is forbidden to our 'female' mates". But if it is 'born' dead then it is shared with them; He will requite them for their designation—verily He is Most Wise, All-Knowing. *Losers indeed are those who killed their 'own' children out of foolishness with no basis in 'proper' knowledge, and forbade what Allah provided for them, falsely ascribing it 'all' to Allah; they have gone astray, and they were not guided!" (6: 136-140)

and your marchers, be their partner in 'their' money and children and promise them!" Satan promises them nothing but delusion!⁽¹⁵⁸⁾
 ﴿65﴾ "Indeed on My servants you shall have no authority!"⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ Sufficient is your Lord 'O Muhammad' as Trustee!⁽¹⁶⁰⁾

﴿66﴾ (161) Your Lord 'O people' smoothly steers the vessels for you in the sea, so that you may seek of His favour—verily He is ever Most Merciful for you!
 ﴿67﴾ When you are touched by adversity in the sea, all that you pray to evades you except Him⁽¹⁶²⁾.

وَرَجِلِكَ وَسَارِكُهُمْ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ
 وَعِدَّهُمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿٦٥﴾
 إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ وَكَفَى
 بِرَبِّكَ وَكَوَيْلًا ﴿٦٦﴾

رَبِّكُمْ الَّذِي يُرِيحُ لَكُمْ الْفُلْكَ فِي الْبَحْرِ
 لِيَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۚ إِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ﴿٦٦﴾
 وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضَّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُونَ
 إِلَّا آيَاتَهُ ط

158 "He promises them and makes them ever vainly wishful; Satan promises them nothing but delusion" (4: 120).

159 "Verily, he has no authority over those who Believe and are reliant on their Lord. *His authority is over none but those who take him as ally and by him they are Associators" (16: 99-100).

160 *Wakīl* (lit. trustee); *al-Wakīl* is one of the most Beautiful Names of God Almighty. He is the One entrusted with being saved from the devils' machinations and is the Helper and Aide of those who put their trust in Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

161 In contrast to Satan, whose life's quest is to ruin people, God Almighty, their Lord and Trustee, makes easy a life of prosperity for them and guards them with His Benevolence from the dangers they are prone to fall into (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*). Yet many are not grateful for all His limitless favours. These are sensitized to their folly and are told to be sure of not being the subject of Divine Wrath.

162 Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه) reported that upon the conquest of Makkah, 'Ikrimah Ibn Abī Jahl, who was among four men that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) did not grant amnesty to, fled to the sea. The ship in which he was boarded was hit by a violent storm. The owners of the ship said: "Be sincere! Your gods will avail you nothing here!" 'Ikrimah then said to himself: "By Allah, should nothing but sincerity save me in the sea, then nothing besides it would save me on land! O Allah, I pledge to you that should You save me from what I am undergoing, I shall come to Muhammad, put my hand in his, and I shall find him forgiving and merciful!" So he came and announced his Islam (cf. Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *al-Badr al-Munīr*, 9: 153).

But once He delivers you to dry land, you turn away—verily humans are ever ungrateful!⁽¹⁶³⁾ ﴿68﴾ Do you 'people' feel secure that He would not make the edge of the land give way with you⁽¹⁶⁴⁾, or send upon you a pelter⁽¹⁶⁵⁾; then you would not find yourselves an ally!⁽⁶⁹⁾ Or do you feel secure that He would not return you to it 'the sea' once more, and set upon you a crusher of a wind⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ and sink you for your ingratitude; and then you shall find your selves no pursuer⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ against Us!

فَلَمَّا بَجَدْتُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ أَعْرَضْتُمْ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ
كَفُورًا ﴿٦٧﴾ أَفَأَمِنْتُمْ أَن يَخْصِفَ بِكُمْ جَانِبَ
الْبَرِّ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا
لَكُمْ وُكَيْلًا ﴿٦٨﴾ أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ أَن يُعِيدَكُمْ فِيهِ
تَارَةً أُخْرَى فَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ قَاصِفًا مِنَ الرِّيحِ
فَيُعْرِقْكُمْ بِمَا كَفَرْتُمْ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ عَلِيًّا
بِهِ تَتَّبِعَا ﴿٦٩﴾

- 163 “Certainly shall We make a human taste mercy from Us and then wrench it away from him; certainly he is despondently despairing, habitually Denying. *But should We make him taste good fortune after an adversity that touched him, he shall say surely: “Away are the worst ones from me!” Verily he is ever exultant, ever boastful! *Barring those who are patient and do good deeds; these for whom are forgiveness and a great reward” (11: 9-11).
- 164 That is after having been delivered from the horrors of the sea. Had they been wiser, even then, they should not feel too secure and forget about their Deliverer; He is as Able to destroy them on dry land as much as He is Able to do so at sea (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa’dī): “Do you feel secure that He Who is in Heaven will not cause the land to engulf you while it churns!” (67: 16)
- 165 *Hāṣiban* (pelter) is either rain or wind in which there are pebbles (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*) with which people are pelted and annihilated and none would stand between them and this dire fate (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 166 *Qāṣifan min al-riḥ* (lit. a crusher of a wind) is a fierce wind (storm, tempest, gale) which crushes (*yaqṣif*) whatever is found on its path (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*).
- 167 *Tabī’an* (pursuer) is one who seeks to avenge someone’s blood (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*).

﴿70﴾ (168) We have truly dignified the children of Adam⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ and carried them both on land and in the sea⁽¹⁷⁰⁾, We blessed them with good provisions⁽¹⁷¹⁾ and vastly favoured⁽¹⁷²⁾ them over many of those We have created.

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا ﴿٧٠﴾

- 168 God Almighty's dignifying of the human race and His favouring of them over many of His creations, is the reason why He shows them mercy and does not hasten punishment for them both at sea or on dry land even the less grateful among them (cf. al-Biqā'ī, Naẓm al-Durar, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 169 This dignification (*takrīm*) applies to all humans whether righteous or rebellious. The manifestations of this are too many to count both inwardly and outwardly. To say the least, among these is the bestowal of intellectual abilities and the subjection of other creatures to the human will (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Bayḍāwī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 170 Humans ride with dignity being mounted on their means of transportation both on land and on the sea (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "*The One Who created the species, all of them, and has made for you of vessels and livestock those which you ride. *That you may settle yourselves upon their backs and then remember the favour of your Lord when you have settled upon them and say: "Glorified be He, Who has subjected this to us while we were not able of that. *Indeed to our Lord we are returning" (43: 12-13).*
- 171 "*Verily, for you in livestock is ponderous consideration: We make you drink off of what is in their bellies – "coming" from between digested fodder and blood – "perfectly" pure milk; palatable for those who drink "it". *And from the fruits of palm trees and grapes you take intoxicants and comely provision; indeed in that is a Sign to those who are mindful! *Your Lord "O Muhammad" inspired the bees that: "Take you homes in mountains, and in trees and in what they "people" raise!" * "Then eat off of all fruits, then take the routes of your Lord, abated!" There comes from their bellies a drink of different colours; in it is cure for people. Indeed in that is a Sign to those who ponder!" (16: 66-69)*
- 172 Ibn 'Āshūr distinguishes between dignification (*takrīm*) and favouring (*tafḍīl*). He opines that whereas the former pertains to humans in and of themselves, the latter relates to humans as compared to other creatures.

﴿71﴾ (173) 'Mention Muhammad' The Day when We call each group of people by their leader⁽¹⁷⁴⁾; whoever is given his book in his right hand, then these read⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ their book and are not dealt unjustly 'even' with a filament! ﴿72﴾ Whoever is blind in this 'life'⁽¹⁷⁶⁾, then he is in the Hereafter 'even' blinder⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ and more astray in path.

يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ اُنَاسٍ بِاِمِمِّهِمْ فَمَنْ اُوْتِيَ
كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَاُولَئِكَ يَفْرَهُوْنَ وَنُكْتُبُهُمْ
وَلَا يَظْلَمُوْنَ فَتِيْلًا ﴿٧١﴾ وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ
اَعْمٰى فَهُوَ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْمٰى وَاَضَلُّ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٧٢﴾

- 173 People will reap the benefits of their favouring, especially their intellectual faculties, in this life in the Hereafter (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr) where the real 'favouring' will be manifested among people (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Those who use these favours in this world come to know God, and thank Him for them, will be really favoured over all other humans on the Day of Judgement: "Look how We favoured some of them over others; indeed the Hereafter is greater in stations and greater in favouring!" (17: 21); "The Day that He gathers you for the Day of Gathering, that is the Day of Mutual Dispossession—whosoever Believes in God and works righteousness, He will absolve him of his evil deeds and cause him to enter Gardens under which rivers flow, to abide therein forever; that is the great triumph!" (64: 9)
- 174 *Imāmihim* (their leader) is the leader they used to follow in this worldly life (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 175 That is, the record of deeds will be read with great elation and happiness by the righteous, as they find the record of good deeds they did in this worldly life, not subtracted in the least (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "As for one who is given his book in his right hand, he will say: "Here, read my book * Truly I knew for certain that I would meet my reckoning. * So he shall enjoy a life contenting * in a lofty Garden *with low-hanging clusters. * "Eat and drink in enjoyment for that which you did in the past in days gone by!" * As for one who is given his book in his left hand, he will say: "Would that I had not been given my book * and did not know of my reckoning. *Would that it 'death' were the final end. * My wealth availed me not. *My power has evaded me!" (69: 19-29).
- 176 That is, blind of heart, unable to see the Truth for what it is (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr).
- 177 That is, in the Hereafter, they will be even blinder and unable to see the road to Paradise (cf. al-Sa'dī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*). Some exegetes, notably al-Ṭabarī and al-Wāḥidī, see that their blindness in the Hereafter is actually physical in nature: "He will say: "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was 'once' seeing?" * He 'Allah' will say: "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten!" (20: 125-126).

﴿73﴾ (178) They would have well swayed you 'Muhammad' from what We have revealed to you⁽¹⁷⁹⁾, so that you may fabricate another ascribing it to Us; and hence they would have taken you as a bosom friend. ﴿74﴾ (180) Had We not made you firm, you would have leaned to them a little. ﴿75﴾ So We would have made you taste doubly 'tormenting' the life and doubly 'tormenting' the death; you then would never find a helper against Us!⁽¹⁸¹⁾

وَأِنْ كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا
إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهُ وَإِذَا لَا تَخَذُوكَ
حَالِيلاً ﴿٧٣﴾ وَلَوْلَا أَنْ نَبَشِّرَكَ لَفَدَكْتَ تَرَكُّنَ
إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا ﴿٧٤﴾ إِذَا لَادَقْنَاكَ ضَعْفَ
الْحَيَاةِ وَضَعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ لَوْلَا لَتَجِدُ لَكَ
عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٧٥﴾

- 178 Those who are blind in this life will stop at nothing to misguide the guided; so they have to be on their guard (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr). This passage sheds light on how hectic matters were in Makkah as that period drew to a close before the Noble Messenger's (ﷺ) migration to Madinah.
- 179 This is differently interpreted by scholars. While some see that they have come close to achieving this aim in nothing but their own imagination, others propound that, being keen on them embracing the Call, it crossed his mind to assent to what they asked him for (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*). However, in the considered opinion of Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shinqīṭī and Ibn 'Āshūr, this second reading is not to be considered valid at all. Indeed, in another aya it is said that they asked him for the same and he (ﷺ) resolutely refused to comply: "When Our Signs, distinctly evident, are recited to them, those who hope not in meeting Us say: "Come up you 'Muhammad' with a Qur'an different from this one, or 'else' modify it!" Say: "It is not for me to modify it out of my own accord! I only follow what is revealed to me! Indeed I fear – should I disobey my Lord – the Punishment of a Great Day!" (10: 15) The Message is to be strictly adhered to with no deviations, however small they are.
- 180 Based on the previous two readings, the 'leaning' (*rukūn*) was either close to happening had God Almighty's mercy not intervened; or that such thoughts did not even cross the Noble Messenger's mind because of the intervention of God's mercy beforehand (cf. Ibn 'Atīyyah, Ibn Juzayy, al-Shinqīṭī, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 181 Had this happened, he would have been punished for it severely both in this life and the one to come (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*): "Had he ascribed some statements to Us, *We would have taken him by the

﴿76﴾ (182) They would have surely stirred you from the land to oust you from it and so then they would have stayed behind you only a little!⁽¹⁸³⁾ ﴿77﴾ This is 'Our' Canon for the Messengers whom We have sent before you 'Muhammad'; you shall find no alteration in Our canon!

وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَسْتَفِزُّوكَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ
لَيُخْرِجُوكَ مِنْهَا وَإِذَا لَا يَلْبِثُونَ خَلْفَكَ إِلَّا
قَلِيلًا ﴿٧٦﴾ سُنَّةَ مَنْ قَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ
رُسُلِنَا وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٧٧﴾

﴿78﴾ (184) Keep up 'Muhammad' the Prayer⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ at the tilting of the sun⁽¹⁸⁶⁾

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِلدُّلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ

*right hand. *Then We would have severed his aorta *and none among you could have shielded him from it.” (69: 44-47)*

God Almighty is showing His Noble Messenger (ﷺ) His great favour on him by sparing him this temptation, which would have incurred a grave punishment (cf. Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa al-Hikam*, 2: 318).

- 182 This is how unsettling their stratagems were. They lead their campaign so intensely to rid themselves of the great pain that the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Message were causing them. They stopped at nothing to cause him harm and have him depart Makkah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī): “Mention Muhammad” *When the Deniers plotted against you to seize you, kill you or expel you; they plot and Allah plans—Allah is verily the best of planners” (8: 30).*
- 183 It is God Almighty’s never changing Canon that those who expel their Messengers from their land will only remain for a short while after them before Punishment befalls them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa’dī).
- 184 Of all other types of devotional worship, Prayer is singled out here as it was a great source of comfort to the Messenger (ﷺ), which was much needed given the circumstances (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Rāzī). Ḥudhayfah Ibn al-Yamān (رضي الله عنه) said: “Whenever something caused the Messenger (ﷺ) gloominess, he would Pray” (Abū Dāwūd: 1319); Sālim Ibn Abī al-Ja’d narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) used to say: “Bilal! Announce Prayer! Console us with it!” (Abū Dāwūd: 4985).
- 185 The timings mentioned here include all obligatory Prayers: *al-Zuhr*, *al-'Ashr*, *al-Maghrib*, *al-'Ishā'* and *al-Fajr*, respectively (Ibn 'Aṭīyyah reports the unanimity of exegetes in this understanding).
- 186 *Dulūk al-shams* (tilting of the sun) at the time of *zawāl*, i.e. the sun’s starting to slope (tilt) from its zenith station edging to the East marking the beginning of the time of *al-Zuhr* Prayer. So the timing from “the tilting of the sun until the darkening of the night”, includes the four obligatory Prayers from *al-Zuhr* through to *al-'Ishā'* (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 24: 25, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī).

until the darkening of the night; and 'keep up' the recitation of the dawn⁽¹⁸⁷⁾, verily the recitation of the dawn is witnessed!⁽¹⁸⁸⁾

﴿79﴾ And at night keep awake 'in Prayer' with it 'the Qur'an', 'as' supererogatory⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ 'Prayer' for you 'O Muhammad'⁽¹⁹⁰⁾,

إِلَى عَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ
الْفَجْرِ كَاتَمَّ شُهُودًا ﴿٧٩﴾ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ
بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ

187 *Qur'an al-fajr* (the recitation of the dawn) is widely held to be *al-Fajr* Prayer itself (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī).

188 That is, it is "witnessed" by the angels of the night and the angels of the day (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī).

Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "A group's Praying together is better by 25 grades than that of an individual Praying alone. The angels of the night and the angels of the day gather at the morn's Prayer" (al-Bukhārī: 4717; Muslim: 649).

The Noble Messenger used to spend a longer time reciting during *al-Fajr* Prayer. Abū Barzah al-Aslamī (رضي الله عنه) reported that: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to stand in the Morn Prayer until each one of us would discern who the person next to him was 'due to the breaking of the dawn'; he used to recite between 60 to 100 'ayas' in it" (al-Bukhārī: 541; Muslim: 461).

189 *Nāfilah* (supererogatory) is Prayer that is extra to the obligatory Prayer (*al-farīdah*). Originally *nafl* denotes giving (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).

190 Exegetes hold different opinions as to why the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) is singled out here (as in *nāfilatan laka* 'O Muhammad') for this night *nafl* Prayer. Some hold it that this Prayer is obligatory for him and voluntary for his nation (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Khāzin, Ibn 'Āshūr). Others see that it is by way of extra merit for the Messenger (ﷺ), because his sins have already been absolved, but a cause for the expiation of sins for his nation (cf. al-Sa'dī, al-Sam'ānī, al-Māwardī). It is also said to be by way of incentivizing him to it to gain its merit and whereby his nation may follow his example (al-Sam'ānī, al-Māwardī).

Both *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar* and *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar* opine that this Prayer would be a cause for the elevation of his grades in the Hereafter in order for him to attain the "laudable position" of intervening (*al-shafā'ah*) with God Almighty on behalf of all people on the Day of Judgement.

"Surely your Lord knows that you 'O Muhammad' stand 'in Prayer' for nearly two-thirds of the night, or 'sometimes' half of it, or a third, as do some of those with you" (73: 20).

'so that' your Lord may resurrect you to a laudable position⁽¹⁹¹⁾.
 ﴿80﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "My Lord, enter me a truthful entry and exit me a truthful exit"⁽¹⁹²⁾,

عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا ﴿٨٠﴾
 وَقُلْ رَبِّ اَدْخُلْنِيْ مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَّاَخْرِجْنِيْ
 مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) was asked: "Which Prayer is the best after the obligatory Prayers?" He replied: "The best Prayer after the obligatory Prayers is that performed in the hush of night" (Muslim: 1163). 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that: "The Prophet (ﷺ) used to stand up in Prayer at night until the soles of his feet would crack. Then I said to him: "Messenger of Allah, why would you do this when Allah has forgiven your sins, both past and future?" He replied: "Would I not love to be a greatly thankful servant!" (al-Bukhārī: 4837.)

191 *Maqāman maḥmūdān* (lit. a stand which is thanked for) is his intervention (*shafā'ah*) with God Almighty on behalf of all those standing at the Day of Judgement, for which all people who ever existed will be grateful (*yaḥmadūn*) to him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The sun draws close on the Day of Judgement until 'people's' sweat reaches up to the middle of their ears. While standing thus 'distressed', they would call out imploringly for Adam 'but he declines', then Moses 'but he declines', then Muhammad (ﷺ). He would interfere so that judgement is passed over the creation. He walks until he grabs the hand of the Door 'of Paradise'. On that Day, Allah raises him to a laudable position (*maqāman maḥmūdān*); all those present at the Gathering will be grateful to him for it" (al-Bukhārī: 1475).

Jābir Ibn 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Whoever says upon hearing the Call for Prayer: "*Allāhumma Rabba hādhihi al-da'wāti al-tāmmah, wa al-ṣalāti al-qā'imah, āti Muḥammadan al-wasīlata wa al-faḍīlata wa-b'ath-hu maqāman maḥmūdān al-ladhī wa'adta-hu* (O Allah, Lord of this perfect Call, and the ever observed Prayer, bestow upon Muhammad 'the lofty stations of' the Means (*al-Wasīlah*) and the Virtue (*al-Faḍīlah*) and raise Him, O Allah, to the laudable position that You promised Him)", my intervention will be duly extended to him on the Day Judgement" (al-Bukhārī: 614).

192 Although, the "truthful entry" (*mudkhala ṣidqin*) and the "truthful exit" (*mukhraja ṣidqin*) mentioned here, could very well apply to all entries and exits of places and otherwise (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn 'Āshūr), it is strongly held that they specifically refer to Madinah, the truthful entry, and Makkah, the truthful exit (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī, al-Sa'dī). Both the entry and exit are "truthful" in that they are comely and lead to God Almighty's Pleasure (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

and provide for me, from Your Own, an upholding authority!”⁽¹⁹³⁾
 ﴿81﴾ (194) And say ‘Muhammad’: “The Truth has come and falsehood has perished”. Verily falsehood ever perishes!⁽¹⁹⁵⁾

وَأَجْعَلْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ سُلْطٰنًا تَصِيْرًا ﴿٨١﴾ وَقُلْ
 جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَرَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوْقًا ﴿٨٢﴾

﴿82﴾ (196) We ‘successively’ send down of the Qur’an that which is a cure and mercy to the Believers⁽¹⁹⁷⁾;

وَنُنزِّلُ مِنْ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

When promised the Laudable Position in the Hereafter, the Noble Messenger is bid to pray for all his positions/stations to be worthy (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). This is by way of giving glad tidings to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) and preparing him for his migration from Makkah to Madinah, honourably, of his own accord and not being forced into it by the provocations (cf. Aya 76 above) of his enemies (cf. al-Jazā’irī, *Aysar al-Tafāsīr*).

- 193 *Sulṭānan Naṣīran* (an upholding authority) is a polysemous phrase. It means both irrevocable evidence (*hujjatan bayyinah*) of Truthfulness and a position of authority and power, which is proof enough of God Almighty’s support (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Juzayy, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 194 Yet another piece of glad tidings to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) that he, being the bearer of Truth, would prevail over the idolaters, the guardians of falsehood, and will come to conquer their stronghold, Makkah (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Jazā’irī, *Aysar al-Tafāsīr*). ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) reported that: “The Prophet (ﷺ) entered Makkah on the day of its liberation, and there were 360 idols around the Ka‘bah. He went on prodding them with a stick in his hand ‘sending them tumbling down’ and saying: “The Truth has come and falsehood has perished; the Truth has come and falsehood ‘is helpless over’ originating ‘anything’, nor restoring ‘it’!” (al-Bukhārī: 4287; Muslim: 1781)
- 195 When the Truth comes, falsehood will surely vanish (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī). Indeed, falsehood does not prevail and cannot occupy the upper hand if and when confronted with the Truth. When the Truth comes, falsehood retreats. Falsehood never rules supreme except at times and places that are bereft of the knowledge of God Almighty and His Signs (al-Sa‘dī).
- 196 The Glorious Qur’an, being the bearer of such comforting glad tidings, and great evidence of the Truth (cf. Ayas 88-89 below), is enough “upholding authority” and the greatest cause behind the vanquishing of falsehood, but it avails nothing to the heart-smitten (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 197 Those who Believe in it will find therein cure to their hearts and their bodies; those who act upon its dictates will be spared Punishment, enter Paradise

yet it increases the unjust
in nothing but loss!⁽¹⁹⁸⁾

وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٨٢﴾

and gain eternal bliss (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī): “O people! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord and a healing for what is in the chests; a guidance and mercy for the Believers” (10: 57); “Say ‘Muhammad’” “It ‘the Qur’an’ is a guidance and a healing for those who Believe, and those who do not Believe have an impairment in their ears, and it is a blindness for them; such are called from a place far off” (41: 44).

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that: “Some of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) set out on a journey and they happened to pass by an Arabian tribe. They asked for hospitality from that tribe, but none was extended to them. The chief of that tribe was bitten by a snake. They tried to cure him by all means but to no avail. So some of them said: “How about going to this company of people who have come to your land? Some of them might have something!” They went to them and said: “Our chief has been bitten. We tried everything but our efforts were to no avail. Is there anyone of you who has something?” A person amongst us said: “By Allah, yes! I shall treat with *ruqyah* (incantation). But I shall not treat him unless you reward us. We asked you for your hospitality and you refused!” They agreed to give us a herd of goats. So he went to him and recited *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* over him and blew. The chief was invigorated and went on walking with no sign of ailment. They gave them the agreed reward. Some of the Companions said: “Let us divide it!” Others said: “Do not, until you reach the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), tell him what has happened and see what he bids us do”. They went to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and told him. He said: “How did you come to know that it can be used as *ruqyah*? You have done the right thing. Divide it and allocate a share for me” (al-Bukhārī: 5749; Muslim: 2201).

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that: “When ill, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to recite *al-Mu‘awwidhāt* (the Sheltering suras, *al-Falaq* and *al-Nās*) and blow. When his sickness got worse, I used to recite them over him and rub ‘his body’ with his own hand seeking its blessing” (al-Bukhārī: 5016; Muslim: 2192).

¹⁹⁸ Because they chose to turn away and not heed it, the Qur’an adds nothing but misguidedness to the Deniers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah): “Whenever a sura is sent down, some among them would say: “Who of you has this one increased his Faith!” But those who truly Believe, it has increased their Faith and they rejoice. *As for those in whose hearts is disease, it has increased them filth to their filth; they die as Deniers” (9: 124-125).

﴿83﴾ (199) When We bestow favours upon a human⁽²⁰⁰⁾, he turns away and strikes a distance 'recoiling' to his side⁽²⁰¹⁾, but when evil touches him, then he is ever despairing!⁽²⁰²⁾ ﴿84﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Let everyone act according to what he is like⁽²⁰³⁾;

وَاِذَا اَنْعَمْنَا عَلَي الْاِنْسَانِ اَعْرَضَ وَنَجَّيْجَانِيهِ
 وَاِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَتُوسَّسًا ﴿٨٣﴾ قُلْ كُلُّ يَعْْمَلُ
 عَلٰى شَاكِلَتِيهِ

- 199 The thankless are heedless of the Qur'an, because it is in the nature for people, especially those of plentiful resources, to be engrossed and taken up with what they are in possession of, believing that they are far removed from misfortune (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr): "Leave to Me those who deny 'the Truth' – the luxuriant ones – and bear with them 'Muhammad' for a little while" (73: 11).
- 200 *al-Insān* (lit. the human) though singular in form (the plural being *al-nās*) is generic in nature. Exegetes hold different opinions as to what is meant by *al-insān* here. Some say that it applies to all humans because this is one of their defining characteristics except the ones that God Almighty spares (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Juzayy, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī). Others see that the ones meant by them are mainly the Deniers (cf. al-Samarqandī, Ibn Abī Zamanīn, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Ras'anī).
- 201 *Na'ā bi-jānibihi* (lit. strikes a distance 'recoiling' to his side) shows how resolutely they turn away from God and how disdainful they are of the Truth. This mimics the sudden movement of arrogant self-important people, as they jerk away their flowing robes and recoil from what they do not like (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, Abū Ḥayyān, Abū al-Su'ūd).
- 202 "When harm touches a human, he would pray to Us 'whether lying' on his side or sitting or standing, but whenever We remove his harm from him, he 'no sooner' moves on as if he did not pray to Us for a harm that touched him; thus has 'always' been prettified for those of excess what they used to do" (10: 12); "Certainly shall We make a human taste mercy from Us and then wrench it away from him; certainly he is despondently despairing, habitually Denying!" (11:9)
- 203 *Ya'malu 'alā shākīlatihī* (lit. act according to what he is like), i.e. in a manner accordant with a person's morals, nature, habits and way of life. It is only likely of a Denier to meet bounties with ingratitude, turning away from God Almighty, the One Who Bestows bounties, while it is expected of the Believer to thank his Benefactor for the blessings conferred on him and draw ever closer to Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī).
- That is to say, continue in your current state of Denial, with which you are satisfied, refusing to heed the Signs of God, just as I will continue following the dictates of God and the path that leads to His Pleasure and I will not be hurt by your intransigence (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

your Lord Knows best whose path is better guided!”

﴿85﴾ (204) They ask you ‘Muhammad’ about the soul⁽²⁰⁵⁾, say: “The soul is a matter of my Lord!”⁽²⁰⁶⁾ The knowledge that you ‘people’ have been given is only but a little!⁽²⁰⁷⁾

فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَىٰ سَبِيلًا ﴿٨٥﴾

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ ۗ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي

وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨٥﴾

It reiterates a breakaway statement that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) was repeatedly told to say during his Makkkan days: “Say ‘Muhammad’: *My people labour in the state in which you are, as I will be labouring ‘my own way’, for sure you will come to know to whom belongs the last round in the land—indeed the wrongdoers do not prosper*” (6: 135; cf. also 11: 93 and 121, 39: 39).

- 204 Such a question highlights what kind of resistance the Message was met with resulting in even more loss for the idolaters. Their question was not posed to gain knowledge but to baffle the Noble Messenger (ﷺ). ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported: “The Quraysh said to the Jews: “Give us something to ask this man ‘i.e. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)’ about!” They replied: “Ask him about the Soul.” For this the Aya “*They ask you ‘Muhammad’ about the Soul, say: “The Soul is a matter of my Lord!*” was sent down” The Jews then said: “Have we only been given little knowledge when the Torah was given to us! Whoever is given the Torah, is given good aplenty!” Then “*Say ‘Muhammad’: “If the sea were ink for the Words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like thereof to replenish it”*” (18:109) was sent down” (al-Tirmidhī: 3140; al-Nasā’ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 11314; Imām Aḥmad: 2309).
- 205 Exegetes are of two opinions as to what the soul (*al-rūḥ*) being asked about here refers to. The majority agree that it is the soul that sustains life in the body (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Sam‘ānī, al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shawkānī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). Some others see that it refers to the great Archangel Gabriel, who is said to be *al-Rūḥ* in Aya 78: 38 (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī).
- 206 That is, this matter is exclusive to God Almighty, He Only knows its truth, being its Creator and none knows its truth except Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī).
- 207 The knowledge that humans have been given is very little compared to that of God Almighty (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Alūsī, al-Qāsimī): “*He knows what is there in front of them and what is there behind them, but they know nothing of His Knowledge, except what He wills!*” (2: 255)

﴿86﴾ (208) Had We wished, We would have done away with what We revealed to you 'Muhammad'; then you shall find yourself no ally against Us! ﴿87﴾ (209) Except due to mercy from your Lord; verily His favour upon you is ever great! (210)

وَلَيْنَ شَيْئًا لَتَذَهَبَنَّ بِالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ
لَا يَجِدُ لَكَ بِهِ عَلَيْنَا وَكِيلًا ﴿٨٦﴾ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً
مِّن رَّبِّكَ إِنَّ فَضْلَهُ كَانَ عَلَيْكَ كَبِيرًا ﴿٨٧﴾

Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) mentioned the following in the story of Moses and al-Khiḍr (عليه السلام): "When they boarded the ship, a bird came and perched on the edge of the vessel and dipped its beak in the sea once or twice. Upon seeing this al-Khiḍr said: "O Mūsā, your knowledge and mine 'combined' subtract no more of Allah's Knowledge than this bird's beak has subtracted from the sea!" (al-Bukhārī: 3401; Muslim: 2380)

This reply teaches people to be humble and that there is a limit to their knowledge and that they should not be fooled by their intellectual acumen. The question of the soul, its nature and the truth behind it, is one of the biggest questions in human history that has occupied the brightest human minds throughout times long and hard (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Soul"), but none arrived at a conclusive answer, simply because this matter, although, sensed in its decisive effect on life and death, lies beyond human perception and human tools of empirical inspection.

People need to occupy themselves and use their time with seeking knowledge that is both attainable and beneficial (cf. al-Shawkānī).

- 208 Even the "little" knowledge that they have been given through revelation to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) can be taken away (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Rāzī). That for confoundingly asking about that which matters not to them and ignoring the True knowledge that has been given to them (cf. al-Biqā'ī).
- 209 God Almighty (ﷻ) would not take away the Qur'an, the main means of guidance, out of mercy to His Prophet and to His servants (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).
- 210 God Almighty (ﷻ) favoured the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) with the Message, the Qur'an and the laudable position on the Day of Judgement among many other favours. So He would not deprive him of the favour that He revealed to him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Indeed the Grace of Allah on you 'Muhammad' is great!" (4: 113)

﴿88﴾⁽²¹¹⁾ Say 'Muhammad': "Should humans and the jinn⁽²¹²⁾ rally up together to come up with the like of this Qur'an, they shall not come up with the like of it, even if they were backing each other"⁽²¹³⁾.

قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْاِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلٰى اَنْ يَّاتُوْا بِمِثْلِ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لَا يَأْتُوْنَ بِمِثْلِهٖ وَلَوْ كَانَتْ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظٰهِرًا ﴿٨٨﴾

- 211 The Qur'an is the greatest miracle which is singularly inimitable; a "great favour" on the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) indeed (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr) being the ultimate, conclusive, everlasting proof of his Messengership (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 212 The jinn are specifically mentioned here either to denote all-inclusiveness and/or in answer to the Arabs who believed that the jinn were able to do stupendous feats of verbal art (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 213 The Qur'an's miraculousness and inimitability lie in both its word and meaning. It lies in the way it is worded and styled, and how its words denote meaning, as well as how it informs us about the Unseen: God Almighty, His Names and Attributes, His angels, telling of long-gone events and happenings, the resurrection and how creation returns to their Creator. Its miraculousness is, moreover, borne out in the cogent logical examples and potent similitudes that it poses (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5: 428). The Qur'an is rife with scientific miracles that only modern scientific breakthroughs and advanced technology have revealed and were not available to people at the time of revelation (cf. for example: 32: 12-14 (which detail the formation of human embryos in the womb); 24: 43 and 30: 48 (which detail how rain clouds come to be formed high up in the sky); 78: 7 (which says that the mountains are pegs that stabilize the crust of the Earth). People will continue to discover more scientific miracles in the Qur'an and signs of its Truth as they develop their tools and become wiser: "We shall show them Our Signs in the horizons, and within themselves, until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth" (41: 53).

This very daring challenge in and of itself is proof enough of its miraculousness (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5: 408). Assuming for the sake of argument that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) was the author of the Qur'an, a wise heart would not dare pose such a glaring challenge to those who are keenest on discrediting him, especially when they are the greatest in the art they are being dared to.

The inimitability of the Qur'an is such that the Qur'an itself mounts a challenge for its contemporaries, repeated a number of times (cf. 2: 23, 10: 38, 11: 13, 17: 88), to come up with something like it, ten suras, or even a single sura of it. It is quite telling to note that this challenge was posed to a people who were acknowledged masters of the art of oratory and rhetoric, poetry and prose, rhymed prose and soothsaying. In fact, in pre-Islamic

﴿89﴾ (214) We have indeed spelled out for people in this Qur'an of each example⁽²¹⁵⁾ but most people refused but to be extremely Denying⁽²¹⁶⁾.

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ فَأَبَى أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ﴿٨٩﴾

﴿90﴾ (217) And they said: "We shall not Believe in you 'Muhammad' unless you make the ground burst with a spring for Us!" ﴿91﴾ "Or you have a garden of palm trees and grapes, and you then burst rivers gushing out profusely through it!"

وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّى تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا ﴿٩٠﴾ أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ بَنَاتٌ مِمَّنْ نَحْمِلُ وَعَنَبٍ فَتَفْجُرَ الْأَنْهَارُ خِلَالَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ﴿٩١﴾

Arabia, the Arabs esteemed linguistic prowess to such an extent that they held annual meetings, prominent among which were 'Ukāz (being the name of the place where the competitions used to be held), al-Nadwah (the forum) and Dhū-l-Majāz (that of the figurative language), in which every linguistic talent was showcased and the latest *magna opera* of celebrated orators and poets were made public. Some poems were immortalized by being written in gilded letters and suspended over the walls of Arabia's holiest shrine ever, the Ka'bah in Makkah. These poems became widely known as *mu'allaqāt* (the hanging odes) and are still being lovingly memorized by Arab literature connoisseurs and school-children up to this day. Also, it is worth noting that these people were absolutely bent on discrediting the Qur'an and ascribing it to the Prophet as we can see in this sura and in the rest of the Qur'an.

- 214 The "examples" posed in the Qur'an, cogent as they are, are but one aspect of its inimitability (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 215 *Mathal* (singular, the plural being *amthāl*, examples) are the proofs and evidences, admonitions and similitudes, and the stories and morals which are varyingly mentioned in the Qur'an so that people of sound reason may contemplate and take heed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 216 *Kufūran* is hyperbolic of *kufr*, Denial (cf. Abū al-Su'ūd). i.e. extreme Denial.
- 217 Out of their extreme Denial, the heart-smitten denied the Truth and treated this great favour with insolent ingratitude, thus they refused to acknowledge the Qur'an, disdained from following the guidance it pointed out to them and hence they frivolously suggested being shown 'miracles' which are of no use or even catastrophic to them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Wajīz, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī).

﴿92﴾ “Or, ‘unless’ you bring down the sky falling down on us – as you claimed – in chunks; or you bring Allah and the angels ‘right’ in front of us!” ﴿93﴾ “Or, that you should have a house of gold; or you climb up in the sky, and even then we would not believe in your climbing unless you bring a book for us to read!” Say ‘Muhammad’: “Glorified may my Lord be! ﴿218﴾ Am I anything but a human, a Messenger!” ﴿94﴾ ﴿219﴾ Nothing prevented people – when the guidance came to them – to Believe except their saying: “Did Allah send a human as Messenger!” ﴿95﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “Were there angels who would walk peacefully on Earth, We would have then sent for them from the Heavens an angel Messenger”. ﴿220﴾

أَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَاءَ كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا
 أَوْ تَأْتِيَنَا بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ قَبِيلًا ﴿٩٢﴾ أَوْ يَكُونَ
 لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّن زُخْرَفٍ أَوْ تَرْقَى فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَن
 نُؤْمِنَ لِرِيقِكَ حَتَّى تُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابًا
 نَقْرُؤُهُ ۗ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ هَلْ كُنْتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا
 رَسُولًا ﴿٩٣﴾ وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ
 الْهُدَىٰ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ بَشَرًا رَسُولًا ﴿٩٤﴾
 قُلْ لَوْ كَانُ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَلَائِكَةٌ يَّمشُونَ مُتَمَيِّنِينَ
 لَنَزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَكًّا رَسُولًا ﴿٩٥﴾

218 The expression *subhāna Rabbī* (Glorified may my Lord be) emphatically exalts God Almighty above and beyond being forced to meet such intransigent demands. If He wills, He would answer whatever He wishes of these and if He so wishes he would not answer any of them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

219 That is, if God Almighty were to ever send a Messenger, he would be an angel not a mere human being, was the original issue that stood between people of all nations and Believing (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). Out of rebelliousness they thought that it would be unbecoming of them to follow the Messenger, who was no more than a human being like themselves, but they forgot about the proofs and evidences that he came with (cf. al-Qurṭubī): “*And they say ‘mockingly’: ‘What kind of messenger is this who eats food and goes about in market-places for a living?’ If only an angel had been sent down with him to be his co-warner!*” (25: 7)

220 The delivery of the Message usually takes years, if not even centuries as in the case of Prophet Noah (ﷺ) (29: 14), of hard, toilsome work, example setting, and argumentation and counter-argumentation. Angels were not

﴿96﴾ Say: “Allah is sufficient as Witness between me and you; verily He is All-Knowledgeable, All-Seeing of His servants!”⁽²²¹⁾

قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَنَّهُ
كَانَ يَعْبُدُهُ حَمِيرًا بَصِيرًا ﴿٩٦﴾

﴿97﴾ ⁽²²²⁾The one whom Allah guides is the one who is truly guided,

وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَمُهْتَدٍ

created for this role. This is why God sends human Messengers; with whom people can interact, relate to and see them acting upon their own teachings, thus providing role models to be emulated and followed. Angels descending to Earth have only one job: to deliver what is ‘true’; “either a Message to a human Messenger or a Punishment from God upon those who Deny it” (Mujāhid, quoted in al-Ṭabarī). “*They* ‘brashly’ say: “*O you to whom the Reminder is revealed! You must be insane! *Why do you not bring us the angels, if what you say is true?**” **We do not send down the angels, save in Truth ‘Punishment’, and were We to do so, they would be granted no respite*” (15: 6-8); “*They* ‘further’ said: “*Had only there been an angel sent down to him!*” *Had We sent down an angel, the whole matter would have been ‘immediately’ settled and they would not be given respite. *Had We made him an angel, We would have ‘certainly’ made him ‘in the form of’ a man and then We would have confused them for what they ‘contrive to’ confuse*” (6: 8-9).

221 The Noble Messenger is to entrust his affairs to God Almighty, the All-Knowledgeable, All-Seeing of His servants (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). God is enough Witness over both the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) and the Deniers. He well knows the truthfulness of His Messenger, aids him with miracles, sends down Signs on him, and makes him prevail over his enemies. Had he been a liar, God would have certainly punished him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr. Al-Sa‘dī): “‘Nay’ *But* ‘in spite of the Deniers’ *Allah* ‘Himself’ bears Witness to what He sent down to you – He sent it with His Knowledge – and the angels bear witness ‘to it’ too—sufficient is Allah ‘indeed’ as Witness” (4: 166); “*Say* ‘Muhammad’: “*What thing is most weighty in testimony?**” *Say*: “*Allah is a Witness between me and you. He revealed to me this Qur’an to warn you with it and whoever it reaches*” (6: 19).

222 Those who make it their cause to remain Denying after all the evidences have been made clear to them, are misguided because of God Almighty’s (ﷻ) displeasure with them due to their insolent rebelliousness, so their hearts and minds would not find the Truth. The stating of this fact here could be to lighten the heart of the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) who needed not to be saddened by their misguidedness because they chose to rebel before contemplating the Signs of the Truth with open hearts and minds (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

but those whom He sends astray, you shall not find allies for them besides Him! We shall herd them 'flat' on their faces⁽²²³⁾ on the Day of Judgement; blind, 'utterly' mute and deaf, their resort is Hellfire; whenever it abates We increase their scorching.⁽²²⁴⁾ ﴿98﴾ That is their requital for their Denying in Our Signs, and having said: "Should we, when we are mere bones and remains, be resurrected as a new creation?"⁽²²⁵⁾ ﴿99﴾ Did they not come to see that Allah, Who created the Heavens and Earth, is Able to create the likes of them; He appointed a term⁽²²⁵⁾ for them, there is no doubt about it—yet the unjust refused but to remain extremely Denying!⁽²²⁶⁾

وَمَنْ يُضِلَّلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِهِ
وَتَحْشُرُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ عُمِّيًّا
وَبِكَمَا وُضِعُوا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ كَمَا خَبَتَ
زِدْنَهُمْ سَعِيرًا ﴿٩٧﴾ ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ هُمُ بِأَنَّهُمْ
كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالُوا إِذْ كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَرُفَاتًا
إِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا ﴿٩٨﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ قَادِرٌ
عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَهُمْ أَجَلًا لَارْتِيَابٍ
فِيهِ فَاذْبَانِ الظَّالِمُونَ الْاَكْفُورًا ﴿٩٩﴾

223 Anas Ibn Malik (رضي الله عنه) reported: "A man asked: "Messenger of Allah, how are the Deniers herded 'flat' on their faces on the Day of Judgement?" The Messenger (ﷺ) replied: "Is not the One Who made any of them walk on his feet able to make him walk on his face on the Day of Judgement?" (al-Bukhārī: 6523; Muslim: 2806).

224 "Among them are those who Believe in him 'Muhammad and/or the Qur'an' and those who look the other way—Hell suffices for a blazing fire! *Those who Deny Our Signs, We will have them scorched by a Fire; whenever their skins are burned away, We replace them with other skins to make them taste the Punishment 'anew'—indeed Allah is Most Prevailing, All-Wise" (4: 55-56).

225 That is, a stated term that could be both their death and resurrection or any other (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah). This is to highlight God Almighty's Omnipotence and inexhaustible Wisdom (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr). None needs to doubt this.

226 Even though they have been given all the evidence needed to guide their hearts and minds, they chose to hold on to their staunch position, pitting themselves wholeheartedly against the Message (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿100﴾ (227) Say 'Muhammad': "If you were in possession of the troves of my Lord's Mercy, so surely you would have withheld, fearing to spend; verily humans are ever stingy!"⁽²²⁸⁾

قُلْ لَوْ أَنُّكُمْ تَمْلِكُونَ خَزَائِنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّي إِذًا لَأَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ الْإِنْفَاقِ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ قَتُورًا ﴿١٠٠﴾

﴿101﴾ (229) We had verily given Mūsā 'Moses' nine clear Signs; ask then 'Muhammad' the Children of Israel⁽²³⁰⁾ when he 'Moses' came to

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ فَسَأَلَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ

227 The Makkan idolaters, were, by and large, the Noble Messenger's (ﷺ) tribesmen and relatives. As much as he was keen on delivering good and guidance to them, they were keen on withholding it from him and those around him, not even by acknowledging the Truth (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). Nothing illustrates this more clearly than their three-year all out, strict embargo limiting the Believers to the narrow mountain pass of *Shi' b Abī Ṭālib* totally boycotting them from the world and almost starving them to death.

228 Their 'stinginess' reveals yet another aspect of their nature which made them slow to answer the Call of Faith. Human nature is varyingly described in the Qur'an in a negative manner being: "rash" (17: 11), "stingy" (17: 100), "most ungrateful" (100: 6), "extremely inept and foolish" (33: 72), "extremely Denying" (22: 66), among many such unfavourable traits. Human beings, being what they are, are in need of God Almighty's help and guidance to rise above these base instincts (cf. Ibn Kathīr): "*Surely man was created most fretful; * When evil touches him, 'he is' most impatient * and whenever good fortune comes to him, he selfishly withholds it 'from others'.* * *Not so, however, those who are 'constantly' Praying'*" (70: 19-22).

229 The story of Prophet Moses (ﷺ) with the extremely rebellious Pharaoh, who was given no less than 'nine clear Signs' yet he was adamant to acknowledge the Truth and doggedly fought against it, is a clear historical precedent of the case in hand; the Makkans need to be warned by his example and not seek to hasten their punishment through flippantly asking for miracles in which they, being heart-smitten as they are, would not come to believe (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn 'Āshūr).

230 The Children of Israel who are meant here are the Noble Messenger's contemporaries (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn al-Jawzī). This interpolative clause brings the all along hinted at Children of Israel to the fore. They were acting behind the scenes aiding the Qurayshite idolaters (cf. commentary on Aya 85 above) in their arguments against the Noble Messenger (ﷺ). Their own heritage, which they cannot possibly deny, is cited as evidence against them and those whom they help (cf. al-Ras'anī).

them, and Pharaoh said to him: “I surely believe you are bewitched, Mūsā!”⁽²³¹⁾ ﴿102﴾ He ‘Mūsā’ said: “You know well that these were sent down by none other than the Lord of the Heavens and Earth⁽²³²⁾, ‘as’ eye-opener ‘evidences’; and I well believe that you are wrecked, Pharaoh!” ﴿103﴾ He ‘Pharaoh’ meant to stir⁽²³³⁾ them ‘Moses and his people’ from the land, but We drowned him with those who were with him, all!⁽²³⁴⁾

فَقَالَ لَهُ فِرْعَوْنُ إِنِّي لَأَظُنُّكَ يُمُوسَى
مَسْحُورًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَمَا أَنْزَلَ هَٰؤُلَاءِ
إِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ بِصَآئِرٍ وَإِنِّي
لَأَظُنُّكَ يَفِرْعَوْنُ مُشْبِرًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ فَأَرَادَ أَنْ
يَسْتَفِزَّهُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ فَأَعْرَفْنَاهُ وَمَنْ
مَعَهُ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٠٤﴾

The Message of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) which was on the rise (as this sura came to assert), had to be, through potent argumentations and evidences, made to shine over all other Messages, especially that which the Jews of Arabia claimed so that the knowledge atmosphere in this realm could be cleared out without any interfering distractions (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

- 231 Pharaoh accused Moses (ﷺ) to be under a magic spill thus alluding that his words were that of a madman; an incoherent babble (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn ‘Atīyyah, Ibn Juzayy, Abū Ḥayyān): “‘These are two’ of nine Signs for Pharaoh and his people. They have truly been a rebellious people.” *But when Our eye-opening Signs came to them, they said, “This is pure magic!” (27: 12-13)
- 232 Any sound mind could easily see that these Signs are the doing of God Almighty, as no mere human being could deliver such miraculous feats. Thus they are enough ‘eye-opening evidences’ to those whose hearts are not beclouded (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 233 *Yastafizzahum* (to stir them), being a marked, no-ordinary, expression is quite significant here as it intertextually relates to Aya 76 above. Whereas Pharaoh tried to ‘stir’ the Children of Israel from Egypt thus God Almighty drowned him and his soldiers and made the victimized people masters of the land, the Qurayshites, at the time of the revelation of this sura, were aggressively plotting to ‘stir’ the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) and evict him from Makkah. Based on this contextual connection, some exegetes consider this to have been a harbinger for things to come, i.e. that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) would come to prevail and take over Makkah as much as Moses (ﷺ) was made to prevail (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 234 “We ‘at once’ took vengeance on them and We drowned them in the deep sea, because they denied Our Signs and were ‘willingly’ averting of them. *And We bequeathed those people whom were down-trodden the Easts and

﴿104﴾ We said to the Children of Israel after him: “Dwell in the land! ‘But’ When the promise of the latter⁽²³⁵⁾ comes, We bring you wholly, all and sundry!”⁽²³⁶⁾

وَقُلْنَا مَنْ بَعْدِهِ لَبِئْسَ اِمْرًا بَدَلْ اَسْكُنُوا الْاَرْضَ
فَاِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْاٰخِرَةِ جِئْنَا بِكُمْ لَفِيفًا ﴿١٠٤﴾

﴿105﴾ ⁽²³⁷⁾With the Truth We have sent it ‘the Qur’an’ down and with the Truth it came down⁽²³⁸⁾.

وَبِالْحَقِّ اَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَّلَ

Wests of the land that We blessed. The gracious Word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel for their steadfastness and We destroyed what Pharaoh and his people used to make and what they used to ‘carefully’ trellis” (7: 136-137).

235 Most exegetes consider that *wa‘du al-ākhirah* (the promise of the latter/ Hereafter) to be the coming of the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Alūsī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

However, two other readings exist (cf. al-Māwardī): seeing that the expression *wa‘du al-ākhirah* (the promise of the latter (*al-ākhirah*)) reiterates the one which is told of in Aya 7 above with regards to the Children of Israel, it is taken to mean that once this promise is due, they will be brought from all corners of the world to dwell in the Levant; and/or that it means the coming down of ‘Īsā (ﷺ) at the end of times who will fight against the Children of Israel and vanquish them and thus the realization of the promise in Aya 7 above.

236 *Lafīfan* (all and sundry) is as a whole of mixed nature. It originates from *l-f-f* which denotes things twisting over each other (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).

237 This final passage sums up the sura, given the ‘extreme Denial’ that has been showcased throughout, with some very important messages on what the conduct of the pious should be like when dealing with the Divine Message, which is in sharp contrast with the conduct of its sworn enemies.

238 The Qur’an, God Almighty’s final Message to His servants, is a revelation which is sent down for the greater good of creation; it encapsulates the Truth, contains truthful news and just rulings. Gabriel (ﷺ), the strong and trustworthy, brought it down to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), safeguarded against the devils, free from additions or subtractions, unaltered on its way down, and preserved against change or modification throughout the times (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr): “*Would I ‘then’ want a judge apart from Allah, while He sent you the Book, detailed? Those to whom We gave the Book know that it ‘the Qur’an’ is sent down from your Lord with the Truth—be not then among the doubters. *Your Lord’s Word ‘Muhammad’*

We have sent you 'Muhammad' as nothing but a bearer of glad tidings and a warner⁽²³⁹⁾. ⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ And 'it being' a Recitation 'Qur'an' We have elaborated⁽²⁴⁰⁾ so that you 'Muhammad' may recite it to people with deliberation⁽²⁴¹⁾, and We Sent it down time after time!⁽²⁴²⁾

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَقُرْءَانًا فَرَقْنَاهُ
لِتَقْرَأَهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلَى مُكَمَّاتٍ وَنَزَّلْنَاهُ تَنْزِيلًا ﴿١٠٦﴾

was perfected truthfully and justly; None can change His Words—He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing" (6: 114-115).

The 'sending down' of the Qur'an is repeated twice in a part of an aya here to assert in the face of the ardent Denial of the Makkan idolaters that the Qur'an is from God Almighty (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

- 239 This statement both asserts the Messengership (cf. al-Jazā'irī) and simply outlines the role of the Noble Messenger and its nature in the face of those who demanded that he showed them miracles that only God Almighty could perform and who doubted his Messengership on the grounds that he was merely a human (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, *I'rāb al-Qur'ān wa Bayānuhu*, 5: 520).

Further, God Almighty is consoling Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and assuring him of the Truthfulness of his Message in the face of the fierce war he and his followers were up against on all fronts. "*We have sent you 'Muhammad' with the Truth, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner; and you will not be asked about the company of Hellfire*" (2: 119).

- 240 The lexical item *faraqnaḥu* (We have elaborated it) is semantically complex. The verb *farraqa/faraqa* (to separate) could mean: detailed, thoroughly explained, elaborated (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shinqīfī) or sent down in separate segments (*mufarraqaṅ*) to the Noble Messenger over the duration of his mission (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Qāsimī).
- 241 '*Alā mukth* (lit. with deliberation) derives from *makatha*, which denotes stopping and waiting (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-Arib*, Ibn al-Hā'im, *al-Tibyān*). Here it means that the Qur'an was sent down to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) so that he may recite it to people unhurriedly and in a good performance. The Qur'an is not to be delivered to people in a hurry: this, so as to make it easier to be learnt by heart, understood and pondered upon, and for the knowledge, secrets and far-reaching goals embedded in it to be obtained (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qāsimī, al-Sa'dī).
- 242 That is, in separate segments, one coming after another (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

﴿107﴾⁽²⁴³⁾ Say 'Muhammad': "Believe in it or do not Believe in it" but those who were given knowledge before it, when it is recited to them, swoop to their chins⁽²⁴⁴⁾, prostrating⁽²⁴⁵⁾. ﴿108﴾ And they say: "Glory be to our Lord; indeed, the Promise of Our Lord⁽²⁴⁶⁾ will ever come to be realized!" ﴿109﴾ They swoop to the chins crying and it 'the Qur'an' increases them in 'devoted' peacefulness! ﴿

قُلْ ءَامِنُوا بِهِ ءَوْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوْا اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
 اُوْتُوْا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ اِذَا يَتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ
 يَخْرُوْنَ لِلْاَذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّنَا
 اِنْ كٰنَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا لَمَفْعُوْلًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَيَخْرُوْنَ لِلْاَذْقَانِ
 يَبْكُوْنَ وَيَزِدُّهُمْ خُشُوْعًا ﴿١٠٩﴾

243 Through indicating the state of those who possess true knowledge upon hearing the Message, God Almighty cheers the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) and tells him not to mind how insolently the ignorant have received it (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa'ādah*, 1: 50).

Should the ignorant Qurayshites deny the Message, those who had been given knowledge before the Qur'an, who are the real authority on such an issue, because they readily realize the Truth of revelation and Prophethood, upon hearing it, swiftly fall prostrating, totally subdued (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah): "Indeed there are among the People of the Book those who Believe in Allah, what has been sent down to you and what had been sent down to them, humbling themselves before Allah" (3: 199).

244 *Li-l-adhqān* (lit. to their chins) indicates how hard they press their whole faces to the ground out of pious humbleness (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Chins are synecdochally used to indicate the whole face (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

245 Prostrating (*sujūd*) is known in the Jewish and Christian faiths: Matthew 26: 39: "He 'Jesus' went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying"; Genesis 17:3: "And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying..."; Numbers 14:5: "Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the Children of Israel"; Numbers 16:22: "And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh".

246 This 'Promise' is the one they find in their Scriptures about the advent of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and that the Qur'an would be sent down to him (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī): "Those who follow the Messenger, 'the unlettered Prophet', whom they find with them written in the Torah and the Evangel. He enjoins them to virtue and advises them against what is unacceptable; makes lawful for them good provisions and makes unlawful for them what is deleterious; lays down their burden and the yokes that were 'imposed' on them" (7: 157).

﴿110﴾ Say 'Muhammad': ⁽²⁴⁷⁾“Pray to Allah or pray to the Most Beneficent, Whoever you pray to, His are the Most Magnificent Names!”; ⁽²⁴⁸⁾and do not raise your voice in your Prayers 'O Muhammad' and do not quieten your voice in them, but seek a middle way between these.

﴿111﴾ ⁽²⁴⁹⁾And say 'Muhammad': ⁽²⁵⁰⁾“All Gratitude be to Allah, Who did not take a child 'for Himself”,

قُلْ اَدْعُوا اللَّهَ اَوْ اَدْعُوا الرَّحْمٰنَ اَيَّامًا تَدْعُوْنَ
فَلَهُ الْاَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنٰى وَلَا تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ
وَلَا تَخَافُتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ سَبِيْلًا ۝ وَقُلْ
الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِى لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا

247 This could be understood differently depending on who the addressees are taken to be. Both al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr opine that these are the Makkan idolaters who deemed it unfit to ascribe the Attribute of Mercy to God Almighty, and thus they would not accept Him to be called *al-Raḥmān* (The Most Beneficent). Further, Ibn Taymiyyah (*Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 14: 15) says that the Makkans heard the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) praying to God Almighty, once as Allah and on another occasion as *al-Raḥmān* and claimed that he was praying to two different gods.

On the other hand, this could be seen as an address to the Believers to turn away from the exhausting wrangles of the Deniers and occupy themselves with praying to God varying between His Most Magnificent Names (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Shirbīnī). Both being two Names for the Same, One and Only, God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

248 The great exegete 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reports the reason behind the revelation of this aya: “It came down when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was lying low in Makkah. When he used to lead his Companions in Prayer and raise his voice and the Associators heard him, they would curse the Qur'an and He Who sent it down. So Allah 'in effect' said to His Messenger: “Do not raise your voice in Prayer upon which the Associators would hear you, but do not be very quiet with that so that your Companions may hear you. Make them hear the Qur'an but do not raise your voice to that extent; seeking a middle way between them” (al-Bukhārī: 4722; Muslim: 446).

249 This command is by way of teaching the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers thereafter how to praise their Lord in Gratitude to Him (cf. al-Rāzī).

250 God Almighty is to be exalted over all and any form of imperfection (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī); being in no need of help from children, associates or allies.

nor has He ever had a partner in 'His' Kingship, or an ally against humiliation⁽²⁵¹⁾; and exalt Him immensely!

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمَلِكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وِثْقٌ
مِّنَ الذِّلِّ وَكَبْرُهُ تَكْبِيرًا ﴿١١١﴾



²⁵¹ "Indeed to Allah belongs all honour!" (10: 65).



سُورَةُ الْكَافِرَاتِ

al-Kahf
(The Cave)



al-Kahf (The Cave)

Title: thus titled, *al-Kahf* (The Cave), eponymously after the cave in which the band of resolute Believing youth took refuge from their Denying people who were hard after them (cf. Muslim: 809 and 2937, al-Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣā'ir Dhawī al-Tamyīz*, 1: 297). It is also known as *Sūrat Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* (The Sura of the Companions of the Cave; cf. al-Tirmidhī: 2240; al-Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 10783). Although desolate and unwelcoming to the peering eye and the worldly thinking mind, the cave to which these youngsters fled, having firm Faith in God Almighty's Providence, which eventually saved them, became exceptionally accommodating and a symbol of the great divide that sets true Belief apart from mindless Denial and Truth apart from falsehood.

Merit: *al-Kahf* is a singularly meritorious sura. Its recitation is a cause for the descension of tranquillity (cf. al-Bukhārī: 3614; Muslim: 795), whereby one is safeguarded against the great, faith-testing, trial of the False Messiah (*al-masīh al-dajjāl*) (cf. Muslim: 809; al-Tirmidhī: 2240; al-Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 10783) and thereby owns a light from one Friday, when it is recited, to the next (cf. al-Hākim: 2: 399; al-Bayhaqī: 6209; al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'*: 6470 and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhib*: 736).

Theme: with a general introduction and a conclusion, the sura recounts four stories, separated by reflective passages which draw lessons from the earlier story and set the scene for the next. The first of these stories is that of the Companions of the Cave (*Aṣḥāb al-Kahf*) whose firm Faith defied all the forces of ignorance they were surrounded by; the second story is that of the Owner of the Two Vineyards (*Ṣāḥib al-Jannatayn*) who remained haughty and ungrateful despite the compelling reminder he was given by a Believing fellow; the third is the story of Prophet Moses (ﷺ) and al-Khiḍr (ﷺ) who demonstrated to him through practical examples that none can claim absolute knowledge of God's Wisdom unless through ignorance dissipating revelation; the final story is that of the great Believing sovereign, *Dhūl Qarnayn* (The Two-Horned), who pursued and built up on the enabling causes that he was gracefully provided with by God Almighty.

Key: the subtle meaning of this sura can be best tapped into by knowing the reason behind its revelation (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Ishāq, al-Wāḥidī, al-Suyūṭī, *Lubāb al-Nuqūl fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, 1: 142). In a bid to discredit the Noble Messenger (ﷺ), the Qurayshites sought the help of the Jews who possessed knowledge of the Book. The Jews advised them to ask the Prophet (ﷺ) about some matters, “none knows about them except a true Messenger”, they added. Among these were: “Some youths who became notable in times of old” and: “A roving man who reached the East and West of Earth!” Sure enough, they came to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) and he told them that they should expect an answer from him by the following day. However, the revelation was delayed, because he forgot to say *in shā’ Allāh* (Allah willing), causing the Messenger (ﷺ) great distress, but also building up excitement about the expected answers. The answer was for sure much more detailed and beautifully told than what they bargained for. It not only detailed the stories of *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* and *Dhūl Qarnayn* but gave them two other stories of great significance in highlighting the purport of the message; this is a truthful Messenger bearing the Message of Truth.

Time and again, *al-Kahf* demonstrates the boundaries between Truth and falsehood, true knowledge which is based on Divine revelation and false knowledge which, at best, is based on apocryphal accounts and mere conjecture. It buttresses one’s Faith to stand up to falsehood and its trials.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿1﴾ 'All' Gratitude be to Allah⁽¹⁾
Who sent down the Book to
His servant 'Muhammad' and
allowed no crookedness therein⁽²⁾;
﴿2﴾ 'it is' straightforward⁽³⁾ to warn⁽⁴⁾

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ
وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا ۖ قِيمًا لِيُنذِرَ

1 *al-Hamdu li Allāh* is an absolute, unqualified form of expressing gratitude to God Almighty. It denotes referring to the One to Whom we are all grateful, Almighty God, with the Attribute of Perfection out of love and glorification (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Sūrat al-Kahf*). It is a glorification of God Almighty, for His favours, both hidden and perceived, as well as those which relate to religious and worldly matters. The greatest of all these favours ever is the sending down of the Qur'an to God's most honourable servant, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. al-Bayḍāwī, al-Sa'dī) because it is the cause of salvation in the eternal life, the Hereafter, and success and good living in this world (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

It is significant to note that the Qur'an begins with this phrase (as in *al-Fātiḥah*), just as it does here with the second half of the Qur'an beginning (as marked by *al-Kahf*) (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Furthermore, it is the closing declaration of affairs on the Day of Judgement: "And you shall see the angels encircling all around the Throne, hymning the praise of their Lord in gratitude; judgement shall be made between them in Truth, and it will be said: "All gratitude be to Allah, the Lord of all beings!" (39: 75)

The phrase is also a practical translation of the command found at the very last aya of the previous sura: "And say 'Muhammad': "All' Gratitude be to Allah, Who did not take a child 'for Himself', nor has He ever had a partner in 'His' Kingship, or an ally against humiliation; and exalt Him immensely!"

- 2 The Qur'an is free from diverging away from the Truth, contradictions and discrepancies, as also dissonance in its words and meanings; the news it tells is truthful and the judgements it passes are just (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr): "An Arabic Qur'an of no crookedness!" (39: 28); "Would they not contemplate the Qur'an; had it been from another 'source' besides Allah, they would have found many a discrepancy in it" (4: 82).
- 3 The adjective describing the Qur'an as *qayyiman* is translated here as "straightforward" as per the opinion of al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr and al-Shinqīṭī who say that it is the opinion of most exegetes. Yet in another sense, the word *qayyim* means caretaker/overseer and thus the opinion of al-Rāzī, Abū al-Su'ūd, Ibn 'Āshūr, that the Qur'an takes care of the well-being of God's servants in respect of both worldly and religious affairs.
- 4 "He revealed to me this Qur'an to warn you with it and whoever it reaches" (6: 19).

against a mighty mettle⁽⁵⁾ from His Own and to give the Believers, who do good deeds, the glad tidings that theirs is a comely reward⁽⁶⁾; ⁽³⁾ wherein they stay forever; ⁽⁴⁾ and to warn⁽⁷⁾ those who are of the saying: “Allah has taken ‘to Himself’ a child!”⁽⁸⁾ ⁽⁵⁾ They are not in possession of ‘the slightest’ knowledge of that neither were their forefathers⁽⁹⁾—

بِأَسَا شَدِيدًا مِّن لَّدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا
حَسَنًا ﴿٣﴾ مَلَائِكِينَ فِيهِ أَبَدًا ﴿٤﴾ وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ
قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا ﴿٥﴾ مَا لَهُم بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ
وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ

- 5 That is, a painful Divine Punishment in this life and in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Qurtubī). On the other hand, *ba'sun shadīd* (mighty mettle) is usually associated with an enemy of great might met in battle (cf. 17: 5, 27: 33 and 48: 16), thus Ibn 'Āshūr takes this to indicate an allusion that the fact that the Deniers will be trounced in battle at the hands of the Believers and that they are warned against this.
- 6 This ‘comely reward’ is Paradise (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī): “*And gives glad tidings to those who Believe and do good deeds that theirs are Gardens under which rivers flow; whenever they are provided with a fruit from it, they would say: “This is what we have been provided with before!” They have been provided with it resembling each other. For them in it are purified spouses—they will abide therein forever*” (2: 25).
- 7 Warning against threats is more likely to get people to act, thus it is repeated here (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Besides, given the stiff opposition that the Call of Faith was up against during the context of revelation, *al-Kahf* carries more warning to the Deniers than glad tidings to the Believers.
- 8 Given the context of revelation, the ones meant here are the pagan Makkan Arabs who were widely known for saying that the angels were God's daughters (as found in 17: 40; cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). But this could also refer to the Jews, for their saying that Ezra is the son of God (cf. 9: 30), and warns them for their assisting the Makkans in asking the Noble Prophet about the news of the Companions of the Cave and the Two-Horned King in their quest to discredit him (cf. cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 9 False knowledge based on heresy and whimsical thinking is exposed for what it is right at the outset of the sura. What follows is a fuller exposure of the fragility of their self-claimed knowledge: “*Verily, they found their forefathers have gone astray *and so they rush after their footsteps!*” (37: 69-70); “*And their saying ‘boastfully’: “We have killed the Messiah, ‘Īsā ‘Jesus’, son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allah”, they neither killed him nor did they crucify him, but it was only made to appear like so to them.*”

grave indeed is the word that comes out of their mouths; they say nothing but 'sheer' lying!⁽¹⁰⁾ ﴿6﴾ Would you then 'Muhammad' waste your life away after them in sorrow⁽¹¹⁾, should they not Believe in this discourse!⁽¹²⁾

﴿7﴾ ⁽¹³⁾Verily We made whatever is on Earth an adornment for it⁽¹⁴⁾

كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِنْ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا ﴿٦﴾ فَلَعَلَّكَ بِخُصْمِكَ عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا ﴿٧﴾

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَهَا

Indeed those who differed regarding him are 'extremely' doubtful about him; they have no 'real' knowledge about him; they are only following guesses. Certainly they did not kill him!" (4: 157)

- 10 The graveness of this single most lie stems from the fact that it is based on absolute, mere conjectural knowledge, having no evidence, neither intellectual nor scriptural, whatsoever to it, and that it is against none other than God Almighty Himself; to Whom such a lie, either wittingly or otherwise, ascribes imperfection. Having a child entails partaking in Godship, the need for a wife to fulfil emotional and bodily functions with, and likeness to His creation who stand in need of offspring. Thus doing, they do not really realize the solemnity of their fallacious claim: *"And they say: "The Most Merciful has taken 'for Himself' a child! *indeed you have brought forth a horrendous thing, *whereby the skies are almost torn, the ground is split asunder, and the mountains fall in ruins *that they ascribe a child to the Most Merciful!" (19: 88-91).*
- 11 The Noble Messenger (ﷺ) was greatly distressed by the obduracy and Denial of his own people of his Message, to the extent of almost wasting himself away in the process (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Kathīr): *"And what of one, the evil of whose deeds has been made to seem fair to him, such that he thinks it beautiful? Truly Allah leads astray whomsoever He wills and guides whomsoever He wills; so let not your soul be expended in regrets over them—truly Allah knows that which they do" (35: 8).*
- 12 *al-Ḥadīth* (the discourse) is the Qur'an (cf. al-Sa'dī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar, al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 13 This fact is stated here to soothe the state of mind of the Noble Messenger (ﷺ); the Earth was created to be an abode of tests and trials to see who does good and who does not. It is natural that some people will fare worse than others in this regard. So let no one grieve over not being able to guide these (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Biqā'ī, Naẓm al-Durar*): *"He is the One Who created the Heavens and Earth in six days – while His Throne had been over Water – to test you, whom of you does better" (11: 7).*
- 14 Life is a test and the world is a place of great trial. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: *"Life is 'alluringly' lush green. Allah*

so that We may test them (people) as to who of them does better deeds⁽¹⁵⁾; ⁽⁸⁾ We shall be making whatever is on it⁽¹⁶⁾ a wasteland⁽¹⁷⁾.

لَتَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ﴿٧﴾ وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ
مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا ﴿٨﴾

⁽⁹⁾ (18) Or did you think 'Muhammad' that the companions of the cave and the inscription⁽¹⁹⁾ were, of 'all'

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ
كَانُوا مِن

will instate you as successors in it and will see how you fare. So beware of the worldly life!" (Muslim: 2742)

- 15 "Then We made you successors in the land after them, so that We may see how you fare" (10: 14).
- 16 One very important feature of this sura is that it lays special emphasis on the very transient nature of life in this world. The message is that a person's quest in it should not solely be seeking after its gains and adornment, but rather to invest in it for what comes after death (cf. Aya: 28, the moral of the story of the two fellows as in Ayas 45-46, and 103-105): "Indeed the example of the worldly life is nothing more than water that We send down from the sky; soon it gets mixed in the plants of the ground, the kind that people and animals consume, until when the land assumes its ornament and beautifies itself and its owners become sure that they are able over it, 'there' comes upon it Our Command at night or in the morning and We make it mowed as if it did not thrive 'only' yesterday—thus We detail the Signs for people who ponder!" (10: 24)
- 17 *Ṣa'īdan juruzan* (wasteland) has two parts: the noun *ṣa'īd* which means a dusty flat expanse of land and the adjective *juruz* which means arid but originally means that its herbage has been mowed down (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).
- 18 After the preceding, tone-setting preamble, now comes the anxiously awaited answer. It begins with a note on the story that will shortly be narrated only showing, though made so significant by the Arabs and the Jews who asked about it, that it is not of great consequence compared to the many other Divine Signs (the creation of the Heavens and Earth, the alternation of day and night, the subjection of the sun, the moon and the planets, bringing the dead to life, to name a few) to which people are willingly heedless (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr). This passage gives a brief interest-building synopsis of the story, highlighting some significant aspects of it, only to be told in detail in the next passages where we will shed light on them.
- 19 *al-Raqīm* (translated here as the inscription) as it derives from the act of inscribing and writing (*yarqumu*). Exegetes have different views as to its nature. Some think it was a book the youths had in which they wrote the dictates of their religion or who they were and why they fled to the cave

Our Signs, 'especially' wondrous! ﴿10﴾ 'Mention' When the youths sought refuge in the cave then said: "Our Lord! Bestow Mercy of Your Own on us⁽²⁰⁾ and make success⁽²¹⁾ the outcome of this matter of ours". ﴿11﴾ Then We sealed their ears⁽²²⁾ in the cave 'for many' years numbered. ﴿12﴾ Then We brought them to life⁽²³⁾, so that

ءَايَاتِنَا عَجَبًا ﴿٩﴾ إِذْ أَوْى الْفَتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ
فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ
لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا ﴿١٠﴾ فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَى آذَانِهِم
فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا ﴿١١﴾ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاَهُمْ

(cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr); or the name of the mountain in which their cave was, or the valley in which this mountain was or the village from which they fled (cf. Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī).

- 20 The 'mercy' (*rahmah*) they asked God for is of a general purport (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr). Whoever God bestows mercy upon is given all that is good and spared all that is evil. But some exegetes give it a more specific meaning; to some, it is forgiveness, security and being delivered from enemies (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Ras'anī, al-Shawkānī, al-Qāsimī). Others limit it to forgiveness and provision (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Wāḥidī). Ibn 'Āshūr explains: "They asked for a specific kind of plentiful mercy while in a state of expecting the opposite. They intended to safeguard their religion from trials, so that they might not in their flight experience hardship or pain, and they would not be humiliated and set up as an example by the enemies of their religion".
- 21 *Rashadan* (translated here as success) is a semantically complex word. Originally it derives from *al-rushd* (guidedness) which is the opposite of digression and being stray (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Exegetes, however, give it a greatly detailed meaning. This whereby the youths asked God Almighty for a means and affairs of which the end is firmness on the path to the Truth, being spared from the Associates, gaining useful knowledge and acting upon it, so that their religious and worldly affairs would be on the right side (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 22 Their ears are specifically mentioned because the sense of hearing above and beyond any other sense is the one that spoils sleep most. If done in perfect circumstances, rarely is sleep disturbed by a cause other than noise (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah).
- 23 The expression *ba'athnāhum* (lit. We resurrected them) is employed because sleep is a kind of death (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Sūrat al-Kahf*): "He is the One Who terminates your 'lives' at night and knows what you earn during the day, then He sets you off again during it 'the day' so that a specified term comes to an end". (6: 60)

We may Know who of the two parties⁽²⁴⁾ is closer to getting right the duration of their stay.

لَتَعْلَمَنَّ أَيُّ الْحِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَىٰ لِمَا لَبِثُوا
 ﴿١٣﴾

﴿13﴾ ⁽²⁵⁾We⁽²⁶⁾ shall recount to you ‘Muhammad’ their notable news with the Truth. They were ‘few’ youths who ‘truly’ Believed in their Lord and We increased them in guidedness⁽²⁷⁾.

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُم بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ
 ءَامَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدَّوْنَاهُمْ هُدًى ﴿١٣﴾

- 24 Given its great length, the duration of their stay in the cave has proven somewhat of an issue of contention among the people of their town after they discovered them (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr). But it is also thought that these ‘two parties’ were the youths themselves when they asked about the duration of their stay right after they woke up (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*). Yet, al-Qurṭubī sees that it is the opinion of most exegetes that these two were the youths themselves on the one hand and the people of their town on the other.

It remains that the finer details of their story are not known for sure as there exist many versions of it (cf. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “Seven Sleepers of Ephesus”) and the Qur’an leaves some of these out since they only lead to beclouding contention rather than illuminating knowledge. Further, it is of little moral use to get into these debates besides what God Almighty says in His Book as found in this sura. The Noble Messenger (ﷺ) himself is told (Aya 22 below) not to be dragged into these details: “Do not ‘Muhammad’ argue ‘with anyone’ in their regard, except cursorily. Do not ‘neither’ seek the counsel from any of those about them.”

Although this is the most significant part of their story and thanks to which they have been immortalized in history, this one issue of the duration of their stay (which is so precisely calculated in the Qur’an as we will come in see in Aya 25 below; refer also to how many the youth were) goes on to show how little people know and how groundless their knowledge would be if they were left to their own means, to discern something as simple as dates and durations (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr), especially of the things and beings that we find only records of and can find no traces of which or whom.

- 25 Over the next passages comes a useful detailing of the true account of their story which is based on real knowledge as opposed to the much guesswork that surrounds their story (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 26 The Noble Messenger (ﷺ) is told the truthful account of their news by none other than God Almighty, the Omniscient, Himself (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’idī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 27 This was the immediate reward for their firm Faith in God. They were also given greater Faith, viz. the ability to act upon the Truth and do good (cf. al-Ṭabarī,

﴿14﴾ We further made their hearts resolute⁽²⁸⁾, as they rose up⁽²⁹⁾ and said: “Our Lord is ‘none but’ the Lord of the Heavens and Earth! We shall not supplicate to any ‘god’ besides Him; otherwise our utterance would be ‘preposterously’ too far away ‘from the Truth’!”⁽³⁰⁾

﴿15﴾ “These are our folks ‘who’⁽³¹⁾ took ‘gods’ besides Him. Would they not then bring forth a compelling authority in their regard. Who then is more wrong than he who fabricates lies against Allah!”

﴿16﴾ “Since you have pulled yourselves away from them and what they worship other than Allah, seek refuge then in ⁽³²⁾the cave⁽³³⁾;

وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا
رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ لَنْ نَدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ
اِلٰهًا لَقَدْ قُلْنَا اِذَا شَطَطًا ﴿١٤﴾ هٰؤُلَاءِ قَوْمُنَا
اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ ءِاِلٰهَةً لَّوْلَا يَأْتُوْنَ عَلَيْهِمُ
بِسُلْطٰنٍ بَيِّنٍ فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ
كَذٰبًا ﴿١٥﴾

وَإِذْ اَعْرَضْتُمْوَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ اِلَّا اللّٰهَ فَاُوْا
اِلَى الْكَهْفِ

al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī): “Those who were ‘willingly’ guided, He increased them in guidedness and bestowed their Mindfulness upon them” (47: 17).

- 28 *Rabaṭnā ‘alā qulūbihim* (lit. We tied over their hearts) is an Arabic expression denoting resoluteness and firmness (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyis al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).
- 29 They most needed these firm hearts as they rose up in the face of their people and the ruler who wielded all means of power in that society and resolutely challenged the status quo (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah).
- 30 *Shaṭatan* is an utterance that is preposterous and too far away from the Truth (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyis al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).
- 31 This either could have been said in front of the ruler or among themselves as they made up their resolution over the matter (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah).
- 32 The cave (*kahf*) is preceded with the definite article *al* (the) because it is either previously known to them as they might have worshipped God in it away from the prying eyes of their enemies, or by way of fact stating (*ta‘rīf al-ḥaqīqah*) as caves are known as places to which people run away from harm (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 33 That they chose for home such an inhabitable place as a cave, and the justification they provide for it, goes on to show how firm their Faith really was (cf. Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, *Tafsīr Āyāt min al-Qur‘ān al-Karīm*, 5: 244).

your Lord shall spread for you 'some' of His mercy, and make facile your affair⁽³⁴⁾.” ﴿17﴾ (35) And you see the sun when it rises, it angles away from their cave to the right⁽³⁶⁾ and when it sets, it draws away from them to the left⁽³⁷⁾; 'while' they being in a spacious expanse in it (the cave)⁽³⁸⁾. That is among the Signs of Allah⁽³⁹⁾;

يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيُهَيِّجَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مِرْفَقًا ﴿١٧﴾ * وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَزَاوَرُ عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا غَرَبَتْ تَقَرَّبُ إِلَيْهِمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِي فَجْوَةٍ مِنْهُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ

34 The wording of their justification of choosing the cave as shelter is context significant and further highlights the greatness of their Faith. The word *yanshuru* (meaning; spread and make spacious (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Shawkānī) is significant as caves are usually not spacious enough for a group of men (most probably seven as we will see shortly) to live in comfortably and since they do not have the usual facilities that humans fit their homes with, they were rightly hopeful that their Lord would 'make facile' (*mirfaq* is what people have use for (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*)) their affair (cf. al-Sha'rāwī).

This is not to distract us away from the general purport that their wording points out: that God Almighty 'spreads out' His Mercy thus saving their religion for them and delivering them from their people, and that He makes their living 'facile' and easy to gain (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Whoever is Mindful of Allah, He will make his affair easy for him." (65: 4).

35 What follows shows how fruitful their hope in their Lord has proven to be and how greatly He spread out His Mercy for them and made facile their affair (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr). They were provided with all the necessary means of preservation over such a great length of time as we shall momentarily see.

36 Exposure to the rays of the sun as it rises would heat and light up their cave and disturb their sleep, and over time, especially this long a period, would have had an impact on their visages and clothing (cf. al-Ṭabarī).

37 Although the meaning given here of the expression *taqriḍuhum* (it draws away from them) is the opinion of many exegetes, it is the opinion of a group of others that it means that the sun touches them when it sets and provides them and their cave with the necessary benefits of sunlight (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

38 As such they get all the air and ventilation they need to sustain them (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).

39 These just mentioned Signs testify to God Almighty's Limitless Power and Authority and how He provides for His pious servants (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Qurtubī).

(40) whoever Allah guides, then he is the 'truly' guided one⁽⁴¹⁾, but whoever He misguides, you shall not find him a guiding ally!⁽⁴²⁾ ﴿18﴾ (43) And you think them awake while they are fast asleep⁽⁴⁴⁾; We turn them 'once' to their right sides and 'once' to their left sides⁽⁴⁵⁾; and their dog extending its forepaws while at the threshold 'of the cave'. Should you peep at them, you would have surely fled away from them beating a retreat and would have surely been filled with horror of them!⁽⁴⁶⁾

مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْسِدًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ آيِقَاطًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَكَلْبُهُم بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَلَمَلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعبًا ﴿١٩﴾

- 40 Wondrous as these affairs of theirs are, being Signs of God Almighty, one has got to know the reason behind them to come to grips with them. That is that they were guided by God Almighty Himself (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 41 That these youths were all of their people who were guided and the great and firm Faith they were given is a prime example of this fact (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Khāzin, Ibn Kathīr).
- 42 Besides the fact that it states, this home truth sends a timely comforting message to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) who was greatly distressed by his people's aversion to his call (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). The message that guidance is only in the Hands of God Himself is of-repeated in the Qur'an to impart the same effect (cf. 4: 88 and 143, 7: 178 and 186, 13: 33, 17: 97, 39: 23 and 36, 40: 33, 42: 44 and 46).
- 43 This aya further highlights how God Almighty cared for and safeguarded them in their vulnerable state (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Should anyone happen on them, he would only see a band of fully awake men with a dog standing guard on them and would surely have been filled with horror over this sight (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 44 Exegetes have it that their eyes were open (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Zajjāj).
- 45 Exegetes opine that the reason for this was so that the ground did not affect their bodies (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*). It is a common medical practice nowadays to turn bed-ridden patients on their sides every few hours so that they do not get bedsores (pressure ulcers) resulting from prolonged pressure on the skin.
- 46 Fear at their sight is an important factor in their preservation so that no one would be tempted to draw close to them (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

﴿19﴾ And like so⁽⁴⁷⁾ We brought them to life so that they would question each other. One among them said: “How long for did you stay ‘asleep’?” They said: “We ‘may have’ stayed for a day or part of a day!”⁽⁴⁸⁾ ‘Then’ They said: “Your Lord knows best the duration of your stay! Send one of you with these silver coins of yours to the town⁽⁴⁹⁾. Let him find out the purest food⁽⁵⁰⁾ and get us some provision from it. Let him be gentle and let not anyone sense him!”⁽⁵¹⁾ ﴿20﴾ “Should they get the better of you, they would surely stone you or turn you back to their creed—you shall not ever prosper thereafter!”⁽⁵¹⁾

وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُوا رُبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثْتُمْ فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا أَزْكَى طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِّنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿١٩﴾ إِنَّهُمْ إِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِي مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا ﴿٢٠﴾

- 47 As amazingly norm-defying their long sleep was, their waking up after it in an intact state was equally so (cf. al- al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). When they came around to this world and its reality, where they have to fend for themselves, immediately after a three centuries-long sleep when God took great care of their well-being as we have just seen, there come worries, cares and calculations.
- 48 This answer shows how well-preserved their state was!
- 49 The one from which they fled, which was not far off (cf. al- al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 50 *Azkā ṭa‘āman* could mean either the more that they could get for their money (from *zakāh*) or, which is the more likely of the two, the purest (from *zakā*), i.e. that which is not mixed with what God prohibits (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *Adwā’ al-Bayān*).
- 51 Such is the doing of the crooked of all times. They just cannot tolerate the righteous in their midst: “*The notables among his people who waxed arrogant said: “We shall expel you, Shu‘ayb, and those who Believed with you from our town or you shall revert back to our way of life!” He said: “Even if we were detesting ‘of it!’” * “We would be fabricating ‘abominable’ lies against Allah should we revert back to your way of life when Allah delivered us from it. We would not ‘ever’ revert back to it unless*

﴿21﴾⁽⁵²⁾ And like so We made them chanced upon so that they may come to know that the promise of Allah is true and that there is no doubt about ‘the coming of the Hour⁽⁵³⁾’; ‘that⁽⁵⁴⁾ as they were disputing their affair amongst themselves. They said: “Put up some building around them⁽⁵⁵⁾; their Lord Knows best about them!”⁽⁵⁶⁾ ‘But’ Those who prevailed over their affair⁽⁵⁷⁾ said:

وَكَذَلِكَ أَغْتَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوا أَن وَعَدَ
اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذْ يَتَنَزَّعُونَ
بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِم بُيُوتًا
رَبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِمْ

Allah, our Lord, wills it so; indeed our Lord encompasses everything with ‘His’ Knowledge. On Allah we rely!” “Our Lord, decide between us and our people with the Truth—You are the best of those who decide” (7: 88-89).

- 52 As God Almighty oversaw the amazing affair of their extraordinary sleep and their waking up after it in an intact state, He made sure that people would come to see them so that they might come to realize God’s Ability over bringing the dead to life, and to which the bringing about to life of these long-considered dead youths is akin (cf. al- al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn al-Jawzī).
- 53 Realizing the Truth of the Day of Judgement is the moral of the story (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*Verily the Hour is surely coming; there is no doubt about it, but most people Believe not!*” (40: 59)
- 54 They were made to find them out at a juncture when people started hotly disputing resurrection among themselves, i.e. this great affair of theirs; some believing in it while others denied it (cf. al- al-Ṭabarī, al-Ras‘anī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, Ibn al-Sa‘dī). It is also said that ‘the affair’ they disputed over was that of the youths themselves (cf. Ibn Juzayy, Ibn ‘Āshūr, Ibn ‘Uthaymīn).
- 55 They intended to afford them a dignified burial in their cave and hide them away from the gazing eye of the curious (cf. al-Wāḥidī, al-Ras‘anī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 56 It is said that these were the concluding words meant to put an end to the disputes that arose after finding them when people could not agree as to who they exactly were, how many they were and how long they had stayed; or that these are the Words of God Almighty aimed at those who waddle in their affair not having any evidence as to what they hold to be true about them (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 57 That is, their heads and leaders who have the final say (cf. al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

“We shall have a place of prostration put up above them!”
 (58) They would say: “They are Three with their dog as their fourth!” And they say: “They are Five with their dog as their sixth!” – merely shooting in the dark⁽⁵⁹⁾ – And they say: “They are Seven with their dog as their eighth!”⁽⁶⁰⁾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “My Lord Knows best their number!”⁽⁶¹⁾ None know ‘for sure’

لَتَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ مَسْجِدًا ۖ سَيَقُولُونَ
 ثَلَاثَةٌ رَّابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ
 سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ
 سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُل رَّبِّي أَعْلَمُ
 بِعَدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ

That the ones who ruled over the matter and had their way are this kind of people goes to show that having places of worship over graves is an act resultant of force and coercion and not that of guidance based on Divine revelation (cf. Ibn Rajab, *Fath al-Bārī*, 2: 397).

- 58 The much surmising that ensued from the story of these youths is highlighted here with the single most piece of advice not to engage in such disputes which are not based on true knowledge, but rather to take heed of their example and try to emulate it (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
 It is not exactly stated as to who these disputants were, but mostly they are thought to be the contemporaries of the Noble Messenger (ﷺ), especially the people of the Torah who differed on their number and/or the Christians who came to the Messenger from Najran; the Jacobites (note: the Syrian Orthodox Church of Jacob Baradaeus) said they were three with their dog as their fourth and the Nestorians said that they were five and their dog being their sixth, whereas the Muslims said they were seven and their dog was their eighth (cf. al-Qurtubī, al-Bayḍāwī, Abū al-Su‘ūd).
- 59 Groundless knowledge is merely shooting in the dark (*rajman bi al-ghayb*, lit. shooting at what is hidden from the eyesight (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)); it hardly hits the target and if it does, it does so by mere chance (cf. Ibn Kathīr).
- 60 Most exegetes agree that this is the right number since God Almighty did not comment on this number as He did with the previous two (being merely ‘shooting in the dark’) (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Ras‘anī).
 But it is left open so that people get used to not delving into what is of next to no use to them (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 61 God, the Knower of the Unseen, perfectly Knows for sure their exact number. His Knowledge is Perfect and far away from that which is based on mere conjecture and shooting in the dark, which may or may not hit the truth (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

their number but a few⁽⁶²⁾. Do not 'Muhammad' argue 'with anyone' in their regard, except cursorily⁽⁶³⁾. Do not 'neither' seek the counsel from any of those⁽⁶⁴⁾ about them. ^{﴿23﴾} Say not 'Muhammad' about anything: "I shall do that tomorrow!"⁽⁶⁵⁾ ^{﴿24﴾} Except that your Lord wills 'it so'. ⁽⁶⁶⁾Remember your Lord when you forget and say:

إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ۖ فَلَا تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَهَرَ
وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا ۖ وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ
لِشَيْءٍ إِيَّائِي فَاعِلٌ ذَلِكَ عَدَا ۖ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ
اللَّهُ ۖ وَأَذْكَرٌ رَبُّكَ إِذْ أَنْسَيْتَ وَقُلْ

- 62 Those few who have come to know their exact number come to it only through revelation (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). al-Shawkānī opines that this knowledge is not limited to their number but includes who they were.
- 63 Exegetes hold different opinions as to the exact nature of this *mir'ā'an zāhīran* (lit. plain argument) but they all boil down to roughly the same thing. Some say that it means limited to what the Qur'an says (cf. al-Wāhīdī, *al-Basīṭ*), others hold that the argument should be of an irrefutable nature which does not take long to be agreed upon, for example, God Knows best their number (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr), yet others deem it to mean that it should be argued lightly not heatedly since no great benefit is to be gained from the details being contested over (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Sūrat al-Kahf*). As with whom he is only to argue cursorily, these were most likely to be the pagans either based on their prompting by the people of the Book or out of their own accord (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Since the Qur'an thwarted their plan by providing this account they naturally felt the urge to find fault with it.
- 64 Most exegetes hold that these are the People of the Book (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhīdī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Sa'dī). This because their knowledge is only based on guesswork and not on infallible revelation (cf. Ibn Kathīr).
- 65 Exegetes agree that reference here is made to the Noble Messenger's reply to the Makkan pagans when they asked him about the Soul, the Companions of the Cave and the Two-Horned Sovereign. He replied to them that he would answer their queries tomorrow but without saying *in shā' Allāh* (God willing) (cf. Introduction to this sura; Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, 2: 403). The future is in God's hands Alone and none can control it besides Him and none has a will over it without God's permission (cf. al-Sa'dī): "You 'people' cannot will none except that 'which' Allah, the Lord of all beings Wills." (81: 29)
- 66 As soon as one remembers not saying *in shā' Allāh* about doing a future action, one should say it. It is also taken to mean that when one forgets something, one should mention God as mentioning Him is a reason for remembering things (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī).

“May my Lord well direct me to what is nearer to guidedness than this!” (67) They remained in their cave for three hundred years and ‘another’ nine more added to them (68). (69) Say ‘Muhammad’: “Allah Knows best the duration of their stay. To Him belongs the Unseen in the Heavens and Earth!” How Perfect His Sight and how Perfect His Hearing are! (70) They have no ally besides Him (71); He shares not His Decree with anyone! (72)

عَسَىٰ أَن يَهْدِيَنِّي رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِن هَذَا رَشَدًا ﴿٦٧﴾
 وَلَبِئْسَ أُولَٰئِكَ كَهْفُهُمْ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِينَ
 وَازْدَادُوا تِسْعًا ﴿٦٨﴾ قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوا
 لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَبْصِرْ بِهِ
 وَأَسْمِعْ مَا لَهُمْ مِّن دُونِهِ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلَا
 يُشْرِكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا ﴿٦٩﴾

- 67 This nurturing interposition aside, God Almighty directs His Noble Messenger (ﷺ) to what is ‘nearer to guidedness’ by telling him in very precise terms the duration of their stay. This duration of their stay is of more significance than their number which gave rise to much argument (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 68 The duration of their stay is given in both the solar calendar (300 years) and the lunar calendar (300 and nine more years) (cf. al-Māwardī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Biqā’ī, al-Shinqīṭī). The reason behind stating the date in the two calendars is to leave no doubt whatsoever in the minds of any party who use one or the other of these two where this piece of information comes from (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Such is precise knowledge, based on Divine revelation, from that which is a far cry from it and which is based on jabbing in the dark.
- 69 The One Who tells us the exact duration of their stay is none other than God Almighty, the Knower of the Unseen: “*He ‘Allah’ has the keys of the Unseen, only He knows them. He knows ‘all’ what is there in the land and sea; not a leaf that falls without Him knowing about it, not a seed in the ‘deepest recess of the’ darkness of Earth, not a thing moist nor dry except ‘it’ being in a clarifying book*” (6: 59).
- 70 Nothing escapes God’s Sight and Hearing (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī): “*Neither is a mote’s weight – nor smaller or greater – stashed away from your Lord in Earth nor in the sky without it being in a clarifying book*” (10: 61).
- 71 God Almighty runs the affairs of all His creation with great care, as much as He cared for the Companions of the Cave. He delegates this to none (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 72 He shares His Decree over His creation and runs their affairs with none. He creates, sets destinations and rules over His creation unchecked (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī).

﴿27﴾ (73) Recite 'Muhammad' what has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord; there is no changing His Words. You shall find no Shelter besides Him! (74) ﴿28﴾ Constrain yourself in patience with those who pray to their Lord early and late in the day seeking 'only' His Face (75); do not 'neither' avert your eyes from them (76) seeking 'out' the

وَأَتْلُ مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ
لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۚ وَلَنْ يَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ
مُلْتَحِدًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ
رَبَّهُمْ بِالْعَدْوَىٰ وَالْعَيْتِ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ
وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ

73 The following are a string of reflective moralizing passages, up to the story of Moses and al-Khidr (عليه السلام), carrying a number of messages to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ), the Believers around him, and crucially to the heedless Deniers so that they come to heed the Message.

The first of these is to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) to deliver the Message as it is, heeding not the Deniers who incessantly kept on asking not only for things to be explained in it (like the story of the Companions of the Cave and the Two-Horned Sovereign), but also for it to be altered (cf. 17: 73 and 10: 15) so as to praise their so-called gods (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). This naturally irked the Messenger (ﷺ) who was keen on them becoming Muslims, even though the Call to Faith had almost met a dead-end at that juncture, so God tells him to 'constrain himself in patience' with the humble but true Believers, and not to listen to the haughty Deniers or their demands about the Message.

74 There is no escaping God's Punishment, should the Message not be delivered, recited and followed as it is (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "*O Messenger, convey what came down to you from your Lord 'fully', but if you do not do 'that', then you would have failed to deliver His Message; Allah will 'certainly' shield you from people!*" (5: 67)

75 The fact that they are busy with mentioning and praying to their Lord at these two busiest times of the day underlines how devoted they were (cf. Abū Ḥayyān): "*Only Allah has a decision; He declares the Truth—He is the best of adjudicators*" (6: 57).

76 In these early days, the ones who sincerely Believed were mostly from among the underprivileged societal denominations, paupers and slaves, so out of sheer egotism when those belonging to the upper echelons of society wanted to sit with the Prophet they disdainfully demanded these 'others' be sent away. Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه) said: "We were with the Prophet (ﷺ), six of us, when the Associators said to him: "Send these away, lest they get overfamiliar with us!" He continued: "There were me, 'Abdullāh' Ibn Mas'ūd, a man from 'the clan of' Hudhayl, Bilāl 'Ibn Rabāh' and

adornment of the worldly life⁽⁷⁷⁾; and do not obey whoever We made his heart ignorant of Our remembrance⁽⁷⁸⁾ thus followed his vain desires⁽⁷⁹⁾ and 'hence all' his affairs are in shambles⁽⁸⁰⁾.
 ﴿29﴾ (81) Say 'Muhammad': "This is"

تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تَطَّعَ مِنْ
 أَعْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ
 أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَقُلْ

another two men whom I do not know their names. Something 'of sorts' occurred to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and then Allah sent down: "Do not 'Muhammad' turn away those who pray to their Lord early and late in the day'" (Muslim: 2413).

Naturally, the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) did not want to do that but God told him against it as is usually the case with Divine teaching (cf. al-Qurṭubī). Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) said: "That I stay with a group of people mentioning Allah from the Fajr Prayer until the sun shines is worthier to me than emancipating four of the 'noble' sons of Ishmael. That I stay with a group of people mentioning Allah from the Asr Prayer until the sun sets is worthier to me than manumitting four 'slaves'" (Abū Dāwūd: 3667).

- 77 "Thus Muhammad' Do not linger your eyes on what We have made parties of them enjoy, do not feel sad over them and lower your wing for the Believers" (15: 88); "And do not linger your eyes to what We have given parties of them to enjoy – the flower of the worldly life – that We may test them therein; the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring" (20: 131).
- 78 Such a person ignored remembering God Almighty so God punished him by making him all the more ignorant (cf. al-Sa'dī): "So turn away from whoever has shunned Our Reminder, only seeking the 'fleeting' life of this world" (53: 29).
- 79 By choosing Denial, idolatry and sinning over Believing, monotheism and dutifulness (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Shawkānī).
- 80 *Furuṭan* (in shambles) originates from *al-ifrāt* which means going to excess without check (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). That is in all his affairs he exceeds proportionate moderation. Thus, he goes over the Truth leaving it behind his back and his life is at a loss (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Biqā'ī, al-Shinqīṭī).
- 81 Now that this message has been delivered to the Noble Messenger (ﷺ), he is told to unequivocally declare to the Deniers, in the face of their demands, that he would unyieldingly deliver the Message as it is. They are either to Believe or Deny: it is up to them; they should not expect compromises from his side (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

the Truth from your Lord⁽⁸²⁾. Whoever wishes, let him Believe and whoever wishes, let him Deny!”⁽⁸³⁾ We have especially prepared a Fire for the unjust⁽⁸⁴⁾, whose wall closes in on them and if they shout out for help, they will be helped with water; a smoldering, putrid fluid⁽⁸⁵⁾ that sears faces—miserable indeed is the drink and sordid indeed is the retreat!⁽⁸⁶⁾

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ
فَلْيُكْفُرْ إِنَّا أَعَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهَا
سُرَادِقُهَا وَإِنْ يَسْتَعِينُوا يَعْثُبُوا بِمَاءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ
يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهُ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ وَسَاءَتْ
مُرْتَقَاً ﴿٢٩﴾

﴿30﴾⁽⁸⁷⁾ Verily, ‘as for’ those who have Believed and done good deeds, We indeed do not render useless the reward of he who does well.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا
لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا ﴿٣٠﴾

- 82 That Truth is from God Almighty Himself nonetheless. So no one should expect it to be altered or changed to accommodate their demands (cf. al-Shawkānī).
- 83 Those who choose Denial over Believing will have Hellfire as their final destination (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). So that they need to choose carefully (Abū Ḥayyān).
- 84 “Indeed the Deniers are the unjust ones!” (2: 254)
- 85 *al-Muhl* is generic for molten materials. It could be copper, lead or any such mineral which has reached its maximum temperature and/or murky oil (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sijistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). This is what they get for a drink to quench their raging thirst within Hell’s fire and this for choosing Denial over Belief!
- 86 “Verily, how evil an abode and a station!” (25: 66)
- 87 At the very other end of the extreme are the Believers, regaling like pampered kings in Paradise. The idolaters used to disdain these folk as riff-raff claiming that because of them they would never come to Believe. “Their Lord responded to them that: “I shall never render useless the deeds of any doer of you, male or female; you are each other’s other part. Those who migrated, were expelled from their lands, persecuted in My cause, fought and got killed, I shall expunge their misdeeds and admit them into Gardens under which rivers flow;” a reward from Allah—indeed with Allah is the best of rewards” (3: 195).

﴿31﴾⁽⁸⁸⁾ Those for whom are Gardens of Eternity⁽⁸⁹⁾; rivers running underneath them. Therein they are adorned with golden bracelets and put on green⁽⁹⁰⁾ robes of *sundus* (fine silk) and *istabraq* (brocade)⁽⁹¹⁾ while reclining⁽⁹²⁾ therein on divans—awesome indeed is the prize and splendid indeed is the retreat!⁽⁹³⁾

أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ
الْأَنْهَارُ يُجِئُونَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ
وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ
مُتَّكِنِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ وَحَسُنَتْ
مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿٣١﴾

- 88 The following is a detailing of their reward: their abode, their garments and adornments and their regal reclining (cf. al-Rāzī). While the abode of the Deniers is Hellfire, theirs are Gardens of Eternity; while the Deniers are served with *muhl*, they have whole rivers running under them; while the Deniers burn in Hell, they regale in silk garments and wear gold bracelets (cf. Abū Hayyān): “Allah promised the Believers, male and female, Gardens under which rivers flow forever they abide therein and comely abodes in Gardens of Eternity, but a Pleasure from Allah is ‘ever’ greater; that is ‘truly’ the great triumph!” (9: 72)
- 89 *Jannāt ‘Adn* (lit. Gardens of Eternal Residence) (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “In the Gardens of Eternity, ‘there are’ two gardens. Their utensils and all that is there is made of silver; ‘and another’ two gardens their utensils and all that is there is made of gold. Nothing keeps its dwellers from seeing their Lord except the Mantle of Loftiness on His Face” (al-Bukhārī: 4878, Muslim: 180).
- 90 The colour green has special significance since Arabs considered it an emblem of kings (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “If you were made to see you would see there great pampering and kingship; *on them are garments of green *sundus* and *istabraq*; they are adorned with silver bracelets and their Lord gives them especially pure drink!” (76: 20-21)
- 91 They put on both at the same time: fine silk next to their skin to shield them against the roughness of the gold-threaded brocade, which is their outer garment (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 92 The reclining posture is symbolic of comfort and luxury (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr, Ibn ‘Uthaymīn). It is the favorite poise of kings who are in possession of total indulgence and at their utmost comfort (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 93 The word ‘retreat’ (*murtafaq*) is employed to drum up the contrasting picture being drawn here between the ‘sordid retreat’ of the haughty Deniers (cf. Aya 27 above) and the ‘splendid retreat’ of the humble Believers (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿32﴾ (94) Set 'Muhammad' for them⁽⁹⁵⁾ as example two men⁽⁹⁶⁾. For one of them We provided two vineyards, surrounded them with palm trees, provided 'various' plants between them; ﴿33﴾ –both vineyards yielded its harvest, holding back none of it – and We sent gushing a river 'running' through them!⁽⁹⁷⁾ ﴿34﴾ He had 'a great harvest of' fruits as he⁽⁹⁸⁾ said to his fellow⁽⁹⁹⁾ while arguing⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ with him: "I am of a greater wealth and summoning⁽¹⁰¹⁾ than you!"

﴿٣٢﴾ وَأَصْرَبْنَا لَهُمْ مَثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَحَفَفْنَاهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زُرْعًا ﴿٣٣﴾ كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ آتَتْ أُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا وَفَجَّرْنَا خِلْفَهُمَا نَهْرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا ﴿٣٥﴾

- 94 The following is a morally charged, potent parable of the two parties who stand at both ends of the divide: the have-it-all Deniers and the have-not Believers. Their perception of life could not be more different (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Marāghī).
- 95 That is, the haughty Deniers who looked down on the dedicated Believers and demanded that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) expel them should he want to have them sit and listen to him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Arafah, al-Sa' dī).
- 96 Exegetes differed about these two men, whether they were real or figurative (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī). However, be they real or figurative the moral of the story and how it is employed in the Qur'an is what one should bring to mind (cf. al-Sa' dī).
- 97 If imagined correctly this would portray a very beautiful landscape (cf. al-Zajjāj, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa I'rābuhu*, 284). One that is orderly, pleasing to the eye and replete with plentiful water, greenery and myriad edibles; grapes, palm dates and vegetables (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah).
- 98 This affluent person stands for the arrogant Deniers of Makkah while his fellow stands for the few true Believers who were around the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) at that time (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī).
- 99 *Ṣāhibuhu* is the person with whom he is mentioned or the contending other (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr); thus, it is translated here as fellow not friend which is what comes to mind when the word *ṣāhib* is mentioned.
- 100 That their interaction is called 'argument' (*muḥāwarah*) shows that he was earlier admonished by his fellow against leading a heathen life. To this he responded with this snobbish reply, meant at belittling his adversary (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 101 That is having more helpers (children, clan, servants and followers) who would come to his aid when summoned at times of need (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī).

﴿35﴾ He entered his garden⁽¹⁰²⁾ – being unjust to himself⁽¹⁰³⁾ – and said: “I believe not that this⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ shall ever decay!” ﴿36﴾ “And I think not that the Hour is ever coming. Shall I ever ‘perchance’ be returned to my Lord, mine shall be a better rebound!”⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ ﴿37﴾ His fellow said while arguing with him: “Did you Deny your Lord Who created you from dust, then from a drop, them perfectly formed you into a man!”⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ
أَنْ تَبِيدَ هَذِهِ أَبَدًا ﴿٣٥﴾ وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً
وَلَئِنْ رُجِدْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا
مُنْقَلِبًا ﴿٣٦﴾ قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ
أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مَّاءٍ
نُّظْفَةً ثُمَّ سَوَّكَ رَجُلًا ﴿٣٧﴾

102 That is, accompanying his fellow to brag all the more about his fortunate lot in life and hence the following conversation ensued (cf. al-Shawkānī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

103 By Denying, waxing arrogance, haughtiness and disbelieving in resurrection and the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr). Arrogance blinds the eye from seeing the Truth for what it is and, thus, is equal to self-injustice.

104 Most exegetes see that he could have been alluding here to his garden (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī) out of great pride, but others observe that he could have been referring to the world and life itself and, thus, straight away denying the Hereafter (cf. al-Wāhidī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Juzayy).

105 Although not believing in the Hereafter altogether, in his mind he thought should there be a tiny possibility of it happening, based on his wrongful calculation of believing that he was only honoured in this life because God loved him, he projected his arrogance onto it. Hence he fell into the fallacy that could he ever be returned to Him, he should only expect greater honouring (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

Although acknowledging this reading, al-Sa’dī holds it that he only said so deridingly, which all the more highlights the extent of his rebelliousness.

106 This is a detailed reply entailing the phases of creation: the father of humanity, Adam, was created from lowly dust (cf. 32: 7), and then his offspring spurted out from a mere sperm drop, ‘despised water’ (cf. 32: 8), and only for them to be formed into fully-fledged human beings with unlimited resources and capabilities.

Such a magnificent creation is evidence enough that the One Who created him in the first place is able over the recreation that he denies (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr), and that his creation is not all in vain: “*Did you think then We had created you in vain, and that you would not be brought back to Us!*” (23: 115)

﴿38﴾ “But I ‘declare that’ He is Allah, my Lord and I shall not Associate any with my Lord!”⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ ﴿39﴾ “‘Why’ Wouldn’t you, when you enter your garden, say: “‘This is’ What Allah willed⁽¹⁰⁸⁾. There is no power except through Allah!”⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Or did you see me below you in wealth and children?”⁽¹¹⁰⁾ ﴿40﴾⁽¹¹¹⁾ “May my Lord well give me what is better than your garden and send on it arrows⁽¹¹²⁾ from the sky and it

لَكِنَّمَا هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ﴿٣٨﴾
 وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتِكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ
 لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِن تَرِنَا أَقْلَ مِنْكَ مَالًا
 وَوَلَدًا ﴿٣٩﴾ فَعَسَى رَبِّي أَنْ يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ
 وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ

al-Rāzī indicates that the allusion to him being formed into ‘a man’ points out that his creation was not in vain and that he, as all humans are, was created for the sole purpose of worshipping God Almighty, and thus they are endowed with the ability to carry out this duty. For this great endowment, they need to thank Him not deny Him so insolently.

107 None is worthy of worship except God, the Beneficent Nurturer (*rabb*) of creation (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

108 That is, the creation of this garden is by the Will of God, the Benefactor to whom all will be grateful (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr).

109 That is, the power which I have over the creation, maintenance and nurturing of the gardens comes only from God Almighty (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Qurtubī, al-Bayḍawī).

Be it a mere utterance, this statement is of great significance because it is an outward manifestation that translates the Faith of the heart. Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of God (ﷺ) said: “O ‘Abdullāh Ibn Qays! Shall I not teach you a word which is one of the treasures of Paradise? ‘It is’ There is no ability or power except through Allah (*lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi Allāh*)!” (al-Bukhārī: 6610; Muslim: 2704).

110 Although his fellow Denier treated him with great contempt, seeing him less well-to-do and having fewer children, this greatly pious fellow did not take it personally and only answered his first slight at the beginning of their interaction (cf. Aya 34 above) last and dealt with the most serious issue of Denial first (cf. al-Shawkānī).

111 Here, feeling the pinch of such a demeaning insult, he prayed in high hopes that God Almighty would reverse their lots so that both the reasons for insult and arrogance would be removed (cf. al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, *Sūrat al-Kahf*).

112 *Husbān* (translated here as arrows) in this meaning occurs only here in the Qur’an. As such it means projectiles being sent on the garden, be

becomes a slippery⁽¹¹³⁾ wasteland!”
 ﴿41﴾ “Or its water⁽¹¹⁴⁾ seeps deep
 in the ground so that you cannot
 ever retrieve it!”

فَتُصْبِحُ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا ۗ أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَاؤُهَا غَوْرًا
 فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ رَطْبًا ۗ ﴿٤١﴾

﴿42﴾ ⁽¹¹⁵⁾His fruits were surrounded
 from all sides⁽¹¹⁶⁾ and he got to
 turning his palms upwards and
 downwards in despair⁽¹¹⁷⁾ over

وَأَحِيطَ بِشَمْرِهِ ۗ فَاصْبِحْ يَوْمَئِذٍ كَفَّةٍ

they stones or fire or any form of punishment. It also means short arrows (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qurʿān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). The nature of these ‘arrows’ was not specified, whether delivered as heavy rain, a thunderbolt, locusts, hail or fire (cf. al-Rasʿanī).

It is noteworthy to consider the other meaning of the word *ḥusbān* which occurs twice in the Qurʿān: 6: 96 and 55: 5; meaning in precise calculation. This other meaning could also be applied to this occurrence (cf. Ibn ʿĀshūr). This whereby he precisely calculated affliction, specifically sent on this Denier’s garden showed him that the punishment was not of a general nature but precisely calculated for him out of all those around him to let him know for certain that it occurred because of his Denial (cf. al-Shaʿrāwī).

- 113 He prayed that his adversary would find no use for this garden, after it had been so destroyed, even for taking a stroll through (cf. al-Shaʿrāwī).
- 114 Water is life and without it the garden would go to rack and ruin all the same.
- 115 The hopes and prayers of the Believer came to be fulfilled and those of the Denier were only denied (cf. al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 116 Ruination encompassed all his vegetation (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Saʿdī). He was punished like so not merely because of his Denial. God Almighty could make Deniers enjoy life and bask in all its glory as long as they exist on Earth, but this one transgressed and used his wealth and money as cause for despising this poor Believer. Since he bragged about these blessings of his and used them to reject the Promise of God, of resurrection and the Hereafter, he deserved the punishment of being deprived of these very blessings. This example poses a very important moral lesson to the Makkan Associators who took their blessings as a means for disdaining from listening to the Call of Faith because such a situation would make them mix with those whom they considered inferior and hence they only asked the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) to expel them (cf. Ibn ʿĀshūr).
- 117 This gesture points out the gripping desperation that he felt (cf. Ibn ʿĀshūr). He can be visualized hitting one of his palms with the other while turning

what he spent in it (the garden) as it went to rack and ruin, saying: “O, how I wish I had not Associated any with my Lord!”⁽¹¹⁸⁾ ﴿43﴾ He had no clique to sustain him against Allah⁽¹¹⁹⁾; he would not ever have been sustained! ﴿44﴾ There and then, the “true” helping out is Allah’s “Alone”⁽¹²⁰⁾, the True; His is a better prize and His is a better outcome!⁽¹²¹⁾

﴿45﴾ ⁽¹²²⁾Set “Muhammad” for them⁽¹²³⁾ the example of the worldly life

عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا
وَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَمْ
تَكُن لَّهُ فِتْنَةٌ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ
مُنْتَصِرًا ﴿٤٤﴾ هُنَالِكَ الْوَلِيَّةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ هُوَ خَيْرٌ
ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا ﴿٤٥﴾

وَأَصْرَبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

them over (cf. al-Wāḥidī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī); or that he was turning them both upside down simultaneously (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, Abū al-Su‘ūd).

- 118 Now that he has lost it all, he wishes that he had heeded the admonition of his fellow. By virtue of this he could have returned to his senses and repented from his grievous sins (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Sa‘dī).
- 119 A stark reminder of his vainglorious bragging to his fellow with his money and summoning! (Abū Ḥayyān, al-Sa‘dī).
- 120 “We did not do them injustice, but they did themselves injustice. Their gods, whom they prayed to besides Allah, availed them nothing when your Lord’s Command came; indeed they increased them nothing but carnage!” (11: 101)
- 121 God Almighty is the best reward Giver to those who obey Him. The outcome of obeying Him is better than that of anyone else’s (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Baghawī).
- 122 This is the moral of the story of the two fellows. The thing that stood most between them and looking at the evidences of the Truth was their overindulgence in this ephemeral life with all its joys and their fallacy about the everlasting nature of the world coupled with the rejection of the Hereafter they espoused (cf. 45: 24). Hence God Almighty asked his Messenger (ﷺ) to give them this very potent example of the nature of life and worldly existence (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 123 These could be the haughty Deniers who asked the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) to expel the poor Believers from his company (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī) or all people (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

as water⁽¹²⁴⁾ which We send down from the sky, the plants of the land fuse with it, and soon it becomes brittle, 'readily' scattered by the winds; Allah is ever Most-Able over everything. ﴿46﴾ ⁽¹²⁵⁾Money and sons⁽¹²⁶⁾ are the adornment

كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ
الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا ﴿٤٦﴾ الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةً

- 124 This imagery beautifully captures the brevity and the transient nature of life. No sooner than rain hits the ground, it produces the plants which are a feast to the eye and mouth, they then turn into brittle debris readily blown away by the wind as if they never existed: “Indeed the example of the worldly life is nothing more than water that We send down from the sky; soon it gets mixed in the plants of the ground, the kind that people and animals consume, until when the land assumes its ornament and beautifies itself and its owners become sure that they are able over it, ‘there’ comes upon it Our Command at night or in the morning and We make it mowed as if it did not thrive ‘only’ yesterday—thus We detail the Signs for people who ponder!” (10: 24)

Life is like water: water hardly settles down and never remains static in one state, and nor does life. Water does not last forever and nor does life. No one enters into water without getting wet and everyone gets wet in life through its trials and temptations. If proportionate, water can be of great use but a deluge of it can be mightily destructive. In the same way, what is proportionate in life is useful, but overindulgence is harmful (cf. al-Qurṭubī).

- 125 One should not be swayed away from the reason for existence by the adornment of life; all of it will be gone one day (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 126 *al-Banūn* is specific to male children. Arab idolaters used to take special pride in their sons (cf. Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, *Sūrat al-Kahf*) rather than the daughters whom they took as bad omens (cf. Ibn ‘Arafah). These were what the Deniers cherished most in life, but the ‘everlasting good deeds’ are what the true Believers treasure most (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Prettified for mankind are objects of desire: women, children, hoards upon hoards of gold and silver, fine steeds, cattle and ploughing grounds; these are the pleasures of this worldly life, but with Allah lies the best of returns. *Say ‘Muhammad’: “Shall I tell you what is better than this? For the Mindful with their Lord are Gardens under which rivers flow, in which they eternally abide; for them in these are purified spouses, and Pleasure from Allah—Allah is All-Seeing of ‘His’ servants. *They are the ones who say: “Our Lord, indeed we have Believed! Forgive us our sins, and spare us the torment of Hellfire”. *They are ‘The forbearing, the truthful, the utterly devout, the ‘charitably’ spending, and the ‘persistently’ asking for forgiveness in the late-night hours” (3: 14-17).

of the worldly life, but the everlasting good deeds are a better prize with your Lord and are a better hope⁽¹²⁷⁾.

الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتِ الصَّالِحَاتِ خَيْرٌ
عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرًا أَمَلًا ﴿٤٦﴾

﴿47﴾ (128) 'Mention Muhammad' The Day when We float the mountains away and you see the land all evident⁽¹²⁹⁾, and We gather them leaving out none of them!⁽¹³⁰⁾

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً
وَحَشَرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿٤٧﴾

127 The doers of good deeds will reap their benefits in the everlasting Hereafter. They are way better than sheer worldly gains and those of sound minds are more rightly hopeful of their benefit both in this life and the life to come (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī): "The everlasting deeds are better with your Lord in reward and better in return!" (19: 76); "Whoever does good, male or female, while being a Believer, We shall make them live a good life and We shall confer upon them their reward" as much as they would be 'for the best of what they used to do' (16: 97).

Exegetes have varying opinions as to what exactly 'everlasting good deeds' (*al-bāqiyāt al-ṣāliḥat*) refers to. al-Shinqīṭī summarizes these views as referring to all the deeds which please God Almighty; be they the five daily Prayers, or the four words (found in the hadith below), because, unlike the transient adornment of life, they are 'everlasting' for their doers, and 'good' because they are carried out in a manner that pleases God Almighty.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Subhāna Allāh (Glory be to Allah), al-ḥamdu li-Allāh (All gratitude be to Allah), lā Ilāha illā Allāh (There is no god but Allah) and Allāh-u akbar (Allah is Greater) are among the everlasting good deeds" (al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*: 3264).

128 The transient nature of existence is carried on here but with vivid imagery of some scenes of the Hereafter, which comes after the life they are so engrossed with (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

Even the mountains, which are the only constant being in existence, that weather away the vicissitudes of time and are never changed or decayed, will come to be removed: "They ask you 'Muhammad' about the mountains. Say: 'My Lord will blast them into nothing; * He leaves it 'the ground' a barren plain. You will see no crookedness or curvature therein!" (20: 105-107)

129 That is, all flattened out with no place to hide anyone (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr).

130 "Not one of all 'beings' that are in the Heavens or on Earth appears before the Most-Merciful other than as a servant. *Indeed, He fully knows them and has counted them precisely. *And each of them will return to Him on the Day of Judgement all alone" (19: 93-95)

﴿48﴾ They are displayed to your Lord in a row⁽¹³¹⁾; “Here you have come to Us as We have created you the first time⁽¹³²⁾. Nay, but you claimed that We would not make you an appointment!” ﴿49﴾⁽¹³³⁾ The book is laid down⁽¹³⁴⁾, and you see the criminals apprehensive of what is ‘written down’ in it and say: “Woe be us! What is the matter with this book! It leaves out not a matter, small or big, without noting it down!” They found what they committed present⁽¹³⁵⁾—your Lord never does anyone an injustice!⁽¹³⁶⁾

وَعُرِّضُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ صَفًّا لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا
خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّنْ نَجْعَلَ لَكُمْ
مَوْعِدًا ﴿٤٨﴾ وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ
مُسْتَفْضِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَا لَ
هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يَعَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً
إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا
وَلَا يَظُنُّرَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ﴿٤٩﴾

- 131 Even here, how they stand in front of God Almighty emphasizes the idea that they have nothing to hide behind (cf. al-Nasafī, al-Qāsimī, al-Sa’dī). This is a stern wake-up call for them to realize that the promise of them meeting God is very true.
- 132 That is, with nothing of the worldly gains that they used to brag about during their days (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Samarqandī, al-Qurṭubī). Although applying to all people, given the context of revelation, the addressees here might be taken to be primarily the insolent Associators who used to lord it over the poor Believers. Here they have come, unclad, bare-footed with neither money nor helpers (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 133 The past tense employed here vividly brings the scenes of these future happenings to mind and imparts a sense of certainty to them (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Abū al-Su‘ūd).
- 134 “To every human We have tethered his fate to his neck; and on the Day of Judgement, We bring out to him a book which he finds spread wide! *‘Read your book, yourself is enough as a reckoner over you this Day!’” (17: 14-15)
- 135 “On the Day in which every soul shall find all the good that it did ‘made’ available ‘for it’; ‘but’ every foul ‘deed’ that it has committed, it wishes it would be at a great distance from it ‘the foul deed’; Allah warns you ‘to beware’ of Himself—Allah is Most Compassionate to ‘His’ servants” (3: 30).
- 136 “Verily Allah does not deal ‘anyone’ unjustly as much as a mote’s weight; if it is a ‘one’ good deed done, then He multiplies it and grants from His own ‘additionally’ a great reward” (4: 40).

﴿50﴾ (137) 'Mention Muhammad' When We said to the angels: "Prostrate to Adam!" They 'all' prostrated except Iblīs; he was one of the jinn⁽¹³⁸⁾, and he rebelled against the Command of his Lord! Do you then take him and his offspring as allies instead of Me while they being an enemy to you! (139) Sordid indeed is the exchange of the unjust!⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا ﴿٥٠﴾

137 The ones who waxed arrogant against the pious Believers are like the most rebellious creature in existence, Satan himself, who saw himself as superior to Adam (cf. 15: 33 and 17: 61) and refused to bow to him on this account and disobeyed God Almighty's command. The snobbish Makkan elite are made mindful of this incident so that they do not go on following in Satan's footsteps (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Āshūr). They obey him and do his bidding and disobey the Command of God Almighty (cf. al-Ṭabarī).

138 He is identified as 'one of the jinn', to give the reason why he disobeyed God Almighty's command (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī). The angels are all honourable creatures of light and would never disobey their Lord (cf. al-Bayḍāwī, Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Faṣl*, 4: 28).

The species, jinn, are also mentioned so as to relate Satan to them, he being their father who scorned the father of all humans and particularly the Arabs here who used to worship his offspring: "They ascribe jinn as partners to Allah!" (6: 100); "They pray to none besides Him but females; they only pray to a rebelliously defiant Devil" (4: 117).

Demons could have possessed their idols and communicated through them; they also used to seek refuge from the evil of the jinn by appraising them and slaughtering sacrifices in their cause (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 14: 283-284; Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifā' al-'Alīl*, p. 27).

139 Sordid indeed is the exchange of God Almighty, the All-Munificent Benefactor, for Satan who despised their father, caused him and his wife to be ousted from Paradise, and he, along with his fellow demons, continue to lead people astray from the right Path and into Hell's way (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Did I not enjoin you, Children of Adam, not to worship Satan? He verily is an open enemy to you! *And that you must worship Me; this 'Mine' is a Straight Path! *He had indeed led a great multitude of you astray; were you not taking heed!" (36: 60-62)

140 The 'unjust' (*al-zālimūn*) are the Associators (who are described as such much throughout the sura, cf. Ayas: 29, 35 and 57) (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, Ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Sūrat al-Kahf*). Who is more unjust to themselves than

﴿51﴾ (141) I have not made them (the devils) witness the creation of the Heavens and Earth nor the creation of their own selves; I would not have taken as aides those who guide astray!⁽¹⁴²⁾

﴿51﴾ مَا أَشْهَدْتُهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا خَلْقَ
أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تُنَادُوا بِمُتَخَذِ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُدًا ﴿51﴾

﴿52﴾ (143) 'Mention Muhammad' The Day when He says: "Call out My Associates that you claimed!"⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ They called out for them but they did not respond to them and We set up a 'ruinous' barrier between them⁽¹⁴⁵⁾. ﴿53﴾ 'There' The criminals saw the Fire and realized that they are 'inevitably' falling into it; they found no breakout from it!

﴿52﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا شُرَكَاءِيَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ
فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَأَلْهَمْتَهُمْ جَوَابًا وَقَالَتْ بَيْنَهُمْ
مُؤَيَّدًا ﴿52﴾ وَرَاءَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ
مُوقَفُونَ لَهَا وَلَمْ يجدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرَفًا ﴿53﴾

those who take their real enemy as an ally (cf. al-Sa'adī)? Not putting things in their proper place is an injustice (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shinqīṭī).

- 141 Those who were not privy to the magnificent act of creation of something as big as the Heavens and Earth and were, in fact, themselves created from non-existence, are not worthy 'Associates' of God Almighty and less so worthy of worship (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 142 God Almighty, the source of guidance, would not take the main cause of misguidance as helpers (Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 143 The gods they took for themselves, whom they claimed were Associates of God Almighty, betrayed them and misguided them in the worldly life and will come to let them down when they need them most in the Hereafter (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, al-Sa'adī).
- 144 "Indeed you have come to Us each one separately just as We created you in the first time and you left behind 'all' what We conferred on you. We do not see your intercessors with you, those you 'falsely' claimed are partners 'with Us' in you; all has been severed between you 'and them' and all that which you once claimed has deserted you" (6: 94).
- 145 "On the Day We gather them all, then We say to those who Associated: "At your spot! You and your 'idol' Associates!" Then 'soon' We disassociated them 'from each other'; and their Associates said: "Never were you worshipping us! *Allah is sufficient as Witness between us and you that we were 'totally' unaware of your worship!" *There every soul scrutinizes what it did before; and they are returned to Allah their Master, the Real, and what they used to fabricate deserted them!" (10: 28-30).

﴿54﴾ We have expounded in this Qur'an for humans all sorts of examples⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ but humans⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ are the most argumentative thing!⁽¹⁴⁸⁾
 ﴿55﴾⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ Nothing withheld people from Believing, when guidance came to them, and to seek their Lord's forgiveness, barring⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ that

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا ﴿٥٤﴾
 وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَّا

146 Among these examples are the ones posed for those who treated the Believers as inferior (cf. Ayah 32 and 45) and which are enough to uncloud their vision (cf. al-Rāzī).

The examples with which the Qur'an abounds are of all sorts and are expressed in various ways and styles, so that people may become mindful and be guided to the Truth (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).

147 The word used here *al-insān* (singular for human), is generic for the human race and is of a more general nature than the word *al-nās* (lit. humans) (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

148 Generally, people, by their nature, are always argumentative; always defending their position. They are hardly willing to acknowledge the Truth and heed admonition (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī): "He created man from a 'mere' drop and lo, he is an articulate, 'ardent' opponent!" (16: 4). However, the context of this aya points to the tendency for argumentation for what is not true (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Quoting the next aya, al-Zajjāj (quoted in al-Shawkānī) sees that this observation pertains to the Deniers, more than anyone else.

149 This and the following ayas, as well as the next passage, reflect on the then ongoing stalemate and mounting opposition in Makkah, where the Call of Faith did not make much progress, beyond the commoners, especially with the Makkan oligarchy whose arguments and demands knew no end. This reflection aims at comforting the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) who found their intransigence particularly exasperating (cf. Aya 6 above; Ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Sūrat al-Kahf*).

150 Given the structure of this sentence with the deletion of *muḍāf* (head of the genitive construct, lit. the added to) and the mentioning of the *muḍāf ilayh* (the genitive construct, lit. the added to it), the reason for them not to Believe was interpreted differently by exegetes (cf. al-Zamaksharī, al-Bayḍāwī, Abū al-Su'ūd). They differently fill in what is deleted as follows: that what prevented them from Believing was God Almighty's Decree which was as per His Sempiternal Knowledge whereby they would not come to Believe (cf. al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Juzayy, al-Shinqīṭī).

That what prevented them from Believing was the same reason that prevented previous doomed nations, i.e. their habit of intransigence and transgression (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

the canon of the ancients⁽¹⁵¹⁾ befalls them or that the Punishment comes upon them barefaced⁽¹⁵²⁾.
⁽¹⁵³⁾ We only send Messengers as bearers of glad tidings and warners; yet those who are Denying argue with falsehood 'seeking' to rout the Truth with it, and they took My Signs and what they have been warned against for mockery!

أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةُ الْأَوَّلِينَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ
 قُبُلًا ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ
 وَمُنذِرِينَ وَيَجِدُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ الْبَطْلِ
 لِيُذِخُوا بِهِ الْحَقُّ وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَمَا
 أَنْذَرُوا هُزُورًا ﴿٥٦﴾

That what prevented them from Believing was their anticipation of the response to their demand that Punishment should befall them as proof of the truthfulness of the Message (cf. Makkī, *al-Hidāyah*, al-Zajjāj, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Kathīr).

However, on a pragmatic level, al-Rāzī and Ibn 'Āshūr, take this to be a threat to the Deniers, that they should Believe or that the Punishment of the earlier nations would come to befall them: "Indeed We have sent 'Messengers' before you for companies of old; *never does a Messenger come to them without them ridiculing him. *Like so We give it 'Denial' passage in the hearts of criminals; *never are they to Believe in it 'the Reminder', though the canon of the ancients already came to pass!" (15: 10-13)

151 *Sunnat al-awwālīn* (also found in 15: 13, 18: 55, 35: 43) or *Sunnat Allāh* (as in 33: 38 and 62, 35: 43, 40: 85, 48: 23) is used invariably to caution in the Qur'an; the earlier nations who rebelled against God were destroyed. People are always encouraged to consider their fate *vis-a-vis* the fate of earlier nations and contemplate God's time-honoured law: "... then do they await except the canon of the ancients? But you shall never find any change in the canon of Allah; you shall never find any alteration in the canon of Allah. *Have they not travelled through the land and observed how the end of those before them was; they were 'even' greater than them in power. Allah is not to be frustrated by anything in the Heavens or on Earth – He is All-Knowing, All-Powerful" (35: 43-44).

152 They see it unmasked, in front of their faces (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Certainly 'Muhammad', the ones over whom the Word of your Lord has come true, will never Believe; *not ever if every Sign was to come to them, until they 'actually' see the painful Punishment!" (10: 96-97)

153 Since enough evidence is given in the Qur'an and various examples are posited, and whereby people tend to argue out of lack of willingness to change their views and position, the Messenger is not to concern himself with their turf wars (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿57﴾ (154) Who is more unjust than one who is reminded of the Signs of his Lord and he turns away from them forgetting what his hands had sent forth⁽¹⁵⁵⁾; verily We have put sheaths upon their hearts lest that they should comprehend it (the Qur'an)⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ and in their ears there is an impairment⁽¹⁵⁷⁾. Should you 'Muhammad' call them to guidance, so they would not ever find guidance⁽¹⁵⁸⁾.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ
عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى
قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ
وَقْرًا وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا
إِذَا ابْتَدَأُ ﴿٥٧﴾

- 154 These prior nations met their eventful end, the canon of the ancients, because they committed the grave injustice of Denial. The Makkans should have no doubt in their mind that they also committed the ultimate injustice by turning their back on and scorning the Call of Faith and thus are well deserving of Divine Punishment. They, however, will await the appointed time of its happening just like that of the towns of those who came before them (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 155 That is, he did not reflect on his evil deeds, rebelling against God and the Denying he committed and 'forgot', caring not a bit, about their evil consequences (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Bayḍāwī, Ibn Kathīr). This is despite the fact that sound human nature acknowledges what is good and what is evil and that he was time and again warned against them by the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 156 Such a 'comprehension' with which comes benefit (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī): "For him whom God does not give any light, there is no light" (24: 40).
- 157 Their aversion to and heedlessness of the Message has a reason (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). This they earned in return for their ardent Denial (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *Adwā' al-Bayān*) and because their hearts are smitten with the disease of doubt: "We keep on turning their hearts and their sights away for not Believing in it the first time and 'thus' We leave them to wander aimlessly in their 'unbending' recalcitrance" (6: 110); "And We put sheaths over their hearts lest they would perceive it, and in their ears there is impairment; when you mention your Lord 'being' Alone, in the Qur'an, they turn on their heels in aversion" (17: 46); "So when they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate; Allah does not guide the rebellious people" (61: 5).
- 158 The fact of the matter is laid bare before the Messenger (ﷺ); eager as he was, they would never Believe. Guidance is in God's Hand: "Never will most people be eager as you are 'Muhammad' to Believe!" (12: 103).

﴿58﴾ (159) Your Lord, the All-Forgiving, the Possessor of Mercy⁽¹⁶⁰⁾, should He bring them to account over what they have 'truly' earned, He would have hastened the Punishment to them. Nay, but they have a 'set' appointment, they would not find an escape from it! ﴿59﴾ (161) Those 'are the' towns 'that' We have destroyed⁽¹⁶²⁾

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَعَجَّلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَنْ يَجِدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْئِلًا ﴿٥٨﴾ وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ

“Certainly ‘Muhammad’, the ones over whom the Word of your Lord has come true, will never Believe; *not ever if every Sign was to come to them, until they ‘actually’ see the painful Punishment (10: 96-97).

al-Shinqīṭī comments: “This aya and its likes in the Qur’an have two well-known interpretations. The first, is that they pertain to those whom in Allah’s Prior Knowledge would be ill-fated. The second, is that they find no guidance as long as they don the mantle of Denial. But, if Allah guides them to Belief and they relent, the cause ‘of misguidance’ will be removed. However, the first interpretation is the closer of the two. Allah Knows best!”

- 159 The following statement is made so that no one should be too eager for their Punishment to be hastened, since their guidance is not possible (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*). As with previous doomed nations their Punishment has an appointed time and the situation might change between now and then should they come to their senses and repent (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 160 A God Who is *Ghāfir* (All-Forgiving), *Dhūl Raḥmah* (The Possessor of Mercy) would not hasten their Punishment, although they well deserved it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah): “Were Allah to take mankind to task for that which they have earned, He would not leave a single creature upon the surface of the earth. But He grants them reprieve till a term appointed; when their term comes, truly Allah is All-Seeing of His servants!” (35: 45)
- 161 A case in hand is cited here. Earlier nations who committed the equally macabre injustice of scorning the Call of Faith met their doom and God’s never changing canon befell them at its appointed hour (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 162 These towns are most probably those of the ‘Ād, Thamūd, Midian and others whom the Arabs were quite familiar with or had heard of (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “These accounts We relate to you ‘Muhammad’, of the ‘bygone’ towns; some are still standing ‘deserted’, while others have been mowed down. *We did not wrong them but they wronged themselves; the gods they prayed to besides Allah availed them nothing: when Allah’s Command came upon them, they increased them in nothing except destruction. *That is how your Lord seizes the townships as He seizes them when they are wrongdoers. His

when they committed injustice, and We made an appointment for their destruction.

﴿60﴾ (163) "Mention Muhammad" (164) When Mūsā (Moses) said to his 'servant' boy: "I shall not cease until I reach the joining of the two seas or 'if not' I shall keep moving 'on' for times of length!" ﴿61﴾ When they reached the joining of them (the seas), they forgot their fish and it took its path in the sea burrowing! (165)

لَمَّا ظَمُّوْا وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِمْ مَوْعِدًا ﴿٥٩﴾
 وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِفَتَاهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّىٰ أَبْلُغَ
 مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا ﴿٦٠﴾ فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا
 مَجْمَعَ بَيْنَهُمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ
 فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا ﴿٦١﴾

*seizing is indeed painful, severe. *Truly in that is a Sign for those who fear the Punishment of the Hereafter. That is a Day on which mankind shall be gathered together, and that is a Day that shall be witnessed*" (11: 100-103).

163 This, as opposed to the attitude of both the Qurayshites and Satan himself, which has already been mentioned, is a great lesson in humbleness. Moses, the great Messenger (ﷺ), the one to whom God spoke directly without a medium (*kalīm Allāh*), stood in need of knowledge, thus showing practically that humbleness is superior to arrogance (cf. al-Marāghī, al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

This story also goes on to show that being a Messenger does not necessarily entail owning all knowledge (cf. al-Shawkānī). Thus nodding at the Jews who advised the Makkans to question the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) about the stories of the Companions of the Cave and the Two-Horned Sovereign claiming that if he told them about these then he was a real Prophet, otherwise, he was merely an imposter (cf. al-Sha'rāwī).

164 This story is mentioned in great detail in al-Bukhārī (78 and 122) and Muslim (2380). The Noble Messenger (ﷺ) tells one story of Moses (ﷺ) as he stood delivering a speech to the Children of Israel. One of them asked him if he knew anyone more knowledgeable than he was and he replied in the negative. Then God revealed to him that His servant, al-Khiḍr, was of greater knowledge than himself. Moses then asked God about a way of meeting him and he was told to seek him out where the fish come to life and swim into the sea (al-Bukhārī: 78) or where the two seas meet (al-Bukhārī: 122). Then the story unfolds as it is being told here in the Glorious Qur'an.

165 *Saraban* (translated here as burrowing) describes the movement of the fish in the sea. They cut their way in the shape of a tunnel (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Su'ūd).

﴿62﴾ When they moved on, he said to his 'servant' boy: "To us with our lunch. Indeed, we have found great hardship in this travel of ours!" ﴿63﴾ He (the servant boy) said: "Did you see when we settled by the rock, I forgot the fish⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ – none made me forget about them except Satan⁽¹⁶⁷⁾, lest that I should remember it – and it took its path in the sea amazingly!" ﴿64﴾ He (Mūsā) said: "That is what we were after!" And they went back tracing their 'earlier' foot prints. ﴿65﴾ Then they found a servant of Ours (al-Khiḍr⁽¹⁶⁸⁾) to whom We bestowed mercy⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ from Our Own and We taught him from certain Knowledge⁽¹⁷⁰⁾.

فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتَاهُ إِنَّا جَدَدْنَا لَقَدْ
لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا نَصَبًا ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ
إِذْ أَوْيَيْنَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَسِيتُ الْحُوتَ وَمَا
أَنْسَيْنِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ
فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغُ فَأَرْسَلْنَا
عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَاءَ فَصَبَّاهُمَا فَصَصَا ﴿٦٤﴾ فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِنْ
عِبَادِنَا إِتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ
لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا ﴿٦٥﴾

166 That is, he forgot the fish at that place and/or forgot to tell his master about what happened to them (cf. al-Māwardī).

167 Satan was eager to make him forget about this amazing incident knowing that the meeting of these two pious highly-knowledgeable servants would result in yet greater knowledge (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

168 There is no doubt in the minds of scholars of Islam that this special servant of God's is al-Khiḍr as found in the Hadiths in al-Bukhārī and Muslim (cf. al-Shinqīṭī).

169 This 'mercy' (*rahmah*) could very well be Prophethood, as the majority of exegetes agree on this (cf. al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī). Prophethood is said to be 'mercy' in some Qur'anic instances as in 43: 32 (cf. al-Shinqīṭī). Others see that al-Khiḍr was a righteous servant of God's and not a Prophet (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Qanūjī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Uthaymīn). Hence 'mercy' here is used in the general sense, i.e. that God showed him mercy in his life or that he was made to be a cause of mercy with his inspired actions (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

170 He, of all people, was inspired with some knowledge that God Almighty made no one else aware of. Part of that was knowledge of some Unseen events (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Bayḍāwī, al-Sa'dī).

This kind of knowledge is known as '*ilm ladunniyy*' (lit. knowledge from God's Own). It is the kind of knowledge that God inspires into the heart

﴿66﴾ Mūsā said to him: ⁽¹⁷¹⁾“Shall I follow you so that you teach me of what you have been taught ‘in which there is’ guidedness?” ﴿67﴾ He said: “You shall not be able to put up with me!” ⁽¹⁷²⁾ ﴿68﴾ “How could you put up with what you have no thorough knowledge of!” ⁽¹⁷³⁾ ﴿69﴾ He said: “You shall find me, by the Will of Allah, forbearing and I shall never disobey a command of yours ever!” ﴿70﴾ He said: “Then, should you follow me, do not ask me about a thing until I make mention of it to you!”

﴿71﴾ Then they set off until when they boarded the ship, he (al-Khiḍr) holed it! He (Mūsā) said: “Did you hole it! ⁽¹⁷⁴⁾Its people might drown! You have surely come up with something macabre!”

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَىٰ هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَيَّ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا
عُلِّمْتَ رُسُلًا ﴿٦٦﴾ قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ
مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٦٧﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ
بِهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٦٨﴾ قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ
صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي
فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ أُحَدِّثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ
ذِكْرًا ﴿٧٠﴾

فَأَنْظَلْنَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا
قَالَ أَخْرَقَهَا لِنُجُوعِ أَهْلِهَا لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا
إِمْرًا ﴿٧١﴾

of the servant without him seeking it intellectually or pursuing a material cause to it (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, 3: 399).

- 171 Moses (ﷺ) here gives a valuable lesson of showing humbleness to those who have greater knowledge than one’s self (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). He sought permission to be a follower of al-Khiḍr’s and asked him to teach him (cf. al-Bayḍāwī).
- 172 As we will see, al-Khiḍr anticipated that Prophet Moses (ﷺ) would not be able to handle such deeds which appeared to be evil but had a pearl of wisdom hidden in them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī).
- 173 As found in Muslim (2380), he told Moses that he was given the knowledge of something that he could not bear with. Witnessing these events unfold, having no knowledge of the wisdom of whom or what the right course of action to take was, Moses could not put up with them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 174 Another equally valid translation would be: “Did you hole it *to* drown its people!” The *lām* particle (to) could be for justification (*al-‘illah*) or for the end result (*al-‘āqibah*; cf. Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, *Sūrat al-Kahf*), and it could be rendered as found in the translation above.

﴿72﴾ He said: “Did I not say that you would not be able to put up with me!” ﴿73﴾ He said: “Do not find fault with me for what I have forgotten about⁽¹⁷⁵⁾. Do not make this affair of mine even harder for me!”

﴿74﴾ Then they set off until when they met a boy and he (al-Khiḍr) killed him. He (Mūsā) said: “Did you kill a pure soul not ‘even’ for killing another! You have verily come up with a most heinous thing!⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ ﴿75﴾ He said: “Did I not say to you that you would not be able to put up with me!” ﴿76﴾ He said: “If I ever inquire you about a thing do not accompany me! You have got your excuse from me!”⁽¹⁷⁷⁾

﴿77﴾ Then they set off until when they reached some dwellers of a village, they asked its dwellers for food but they ‘resolutely’ denied⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ them hospitality. Then they found

قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٢﴾
قَالَ لَا تَأْخُذْ بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ
أَمْرِي عُسْرًا ﴿٧٣﴾

فَأَنْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلَامًا فَضَلَّهُمْ قَالِ أَقْتَلْتُمْ
نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةً بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا
ثُكْرًا ﴿٧٤﴾ * قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ
مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٥﴾ قَالَ إِنْ سَأَلْتكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ
مِّنْ بَعْدِهَا فَلَا تُصَاحِبْنِي قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِن لَدُنِّي
عُذْرًا ﴿٧٦﴾

فَأَنْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُ أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ أَسْتَعْصِمُوا أَهْلَهَا
فَأَبَوْا أَنْ يُضَيِّقُوا هُمْمَا فَوَجَدَا

175 This first instance of breaching the agreement between him and al-Khiḍr is due to forgetfulness (cf. al-Bukhārī: 4725; Muslim: 2380). His sound heart and clear conscience could not put up with what appeared to him as a roguish deed (cf. al-Qaṣṣāb, *al-Nukat al-Dāllah ‘Alā al-Bayān*).

176 Although, Moses (ﷺ) forgot in the first instance, this time over, he just could not remain silent about what he had just seen and which so sharply clashed with his principles (cf. al-Sa’dī).

177 For breaking the agreement twice, Moses (ﷺ) found that al-Khiḍr now had a perfectly valid excuse to part with him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

178 *Abaw* (lit. they refused) is for *ibā’* which is adamant refusal (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). The people of the town were extremely mean folk (cf. Muslim: 2380, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

a wall about to tumble down and he (al-Khiḍr) set it straight. He (Mūsā) said: “If you will, you may have asked payment for it!” ﴿78﴾ He said: “This is ‘then’ a parting between me and you!⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ I shall ‘momentarily’ tell you the interpretation of that which you could not put up with”.

﴿79﴾ “As for the ship: it is owned by poor folks who venture into the sea ‘to seek provisions’. I wanted to defect it ‘as’ there was after them a king who would forcefully appropriate all ‘seaworthy’ ships!” ﴿80﴾ “As for the boy: his parents are Believers⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ and we feared that ‘should he live’ he would hard press them into rebelliousness and Denial!”⁽¹⁸¹⁾ ﴿81﴾ “We wanted their Lord to replace them with ‘another’ who is better in purity and closer in compassion!” ﴿82﴾ “As for the wall: it belongs to two orphan boys in the town and there is a treasure under it which belongs to them⁽¹⁸²⁾. Their father was

فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْقُضَ فَأَقَامَهُ قَالَ
لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا ﴿٧٧﴾ قَالَ هَذَا
فِرَاقٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ سَأْتِيكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ
تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٨﴾

أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسْكِينٍ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي
الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ
يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا ﴿٧٩﴾ وَأَمَّا الْغُلَامُ فَكَانَ
أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِينَا أَنْ يُرْهِمَا طُغْيَانًا
وَكُفْرًا ﴿٨٠﴾ فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبْدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا
مِنَهُ زَكْوَةً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا ﴿٨١﴾ وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ
لِغُلَامَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ
كَنْزٌ لَهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا

179 This is the third time that Moses (ﷺ) broke the agreement due to his inability to put up with acts that did not agree with his nature.

180 Although the parents were Believers, their boy was to become a Denier (cf. al-Bukhārī: 4725; Muslim: 2380; al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī).

181 Their love for their child, was feared to make them cross God Almighty’s boundaries and fall into Denial (cf. al-Bukhārī: 4726, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*).

182 Had the wall not been mended and subsequently fell, they, being young and weak surrounded by extremely mean people, would surely have lost it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

a righteous man⁽¹⁸³⁾ so your Lord wanted them to reach the height of their strength and uncover their treasure. 'All of that is' A mercy from your Lord. I did not do it of my own accord⁽¹⁸⁴⁾. That 'you see' is the interpretation of what you could not bear with!⁽¹⁸⁵⁾"

صَلِيحًا فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا
وَيَسْتَخْرِجَاكَ زَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَمَا
فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ
عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿٨٣﴾

﴿83﴾ ⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ And they ask you 'Muhammad' about *Dhūl Qarnayn* (The Two-Horned 'King'⁽¹⁸⁷⁾). Say:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ قُلْ

- 183 This is indeed a great lesson for everyone. The deceased father was a righteous person and because of that, even after his death, God Almighty saw to the well-being of his children. A person's righteousness will not be just of benefit to their children in this life only, but also in the Hereafter. Should they be Believers, they will be made to join them and share their high rank in Paradise (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Those who Believed and whose offspring followed them in Believing, We will unite their offspring with them 'in Paradise' without depriving anybody of the reward for their deeds. Each one according to what he has earned" (52: 21).
- 184 That is, in all these actions, he was carrying out God Almighty's commands (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 185 Although the tri-syllabic *tas-ta-ti'* (found in Aya 78 as 'put up with') and the disyllabic *tas-ti'* (translated here as bear up with) are one and the same (cf. al-Wāhidī, al-Basīl), it is said that the second syllable in the first word, the *ta*, was deleted here because whereas in the first instance, the burden was so greatly felt by Moses (ﷺ), seeing all these extremely roguish deeds which severely clashed with all that he lived and fought for, here the burden is lightened by virtue of the explanation just given, thus the dropping of the second syllable (cf. Ibn Kathīr). Or that this usage is meant to vary lexicalization, having another equally applicable exact synonym of the word. The first being the most widely used so it was mentioned earlier (cf. al-Bayḍawī, Abū al-Su'ūd).
- 186 Now comes the story of the Two-Horned Sovereign, whom the Qurayshites asked the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) about, along with that of the Companions of the Cave in order to test him.
- 187 There are different opinions as to why he was called by this name. al-Biqā'ī in *Naẓm al-Durar* sums up that he was called thus because: he reached the earliest rising point and the last setting point of the Sun, both known as *Qarnayn* (two horns); because two generations (*qarnayn*) of people passed away during his reign; because he had two long locks of hair (*qarnayn*); because his crown had two horns.

“I shall recite ‘some profound’ mention about him⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ to you!”
 ﴿84﴾ We have indeed ‘greatly’ empowered him in the land and gave him a means for everything⁽¹⁸⁹⁾; ﴿85﴾ and he ‘resolutely’ pursued the means!⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ ﴿86﴾ Until when he reached the setting place of the sun⁽¹⁹¹⁾ he found it setting in a turbid fount⁽¹⁹²⁾ and found at it some folks. We said: “O *Dhūl Qarnayn!* Either you punish or dispense benevolence in their regards!⁽¹⁹³⁾”

سَأْتَلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿٨٣﴾ إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِي
 الْأَرْضِ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا ﴿٨٤﴾ فَاتَّبَعَ
 سَبَبًا ﴿٨٥﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا
 تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا قُلْنَا
 يَدَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُعَذِّبٌ وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ
 حُسْنًا ﴿٨٦﴾

188 That is, whatever is of relevant moral value (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Alūsī, al-Sa‘dī).

189 He was endowed with all means necessary to achieve his endeavours; soldiers, weaponry, know-how, fear struck in the hearts of enemies, etc. (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Alūsī, al-Sa‘dī).

190 He set about the land utilizing these means (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

191 That is, the furthest land point that can be reached heading West (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

192 ‘*Ayn ḥami’ah* translated here as ‘turbid fount’ has two parts. The ‘*ayn* which is one of the most polysemous words of the Arabic language, while originally meaning a spring of abundant water, here exegetes take to mean a sea (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). As for *ḥami’ah* it is dark, putrid mud (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).

It is agreed among exegetes that this setting is described as he saw it not as it actually happened (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Bayḍāwī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

It is quite a recurrent event that one sees the sun setting in the sea (or a lake or behind a hill). This does not mean that the sun left its orbit and came to set in that place. To assume such is quite childish. The Qur’an clearly states that celestial bodies run in designated orbits of their own (Ibn Taymiyyah, *Mukhtaṣar al-Fatāwā al-Maṣriyyah*: 579, al-Shinqīṭī): “*And He is the One Who created the day and the night, the sun and the moon—each gliding in an orbit*” (21: 33); “*It is not for the sun to catch up with the moon, nor does the night outrun the day. Each is gliding in an orbit*” of its own” (36: 40).

193 These were Denying folks. God Almighty gave him a choice to either punish them immediately should they not embrace the Call of Faith, or give them enough time to reconsider after showing them the way of guidance (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Bayḍāwī, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*).

﴿87﴾ He said: “He who committed injustice⁽¹⁹⁴⁾, we shall punish. Then he is returned to his Lord and He would subject him to an unheard of Punishment!⁽¹⁹⁵⁾” ﴿88﴾ “As for he who Believes and does good deeds, his is the Most Comely ‘reward’⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ and we shall say to him – of our command – ‘nothing but’ ease!⁽¹⁹⁷⁾” ﴿89﴾ Then he ‘resolutely’ pursued the means⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ until when he reached the rising place of the sun⁽¹⁹⁸⁾, he found it rises upon some folks for whom We made no shield between them and it!⁽¹⁹⁹⁾

قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ نُرِيدُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ
فِعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا نُّكَرًا ﴿٨٧﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ
صَالِحًا فَلَهُ جَزَاءٌ أَلْحَسَىٰ وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا
يُسْرًا ﴿٨٨﴾ ثُمَّ أَتْبَعْنَا سَبَّابًا ﴿٨٩﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ
السَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ
مِنْ دُونِهَا سِتْرًا ﴿٩٠﴾

194 That is the ‘injustice’ of Denial (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). Meaning here the people who insist on Denying after the Truth has been made plain to them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Bayḏāwī, Ibn Kathīr).

Notice the word ‘injustice’ is used again here to describe the action of Denial (cf. note on Aya 8 above).

195 They will be subjected to such a horrid Punishment that no one had experienced the like of which before (*nukran*). This for their ingratitude to God Almighty and using the blessings He bestowed on them to worship others besides Him (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

196 That is, Paradise (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī).

197 That is, such a person will be commanded with nothing but what is easy for one to carry out (cf. al-Rāzī, al-ījī): “*He (Allah) laid upon you no hardship in the religion*” (22: 78).

How he ran the affairs of these people whom God Almighty gave him the choice over, shows the great wisdom and justice this king was given by God Almighty (cf. al-Sa’dī).

198 That is, the furthest land point that can be reached heading East (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

199 They lived in a land where nothing could shade them from the sun; trees, mountains, or buildings (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī). al-Sa’dī opines that this was because they either were so primitive that they did not know how to shield themselves from it, or that because the sun was always rising on them and rarely set. Some exegetes went on to say that they did not know how to cover their bodies with clothing (cf. al-Samarqandī, al-Wāhidī, al-Shawkānī).

﴿91﴾ Like so 'is his affair'⁽²⁰⁰⁾, and We encompassed what he got with Knowledge!⁽²⁰¹⁾

﴿92﴾ Then he 'resolutely' pursued the means⁽²⁰²⁾ ﴿93﴾ until when he reached the 'mountain' barriers he found, just short of them, some folks who could barely comprehend a saying!⁽²⁰³⁾

﴿94﴾ They said⁽²⁰⁴⁾: "O *Dhūl Qarnayn!* Verily *Ya'jūj* and *Ma'jūj* (Gog and Magog)⁽²⁰⁵⁾ ever go about sowing corruption in the land⁽²⁰⁶⁾.

كَذَلِكَ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٩١﴾

ثُمَّ اتَّعَسَّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٢﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَّا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا ﴿٩٣﴾ قَالُوا يَا بَشَرُ إِنَّا لَفَرَقَيْنِ إِنَّ يَاجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

Whatever the case might be, this affair of theirs shows the great wonders that the mighty king came to face in his travels and explorations and how different people are in their way of living (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). He travelled so wide that he actually reached the edge of civilization.

200 Cf. al-Zamaksharī, Abū al-Su'ūd, al-Biqā'ī, Ibn 'Uthaymīn.

201 Such was the greatness of what God Almighty bestowed upon him (soldiers, riches, tools, and the means of wielding kingship and power) that only He could exactly Know the extent of which (cf. al-Bayḏāwī, al-tijī).

202 That is, to reach the destination he headed for (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

203 They knew no other language besides their own (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurtubī).

204 If they could 'barely comprehend a saying' how come they were able to get their message across to *Dhūl Qarnayn*, and for him to interact with them to carry out the momentous task at hand as we shall see shortly? Exegetes extend a number of opinions:

that 'barely' means only after much effort was invested in making them understand what was being said to them (cf. al-Rāzī)

The message was got across through a translator (cf. al-Baghawī), especially since *Dhūl Qarnayn* was given 'a means of everything' (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn). That God Almighty gave him the ability to comprehend them and make them comprehend him well-endowed as he was (cf. al-Sa'dī).

205 Given the much cited apocryphal accounts and the aberrations of nature contained in them that run around, it is important to clearly stress that Gog and Magog are two human tribes, as found in the authentic Prophetic Hadiths (al-Bukhārī: 3348, Muslim: 222).

206 They used to come through the space between the mountains killing other people and pillaging their property, and engaging in all sorts of mischief (cf. al-Bayḏāwī, al-Alūsī, al-Sa'dī).

Shall we provide you with a fee so that you may put a barrier between us and them?"²⁰⁷ He said: "What my Lord has empowered me with is 'far' better²⁰⁷. 'Only' Assist me with power²⁰⁸ and I shall erect a 'fortified' dam²⁰⁹ between you and them!"²⁰⁹ "Hand me the iron bars!" Until when he brought the two sides 'of the mountains' to level²¹⁰, he said: "Blow!" Until when he made it (the pile of iron bars) into a flaming fire, he said: "To me with molten copper that I may pour on it!"²¹¹ They (*Ya'jūj* and *Ma'jūj*) could not mount it 'therein'; they could not pierce it!²¹² He said: "This is

فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلَىٰ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا
وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا ۗ قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ
فَأَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا ۗ
ءَأُتُونِي زُبُرَ الْحَدِيدِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ
قَالَ انْفُخُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَعَلَهُ نَارًا قَالَ ءَأُتُونِي أُفْرِغَ
عَلَيْهِ فِطْرًا ۗ فَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا
اسْتَطَعُوا لَهُ رِقَابًا ۗ قَالَ هَذَا

- 207 He took pride in the great power that God Almighty gave to him (cf. al-Qāsimī). The kingship, money, resources and knowledge he had at his disposal, stood him in no need of any money that could be given to him as reward for his efforts (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 208 The power of their muscles (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn 'Āshūr). Had he accepted the fee, being a hired worker, he would have had to carry out the task without their help, but he, being the wise sovereign that he was, asked them to partake in the task of building their own protection (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr) and so accomplish the task faster (cf. al-Qurṭubī). Furthermore, being the settlers of that land, they would know where to obtain the necessary materials from.
- 209 The *radm* (fortified dam, lit. pile-up) that he proposed to erect would be more effective than the *sadd* (barrier, lit. a blockage); essentially, it would be stronger and tighter (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Naḥḥās).
- 210 He made the piled-up iron bars as high as the two mountain tops so that they rested at the same level as each other (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 211 Molten copper (*qitr*) when poured on an uneven pile of fire-hot iron bars would make the bars stick together, fill up the cracks and smooth out the surface (cf. al-Ejī, al-Tha'ālibī, al-Sha'rāwī).
- 212 They could not climb it because of its smooth surface, and could not hole through it because of its great strength and fortitude. Furthermore, the dam was as high as the mountains which were insurmountable in their own right (cf. al-Baghawī, Ibn Juzayy, Ibn Kathīr).

mercy from my Lord. 'But' When the promise of my Lord comes to pass⁽²¹³⁾, He will level it (the dam) to the ground; verily the promise of my Lord is ever true!⁽²¹⁴⁾

رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّي فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا ﴿٩٨﴾

﴿99﴾ ⁽²¹⁵⁾ And We let them on that day surge into one another⁽²¹⁶⁾, 'then' the Horn is blown⁽²¹⁷⁾, and We round them all up⁽²¹⁸⁾;

* وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ وَنَفَخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَمَجَمَّعَهُمْ مَّجْمَعًا ﴿٩٩﴾

Some exegetes make a distinction between the use of the tri-syllabic *is-ta-‘ū*, which is used to describe their inability to climb the dam and the tetra-syllabic *is-ta-tā-‘ū*, which is used to describe their inability to effect a hole in the dam. The tri-syllabic, the easier to pronounce word, is used for climbing as this is easier than the arduous task of working a hole in such a huge and greatly fortified dam, for which the harder to pronounce tetra-syllabic word is used (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

- 213 The time of God Almighty's decree for their coming out from behind the dam (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Their coming out to wreak havoc in the world is very close to the coming of the Hour and the Day of Judgement (Muslim: 2937).
- 214 This is a subtle reminder to all those concerned at the time of revelation that whatever God promises will surely come to be realized, especially the punishment which is being awaited: "Verily Allah does not break His appointment!" (13: 31)
- 215 This passage gives quite a vivid reminder that the promise of God Almighty will come true, so that no one will have doubts about it and that they will face the consequences of their actions.
- 216 When the day comes and the dam of Gog and Magog is levelled to the ground, they will come out in great waves and merge with people creating great chaos (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīfī). This is one of the great harbingers (*ashrāt al-sā'ah al-kubrā*) of the Last Hour (Muslim: 2937).
- 217 This is the second blow of the Horn, which heralds the joining of souls with the bodies of creation rising up from death to stand before God Almighty on the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Atīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Alūsī, al-Shawkānī).
- 218 All creatures, humans, jinn, angels, animals, etc. will be gathered on that Day (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): "Say 'Muhammad': "Verily the first and the last 'generations' will be gathered for the timing of a known Day!" (56: 49-50)

such a rounding up!⁽²¹⁹⁾ ﴿100﴾ And We display Hell to the Deniers; such a display!⁽²²⁰⁾ ﴿101﴾ (221)Those whose eyes were in a cover against My Reminder⁽²²²⁾; 'neither' were they able over hearing!⁽²²³⁾ ﴿102﴾ (224)Might those who have Denied presume that they could take My servants as allies besides Me! Verily We have 'carefully' prepared Hell as a domicile for the Deniers!

وَعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْكَافِرِينَ عَرَضًا ﴿١٠٠﴾ الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غَطَاةٍ عَن ذِكْرِي وَكَانُوا لَا يَسْمَعُونَ سَمْعًا ﴿١٠١﴾ فَحَسِبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَن يَتَّخِذُوا عِبَادِي مِن دُونِي أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِّلْكَافِرِينَ نَزُلًا ﴿١٠٢﴾

- 219 This affirmation through the use of the infinitive of the verb *jama'a* (gather), i.e. *jam'an* (such a gathering) signifies that this gathering will be real and not used in the figurative sense. Moreover, the indefinite form used here imparts magnanimity to these events. By the same measure, this applies to 'ard (the display of Hellfire right before the Deniers), which is mentioned in the next aya (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr). In English such usage goes by the name of *figura etymologica* or cognate object construction.
- 220 "You will see them as they are exposed to it 'Hellfire', abject in their abasement, glancing around them furtively" (42: 45).
- 221 This eye-opening, stark display of Hellfire right in front of them, is in requital for their willing and adamant, heart-bent refusal to look at God's Signs and consider them.
- 222 Both the eyes of their hearts and those in their heads (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifā' al-'Alīl*: 93, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*) were unable to see and consider the Signs (ayas) of the Qur'an and played blind to accepting the Truth, avoiding its following (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and over their eyes there is a veil—theirs is a grievous Punishment" (2: 7).
- 223 Being so heart-smitten and embroiled in the materialistic life and heathen ways they lead, they could not bring themselves to listen heedfully to the Call of Faith (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī): "They were never able to hear nor were they seeing!" (11: 20)
- 224 This groundless presumption led them to falsely believe that the so-called gods they took for protectors would be of use to them before God Almighty, so they heeded not His Signs (cf. al-Zajjāj, al-Shinqīfī, Ibn 'Ashūr, Ibn 'Uthaymīn): "They have taken gods, besides Allah, seeking strength and protection through them. *Nay, but they will deny their worship and turn against them!" (19: 81-82)

﴿103﴾ (225) Say 'Muhammad': "Shall we tell you about those whose deeds are most at loss?" ﴿104﴾ "They are The ones whose pursuit in the worldly life have lost their way" (226), but they 'still' think that they are doing well!" (227) ﴿105﴾ These are the ones who Denied in the Signs of their Lord and in meeting Him; their deeds are made void and then We shall hold no weight for them on the Day of Judgement! (228) ﴿106﴾ That 'and' their requital is Hell for their Denial and taking My Signs and Messengers for mockery! ﴿107﴾ (229) Verily those who have Believed and did the good deeds,

قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ الَّذِينَ صَلَّ
سَعَيْهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ
يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا ﴿١٠٤﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ
رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِمْ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ
لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وِزْنًَا ﴿١٠٥﴾ ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُهمْ جَهَنَّمَ
بِمَا كَفَرُوا وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَرُسُلِي هُزُوًا ﴿١٠٦﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

- 225 This passage further explains why they deserved such a ghastly fate. The Noble Messenger is bid to tell them of this great loss of theirs (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 226 They based their actions on groundless knowledge and directed their acts of worship towards mere idols bringing themselves to believe that they would somehow be of use to them (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr). Their pursuit was a lost way because they followed a false belief and did not take the path of their Lord (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Then We turned to whatever work they have done, and made it scattered dust" (25: 23).
- 227 Such people never admit that they are wrong and will always invent ways to justify their actions, so much so that they actually come to believe that these excuses are nothing but the truth.
- 228 On the Day of Judgement when the true Scales are set up to weigh people's deeds, they will come to know their true worth: "We place the Scales of justice for the Day of Judgement, so that no soul is wronged in the least. Even if it was the weight of a mustard seed, We shall bring it; We are sufficient as a Reckoner" (21: 47).
- 229 This final passage sends messages to all the parties involved: the Believers, that theirs is a great reward, the Jews that the knowledge they have, with which they sided with the Deniers, is no more than a drop in the mighty ocean of God Almighty's Knowledge and the Deniers to choose the path they take for themselves having received knowledge in great detail of both the path of doom and that of pleasure as depicted in this sura as well as throughout the Qur'an so that they might open up their hearts to the Call of Faith.

theirs are ever the Gardens of Paradise as domicile⁽²³⁰⁾. ﴿108﴾ Forever they abide therein, wishing not to move anywhere away from it. ﴿109﴾⁽²³¹⁾ Say 'Muhammad': "Had the sea⁽²³²⁾ been the fountain⁽²³³⁾ of my Lord's Words⁽²³⁴⁾, it would

كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوَلًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَاتَمْتُ رَبِّي

230 In great contrast to the ghastly fate of the Deniers is the regal fate of the Believers, whom the former held in contempt (cf. Ibn 'Aṭṭīyah).

231 Now that all what they asked for has been so beautifully explained, giving them more than what they bargained for (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*) it is time to state the fact that the great knowledge which is given in this sura, particularly, that in the unwitnessed stories of old times of which there is no knowledge at all and/or agreement on details, is infinitely small compared to God Almighty's Knowledge (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Even those who stood behind the Deniers, who meant to test the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) with them, and think themselves knowledgeable by virtue of having Scriptures cannot even start to claim that they have encompassed all Divine Knowledge (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). The knowledge they were given, and are using to help drive people away from the Path of God, is as much as the ink they have to write their Scriptures with, compared to all the water on Earth manifold times over.

'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: "The Quraysh said to the Jews: "Give us something to ask this man about!" They replied: "Ask him about the soul!" they came to him (the Noble Messenger (ﷺ)) and asked him, and so was revealed: "They ask you 'Muhammad' about the soul, say: "The soul is a matter of my Lord!" The knowledge that you 'people' have been given is only but a little"". They 'the Jews' said: "We have been given great knowledge. We have been given the Torah!" Then Allah sent down: "Say 'Muhammad': "Had the sea been the fountain of my Lord's Words, it would have been depleted before the Words of my Lord are exhausted"" (al-Tirmidhī: 3140; al-Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 11314; Imām Aḥmad: 2309).

232 *al-Baḥr* (the sea) used here in the generic sense, meaning all the water that is found on this planet (cf. al-Sa'dī).

233 *Midād* (fountain) originally comes from *madad* which signifies a very long continuous connection of a string of things of the same nature (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Here it means the ink with which an inkpot is replenished (cf. al-Ras'anī).

234 *Kalimātu Rabbī* (the Words of my Lord) are God Almighty's Words which spring from His Knowledge and Wisdom, which He reveals to His angels and Messengers (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). God Almighty's Words are inexhaustible because His Knowledge is inexhaustible (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

have been depleted before the Words of my Lord are exhausted, even if We were to bring the like of it as replenishment! ﴿110﴾ Say 'Muhammad': ⁽²³⁵⁾“I am no more than a human like yourselves, 'but' to me it is revealed that your God is only the One God. ⁽²³⁶⁾Whoever

لَقَدْ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا ﴿١١٠﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُ الْوَحِيدُ

235 They are to realize that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) is no more than a mere human like any other who knows naught of the knowledge of the Unseen except what God Almighty lets him in on (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr), so that they need not expect more from him than what is Divinely revealed (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). The most prominent piece of knowledge of what is revealed to him, is that God is One and Only (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr), so that they should Associate none with Him in worship.

236 Those who realize this most defining fact, and are hopeful of seeing God in the Hereafter, being rewarded and spared His Punishment, should do good in this life while purifying their Faith from any kind of Association (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr).

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Allah, glorified and exalted be He, said: “I am, of all associates, the least in need of it! Whoever does a deed and Associates any other in it with Me, I shall disregard him and his Association!” (Muslim: 2985).

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “The first among people against whom judgement will come to pass on the Day of Judgement is a martyred man. He is brought and Allah counts His bounties on him and he acknowledges them. ‘Then Allah’ Says: “What did you do in return for them?” He says: “I fought for Your sake until I was martyred!” ‘Then Allah’ Says: “You lie! You fought so that they may say that you were audacious! Well. It was said!” Then it will be commanded in his regard and he will be dragged on his face and thrown into the Fire! And a man who acquired knowledge and taught it, and recited the Qur’an is brought. Allah counts His bounties on Him and he acknowledges them. ‘Then Allah’ Says: “What did you do in return for them?” He says: “I learned knowledge and taught it, and recited the Qur’an for your sake!” ‘Then Allah’ Says: “You lie! You have learned knowledge so that they may say you were knowledgeable! Well. It was said!” Then it will be commanded in his regard and he will be dragged on his face and thrown into the Fire! And a man to whom Allah gave fortune plentifully and all sorts of wealth is brought and Allah counts His bounties on Him and he acknowledges them. ‘Then Allah’ Says: “What

hopes to meet his Lord, let him do good and Associate none in the worship of his Lord!

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا
صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا ﴿١١٠﴾



did you do in return for them?” He says: “I left no cause You love for it to be spent on, without me spending in it!” Then Allah’s Says: “You lie! You have spent so that they may say you were a giver! Well. It was said!” Then it will be commanded in his regards and he is dragged on his face and thrown into the Fire!” (Muslim: 1905)



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