



LII

AT-TŪR

الطُّورُ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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INTRODUCTION

Name

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

Period of Revelation

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

Subject-Matter and Topics

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

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

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



وَالطُّورِ ^١ وَكِتَابٍ مَّسْطُورٍ ^٢ فِي رَقٍّ مَّنشُورٍ ^٣ وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ ^٤ وَ
 السَّفِينِ الْمَرْفُوعِ ^٥ وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ ^٦ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ ^٧ لِّمَا لَهُ
 مِنْ دَافِعٍ ^٨ يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا ^٩ وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا ^{١٠} قَوْلٍ
 يَوْمَهِدِ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ^{١١} الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي حُوضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ ^{١٢} يَوْمَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى
 نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ دَعَاً ^{١٣} فَيَذَرُوهَا كَالْحِثْيِ ^{١٤} أَلَيْسَ لَهَا آيَاتٌ أَمْ
 أَنْتُمْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ ^{١٥} إِضْلَوهَا فَاصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّمَا تُحْجَرُونَ
 مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ^{١٦} إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ ^{١٧} فَكِهِينَ بِمَا أَتَّهُمُ رَبُّهُمْ وَ
 وَقَدِّمَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ^{١٨} كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِن مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ^{١٩}
 مُكَلِّينَ عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَّصْفُوفَةٍ ^{٢٠} وَزَوَّجْنَاهُم بِحُورٍ عِينٍ ^{٢١} وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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الطور

Verses: 49

Revealed at Makkah

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

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

The righteous¹¹ shall be in Gardens and Bliss, rejoicing in what 17-20
 their Lord shall give them; and their Lord shall save them from the
 torment of Hell.¹² (It will be said to them:) "Eat and drink with relish¹³
 as a reward for what you have been doing." They will be reclining on
 couches, facing each other, and We shall wed them to houris with
 beautiful eyes.¹⁴

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p. 178]

اتَّبَعْتَهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ
 مِنْ شَيْءٍ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِيْنٌ ﴿٢١﴾ وَأَمْدَدْنَاهُمْ بِفَاكِهَةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِمَّا
 يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ يَتَنَزَّعُونَ فِيهَا كَأَسَا لَا لَغْوٌ فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْتِيهِمُ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَطُوفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
 غِلَاقًا لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لَوْلُؤُا مَكْنُونُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾
 قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَمَنْ آتَى اللَّهَ عَالِيْنَا وَوَقَدْنَا عَدَابَ
 السَّمُومِ ﴿٢٧﴾ إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَذَكَرْنَا مَا أَنْتَ
 بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا سَجْنُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ مَرَبِّبِ
 الْمَنُونِ ﴿٣٠﴾ قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنْتَرِبِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَحْلَامُهُمْ
 بِهَذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقْوَلَهُ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَلْيَأْتُوا
 بِحَدِيثٍ مِثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾
 أَمْ خَلِقُوا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُؤْقِنُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ
 هُمُ الْمُضْطَرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلُوٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ فِيهِ فَلْيَأْتِ مُسْتَمِعُهُمْ بِسُلْطَنٍ
 مُبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمُ الْبَنُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَغْرَمٍ
 مُثْقَلُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا فَالَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَكِيدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهُ غَيْرَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَإِنْ
 يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَرْكُومٌ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَذَرَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا
 يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ
 يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا
 يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَأَصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ



Those who have believed and their offspring also have 21-28
 followed in their footsteps in degrees of faith, We shall join to them
 those of their offspring also (in Paradise) and shall not deprive them
 of anything of their deeds.¹⁵ Every person is a pledge for what he has
 earned.¹⁶ We shall go on providing them well with fruits and meat,¹⁷
 such as they may desire. They shall zealously be passing from hand to
 hand a cup of wine which shall neither contain idle talk nor
 immorality.¹⁸ And there will go round to them young boys,
 exclusively appointed for their service,¹⁹ who will be as lovely as
 well-guarded pearls. They will turn to one another and ask (about
 their worldly lives). They will say, "Before this we lived among our
 kinsfolk, in fear and dread."²⁰ Consequently, Allah has been bounteous
 to us and has saved us from the torment of the scorching wind.²¹
 Indeed, we prayed only to Him in our previous life. Most surely He is
 the Beneficent, the Merciful."

So, O Prophet, go on admonishing (them). By the grace of 29
 your Lord, you are neither a soothsayer nor mad.²²

Do they say, "He is a poet for whom we are awaiting the 30-32
 adverse turn of fortune?"²³ Say to them, "Yes, wait; I too shall wait
 with you."²⁴ Do their minds command them to do so, or, are they a
 people who have transgressed all limits?²⁵

Do they say, "This man himself has forged this Qur'ān" The 33-34
 fact is that they do not want to believe.²⁶ Let them then produce a
 discourse like it, if they are true in what they say.²⁷

Have they been created without a Creator? Or, are they their 35-36
 own creators? Or, have they created the heavens and the earth? The
 fact is that they lack faith.²⁸

Do they possess the treasures of your Lord? Or, is it they who 37
 control them?²⁹

Do they have a ladder by climbing which they overhear what 38-39
 goes on in heavens? Then let any of them who has overheard bring a
 clear proof. Is Allah to have daughters and you sons?³⁰

Do you ask them for any rewards that they are weighed down 40
 under a load of debt?³¹

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

Contd. from p. 175.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

حِينَ تَقُومُوا مِنْ لَيْلٍ فَسَبِّحُوهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ



48-49

Endure patiently, O Prophet, until your Lord's judgement comes to pass³⁸; you are in Our sight.³⁹ Glorify your Lord with His praise when you rise up,⁴⁰ and glorify Him in the night too,⁴¹ and also at the retreat of the stars.⁴²

Contd. from p. 191

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prayer."

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

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