

Ma'ariful Qur'an

Commentary of the Holy Qur'an

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FOREWORD

By Justice (Retired) Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Ma'ariful-Qur'an is the name of a detailed Urdu commentary of the Holy Qur'an written by my father Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi' (RA). He was one of the eminent scholars who served as a professor and as a grand Mufti of Darul-Uloom Deoband, the well-known university of the Islamic Sciences in the sub-continent of India. In 1943, he resigned from Darul-Uloom, due to his active involvement in the Pakistan movement, and when Pakistan came into existence, he migrated to Karachi where he devoted his life for the homeland of the Muslims and served the country in different capacities. He also established Darul-Uloom Karachi, an outstanding institute of Islamic Sciences on the pattern of Darul-Uloom Deoband, which is regarded today as the biggest private institute of higher Islamic education in Pakistan.

He was a prolific writer who left behind him about one hundred books on different Islamic and literary subjects. Ma'ariful-Qur'an was the last great work he accomplished four years before his demise.

The origin of Ma'ariful-Qur'an refers back to the third of Shawwal 1373 A.H. (corresponding to the 2nd of July 1954) when the author was invited to give weekly lectures on the Radio Pakistan to explain selected verses of the Holy Qur'an to the general audience. This invitation was accepted by the author on the condition that he would not accept any remuneration for this service and that his lectures would be broadcast without any interference by the editing authorities. The permanent title of this weekly programme was "Ma'ariful-Qur'an " (The Wisdom of the Holy Qur'an) and it was broadcast every Friday morning on the network of Radio Pakistan.

This series of lectures continued for ten years up to the month of June 1964 whereby the new authorities stopped the programme for reasons best known to them. This series of lectures contained a detailed commentary on selected verses from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an up to the Surah Ibrahim (Surah no. 14).

This weekly programme of Radio Pakistan was warmly welcomed by the Muslims throughout the globe and used to be listened to by thousands of Muslims, not only in Pakistan and India but also in Western and African countries.

After the programme was discontinued, there was a flood of requests from all over the world to transfer this series in a book-form and to complete the remaining part of the Holy Qur'an in the shape of a regular commentary.

These requests persuaded the esteemed author to revise these lectures and to add those verses which were not included in the original lectures. He started this project in 1383 A.H. (1964) and completed the commentary of Surah al-Fatihah in its revised form and started the revision of Surah al-Baqarah. However, due to his numerous involvements he had to discontinue this task, and it remained unattended during the next five years.

In Shawwal 1388 (1969) the esteemed author suffered from a number of diseases which made him restricted to his bed. It was during this ailment that he restarted this work while on bed and completed Surah al-Baqarah in the same condition. Since then he devoted himself to the "Ma'ariful-Qur'an". Despite a large number of obstacles in his way, not only from the political atmosphere of the country and the difficult responsibilities he had on his shoulders in different capacities, but also from his health and physical condition, he never surrendered to any of them and continued his work with a miraculous speed until he accomplished the work in eight volumes (comprising of about seven thousand pages) within five years only.

After appearing in a regular book-form, Ma'ariful-Qur'an was highly appreciated and widely admired by the Urdu-knowing Muslims throughout the world. Thousands of copies of the book are still circulated every year, and the

demand for the book is so increasing that it has always been a problem for its publisher to satisfy the demand to its optimum.

A Few Words about the present English Translation of Ma'ariful-Qur'an

Let me say a few words about the present English translation of the Ma'ariful-Qur'an.

Although a large number of English translations of the Holy Qur'an is available in the market, yet no comprehensive commentary of the Holy Qur'an has still appeared in the English language. Some brief footnotes found with some English translations cannot fulfil the need of a detailed commentary. Besides, they are generally written by the people who did not specialize themselves in the Qur'anic sciences, and their explanatory notes do not often reflect the authentic interpretation of the Holy Qur'an. Some such notes are based on an arbitrary interpretation having no foundation in the recognized principles of the exegesis of the Holy Qur'an, and are thus misleading for a common reader.

On the other hand, during the last few decades, the Muslim population has increased among the English speaking countries in enormous numbers. These people and their new generations need a detailed commentary of the Holy Qur'an which may explain to them the correct message of the last divine book with all the relevant material in an authentic manner which conforms to the recognized principles of Tafsir (the exegesis of the Holy Qur'an).

Since Ma'ariful-Qur'an was the latest book written on these lines and was proved to be beneficial for a layman as well as for a scholar, it was advised by different circles that its English translation may fulfil the need.

It made me look for a person who might undertake the task, not only with his professional competence, but also with his commitment to serve the Holy Qur'an.

Fortunately, I succeeded in persuading Prof. Muhammad Hasan Askari, the well-known scholar of English literature and criticism, to undertake the translation. In the beginning he was reluctant due to his strong sense of responsibility in the religious matters, but when I assured him of my humble assistance throughout his endeavour, he not only agreed to the proposal, but started the work with remarkable devotion. Despite my repeated requests, he did never accept any honorarium or remuneration for his service. He was a chain-smoker. But he never smoked during his work on Ma'ariful-Qur'an, which sometimes lasted for hours.

In this manner he completed the translation of about 400 pages of the original Urdu book and 156 verses of the Surah al-Baqarah, but unfortunately, his sudden demise discontinued this noble effort. Strangely enough, the last portion he translated was the commentary of the famous verse:

And surely, We will test you with a bit of fear and hunger and loss in wealth and lives and fruits. And give good tidings to the patient who, when they suffer a calamity, say, 'We certainly belong to Allah and to Him we are about to return'. [2:155/2:156]

Prof. Askari passed away in 1977, and due to my overwhelming occupations during the next 12 years, I could not find out a suitable person to substitute him. It was in 1989, that Prof. Muhammad Shamim offered his services to resume the translation from where Prof. Askari had left it. I found in him the same sincerity, commitment and devotion I had experienced in the late Professor. Moreover, he had decided to devote the rest of his life to the service of the Holy Qur'an without any financial benefit. Here again I tried my best to persuade him to accept some kind of honorarium, but it was in vain. He started his work from the Verse 158 of Surah al-Baqarah and has now completed the translation of the first two volumes of the original Ma'ariful-Qur'an and is working on the third volume.

Both Prof. Muhammad Hasan Askari and Prof. Muhammad Shamim have insisted that their translations must be revised by me from the religious point of view. For this purpose, I have gone through the typescript of the translations of both of them and suggested some amendments where it was necessary.

The translation of Prof. Askari had been started at a time when the esteemed author of Ma'ariful-Qur'an was still alive. We were fortunate to receive some guide-lines from the author himself. He had advised the translators not to be too literal in translation to sacrifice the natural flow of the text. Moreover, he had emphasized that while rendering his book into English, the requirements of English readership must be kept in mind. Some discussions may be dispensed with. Similarly, many paragraphs may be condensed in the English version in order to avoid repetition.

The esteemed author had authorised me for suitable decisions in these matters. Both the learned translators, despite their earnest effort to reflect the original text as accurately as possible, have followed, in consultation with me, the said advices of the author himself. However they have never tried to sacrifice the original concept of the text for the beauty of language alone, particularly, in the juristic discussions of the book, they have been very strict in the translation, lest some change in the style should creep in and distort the accurate connotation of the Islamic injunctions. In such places, the reader may feel some difficulty. However, a more concentrate reading can easily remove it.

Translation of the Holy Qur'an

The original Urdu Ma'ariful-Qur'an had not given a new translation of the Holy Qur'an itself. Rather, the esteemed author had adopted the Urdu translations of Maulana Mahmoodul-Hasan (Shaikhul-Hind) and Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanavi on which he based his commentary. While rendering the book into English, we had three options about the translation of the Holy Qur'an:

- (a) To adopt anyone of the already available English translations of the Holy Qur'an, like those of Arberry, Pickthall or Abdullah Yousuf Ali.
- (b) To translate the Urdu translations used in the Ma'ariful-Qur'an into English.
- (c) To provide a new translation of our own.

After a great deal of consideration and consultation, we elected to work on the third option, i.e. to prepare a new translation of the Holy Qur'an. The reasons behind this decision were manifold which need not be detailed here. In short, we wanted to prepare a translation which may be closer to the Qur'anic text and easier to understand. For this purpose, we formed a committee with the following members:

1. Prof. Muhammad Shameem.
2. Mr. Muhammad Wali Raazi.
3. This humble writer.

This committee has accomplished the translation of the Holy Qur'an up to the Surah Yusuf and is still going on with this project.

The committee has all the famous available translations of the Holy text before it, and after a deep study of the relevant material found in the classical Arabic commentaries, lays down the new translation in as simple expressions as possible, While doing so, we have tried our best that the different possible interpretations of the Qur'anic text remain undisturbed, and the new translation accommodates as many of them as practicable. We have tried not to impose on our reader a particular interpretation where several interpretations were equally possible. However, where the translation could not accommodate more than one connotation, we have followed the one adopted by the majority of the classic commentators including Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanavi on whose translation the Ma'ariful-Qur'an is based.

Despite all these sincere efforts, one cannot avoid the admission that the exact translation of the Holy Qur'an is impossible. One cannot convey the glory and the beauty of the divine expression in any other language, let alone the English language which, despite its vast vocabulary, seems to be miserable when it comes to the expression of spiritual concepts. Therefore, even after observing all the precautions at our command, we feel that we were trying to translate a text which is as Arberry has rightly put it - totally untranslatable.

However, this is another humble effort to convey the basic message of the Holy Qur'an to a common reader in a simple manner. How far we have succeeded in this effort? Allah knows best.

The Scheme of the Translation

Now, here are some points to be kept in mind while consulting the translation.

1. Although the translators have tried their best to preserve not only the literal sense of the Holy text, but also the order of words and sentences, yet, while translating the idiomatic expressions, it is sometimes felt that the literal translation may distort the actual sense or reduce the emphasis embodied in the Arabic text. At such places effort has been made to render the Quranic sense into a closer English expression.
2. Both in the translation of the Holy Qur'an and in the commentary, a uniform scheme of transliteration have been adopted. The scheme is summarized in the beginning pages of the book.
3. The names of the prophets have been transliterated according to their Arabic pronunciation, and not according to their biblical form. For example, the biblical Moses has been transliterated Musa (AS), which is the correct Arabic pronunciation. Similarly, instead of biblical Abraham, the Qur'anic Ibrahim (AS) and instead of Joseph, the Qur'anic Yusuf (AS) has been preferred. However, in the names other than those of prophets, like Pharaoh, their English form has been retained.
4. A permanent feature of the original Urdu Ma'ariful-Qur'an is its "Khulasa-e-Tafseer" (Summary). Under every group of verses, the esteemed author has given a brief summary of the meaning of the verses to help understand them in one glimpse. This summary was taken from Bayan-ul-Qur'an, the famous commentary of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanavi. He has set up this summary by adding some explanatory words or sentences within brackets to his Urdu translation. The esteemed author of Ma'ariful-Qur'an has reproduced this summary (after simplification in some places) with the heading of Khulasa-e-Tafseer before his own commentary to the relevant group of verses.

While translating Ma'ariful-Qur'an into English, it was very difficult, rather almost impossible, to give that summary in the same fashion. Therefore, the translators have restricted themselves to the commentary of Ma'ariful-Qur'an and have not translated the Khulasa-e-Tafseer. However, where they found some additional points in the summary which are not expressly mentioned in the commentary, they have merged those points into the main commentary, so that the English reader may not be deprived of them.

It is only by the grace of Allah Almighty that in this way we could be able to present this first volume of this huge work. The second volume is already under composing, and we hope that Allah (SWT) will give us Tawfiq to bring the next volumes as soon as possible.

Acknowledgments are due to all those who contributed their efforts, advices and financial support to this work. Those deserving special reference are Prof. Abdul-Wahid Siddiqi, Dr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Mr. Abubakr Varachia and Mr. Shu'aib 'Umar (both of South Africa) Dr. Muhammad Ismail (of U.S.A), and Mr. Altaf' Barkhurdaria.

My elder brother Mr. Muhammad Wali Raazi has been associated with the work right from its beginning, and has always been a great source of guidance, support and encouragement. He is a member of the committee set up for the translation of the Holy Qur'an and his remarkable contributor, not only to the translation of the Holy Qur'an, but also to the translation of the commentary is unforgettable. He, too, has been contributing his valuable time

and effort to this project for years just for the sake of Allah. May Allah approve his contributions with His pleasure and bless him with the best of rewards both here and hereinafter.

As for Prof. Muhammad Shameem, the original translator of Ma'arif-ul-Qur'an after the demise of Prof. Muhammad Hasan Askari, all the formal words of acknowledgment seem to be miserably deficient for the valuable service he has rendered to this project. He has not only translated the book with precaution and love, but also devoted his whole life to the Holy Qur'an and spared no effort to bring this volume into light. Out of his commitment to the cause, he did not restrict himself to the work of a translator, but also undertook the function of an editor and a proof reader and supervised all other minute details of the publishing process. His devotion, sincerity and hard work is beyond any amount of admiration. May Allah grant him the best reward of His absolute approval for his noble work; Amin.

With these few words I am honoured to present this first volume to the readers. May Allah approve this effort and make it beneficial to the Ummah; Amin.

Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Darul-Uloom, Karachi

10th of Safar 1416 (9 July 1995)

PREFACE

This is an introduction comprising of some basic information about the Holy Qur'an its revelation, the history of its descention and preservation and similar other subjects. This introduction was written by me on the direction of my father, the esteemed author of Ma'ariful Qur'an. He wanted to write this introduction himself, but due his many other involvements and his deteriorating health, he could not do so. At this stage he directed me to write on these subjects. When I started writing the introduction, it became a lengthy volume itself and it was not proper to include it in the Ma'ariful-Qur'an as an introduction. Therefore the book was published separately under the title of "Uloom-ul-Qur'an" and I condensed its discussions to the present introduction, which was published in the beginning of the second edition of 'Ma'ariful-Qur'an'.

This introduction is translated into English by Prof. Muhammad Shameem after he accomplished the translation of the first volume of Ma'ariful-Qur'an. My book "Uloom-ul-Qur'an" is now available in English also. Those who like detailed discussions on these subjects may refer to it.

Muhammad Taqi Usmani

11th of Safar 1416 (10th of July 1995)

Wahy and its true nature

Since the Holy Qur'an was revealed to our beloved prophet Sayyidina Muhammad (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) by means of Wahy (revelation), an understanding of some particulars about Wahy is imperative at the very outset.

The need for Wahy

Every Muslim knows that Allah Almighty has sent man into this world as a matter of test, and in return for his being obligated with certain duties, the whole universe has been placed at his service. For this reason man, once he is in the world, must do two things:

1. He should make the best use of this world, and of things created in it.
2. While using this world to his advantage, he should keep the injunctions of Allah Almighty in sight and do nothing that goes against His will and pleasure.

For these two functions man needs knowledge. Therefore, unless he knows the reality of this world, the properties of different things and the manner in which they can be put to use, he cannot use anything in this world to his advantage. Likewise, unless and until he knows the will of Allah Almighty as to what pleases Him and what displeases Him, it will be impossible for him to lead a life in line with the will of Allah Almighty.

So Allah Almighty, along with the creation of man, has created three things through which he could continue receiving knowledge of the above-mentioned matters of concern. These are:

1. Man's senses, that is, the eyes, the ears, the nose, the mouth, the hands and the feet.
2. The reason.
3. The Wahy.

Consequently, man finds out many things through his senses, many others through reason, and the knowledge of things he cannot get through these two sources are bestowed upon him through Wahy.

The arrangement between these three sources of knowledge is such that each one has its limits, and a particular sphere of activity beyond which it does not work. In natural sequence, the knowledge of things man collects through his senses cannot be deduced through bland reason. For instance, you know by seeing a wall with your eyes that its colour is white. But, should you close your eyes and try to find out the colour of that wall on the sole strength of your reason, this will then be impossible. Similarly, the knowledge of things that comes through reason cannot be discovered by senses alone. For instance, you cannot find out as to who made that wall by simply seeing it with your eyes or touching it with your hands. Not at all, you rather need reason to arrive at that conclusion.

In short, reason gives no guidance as far as the five senses work efficiently, and when the five senses become helpless, reason starts functioning. But, even the guidance given by this reason is not unlimited. This too stops at a certain limit. Then there are things the knowledge of which can neither be acquired through senses nor through reason. For instance, to find out about this very wall, as to what manner of its use will please Allah Almighty and what manner of its use will displease Him, is possible neither through senses nor through reason. In order to give man the answer to such questions, the source that Allah Almighty has prescribed is what is known as Wahy. And the method it follows is that Allah Almighty selects one of His servants, ordains him as His messenger and to him He reveals His Word. This Word is Wahy.

This makes it clear that Wahy is the highest source of knowledge for man, which offers to him the answer to questions about his life which cannot be solved by means of reason and senses, but, he still has to have that knowledge. This further explains that reason and perception alone are not enough to show man the way. It is rather all the more necessary, almost inevitable, that the Divine Wahy be there for his guidance. Since Wahy is

basically needed where reason does not work, it is, therefore, not necessary that everything communicated through Wahy be compulsively comprehended through reason. On the contrary, as reason is no help in finding out the colour of some object since that is the job of the senses, so is the knowledge of many religious beliefs, the gracious giving of which is the sole prerogative of Wahy and not of reason. Furthermore, trusting reason alone for their comprehension is not sound and correct.

To begin with, it is totally senseless to discuss the issue of Wahy with a person who, God forbid, does not accept the very existence of God. But, for a person who believes in the existence of Allah Almighty and has faith in His perfect power, it is not at all difficult to understand that Wahy is a rational need, that it is possible and that it is there for real. If you have faith in the fact that this universe has been created by an absolutely powerful entity, He is the One who has sent man down here to accomplish some particular mission, how then is it possible to imagine that He, after once having created man, would leave him off in total darkness, without ever telling him why did he come into this world, what his duties were, where was he destined to go and how could he realize the purpose of his life? How could a person, whose sanity is still there, send one of his servants on a certain trip under a designated mission without ever telling him the purpose of the trip while he is leaving, nor explaining it to him later on through some message as to why he has been sent out there and what duties he is supposed to carry out during the trip? When a man of ordinary reason cannot do something like this, how can something like this be imagined with respect to the most Holy Lord of the Universe under Whose ultimate wisdom this whole system of the universe is functioning? After all, how is it possible that the Being, that did create such a mind-boggling system composed of the moon, the sun, the sky, the earth, the stars and the planets, would remain unable to institute some arrangement of communication with His servants, through 'Which human beings could be given guidance about the purpose of their lives? If there is Imaan or faith in the ultimate wisdom of Allah Almighty, then admitting that He did not forsake His servants in the dark, will become all the more necessary; rather on the contrary, He has surely instituted some regular system for their guidance. And so, this very regular system of guidance is known as Wahy (Revelation) and Risalah (Prophethood).

This makes it crystal clear that Wahy is not only a religious belief but also a rational need the rejection of which amounts to a rejection of the ultimate wisdom of Allah Almighty.

The Modes of Descent

This sacred sequence of Wahy (revelation) and Risalah (Prophethood) came to an end with the last of the prophets, Muhammad al-Mustafa (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam). Nevermore shall Wahy descend upon any man, nor there is any need for it. Wahy used to come to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) in several forms and modes. In a hadith from Sahih al-Bukhari, Sayyidah 'A'ishah (RA) says that Sayyidna Harith ibn Hisham (RA) once asked the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) as to how did Wahy come to him. The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said that 'there are times when I hear something like the chiming of bells and this mode of Wahy is the hardest on me. After that, when this chime-sequence ends, that which has been said by the sound seems to have been committed to my memory. And there are times when the angel appears before me in the shape of a man.' (Sahih al-Bukhari, 2/1)

As regards the likening of the sound of Wahy to the sound of bells in the hadith cited above, Shaykh Muhyy al-Din ibn al-'Arabi (RA) has explained it by saying that, in the first place, the sound of Wahy is continuous like the sound of a bell which does not break off in between; and in the second place, when the bell rings continuously, it generally becomes difficult for the listener to determine the direction of its sound because its sound seems to be coming from all directions. And the Divine Word too carries with it the distinction that it has no one single direction, in fact, the sound gives the impression of being heard from all directions. A correct realization of this phenomenon is just not possible without auditory experience; however, in order to bring this happening closer to common comprehension, the Holy Prophet ~ has simply likened it to the sound of bells. (Fayd al-Bari, 19,20/1).

With the descent of Wahy in this mode, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) came under very heavy strain. Sayyidah 'A'ishah (RA) says towards the end of this very hadith that she had seen the coming of Wahy to him during days of extreme winter. When the progression of Wahy ceased, his blessed forehead would have already become dripping-wet inspite of the chilly weather. In yet another narration, Sayyidah 'A'ishah (RA) relates: When Wahy came to him, his breath would seem to stop, the radiant face would change -- turning pale like the branch of a date palm, the front teeth would shiver from cold and he would perspire so much that its drops would roll like pearls. (Al-Itqan, 1/46)

On occasions, so much intensity would be generated in this state of Wahy that the animal he would be riding at that time would sit down, wilting under his weight. Once, when he was resting his blessed head on the lap of Sayyidna Zayd ibn Thabit (RA) there started the descent of Wahy in that very posture. This released so much weight on Sayyidna Zayd's thigh that it seemed to break. (Zad al-Ma'ad, 1/18,19)

There were times when a low-volumed sound of this Wahy was sensed by others as well. Sayyidna 'Umar (RA) says: When Wahy came to him, a sound somewhat similar to the buzzing of honey-bees could be heard close to his most bright face. (Tabwib Musnad Ahmad, Kitab al-Sirah al-N abaviyah, 20/212)

Under the second mode of Wahy, an angel would come to him in some human form and deliver Allah's message. Generally, on such occasions, Sayyidna Jibra'il (AS) used to come to him in the form of Sayyidna Dihyah al-Kalbi (RA) . Certainly, at other times, he has come in other forms as well. In any case, this mode of the coming of Wahy when it was brought by Sayyidna Jibra'il (AS) appearing in human form, was the easiest on the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) (Al-Itqan, 1/46).

The third mode of the coming of Wahy used to be that Sayyidna Jibra'il (AS) would appear as he was, without having taken on the shape of a man. But this has happened only thrice in his entire life-time. First of all, it was when the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) had himself wished to see him in his real form and shape. The second time, it was in the Mi'raj (the Ascent to Heaven), and the third time it was at Ajyad in Makkah al-Mukarramah during the very early days of Prophethood. The first two happenings stand proved authentically, however, the last one suffers from weak chains of authority and is, therefore doubtful. (Fath al-Bari. 1/18.19)

The fourth mode is distinguished by a direct, non-intermediary two-way conversation with Allah Almighty. This honour was bestowed upon the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) only once, that is, in Mi'raj, while awake. In addition to that, once it was in a dream as well that he was in a conversing situation with Allah Almighty.

Under the fifth mode of Wahy, it so happened that Sayyidna Jibra'il (AS) would, without appearing physically in any form whatsoever, let some words of the message fall into his heart. This is technically known as “nafth fi al-rau”: blowing into the heart) (Ibid).

The Chronology of the Revelation of the Qur'an

The noble Qur'an is, in fact, the Divine Word. It is, therefore, secure in the Preserved Tablet. The noble Qur'an says:

Rather, it is the glorious Qur'an in the Preserved Tablet (85:21-22)

Then, from the Preserved Tablet, its descention took place twice.

Once, the whole of it had been sent to al-Bayt al- 'Izzah, the most exalted House on the firmament of the world. The most exalted House (also known as al-Bayt al-Ma'mur) is a House facing Ka'bah that exists in the firmament as the place of worship for angels. This descention took place on the Night of Qadr (rendered as the Night of Power in English). The second time it used to be revealed to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)

gradually as needed, having reached its completion in twenty three years. These two modalities of the Qur'anic revelations become clear through the style of the noble Qur'an itself. In addition to that, al-Nasa'i, al-Baihaqi and al-Hakim and others have reported from Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas (RA) what can be summed up by saying that the first descention of the noble Qur'an to the firmament of the world took place all at one time and the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was blessed with the second descention gradually. (al-Itqan, v. 1, p. 41)

Explaining the wisdom behind the first descention of the noble Qur'an on the firmament facing the world, Imam Abu Shamah (RA) has said that it aimed at demonstrating the exalted majesty of the noble Qur'an, and at the same time, it was to tell the angels that this was the last book of Allah which is ready for descention for the guidance of the people of the earth.

Shaykh al-Zurqani (RA) makes yet another point when he says that this two-timed descention also aimed at stressing that this book is beyond all doubts, and it stands preserved at two more places other than the blessed heart of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam), that is, in the Preserved Tablet, and in the Exalted House. (Manahil al-'Irfan, v.1, p. 39).

It is almost agreed by all the scholars that the second gradual descention which was on the heart of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) began when his age was forty years. The beginning of this descention, as authentically reported, was in the Night of Qadr, and this was the date on which, some years later, the event of the Battle of Badr came to pass. However, nothing definite can be said about the exact date of Ramadan when this Night fell. There are some reports which identify that of the seventeenth Ramadan, while others place it on the nineteenth, and still others which indicate the Night of the twenty seventh. (Tafsir Ibn Jarir v. 10, p. 7)

The verses that came first

It is authentically said that the first verses to Come to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) were the verses from which Surah al-'Alaq begins. As in Sahih al-Bukhari, Sayyidah 'A'ishah (RA) while relating its background has said that the very first beginning of revelations to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) actually was through true dreams. Following that, came his zeal to worship in seclusion. During this period, he would spend night after night in the Cave of Hira' and stay in the state of 't'ikaaf { devoted to his 'ibadah (worship) when one day, right there in that cave, there came an angel from Allah Almighty and the very first thing he said was (**Iqra**: 'Read'). The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said: '**I am unable to read.**' After that, relating the event himself, he (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said that the angel, hearing this answer of mine, caught hold of me and embraced me with such force that I had to go through unbearable strain.' Then he released me and said: (**Iqra**: 'Read'). I said: 'I am unable to read.' Thereupon, he seized me the third time, gave a hard embrace and then released me. After that he said:

Recite with the Name of your Lord who created, created Man out of a blood-clot. Recite and Your Lord is Most Generous who taught by the Pen, taught Man what he did not know. [96:1-3]

These were the first verses to be revealed to him. Thereafter, the coming of Wahy stayed discontinued for three years. This period is known as the period of fatrah, that is, the period when Wahy was discontinued for a short interval of time. Then, it was after three years that the same angel who had visited him in the Cave of Hira became visible to him between the heaven and the earth. He read to him the verses of Surah al-Muddaththir. Thereafter, the sequence of Wahy was reactivated.

The Makki and Madani Verses

While looking at the titles of the Surahs of the Holy Qur'an, you may have noticed the entry, Makkan (or Meccan, Makkan, Makkiyyah) with some Surahs, and Madani (Medinan, Medinite, Madaniyyah) with some others. It is necessary to understand correctly what it means. In the terminology of the commentators, the 'Makkiyah' means a verse that was revealed to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) earlier than he actually reached

Madinah by way of hijrah (emigration). Similarly, the 'Madaniyah' or the Madani verse means that it was revealed after he migrated to Madinah. Some people take 'Makki to mean that the verse concerned was revealed in the city of Makkah, and so the 'Madani' is supposed to have been revealed in Madinah. This view is not correct because there are several verses which were not revealed in the city of Makkah, yet are called Makki because they had already been revealed before hijrah. As such, the verses that were revealed in Mina, 'Arafat, or during the Journey of Ascent (Mi'raj) are also called Makki. So much so, that the verses revealed during the journey of hijrah enroute to Madinah are also called Makki. Similarly, there are several verses which were not revealed in the city of Madinah, but they are Madani. For example, there were several journeys that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) had to undertake while going many hundred miles away from Madinah, and the verses revealed at all those places are called Madani anyway. So much so that the particular verses that were revealed on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah or the military campaign of Hudaibiyah in the city of Makkah proper or its environs are also called Madani. Accordingly, the Qur'anic verse:

going many hundred miles away from Madinah, and the verses revealed at all those places are called Madani anyway. So much so that the particular verses that were revealed on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah or the military campaign of Hudaibiyah in the city of Makkah proper or its environs are also called Madani.

Accordingly, the Qur'anic verse **إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا**

Surely, Allah commands you to fulfil trust obligations towards those entitled to them. [4:58]

is Madani although it was revealed in Makkah al-Mukarramah. (alBurhan, v. 1, p. 88, and Manahil al-'Irfan, v. 1, p. 88)

Then there are Surahs which are either totally Makki, or totally Madani'. For instance, Surah al-Muddaththir is wholly Makki and Surah 'Al-'Imran is wholly Madani. But, on occasions, it has so happened that one or some Madani verses find a place in the Surah which is wholly Makki. On other occasions, it has happened just the reverse. For instance, Surah al-A'raf is Makki, but in it the verses from (7:163) to (7:172) are Madani, similarly Surah al-Hajj is Madani but four of its verses, that is, those from (22:52) to (22:56) are Makki.

This also makes it clear that the incidence of a Surah being Makki or Madani is generally conditioned by the nature of the majority of its verses and so it happened frequently that the initial verses of a Surah which were revealed before Hijrah were regarded as Makki, although some of its verses may have been revealed later on following Hijrah. (Manahil al-'Irfan, v. 1, p. 192)

Characteristics of Makki and Madani Verses

The scholars of Tafsir, after having made a thorough investigation into the Makki and Madani Surahs, have come up with a set of characteristics that tell right off if a Surah is Makki or Madani. Some of these characteristics are recognized as universal rules while others hold good most of the time. The universal rules are as follows:

1. Every Siirah in which the word **KALLA** (never) appears is Makki. This word has been used 33 times in 15 Surahs, and all these verses are in the last half of the noble Qur'an.
2. Every Surah in which (according to the Hanafiyyah) there appears a verse of Sajdah is Makki.
3. Every Surah, with the exception of Surah al-Baqarah, in which the story of Adam and Iblis finds mention, is Makki.
4. Every Surah in which a permission of jihad or a description of its injunctions has been given is Madani.
5. Every verse which mentions the hypocrites is Madani.

The following characteristics are general and mostly frequent, that is, sometimes the contrary may happen, but usually and mostly it follows the said pattern:

- 1) In Makki Surahs, generally, the form of address used is "**o people**", and in Madani Surahs it is "**o believers**".
- 2) The Makki 'Ayat (Verses) and Surahs are generally short and brief while the Madani verses and chapters are long and detailed.
- 3) The Makki Surahs mostly consist of subjects such as, Oneness of Allah, Prophethood, affirmation of the Hereafter, the panorama of the Resurrection, words of comfort for the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) and events relating to the past communities, and in these, the number of injunctions and laws taken up is much less as compared with the Madani Surahs where family and social laws, injunctions of jihid and expositions of limits and duties appear frequently.
- 4) In Makki Surahs, most of the confrontation is against idolaters while in Madani Surahs it is against the people of the book and the hypocrites.
- 5) The style of Makki Surahs is more majestic. It has profusion of metaphors, similies and allegories, and the vocabulary used is extensive. Contrary to this, the style of the Madani Surahs is comparatively simple.

This difference in the style of Makki and Madani Surahs initially owes its origin to a variety of conditions, circumstances and addressees. Muslims had to deal mostly with the idolaters of Arabia during their Makkan life. No Islamic state was born yet. Therefore, during this period, more emphasis was laid on the correction of beliefs, reform of morals, logical refutation of the idolaters and the miraculous nature of the noble Qur'an. Contrary to this, an Islamic state had risen in the Holy city of Madinah. People were rushing into the fold of Islam, group after group, Idolatry stood refuted intellectually. The ideological confrontation was now wholly against the people of the book. Therefore, greater attention was paid to education in injunctions, laws, limits and duties, and on the refutation of the people of the book. The style adopted matched these objectives.

The Gradual Revelation of the Noble Qur'an

As said earlier, the noble Qur'an was not revealed to the Holy prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) suddenly and simultaneously. On the contrary, it was revealed, little by little, over a span of nearly twenty three years. At times, Sayyidna Jibra'il (AS) would come with a small verse, or even with some unit of a verse. Then, there were times when several verses would be revealed at one time. The smallest portion of the Qur'an which was revealed as such is **غَيْرُ أُولَى الضَّرَرِ** Ghairu-Aulidh-Darrar (al-Nisa': 4:94) which forms part of a long verse. On the other hand, the whole of Surah al-An'am was revealed at one time. (Ibn Kathir, v. 2, p. 122)

Rather than being revealed all at once, why was the Qur'an revealed little by little? The polytheists of Arabia had themselves put this question to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) Allah Almighty has taken it upon Himself to answer the question in the following words:

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ مَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلاً (٣٢) وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا

The disbelievers said, "Why has the Qur'an not been sent down upon him all at once?" (We did) like this, so that We may strengthen your heart thereby, and We have recited it very distinctly. They bring not to thee any similitude but that We bring thee the truth, and better in exposition" (25:32-33)

It is sufficient to understand a gist of the wisdom behind the gradual revelation of the Holy Qur'an as stated by Imam al-Razi (RA) in his explanation of this verse. He says:

1. The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was ummiy, that is, being unlettered, he did not read or write. So, had the entire Qur'an been revealed at one time, it would have been difficult to remember and

document. Contrary to this, Sayyidna Musa (RA) knew reading and writing, therefore, the Torah was revealed to him at one single time.

2. If the entire Qur'an had been revealed all at once, immediate compliance of all its injunctions would have become obligatory, and this would have gone against the wise graduation which has featured as a matter of concern in the Shari'ah of our Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam).
3. The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) had to go through ever-new tortures inflicted by his people. That Sayyidna Jibra'il (AS) came, again and again, with the words of the noble Qur'an, made his stand against these tortures bearable, and gave strength to his heart.
4. A large portion of the Qur'an is devoted to answers given to people who posed questions, while some other portion refers to various particular events. Therefore, the revelation of those verses was appropriate at the time when those questions were asked, or those events came to pass. This increased the 'insight of Muslims and when the Qur'an unfolded that which was unseen, its truth became all the more manifest. (al-Tafsir al-Kabir, v. 6, p. 336)

Sabab al-nuzul: (Cause of revelation)

The verses of the noble Qur'an are of two kinds. In the first place, there are the verses that Allah Almighty revealed on His own. Their revelation was not caused by some particular event or a question asked by someone. In the second place, there are those verses which were revealed in answer to some question or with reference to some event. This could be termed as the background of these verses. This background is known, in the terminology of the commentators, as the 'sabab al-nuzul (cause' of revelation) or the 'sha'n' of nuzul (the 'background' of revelation). For instance, take the verse in Surah al-Baqarah:

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَةَ حَتَّىٰ تُؤْمِنَ وَلَأَمَةٌ مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكَةٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ

Do not marry female associators unless they come to believe, and a Muslim slave girl is better than a female associator, even though she is liked by you. (2:221)

This verse was revealed in the wake of a particular event. During the days of Ignorance, Sayyidna Marthad ibn Abi Marthad al-Ghanavi (RA) had a relationship with a woman, named 'Anaq. After embracing Islam, he migrated to Madinah while that woman stayed behind in Makkah al-Mukarramah. There was an occasion when Sayyidna Marthad visited Makkah al-Mukarramah on a certain business. 'Anaq came to him with an invitation to sin. Sayyidna Marthad refused flatly and said: 'Now Islam has come between me and you, but should you so wish, I can marry you after clearing it with the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam).' After returning to Madinah, Sayyidna Marthad sought his permission to marry the woman he said he liked. Thereupon, this verse was revealed, and it prohibited marriage with mushrik women. (Asbab al-Nuzul by al-Wahidi, p. 38)

This event is the 'sha'n' or 'sabab' of nuzul (cause' or 'background' of revelation) behind the verse mentioned above. The background of revelation is, therefore, very important in the exegesis of the noble Qur'an. There are many verses the meaning of which cannot be correctly understood unless the circumstances underlying their revelation become known .

The Seven Readings of the Holy Qur'an

In order that the noble Qur'an becomes easily recitable, Allah Almighty has blessed the Muslim community with special convenience by allowing it to read the words of the Qur'an in more than one way. If there are situations when a person is unable to pronounce some words in one manner, he could recite it in another. It appears in a hadith of Sahih Muslim that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was once sitting by the pond of Banu Ghifar while Angel Jibrail(AS) came and said: 'Allah Almighty has commanded you to ask your community to recite the Qur'an following one method of reading.' He said: 'I seek from Allah His pardon and forgiveness. My people do not have the ability to do so.' Then, Angel Jibra'il returned to him and said: 'Allah Almighty has

commanded you to let your people recite the Qur'an following two readings.' He said: 'I seek pardon and forgiveness from Allah Almighty. My people do not have the ability to do even that.' Then, Jibra'il came the third time and .said: 'Allah Almighty has commanded you to let your people recite the Qur'an following three readings.' Again he said: 'I seek pardon and forgiveness from Allah Almighty. My people do not have the ability to do even that.' Then he came the fourth time and said: 'Allah Almighty has commanded you to let your people recite the Qur'an following seven readings. So, whichever of these they follow to read the Qur'an, their recitation will be correct.' (Manahil al-'Irfan, v. 1, p. 33)

Accordingly, there is yet another HadLth where the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has said:

This Qur'an has been revealed covering seven versions. So from out of these, recite in a way that is easy on you.

What is meant by 'Seven Versions' in this saying of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)? There are several scholarly positions in this connection but according to scholars who have conducted painstaking and exhaustive research on the subject, the weightier meaning of this expression is that the variations found in different readings of the Holy Qur'an are of seven types. These are as follows:

The difference in nouns:

This includes the difference concerning singular, dual, plural, as well as, masculine and feminine. For instance, in one reading it is تمت كلمة ربك while in another تمت كلمات ربك

The difference in verbs:

That there be past in one reading, the present in another and the imperative in yet another. For instance, it is ربنا ربنا بعد بين اسفارنا in one reading, while ربنا بعد بين اسفارنا in another.

The difference in the placement of diacritical marks:

That which shows variance in 'rab, which reflects variance in grammatical mode of a word and is demonstrated through desinential inflections, such' as kasrah, Fatbah, Dammah. For instance, reading لا يُضَارُّ كَاتِبٌ as لا يُضَارُّ كَاتِبٌ

The difference caused by addition and deletion of words:

That there be some word missing in one reading while it has been added on in another; for instance, the words تجرى من تحتها الانهار appear in one reading while the words تجرى تحتها الانهار appear in another:

The difference of precedence and succession:

That there is a word which precedes in one reading, while it succeeds in the other. For instance وجاءت سكرة الحق and وجاءت سكرة الموت بالحق

The difference caused by transposition:

This happens when a word found in one reading is replaced by another word in another. For instance ننشزها and ننشزها also فتبينوا and فتثبتوا and طلع and طلع

The difference caused by manners of reading:

It includes variations in *tafkhim* (velarization, making sound heavy), *tarqiq* (making a letter sound soft), *imala* (inclination; bending the sound of a short vowel), madd (prolongation), qasr (to shorten), hamz: hamzation (providing a letter with hamzah), izhar (clear pronunciation) and idgham (assimilation). It means that, by doing these, the actual word does not change but the mode of its pronunciation does change. For instance, the word, 'موسى' is rendered as موسى in one of the readings.

Anyhow, many readings were revealed incorporating these seven types of different renderings. This difference between them really made no difference in meaning. The latitude so given was aimed at making recitation easy.

In the beginning, people were not totally used to the style of the Qur'an, therefore, many readings were permitted within the radius of these even types. But, it was the blessed practice of the Holy (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) that he would go through the entire revealed Qur'an with Sayyidna Jibra'il (AS) during the month of Ramadan every year. The year he left this mortal world, that was the year he did so twice. This 'daur' or meticulous re-reading of the Qur'an is called "Al-Ardhatal-Akhira" (last review). On this occasion, many readings were abrogated. Only readings retained were the ones which continue to stay preserved to this day with uninterrupted succession.

Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) during the period of his khilafah, arranged to have seven copies of the noble Qur'an prepared in order to remove misgivings regarding the recitation of Qur'an. He incorporated all readings in these seven copies by leaving the calligraphed verses of the noble Qur'an without dots and desinences (the vowel-points) so that the text could be read in accordance with whichever reading one wished to follow from among the very readings cited. Thus most of the readings merged into this script, and the readings that could not merge into the script were saved by him when he elected to have one copy written according to one reading, and another, in accordance with another reading. The community demonstrated such care and diligence in having the fondly-remembered readings collected in these copies that Qira'ah developed into a branch of knowledge in its own right, and there rose hundreds of scholars, reciters and memorizers of the Holy Qur'an who spent their entire spans of life to keep it preserved and protected.

What actually happened was that when Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) sent the seven copies of the noble Qur'an to various areas, he had also sent particular reciters who could teach how to recite them. So, when these revered reciters reached their designated areas, they taught people to read the Qur'an in accordance with their respective readings. These different readings spread out among people. At this stage, some people bequeathed their lives to memorize different readings, and in training others to continue the discipline. This is how the foundation of the 'science of readings' was laid and people from different parts of the Islamic world started turning to the masters of the discipline to achieve the highest of excellence in it. Some memorized only one reading, others did two or three or seven, or even more than that. In this connection, a standard rule was accepted 'as norm throughout the ummah and it was invariably followed everywhere. It stipulated that only such reading (qira'ah) will be accepted as being the Qur'an which fulfils three conditions:

There is room for it in the script of 'Uthmani' copies of the Qur'an.

It conforms to the grammar of the Arabic language.

It should have, provenly -- with sound authority, originated from the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) and be well-known among the masters of readings, that is, the Imams of Qira'ah.

A reading which lacks even one of these three requirements cannot be considered as part of the Qur'an. Thus a large number of readings continued to be reported in uninterrupted succession. Then, as a matter of convenience, it so happened that an Imam started giving instructions in one, or some selected readings, and that particular reading became identified with his name. Then, scholars started writing books to collect these readings. So, Imam Abu 'Ubayd Qasim ibn Sallam, Imam Abu Hatim Sijistani, Qari Isma'il and Imam Abii Ja'far al-Tabari were the first among those who compiled books in this field which included more than twenty readings. Then came the great scholar, Abu Bakr ibn Mujahid (died 324 Hijrah) who wrote a book in which he had included readings from seven qaris (reciters) only. This book of his became so popular that these readings from the seven qaris became much more famous as compared with those of other qaris. In fact, some people got used to thinking that these are the only sound readings coming in uninterrupted succession. Although, the truth of the matter is that 'Allamah ibn Mujahid (RA) has collected these seven readings in one place just by chance. He never meant that readings other than these were wrong or unacceptable. This act of 'Allamah ibn Mujahid created yet another

misunderstanding when some people began to think that “Sabata-Ahraf” (seven versions) means just these seven readings which have been collected by Ibn Mujahid. Although, it has been explained earlier that these seven readings are simply a part of sound readings, otherwise every reading that fulfils the above-mentioned three conditions perfectly is sound, acceptable and included within the seven versions (Huruf) in which the noble Qur'an was revealed.

The Seven Qaris

Anyhow, the seven qaris who became most famous as a result of this act of 'Allamah Ibn Mujahid (RA) are:

'Abdullah Ibn Kathir al-Dari (died 120 Hijrah):

He was fortunate enough to have seen Sayyidna Anas Ibn Malik (RA), 'Abdullah Ibn Zubayr (RA) and Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (RA) from among the Companions. His reading became more famous in Makkah al-Mukarramah well-known among those who transmitted his rendition are Bazzi and Qambal, may Allah have mercy on them all .

Nafi' Ibn 'Abd Al-Rahman Ibn Abi al-Nu'aym (died 169 Hijrah):

He had the benefit of learning from seventy successors to the Companions who were direct disciples of Sayyidna 'Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (RA), 'Abdullah Ibn Abbas (RA) and Abu Hurayrah (RA) . His reading became more famous in Madinah and among those who transmitted his rendition, Abii Musa Qalun (died 220 Hijrah) and Abu Sa'id Warsh (died 197 Hijrah) are better known.

'Abdullah al-Hisbi, better known as Ibn 'Amir (died 118 Hijrah):

He was fortunate to have seen Sayyidna Nu'man Ibn Bashir (RA) and Wathilah Ibn Asqa (RA) from among the Companions. He had learnt the art of Qur'anic reading from Mughirah Ibn Shihab al-Makhziimi (RA) who was a disciple of Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA). His reading gained currency mostly in Syria, and more famous among those who transmitted his rendition are Hisham and Dhakwan.

Abu 'Amr Zabban Ibn al-'Ala (died 154 Hijrah):

He has reported his rendition from Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas and 'Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (RA) through Mujahid and Sa'id Ibn Jubayr (RA). His reading became fairly well-known in Basrah. Abii 'Umar al-Dawri (died 246 Hijrah) and Abii Shu'ayb al-Susi (died 261 Hijrah) are among the more famous transmitters of his rendition.

Hamzah Ibn Hablab al-Zayyat, ex-slave of Ikramah Ibn Rabi' al-Taymi (died 188 Hijrah):

He is a disciple of Sulayman al-A'mash, who was a disciple of Yahya Ibn Waththab, who was a disciple of Zirr Ibn Hubaysh, and he had the benefit of learning from Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA), Ali (RA) and 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (RA). Among his transmitters, Khalf Ibn Hisham (died 188 Hijrah) and Khallad Ibn Khalid (died 220 Hijrah) are more famous.

'Aim Ibn Abi al-Najid al-Asadiyy (died 127 Hijrah):

Through Zirr Ibn Hubaysh, he is a disciple of 'Abdullah Ibn Masud (RA) and through Abii 'Abd al-Rahman Sulami and al-Asadiyy, he is a disciple of Sayyidna Ali (RA) . More famous among the transmitters of his rendition are Shu'bah Ibn 'Ayyash (died 193 Hijrah) and Hafs Ibn Sulayman (died 180 Hijrah). Generally, the recitation of the Holy Qur'an these days is made following the rendition of this very Hafs Ibn Sulayman.

Abu al-Hasan 'Aii Ibn Hamzah al-Kisa~ (died 189 Hijrah):

Among his transmitters, Abii al-Harith Marwazi (died 240 Hijrah) and Abu 'Umar al-Dawri (who is also a transmitter of Abu 'Amr) are better known. The readings of the later three became more common in Kufah.

As it has been submitted earlier that several other readings, other than these seven, are sound and have been reported in uninterrupted succession. However, when the misunderstanding that sound readings are limited to these seven started gaining currency, several scholars (for example, 'Allamah Shadha'li and Abi Bakr Ibn Mihran) collected, instead of seven, ten readings in one book. Thereupon, the term, "Al-qira'at al-Asharah" or "Ten

Readings" became famous. In these ten readings, the readings by the following three were also included in addition to those of the seven mentioned above:

Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Hadrami (died 205 Hijrah):

His rendition was famous mostly in Basrah,

Khalf ibn Hisham (died 205 Hijrah):

who is also a transmitter of the rendition of Hamzah. His rendition was common mostly in Kufah.

Abu Ja'far Yarid ibn al-Qa'qa' (died 130 Hijrah):

His rendition found wider currency in Madinah al-Tayyibah.

Abu al-Faraj Shambudhi (died 388 Hijrah):

who was a resident of Baghdad.

Some scholars have counted Sulayman al-A'mash among the fourteen qaris in place of Shambudhi, Out of these, the first ten readings are credited with uninterrupted succession as vouched by sound authority.

Other than these are Shadhhdh or rare. (Manahil al'Irfan with reference to Munjid al-Muqri'in by ibn al-Jazri).

The Preservation of the Holy Qur'an In the days of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)

Since the noble Qur'an was not revealed all at once, on the contrary, different verses from it used to have been revealed as and when appropriate, therefore, it was not possible from the very beginning to write and preserve it in a book form. So, during the initial stage of Islam, major emphasis was laid on memory as a means of preserving the noble Qur'an. When Wahy used to come in the very beginning, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) would tend to repeat its words instantly so that they would be memorized well enough. Thereupon, Allah Almighty directed him through the verses of Surah al-Qiyamah that he need not repeat words in a hurry immediately as Wahy came. Allah Almighty would Himself endow him with a memory that he will be unable to forget the words of the Wahy once its descension has been completed. So it was that the moment the Qur'anic verses would come to him, they would be committed to his memory the next moment. Thus the blessed chest of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was the most protected vault of the noble Qur'an, in which there was no chance of even some common mistake, editing or alteration. Moreover, as a matter of additional precaution, he used to recite the Qur'an before angel Sayyidna Jibra'il (AS) every year during the month of Ramadan; and the year he left this mortal world he completed cumulative review of Qur'anic recitation (daur) twice with Sayyidna Jibra'il (AS) (Sahih al-Bukhari with Fath al-Bari, p. 36, v. 9).

Again, as it was, he would not restrict his teaching of the Companions to just the meanings of the noble Qur'an, but had them memorize its words as well. Then, the revered Companions were themselves so enamoured with the desire to learn and remember the noble Qur'an that everyone of them was anxious to get ahead of the other. There were women who claimed no mahr (dower) from their husband except that they would teach the Qur'an.

Hundreds of Companions, freeing themselves from all other concerns, had devoted their whole lives for this purpose. Not only did they memorize the Qur'an but also went on repeating it within their nightly prayers. When someone migrated from Makkah al-Mukarramah and came to Madinah al-Tayyibah, says Sayyidna 'Ubadah ibn Samit (RA) the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) would entrust him to one of us Ansars so that he could teach Qur'an to the newcomer. The Mosque of the Prophet was so filled with voices generated by learners and teachers of the Qur'an that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) had to ask them to lower their voices so that mistakes are not made (Manahil al-Irfan, Pg 234).

So, within a fairly short time, there was on hand a large group of the noble Companions who had the glorious Qur'an all committed flawlessly to their memory. Included in this group were, in addition to the Four Guided Caliphs, persons like Sayyidna Talhah (RA), Sayyidna Sa'd (RA), Sayyidna Ibn Mas'ud (RA), Sayyidna Hudhayfah ibn Yaman (RA), Sayyidna Salim Mowla abi Hudhayfah (RA), Sayyidna Abu Hurayrah (RA), Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (RA), Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas (RA) Sayyidna 'Ami' ibn al-'Aas (RA), Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (RA), Sayyidna Mu'awiyah (RA), Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn Zubayr (RA), Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn al-Sa'ib (RA), Sayyidah 'A'ishah (RA), Sayyidah Hafsa (RA), Sayyidah Umm Salmah (RA)

In short, memorization of the Qur'an was given more emphasis in early Islam as this was the only protected and trust-worthy method given the conditions of that time. The reason is that the number of people who could read or write was very limited in those days. The means of publishing books, such as the printing press, etc., were not there. Therefore, in that situation, if writing was taken to be sufficient, it would have neither been possible to spread out the Qur'an on an extensive scale nor to protect it reliably. In its place, Allah Almighty had blessed the people of Arabia with a memory of such dimensions that thousands of poetic lines would normally rest in the memory of one person after another. Ordinary, run-of-the-mill villagers would remember by heart their genealogies and those of their families, and unbelievably enough - even those of their horses! Therefore, this power of memory was well utilized for the conservation and protection of the noble Qur'an and it was through it that the verses and chapters of the noble Qur'an reached all over into the far corners of Arabia.

The writing of Wahy

Besides having the Qur'an committed to memory, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) made special arrangements to have the Qur'an committed to writing as well. Sayyidna Zayd ibn 'Thabit (RA) says: 'I used to write down the words of Wahy for him. When Wahy came to him he felt burning with heat and the drops of perspiration would start rolling down on his body like 'pearls. When this state would go away from him, I would present myself before him with a shoulder-bone or a piece (of something else). He would go on dictating and I would go on writing. When I would be finished with writing, the sheer weight of copying the Qur'an would give me the feeling that my leg is going to break and I would never be able to walk. In any case, when I would be finished with writing, he would say: 'Read'. I would read it back to him. If there was a shortcoming, he would have it corrected and then let it be known to people (Majrna' al-Zawaid with reference to Tabrani 1/156).

Besides Sayyidna Zayd ibn Thabit (RA) there were many other Companions who carried out the duty of committing the Wahy to writing. Some of those who can be specially mentioned, in addition to the Four Guided Caliphs, are Sayyidna 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b (RA), Sayyidna Zubayr ibn 'Awwam (RA), Sayyidra Mu'awiyah (RA), Sayyidna Mughirah ibn Shu'bah (RA), Sayyidna Khalid ibn al-Walid (RA), Sayyidna Thabit ibn al-Qays (RA), Sayyidna Aban ibn Said (RA) and others (Fath al-Bari, 9/18)

Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) says that it was the blessed practice of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) so that he, soon after the revelation of a certain portion of the Qur'an, would pointedly instruct the scribe of the Wahy to write it in such Surah after such and such verse (for details see Fath al-Bari, 9/18 and Zad al-Ma'ad 1130).

Since paper was not available in Arabia during those days, therefore, these Qur'anic verses were mostly written on stone slabs, parchments, date branches, bamboo units, tree leaves and animal skins. However, at times, paper pieces have also been used (Ibid.; 9/11)

Thus, there existed, during the times of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) a copy of the noble Qur'an which he had arranged to be committed to writing under his supervision. Although, it was not there as a formally prepared book, but it certainly was there in the form of various units of available writing materials. Along with it, it was also the practice of some revered Companions that they would make copies of the Qur'anic verses and keep them for personal recollection. This practice was common since the very early period of Islam. Accordingly,

much before Sayyidna 'Umar (RA) embraced Islam, his sister and brother-in-law had in their possession verses of the Qur'an which they had written and kept in book form (Sirah ibn Hisham).

Preservation: In the period of Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA)

However, it was characteristic of all copies of the noble Qur'an made during the days of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) that they were either written on different available writing surfaces, for instance, a verse would appear on parchment, another on tree leaf and yet another on a bone; or they were not complete copies. One Companion would have only a single Surah in his record while someone else would have five or ten Surahs and some others will have only a few verses. Then there were Companions having in their possession explanatory sentences as well along with the text of the verses.

On these grounds, Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) during his tenure of Khilafah, thought it necessary to bring together all these scattered units of the Qur'an and thus have them preserved. The motives and the methods behind this great achievement of his have been explained in detail by Sayyidna Zayd ibn Thabit (RA) when he says: "One day, soon after the battle of Yamamah, Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) sent a message calling me in. When I reached him, Sayyidna 'Umar (RA) was present there. Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) said to me: 'Umar has come just now and he tells me that a large group of Huffaz (those who had committed the Qur'an to memory) have met their death as martyrs in the battle of Yamamah, If the Huffaz of the noble Qur'an continue to meet their shahadah (martyrdom) in this manner, I am afraid a large portion of the Qur'an may just go extinct. So, in my view, you should begin the task of having the Qur'an collected together under your order'. I said to 'Umar (RA): 'How can we do what the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) himself did not do?' 'Umar (RA) replied: 'By God, this is for nothing but good.' After that, this is what 'Umar (RA) continued telling me, until I too started seeing the truth, and now, my view was the same as 'Umar's', After that Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) told me: 'You are young, and intelligent. We have no doubts about you. You have been working as a scribe of Wahy as well under the supervision of the Messenger of Allah (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) , so you search and collect the verses of the 'noble Qur'an'."

Sayyidna Zayd ibn Thabit (RA) says: "By God, had these blessed people commanded me to haul some mountain, that would have been much less weightier than this duty of collecting the Qur'an. I said to them: 'How are you doing something that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) did not do?' Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) said: 'By God, this is good, nothing but good.' After that, this is what Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) kept saying to me again and again until Allah Almighty put my heart at rest for the same view that was the view of Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) and 'Umar (RA). Consequently, I started searching for the Verses of the Qur'an and it was from the branches of date palms, slabs of stones and hearts of people that I finally collected the noble Qur'an." (Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab Fada'il al-Qur'aan)

At this point while we are dealing with the process of the collection of the Qur'an, we should have a clear perception of the method used by Sayyidna Zayd ibn (RA) . As mentioned earlier, he was himself a Hafiz of the Qur'an, therefore, he could have written down the whole Qur'an from his memory. In addition to that, there were hundreds of Huffaz (memorizers of the Qur'an: plural of Hafiz) present at that time; the noble Qur'an could have still been written down by entrusting the duty to a selected group from out of them.

Also, the copies of the noble Qur'an committed to writing during the times of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) could have been used by Sayyidna Zayd to make his copy of the Qur'an. But he, guided by his caution and concern, did not limit himself to anyone of the many methods available. On the contrary, by using all these methods simultaneously, he did not allow any verse to be included in his master copy of the Qur'an unless he received written and verbal testimonies proving its uninterrupted succession. In addition to that, the verses that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) had arranged to be written under his supervision, were still preserved by the Companions. Sayyidna Zayd collected them together so that the new copy be made from them. Consequently, a public proclamation was made to the effect that anyone possessing any number of written verses

of the noble Qur'an should bring them over to Sayyidna Zayd. When a written verse was brought to him by someone, he used to verify its authenticity by the following four methods:

- 1) To begin with, he tested its reliability against his own memory.
- 2) Then, Sayyidna 'Umar (RA) too was a Hafiz of Qur'an, and as proved by reliable reports, Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) had assigned him too to work with Sayyidna Zayd on this project. When someone came with some verse, Sayyidna Zayd (RA) and Sayyidna 'Umar (RA) used to receive it jointly (Fath al-Bari with reference to ibn Abi Dawud),
- 3) No written verse was accepted until such time that two trustworthy witnesses had testified to the fact that the particular verse was written in the presence of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)(al Itqan, 1/10)
- 4) After that, these verses in writing were collated with collections that different Companions had prepared for themselves (al-Burhan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an, by Zarkashi, 1/238).

If this functional methodology behind the collection of the Qur'an during the period of Sayyidna Abii Bakr (RA) kept in mind, it would become perfectly simple to understand what Sayyidna Zayd ibn Thabit (RA) meant when he said: "I found the last verses of Surah al-Bara'ah beginning with Surely, (9:128) there has come to you, from your midst, a Messenger... with Sayyidna Abu Khudhaymah (RA) only. They were not found with anyone else except him."

This never means that no person other than Sayyidna Abu Khudhaymah (RA) remembered these verses, or somebody else did not have these in the written form, or anyone other than him did not know of their being part of the Qur'an. On the contrary, it means that these verses were not found with anyone from among those who were coming along with different verses written as dictated by the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam). Otherwise, as far as the fact of these verses being part of the Qur'an is concerned, everyone knew it in an uninterrupted succession. There were hundreds of Companions who remembered it as well. Moreover, these were available in writing with Companions who possessed complete collections of the Qur'anic verses. But, among those written separately under the supervision of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) this verse was found only with Sayyidna Abu Khudhaymah (RA) and not with anyone else (al-Burhan, 1/234-45).

So, in every way possible, it was with great caution and concern that Sayyidna Zayd ibn Thabit (RA) by collecting the Qur'anic verses, wrote them out in an organized form on pages of paper (al-Itqan, 1160).

But, each Surah was written in separate folios, therefore, this copy was composed of many folios. In the terminology of Qur'anic Studies, this copy is called the "Umm" (literally, 'the mother', meaning 'the original') and it had the following features:

In this copy, the Qur'anic verses were indeed arranged in accordance with the order identified by the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) but the Surahs were not so arranged, rather they were written separately (Ibid),

Incorporated in this copy were all seven Huruf (versions) of the Qur'an (which have been explained earlier). (Manhil al'Irfan, 1/246 and Tarikh al-Qur'an by al-Kurdi, p. 28)

Collected here were all verses the recitation of which has not been abrogated.

The purpose of having this copy made in writing was to prepare an organized document with the collective endorsement of the whole ummah, so that, reference can be made to it when needed.

These folios committed to writing on the orders of Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) remained with him during his life-time. Then, they remained with Sayyidna 'Umar (RA) . After the martyrdom of Sayyidna 'Umar, they were transferred to

the custody of Umm al-Mu'minin Sayyidah Hafsa (RA). After the death of Umm al-Mu'minin Sayyidah Hafsa (RA), Marwan ibn al-Hakam had these burnt since the copies of Qur'an ordered by Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) were ready at that time, and a consensus of the ummah had already been reached to the effect that following these copies of the Qur'an, in script and arrangement of Surahs, was obligatory. Marwan ibn al-Hakam thought it inadvisable to let any copy which was contrary to this script and arrangement remain in existence (Fath al-Bari, 9/16)

Preservation: In the period of Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA)

When Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) became Khalifah, Islam had grown out of Arabia reaching into the far-flung areas of Byzantium and Iran. As people from new areas embraced Islam, they would learn the noble Qur'an from the Mujahidin of Islam or from the traders because of whom they had found the blessing of Islam. On the other side, you have already read that the noble Qur'an was revealed incorporating seven versions with various readings, and different Sahabah. (Companions) had learnt it from the Holy Prophet ~ in accordance with different readings, therefore, every Companion taught Qur'an to his disciples in accordance with that particular reading which they had themselves learnt from the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam). In this manner, this difference in readings reached far-out countries. Until such time that people knew that the noble Qur'an has been revealed incorporating seven Huruf (versions) no harm was done by this difference. However, when this difference reached those far-out countries, and the fact that the noble Qur'an has been revealed incorporating different readings was not fully publicised there, disputes among people started showing up. Some people began to insist on their reading as correct and that of others as incorrect. On the one hand, these disputes posed the danger that people would fall into the grave error of declaring the readings of the noble Qur'an which have followed in uninterrupted succession as incorrect. On the other hand, there was no such standard copy available throughout the Islamic world which could become the rallying authority for the entire ummah, except, of course, the copy committed to writing by Sayyidna Zayd ibn Thabit (RA) which was there in Madinah. Since other copies were written individually, and in them, there was no provision to incorporate all the readings, therefore, the only reliable method to resolve these disputes was that copies which incorporate all valid readings be spread out all over the Islamic world, and then, by seeing them it could be decided as to which reading is correct and. which, incorrect. Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) accomplished this very remarkable feat during the period of his Khilafah.

Details of this feat, as given in hadith narrations, inform us that Sayyidna Hudhayfah ibn Yaman (RA) was engaged in jihad on the Armenian-Azerbaijan front. There he noticed that differences were rising among people a8Out readings of the noble Qur'an. So, on his return to Madinah, he went straight to Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) and once there, he pleaded: 'Ya Amir al-Mu'minin! Before this Ummah falls a prey to differences in the book of Allah like the Jews and Christians, you should do something a8Out it.' Sayyidna 'Uthman asked: 'What is the matter?' In reply, Sayyidna Hudhayfah (RA) said: 'I was on jihil mission fighting on the Armenian front. There I saw people of Syria following the reading of Ubayy ibn Ka'b (RA) which would not be familiar to the people of 'Iraq, and the people of Iran follow the reading of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (RA) which would not be familiar to the people of Syria. As a result of this, they are charging each other of being kafirs.'

In fact, Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) had himself sensed the danger much earlier. He was told that there were cases right there in Madinah al-Tayyibah itself where a teacher of the noble Qur'aan 'would teach the text to his disciples in accordance with one reading, and another teacher would do so in accordance with another reading. In this way, when the disciples of different teachers came together, differences would crop up between them, and there were occasions when this difference would extend to teachers, and they too, would declare each other's reading to be incorrect. When Sayyidna Hudhayfah ibn Yaman (RA) too invited his attention to this danger, Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) convened a meeting of some highly-regarded Companions and sought their advice. He said: I have been informed that there are people who say to each other things like "my reading is better than yours" - and this could touch the extreme limits of kufr. So, what is your opinion in this connection?' The

Companions themselves asked Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) : 'What are your own thoughts on this subject?' Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) said: "I believe we should unite everyone on one book so that we face no difference or division." The Companions, approving of this opinion, supported Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA).

Consequently, Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) gathered people together and delivered a sermon and in it he said: "You who live so close to me in Madinah, if you can falsify each other and differ with each other in respect of the readings of the noble Qur'an, it is quite obvious that those who are far away from me will be indulging in falsification and disputation on a much larger scale. Therefore, let everyone get together and come up with a copy of the Qur'an following which becomes obligatory for all."

With this in view, Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) sent a message to Sayyidah Hafsa (RA) requesting her to let them have the blessed folios of the Qur'anic text (prepared under the orders of Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) which she had in her custody). He promised that these will be returned to her after copies have been made. Sayyidah Hafsa (RA) sent these pages of the Qur'an to Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA), He then formed a group of four Companions which was composed of Sayyidna Zayd ibn 'Thabit, Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn Zubayr, Sayyidna Sa'id ibn al-'Aas and Sayyidna 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Harith ibn Hisham (RA) . This group was entrusted with the duty of making several copies from the original copy of Sayyidna Abu Bakr's Qur'anic folios and making sure that Surahs too are arranged in order. Out of these four Companions, Sayyidna Zayd was an Ansari, while the rest of the three were Qurayshis. Therefore, Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) said to them: "When you and Zayd differ in respect of any portion of the Qur'an (that is, differ as to how a certain letter should be written) you write it in the language of the Quraysh because the noble Qur'an has been revealed in their very language."

Basically, this duty was entrusted to only four distinguished persons named above, but later on, other Companions were also attached to help them out. (Fath al-Bari, pp. 13-15, v. 9)

They performed the following functions in connection with the writing of the Qur'an:

1. In the copy prepared during the period of Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA), Surahs were not placed in sequence, rather each Surah was written separately. They wrote down all Surahs in their proper sequence in a single copy. (Mustadrak, 2/229)
2. The verses of the noble Qur'an were written in a way so that all readings backed by uninterrupted succession could be incorporated within their script. Therefore, no dots or desinential marks were placed on them so that the text could be recited in accordance with all readings that are supported by uninterrupted succession. For instance, they wrote ننسرھا in order that it could be read both ننشرھا and ننشرھا, because both readings are correct. (Manahil al- 'Irfan, 1/253-254)
3. Upto this time, there existed only one single copy of the noble Qur'an - complete, authentically standard and collectively attested by the whole ummah. These distinguished persons prepared more than one copy of this newly organized Mushaf (copy of the Qur'an).

It is generally believed that Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) had accomplished the preparation of five copies, but Abu Hatim Sijistani says that a total of seven copies were prepared. Out of these one was sent to Makkah al-Mukarramah, one to Syria, one to Yaman, one to Bahrain, one to Basrah and one to Kufah, and one was preserved in Madinah al-Tayyibah.

4. To accomplish the task cited above, these revered elders basically worked through the pages of the Qur'an which were written during the times of Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA). But, along with it, as a matter of added precaution, they adopted exactly the same method that was employed during the times of Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) . Consequently, assorted copies of texts committed into writing during the days of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) which were preserved by different Companions were recalled once again, and it was, by yet another collation with these, that the new copies were prepared. This time, a separately written verse of Surah al-Ahzab, (33:23) **[Among the believers, there are men who**

came true to the covenant they had with Allah. So, some of them have fulfilled their vows (by sacrificing their lives in the way of Allah), and some of them are (still) waiting, and they did not change (their commitment) in the least.] found with Sayyidna Thabit al-Ansari (RA) only. As we have explained earlier, it does not mean that nobody else remembered this verse because Sayyidna Zayd (RA) has himself said: 'While writing the copy of the Qur'an, I could not find the particular verse of Surah al-Ahzab which I used to hear the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) recite.' This shows very clearly that the verse under reference was something Sayyidna Zayd and other Companions remembered very well. On the other hand, it also does not mean that this verse never existed in writing anywhere, because this verse was obviously there in the pages of the Qur'aan written during the times of Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) Besides that, obviously enough, this verse was also included in the copies of the noble Qur'an which were written and preserved by the Companions on their own. But, like it was in the days of Sayyidna Abu Bakr (RA) , this time too, all those scattered documents, available with the Companions in writing, were collected together, therefore, Sayyidna Zayd (RA) and others with him did not write down any verse into these copies of the Qur'an until such time when they did find it in those written documentations as well. As such, the fact was that other verses were found written separately too with several Companions, but this verse from Surah al-Ahzab was not found written separately with anyone else except Sayyidna Khudhaymah (RA).

5. After having these several standard copies of the Qur'an prepared, Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) had all copies personally kept by different Companions burnt so that all copies of the Qur'an become uniform in terms of the script, incorporation of accepted readings and the order of chapters, leaving no room for any difference between them.

The entire ummah acknowledged this achievement of Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) with admiration, and the Companions supported him in this venture. The only exception is that of Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn Mas'iid (RA) who was somewhat unhappy about it, something that cannot be taken up here in its proper perspective. Sayyidna 'Ali (RA) says: "Say nothing about 'Uthman unless it be in his favour because, by God, whatever he did in connection with copies of the Qur'an was done in the presence of all of us, and with our advice and counsel." (Fath al-Bari, 9/15)

Steps taken to facilitate Recitation

After the afore-mentioned achievement of Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) the ummah reached a consensus on the rule that it is not permissible to write the text of the noble Qur'an using any method other than the 'Uthmani Script. Consequently, all copies of the Qur'an were, later on, written in accordance with this method, and the Companions and their successors, may Allah be pleased with them all, by bringing forth repeatedly, reproductions of the standard 'Uthmani copies of the Qur'an, helped spread the noble Qur'an on a vast scale.

But, the copies of the noble Qur'an were still devoid of dots and vowel points or desinential marks which made it difficult for nonArabs to recite them freely. As Islam spread out wide and deep in non-Arab countries, the need to add dots and vowel points became acute, in order that people may be able to recite them easily. Several steps were taken to achieve this purpose. Their brief history is as follows:

Inclusion of Dots

The practice of placing dots over or under letters was just not there among early Arabs, however, the readers were so used to this style that they had practically no difficulty in reading dot-less writing to the limit that they would easily distinguish between doubtful letters by referring to the context. Specially, there was no possibility of any doubt in the case of the noble Qur'an because its preservation did not rest on writing, rather on the strength of memories, pursuant to which, Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) had assigned Qaris, accomplished reciters of the Qur'an, along with its copies sent out to various parts of the Muslim world so that they could teach how to read it.

There are different reports as to who first placed dots on the copy of the noble Qur'an. Some reports say that this feat was first accomplished by Hadrat Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali (RA) (al-Burhan, 11250). Some say he did this under

the instructions of Sayyidna Ali (RA) (Subh al-A'sha, 3/155). There are others who have said that Ziyad ibn Abi Sufyan, the Governor of Kufah, asked him to do this. Then there is yet another report which credits Hajjaj ibn Yusuf with this feat who did it with the help of Hasan al-Basri, Yahya ibn Ya'mur and Nasr ibn 'Asim al-Laythi, may Allah's mercy be upon them all. (Tafsir al-Qurtubi, 1163)

Marks for correct reading

In the beginning, like dots, the Qur'an did not have any desinential marks either. Here too, reports are at variance as to who placed desinential marks first. Some say Abu al-Aswad al-Du'air did it first while others claim that this was accomplished by Hajjaj ibn Yusuf through Yahya ibn Ya'mur and Nasr ibn 'Asim al-Laythi. (Ibid)

Keeping in view all reports in this connection, it appears that desinential marks were first invented by Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali, but they were not like what they are today. Instead, placed there for fathah was a dot over the letter, for kasrah a dot under the letter, for dammah, a dot in front of the letter; and there were two dots (over, under and in front as written previously) for tanwin or nunnation. It was only later that Khalil ibn Ahmad innovated the signs of hamzah (glottal stop) and tashdid (doubling). (Subh al-A'sha, 3/160-161) After that, Hajjaj ibn Yusuf requested Yahya ibn Ya'mur, Nasr ibn 'Asim al-Laythi and Hasan al-Basri, may Allah's mercy be upon them all, to simultaneously place dots and desinential marks on the text of the noble Qur'an. On this occasion, the present forms of desinential marks were chosen to replace dots as expression of case signs. The purpose was to avoid confusing them with dots intrinsically belonging to letters.

Ahzip or Manazil

It was the practice of Companions and their Successors that they would complete the recital of the entire Qur'an once every week. For this purpose, they had identified fixed portions for their daily recitation which is known as 'hizb' or 'manzil'. Thus the entire Qur'an was divided over seven 'ahzab' (plural of 'hizb') 'manazil' (plural of 'manzil'). (al-Burhan, 1/250)

Ajza' or Parts

Today, the Qur'an is divided over thirty 'ajza' (plural of 'juz') or parts. This division in parts has nothing to do with the meaning of the Qur'an. In fact, this division in thirty equal parts has been made to serve as teaching aid for children as, it will be noticed, there are places where the designated part ends with an unfinished statement. It is difficult to say with certainty as to who brought about this division of the Qur'an in thirty parts. Some people believe that Sayyidna 'Uthman (RA) had arranged to have these written in thirty different folio-units while their copies were being made, therefore, this division dates back to his time for sure. But, this humble writer was unable to find any proof of this position in the writings of earlier scholars. However, 'Allamah Badr al-Din al-Zarkashi has written that the thirty parts of the Qur'an have been known all along and they customarily appear in copies of the Qur'an used in schools. (al-Burhan, 1/250; Manahil al-Trfan, 1/402)

Ahhmas and A'shar: The sets of Fives and Tens

Another sign used in Qur'aanic copies of early centuries was that they would write the word, khams (five) or its abbreviation (خ) after every five verses (on the margin); and the word, 'Ashr (: ten) or its abbreviation (ع) after every ten verses. The former kind of signs were called 'Akhmas' (a pentad or group of five) and the later, 'A'shar' (a decade or group of ten). Consequent to another difference among early scholars, these signs were considered permissible by some, and reprehensible or *Makruh* by others. Saying, with any degree of certainty, as to who was the first to place the signs, is difficult indeed. According to one view, Hajjaj ibn Yusuf was its inventor, while another view credits this to an order of 'Abbasi Khalifah, al-Ma'mun (al-Burhan, 1/251). But, these two views do not appear to be sound since the idea of a'shar seems to be there during the times of the Companions. For example, Maeruf a well-known Tabi', says that with Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (RA) the placement of 'A'shar' markings in the copy of the Qur'an was makruh. (Musannaf ibn Abi Shaybah, 2/497).

Ruku' or Section

Moreover, the signs of Akhmas and A'shar were abandoned later on but, yet another sign which continues on even to this day is the sign of ruhu' or section. This has been determined in terms of the contents of the noble Qur'an whereby a sign of ruhu: (the letter t on the margin) is placed at the conclusion of a statement. In spite of his efforts, this humble writer was unable to locate anything authentic which would tell us as to who originated the ruku', and in what period. However, this much is almost certain that the purpose of this sign is to identify an average portion of verses which could be recited in one raka'ah. It is called 'ruku' so that ruku' (bending position) could be made in Salah after reaching this point. There are 540 ruku'at in the whole Qur'an. So, by reciting one ruku' in every raka'ah of tarawih., it is possible to complete the recital of the entire Qur'an on the night of the twenty seventh (Fatawa 'Alamgiryah, Fasl al-Tarawih, 1/94).

Rumuz al-Aiqaaf: Stop Signs

Another useful step taken to facilitate recitation and phonetically, correct pronunciation (tilawah and tajwid) was to provide signs with Qur'anic sentences which could tell the nature of making a stop (breathing) there. These signs are known as the 'rumuz' (signs) or 'ala mat (symbols) of auqaf (stops). Their purpose is to help a person who does not know Arabic to stop at the correct spot during his recitation, and thus, avoid causing a change in meaning by breaking his breath at the wrong spot. Most of these signs were first invented by 'Allamah Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Tayfur Sajawandi, may Allah's mercy be upon him (Al-Nashr fi al-Qira'at al-'Ashr, 1/225). Details about these signs are given below:

- 1) ط: This letter Ta' is an abbreviated form of al-waqf al-mutlaq. It means that the statement stands completed at this point. Therefore, it is better to stop here.
- 2) ج: This letter Jim is an abbreviation of al-waqf al-ja'iz and it means that it is permissible to stop here.
- 3) ز: This letter Za' is an abbreviation of al-waqf al-mujawwaz. It means that making a stop here is correct all right, but the better choice is not to make a stop here.
- 4) ص: This letter Saad is an abbreviation of al-waqf al-murahhhuis, It means that the statement has not yet been completed at this point but, because the sentence has become long, here is the place to breathe and stop rather than do it elsewhere (al-Mianh al-Fikriyyah, p. 63).
- 5) م: This letter mim is an abbreviation of al-waqf al-lazim, It means if a stop is not made here an outrageous distortion in the meaning of the verse is possible. So, it is better to stop here. Some phoneticians of the Qur'an have also called this al-waqf al-uiajib or the obligatory stop. But this is not 'uiajib' of [iqh. which brings sin if abandoned. In fact, the purpose is to stress that making a stop here is the most preferable of all stops (al-Nashr, 1/231).
- 6) لا: This letter la is an abbreviation of la taqi. It means 'do not stop here,' but it does not imply that making a stop here is impermissible, because there are certain places bearing this sign where making a stop brings no harm and making an initiation from the following word is also permissible. Therefore, the correct meaning of this sign is: If a stop is made here, it is better to go back and read over again. Initiation from the next word is not approved (al-Nashr, V233).

As far as the origin of these signs is concerned, it stands proved beyond doubt that they were invented by 'Allamah Sajawandi. In addition to these, there are some other signs as well that appear in the copies of the Qur'an, for instance:

- 7) مع: This ma' is an abbreviation of "mu'anaqah", This symbol is inserted at a place where a single verse has two possible explanations. According to one explanation, the stop will be made at one given place, while according to another explanation, this will be at another place. So, a stop can be made at either one of the two places, but once a stop has been made at one place, it is not correct to stop at the other. For Instance, take the verse **ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْئَهُ**. If

a stop is made here **التَّوْرَانَةِ** then it is not correct to stop at **التَّانِجِيلِ** and should a stop be made at **التَّانِجِيلِ**, then it is not correct to stop at **التَّوْرَانَةِ**. However, if a stop is not made at both places, that will be correct. It is also known as 'al-muqabalah', It was, first of all, pointed out by Imam Abu al-Fadl al-Razi (al-Nashr, 1/237 and al-Itqan, 1/88).

- 8) **سكته**: This is a sym80l for saktah. It means one should stop here breaking the sound but not the breath. This is generally inserted at a place where assimilated reading is likely to cause an erroneous projection of meaning.
- 9) **وقفه**: At this sign of waqfah, one must stop a little longer than saktah (pause). But, breath should not break here too.
- 10) **قفي**: This letter qaf is an abbreviation of qila 'alaihi l'waqf. It means that some phoneticans of the Qur'an identify a stop here while others do not .
- 11) **قف**: This word is 'qif which means 'stop' and it is inserted where the reader may possibly think that a stop was not correct there.
- 12) **صلى**: This is an abbreviation of al-waslu Aula which means 'it is better to recite in assimilated continuity'.
- 13) **صل**: This is an abbreviation of qad yusalu, that is, some stop here, while others like to recite on in assimilated continuity.
- 14) **وقف النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم**: This is marked at places where some hadith report proves that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) stopped here while reciting.

The printing of the Holy Qur'an

Before the advent of the printing press, all copies of the Qur'an were calligraphed by hand, and for this purpose, there always has been, in every age, a large group of calligraphers whose sole purpose in life was nothing else except the calligraphy of the Qur'an. The amount of hard work put in by Muslims in writing the words of the Qur'an in ever better styles, and the way they demonstrated their intense emotional involvement with this great book has a long and interesting history of its own which would need a regular book. This is not the appropriate place to go in such details.

With the invention of the printing press, the noble Qur'an was first printed at Hamburg in 1113 Hijrah, a copy of which is still present in Dar al-Kutub al-Misiriyyah. After that, several orientalist arranged the publication of the copies of Qur'an but they were not received with much approval in the Muslim world. After that, Mawlay 'Uthman was the first person among Muslims who had one manuscript of the Qur'an printed at St. Petersburg, a Russian city, in 1787 A.D. Similarly, another manuscript was printed in Qazan also. In 1828 A.D., the Qur'an was printed by lithography on stone slabs in the Iranian city of Tehran. After that, printed copies of the Qur'an became common throughout the world. (Tarikh al-Qur'an by al-Kurdi, p. 186, and 'Ulum al-Qur'an by Dr. Subhi Saleh; Urdu Translation by Ghulam Ahmad Hariri, p. 142)

An introduction to the science of Tafsir

Now we can turn to the requisites of 'Ilm al-Tafsir or Exegesis. The literal meaning of 'tafsir' in the Arabic language is 'to open' or to explain, interpret or comment. Technically, the science of tafsir is a branch of knowledge in which the meanings of the Qur'an are explained and its injunctions and wisdoms are described openly and clearly (al-Burhan), Addressing the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) , the Glorious Qur'an says,

We revealed the Qur'an to you so that you explain to the people what has been sent down to them(16:44).

Once again, the Qur'an says:

Surely, Allah did a great favour to Muslims when He sent a Messenger to them from among them who would recite His verses before them and purify them and teach them the book and the Wisdom (3:164).

Keeping this in view, it should be noted that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) did not only teach the words of the Qur'an, but he also explained these in details. This is why, on some occasions, the revered Companions had to devote years together in learning a single Surah; details will, inshallah appear later on.

Until such time that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) graced this mortal world with his presence, seeking the explanation of any verse was not much of a problem. When the Companions faced any difficulty, they would turn to him and get a satisfying answer. But, later on after him, it became necessary that the tafsir of Qur'an be preserved as a permanent branch of knowledge so that, along with the words of the noble Qur'an, its correct meaning as well stands protected and conserved for the Muslim ummah, and heretics and deviationists find no room there for distortion of its meanings. So, with the grace and taufiq of Allah Almighty, this ummah accomplished this wonderful mission with such efficiency that today we can say without any fear of doubt or rejection that not only are the words of this last book of Allah protected but also stands protected even that correct tafsir and explanation which has reached us through the Holy Prophet .g: and his Companions who were ever-prepared to sacrifice their lives for him.

In what ways the Muslim ummah protected and preserved the 'ilm (science) of tafsir? What extreme hardships they faced in this pursuit? How many stages did this struggle had to go through? All this has a long and fascinating history which cannot be taken up in the present context (for this, please see 'Ulum. al-Qur'an, a detailed work on this subject by this humble writer). The intention here is to state briefly as to what are the sources of Qur'anic exegesis and how these sources have been utilized in explaining the noble Qur'an by all those countless books on 'Ilm al-Tafsir' available in every language. These sources are six in number:

The Sources of Tafsir

1. The Glorious Qur'an

The first source of the knowledge of tafsir is the Holy Qur'an itself. Accordingly, it happens very often that a certain point which is brief and requires explanation is invariably clarified by some other verse of the Qur'an itself. For instance, there appears that sentence of “**Guide us in the right path**” prayer in the Surah al-Fatihah: 1: 6 that is, “**Guide us in the straight path - the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace** “ Now it is not clear here as to who are those whom Allah Almighty has blessed. But, in another verse, they have been identified very clearly where it is said:

So, these are the people whom Allah Almighty has blessed, being the prophets, their true followers, the martyrs (in the way of Allah) and the righteous. (4:69)

Therefore, when respected commentators explain some verse, they first check to see if a tafsir of this verse is already there elsewhere in the noble Qur'an itself. If it is there, they elect to go by it as their first choice.

2. The Hadith

The words and the deeds of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) are called Hadith, and as it has been stated earlier, Allah Almighty had sent him with the Qur'an solely for the purpose that he should explain to people, openly and explicitly, the correct meanings of the noble Qur'an. Consequently, he discharged this duty with grace and excellence both by his words and deeds. In fact his whole blessed life is after all, a practical tafsir of Qur'an. It is for this reason that respected commentators, in order to understand the Qur'an, have laid the greatest emphasis on Hadith as the second source, and it is in the light of ahadith that they have determined the meanings of the book of Allah. However, because all sorts of narrations - sound, weak, and fabricated - are included in Hadith , therefore research-oriented commentators do not accept a narration as trustworthy until it withstands the principles used in the scrutiny of Hadlth narrations. Hence, finding a Hadith report somewhere, looking at it, and then employing it to determine a certain tafsir is not correct, because that report could be weak,

even contrary to other stronger reports. This is really a very delicate matter, and venturing therein is the exclusive prerogative of those who have spent their years in mastering these fields of knowledge.

3. The Reports from the Sahabah

The noble Sahabah (Companions), may Allah be pleased with them all, had received their education directly from the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) . In addition to that, they were personally present on the scene when Wahy came, and they had themselves witnessed all circumstances and backgrounds of the revelation of the Qur'an. Therefore, naturally, the recorded statements of these blessed souls are far more authentic and trustworthy in explaining the noble Qur'an; the later people cannot take that place. Hence, in the case of verses the explanation of which is not found in the Qur'an or Hadith, statements recorded from the noble Companions are given the highest priority. Consequently, if there is a consensus of Companions on the explanation of a certain verse, the commentators follow just that, and explaining it in any way, other than that, is not permissible. By the way, if the statements of Companions differ in the interpretation (tafsir) of a certain verse, then the commentators who come later examine them in the light of arguments and determine as to which interpretation or explanation can be given preference. In order to handle this situation, there is an important corpus of rules and regulations already codified under the sciences of Usul al-Fiqh, Usul al-Hadith and Usul al-Tafsir a detailed discussion of which is not appropriate here.

4. The Reports from the Tabi'in or Successors

After Companions (Sahabah) come the Successors (Tabi'in). The later are those who have learnt the tafsir of Qur'an from the Companions. Therefore, their statements too have great importance in the science of tafsir, although there exists a difference among scholars whether or not the statements of the tabi'in are decisive evidences in tafsir (al-Itqan, 2/179) but their importance is something which cannot be denied.

5. The Arabic Language

Since the noble Qur'an was revealed in the Arabic language, therefore, in order to explain the Qur'an, it is necessary to have a complete mastery over the language. There are several verses of the noble Qur'an in the background of which there happen to be just no attending circumstances of revelations, or any juristic or scholastic question, therefore, in their tafsir or explanation, the sayings of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) or the statements of the Sahabah and tabai'in are not reported. For that reason, the only means through which these can be explained is that of the Arabic language, and it is on the basis of language alone that they are elucidated. Besides that, should there be some difference in the tafsir of a certain verse, then, in that case too, the science of linguistics is used to run a test of veracity between varying opinions.

6. Deliberation and Deduction

The last source of tafsir consists of deliberation and deduction. The subtleties and mysteries of the noble Qur'an are an ocean with no shore, no end. Therefore, the more a person, who has been blessed with insight into the Islamic sciences by Allah Almighty, deliberates in it, the more he discovers ever-new mysteries and subtleties. As a result of this, commentators do present the outcomes of their respective deliberations as well, but mysteries and subtleties so described are found acceptable only when they do not go against the five sources mentioned above. So, should a person, while explaining the Qur'an, come out with a subtle point or independent judgment which is contrary to the Qur'an and Sunnah, Consensus (Ijma'), Language, or the statements of Companions and Successors, or stands in conflict with another principle of Shari'ah, that will then have no credence. Some mystics (RA) had started describing such mysteries and subtleties in tafsir, but investigative scholars of the ummah did not consider these trustworthy because the personal opinion of any person against the basic principles of the Qur'an, Sunnah and Shari'ah has obviously no weight. (al-Itqan, 2/184)

The rules relating to Israelite reports

Judaica or Israiliyat are narratives which have reached us through Jews and Christians. It may be noted that early commentators used to write down all sorts of narrations which reached them from an identified source. Many of these narrations were straight Judaica. Therefore, it is equally necessary to know what they really are. The reality is that some noble Companions and their Successors first belonged to the religion of the people of the book, later on when they became Muslims and learnt the Qur'an, they came across several events relating to past communities in the Qur'an and which they had also read in the books of their previous religion. Therefore, while referring to the events mentioned in the Qur'an they would describe other details before Muslims which they had seen in the books of their old religion. These very details have entered into the books of tafsir under the name of Israiliyat. Hafiz ibn Kathir, who is one of the authentic research scholars, has written that there are three kinds of Israiliyat:

1. Narrations the truth of which is proved from other evidences of the Qur'an and Sunnah, for instance, the drowning of Pharaoh and the ascent of Sayyidna Musa (AS) onto Mount Tur (Sinai).
2. Narrations the falsity of which is proved from other evidences of the Qur'an and Sunnah, for instance, it appears in Judaic narrations that Sayyidna Sulayman (RA) had become (God forbid) an apostate in his later years. Its refutation is proved from the Qur'an. It is said "**It was not Sulayman who became an infidel, but the devils did become infidels (2:102)**". To cite yet another example, it finds mention in Judaic narrations that (God forbid) Sayyidna Dawud (RA) (David) committed adultery with the wife of his general (Uriah), or, having him killed through all sorts of contrivances, ended up marrying his wife. This too is a blatant lie, and taking such narrations to be false is imperative.
3. Narrations regarding which the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the Sharh'ah are silent, such as the injunctions of Torah etc., are subjects about which silence is to be observed as taught by the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam): **'Neither confirm, nor falsify'**. There is, however, a difference of opinion among scholars whether or not reporting such narrations is permissible. Hafiz ibn Kathir has given the decisive word by saying that reporting these is permissible all right but doing so is useless because they cannot be taken as authentic. (Muqaddamah Tafsir ibn Kathir)

A misconception about the tafsir of Qur'an

Hopefully, details given above have made it clear that the tafsir (exegesis or interpretation) of the noble Qur'an is an extremely delicate and difficult undertaking for which getting to know the Arabic language alone is not enough. In fact, it is necessary to have expertise in all related branches of knowledge. Therefore, scholars say that a mufassir or commentator of the Qur'an must have vast and deep knowledge of the syntax, etymology, rhetoric, and literature of the Arabic language, as well as, that of prophetic Traditions, principles governing jurisprudence and exegesis, doctrinal articles of belief and scholastics. The reason is that one cannot arrive at correct conclusions while explaining the Qur'an unless there be that adequacy in these fields of knowledge.

It is regrettable that a dangerous epidemic has overtaken Muslims lately whereby many people have started taking the sole reading ability of Arabic sufficient for the tafsir (interpretation) of the Qur'an. As a result, anyone who gets to read ordinary Arabic starts passing out opinions in the domain of Qur'anic exegesis. Rather, it has been noticed on occasions that people having just passable familiarity with the Arabic language, and who have yet to master their Arabic to perfection, take it upon themselves to engage in explaining the Qur'an following their whims, even going to the limit of finding faults with classical commentators. Bad come to worse, there are some subtle tyrants who would, by simply reading the translation, imagine that they have become scholars of the Qur'an, not even feeling shy of criticising commentators of great stature.

It should be understood very clearly that this is a highly dangerous pattern of behaviour which, in matters of religion, leads to fatal straying. As regards secular arts and sciences, everyone can claim to understand that should a person simply learn the English language and go on to study books of medical science, he would not be acknowledged as a physician by any reasonable person anywhere in the world, and certainly not trustworthy

enough to take care of some80dy's life unless he has been educated and trained in a medical college. Therefore, having learnt English is not all one needs to become a doctor.

Similarly, should anyone knowing English hope to become an engineer just by reading through engineering books, it is clear that no sane person in this world would accept him as an engineer. The reason is that this technical expertise cannot be acquired simply by learning the English language. It would, rather, need a formal training in the discipline under the supervision and guidance of expert teachers. When these stringent requirements are inevitable in order to become a doctor or engineer, how can the learning of Arabic language alone become sufficient in matters relating to the Qur'an and Ifadith? In every department of life, everyone knows and acts upon the principle that every art or science has its own particular method of learning and its own peculiar conditions. Unless these are fulfilled, the learner's opinion in given arts and sciences will not be considered trustworthy. If that is so, how can the Qur'an and the Sunnah become so unclaimed a field of inquiry that there be no need to acquire any art or science in order to explain them, and anyone who so wishes starts passing out opinions in this matter?

Some people say that the Qur'an has itself stated that: **“And surely We have made the Qur'an easy for the sake of good counsel.”** And since the noble Qur'an is a simple book, its explanation hardly needs much of a support from any art or science. But this argument is terribly fallacious, which is, in itself, based on lack of intellect and plenty of superficiality. The fact is that the verses of the Qur'an are of two kinds. Firstly, there are the verses that offer general good counsel, relate lesson-oriented events and introduce subjects dealing with taking of warning and acting on sound advice. Examples of this are the mortality of the world, the accounts of Paradise and Hell, the discourses likely to create the fear of God and the concern for the Hereafter, and other very simple realities of life. Verses of this kind are undoubtedly easy and anyone who knows the Arabic language can benefit from their good counsel by understanding them. It is in relation to teachings of this kind that, in the verse cited a80ve, it was said that 'We have made them easy'. Hence, the word **للدكر** (for the sake of good counsel) in the verse itself is pointing out towards this meaning.

Contrary to this, the other kind consists of verses which include injunctions, laws, articles of faith and intellectual subjects. Understanding verses of this kind as they should be rightfully understood and deducing and formulating injunctions and rulings from them cannot be done by just any person unless one has the insight and permeating reach into the Islamic areas of knowledge. This is why the noble Companions, whose mother-tongue was Arabic and they did not have to go anywhere to get trained into understanding Arabic, used to spend long periods of time in learning the Qur'an from the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam). 'Allamah al-Suyuti has reported from Imam Abii 'Abd al-Rahman Sulami that the Companion who formally learned the Qur'an from the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) such as Sayyidna 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud and others, have told us that, after having learnt ten verses of the Qur'an from the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam), they would not proceed on to the next verses until such time that they had covered all that was intellectually and practically involved in the light of these It is in relation to teachings of this kind that, in the verse cited a80ve, it was said that 'We have made them easy'. Hence, the word **للدكر** (for the sake of good counsel) in the verse itself is pointing out towards this meaning.

We have learnt the Qur'an, knowledge and action all in one. (al-Itqan 2/176)

Consequently, as reported in Mu'watta' of Imam Malik, Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (RA) spent full eight years memorizing Surah al-Baqarah alone and, as in the Musnad of Ahmad, Sayyidna Anas (RA) says that 'one of us who would learn Surah al-Baqarah and Surah 'al-Imran had his status enormously raised among us.' (Ibid)

Worth noticing is the fact that these noble Companions whose mother-tongue was Arabic, who had the highest degree of expertise in poetry and letters and who would have no difficulty in having very long qasidahs (poems)

perfectly committed to their memories with the least of effort, why would they need, just to memorize the Qur'an and understand its meanings, as long a time as eight years, and that too, for mastering one Surah? The only reason for this was that proficiency in the Arabic language was not enough to have a learning of the noble Qur'an and areas of knowledge bearing on it. In order to do that, it was also necessary to seek the benefit of the teaching and the company of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) . Now this is so obvious that the noble Companions inspite of having an expertise in the Arabic language and notwithstanding their being direct witnesses to the revelation, still needed the process of going through formal education at the feet of the blessed master in order to become the 'alims of the Qur'an, how then, after all these hundreds of years following the revelation of the Qur'an, just by cultivating an elementary familiarity with Arabic, or by simply looking at translations, can anyone claim to having become a commentator of the Qur'an? What a monstrous audacity and what a tragic joke with knowledge and religion! People who opt for such audacity should remember well that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has said:

Whoever says anything about the Qur'an without knowledge, then he should make his abode in Hell. (Abu Daw'ud, as in al-Itqan, 2/179)

And he (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has also said:

Whoever talks about the Qur'an on the basis of his opinion, and even if says something true in it, still he made a mistake. (Abu Daw'ud, Nasa'i)

Famous Commentaries of the Qur'an

Countless commentaries of the Glorious Qur'an have been written since the blessed period of the Prophethood. In fact, no other book of the world has been served as much as the noble Qur'an. Introducing all these commentaries is not possible even in some detailed book, much less in a brief introduction such as this. But, what we wish to do here is to introduce very briefly the major commentaries that have served as particular sources of Ma'arifur Qur'an and which have been cited there time and again. Although, during the period the above commentary was being written, many commentaries and hundreds of books were constantly referred to, but here, the purpose is to limit the introduction to commentaries the references to which will appear repeatedly.

Tafsir ibn Jarir

The real name of this Tafsir is Jami' al-Bayan and it was compiled by 'Allamah Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-T'abari (died 310 Hijrah). Allamah Tabari is a highly rated commentator, muhaddith (Hadith expert) and historian. It is said that he kept writing for forty years continuously and used to write forty pages every day (al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, v . 11, p. 145). There are charges of being Shi'ah against him, but researchers have refuted this charge and the truth of the matter is that he is a highly regarded scholar of the followers of the Sunnah, rather than one of the Shi'ite scholars.

Being in thirty volumes, his Tafsir enjoys the status of a basic source for later commentaries. In his explanation of the verses, he quotes different scholars and then goes on to prove the position which, according to him, is weightier, of course, with arguments and proofs. It must, however, be admitted that narrations of all sorts, sound and weak, have found a place in his commentary. Because of this, not every narration presented by him can be relied upon. In reality, he was aiming through his commentary to collect and compile all narrations that could become available to him, so that this collected material could be put to use later on. Conceded is the fact that he has given the chain of reporters along with each narration so that whoever wishes to investigate into the chain of narrators could do so and decide for himself if the narrations are true or false.

Tafsir ibn Kathir

Hafiz 'Imad al-din Abu al-Fida' Isma'il ibn Kathir al-Dimashqi al-Shafi'i (died 774 Hijrah), a distinguished research scholar of the eighth century, is the author of this commentary. It has been published in four volumes. Here

emphasis has been laid on explanatory narrations. A special feature is his criticism as Hadith expert on different narrations, and from this point of view, this book holds a distinct place among all books of Tafsir.

Tafsir Al-Qurtubi

Its full name is Al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an. It was written by the famous learned writer and research scholar of Andalusia (Spain), Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad Abi Bakr ibn Farah al-Qurtubi (died 671 Hijrah), He was a follower of the Maliki school of fiqh and was known all over for his 'ibadah and piety. The fact is that the basic objective of this book was to deduce juristic injunctions and rulings from the Qur'an yet, while doing so, he has also provided the explanation of verses, research into difficult words, discussion of diacritical marks and elegance of style and composition, and related Traditions and Reports in his Tafsir, and quite ably so. This **book** is in twelve volumes and has been published repeatedly.

Al-Tafsir' al-Kabir

This is the work of Imam Fakhr al-din al-Razi (died 606 Hijrah). Its real name is Mafatih al-Ghayb, but is popularly known as 'Tafsir Kabir'. Imam Razi is an imam of the theology of Islam, therefore, great emphasis has been laid in his Tafsir on rational and scholastic debates and on the refutation of false sects. But, the truth is that this Tafsir is, in its own way, a unique key to the Qur'an as well. Furthermore, the pleasing way in which the meanings of the Qur'an have been clarified and the mutual link of the Qur'anic verses established, is all too praise-worthy. Most likely, Imam Razi himself wrote down his Tafsir as far as Surah al-Fath. Onwards from there, he could not complete. So, the remaining part of the Tafsir, from Surah al-Fath to the end, was completed by Qadi Shihab al-Din ibn Khalil al-Khawli al-Dimashqi (died 639 Hijrah) or Shaykh Najm al-Din Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Qamuli (died 777 Hijrah). (Kashaf' al-Zunun v. 2, p. 477)

Imam Razi has particularly emphasised scholastic debates and the refutation of false sects in accordance with the dictates of his time, and while doing so, his discussions have become too lengthy at several places, therefore, some people have made the following comment on his Tafsir: **'There is everything in this (book) except the Tafsir'**. But this comment is a terrible injustice to Tafsir Kabir. That which is the truth has already been stated above, namely, that this Tafsir enjoys a high rating as far as the resolution of the meanings of the Qur'an is concerned. But, there are places where he has explained verses of the Qur'an while moving away from the consensus of the ummah, however, such places are very thinly spread out in this **book** that goes on to eight volumes.

Tafsir al-Bajr al-Muhit

This was written by 'Allamah Abi Hayyan al-Gharnati al-Andalusi (died 754 Hijrah) who was a master of syntax and rhetoric in addition to other Islamic fields of learning. As a result of this, his own Tafsir is soaked in syntax and rhetoric. He places special stress on investigating into the words of every verse, the difference in structures and on points of eloquence.

Ahkam Al-Qur'an by al-Jassas

This was written by Imam Abu Bakr al-Jassas al-Razi (died 370 Hijrah) who occupies a distinguished place among Hanafi jurists. The deduction of juristic injunctions and rulings from the noble Qur'an is the subject of this book. Instead of explaining verses in serial continuity, he has taken up the juristic details as called for by verses which consist of juristic injunctions. Several other books have also been written on this subject, but this book enjoys a prominent place among those.

Tafsir al-Durr al-Manthur

This was written by Allamah Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (died 910 Hijrah), Its full name is 'al-Durr al-Manthur fi al-Tafsir bi l' Ma'thur.' Here Allamah al-Suyuti has tried to collect all narrations about the tafsir of Qur'an he was able to find. Several Hadith scholars such as Hafiz ibn Jarir, Imam Baghawi, Ibn Mardirwayh, Ibn Hibban and Ibn Majah and others had already worked in this area on their own. Allamah al-Suyuti has assembled narrations presented

by all of them in this book. But, rather than refer to complete chain of authorities along with narrations, he has found it sufficient to simply name the particular author who has presented that narration under his authority so that, if needed, one could go back to the work and investigate into the ultimate authority. Since his purpose was to put together a mass of narrations, as a result of which, all sorts of narrations, sound and weak, have found their way into his book. Hence, every narration allowed entry by him cannot be considered reliable without investigation into its authority. There are occasions when Allamah al-Suyuti does indicate with each narration the degree of its authority as well. But, as he is known to be fairly easy-going in respect of hadith critique, it is still difficult to fully rely on that too.

Al-Tafsir al-Mazhari

This was written by Qadi Thanauallah Panipati (died 1225 Hijrah). He has named this Tafsir as 'Al-Tafsir al-Mazhari' after the name of his spritual master, Mirza Mazhar Jan-e-Janan Dehlavi. This Tafsir of his is very simple and clear, and extremely useful to locate brief explanations of Qur'anic verses. Along with the elucidation of Qur'anic words, he has also taken up related narrations in ample details, and in doing so, he has made an effort to accept narrations after much more scrutiny as compared with other commentaries.

Ruh al-Ma'ani

The full name of this Tafsir is 'Ruh al-Ma'ani fi Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim wa al-Sab' al-Mathani' and it was written by Allamah Mahmud al-Alusi (died 1270 Hijrah), the famous scholar of the last period of Baghdad, and comprises of thirty volumes. He has made his best possible effort to make this Tafsir comprehensive. There are exhaustive discussions on language, syntax, letters, style, and on jurisprudence, articles of faith, scholastics, philosophy, astronomy, mysticism and related narratives of Traditions. He has made an attempt to leave no intellectual aspect pertaining to a verse unexplained. In the case of hadith narratives as well, the author of this work has been more cautious as compared to other commentators. From this angle, this is a very comprehensive commentary, and no future venture in connection with the Tafsir of the Qur'an can now afford to ignore its help.

1. The Opening (Al-Fatihah)

This Surah is Makkan, and comprises of seven verses

The Merits and Peculiarities of the Surah

This Surah (Chapter) of the Holy Qur'an possesses a number of merits peculiar to it. Firstly, the Holy Qur'an begins with it; the prescribed prayer begins with it; and even in the order of revelation this is the first Surah which was revealed to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) in its complete form. Some verses of the Surah Iqra' (al-'Alaq), al-Muzzammil and al-Muddaththir had no doubt been revealed earlier, but the first Surah to be revealed in a complete form is no other than this. Certain Companions of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) have reported that this was the first Surah to be revealed. Most probably they had meant that no Surah had been revealed in a complete form before this. Perhaps that is why the Surah has been named as 'Fatihatul-Kitab (The Opening of the book).

The other important peculiarity of the Surah is that it is, so to say, the quintessence of the Holy Qur'an, and the rest of the Qur'an is its elaboration. The Surah may thus be delineated for two reasons. Firstly, all that the Holy Qur'an has to say is, in one way or another, related to either of the two themes, faith ('Iman) and virtuous deeds (al-'amal al-salih), and the basic principles of the two have been indicated in this Surah (See Ruh al-Ma'ani and Ruh al-Bayan). That is why authentic Traditions (Ahadeeth) give to this Surah such titles as "Umm al-Qur'an" (Essence of the Qur'an), "Umm al-Kitab" (Essence of the book), "Al-Qur'an al-'klln (Glorious Qur'an).

Secondly, this Surah gives a special instruction to the man who begins the recitation or the study of the Qur'an that he should approach this book with a mind cleansed of all his previous thoughts and opinions, seeking nothing but the Truth and the right path, praying to Allah for being guided in the right path. The Surah begins with the praise of Him before whom the request is to be submitted, and ends with the request for guidance. The whole of the Qur'an is the answer to this request. The answer begins with the words: "Alif Lam Mim. This is the book", which is an indication that the guidance man had prayed for has been provided in this book.

The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has said, "I swear by Allah who is the master of my life, neither the Torah, nor the Evangile nor the Psalms of David have anything to compare with the Opening Chapter of the Qur'an, and no other Chapter of the Qur'an itself can compare with it." (Reported by the Companion Abu Hurairah (RA).

The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has also said that this Surah is a cure for all kinds of illnesses. According to another Tradition (Hadith), the Surah has also been named the "Cure" (Al-Shifa), (See Qurtubi), and al-Bukhari reports from the Companion Anas that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has called this Surah the greatest among all the Surahs of the Holy Qur'an. (See Qurtubi)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(I begin) with the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very Merciful.

Bismillah is a verse of the Holy Qur'an

There is consensus of all the Muslims on the fact that Bismillahi al-Rahman al-Rahim is a verse of the Holy Qur'an, being a part of the Surah al-Naml (The Ant); and there is also an agreement on that this verse is written at the head of every Surah except the Surah al-Taubah. But there is a difference of opinion among the Mujtahids (the authentic scholars who are entitled to express an opinion in such matters) as to whether this verse is an integral part of the Surah al-Fatihah or of all the Siirahs or not. According to the great Imam Abu Hanifah, it is not an integral part of any Surah except al-Naml, rather it is in itself an independent verse of the Holy Qur'an which has

been revealed for being placed at the beginning of every Surah in order to separate and distinguish one Surah from another.

The merits of Bismillah

It was a custom in the Age of Ignorance (Jahiliyyah) before the advent of Islam that people began everything they did with the names of their idols or gods. It was to eradicate this practice that the first verse of the Holy Qur'an which Sayyidna Jibra'il (AS) brought down to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) commanded him to begin the Qur'an with the name of Allah **أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ**: "Read with the name of your Lord."

The famous commentator al-Suyuti says that beside the Holy Qur'an all the other divine books too begin with Bismillah. Certain other scholars are of the opinion that Bismillah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim is peculiar to the Qur'an and to the followers of Muhammad (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam). The two views can be brought into agreement with each other if we say that all the divine books share the common trait of beginning with the name of Allah, but the words Bismillali al-Rahman al-Rahim are peculiar to the Holy Qur'an, as is evident from certain Traditions (Ahadith) which report that in order to begin with the name of Allah anything undertook, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) used to say the words (Bismiki Allahumma), but when the verse Bismillah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim was revealed, he adopted these words. Since then this practice was established through the verbal command of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) or through his act or tacit approval). (See Qurtubi and Ruh al-Ma'ani)

The Holy Qur'an again and again instructs us to begin what we do with the name of Allah. The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has said that no important work receives the blessings of Allah, unless it is begun with His name. According to yet another hadith (Tradition), closing the door of one's house, putting out the lamp, covering a vessel, should all be done with the recitation of Bismillah, The Holy Qur'an and the Ahadeeth (Traditions) repeatedly instruct us to recite this verse while taking food, drinking water, performing the Wudhu (ablution), getting on a carriage or getting down from it. (See Qurtubi)

By instructing man to begin everything with the name of Allah, Islam has given to the whole of his life an orientation towards Allah so that he may, with each step he takes, renew his allegiance to the covenant with Allah that nothing he does, not even his very being can come into existence without the will and the help of Allah. Thus, all the economic and worldly activities of man, each movement and gesture becomes transformed into an act of worship. *(This is the only way in which human life can, to use a word dear to modern cultural anthropology, be sacralized in any meaningful sense of the term – Translator)*

How brief is the action, which consumes neither time nor energy, and yet how immense is the gain -" it is a regular alchemy, transmuting the profane (dunya) into the sacred (din); a disbeliever eats and drinks just as a Muslim does but in saying 'Bismillali' as he begins to eat, the Muslim affirms that it was not in his power to obtain this little morsel of food which has passed through innumerable stages from the sowing of the seed to the reaping of the grain corn and which has during this process required the la80urs of the wind, the rain, the sun, of the heavens and of the earth, and of a thousand men -- and that it is Allah alone who has granted him this morsel of food or this draught of water by making it go through all these stages. A disbeliever goes to sleep, wakes up and goes a80ut as much as a Muslim. But while going to sleep or waking up, the Muslim mentions the name of Allah, renewing his relationship with Him. Thus his economic and worldly needs and activities acquire the nature of the remembrance of Allah, and are counted as acts of worship. Similarly, in saying 'Bismillahi' while getting on to a carriage, the Muslim testifies to the fact that it is beyond the power of man to produce this carriage and to procure it for him, and that it is only the infallible and divinely-created order of things that has brought together from all the corners of the world the wood, the steel and other metals which have gone into the making of the carriage, as well as the mechanics who have given a particular shape to these components, and the driver -- and

finally put all these into the service of man who can make use of the labour of this army of the creatures of man who can God by spending a few coins. And even these coins have not been created by him, it is Allah himself who has provided the complex ways and means of earning them. Veritably, ' Bismillahi ' is the legendary philosopher's stone which transmutes not copper, but mere dust into the purest of gold.

فله الحمد على دين الاسلام و تعليماته

Then, praised be Allah for the religion of Islam and its teachings.

Ruling

Before beginning to recite the Qur'an, it is sunnah to first say **اعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم** (I seek refuge with Allah from Satan -- the accursed) and then **بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ** (I begin with the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful). And during the tilawah (the recitation of the Holy Qur'an) as well, saying dua **بِسْمِ اللَّهِ** 'Bismillah ... at the beginning of each Surah, except the Surah Al-Bara'ah (al-Taubah), is Sunnah.

Commentary of Bismillah

This phrase is composed of three words -- the letter 'Ba', 'Ism' and 'Allah'. The preposition 'Ba' has several connotations in Arabic, three of which are appropriate to the occasion. All the three are applicable here:

- 1) Contiguity, or the close proximity between one thing and the other;
- 2) Seeking the aid of someone or something;
- 3) To seek the blessings of someone.'

The word 'Ism' has many lexical and intellectual nuances of meaning, the knowledge of which would not be essential for the average reader. It is sufficient to know that this word is translated in English as 'Name'.

The word, 'Allah' is the greatest and the most comprehensive of the divine names. According to some scholars, it is the 'Great Name', or 'Al-Isim al-A'zam'. (According to the Tradition (Hadith), the Great Name carries with it such a benediction that a prayer is granted when this word has been uttered. Reports differ as to what this Great Name is). The word 'Allah' refers to the Essence, and hence this name cannot be given to anyone except Allah. That is why this word has neither a plural nor a dual, for Allah is One and has no associate. In short, Allah is the name of that Ultimate Reality which comprehends in Itself all the attributes of perfection, which is the creator and sustainer, unique and peerless.

Thus, the phrase 'Bismillahi' has these three respective significations according to the three connotations of the preposition 'Ba':

- a) With the name of Allah
- b) With the help of the name of Allah
- c) With the barakah or benediction of the name of Allah.

But, in all the three forms, the phrase obviously remains incomplete unless one mentions the work which one intends to begin with the name of Allah or with its help or benediction. So, according to the rules of grammar, some verb is taken to be understood here which should be suitable for the occasion -- e.g., 'I begin or recite with the name of Allah.' Propriety demands that even this verb should be understood to occur after the phrase, so that one does actually begin with the name of Allah and the verb does not precede His name. The preposition 'Ba' has, however, to be placed before the name of Allah, for it is an exigency of the Arabic language. But even in this respect the 'Uthmani manuscript of the Holy Qur'an prepared by the third Caliph 'Uthman (RA) has made the

necessary modification in accordance with the consensus of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam). The regular Arabic script requires the letter 'Ba' here to be joined with the letter Alif, producing this shape **بِسْمِ اللَّهِ**. But the 'Uthmani manuscript has dropped the 'Alif, and joined the letter 'Ba' with the letter 'S"n', making the 'B' look like a part of the word 'Ism', so that the beginning is made, in effect, with the name of Allah. That is why the letter 'Alif is not dropped in other combinations between the preposition 'Ba' and the noun 'Ism' -- for example, in the verse (96:1) **أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ**, the 'Alif is written along with the 'Ba', It is the peculiarity of 'Bismillah' alone that the letter 'Ba' has been joined with the letter 'Sin'.

Merciful:

these two are the attributes of Allah Almighty. 'Rahman' signifies one whose mercy is common to all, and extends to the whole universe, to everything that will be created in the future. On the other hand, 'Rahim' signifies one whose mercy is perfect in all possible ways. That is why 'Rahman' is the exclusive attribute of Allah and the word is employed only when one is referring to Him. It is not permissible to qualify any created being as 'Rahman', for there cannot possibly be anyone else, beside Allah, whose mercy should be all-embracing and all-inclusive. Just like the word 'Allah', there is no dual or plural for the word 'Rahman' too, because these words are in their signification exclusive to the One and Absolute Being which does not permit the existence of a second or a third. (Tafsir al-Qurtubi) The signification of the word 'Rahim', on the contrary, does not contain anything which it should be impossible to find in a created being, for a man may be perfectly merciful in his dealings with another man. So, the word 'Rahim' may justifiably be employed in the case of a human being -- as the Qur'an itself has used the word in speaking of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) which (9:128) is **بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ** (He is gentle and very merciful towards the Muslims).

Ruling:

This would easily show that those who shorten names such as 'Abd al-Rahman or Fadl al-Rahman into 'Rahman' are doing what is not permissible and are thus committing a sin.

Out of the 'Beautiful Names' (الاسماء الحسنى) of Allah Almighty and His attributes of perfection, only two have been mentioned in this verse - namely, 'al-Rahman and 'al-Rahim' -, and both have been derived from the root 'Rahmah' (mercy), indicating the all-pervasiveness and perfection of divine mercy. It points to the fact that the creation of the heavens and the earth and the sustenance of the whole universe has no other motivation than making manifest Allah's quality of mercy. He Himself had no need of these things, nor could anyone compel Him to create them. It is His own mercy which has required the creation and sustenance of the whole universal order.

How aptly this was put in Persian by poet Rumi;

There was nothing -- neither our being nor our claim to be;

It was Thy mercy that heard our unsaid.

Injunctions and related considerations

The Holy Qur'an says (16:98) **فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ** When you recite the Qur'an, seek the protection of Allah against Satan, the rejected one.

According to the consensus of Ummah, it is a Sunnah to say ta'awwudh (A'udho Billah) before the recitation of the Holy Qur'an whether in Salah or out of Salah (Sharah al-munyah). Saying ta'awwudh is peculiar to the

recitation of the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, with the exception of tilawah, all other chores should be taken up by first saying 'Bismillah' only. Saying ta'awwudh is not a sunnah there. ('Alamgiri, Chapter 4 - Al-Karahiyah)

One should begin the recitation of the Qur'an by reciting both ta'awwudh (A'udho Billah) seek the protection of Allah) and Bismillahi; I begin with the name of Allah). During the recitation, one should repeat 'Bismillah'; but not ta'awwudh (A'udho Billah) when one comes to the end of a Surah (or Chapter) and begins the next Surah -- with the sole exception of the Siirah 'Al-Bara'ah'. If one comes upon this particular Siirah in the course of the recitation, one should not say 'Bismillah.' before reading it. But if one happens to begin the recitation of the Holy Qur'an with this Surah, one should recite ta'awwudh (A'udho Billah) and 'Bismillah' both (Alamgiri from Al-Muhit).

'Bismillih al-Rahmati al-Rahim' is a verse of the Holy Qur'an and a part of the verse in Surah 'al-Naml'; it is also a regular verse when it occurs between two Surahs, It must, therefore, be treated with as much respect as the Holy Qur'an itself, and it is not permissible to touch it without having performed wudu (ablution). In the state of major ritual impurity (e.g., after the emission of semen, or during menstruation, or after child-birth), it is not allowed to even read this verse as recitation of the Holy Qur'an before having taken a ritual bath. One may, however, recite it as a form of prayer before beginning a work, like taking one's meals or drinking water under all conditions.

Rulings:

- 1) It is a Sunnah to recite 'Bimillah' after ta'awwudh (A'udho Billah) at the very beginning of the first raka'ah in the Salah, But views differ as to whether it should be recited in a loud or a low voice. Imam Abu Hanifah and certain other Imams prefer it to be done in a low voice. There is a consensus on the point that 'Bismillah' should be recited at the beginning of all the succeeding raka'ahs too. This is unanimously considered to be a Sunnah; however, in some narrations, the reciting of 'Bismillah' at the beginning of every raka'ah has been identified as wajib or necessary.
- 2) In the course of salah, whether one is reciting the Holy Qur'an loudly or silently, one should not recite 'Bismillah' before beginning a Surah just after the Surah 'Fatihah'. Such a practice has not been reported either from the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) or from any of the first four Khulafa', According to Sharh al-munyah, this is the view of Imam Abu Hanifah and of Imam Abu Yusuf, and Shrah al-munyah, al-Durr al-Mukhtar, al-Burhan etc. prefer it to other views. But Imam Muhammad considers it to be preferable that one should recite 'Bismillah' if one is reciting the Holy Qur'an in Salah offered silently. Certain reports attribute this view even to Imam Abil Hanifah, and al-Sharni has quoted some Muslim jurists in support of this view which has been adopted even in 'Bahishti Zewar' of Maulana Thanavi. Anyhow, there is a complete agreement among the scholars that it is not makruh or reprehensible for some one to recite 'Bismillah' in this situation.

Surah Al-Fatihah:

سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (١)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٢) الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمِ (٣) مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ (٤) إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
(٥) أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (٦) صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ (٧)

Translation

With the name of Allah, The All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful. [1]

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, [2]

The All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful, [3]

The Master of the Day of Judgment [4]

You alone we worship, and from You alone we seek help [5]

Guide us in the straight path [6]

Commentary of AL-Fatihah

The path of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray [7]

This Surah comprises seven verses. Of these, the first three are in praise of Allah, while the last three contain a request or a prayer on the part of man, which Allah himself has, in His infinite mercy, taught him. The verse in between the two sets has both the features -- there is an aspect of praise, and another of prayer.

The Sahih of Muslim reports from the blessed Companion Abu Hurayrah a hadith (Tradition) of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)"Allah has said, 'The salah. (i.e., the Surah Al-Fati1).ah) is equally divided between Me and My servant. And My servant shall be given what he prays for.'" The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)continued: "When the servant says:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds,

Allah says: "My servant has paid his homage to Me." When he says:

الرَّحْمَنَ الرَّحِيمَ

The All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful,

Allah says: "My servant has praised Me." When the servant says:

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

The Master of the Day of Judgment,

Allah says, "My servant has proclaimed my greatness." When the servant says:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

You alone we worship, and to You alone we pray for help,

Allah says, "This verse is common to Me and My servant. He shall be given what he has prayed for." When the servant says:

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Guide us in the straight path ... ,

Allah says: "All this is there for My servant._ He shall be given what he prays for." (Mazhari)

The Surah begins with the words Al-hamdulillah, signifying that all praise essentially belongs to Allah. Whosoever praises anything anywhere in the world is ultimately praising Allah. The sensible world contains millions of things which compel man's attention and admiration for their beauty and usefulness, but if one tries to look behind the veil of appearances, one would find in each and every thing the manifestation of the same creative power. Admiring anything that exists in the created world is no more than showing one's admiration for a work of art or craft, which in fact is a praise of the artist or the craftsman. This small statement of the Holy Qur'an opens a new perspective for man lost in the labyrinth of multiplicity, and shows him how the many are knit together in the same unity, and how all praise in reality belongs to One whose power is absolute, and that it is only in our ignorance or indifference that we regard this praise to be due to anyone else.

If there is only one Being in the whole universe who inherently deserves all praise, it necessarily follows from it that this Being alone should be worthy of adoration and worship. Thus we can see that although the phrase, Al-hamdulillah, has been used to signify praise, yet, by implication, it cuts the very root of polytheism or the worship of created beings, and at the same time brings out in a self-evident manner the first and the basic principle of the Islamic creed -Oneness of God.

The next phrase to follow in the Surah speaks of an attribute of Allah -- Lord of the Worlds. Lexically, the word, Rabb signifies 'one who nurtures'. And 'nurture' implies developing a thing by gradual stages in a manner which is conducive to its own good till it attains perfection. The word, Rabb is exclusive to the sacred Being of Allah, and cannot be employed in the case of any created being without adding some qualification, for a created being is itself in need of 'nurture', and cannot nurture anyone else.

Al-Aalamin is the plural of 'alam (world, universe, kingdom). "The worlds" include all possible forms of -- existence: the sky, the earth, the sun, the moon, stars, wind and rain, the angels, the jinns, animals, plants, minerals, and, of course, men. So, 'the Lord of allthe worlds" means that Allah alone gives nurture to all the forms of existents that are to be found in this universe, or in the millions of universes that may lie beyond our own universe in the outer space. Imam Raz], the great commentator of the Holy Qur'an, says that the existence of an indefinite space beyond our universe can be proved on the basis of rational argument, and it is also certain that Allah is All-Powerful, so it should not be at all difficult for Him to have .created millions of other universes in this endless space. It has been reported from the Companion Abii Sa'id al-Khudri (RA) that there are forty thousand worlds; our world, stretching from the East to the West, is only one of them, there being many more besides it. According to the well-known commentator Muqatil, the number of worlds is eighty thousand. (See Qurtubi)

As for the objection that no man or animal can live in the outer space owing to the lack of the kind of air which should be compatible with the physical make-up of man, Imam Razi replies that the inhabitants of the worlds in the outer space need not necessarily have the same physical make-up as that of the inhabitants of our world which should make existence in space impossible for them, and suggests that their organic composition and the requirements for its nourishment and sustenance might just be totally different.

Imam Razi postulated these possibilities some eight hundred years ago without the help of the modern facilities for observation and exploration, yet the speculations of the scientists in the age of space travel endorse his view.

Seen in the light of this short phrase, 'Lord of the worlds', the universe reveals itself to be an incredibly complex, yet perfectly integrated order. From the heavens to the earth, from the planets and the stars to the particles of dust, everything is 80und in a chain of being, and is performing the function assigned to it by Divine Wisdom. Man cannot obtain a little morsel of food unless a thousand forces of the sky and the earth work together to produce

it. The universal order is there for man to contemplate, and to realize that, if Allah has put millions of His creatures in the service of man, man in his turn cannot be worthless or purposeless or meaningless. The Holy Qur'an is indeed very explicit and very insistent in reminding us that the universe is not absurd **وَمَا خَلَقْنَا**
السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَطْلًا ذَٰلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنَ النَّارِ

We have not created in vain the heavens and the earth and what lies between them. That is the fancy of the disbelievers. But woe to the disbelievers in the fire of Hell. (38:27)

If the universe is not in vain or absurd, man too, whose purposes the universe has been made to serve, cannot be purposeless and meaningless. The Holy Qur'an defines the Divine purpose in creating man and the goal of his existence in these words **وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ** I have not created the jinn and mankind except to worship Me. (51:56)

It may be said that the phrase 'the Lord of all the worlds' is in a way the proof of the claim made in the earlier phrase Alhumdo-lillah (all praise belongs to Allah). When Allah alone is the ultimate cause for the nurture of the whole universe, He alone can, in reality, be worthy of praise. Thus, the first verse of the Surah, as we said before, combines in itself the praise of Allah and a subtle indication of the first and basic principle of the Islamic creed -- the oneness of God.

The second verse speaks of the Divine quality of mercy, employing two adjectives Rahman and Rahim, both of which are hyperbolic terms in Arabic, and respectively connote the superabundance and perfection of Divine mercy. The reference to this particular attribute in this situation is perhaps intended to be a reminder of the fact that it is not through any external compulsion or inner need or any kind of necessity whatsoever that Allah has assumed the responsibility of nurturing the whole of His creation, but in response to the demand of His own quality of mercy. If this whole universe did not exist, He would suffer no loss; if it does exist, it is no burden to Him.

The third verse pays 'homage to Allah as 'the Master of the Day of Judgment or Requital' **مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ**. The word Malik has been derived from the root, 'm'ilk' (ملك) which signifies possessing a thing in such a manner that one has 'the right and power to dispose of it as one likes (See Qamus), The word Din signifies 'Requital'. So, the phrase 'Master of the Day of Requital' implies total mastery on the Day of Requital. But there is no mention of the thing or things to which this mastery or possession would apply. According to the commentary, 'al-Kashshaf', the phrase makes a general reference to cover everything. That is to say, on the Day of Requital the mastery over everything that exists will belong to Allah alone.

The Day of Requital is real and rational:

Before we proceed, let us consider two important questions: Firstly, what is this Day of Requital? Secondly, Allah being the Master, of everything even today as much as on the Day of Requital, why does this verse specifically mention the Day of Requital? The Day of Requital or the Day of Judgment is the Day appointed by Allah to recompense good or evil deeds. (The verse qualifies Allah specifically as 'Master of the Day of Requital', and thus emphasizes a principle which is in itself of the highest import, and is particularly relevant to certain tendencies in the modern habits of thought. Contrary to the modern conviction which one finds reflected even in the so called "new interpretations" of Islam, individual or collective well being is not the be-all and end-all of human existence, nor is the physical world the place where good or evil deeds are recompensed – Translator)

The world is only the field of action, the place where one is required to perform one's duty, and not the place for receiving one's reward. The mere fact that man happens to be healthy and wealthy or powerful does not

necessarily argue that he has won the pleasure and favour of Allah. Similarly, the mere fact that a man happens to be ill or poor or weak or miserable does not by itself indicates that he is the object of Allah's wrath. Even in the case of worldly life, would it not be a platitude to remark that a man sweating in a factory or an office does not consider it a misfortune? In fact, try to deprive him of this opportunity to sweat, and you would have earned his deepest displeasure; for beyond all this toil he can glimpse the reward he is going to get after thirty days in the shape of his wages.

It proceeds from this principle that the greatest sufferings in this world are the lot of the Prophets (AS) and, after them, of the men of Allah, and yet we see them quite content and even happy. In short, physical well-being or worldly glory or luxury is no sure indication of one's virtue and truthfulness, nor is sorrow and suffering that of one's misdeeds and falsity. It may, however, happen that a man receives some punishment or reward for his deeds in this world. This never is the full recompense, but only a faint model which has been manifested to serve

as an intimation or warning. The Holy Qur'an has spoken very clearly on this point **وَلَنذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ** **أَلَدِّ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ** And We shall surely let them taste a nearer punishment (in this world) before the greater punishment (in the other world), so that they may return (to the right path). (32:21)

And

كَذَلِكَ الْعَذَابُ وَالْعَذَابُ الْأَخْرَجُ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ Such is the punishment; and the punishment of the other world is certainly greater, only if they knew. (68 : 33)

The sufferings of this world, as even its joys, are sometimes a trial, and sometimes a punishment, but never a full recompense, for the world is itself transitory. What really counts is the joy or suffering that will endure for ever, and which one will come to know in the other world beyond this world. Given the fact that good or evil deeds are not fully recompensed in this world, and the rational and just principle that good and evil not being equal in value, every deed should be rewarded or punished according to its nature, it readily follows that beyond this world there should be another world where every deed, big or small, good or evil, is to be judged, and then justly rewarded or punished. This the Holy Qur'an calls Al-Akhirah: (The world-to-come), or Al-Qiyamah (Doomsday or the Day of Judgment), or 'Yawm aldin, (Day of Requital). The whole idea has been explained by the Holy Qur'an

itself **وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيءَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ (٥٨) إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَأْتِيَةٌ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ** The blind are not equal with the seeing, nor the wrong-doers with those who believe and do good deeds. Yet you seldom reflect. The hour of retribution is sure to come, no doubt about it, yet most people do not believe. (40 : 58-59)

Who is the Master?

Now, we come to the second question. It should be obvious, on a little reflection, to everyone that the real master of every particle of dust in the universe can only be He who has created and nurtured it, Whose mastery over everything is complete, having neither a beginning nor an end, covering the living and the dead, the apparent and the hidden, the seen and the unseen. On the contrary, the mastery of man is delimited by a beginning and an end; it has a 'before' when it did not exist, and an 'after' when it will exist no more. Man's mastery and control extends to the living, not to the dead, to the seen, not to the unseen, to the external aspect of things, not to the internal. All this would show to those who can see that the real Master of the whole universe, not only on the Day of Requital but even in this world, is no other than Allah. Then why should this verse specify the Day of Requital?

The verses of the Surah al-Mu'min / Ghafir (Chapter 40) serve as a commentary on the phrase under discussion, and provide a clear account of the Day of Requit. The real and complete mastery over everything, no doubt, belongs to Allah alone even in this world. Yet Allah Himself, in His beneficence and wisdom, has granted a kind of imperfect, temporary and apparent mastery to man as well; and the Shari'ah, in laying down laws for worldly affairs, has given due consideration to man's limited right to ownership. But today, in possessing lands or money or power, which has been given to him by way of trial, man has always been prone to get drunk with pride and vanity. (*Specially the modern man living in the so-called 'humanistic civilization' when the sole drive and motivating force is the complacent belief in man's mastery – Translator*)

The phrase 'Master of the Day of -Judgment' is a warning to man reeling in his forgetfulness and self-conceit, and an intimation that all his possessions, all his relationships with things and men are only short-lived, and that there shall come a Day when masters will no more be masters and slaves no more slaves, when no one will own anything even in appearance, and the ownership and mastery, apparent as well as real, of the whole universe will be seen to belong to none but Allah, the Exalted. The Holy Qur'an says **يَوْمَ هُمْ بَارِزُونَ لِمَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ لَّمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ (١٦) أَلْيَوْمِ تُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ** The day they will present themselves (before Allah), and nothing of theirs will remain hidden from Allah (even apparently). 'Whose is the kingdom today?' Of Allah alone, the One, the Mighty. Today everyone will be recompensed for what he has done. Today no one will be wronged. Allah's reckoning is surely swift. (40:17)

The fourth verse **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ** 'You alone we worship, and from You alone we seek help' has a double aspect, one of praise and another of prayer. A man's life is subject 'to three states of time -- past, present and future. The first two verses of the Surah, **الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ** (All Praise belongs to Allah) and **الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ** (the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful), remind man that, as far as his past and present are concerned, he owes everything to Allah alone, for it is Allah who created him out of nothing, endowed him with the best form in the universe, and with reason and intuition, and continues to sustain and nurture him in the present. The third verse **مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ** (Master of the Day of Judgment) tells him that in the future too he will have to depend on Allah alone, for on the Day of Requit one cannot possibly have a helper other than Allah. The three verses having made it clear that man is totally and absolutely dependent on Allah in all the three states of his life, it logically and naturally leads to the conclusion that Allah alone is worthy of being worshipped, for in Arabic the word 'ibiidali (worship) connotes showing the utmost humility and submissiveness out of an intense respect and love for someone, and such an attitude of willing self-abasement cannot justly be adopted towards anyone except Allah. So, the phrase: **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ** (You alone we worship) expresses this very natural and logical conclusion. And once it has been understood that there is only one Being who can satisfy all our needs, it is equally natural and logical to turn for help in everything to Him alone. Hence the phrase **وإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ** (to You alone we pray for help). Beside these two aspects, the fourth verse has another dimension as well. It teaches man not to worship anyone except Allah, not to consider anyone else as being really capable of satisfying his needs, and not to beg anyone else to satisfy these needs. It does not, however, go against this principle if, in praying to Allah, one mentions the name of a prophet or a man of Allah by way of a medium (wasilah) for drawing the mercy of Allah upon oneself.

It may also be noticed that the phrase **وَأِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ** (to You alone we pray for help) does not mention the purpose for which help is being sought. According to most of the commentators, it generalizes the idea of the request to cover everything from acts of worship to all possible worldly or other-worldly concerns.

Then, acts of worship ('Ibadah) are not limited merely to prescribed prayers or fasting. Imam al-Ghazzali in his book 'Arba'in' has enumerated ten forms which worship can take:-

1. Prayers.
2. Prescribed Alms-giving.
3. Fasting.
4. Hajj or pilgrimage to Makkah.
5. Reciting the Holy Qur'an.
6. Remembrance of Allah in all possible situations.
7. Earning one's livelihood in accordance with the regulations of the Shari'ah,
8. Fulfilling one's obligations towards one's companions and neighbours.
9. Persuading people to act righteously and dissuading them from what is reprehensible and forbidden.
10. To follow the Sunnah, or the practice of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) .

Therefore, not associating anyone with Allah in worship means that one should not love or fear or depend on anyone else as one loves , or fears or depends on Allah, nor should one repose one's hope in anyone else, nor should one consider obedience or submission or service to another as obligatory as the worship of Allah, nor make a votive offering or consecrate or dedicate anything to anyone or take a vow in the name of anyone similar to the way one does these things in the case of Allah, nor should one show complete self-abasement and total humility before anyone as one is required to do before Allah, nor should one engage in the particular God-oriented acts of worship for anyone other than Allah, acts which symbolize the farthest limits of self-abasement, such as, ruku' and sajdah (the bowing and prostrating in salah).

The Prayer for Guidance

The last three verses of the Surah consist of a prayer on the part of man. In other words, Allah Himself, in His **أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (٦) صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ** great mercy, has taught man what to pray for **غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ (٧)**

Guide us in the straight path, the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, not of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.

The Implications of Guidance

A problem of highest significance arises here. The teaching with regard to the prayer for being guided in the straight path is addressed equally to all men or all Muslims and to saints and prophets who have already received guidance and are even a source of guidance for other men. Why should these repeatedly pray for something they already possess? The answer to this question depends on knowing all that is implied by guidance. The answer would, at the same time, remove all difficulties and confusions which arise in the minds of those who, not being familiar with the true signification of guidance, begin to suspect that certain verses of the Holy Qur'an were contradicting certain others.

The Meaning of Hidayah or Guidance

The best explanation of the word, Hidayah (guidance) has been offered by Imam Raghīb al-Isfahani in his Mufradat al-Qur'an, which can be summed up thus: Hidayah signifies leading someone towards his destination, gently and kindly; while guidance, in the real sense, issues forth from Allah alone, and it has several degrees.

The First Degree of Guidance

The first degree of guidance is general, and covers everything that exists in the universe -- minerals, plants, animals etc. It would surprise many to hear of guidance in relation to minerals. But the Holy Qur'an makes it quite clear that all forms of existents in the universe, and every particle of dust possesses life, sensitivity, and even consciousness and understanding in its own degree and according to its own sphere of existence. Some of these existents possess more of this essence than others, and some less. Hence, those who have very little of it are considered to be inanimate and devoid of consciousness. The Shari'ah too has recognized this difference, and such creatures have not been made to bear the obligation of observing the injunctions of Allah. The creatures which show obvious signs of life but not those of consciousness and reason are considered to be living, but not rational; whereas, creatures showing the signs of consciousness and reason, along with those of life, are called rational beings. Because of these differences in the degrees of consciousness, men and jinn alone, of all the existents in the universe, have been made subservient to the injunctions of the Shari'ah and accountable for their actions, for they alone have the necessary consciousness and understanding. But, it does not mean that other creatures or existents are totally devoid of life or sensitivity, or of consciousness and understanding. The Holy Qur'an is very explicit on this point **وَأَنَّ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِن لَّا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا** Nothing exists that does not celebrate His praise, but you do not understand their (mode of) praising. (17:44)

And

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ ۚ مِنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرِ صَوَّاتٍ كُلِّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ ۚ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ

Have you not seen that everything in the heavens and the earth proclaims Allah's purity, and the birds too that spread their wings? Each of them knows its prayer and its (mode of) praising. And Allah is aware of what they do. (24:41)

Evidently, one cannot extol and praise Allah without knowing Allah. It is equally evident that knowing Allah is the highest form of knowledge possible, and such a knowledge cannot be gained unless one possesses consciousness and understanding. These verses, therefore, show that everything that exists in the universe possesses life, sensitivity, understanding and consciousness, though it may not always be apparent to the ordinary observer -- a truth which has been endorsed by all the great religions, by certain ancient philosophers, and lately even by experimental science.

This, then, is the first degree of guidance which is common to minerals, plants, animals, men, jinns and all the forms of creation. The Holy Qur'an speaks of this primary and general guidance in these words **قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ** He gave to everything its distinctive form, and then guided it. (20:50)

Or, as we find in another Surah **سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَىٰ (١) الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ (٢) وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ** Celebrate the name of your Lord, the Most High, Who has created all things, well proportioned them, and Who has determined and guided them. (87:1-2)

That is to say, Allah has given every creature a particular nature and function, and guided it in a way which should correspond to its station in the scheme of things. Thanks to this general guidance, everything in the universe is performing its Allotted function with such marvellous efficiency. For example, it is the ears that hear a sound and not the eyes or the nose. Similarly, the nose smells but cannot see; the eyes see but cannot smell. In short **إِنَّ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالتَّرْضِ إِلَّا عِندَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا** There is nothing in the heavens and the earth but comes to the All-Merciful as a servant. (19:93)

The Second Degree of Guidance

Unlike the first, the second degree of guidance is not general but particular. It is limited to those creatures which are considered to be rational, that is, men and jinns. This kind of guidance comes to every man through prophets and revealed books. Some accept this guidance, and become believers (Muslims): some reject it and become disbelievers (Kafirs).

The Third Degree of guidance

The third degree of guidance is still more particular, being special to true believers (Mu'minin) and the God-fearing (Muttaqin). Like the first degree, the third kind of guidance too descends directly to the individual from Allah, and it is called, Taufiq, That is to say, Allah's grace provides a man with internal and external means and circumstances which should make it easy, and even pleasant for him to accept and act upon the guidance of the Holy Qur'an, and difficult to ignore or oppose it. The scope of the third degree of guidance is limitless, and its levels indefinite. *(Contrary to all the modern fictions about man's Evolution or Perfectibility or Progress which may pass for sound philosophy or science – Translator)*

Here is the sphere in which man, not only can, but is required to make a progress in the veritable sense of the term. The agency of this progress is the performance of virtuous deeds *(As defined, it goes without saying, by the Shariah and not by individual or collective fancy, or by custom and habits, or by the fads or fashions of the day – Translator)*

All increase in virtuous deeds brings with it an increase in divine guidance. The Holy Qur'an itself gives us the promise of such increase **وَالَّذِينَ أَهْتَدُوا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى** As for those who follow the straight path, Allah will increase their guidance. (47:17)

And

وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ And whoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart. (64:11)

And

الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا Those who strive for (literally, 'in') Us, We will surely guide them in Our paths. (29:69)

It is in this field of progress that we see even the greatest prophets and men of Allah striving, and it is an increase in divine guidance and help that they keep seeking to their last breath.

A Cumulative view of guidance

Keeping in mind the three distinct degrees of guidance, one can easily see that guidance is a thing which everyone does possess in some way, and yet no one, not even the greatest, can do without wishing to attain more of its advanced and higher stages. Hence, of all the prayers man can address to Allah, the most important is the prayer for guidance, which has been taught to us in the very first Surah of the Holy Qur'an; and this prayer is as

necessary for the greatest of prophets and men of Allah as for an ordinary Muslim. That is why the Surah Al-Fath (Victory), in enumerating the material and spiritual benefits of the conquest of Makkah in the last days of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam), also says **وَيَهْدِيكُمْ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا** (and to guide you on the straight path) (48:20). When these verses were revealed, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) had already received guidance and was a source of guidance for others, The good tidings of receiving guidance can, in this situation, have only one meaning that he attained some very high station of guidance at the time.

Guidance: Some notes of caution

In concluding this discussion about the different implications of guidance (Hidayah), we repeat points that would help the reader of the Holy Qur'an avoid certain confusions and errors:

1. The Holy Qur'an sometimes speaks of divine guidance as being general and common to believers and non-believers, in fact to all creatures, and sometimes makes it out to be particular and special to the God-fearing. So, the unwary may be led to sense a contradiction here. But once it is understood that one degree of guidance is common to all, whereas another degree is limited to particular cases, the doubt and confusion readily resolves itself.
2. On the one hand, the Holy Qur'an reminds us again and again that Allah does not grant guidance to the unjust and the unrighteous; on the other hand, it repeatedly declares that Allah guides all. The misunderstanding which may arise here is also dispelled by a knowledge of the degrees of guidance. Now we can easily see that the general guidance is given to all without any distinction, but the third and very special degree of guidance is not granted to the unjust and the unrighteous.
3. The first and the third degrees of guidance pertain to a direct act of divine grace, and no prophet can have anything to do with it, for the function of the prophets is related only to the second degree.

Whenever the Holy Qur'an speaks of Prophets (AS) as guides, it is always referring to this second degree, and to it alone. On the other hand, when the Holy Qur'an, addressing the noble Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) says

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ (You cannot guide whom you please) (28:56), it is the third degree of guidance which is intended, that is to say, it is neither the function of a prophet nor is it in his power to provide tawfiq to anyone, in other words, to make it easy for anyone to accept guidance. *(In this context one should not overlook the popularity enjoyed in the West, since the rise of Protestantism, by the notion of a personal relationship with God on the part of the individual. This notion has in its turn produced a diffused yet very effective conviction that ethics can be made independent of religion, that the external or legislative aspect of religion is of no account, that prescribed rites are irrelevant to the so-called 'religious experience', and more monstrously still, that doctrines can be dispensed with altogether -- all of which betrays a total incomprehension of what constitutes a religion. The tendency has, in fact, begun to infect some of the modernist interpreters of Islam in one way or another, all of whom claim to be fulfilling the 'needs of the present age'. Attempts have been made even to exploit this notion for ulterior motives.*

In persuading the Muslim countries to look upon themselves as 'the eastern-most part of the West', the London ECONOMIST argues that Islam 'also implies a one-to-one relationship between the believer and the God he believes in, a direct contact without intermediary and in this relationship, in which a single God speaks directly to the core of a single man, is the basis of individualism. The Protestant ethic is grounded on precisely the same concept.' (May 17-23, 1975, page 82 of the Special Survey). In the light of the discussion regarding the three degrees of guidance, it should not be difficult to see that the direct contact with God without intermediary pertains only to the first and third degrees, and not the second degree where the mediation of the prophets is indispensable. To attain the third degree may be necessary for making a spiritual progress, but Islam, or for that matter any authentic religion, is born out of the second degree of guidance. One cannot, indeed, enjoy the benefits

of the third degree without having accepted the guidance of the second degree -- or, to use the Islamic terminology, without following the Shari'ah – Translator)

To sum up, the Qur'anic prayer **أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ** (guide us in the straight path) is most comprehensive, and certainly, one of the most important prayers taught to man. No member of the human family can claim not to need it. No success, no prosperity in this or in the other world can really come without being on the straight path. Particularly so, for man lost in the anxieties of mortal life, the prayer for the straight path is an elixir, though people do not realize it.

Which 'path' is 'straight'?

Now, to come to the meaning of the 'straight path', it is the path which has no turns and twists. The term signifies the particular way of Faith which equally avoids the two extremes of excess and deficiency. One who follows the straight path would, in matters of doctrine and practice both, neither go beyond the limits nor fall short of them.

The last two verses of the Surah Al-Fatihah define and identify that 'straight path', something man has been prompted to pray for immediately earlier. The verse says **صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ** (The path of those on, whom You have bestowed Your grace).

As to who these people are, another verse of the Holy Qur'an gives us details in the following words **الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ**

Those whom Allah has blessed, namely, the prophets, the Siddiqin, the Shuhada', and the righteous. (4:69)

These are the four categories of those who find favour with Allah.

Among them all, the prophets are the greatest. The Siddiqin (the constantly true) are those who acquire spiritual perfection, and thus -attain the highest rank among the followers of a prophet. In common parlance, they are called Men of Allah, or saints. *(If taken in an untainted religious sense, and certainly not if taken in one of the many modern vulgarized usages of the term where, for instance, you see the halo of spiritual glory over the head of a spy –)*

The Shuhada' (martyrs) are those who sacrifice even their lives for the sake of their faith (or, who bear witness to the truth, as the word admits of both meanings). The righteous (the Saliheen) are those who follow the Shari'ah completely, not only in the matter of obligations (Wajibat) but also with regard to commendable (Mustahab) actions. In everyday language they are called the pious or the virtuous or the good.

This verse, then, determines the straight path in a positive manner, identifying it with the path followed by men of these four categories. The next verse, by a process of elimination, does the same in a negative manner by saying **غَيْرِ الْمَعْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ** Not of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.

Those who have incurred Allah's wrath are the people, who in spite of being quite familiar with the commandments of Allah wilfully go against them out of a calculated perversity or in the service of their desires, or, in other words, who are deficient in obeying divine injunctions. This, for example, was the general condition of the Jews who were ready to sacrifice their religion for the sake of a petty worldly gain, and used to insult and sometimes even to kill their prophets.

As for **الضَّالِّينَ** (those who go astray), they are the people who, out of ignorance or lack of thought, go beyond the limits appointed by Allah, and indulge in excess and exaggeration in religious matters. This, for example, has generally been the error of the Christians who exceeded the limits in their reverence for a prophet and turned him into a god. On the one hand, there is the rebelliousness of the Jews who not only refused to listen to the

prophets of Allah but went on to kill them; on the other hand, there is the excessive zeal of the Christians who deified a prophet.

Thus, the essential meaning of the verse is that, in praying for the straight path, we do not ask for the path of those who are the slaves of their desires, perverse in thought and action, and deficient in performing their religious obligations, nor the path of those who are ignorant or unmindful or misled, and indulge in excess and exaggeration in religious matters, but wish for a path between these two extremes, which inclines neither towards excess nor towards deficiency, and which is as free of the promptings of desires as of doubts and confusions and of erroneous beliefs.

In short, the prayer for the straight path is the essence of the Surah Al-Fatihah. Since knowing and following the straight path is the real knowledge and the real achievement in this mortal world, a mistake in picking it up right takes peoples and nations to ruins; otherwise, there are even non-Muslims who claim to be seeking God and undertake stupendous labours to attain this end. The Holy Qur'an has, therefore, defined the straight path so explicitly from a positive as well as eliminative point of view.

The Key to the Straight Path

But, before we proceed, there is another problem to be considered, the answer to which would open the door to a new and more comprehensive understanding.' It would seem that in order to define the straight path it should have been sufficient to call it 'the path of the Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) or 'the path of the Qur'an', which should also have been more succinct and more explicit, for the whole of the Holy Qur'an is really an explanation of the straight path, and the teachings of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam), an elaboration. But, setting aside the succinct and explicit form of expression, the Holy Qur'an has taken up two verses of this short Surah for defining and delimiting the straight path positively and negatively, and has thus indicated that if one wishes to follow the straight path, one should seek such and such men 'those on whom Allah has bestowed His grace .. .', and adopt their way. Here, the Holy Quran does not ask us to follow the 'path of the Qur'an', for a book alone is not sufficient for the grooming of man; nor does it ask us to follow 'the path of the prophet', for the Holy Prophet ~ was not to be in this world for ever, and no other prophet was to come after him. So, in enumerating those whose teaching and example can help us attain the straight path, the Holy Qur'an has, besides the prophets (AS) , included those too, who will always be found living amongst us till the last day of the world -- namely, the Siddiqin, the Shuhada', and the righteous.

For the purpose of indicating the manner in which one can find the straight path, the Holy Qur'an has thus referred not to a book but to certain men. According to a hadith , when the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) informed his Companions that, like earlier communities, his 'Ummah' too would be divided into seventy or seventy-two sects, and that only one among them would be on the right path, they wanted to know as to which group it would be. The answer he gave also leads on to certain men of Allah, for he said: (That which follows my way and the way of my Companions). All this comes to mean that written books or oral traditions alone cannot teach, train and discipline man; for this, one has to be with knowing men, and learning from them. In yet other words, the real teacher and groomer of man has to be another man; a **book** cannot take that place all by itself. How curtly this was pointed out by Akbar, the famous Urdu poethumourist, who said which, in English, comes close to saying: "**Courses teach words. But, men train men.**" This truth holds good even for spheres of everyday life.

No one has ever become a doctor, or an engineer, or even a cook or a tailor merely by reading a book. Similarly, studying the Holy Qur'an and the Ifadith on one's own cannot by itself be sufficient for the moral-spiritual education and training of a man; such a study must be carried on under the guidance of a specialist or a genuine scholar before it can be useful. It is common observation (*Under the influence of the West, particularly that of Protestantism - Translator*) that," many people today, though otherwise educated, cherish the erroneous notion

that one can acquire a masterly knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith merely by reading a translation or at best a commentary. (*The illusion has been encouraged by the modernistic or pseudomodernistic interpretations of Islam - Translator*) " But the error of such an enterprise is self-evident. Had a book in itself been sufficient for the guidance of men, there was no need for the prophets to be sent. But, Allah in sending us His book, has also sent His Prophet to serve as a teacher and guide. In defining the straight path too, He has also enumerated those of His servants who find special favour with Him -- all of which argues that, in trying to understand the book of Allah and to act upon it, one cannot solely rely on one's own study and judgment, but must turn to someone who knows.

The conclusion

Two things are necessary for the physical and spiritual well-being and success of man -- the book of Allah which contains guidance for every sphere of human life, and the Men of Allah who help in making this guidance effective. The way to profit from the Men of Allah is to assess them according to the well-known principles of the book of Allah. Those who do not conform to these principles should just not be regarded as Men of Allah. But, when one has found Men of Allah, in the real sense, one should seek their guidance in order to understand the meaning of the book of Allah and act upon it.

Why the Schism?

As to the sectarian differences on this point, we may remark that there are two kinds of deviations in this respect. Some people elected to follow the book of Allah alone, ignored the Men of Allah totally and gave no value to their teachings and explanations. Conversely, others adopted the Men of Allah as the only criterion of truth and became indifferent to the book of Allah. both these ways lead to fatal error.

Injunctions and related considerations

To recapitulate, the Surah Al-Fatihah begins with the praise of Allah. Then comes an affirmation on the part of man that he worships Allah alone, and turns to him alone in the hour of need. That is, so to say, the oath of allegiance man offers to his Lord and Master. Finally, there is a prayer which covers all possible human needs and goals. Beside these, there are some related secondary considerations also which arise from the Surah, These are as follows:

The proper way of Praying to Allah

Through this particular mode of expression and through its structure, the Surah teaches man how to pray and how to make a request to Allah. The proper method is that one should begin by fulfilling one's obligation to praise Allah. Then, one should offer the pledge of complete allegiance to Allah to the effect that one does not regard anyone except Allah as being worthy of adoration and worship, nor does one look upon anyone except Allah as having the real power to give help in one's distress or need. Finally, one should pray for what one wishes to have. And there is every hope that a prayer made in this manner will be granted. (See Ahkam al-Jassas). The Surah also suggests that, in praying to Allah, one should pray for something so comprehensive that it includes in essence all possible human goals, for example, pray for being guided in the straight path, because if one can and does follow the straight path in everything that concerns this world or the other, one's material life or spiritual, one need not be afraid of stumbling or of being hurt.

Praising Allah is Man's Natural Demand

The first verse of the Surah teaches man to praise Allah. We praise someone either for a quality inherent in him or for a favour received from him. But the verse mentions neither. The implication is that the blessings of Allah are limitless. The Holy Qur'an says **وَأِنْ تَعَدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَأَنْتُمْ أَكْثَرُ نَجْوًا** (If you try to count the blessings of Allah, you will never be able to number them) (14:34 and 16:18). Leaving aside other things, if man only considers his own being, he would find that it is a microcosm -- in itself which contains in analogical form everything

contained in the macrocosm, his 80dy offers a parallel to the earth, the hair on it to the vegetation, his 80nes to the hills, his veins flowing with blood to the springs underground (*It may not be out of place to remark that this analogical view of man's relationship with the universe has been an essential feature of all traditional cosmologies. The Copernican cosmology, whatever its merits may otherwise be, has tended to dissolve this vision of things, leaving man, at least in the West, to grow more and more alienated from the universe __ till we have arrived at the viewers of the American television who are reported to have been more interested in a ball game than in man's first landing on the moon – Translator*)

Man, again, is composed of two parts, spirit and body, of which the spirit is obviously superior in value, while the 80dy is subservient to it. In this inferior part alone, there are thousands of anatomical and biological wonders. There are supposed to be more than three hundred joints, but Allah has made each of them so strong that during the sixty or seventy years of an average man's life they are in perpetual motion and yet don't need repairs. Of this Allah himself has reminded us **نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَا أَسْرَهُمْ ط** It is We Who created them, and it is We Who endowed their joints with strength (76:28).

Or, take the example of the eye. One may spend a life-time and yet not fully know the manifestations of divine wisdom present in it. Or, take a single movement of the eye, and see how many blessings of Allah are involved in its functioning. Before the eye can see, internally it requires physical energy which in its turn is provided by food, air, water etc. And externally it requires the light of the sun which in its turn depends on a thousand other factors. That is to say, all the forces of the universe join together to make it possible for the eye to see even once. Now, try to calculate how many times does the eye see in a day, in -a year, in a man's life-time. Similarly, the functions of the ears, the tongue, the hands and the feet, each brings into action the forces of the whole universe.

This is a kind of blessing which is equally available to every living man, be he a king or a beggar. In fact, all the greatest blessings of Allah are the common property of every living creature -- for example, air, water, light, the sun, the moon, the stars, in fact, everything that exists in the heavens and the earth, or between them, offers its benefits to all without distinction.

Then there are special blessings which divine wisdom has chosen to distribute unequally among men, some getting more and others less. This category includes wealth, honour, health, peace, knowledge and other acquisitions. Although the general blessings are obviously much more important and essential for human life than the special blessings, yet man in his naivety takes them for granted and never realizes what great gifts they are in spite of being common.

Now, human nature itself requires that in recognition of the innumerable blessings that keep descending on him at every moment of his life, man should, as far as he can, praise and continue to praise his Benefactor. It is to indicate this basic need of human nature that the Holy Qur'an employs the word 'Al-hamd' (Praise) as the first word of the very first Surah. Thus, the praise of Allah has been accorded a very high rank among the acts of worship. The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has said that when, on receiving some kind of a blessing from Allah, His servant says Alhumdo-lillah (Praise belongs to Allah), it is like giving something better in return for what he has taken (Qurtubi, from Ibn Majah, as narrated by Anas (RA)). According to another hadith if a man, on receiving all possible blessings of the world, says Alhumdo-lillah (Praise belongs to Allah) his act is superior to all those blessings. Commenting on this hadith and citing certain scholars, al-Qurtubi says, the ability to 'repeat the phrase 'Al-hamdulillah' with one's tongue is in itself a blessing of Allah. According to another authentic hadith , saying this phrase fills half the scale on the side of good deeds in the Balance. As to what praising Allah should actually mean, Shaqiq ibn Ibrahim explains that when one receives some gift from Allah, one should first of all recognize the Benefactor, then be content with what He has given, and finally never disobey Him as long as one has some strength left in the body, which again is a gift from Allah. (See Qurtubi)

The second element in the phrase is Lillah, which is composed of the preposition Lam (Arabic equivalent of the letter L) and the noun 'Allah'. This preposition means 'for' and is used for particularization, showing the exclusive possession of a thing or quality. So, the phrase implies that not only is it the duty 'of man to praise Allah, but in reality all praise belongs exclusively to Him, and no one else in the universe is worthy of it. At the same time, and by way of a further blessing, Allah has, for the purpose of teaching man how to behave with his fellow beings, commanded him to thank those too through whom the gifts of Allah come to him, for one who does not see the need of thanking his human benefactor would not thank Allah too.

Self-Praise is not permitted

It is not permissible for a created being such as man to praise himself The Holy Qur'an says **فَلَا تُزَكُّوْا اَنْفُسَكُمْ**

هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ اَتَّقَى Do not pretend to be pure; He knows best who is really God-fearing) (53:32). That is to say, a man can be praised only if he fears Allah, but Allah alone knows to what degree a particular man possesses this quality, known as Taqwa, As for Allah praising Himself, the reason is that man is not capable of praising the glory and greatness of Allah in a befitting manner. Not to speak of others, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has exclaimed "I cannot properly praise You". Therefore, Allah Himself has taught man the mode of praising Him.

Rabb is the exclusive attribute of Allah

The Arabic word 'Rabb' (Lord) is applied to a person who not only possesses a certain thing, but is also fully capable of and responsible for nurturing it properly. Obviously, no one can act as 'Ra bb' with regard to the whole universe except Allah. So, the word, used in an absolute sense, is exclusive to Allah, and it is not permissible to address or describe anyone other than Allah as 'Rabb,' Ahadith in the Sahih of Muslim explicitly forbids a slave or servant to call his master a 'Rabb', The word may, however, be employed in the case of a man too in a relative sense -- that is, in relation to a particular thing, for example, 'rabb al-dar' (master of the house) etc. (Qurtubi).

Seeking help from Allah

According to the great commentator and Companion 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas, the verse **اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَاِيَّاكَ**

نَسْتَعِيْنُ You alone we worship, and from You alone we seek help' means that one worships Allah alone and no one else, and that one turns for help to Allah alone and to no one else. (Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Jarlr)

It has been reported from certain great scholars and saints of the earliest centuries of Islam that the Surah al-Fatihah is the secret (i.e., the gist) of the entire Holy Qur'an, and this verse is the secret of the whole Surah, for the first sentence of the verse is a declaration of one's being free from Shirk, or from all desire to associate anyone with Allah, and the second sentence is an expression of one's being exempt from all wish to trust in one's own power and will. Such an affirmation would naturally lead to putting oneself in the hands of Allah in all concerns. The Holy Qur'an again and again commands us to do so

فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ Worship Him, and put your trust in Him'. (11:123);

قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ اَمْنًا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُمْ Say He is the All-Merciful. We believe in Him, and we put all our trust in Him' (67:29);

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا He is the Lord of the East and the West; there is no god but He;"so take Him for a guardian' (73:9).

All these verses come to mean simply this -- a true Muslim should, in anything that he undertakes, rely neither on his own faculties nor on the help of a fellow creature, but should entrust himself completely to Allah, for He alone is All-Powerful, and He alone is the absolute helper.

Two doctrinal points emerge from this discussion. Firstly, it is totally forbidden to worship anyone except Allah, and associating anyone else with Him in worship is a deadly and unforgivable sin. As we have already explained, 'Ibadah. (worship) signifies an utmost humility and willing self-abasement before someone out of the deepest love and veneration. If one behaves in this manner in relation to any created being, it is called shirk (association) in Islamic terminology. It basically follows from this definition of "worship" that "association" does not merely consist in attributing divine power to figures made out of stone or metal as idolators usually do; but obeying or loving or venerating someone to the degree which is reserved for Allah is also an "obvious association" (al-shirk al-Jalii). In recounting how the Jews and the Christians indulge in shirk (association), the Holy Qur'an says: **اتَّخَذُوا**

أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ They have taken their religious scholars and their monks as lords apart from Allah'. (9:31). The Companion 'Adi Ibn Hatim, who was a Christian before accepting Islam, asked the Holy Prophet .ff. with reference to this verse as to why the Holy Qur'an should blame the Christians for having taken their religious scholars as lords when they were never guilty of worshipping them. The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) in his turn asked him if it was not a fact that their scholars had declared many things as forbidden although Allah had permitted men to eat them, and that conversely they had declared as permissible what had been forbidden, arid that the Christians obeyed their scholars in both the respects. 'Adi admitted that it was so. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) remarked that this was exactly how they 'worshipped' their scholars. This goes to prove that Allah alone has the right to establish what is permissible and what is forbidden. If one associates somebody else with Allah in this respect and, in spite of being familiar with the divine injunctions regarding what is permissible (Halal) and what is forbidden (haram), goes against them, believing that someone other than Allah too can demand obedience in these matters, one is virtually worshipping him and being guilty of the sin of association (shirk). But, in order to guard against a possible misunderstanding, we may remark that this verse of the Holy Qur'an, which condemns the worship of religious scholars, does in no way apply to the generality of Muslims who, not being qualified to understand the Holy Qur'an and the Sun na h by themselves or to deduce the injunctions of the Shariah from them, naturally depend on an Imam , a Mujtahid ; a Mufti or a religious scholar and follow his instructions in these matters. In fact, such Muslims are only acting in accordance with the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah, and obeying divine commandments. For the Holy Qur'an itself says: **فَسئَلُوا أَهْلَ الدِّكْرِ إِن كُنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ** Ask the men of knowledge, if you yourselves do not know. (16:43)

Another thing which comes under the category of association (shirk) is to make votive offerings to someone other than Allah; so does praying to someone else in time of need or distress, for, according to a Tradition (Hadith), praying is also an act of worship. Similarly, adopting such practices as are in general considered to be the signs or symbols of association also constitute the same sin. For example, the Companion 'Adi ibn Hatim (RA) relates that when he embraced Islam and presented himself before the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) with a cross hanging round his neck, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) asked him to remove this idol. Although at this time the cross did not have the kind of signification for 'Adi which it pas for Christians, yet he was asked to shun a symbol of 'association' externally as well. Among the symbols of 'association' are included practices like bowing (ruku') or prostrating (sajda) oneself before anyone except Allah, or going round a person or thing in the prescribed manner of the tawiif (circumambulation) of the Ka'bah . Avoiding all such symbols of 'association' is a necessary, part of the pledge of fidelity to Allah made in the phrase: 'You alone we worship'.

Seeking Allah's Help Directly and Indirectly

The other doctrinal point we mentioned is that one must turn to Allah alone for help and to no one else. This requires some clarification.

There is a kind of help which every man does seek from other men. The physical aspect of the universal order being what it is, it has to be so, and not otherwise. A tailor or tinker, a carpenter or a blacksmith, each is serving others, and everyone is obliged to seek his help. Seeking help of this kind neither is nor can be forbidden by any religion, for it is part and parcel of the network of physical means provided to men by Allah. In the sphere of non-physical means too, it is quite permissible for one to seek the help of a prophet or a saint by asking him to pray to Allah in one's behalf, or to mention, while praying directly to Allah, the name of a prophet or a saint by way of a medium (wasilah) for drawing divine mercy upon oneself. Explicit Traditions (Ahadeeth) and implicit indications of the Holy Qur'an fully justify this practice, and it would be wrong to condemn it as being forbidden or to include it among the various forms of association (shirk).

Now, what sort of supplication for help is it which can be addressed exclusively to Allah and to no one else? And, when does one fall into the sin of shirk (association) in asking someone other than Allah for help? In reply to the second question, we may say that in this context the sin of shirk or association arises in two forms. Firstly, one becomes guilty of association, if one seeks the help of an angel or prophet or saint or any creature believing him to be omnipotent like Allah. It is such an obvious heresy that even idolaters and associators in general consider it as such, for even they do not look upon their idols and gods as being omnipotent like Allah. The second is the form adopted by idolaters and associators. They admit that God alone is Omnipotent, but also believe that He has delegated a part of His power to an angel or a prophet or a saint or to a smaller god who exercises a full and independent authority in that area, and to whom one may pray for help in matters within his jurisdiction. This is the supplication which the Holy Qur'an forbids, and against which it warns us in the phrase **وَأَيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ** (to You alone we pray for help).

There is a simple reason for misunderstanding in this regard. Allah appoints many angels to perform quite a large number of functions even in the physical order of the universe; or, He makes many things happen through the prophets which are beyond the powers of man and which are called miracles (mu'jizat), as also other incredible wonders through the saints which are called karamat. The appearance may easily lead a careless observer to ignore the reality, and to conclude from what he has seen that the angels or the prophets or the saints could not have worked such wonders if Allah had not given them the necessary power and authority. This faulty argument which is no more than an illusion gives birth to the belief that the prophets or the saints enjoy absolute power and authority in their own degree. It is not so. Miracles and wonders are the direct acts of Allah, but they are manifested through prophets and saints so that people may recognize their spiritual station -- prophets and saints themselves have no powers to make such things happen. This fact is borne out by so many verses of the Holy Qur'an. For example, the verse **وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ** 'When you threw, it was not you that threw, but Allah threw' (8:17) refers to a miracle of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) in which he threw a handful of pebbles at an army of his enemies, and Allah willed it so that they smote the eyes of the whole army. The Holy Qur'an attributes the act of throwing pebbles, not to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) but to Allah Himself, which clearly shows that a miracle is manifested through a prophet .go. , but is in reality an act of Allah Himself. Similarly, when the people of Nuh, or Noah (AS) demanded that, in order to establish his authenticity as a prophet, he should bring down on them the punishment and wrath of Allah, he replied **إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ إِنْ شَاءَ** Allah will certainly bring it down to you, if He so wills' (11:33), in other words, he declared that he himself could not bring down divine punishment on them by way of a miracle. Another verse of the Holy Qur'an reports what a group of prophets said to their people in reply to a similar demand **وَمَا كَانَ لَنَا**

أَنْ نَأْتِيَكُمْ بِسُطُنٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ We cannot give you proof, except by Allah's will' (14:11). This again was an admission that it was not in their power to produce a miracle, for all power rests in the hands of Allah. In short, it is not at all possible for a prophet or a saint to show a miracle whenever he likes and whatsoever he likes. The disbelievers used to demand specific .miracles from the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) and from the earlier prophets (AS) but Allah manifested only those which He Himself pleased, and not others. The Holy Qur'an presents many such instances.

An ordinary example will make the discussion clear. In your room, you receive light from a lamp and air from a fan, but the lamp and the fan do not possess in themselves an absolute power to give you light and air, but need the electric current which they receive from the power house, and without which they cannot function. Giving you light and air is, in actual fact, not the work of the lamp and the fan, but of the electric current which comes from the power house. Similarly, saints, prophets and angels, all depend on Allah in everything they do; it is Allah's power and will which makes things happen, though it manifests itself through prophets and saints as the electric current manifests itself through fans and lamps.

This example would also show that although prophets and saints have no power to make these things happen or come to be, yet their presence is not altogether irrelevant to what happens, you cannot have light and air in your room without there being a lamp and a fan. Likewise, you cannot have miracles or wonders without there being a prophet or a saint. There is, of course, a certain difference between the two situations. In spite of all the wirings and fittings being intact, you cannot have light without a lamp, nor air without a fan. But, in the case of miracles, Allah has the power, if He so wills, to manifest them even without the medium of prophets and saints. The usual way of Allah has, however, been that miracles are not manifested without the medium of prophets and saints; otherwise miracles would not serve the purpose for which they are intended.

To conclude, one must have firm faith in the doctrine that everything that happens is made to happen by the power and will of Allah, but it is also necessary to recognize the need for prophets and saints, and to admit their importance. Without such an admission, one would succeed neither in obeying divine commandments in the real sense nor in attaining Allah's pleasure exactly like the man who, being ignorant of the worth of lamps and fans, disregards them, and remains deprived of light and air.

The problems we have discussed above perplex many a mind. But the answer is essentially simple. Taking prophets and saints as a medium (Wasilah) for drawing divine mercy upon oneself is neither absolutely permissible nor absolutely forbidden. There is a condition attached to it. If one does so, believing a prophet or a saint to be all-powerful, it becomes an act of shirk (association) and is hence forbidden. But if one takes a prophet or a saint to be no more than a medium or a means; it is permissible. But one finds that in this matter people generally adopt either of the two extreme positions, outright rejection of wasilah or exaggerated veneration. The truth, however, lies between the two.

Success in this world and in the Hereafter

As we have said before, the prayer which the Holy Qur'an has chosen to recommend to everyone, in every situation and for everything one does, is the prayer for being guided in the straight path. Just as success in the Hereafter depends on taking the straight path which leads one to Paradise, in the same way, if you come to think about it, success in all worldly concerns too depends on keeping to the straight path -- that is, on using the means and methods which habitually lead to the attainment of one's goal. Conversely, a little reflection will reveal that failure is always due to having strayed from the straight path. In view of the need for the straight path in worldly and other worldly concerns both, this is the prayer which should constantly be on the lips and in the heart of a true Muslim -- never as an empty verbal exercise, but with a sincere intention and with the meaning of the words fully present in the mind.

Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah An-Fatiha Ends here

78. The Great Event (An-Naba')

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ (١) عَنِ النَّبِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ (٢) الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ (٣) كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ (٤) ثُمَّ
كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ (٥) أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهْدًا (٦) وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا (٧) وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا (٨)
وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا (٩) وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا (١٠) وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا (١١) وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ
سَبْعًا شِدَادًا (١٢) وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَاجًا (١٣) وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا (١٤)
لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا (١٥) وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا (١٦) إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا (١٧) يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ
فِي الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا (١٨) وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا (١٩) وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ
سَرَابًا (٢٠) إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا (٢١) لِلطَّالِعِينَ مَابًا (٢٢) لِّلْبَاقِيَةِ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا (٢٣) لَّا
يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا (٢٤) إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا (٢٥) جَزَاءً وَفَاقًا (٢٦) إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَّا
يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا (٢٧) وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا (٢٨) وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا (٢٩) فَذُوقُوا
فَلَن نَّزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا (٣٠) إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَقَارًا (٣١) حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا (٣٢) وَكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا
(٣٣) وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا (٣٤) لَّا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِذَابًا (٣٥) جَزَاءً مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءً
حِسَابًا (٣٦) رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَنُ لَّا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا (٣٧) يَوْمَ
يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا لَّا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا (٣٨) ذَلِكَ
الْيَوْمَ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَآبًا (٣٩) إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ
مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَلَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا (٤٠)

Translation

About what are they asking each other? [1]

About the Great Event [2]

in which they dispute! [3]

Truly, they will soon know. [4]

Again, truly, they will soon know. [5]

Did We not make the earth as a floor, [6]

and the mountains as pegs? [7]

And We have created you in pairs, [8]

and made your sleep a source of rest, [9]

and made the night a covering, [10]

and made the day a source of livelihood. [11]

And We have built seven strong (skies), [12]

and created a luminous lamp (the sun). [13]

And We have sent down from the rain-laden clouds abundant water, [14]
so that We bring out therewith grain and vegetation, [15]
and thick gardens. [16]
Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time, [17]
a day when the trumpet will be blown, so you will come in multitudes, [18]
and the sky will be opened, so it will become as gates, [19]
and the mountains will be set in motion, so they will be as mirage. [20]
Surely Jahannam (the Hell) is set in ambush. [21]
(It is) an abode for the rebellious people [22]
who will be abiding in it for ages. [23]
They will taste nothing cool in it, nor a drink, [24]
except boiling water and pus, [25]
this being a recompense in full accord (with their deeds). [26]
They did not expect (to face) accounting (of their deeds), [27]
and they rejected Our signs totally. [28] And everything (from their deeds) is thoroughly recorded by Us in writing. [29]
"So now taste! We will never add to you anything except torment." [30]
For the God-fearing there is sure achievement, [31]
gardens and grapes, [32]
and buxom maidens of matching age, [33]
and goblets filled up to the brim. [34]
They will not hear therein any vain talk, nor lies, [35]
this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing grant, [36]
(from) the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, the All-Merciful. No one will have power to address Him, [37]
on the Day when the Spirit and the angels will stand in rows. They will not speak, except the one who is permitted by the Rahman (the All-Merciful) and speaks aright. [38]
That is the Day which is sure to come. So whoever so wishes may take refuge with his Lord. [39]
We have warned you of an approaching torment (that will be inflicted) on a day when one will see what his hands have sent ahead, and the disbeliever will say, "O would that I had become dust!" [40]

Commentary

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ (About what are they asking each other? .. 78:1). The word 'amma is made up of two particles: [1] The preposition: 'عن' an (about); and [2] the interrogative particle ما 'ma' (what?) (the last letter, that is, 'ma has been omitted according to the grammatical composition. The sense is: About what are they asking each other?' Allah Himself replies to the question when He says **عَنِ النَّبِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ (٢) الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ**

مُخْتَلِفُونَ (About the Great Event in which they dispute!. 78:2,3). The word naba' means 'news' but not every news is naba'. It means a 'momentous news of a great event'. This refers to the news of the Day of Judgement. The verse purports to convey that the inhabitants of Makkah ask about the Day of Judgement in which they dispute [while some of them believed in Resurrection, others did not.]

Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas (RA) reports that when the revelation of Qur'an started, the pagan Arabs used to form circles and discuss and criticise it, especially about the tremendous import of Resurrection and Judgement referred to in the Qur'an. The pagans thought this was impossible, and they used to have protracted discussion. The disbelievers persuade themselves to believe that the predicted event will never take place, though there were others who believed in the event. The Siirah opens by shunning the enquirers and the enquiry, it wonders that anyone should raise any doubts about Resurrection and Judgement. Some of the commentators express the opinion that their enquiry was not a genuine one where they were keen to learn about the truth. So they ask half-mockingly and half in doubt, when that event, so loudly pronounced, will happen. Qur'an has responded by asserting one statement twice for emphasis, thus **كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ (٤) ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ** (Truly, they will soon know. Again, truly, they will soon know 78:5) The particle kalla is negative, and means 'never, by no means'. It means here that this matter cannot be understood by question and answer or by disputation and debate. Its reality will be understood by them when they will face it. It is such a reality that has no room for questions, disputation or denial. The Qur'an says that soon they will come to know about it [and this statement is repeated twice for emphasis]. In other words, when they die, they will discover the realities of the next world. They will see the horrors of the Hereafter with their eyes.

Then the Holy Qur'an has pointed to different demonstrations of His power to prove that it is not impossible for Allah to destroy this entire world and re-create it once again. Reference is made to the creation of earth, mountains, human beings, males and females and the creation of suitable conditions for human life, health and activities. One of the things mentioned in this connection is **وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا** (and made your sleep a source of rest, 78:9). The word subat is derived from sabbat which means 'to cut off'. Sleep is something that cuts off the worries and tensions one may have, and thus gives him such a rest that cannot be attained from anything else. Therefore, some scholars translate the word subat as 'rest'.

Sleep Is a Great Gift

After mentioning in verse [8] that Allah has created mankind in pairs, Allaah Ta'ala states in verse [9] that among the means of their comfort, He created sleep, which is a great divine gift. Sleep is a great source of relaxation for the entire creation - for rich as well as for poor, for learned people, as well as for the illiterate ones, for kings as well as for labourers. This gift is made available equally and simultaneously for all. Rather, experience shows that this gift is most readily available to the poor and labouring class, as compared to the affluent and the elite class. The latter class has all the means of comfort, they have comfortable homes, they have moderately warm and cold places, they have comfortable mattresses and pillows that are rarely available to the poor. But the gift of sleep is not dependent upon the mattresses, pillows, cottages and bungalows. It is purely a divine gift that is given directly by Allah. Often the poor, with no means of comfort and without bed or bedding, enjoy the best sleep in an open space. Sometimes, the affluent and the men of means suffer from insomnia and can only get sleep when

they take sleeping pills. Often the pills do not work either. Not only that this great gift is given to all creatures - humans as well as animals - and it is given free of charge, without working for it. Allah has made it compulsory for everyone in a way that even if he wishes to keep awake because of load of work, sleep is imposed on him by Allah's mercy, so that his tiredness is removed and he is refreshed to work further. This arrangement is a wonderful means of providing rest and peace for man.

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا (and made the night a covering ... 78:10) This points to the fact that man naturally feels sleepy when light decreases and darkness prevails, when there is tranquillity all around and there is absence of noises. The verse under comment additionally signifies that Allah did not only give man sleep, but created in the entire world conditions that are suitable for sleep. That is to say: [1] darkness of night; [2] the state of sleep is imposed on all humans and animals simultaneously, so that they sleep at the same time. In this way, there will be peace and tranquillity throughout the world. Like other works, if there are different times for different people to sleep, no one will have peace and tranquillity.

Thereafter the verse reads:

وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا (and made the day a source of livelihood 78:11). Man requires, together with sleep, other essentials of life, such as livelihood. Otherwise, the sleep will turn into death. If the world would have had only nights and no days, and man would have continued to sleep all the time, how would he have obtained his livelihood and other essentials, whereas day is the time when he could work hard and make activities in the daylight in order to earn a living. Thus the verses under comment purport to say that Allah has, in order to complete the comforts of life, made the night a cloak and the day for earning a living.

Now attention is drawn to the comforts we get from the sky. The most useful thing in the sky is the light of the sun. It is mentioned in the following verse **وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَاجًا** (and created a luminous lamp [the sun] 78: 13). Then, among the useful things below the sky, the most beneficial and the most essential thing is the raining clouds which are mentioned thus **وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا** (And We have sent down from the rain-laden clouds abundant water, ... 78:14). The word mu'siriit is the plural of mu'sirah. 'rain-laden cloud'. This indicates that rain comes down from the cloud. There are verses, however, that indicate that rain comes down from the sky. Those verses too probably refer to 'upper atmosphere'. There are many verses in the Qur'an where the word samo' is used in that sense. Having mentioned these Divine blessings, the SURah reverts to its original theme of Resurrection and Judgement **إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا** (Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time ... 78: 17). 'The Day of Decision' refers to the Day of Resurrection. It is a fixed appointment. Other verses indicate that the trumpet will be blown twice. When it is blown the first time, the entire world will come to an end. When it is blown the second time, people of the entire world, the earlier generations as well as the latter generations, will be resurrected and come in multitudes and droves. Sayyidna Abu Dharr Ghifari (RA) reports that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said: "On the Day of Resurrection, people will come in three different groups: [1] a group will come in the Plain of Gathering whose stomach will be full, wearing clothes and riding mounts; another group will come to the Plain of Gathering bare feet; and a third group will be brought on the Plain of Gathering being dragged on their faces." [Mazhari cites the following authorities: Nasa'i, Hakim and Baihaqi]

Some narratives report ten types of group. Some scholars say that the groups on the Plain of Gathering will be divided according to their deeds and character. The narratives are not conflicting. All of them may be true.

وَسَيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا (and the mountains will be set in motion, so they will be as mirage ...

78:20). The word suyyirat 'set in motion' signifies that mountains, which are taken as an example of firmness and strength, will be shifted from their positions, and will become like little particles of dust flying about in the atmosphere. The word sariib literally means 'to disappear' and it also refers to 'mirage' or an optical illusion, as of a sheet of water, that sometimes appears in a desert, because it seems to be a sheet of water from a distance, but when a person comes near it, it disappears. [Sihah and Raghīb]

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا (Surely Jahannam [the Hell] is set in ambush. 78:21). The word mirsad means 'an ambush' or 'lying in wait to attack unawares' or 'a secret position for surprise attack'. Here Hell refers to the bridge of Hell. The angels of reward and punishment will lie in wait. The angels of punishment will make a surprise attack on the inmates of Hell, and the angels of reward will lie in wait to accompany the inmates of Paradise and take them to their abode. [Mazhari]

Sayyidna Hasan Basri (RA) said that there will be an outpost of guardian angels on the bridge of Hell. If anyone has a permit to enter Paradise, he will be permitted to enter; but if anyone does not have the permit to enter Paradise, he will be prevented from entering it. [Qurtubi]

لَلطَّغِينِ مَأْبَأٌ ([It is] an abode for the rebellious people ... 78:22). The combined sense of verses 21 and 22 is that the bridge of Hell is set in ambush for all, the good and the bad. They will have to go over it. But Hell is the abode of the rebellious people. The word taghin is the plural of taghi, being derived from tughyan, meaning 'rebellion'. Thus the word taghi refers to a 'person who exceeds the limit in disobeying the authority [of Allah]'. This is possible only when he gives up his faith. Hence, the word taghin in this context would refer to the disbelievers. It may also refer to the stray groups of Muslims who have deviated from the limits of Qur'an and Sunnah, though they may not have adopted kufr expressly, such as Rawafid, Khawarij, Mu'tazilah and others. [as in Mazhari],

لَّيْسِينَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا (who will be abiding in it for ages 78:23). The word labithin is the plural of labith which means 'one who abides'. The word ahqab is the plural of hiqbah and means 'ages or a long time'. Scholars differ on the exact length or specific amount of time meant by this word. Ibn Jarir has recorded that Sayyidna Ali (RA) states that hiqbah is eighty years, and the year constitutes twelve months, and every month comprises thirty days, and each day is equivalent to one thousand years, thus one hiqbah totalling about twenty million and eighty-eight hundred thousand years. Sayyidna Abu Hurairah, 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbas (RA) and others say that one hiqbah is seventy years instead of eighty years. The rest of the calculation remains the same. [Ibn Kathir]

In Musnad of Bazzar, Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar (RA) traces the following Hadith to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)

"Those who will be put in Hell for punishment of their sins, they will not be able to come out until they tarry therein for a few Ahqab, One hiqbali will be a little over eighty years, and the year has three hundred and sixty days according to your reckoning [in this life]."

This Tradition, though does not interpret this verse, it does explain the sense of the word ahqab. Some of the Companions mention that one day is equivalent to a thousand years. If they had heard this from the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) there is conflict in the narratives. In the face of such conflict, it is not possible to settle on one narration. However, there is a common denominator between the two conflicting narratives, that hiqbah means 'an extremely long period of time'. Therefore, Baidawi has interpreted the word as 'many long periods of time successively following the others.

Problem of Eternity of Hell

If it be argued, as some do, that the inmates of Hell, after serving the long ages in Hell, will be released because no matter what the length of hiqbah, it is, nonetheless, finite and limited and will come to an end some time or other. But looking at other clear verses of the Qur'an, the argument does not hold up. We come across express text like **خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا** '[They, the disbelievers] shall remain therein [in the Fire] for ever'. Therefore, there is the consensus of Ummah that neither Hell will perish, nor will the disbelievers be released at anytime.

Suddi reports from Sayyidna Murrah Ibn 'Abdullah (RA) that if the inmates of Hell are informed that they will abide in Hell for the number of pebbles in the entire world, they will be happy even at this information, because these pebbles though will count into billions or zillions, still they are finite. If so, their punishment will, some time or the other, come to an end. If the same information is given to the inmates of Paradise that they will abide therein to the count of billions of pebbles in the entire world, it will sadden them, because, in that case, no matter how long the space of time they will live in Paradise, they will be expelled after this period. [Mazhari]

In any case, the notion that after a few ahqab the disbelievers will be released from Hell is contrary to the explicit texts and common consent of the Ummah, and as such it is unworthy of consideration, because the verse does not mention what will happen after the ahqib, It merely mentions that they will have to abide in Hell 'for ages [ahqab]'. This does not necessarily imply that there will be no Hell after ahqib or its non-believing inmates will be released. Therefore, Sayyidna Hasan (RA) says that no specific period has been defined for the inmates of Hell, so that they will be released after that. It is that which has no end to it. Whenever one hiqbah [era] is over, a new hiqbah will start; when the second era come to an end, a third hiqbah will start; when the third hiqbah ends, the fourth hiqbah will start and it will carry on ad infinitum. Sayyidna Sa'id Ibn Jubair (RA) also interprets the word ahqab as referring to 'the time which has no end to it. Whenever one era ends, a new era follows it until eternity'. [Ibn Kathir and Mazhari]. Ibn Kathir describes another possibility which Qurtubi supports and Mazhari adopts. The possibility is that the word taghin 'rebellious people' probably does not refer to the disbelievers, but to the people of Tauhid, who, on account of their false beliefs, fall into one of the categories of deviant groups. Traditionalists refer to them as ahl-ul-ahwa' 'heretics whose beliefs are not in keeping with the common consent of the People of Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jama'ah. In this case, the verse purports to say that they are the people of Tauhid, but bordered on the boundary of disbelief on account of false beliefs. They, however, did not cross into the boundary of explicit disbelief. They will therefore abide in Hell for the period of ahqib, and then discharged therefrom by virtue of the creed of tauhid,

Mazhari, in support of this possibility, has cited the Prophetic Hadith which was reported earlier on the authority (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said that after the period of ahqab has passed, these people will be taken out of Hell.

Abu Hayyan, however, disputes this on the grounds of the verses that follow the present verse **إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَنَا** **يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا (٢٧) وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا** (They did not expect [to face] accounting [of their deeds], and they rejected Our signs totally 78:28)

These verses contradict the possibility that taghin 'rebellious people' could be referring to people of Tauhid and deviant groups, because in the concluding verses it is expressly mentioned that they explicitly reject reckoning and utterly deny the Prophets (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam). Likewise Abu Hayyan rejects out of hand Muqatil's opinion that this verse is abrogated.

A group of commentators find a third interpretation of this verse. A statement after this verse, namely **لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا (٢٤) إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَعَسَافًا** (They will taste nothing cool in it, nor a drink, except boiling water and pus ... 78:25) - is circumstantial clause to ahqab, in which case the verse purports to say

that for the countless aeons of ahqib that they will be in Hell they will not be tasting any coolness of air nor any food or drink excepting for boiling water and [scalding] pus. When the ahqab is over, the condition may change, and other kinds of punishment may be imposed. The word hamim means 'intensely boiling water if brought near the face, it would burn its flesh, and when put into the stomach it would cut into pieces the internal organs'. The word ghassaq means 'blood and pus, and washings of wounds that will ooze from the inmates of Hell'.

جَزَاءَ وَفَا (this being a recompense in full accord [with their deeds] 78:26). The punishment given to them in Hell will be based on justice and equity - a fitting recompense - on account of their false beliefs and evil deeds. They will not be wronged in the least.

فُدُوْقُوا فَلَٰنَ نَزِيْدِكُمْ اِلَّا عَذَابًا ("now taste! We will never add to you anything except torment." 78:30). In other words, in the world they continued to add disbelief. If death did not overtake them by coercion, they would have continued to add disbelief, and today their punishment will be increased.

Thus far the punishment of disbelievers was depicted. As opposed to this, the reward and blessings of the righteous believers are depicted below.

جَزَاءَ مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا (this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing grant ... 78:36). The blessings of Paradise described above is the reward of the believers and is an abundant grant from their Lord. Here two things are mentioned. First, these blessings are a reward of their deeds. Secondly, they are a Divine grant. Apparently, they seem to be contradictory, because reward means receiving something in lieu of doing some service, whereas grant is given gratis. The Qur'an has combined the two words in order to indicate that the blessings of Paradise are reward for the inmates of Paradise only apparently, and in reality they are a Divine grant given to them gratis, because human deeds cannot be the reward of even those blessings which were given to him in the world, let alone the blessings of the Hereafter which depend entirely on Divine grace as is confirmed by the Tradition of the Holy Prophet ij: "No one can enter Paradise merely by virtue of his deeds, unless Allah shows His grace." The Companions asked: "What about you, Messenger of Allah." He replied: "Nor will I enter Paradise merely by virtue of my action."

The word hisaban has two meanings: [1] a grant [that is] sufficient [and] abundant. This meaning is adapted from the following idiom **احسبت فلانا اى اعطيته ما يكفيه حتى قال حسبي** 'ahsabtti means that I gave him so much so that it was sufficient for him until he yelled out "enough, this is too much for me"; and [2] the second meaning 'balancing of account' and 'comparing'. Sayyidna Mujahid (RA) says that in this context the verse purports to say that the Divine grant will be given gratis to the inmates of Paradise. The grant will be in keeping with the degree of sincerity as reported in authentic Traditions. The deeds of the noble Companions are greater than the deeds of the rest of the Ummah. If a Companion were to spend in the way of Allah one mudd = [815,39 grams] and a non-Companion were to spend to the equivalent of Mount Uhud, the Companion's one mudd will weigh heavier than the mountain. And Allah knows best!

لَا يَمْتَكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا (... No one will have power to address Him, ... 78:37) This sentence is probably connected to the preceding verse **جَزَاءَ مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا** (this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing grant ... 78:36) In this case, it would mean that when Allah grants a certain grade of reward, no one dare speak about the grade as to why someone got more and others got less. But if this sentence is treated as an isolated one, it will mean that no one in the Plane of Gathering will have the power to speak to Him without His permission. This permission will be granted in some of the positions of Gathering, and not in others.

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا (on the Day

when the Spirit and the angels will stand in rows. They will not speak, except the on who is permitted by the Rahman [the All-Merciful] and speaks aright -78:38). Ruh (Spirit), according to some of the commentators, refers to the angel Jibrail (RA). He has been mentioned before the other angels in general in order to show the greatness of his status. According to certain Prophetic traditions, Rill} is not an angel but a huge army of Allah. They have heads, hands and legs. In this interpretation, there will be two rows. One row will be that of Rulh and the other will be that of the angels.

يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ on a day when one will see what his hands have sent ahead 78:40)

Apparently, this refers to the Day of Judgement. Every person will see his deeds with his own eyes in the Plane of Gathering. This might happen in one of two ways: [1] his ledger of deeds will be given in his hands and he will see it; or [2] his deeds will appear in the Plane of Gathering, epitomized in a visible shape, as certain narratives confirm this. Still a third possibility exists. The word 'day' may refer to 'the day of death'. And the words 'will see' means to see in the grave or barzakh, as explained by Mazhari].

وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَا لَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا (and the disbeliever will say, "O would that I had become dust ... 78:40)

Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar (RA) reports that on the Day of Resurrection the entire earth will become a plane surface where all human beings, Jinn, domesticated animals and wild animals will be gathered. If one animal had wronged another animal in the world, it will be given the opportunity to take its revenge. If a goat with horns had wronged a goat without horns, it will be granted the opportunity to take its avenge. When this phase is over, all animals will be commanded to become dust. They will become dust. At that moment the disbelievers will wish that they were also animals and would become dust like them, so that they would have been spared the torment of reckoning and punishment of Hell. We seek refuge in Allah from it! Allah knows best!

Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah An-Naba' Ends here

79. Those who pull out (An-Naziat')

وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا (١) وَالنَّشِيطَاتِ نَشْطًا (٢) وَالسَّابِحَاتِ سَبْحًا (٣) فَالسَّابِقَاتِ سَبْقًا (٤)
فَالْمُدْبِرَاتِ أَمْرًا (٥) يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ (٦) تَتَّبِعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ (٧) قُلُوبٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ (٨)
أَبْصَرُهَا خَشَعَةٌ (٩) يَقُولُونَ أَعِنَّا لَمَرْدُودُونَ فِي الْحَافِرَةِ (١٠) أَعِدَّا كُنَّا عِظْمًا نُخْرَعُ (١١)
قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذًا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ (١٢) فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ (١٣) فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ (١٤) هَلْ
أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى (١٥) إِذْ نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى (١٦) أَذْهَبَ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ
طَغَى (١٧) فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَى أَنْ تَزَكَّى (١٨) وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَى (١٩) فَأَرَاهُ الْآيَةَ
الْكُبْرَى (٢٠) فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَى (٢١) ثُمَّ أَذْبَرَ يَسْعَى (٢٢) فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَى (٢٣) فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ
الْأَعْلَى (٢٤) فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى (٢٥) إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِمَنْ يَخْشَى (٢٦)
ءَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ بَنِيهَا (٢٧) رَفَعَ سَمْعَهَا فَسَوَّيَهَا (٢٨) وَأَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ
ضُحَاهَا (٢٩) وَالتَّارُضُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا (٣٠) أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَاهَا (٣١) وَالتَّجِبَالُ
أُرْسِلَهَا (٣٢) مَتَلَعَا لَكُمُ وَالْيَتَمِيمُ (٣٣) فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الطَّامَةُ الْكُبْرَى (٣٤) يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ
الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَى (٣٥) وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِمَنْ يَرَى (٣٦) فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَى (٣٧) وَعَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ
الْأَدْنَى (٣٨) فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى (٣٩) وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ
الْهَوَى (٤٠) فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى (٤١) يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَلُهَا (٤٢) فِيمَ
أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرِهَا (٤٣) إِلَى رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهَى (٤٤) إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ مَنِ يَخْشَاهَا (٤٥) كَاتِبُهَا يَوْمَ
يَرُوثُهَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا (٤٦)

Translation

I swear by those (angels) who pull out (the souls of the infidels) vigorously [1]

and by those (angels) who untie the knot (of the souls of the believers) smoothly, [2]

and by those who float (in the atmosphere) swiftly, [3]

then proceed forward quickly, [4]

then manage (to do) everything (they are ordered to do,) [5]

(you will be resurrected) on the Day when the shocking event (i.e, the first blowing of the trumpet) will shock (everything), [6]

followed by the next one (i.e, the second blowing of the trumpet.) [7]

Hearts, on that Day, will be throbbing, [8]

(and) their eyes will be downcast. [9]

They say, "Are we going to be brought back to our former state (of Life)? [10]

Is it when we will have turned into decayed bones?" [11]

They say, "If so, that will be a harmful return." [12]

So, it will be only a single harsh voice, [13]

and in no time they will be (brought) in the plain (of hashr). [14]

Has there come to you the narrative of Musa? [15]

(Recall) when his Lord called to him in the blessed valley of Tuwa:[16]

"Go to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). Indeed, he has crossed all bounds (in making mischief). [17]

And say (to him,) "Would you like to purify yourself, [18]

and that I guide you to your Lord, so that you fear (Him)?" [19]

So he showed him the biggest sign. [20]

But he rejected and disobeyed, [21]

then he turned back, and tried hard (to refute the Messenger), [22]

then he gathered (his people) and shouted [23]

and said, "I am the supreme lord of yours." [24]

So, Allah seized him for the deterrent punishment in the Hereafter and the present world. [25]

Indeed, there is a lesson for him who fears (Allah). [26]

Are you more difficult to be created or the sky? He has built it, [27]

He has raised its height, then made it proper, [28]

and darkened its night, and brought forth its daylight, [29]

and, after that, He spread out the earth. [30]

From it, He brought out its water and its meadows, [31]

and firmly fixed the mountains, [32]

(all this) as a benefit to you and your cattle. [33]

So when the Biggest Havoc will come [34]

on the day when man will recall what he did, [35]

and the Hell will be exposed for all who see, [36]

then for the one who had rebelled, [37]

and preferred the worldly life (to the Hereafter), [38]

the Hell will be the abode, [39]

whereas for the one who feared to stand before his Lord, and restrained his self from the (evil) desire, [40]

the Paradise will be the abode. [41]

They ask you about the Hour (the Day of Judgment) as to when it will take place. [42]

In which capacity are you to tell this? [43]

With your Lord is the final word about it. [44]

You are only a warner for anyone who fears it. [45]

The day they will see it, it will seem to them as if they did not live (in the world), but only for one afternoon or for the morning thereof. [46]

Commentary

وَالَّذِينَ نَزَعْتَ مِنْهَا (I swear by those [angels] who pull out [the souls of the infidels] vigorously ... 79: 1). The word nazi'at is derived from nazh which means 'to draw vigorously'. The word gharqan is its corroborative because the word gharq is used here in the sense of ighriiq and means 'to exert oneself much or to the utmost extent in the thing'. The Arabic idiom has **اغرق النازع في القوس** 'He drew the bow with great vigour'. The S^{ra}h begins with an oath by certain characteristics of the angels to affirm that the Resurrection is a certainty. The subject of the oath, however, has been contextually deleted. The oath of the angels is probably apt on this occasion because they are all the time involved in the administration and running of the world. They are executing their duties loyally. On the Day of Judgement, all material causes will be severed. Unusual events will occur and the angels will be involved in them.

Five characteristics of the angels are mentioned which are concerned with or related to the extraction of the soul at the time of death. The purport of the verses is to affirm that Resurrection is a certainty. It starts with human death. Every man's death is his partial Day of Doom, and this has an important impact on his belief in Resurrection. The five qualities are as follows:

The first quality of the angels:

وَالَّذِينَ نَزَعْتَ مِنْهَا I swear by those (angels) who pull out (the souls of the infidels) vigorously.

This refers to the angels of punishment who draw the souls of the infidels vigorously and harshly. The words 'vigorously' refer to spiritual pain. The humans around the dying person may not be sensitive to the pain. Often it is noticed that the soul of an infidel apparently slips out easily, but this ease is perceived by humans around the dying man. The pain is felt by the soul of the dying person. Who can perceive it? We are aware of it only because Allah has informed us about it in this verse.

The second quality of the angels:

وَالَّذِينَ نَشِطُوا (and by those [angels] who untie the knot [of the souls of the believers] smoothly, [2]) The word nashitat is derived from nasht and it means 'to untie the knot'. This signifies 'to untie the knot of something which contains water or air, so that it may be released easily'. This is metaphor for drawing out the souls of the believers gently, unlike the souls of the infidels which are plucked out harshly. In this case too the adverb 'smoothly' refers to the spiritual smoothness, and not to the physical experience. Sometimes, it happens that there is a delay at the time of death of a righteous believer. This may not be suspected to mean that he is undergoing some sort of suffering, although physically it may seem so. When the soul of an infidel is extracted, the entire scene of the punishment of barzakh comes in front of him. It is frightened by it, disperses throughout the body and tries to hide or escape. The angels forcefully extract the soul just as wet wool wrapped around a skewer is forcefully removed. When the soul of a believer is extracted, on the other hand, the reward, the blessings and the welcome news of the barzakh come in front of him.

The third quality of the angels:

وَأَلْسَبِحَاتٍ سَبْحًا (and by those who float [in the atmosphere] swiftly ... 79:3).

The word sabh literally means to 'swim' or 'float'. Here it signifies 'to glide along swiftly as in the sea where there is no mountain barrier'. The one who swims fast and goes far in swimming or a boatman who moves directly towards his final destination. The 'angels who float swiftly' refer to the quality of the angels of death who extract human souls and take them quickly towards the sky.

The fourth quality of the angels:

فَأَلْسَبِقَاتٍ سَبْعًا (then proceed forward quickly ... 79:4). According to Divine instruction, the angels do not delay in transporting the souls of people to their good or their bad abodes. The soul of a believer is transported to the atmosphere and blessings of Paradise, and that of an unbeliever to the atmosphere and torment of Hell.

The fifth quality of the angels:

فَأَلْمَدَبِرَاتِ أَمْرًا (then manage [to do] everything [they are ordered to do.] ... 79:5). In other words, the last task of these angels of death will be as follows: Those who are commanded to reward and comfort the deserving souls, will gather means of reward and comfort for them; and those who are commanded to punish and cause pain to [the evil souls] will organise means for that.

Reward and Punishment in the Grave

The Surah thus far confirms that at the time of death, the angels will arrive and extract human souls. Then they will take them to the sky and swiftly transport them to their abodes, the good souls to the good abode and the bad souls to the bad one. There they will organise means of reward or punishment and pain or comfort for them. The verses show that the reward and punishment will take place in the grave or barzakh. Thereafter the reward and punishment will be meted out on the Day of Judgement. Authentic Traditions give elaborate details of this. There is a lengthy Tradition of Sayyidna Bara' Ibn 'Azib (RA) cited in Mishkat-ulMasabih with reference to Musnad of Ahmad.

Nafs [Self] Ruh [Spirit - Soul]: Qadh Thana'ullah's Research and Analysis

The readers are referred to a special research and analysis by the Baihaqi of his time, Qadi Thana'ullah Panipati, that was presented in this book under verse [29] of Surah Hijr. Here the learned commentator has added some more details which dispose of many doubts which arise from the above Tradition: The human soul is a refined body which permeates the dense material body. The [ancient] doctors and philosophers called it as ruh or soul. But the real spirit is an abstract substance and a subtle divine creature connected in a special way with this physical soul or nafs, the life of which is dependent on the Divine Spirit. The pure, abstract and non-material spirit is the life of the first soul on which depends the life of the body, and therefore it is called the 'soul of soul'. The real nature of the connection between these two kinds of soul is not known to anyone. It is known to Allah alone. Perhaps an illustration would clarify the matter. If we were to hold a mirror against the sun, then, despite that the sun is 149.6 million kilometres away from the earth, its reflection comes into the mirror. And because of the light, that too starts glowing like the sun. The same thing applies to the human soul. If it exerts itself in spiritual struggle and ascetic discipline in keeping with the teachings of [Divine] revelation, he will be enlightened. Otherwise he would be polluted with the bad effects of the physical body. This is the refined bodily soul that the angels transport to the heaven and transport him back with honours if he is enlightened. Otherwise the doors of the heaven are not opened for him and is thrown down from top. This is the refined bodily soul, the Tradition notes, which Allah created from dust and to it He will return him and from it. He resurrect him. It is this refined bodily soul that gets enlightened and becomes fragrant. But the same body can stink because of [the filth of] disbelief

and idolatrous practices. The 'abstract spirit' is connected with the dense body through the refined bodily soul. The abstract spirit never dies. The reward or punishment of grave is experienced by the refined bodily soul which keeps connected with the grave whereas the abstract spirit remains in 'illiyun, and it feels the effects of reward and punishment indirectly. Thus the statement that 'the soul is in the grave' is true in the sense that 'soul' in this context refers to the bodily soul. The statement that 'the soul is in 'Alam-ul-oruiih. or ' illiyun' is also true, because the 'soul' in this context refers to ruh; mujarrad or 'abstract spirit'. Thus it is possible to reconcile the apparently conflicting statements.

فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ (and in no time they will be [brought] in the plain [of hashr] ... 79:14). The word sahirah refers to 'the surface of the earth'. When the earth will be re-created at Resurrection, it will be a completely level surface. There will be no mountain barriers, no buildings or caves. This is referred to as 'sahirah '.

The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) used to be hurt by the stubbornness of the obdurate rejecters of Resurrection. The next verses recount the story of Musa (AS) and Fir'aun to console him, and to show that the adverse attitude of the pagans is not confined to him. The previous prophets have also faced similar situations, but they endured them with patience. The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) too should exercise patience and fortitude.

فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْأَخْزَرَةِ وَالْأُولَىٰ (So, Allah seized him for the deterrent punishment in the Hereafter and the present world 79:25). The word nakal means an 'exemplary punishment' or 'an extremely severe punishment given to an offender to deter others against committing a similar offence or sin'. The phrase 'punishment of the 'akhirah' refers to the punishment of the Hereafter that will be meted out to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). The phrase 'punishment of the 'ula' refers to the punishment meted out to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) and his army in this world whereby they were destroyed by drowning.

Further, the Qur'an again disposes of the doubt of the rejecters of resurrection who pose the question: "Are we going to be brought back to our former state (of life)? Is it when we will have turned into decayed bones?" [10-11] In other words, this is a negative rhetorical question. They purport to say that it is not possible for them to be restored to life after death when they have become perished and worm-eaten bones. Allah responds that the Supreme Creator, Who drew out this universe without any pre-existing matter and without any instrument, certainly has the Supreme power to give existence to things after destroying them. Why should it be a surprise?

In the verses that follow, the horrors of the Day of Judgement are depicted. It is mentioned that on that Day, every person will be presented with his deeds. Described also are the abodes of the inmates of Paradise and Hell. Towards the end, special traits of the people of Paradise and those of Hell are portrayed by which a man can decide in this very world whether, according to the rules, his abode would be Paradise or Hell. The expression 'according to the rules' has been used because many verses and narratives indicate that there could be 'exceptions to the rules'. For example, a person might attain freedom from Hell and enter Paradise by virtue of intercession or directly through the grace of Allah. This is an exception to the rule. The general rule is the same as has been mentioned in these verses.

First, the special marks of the inmates of Hell are described. They have two characteristics **فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ**

(۳۷) وَعَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا (then for the one who had rebelled, and preferred the worldly life [to the Hereafter]. .. 79:38). In other words, [1] instead of remaining loyal to Allah and His Messenger and following their commands, they adopt the line of rejection and rebellion; and [2] prefer the life of this world to that of the Hereafter. In other words, if he were to do a deed that gives comfort and pleasure in this world but punishment in the Hereafter, he would prefer the comforts and pleasure of this life to the pleasure of the next life. Those who

are characterised by these two qualities the Blazing Fire, that is Hell, will be their abode, thus **فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ** **الْمَأْوَىٰ** (the Hell will be the abode ... 79:39).

Thereafter, the special marks of the inmates of Paradise are described.

They too have two characteristics:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ (whereas for the one who feared to stand before his Lord, and restrained his self from the [evil] desire, 79:40). In other words, [1] the first characteristic of a God-fearing person is that, in this life, he shudders at the thought of appearing before Allah to account for his deeds on the Day of Reckoning; and [2] forbids the baser self from its evil desires. Those who are characterised by these two qualities have the good news that the Paradise will be their abode, thus **فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ** (the Paradise will be the abode 79:41)

Three Levels of Suppressing [the Base] Self

The verse under comment lays down two conditions of attaining the abode in Paradise, but carefully considered, the two conditions, in terms of consequence, are one. The first condition is the fear of accountability in the presence of Allah. The second condition is to restrain oneself from the evil desires. As a matter of fact, fear of Allah causes one to restrain oneself from evil desires. Qadi Thana'ullah Panipati has written in his Tafsir Mazhari that there are three levels of suppressing evil desires, as follows:

The first level is that one avoids false beliefs which are in conflict or incompatible with express texts [of the Holy Qur'an and established Sunnah] and consensus of [the righteous] predecessors. In this level, a person deserves to be called 'Sunni Muslim'.

The second level is the middle one. A person, in this stage, may think of committing sin. Then he may remember that he has to account for his deeds before Allah [on the Day of Reckoning]. As a result, he abandons the thought of committing sin. The complement to this level is that one abstains from doubtful things and those acts that are permissible in themselves, but there is apprehension that if committed, they may lead one to slip into impermissible acts. Sayyidna Nu'man Ibn Bashir (RA) narrates that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said: "**He who abstained from doubtful things has protected his honour and religion. He who indulged in doubtful things will eventually indulge in forbidden things.**" The expression 'doubtful things' signifies those acts about which one is not certain whether they are permissible or not, both possibilities being equal. Let us consider a few examples: if a person is ill and can take [wet] ablution, but he is not sure whether taking [wet] ablution in this state would be harmful. Thus the permissibility of dry ablution (tayammum) becomes doubtful. Likewise a person is able to perform prayers in a standing position, but feels great difficulty. He is now in doubt whether or not it is permissible for him to perform prayers in a sitting position. On such occasions, one should abandon the doubtful thing or act, and prefer what is definitely certain. This is taqwa and the middle course of suppressing the selfish desires.

Tricks of the Base Self

There are acts whose sinful nature is obvious to everyone. The selfish desires prompting to such sinful acts may be suppressed by one's deliberate efforts and firm resolution. However, there are evils prompted by one's base self even during his acts of worship and other good deeds, such as self-conceit, ('Ujb) vanity, (Kibr), and show off (Riya'). These are such sins whose sinful nature is often not discoverable to a common person, still they are very severe and firmly ingrained evil desires of one's base self. One is at times deceived by them, because he continues to think that his actions are right. It is extremely necessary that first and foremost this lower self must be

suppressed. But this cannot be achieved by one on his own. It is necessary for one to search for a perfect spiritual master (Ash-shaikhul-kamil), and hand himself over to him for guidance. He acts as the authentic guide and the only one to whom a seeker of Truth should turn in his quest and follow his advice. In turning to the spiritual master, the seeker is turning to Allah Almighty. The shaikh engages him in the spiritual struggle and endeavour [mujahadah] against the passions and tendencies of the lower self ['uyub-un-nafs].

Shaikh Imam Ya'qub Karkhi (RA) says that in his young age he was a carpenter. He found laziness, and felt darkness in his inner self. So, he intended to keep fasts for a few days so that he may get rid of the laziness and darkness. Co-incidentally, one day, while he was fasting, he went up to Shaikh Imam Baha'uddin Naqshbandi. The Shaikh called for meals for his guests. He was also invited to partake of the meal, and the Shaikh said: "He is a very bad slave who is the slave of his base self that misleads him. It is better to partake of meal than to keep fast with evil desires of the base self." Shaikh Karkhi says that at that moment he realised that (by fasting) he was falling prey to self-complacency, self-conceit and pride, which the Shaikh Naqshbandi perceived. On that occasion, Shaikh Karkhi realised that a spiritual master's permission and guidance is needed to take up an optional act of worship, because the spiritual master is aware of the hidden tricks of the evil desires of the base self. If an optional act of worship will be accompanied by such motives, the will put a stop to it [for remedial purposes]. He asked Shaikh Naqshbandi: "If I cannot find a Shaikh who is called Sufi in terms as fani fillah and baqi billah, (the explanation is coming in the next paragraph.) what must I do?" He replied: "Recite istighfar abundantly and recite istighfar [seek Allah's pardon] twenty times regularly after every prayer, so that it works out to a hundred times reciting it five times a day." The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) is reported to have said: "Sometimes I feel my heart disturbed, and I recite istighfar [seek Allah's pardon] a hundred times a day."

The third and the highest level of suppression of the base self is that by abundant dhikrullah [remembrance of Allah] and constant mujiihadah. [spiritual struggle and endeavour against the evil passions] and riyadah. [ascetic discipline], one's self (nafs) is so much cleansed and purified that the desires that tempts him to evil are totally eliminated. This is the special stage of ioiliyah. [Divine friendship], which in Sufi Terminology is called fina fillah and baqi billah. The Qur'an says regarding such people [addressing the Satan] **إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ** 'My servants are such that you have no power over them [15:42]'

The following Tradition applies to the same category of wali:

'None of you can be a [perfect] believer unless his [base] desires of self follow my teachings.'

Towards the end of the Surah, the Holy Qur'an responds to the malafide demand of the infidels that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) should let them know the exact date and time of the Day of Judgement. They are told that knowledge of the time and date is within Allah's own special prerogative. Allah's consummate wisdom did not pass the information to any angel or Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam). Therefore, the demand is futile.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah An-Nazi'at Ends here](#)

80. Frowning (Abas)

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ (١) أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَىٰ (٢) وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّىٰ (٣) أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَىٰ (٤) أَمَّا مَنْ أَسْتَعْتَىٰ (٥) فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّىٰ (٦) وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَّكَّىٰ (٧) وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَىٰ (٨) وَهُوَ يَخْشَىٰ (٩) فَأَنْتَ عَنْتَهُ تَلْهَىٰ (١٠) كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ (١١) فَمِنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرَهُ (١٢) فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ (١٣) مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ (١٤) بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ (١٥) كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ (١٦) قَتَلَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ (١٧) مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ (١٨) مِنْ نُّطْقَةٍ خَلَقَهُ (١٩) فَقَدَرَهُ (٢٠) ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ (٢١) ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ (٢٢) فَأَقْبَرَهُ (٢٣) ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنشَرَهُ (٢٤) كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَا أَمَرَهُ (٢٥) فَتَنْظُرُ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَىٰ طَعَامِهِ (٢٦) أَنَا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا (٢٧) ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا (٢٨) فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا (٢٩) وَعَيْنًا وَقَضْبًا (٣٠) وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا (٣١) وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا (٣٢) وَفَكْهَةً وَأَبًّا (٣٣) مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ (٣٤) فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاعَةَ (٣٥) يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ (٣٦) وَأُمِّهِ (٣٧) وَأَبِيهِ (٣٨) وَصَلْبَتِهِ (٣٩) وَبَنِيهِ (٤٠) لِكُلِّ أُمَّرٍ مِّنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُّغْنِيهِ (٤١) وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ (٤٢) ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ (٤٣) وَوُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ (٤٤) تَرْهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ (٤٥) أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكٰفِرَةُ الْفٰجِرَةُ (٤٦)

Translation

He (the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)) frowned and turned his face, [1]

because the blind man came to him! [2]

And what could tell you (O Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) about the prospects of the blind man?) May be, (if you had attended him properly,) he would have attained purity, [3]

or have taken to the advice, and the advice would have benefited him. [4]

As for the one who does not care (about faith), [5]

you are anxious to pursue him, [6]

while there is no blame on you, if he does not attain purity. [7]

As regards the one who has come to you rushing eagerly, [8] while he fears (Allah), [9]

to him you pay no heed! [10]

Never! (you should never act in this way,) Indeed this (Qur'an) is an advice. [11]

So, whoever so wills, let him remember it. [12]

It is (recorded) in those scripts (of the Preserved Tablet) that are honoured, [13]

exalted, purified, [14]

in the hands of those scribes [15]

who are honourable, righteous. [16]

Death be unto the man! How ungrateful he is! [17]

From which stuff did He (Allah) create him? [18]

From a drop of semen! He created him, and designed him in due proportion, [19]
then He made the way easy for him, [20]
Later, he made him die, and put him into the grave, [21]
thereafter, when He will intend, He will raise him up. [22]
No! He has not yet fulfilled what He (Allah) had commanded him. [23]
So, let the man look to his food, [24]
how well We poured water, [25]
then how nicely We split the earth, [26]
then We grew in it grain, [27]
and grapes and greens, [28]
and olive and date-palms, [29]
and gardens, full of thick trees, [30]
and fruits and fodder, [31]
as a benefit for you and your cattle. [32]
So when there will come the Deafening Noise, [33]
the Day when one will flee from his brother, [34]
and from his mother and father, [35]
and from his wife and sons, [36]
every one of them will have enough concern to make him careless of others. [37]
Many faces, on that day, will be bright, [38]
laughing, rejoicing, [39] and
many faces, on that day, will be stained with dust, [40]
covered by darkness. [41]
Those are the disbelievers, the nefarious. [42]

Commentary

Circumstances of Revelation

Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktuk (RA), the companion of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was a blind man. It once happened that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was engaged in a talk with the leaders of Quraish about some matters of belief. Sayyidnii 'Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum (RA) arrived there. Imam Baghawi adds that being blind and unable to see the surroundings, he did not realise that the Holy Prophet

(Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was occupied with the others. He, therefore, burst into the circle and called the Holy Prophet repeatedly. [Mazhari]. According to Ibn Kathir, he requested the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) to teach him a verse of the Qur'an and insisted on an immediate enlightenment on the question. On that occasion, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was occupied with the non-believing leaders of Makkah in the hope that they would embrace the faith of Islam. The leaders to whom the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was speaking were 'Utbah Ibn Rabl'ah, Abu Jahl Ibn Hisham and the Holy Prophet's (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) uncle 'Abbas (RA) [who had until then not embraced the Islamic faith].

The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) disliked the intrusion, and showed his displeasure by turning aside from Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum (RA), thinking that he was a committed Muslim who frequently visited him, and therefore he could speak to him at another appropriate time. There was no religious loss in postponing the response to him. On the other hand, the Quraish leaders neither frequented the Holy Prophet's (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) company, nor could the Word of Allah be conveyed to them at any time. At that particular moment, they were listening to the Holy Prophet's (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) discourse and there was hope that they would embrace the Islamic faith. But if the conversation was rashly interrupted, apparently they would have been deprived of the faith. In view of this situation, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) showed adverse reaction by turning aside from 'Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum (RA), and continued his discourse with the Quraish leaders. When the assembly broke up, the verses of Surah 'Abas were revealed to record Allah's dislike for this attitude, and to give directions for future.

This attitude of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was based on ijthiidi or 'an opinion based on personal reasoning'. He thought that if a Muslim were to adopt a speech style that is not in keeping with etiquettes of a gathering, he needs to be reprimanded, so that in future he may be careful. That is the reason why Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) turned his face away from Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum (RA). Secondly, disbelief (kufr) and polytheism (shirk) are the most severe sins, and an effort to eradicate them should take priority over the subsidiary precepts of Islam on which Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum (RA) asked for enlightenment. Allah Almighty, through this Surah, did not confirm the correctness of this ijthiidi of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam), and explained to him that educating a genuine seeker will most certainly benefit him, while the benefit of discussion with the opponents (who disdainfully turn away their face when the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) talks to them) is shaky and doubtful. Doubtful things cannot be preferred over certainty. As for the violation of etiquette committed by Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum (RA), its excuse is pointed out by the Holy Qur'an in the word 'blind'. It is indicated by this word that being a blind man, he could not see what the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was doing and with whom he was engaged in conversation. Thus he was excusable, and was not liable to be subjected to aversion. This indicates that if an excusable person were to break any rule of etiquette unwittingly, he should not be reprimanded.

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى (He [the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)] frowned and turned his face, 80:1). The word 'abasa means 'he frowned' and the word tawalla means 'he turned aside'. Since the reference here is to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) who himself is addressed, the verbs should have been in the second person: 'you frowned and you turned aside'. But the Holy Qur'an on this occasion uses the third person in order to maintain the honour of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam), as if this attitude were shown by some other person, and in a subtle way it alludes to the point that what the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) did was not befitting his high status. Then the next sentence **وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ** (and what could tell you? ... 80:3) alludes to the fact that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was excusable, because it did not come to his attention that the Companion is asking something whose effect will be certain and the effect of conversation with others is dubious. The second sentence abandons the third person, and switches to the second person in order to maintain the honour of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam). Had he not been addressed in second person at all, it

might have created the impression that he is not addressed directly because of his unapproved conduct, which would have been an unbearable pain and grief for the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam). Just as the third person in the first statement is meant to show respect to him, the second person in the following sentence is also meant to honor and console him.

لَعَلَّهُ يُزَكِّي (۳) أَوْ يَذَكِّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى (May be, [if you had attended him properly,] he would have attained purity, or have taken to the advice, and the advice would have benefited him. ... 80:4). In other words, because Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum (RA) was a genuine believer, any advice given to him would have benefited him and served to purify him. The companion sought enlightenment and its benefit was certain. If the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) enlightened him on the topic, he would have purified himself and attained perfection. If that did not happen, he would have at least attained the basic benefit of Divine remembrance. He would have improved the love and fear of Allah in his heart. The word dhihrii means 'to remember Allah abundantly' [Sihah]. *(This interpretation is based on taking the word 'dh.ikrii' in the sense of remembrance of Allah'. (However, some other exegetes have taken this word to mean 'advice', and the translation of the text, as well as the explanation following in the next paragraph, is based on it. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani))*

On this occasion, the Quran has used two sentences yazzakka and yazzakkaru. The first statement signifies 'to be purified' and the second statement signifies 'he may take heed and the reminder may benefit him'. The first stage is that of the 'righteous' who cleanse their inner and outer selves. The second stage is that of muftadi 'beginners on the spiritual journey'. At this stage, the beginner is reminded of Allah which enhances the greatness and awe of Allah in his heart. The two sentences are disjoined by disjunctive particles *aw* (or) and technically they are not necessarily exclusive to one another. The sense is that 'Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum (RA) would have attained either both benefits, or at least, the second one, that is, increase in Allah's remembrance and in His awe, which is the initial step towards perfection. [Mazhari]

An Important Qur'anic Principle of Teaching and Preaching

On this occasion, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was faced with two different requirements at the same time. On the one hand, he was required to teach a Muslim and to encourage him on attaining perfection. On the other hand, he had to provide guidance to non-Muslims. The principle laid down here makes it clear that the first requirement takes priority over the second one. It is improper to delay the first task (educating Muslims) because of the second task. This indicates that education of Muslims and their reform are more important than, and take priority over, getting the non-Muslims to embrace the faith.

Scholars should avoid any such indulgence when disposing of any doubts of the non-Muslims, which may create doubts or complaints in the minds of the general body of Muslims. The teachers, preachers and reformers need to keep in mind these Qur'anic guidelines to maintain the welfare and priority of the Muslims. How beautifully Akbar Allahabadi, the Urdu poet, versifies this principle:

'Protect yourselves from a position where people of the Haram (Muslims) call you unfaithful.

As opposed to this, if People of temple [non-Muslims] call you 'ill-mannered', (because of your faithfulness to your religion), this dishonor is better.

The following verses clarify the principles more elaborately:

أَمَّا مَنْ أَسْتَعْنَىٰ (۵) فَأَنْتَ لَهُ وَتَصَدَّىٰ

(As for the one who does not care [about faith], you are anxious to pursue him!. ... 80:6).

In other words: 'Those who turn away from you and your religion, you are pursuing them under the hope that some how they should become Muslims, while this is not your responsibility. If they do not embrace the faith, there will be no blame on you.

Thereafter, in verses 13 and 14, Allah Almighty has described the high status of the Holy Qur'an, thus: **فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ (١٣) مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ** (It is [recorded] in those scripts [of the Preserved Tablet] that are honoured, [13] exalted, purified - 14).

The word suhuf refers to Lauh Mahfuz 'the Preserved Tablet'. Although it is a single thing, but suhuf, the plural form of Sahifah is used because all divine scriptures are written in it, or because the angels copy their scriptures from them. The word mrfu'ahah means 'exalted in the sight of Allah'. The word mutahharah (purified) means 'people in the state of sexual defilement, menstrual discharge, post-natal bleeding and people in the state of minor uncleanness are not permitted to touch it'.

بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ (١٥) كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ (in the hands of those scribes who are honourable, righteous. [80:15-16] . The word safarah, with fathahon the first two letters, may be the plural of safir which means a 'scribe'. In this case, it would refer to the recording angels, or to the Prophets (AS) and those of their aides who write down the revelation. Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas (RA) and Mujahid hold this view.

The word safarah may be used as the plural of safir in the sense of 'envoy'. In this case, it would refer to the angels who convey the revelation, and Prophets (AS) and their companions who write the revelation. The 'ulama' (knowledgeable persons) of the Muslim community' are also included in this term, because they too are envoys between the Holy Prophet ii and the Muslim community. The messenger of Allah (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) is reported to have said that he who recites the Quraan and is an expert in the art of recitation, he will be with the honorable, righteous envoys. He who is not an expert in the art of recitation, but recites it correctly with difficulty, he shall receive double reward.[Transmitted by Shaikhain from 'A'ishah - Mazhari]. This shows that a non-expert will receive double reward - one for recitation of Quran, and the other for bearing the difficulty. This also indicates that an expert will receive countless rewards. [Mazhari]

The preceding verses mentioned that the Qutan is exalted and that belief in it is incumbent. Subsequently, the rejecters of Qumn are cursed and they are warned against showing ingratitude towards Divine favours. That the Holy Qur'an is a great Divine blessing is understood only by the men of Divine knowledge and understanding. Further, there is the mention of those Divine favours that Allah confers on man since his inception to the end of his life. These are material and physical things that a man with basic intellect can understand. Human creation is mentioned, thus: **مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ ۖ (١٨) مِنْ نُّطْقَةٍ** (From which stuff did He [Allah] create him? From a drop of semen! 18-19).

First a question is raised: 'O man! Consider what Allah has created you from?' Since its reply is so obvious that there can be no other reply, the next verse itself says: 'From a drop of semen!' Thus the verse draws pointed attention to the very humble beginning of man, so that it may be brought home to him that Allah having created him from such an insignificant thing as a sperm-drop, created him and proportioned him: **خَلَقَهُ ۖ فَقَدَرَهُ ۖ** (He created him, and designed him in due proportion .. 80:19). In other words, He has made him with a special design and with great wisdom. His stature, body-structure, his face, his length and breadth of the limbs, his joints, his eyes, nose and ears are all well-proportioned in their creation. If any limb or organ loses its proportion, man's face will go awry, and every activity will become a problem.

The word qaddara is derived from taqdir which is also used in the sense of 'predestination'. Taking the word in this sense, the verse may also mean here that when man is under creation in his mother's womb, Allah predetermines four things for him: his life span, his sustenance, his deeds and whether he would be miserable or happy [as in the hadith of Ibn Masud (RA) recorded by Shaikhain].

ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ (then He made the way easy for him ... 80:20) Allah through His consummate wisdom creates man in his mother's womb, creation after creation, within three layers of darkness [i.e. the belly, the womb and the amniotic membrane]. It is kept in a safe place in the belly. The mother in whose belly all this is happening is totally unaware of any of the details of this process. Thereafter, when the baby becomes perfect with all its limbs and organs, Allah made it possible that a body weighing 3 to 4 kg comes out through an extremely narrow passage, and the mother does not suffer unduly. So blessed be He Who is the best Creator!

ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ (Later, he made him die, and put him into the grave .. 80:21) After mentioning the inception of human life, Allah points to its end, that is, death and grave. Death has been mentioned here in the context of blessings of Allah. It indicates that death is a blessing rather than a calamity. The Holy (Prophet Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) is reported to have put it thus: "The gift of a believer is death." Moreover, there is a profound wisdom in death at macro level for the entire world.

The phrase **فَأَقْبَرَهُ** (and put him into the grave) describes another blessing of Allah, in that when man is dead, he is not left lying on the earth like other animals where he might rot, blow up and burst [and probably be ravaged by vultures or beasts]. But, even after death, he is honoured in the most befitting manner. His body is washed ceremonially, enshrouded in clean cloths, and buried in a grave with respect.

This verse also indicates that it is obligatory to bury a dead human body **كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَا أَمَرَهُ** (No! He has not yet fulfilled what He [Allah] had commanded him ... 80:23).

Having mentioned in the preceding verses the beginning and the end of human life, Divine Omnipotence and Divine blessings, the current verses warn the non-believing man that the demand of Divine Signs and blessings was to carefully ponder and believe in Allah, and comply with His injunctions, but the unfortunate creature failed to do so. Further, the Divine favours are mentioned that were conferred on man between the beginning and end of his life. Man is then asked to consider the sources of his food. Allah showers down water abundantly from the clouds. He cleaves the earth with new growth. Thereupon He causes grain to grow out of it. At first, a fragile shoot germinates and sprouts. Then many different kinds of grain, fruits and gardens come into existence. Having warned man several times about these Divine blessings, the ffirah concludes with the mention of Resurrection, thus: **فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّخَّةُ** (So when there will come the Deafening Noise .. 80:33). The word Sakhkhah means 'deafening cry or shout' and it refers to the blowing of the trumpet, which will be a deafening sound.

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ (the Day when one will flee from his brother .. 80:34). This depicts the scene when all the people will have gathered in the Plain of Gathering. Each person will be worried about himself, and the situation will be so horrifying and tense that it will make people heedless of anything around them. In the world, there are relationships between people that make one willing to lay down his life for the other, but on the Day of Resurrection there will be such horror and chaos that they will be unable to take care of anyone. In fact, even if one sees the other in front of him, he will turn away from him. They will try to flee from their brothers, from their mothers and fathers, from their spouses and their children. They will not be able to help any of them in the Hereafter, despite the natural attachment they had with them in the world. Normally, one is more anxious in this world about his parents than about his brothers, and he is more anxious about his wife and children than about

his parents. Keeping this in view, the relationships, in the present verse, are arranged from lower order to higher order.

The Chapter ends on a note of warning to disbelievers that if they reject the Qur'anic message and persist in opposition to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) they will have to face a day of reckoning when misery, shame and ignominy will be their lot. The righteous believers, however, will reside in Gardens of Bliss, their faces beaming with joy and happiness.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Abas Ends here](#)

81. The Folding (At-Takweer)

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ (١) وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ (٢) وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ (٣) وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ
(٤) وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ (٥) وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ (٦) وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ (٧) وَإِذَا
الْمَوْءُودُ سُيِّدَتْ (٨) بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ (٩) وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ (١٠) وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ
(١١) وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِّرَتْ (١٢) وَإِذَا الْجَنَّةُ أُزْلِفَتْ (١٣) عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرَتْ (١٤) فَلَا
أَقْسِمُ بِالْخُنُوسِ (١٥) الْجَوَارِ الْكُنُوسِ (١٦) وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا عَسْعَسَ (١٧) وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا تَنَفَّسَ (١٨)
إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ (١٩) ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ (٢٠) مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ (٢١)
وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ (٢٢) وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ بِالْأَفْقِ الْمُبِينِ (٢٣) وَمَا هُوَ عَلَى الْعَيْبِ بِضَنِينٍ
(٢٤) وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ (٢٥) فَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ (٢٦) إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ (٢٧)
لِمَن شَاءَ مِنكُمْ أَن يَسْتَقِيمَ (٢٨) وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٢٩)

Translation

When the sun will be folded up, [1]

and when the stars will swoop down, [2]

and when the mountains will be set in motion, [3]

and when the ten-months pregnant she-camels will be abandoned, [4]

and when the wild beasts will be gathered together, [5]

and when the seas will be flared up, [6]

and when the people will be arranged in categories, [7]

and when the girl-child that was buried alive will be asked, [8]

for what sin she was killed, [9]

and when the scrolls (of deeds) will be unrolled, [10]

and when the sky will be stripped off, [11]

and when the Hell will be set ablaze, [12]

and when the Paradise will be brought close, [13]

then everyone will know what he (or she) has put forward, [14]

So, I swear by those (stars) that recede, [15]

that proceed, that withdraw from the scene, [16]

and by the night when it departs, [17]

and the morning when it starts breathing, [18]

it (the Qur'an) is surely the word of a noble messenger (Jibra'Il (AS)), [19]

the one possessing power, and a high status with the Lord of the Throne, [20]

the one obeyed there, trusted. [21]

And your companion (Muhammad (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)) is not a madman. [22]

And he did see him (Jibra'Il (AS) on the clear horizon. [23]

And he (the Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)) is not stingy about (the news of) the unseen. [24]

Nor is it the word of an outcast satan (devil). [25]

Then where are you going? [26]

It is nothing else but a message of advice for all the worlds, [27]

for the benefit of anyone from among you who intends to go straight. [28]

And you cannot intend (to do anything) unless it is so intended by Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. [29]

Commentary

وَإِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ (When the sun will be folded up ... 81:1) The word kawwara is derived from Takwir which denotes for the sun 'to lose its light'. (Another meaning of Takwir is 'to fold', and the translation in the text is based on this meaning. The sense of folding the sun is that its function will come to an end, and it will lose its light. As such, it comes to mean same thing as mentioned in first interpretation. Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

Sayyidna Hasan Basri (RA) has attached this interpretation to it. Another sense of the word is 'to cause to fall'. Rabi' Ibn Khaitham (RA) assigns the following interpretation to this verse: The Sun will be thrown into the ocean, and as a result of its heat the entire ocean will turn into fire. The two interpretations are not contradictory. They may be reconciled thus: first, its light will be put off and then it may be thrown into the ocean. Sahih of Bukhari records from Sayyidna Abu Huharirah (RA) that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said that on the Day of Resurrection the Sun and the Moon would be thrown into the ocean. Musnad of Bazzar has the addition that they will be thrown into Hell. Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Abid-Dunya and Abush-Shaikh stated that on the Day of Resurrection Allah will throw the Sun, the Moon and all stars into the ocean. Then a violent wind will blow over them, as a result of which the entire ocean will turn into fire. Thus it is correct to say that the Sun and the Moon will be put into the ocean. It is likewise correct to say that they will be put into Hell, because the entire ocean at that time will have been turned into Hell. [Derived from Mazhari and Qurtubi]

وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ (and when the stars will swoop down ... 81:2). The word inkadarat is derived from inkidar and it denotes 'to fall'. The righteous predecessors have interpreted it thus. It signifies that all the stars from the sky will fall into the oceans as explained in the preceding verses.

وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ (and when the ten-months pregnant she-camels will be abandoned ... 81:4). The Arabic word 'ishiir is the plural of the word 'usharii' and is applied to she-camels having ten months pregnancy. Such she-camels were considered by the Arabs to be a very valuable asset, because they expected her to give birth to more camels and abundant milk. As such, they used to protect her and never left her free. The verse referring to this custom of the Arabs, who were the immediate addressees, depicts the horrible scene of the Doomsday when even the most favorite wealth, like such a she-camel, will be abandoned and neglected by its owners because of the calamity they will be facing .

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ (and when the seas will be flared up ... 81:6). The word *sujjirat* is derived from *tasjir* and it signifies 'to set ablaze'. Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas (RA) assigns this interpretation to the word in this context. Another sense of the word is 'to fill' and a third sense of the word is 'to mix or admix'. Some commentators have interpreted it in this sense. None of these interpretations is contradictory to each other. First, the salt and sweet water are admixed and the rivers are made to flow forth into the sea; then the seas will meet together and become one and having more water; then the seas will be set on fire; and then the Sun and the Moon and the stars will be thrown into the water. Then all the water will be turned into fire which will become part of Hell. [Mazhari]

وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ رُجِّتْ (and when the people will be arranged in categories ... 81:7). It means that the people on the Plain of Gathering will be grouped, like with like, in terms of belief and deeds. Disbelievers will be grouped together and believers will be grouped together. There are differences between the deeds and habits of believers and there are differences between the deeds and habits of disbelievers. The non-believers will be re-grouped according to their essential characteristics and the Muslims too will be re-grouped according to their essential characteristics as is reported in Baihaqi on the authority of Sayyidna Nu'man Ibn Bashir (RA) that Sayyidna 'Umar Ibn Khattab (RA) said that the people doing similar deeds, good or bad, will be joined together. For example, the knowledgeable persons from among the Muslims who were serving Islamic studies will be made into one group; the people who devoted themselves for worship will be made into another group; the people performing jihad will be together, and the people whose main characteristic was to spend in charities will be gathered in one place. On the other hand, those who were involved in wicked activities like thieves, robbers, adulterers will also be assembled in their respective groups. Sayyidna 'Umar. based this statement on the verse of the Holy Qur'an in which Allah says in Surah Al-W'aqi'ah **وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً** [and you will be (divided into) three categories. (56:7) It is mentioned further in that Siirah that out of the three categories, two will attain salvation who are named as the 'foremost' and 'people of the right' while another group, namely the 'people of the left' will be comprised of the infidels.

وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ (and when the girl-child that was buried alive will be asked, for what sin she was killed ... 81:8-9) The word *mau'uidah* is the girl-child buried alive. It was a common practice in pre-Islamic time of ignorance that people would take the birth of a girl as a matter of shame for their fathers, and therefore they would bury them alive as soon as they were 80rn. Islam has a80lished this barbaric practice completely. This verse, while depicting the scene of Resurrection, mentions that the girls who were buried alive will be questioned for what crime they were killed. Apparently, it seems that the question will be posed to the girl herself. This will give the victim an opportunity to prove her complete innocence and thus the perpetrators of this crime will be hauled up in the Divine Court of Justice, and will be duly punished for their wrongdoing.

It is also possible that the question will be posed to the killers of the girls why they committed infanticide.

Important Note

In any case, one question may arise here: The day referred to in these verses is named as the 'Day of of Requital' and the 'Day of Judgement'. This name itself sows that every person, on that day, will be put to a trial where he will be asked all sorts of questions a80ut his deeds. Why has the Holy Qur'an, at this place, singled out only the question asked a80ut the girl that was buried alive. Carefully considered, it would appear that such a girl was the victim of the barbarism of her own parents. As such, there was no one to raise a plaint against such a brutal act, and to demand retaliation, especially when she was buried secretly with no evidence left. The verse, therefore, signifies that on the Day of Reckoning, even those criminals will be exposed and hauled up in the Divine Court of

Justice against whom there was no evidence, nor was there anyone who could stand up on their behalf to demand justice. Allah knows best!

Abortion after Four Months is Tantamount to Infanticide

Ruling [1]

Burying alive infants or killing them is a major sin and a heinous brutality. Aborting a foetus after four months falls under the same category in Shari'ah, because within four months the foetus receives the soul and treated as a living human being. Likewise, if a person strikes on the stomach of a pregnant woman which causes the baby to abort, then, according to the common consent of the Muslim jurists, it would be incumbent upon him to set free a slave or pay its price in blood-wit or diyah. If the baby was alive at the time of aborting and then died, full diyah will be incumbent. Abortion before four months is also unlawful, except in cases of necessity, but compared to the first case, it is a sin of lesser degree, because it does not amount to killing of a living human being clearly.

Ruling [2]: Birth Control

Birth control, whose many forms are invented today, is also termed by the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) as 'hidden infanticide' in a hadith reported by Muslim from Judhumah. bint Wahb (RA). There are, however, some ahadith in which the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) is reported to have allowed 'azl (coitus interruptus) or to have observed silence when asked about it, which is a sign of permissibility of such an act. But it should be remembered that its permissibility is restricted to genuine needs, and that too in a way that productivity of the woman is not permanently blocked. [Mazhari]. The present-day medical science has invented some measures that prevent pregnancy forever. The Shari'ah does not permit such measures under any circumstances. Allah knows best!

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ (and when the sky will be stripped off. .. 81:11) The word kushtat is derived from hasht; and it literally means 'to strip off the skin of an animal. Probably, this condition will prevail at the first blowing of the Horn, which will happen in this world. The stars, the Sun and the Moon that contributed to the beauty of the sky will all lose their light and lustre and will be thrown into the ocean. The outlook of the sky will be changed. This phenomenon is termed in this verse as: 'The sky will be stripped off. Some commentators interpret the word kasht in the sense of 'folding up'. The verse, according to them, purports to say that the sky that surrounds the upper atmosphere over our heads will be folded up.

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرَتْ (then everyone will know what he [or she] has put forward ... 81:14). It means that when Resurrection, with all the horrors mentioned above, will take place, man will realise what he has brought with him. The word 'what' here refers to his good and bad deeds, all of which will be in front of him, either in the form of the Record of Deeds that will be given in his hands or his deeds will assume a specific body shape as is understood from certain Traditions. Allah knows best!

Having described the horrors of Resurrection, and the accountability of deeds, Allah swears an oath by a few stars to confirm that the Qur'an is the truth that has been sent down, fully protected from any interruption or distortion, and that the Prophet who has received it is a great personality, and the angel (Jibra'il (AS) who descended with it was known to him before hand. Therefore, there can be no room for any doubt about its veracity. The verses here swear an oath by five stars which the ancient Greeks called khamsah mutahaiyyirah or 'the five wandering stars' since they seemed to stray irregularly across the sky. At times they are seen moving from East to West, and at others, from West to East. Different reasons have been assigned to their irregular movements. The ancient Greeks hold several contradictory explanations for this. The research of modern scientists concurs with some of the ancient philosophers, and differs from some others. The Creator alone knows the truth and reality. The scientists merely guess and conjecture which may be wrong. The Qur'an has, therefore,

not involved its readers in such a useless debate. Allah showed us what was beneficial, that is, to observe the Divine Omnipotence, His Consummate Wisdom and to repose our faith in Him.

إِنَّهُ ۖ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ (١٩) ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ (it [the Qur'an] is surely the word of a noble messenger [Jibra'il], the one possessing power and a high status with the Lord of the Throne ... 81:19-20). This is the subject of oath that affirms that Qur'an is the word brought by a noble messenger. Then three qualities are attributed to this noble messenger. The first quality is that he possesses power. The second quality is that he has high status and lofty rank with Allah, and he is obeyed in the upper realm. The third quality is that he is trusted, and there is no possibility of his committing any breach of trust or tampering with the message he conveys. The word 'noble messenger' obviously refers to the angel -Jibra'il (AS), because the word 'messenger' is used for angels as it is used for prophets, and all the three qualities attributed to the 'messenger' in the next verses are truly present in Jibra'il ~\ . His being powerful is mentioned in Surah An-Najm in the following words; **عَلَّمَهُ ۖ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ** It is taught to him by one (angel) of strong faculties.[53:5]

It is established through the hadith of Mi'raj that he is obeyed by other angels, because when he accompanied the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) to the sky and ordered the angels appointed on its doors to open them he was obeyed by them. That he is trust-worthy is too obvious to need a proof.

Some commentators, however, take the phrase 'honourable messenger' to refer to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)and accordingly have made an attempt to take all the three qualities referring to the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam).

In the next verses, the Holy Qur'an has mentioned the high status of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) and has refuted the silly objections raised against him by the infidels.

وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ (And your companion [Muhammad (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)] is not a madman 81:22) This is rebuttal to the foolish criticism of the enemies who said that Muhammad (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) is [God forbid!] insane.

وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ بِالتَّأْفُقِ الْمُبِينِ (And he did see him [Jibra'il (AS)] on the clear horizon. .. 81:23) In other words, Muhammad saw Jibra'il (AS) on a clear horizon. A similar statement occurs in Surah An-Najm as follows: **وَهُوَ ۖ بِالتَّأْفُقِ الْعَلِيِّ** while he was on the upper horizon 53:7)

The purpose of mentioning this is to show that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was well-acquainted with Jibra'il (AS), the angel of revelation. He had seen him in his original shape. Therefore, there can be no room for doubt in the veracity of revelation he brings to him.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah At-Takweer Ends here](#)

82. Cleaving (Al-Infitaar)

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ (١) وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انْتَثَرَتْ (٢) وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ (٣) وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ
بُعْثِرَتْ (٤) عَلِمْتَ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمْتَ وَأَخَّرْتَ (٥) يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَّا عَرَكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ (٦)
الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ (٧) فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ (٨) كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَذِّبُونَ بِالَّذِينَ (٩)
وَأَنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لِحَافِظِينَ (١٠) كِرَامًا كَتِيبِينَ (١١) يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ (١٢) إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ
(١٣) وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ (١٤) يَصَلُّوْنَهَا يَوْمَ الَّذِينَ (١٥) وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ (١٦)
وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الَّذِينَ (١٧) ثُمَّ مَّا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الَّذِينَ (١٨) يَوْمَ لَا تَمَلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا
وَأَلْتَمِرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ (١٩)

Translation

When the sky will be cleft asunder, [1]

and when the stars will disperse, [2]

and when the seas will be burst forth, [3]

and when the graves will be overturned, [4]

then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [5]

O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord, [6]

who created you, then perfected you, then brought you in due proportion? [7]

He composed you in whichever form He willed. [8]

Never! (i.e. one should never be heedless towards him.) But you deny the Requital, [9]

while (appointed) over you there are watchers, [10]

who are noble, writers (of the deeds), [11]

who know whatever you do. [12]

Surely the righteous will be in bliss, [13]

and surely the sinners will be in Hell, [14]

in which they will enter on the Day of Requital, [15]

and they will not (be able to) keep away from it. [16]

And what may let you know what the Day of Requital is? [17]

Again, what may let you know what the Day of Requital is? [18]

A Day when no one will have power to do any thing for another! And all matters, on that Day, will belong to Allah (alone). [19]

Commentary

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind 82:5) In the preceding verses [1-4] of the Surah, Allah depicts the scene of the Day of Judgement that when the sky splits, the stars fall, the seas are poured forth [ie the fresh and salt water 80dies will merge to form one mass of water] and the graves are overturned [ie corpses will emerge from their graves], every soul shall come to know what it had sent ahead and what it had left behind. The phrase 'what he sent ahead' means the good or evil act which he has done in his life; and the phrase 'what he left behind' means what he failed to do or refrained from doing. It is also possible that 'what he sent ahead' refers to the acts he has done himself, and 'what he left behind' refers to the acts one has not done himself, but he has laid down a custom in the society. The Holy Prophet ti is reported to have said: "If anyone establishes a good tradition in Islam, he will have a reward for it and the equivalent of the rewards of those who act upon it after him, without theirs being diminished in any respect; but he who establishes a bad custom in Islam will bear the responsibility of it and the responsibility of those who act upon it after him, without theirs being diminished in any respect." This subject was dealt with earlier under the following verse **يُنَبِّئُ الْإِنْسَانَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ** 'Man will be informed of what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [53:13]'

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّبَكَ رَبِّكَ الْأَكْرِيمِ (0 man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord ... 82:6)

The opening of the Siirah mentions the violent events that will take place at the end of this worldly life, and the current set of verses reminds us of the inceptive stages of our creation. The sum total of the verses purport to say that if man had considered carefully, he would have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and he would not have deviated a hair's breadth from Divine injunctions, but he slumped into heedlessness and forgetfulness. In the present verse, he is reprimanded by a rhetorical question and by means of gentle remonstrance as to what has lured him away from His Gracious Lord, and led him to disobedience, despite he knows his beginning, and he knows his end.

The verse further goes on to remind man of the inceptive stages of his creation. First, it says: **خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ** (who created you, then perfected you,... 82:7). The sense is that not only did Allah create man, but He also perfected his creation and proportioned his 80dy, limbs and organs. Every limb and organ is well placed. The 80dy, height, length and breadth of every limb are kept in harmony, symmetry and balance. Any deviation from the symmetrical construction of the human 80dy, the organs will become dysfunctional. Then the verse says: **فَعَدَّلَكَ** (. .. then brought you in due proportion? ... 82:7). Man is granted such symmetry, harmony and balance that no other animal in the world is granted to that degree. Along with physical and physiological symmetry and harmony, he has been granted well-balanced disposition, despite the fact that man is made up of opposing humours - blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile. Some are hot and others are cold, and yet the perfect wisdom of Allah prepared a well-balanced disposition. Thereafter a third characteristic is mentioned as follows:

(٧) فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ (He composed you in whichever form He willed 82:8). This is to indicate that since the basic structure of all human beings is the same, it was expected that the zillions of members of the human society would have shared the same shape, size and features, but the perfect mastery and the wonderful acumen of the Supreme Creator has created them so differently that each one of them has its own unique features that make him clearly distinct from all others, and no one is confused with another.

Having stated the creative acumen of the Great Creator, the verse states **يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّبَكَ رَبِّكَ الْأَكْرِيمِ** (0 man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord,... 82:6). Allah has endowed man with such

natural faculties and abilities that every limb and every joint of his body was enough to remind him of His Creator, and to make him obedient. But he is lured away from his gracious Lord, has forgotten Him and disobeyed Him. The question is: How did he forget his Lord, how did he become heedless of Him, and how is he lured away from his Lord? On this occasion, the adjective karim (Gracious) used for the 'Lord' points to the answer. The reason for such an ungrateful attitude is that Allah is Gracious and does not punish man immediately after his committing a sin. Rather, his sustenance, welfare and well-being, and worldly comforts [and pleasures] are not curtailed. He misinterprets Allah's magnanimity, and thus falls into deception. If man were to think rationally, he would adopt a grateful attitude and obedient behaviour, rather than adopting an ungrateful attitude and impudent behaviour. Sayyidna Hasan Al-Basri (RA) says:

'How many humans are there whose faults are put [by Allah] under cover, (i.e. He did not disgrace them), yet they do not appreciate (and are deluded by His grace).'

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ (۱۳) وَإِنَّ الْفَجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ (Surely the righteous will be in bliss, and surely the sinners will be in Hell, ... 82:13-14) These two statements are connected with verse [5] عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [5]

The verse informs us that each person, on the Day of Reckoning, will know what he has done, and what will be the consequences of his deeds. The present verse says that the righteous will be in perfect bliss, while the sinners will be in a Blazing Fire of Hell.

وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ (۱۵) (and they will not [be able to] keep away from it...82:16) The inmates of Hell will never be able to get away from it, because the torment will be eternal, as the concluding verse of the Surah asserts: يَوْمَ لَا تَمَلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا (A Day when no one [with his own free will in the Plain of Gathering] will have power to do any thing for another!). This does not negate intercession, because that will not happen with one's own free will, unless Allah grants permission to someone to intercede on someone's behalf, and then accepts the intercession. And all matters, on that Day, will belong to Allah (alone). [19] Allah knows best!

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Infitaar Ends here](#)

83. Curtailing the Rights (At-Tatfif)

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ (١) الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْثُونَ (٢) وَإِذَا كَالُواهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُواهُمْ
يُخْسِرُونَ (٣) أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُولَئِكَ أَنَّهُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ (٤) لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ (٥) يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ (٦) كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفَجَارِ لَفِي سِجِّينَ (٧) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سِجِّينَ (٨) كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ
(٩) وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ (١٠) الَّذِينَ يُكْذِبُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ (١١) وَمَا يُكْذِبُ بِهِ إِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدٍ
أَثِيمٍ (١٢) إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ (١٣) كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا
يَكْسِبُونَ (١٤) كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَمَحْجُوبُونَ (١٥) ثُمَّ إِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُوا الْجَحِيمِ (١٦) ثُمَّ
يُقَالُ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكْذِبُونَ (١٧) كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيِّينَ (١٨) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا
عِلِّيُّونَ (١٩) كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ (٢٠) يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ (٢١) إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ (٢٢) عَلَى
الْأَرَابِكِ يُنظَرُونَ (٢٣) تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ (٢٤) يُسْتَقُونَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَّخْتُومٍ
(٢٥) خِتْمُهُ مُسَكَّ وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ (٢٦) وَمِرَاجُهُ مِنْ تَسْنِيمٍ (٢٧) عَيْنًا
يَشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُونَ (٢٨) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ (٢٩) وَإِذَا
مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُونَ (٣٠) وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ (٣١) وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّ
هَؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ (٣٢) وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِظِينَ (٣٣) فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ
يَضْحَكُونَ (٣٤) عَلَى الْأَرَابِكِ يُنظَرُونَ (٣٥) هَلْ تُؤِيبُ الْكُفَّارُ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ (٣٦)

Translation

Woe to the curtailers [1]

who, when they measure something to receive from people, take it in full, [2]

and when they measure or weigh something to give it to them, give less than due. [3]

Do they not think that they have to be raised up [4]

on a Great Day, [5]

the Day when all the people will stand before the Lord of the worlds? [6]

Never! (i.e, they should never forget that Day.) Indeed the Record of Deeds of the sinners is in sijjin. [7]

And what may let you know what sijjin is? [8]

A register, inscribed! [9] Woe that day to the deniers, [10]

who deny the Day of Requit! [11]

And none denies it but every sinful transgressor. [12]

When Our verses are recited to him, he says, "(These are) tales of the ancients." [13]

No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust. [14]

No! Indeed they will be screened off from their Lord on that Day. [15]

Then they will have to enter the Hell. [16]

Then it will be said, "This is what you used to deny." [17]

No! The record of deeds of the righteous is in 'illiyyun. [18]

And what may let you know what 'illiyyun is? [19]

A register inscribed, [20]

attended by those (angels) who are blessed with nearness to Allah! [21]

Indeed the righteous will be in absolute bliss. [22]

While (sitting) on thrones, they will be watching (the scenes of Paradise). [23]

You will recognize on their faces the glamour of bliss. [24]

They will be served with a pure sealed wine to drink, [25]

the seal of which will be of musk. And in aspiring for this, the competitors should compete. [26]

and it will be blended with (a drink from) Tasnim, [27] a spring from which will drink those who are blessed with nearness. [28]

Indeed those who were guilty used to laugh at those who believed, [29]

and when they passed by them, they used to wink at one another, [30]

and when they went back to their family, they went enjoying their mockery, [31]

and when they saw them, they said, "Surely these are the ones who have gone astray" [32]

while they were not sent as watchmen over them. [33]

So, today those who believed will laugh at the disbelievers. [34]

While (sitting) on thrones, they will be seeing [35]

whether the disbelievers have been paid back for what they used to do. [36]

Commentary

According to Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (RA), Surah Taffir was revealed in Makkah. Therefore, most of the copies of the Qur'an refer to it as the Makki Surah. According to Sayyidina Ibn 'Abbas (RA), Qatadah, Muqatil and Dahhak (RA), it is a Madani Surah, but only about eight verses are Makki. Imam Nasa'i transmits a narrative from Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas (RA) that when the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) arrived in Madinah, the people of Madinah whose most transactions were based on measurements used to cheat and short measure. For this reason, Allah revealed the Surah. It is reported from Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas (RA) that this is the first Surah that was revealed as soon as the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) arrived at Madinah, The reason is that it was a common practice in Madinah that the people used to be very strict in measuring when they had to receive something from others, but when they sold something, they used to cheat the buyers. After the revelation of this Siirah, all of them abandoned this bad custom totally, and mended themselves in a way that they are now well-known in their honesty in weighing and measuring. (Reported by Hakim, Nasa'i, and Ibn Majah, with sound chain of narrators)

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ (Woe to the curtailers ... 83:1) The word mutaffifin 'those who give short measure or weight' is derived from Tatif 'to give short measure or short weight'. The Qur'unic expression 'Woe to the curtailers' is indicative of the injunction that this practice is prohibited.

Tatif has a Wider Scope

The Qur'an and Sunnah have prohibited Tatif which primarily signifies 'giving short measure and weight', because generally all transactions are carried out by things that can be measured or weighed. But the basic purpose of weighing or measuring is none else but to give a person what he deserves. It, therefore, indicates that the rule is not restricted to weights and measures only, but it includes all other means through which the rights of someone are evaluated, assessed or appraised. It is obligatory that all rights are given to the deserving persons in full, whether they are assessed by weight, measure, number or any other means. In terms of this concept of Tatif, it is prohibited to give to any person less than his due.

It is recorded in Muwatta' of Imam Malik that Sayyidna 'Umar Ibn-ul-Khattab (RA) saw a person curtailing [cutting short] his bowing and prostration postures in prayers, he said to him:

'You have committed Tatif (curtailed the right) of Allah.'

Having cited this statement of Sayyidna 'Umar Ibn-ul-Khattab (RA), Imam Malik formulates the following postulate:

'Everything has a full due and a short measure.'

This postulate can apply even to prayers, ablution, cleanliness and all the rights of Allah and the ways of worship. If someone is deficient in fulfilling these rights of Allah, he is guilty of Tatif. Similarly if one cuts short human rights [by failing to perform duties imposed upon him or keeping to the terms of agreement duly], he is covered by the rule laid down by the verse regarding Tatif. For example, if an employee has entered into a contract with the employer that he shall work for specified time, it is imperative for him to work for the stipulated hours. If he curtails the hours, he is guilty of Tatif. Generally, people - even scholars - are lax in this matter. They do not regard curtailment of their obligations relating to service or labour as sin. May Allah protect us from it!

Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas (RA) has narrated that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has said:

'There are five sins, for which there are five punishments.'

- 1) He who breaks his covenant, Allah will cause his enemy to subdue him.
- 2) The nation that abandons the sacred laws of Allah, and decides cases according to other laws, poverty will prevail commonly among them.
- 3) The nation among whom promiscuity and zina (fornication or adultery) becomes rampant, Allah will punish them with epidemics and endemic diseases.
- 4) Those who curtail measures and weights, Allah will cause famine to break out amongst them. and
- 5) Those who fail to pay their Zakat, Allah will withhold rain from them.

[Cited by Qurtubi who said that Al-Bazzar has narrated the over-all sense of this hadith, though with different words; and Malik Ibn Arras has also narrated it from Ibn 'Umar].

Tabarani narrates from Ibn 'Abbas (RA) that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said:

"When it becomes rampant in a community to steal from the spoils of war, Allah will cast terror of enemies into their hearts; when usury becomes a common practice in a community, death becomes a frequent occurrence in that society; a community that gives short measure and weight, Allah cuts off their sustenance; those who decide

against the truth, murder becomes common among them; and those who betray their agreement, Allah causes their enemies to prevail upon them." [Malik has also transmitted it, but as a saying of Ibn 'Abbas. See Mazhari],

Various Forms of Poverty, Famine and Curtailment of Sustenance

The Hadith (cited above) states that people's 'sustenance' may be Cut Off as a punishment to short measuring: This can take different forms. They may be completely deprived of their sustenance; or sustenance may be available, but they may not be able to eat or use it, as it commonly happens nowadays in the case of many diseases. Likewise, 'famine' might take different forms: Items of necessity might be lacking; or they might be available abundantly, but it might be difficult to purchase them, because the prices are unbearably exorbitant, as is experienced nowadays. The Hadith says that in certain situations faqr will prevail in the society. Faqr is generally translated as 'poverty', but its real meaning in Arabic is 'being in need' or 'being dependent on someone'. Keeping this meaning in view, the situation of faqr pointed out in the Hadith is not confined to lack of money and other necessary things, but it also includes a situation where people depend on others in their business and other necessities of life. The more a person is in need of others, the greater is his degree of faqr. Let us consider the conditions of the present age. Man is bound by the most complicated laws that restrict his living, his movement and his intentions, so that he is unable to eat what he wants to eat, or utter what he wants to utter. He possesses money, but he is not free to buy of his choice from where he wants to. He is not free to undertake a journey [or to travel] as and when he wants to. He is bound so much by these restrictive laws that he has no choice but to follow the official procedure for which he has to flatter the officials [at every level] including the peons. Without this, life is difficult. This entire system of dependence on others is a part of faqr. This elaborate explanation should dispel the doubts that might apparently arise regarding the statement of the Hadith.

Sijjin and 'illiyyin

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِي سِجِّينٍ (Never! [i.e. they should never forget that Day. Indeed the Record of Deeds of the sinners is in sijjin. [83:7] The word sijjin is derived from sajana which means to 'imprison in a narrow place'. According to Qamus, the word sijjin means 'eternal imprisonment'. Traditions indicate that sijjin is a special place where the souls of the non-believers are kept, and in the same place, the Record of the evil deeds of every wicked person is kept separately. It is also possible that in this there is a consolidated book in which the deeds of all the non-believers of the world are recorded.

Where is this place? According to a lengthy hadith reported by Sayyidna Bara' Ibn 'Azib (RA) the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has said that sijjin is beneath the seventh level of the earth, and 'illiyyin is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. [Baghawi, and Ahmad etc., as quoted by Mazhari]. According to certain Traditions, sijjin is the seventh earth which contains the souls of the disbelievers, and 'illiyyin is the seventh heaven which contains the souls of the believers.

The Locale of Paradise and Hell

Baihaqi has recorded a narration from Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Salam (RA) that Paradise is in the heaven, and Hell is in the earth. Ibn Jarir cites in his commentary on the authority of Sayyidna Mu'adh Ibn Jabal (RA) a narrative of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam), according to which he was asked about the meaning of the following verse **وَجَاءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ** and Jahannam (Hell), on that day, will be brought forward, [89:23]

The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was asked from where the Hell be brought forward? He replied: "From the seventh earth." These narratives indicate that Hell will be brought forward from the seventh earth. It will suddenly flare up there, and all the oceans will join its blazing fire, and come forward in full view of all. This interpretation is reconcilable with narratives that define sijjin as the name of a place in Hell. [Mazhari], And Allah knows best!

كُتِبَ مَرْقُومٌ (A register inscribed! 83:9) The word marqum (translated above as 'inscribed') signifies here makhtum meaning 'sealed'. Imam Baghawi and Ibn Kathir say that this statement is not the interpretation of sijjin, but rather the explication of a phrase before that, namely **كُتِبَ الْفَجَارِ** 'Indeed the record of deeds of the sinners is in sijjin; [83:7]'

It is a book inscribed and sealed. No one can add anything to it, nor can anyone remove anything from it, nor is any alteration possible in it. The place where it will be kept for safe-custody is called sijjin, and it is the place where the souls of the wicked unbelievers are gathered.

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust...83:14). The word ran a is derived from rain and it means 'rust' or 'dust' or 'filth'. In other words, the rust of committing many sins has covered up their hearts. Just as rust consumes the iron, and turns it into dust, in the same way, the rust of sins has destroyed their innate capacity to distinguish right from wrong. Sayyidna Abu Hurairah (RA) narrates that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said: "Surely, when the servant commits a sin, a black dot appears on his heart. If he repents from it, his heart is polished clean. However, if he increases in the sin, the blackness continues to increase. That is the statement of Allah **كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى**

قُلُوبِهِم 'No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust. [83:14]'. [Baghawi, Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban and al-Hakim have recorded it, and Tirmidhi has rated it as sahih, as quoted by Mazhari]. The particle kalla, in Arabic grammar, is called harf-ur-rad' 'particle of disapproval, particle of repelling or averting'. In the preceding verses, mention was made of the attitude of the unbelievers towards the Qur'anic verses, in that when they are recited to them, they say, "(These are) tales of the ancients." [13]. The present verse uses kalla to repel the false idea of the ignoramus [that Qur'an is the tale of the ancients]. In fact, [the heavy] load of their sins have eclipsed the light and innate capacity to separate the right and the wrong. This capacity is innate and inborn in man. The verse purports to say that their rejection is not based on any logical or intellectual evidence, but their hearts have become blind, as a result they are unable to see the good and the bad.

كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَمَحْجُوبُونَ (No! Indeed they will be screened off from their Lord on that Day...83:15). This will be their punishment for their failure to recognise Allah in the world. The unbelievers will remain deprived of seeing their Lord on the Day of Judgement, and a screen will fall between them and their Lord. Imams Shafi'i and Malik said that in this verse is a proof that the believers and friends of Allah will be able to see Him. Otherwise, the wording that the unbelievers will be screened off from their Lord on that Day will have no real sense.

Special Note

According to some of the learned predecessors, this verse is a proof that man, by virtue of his innate nature, is forced to love Allah. Therefore, all unbelievers in the world, no matter how deeply they are steeped in their form of disbelief or hold false beliefs regarding the [Supreme] Being and attributes of Allah, there is a common denominator in their hearts. They love, respect and honour Allah. They worship Him according to their belief system in quest of Him and His pleasure. Because they have taken the wrong road, they are unable to reach their destination, but they are, nonetheless, in search of the same destination of truth. If they did not have the desire to see their Lord, it would not have been said, in their punishment, that they will remain deprived of seeing Allah, because if a person is not desirous [rather he is hateful] of seeing Him, it would be no punishment for him.

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عَلِيَيْنَ (No! The record of deeds of the righteous is in 'illiyun....83:18). According

to some authorities, 'illiyun is the plural of 'uluww and it signifies the 'highest point'. According to Farra', this is the name of a place. It is not a plural, but on the measure of plural. When analysing the word sijjin in the foregoing paragraphs, the traceable Tradition of Sayyidna Bara' Ibn 'Azib (RA) was cited to prove that 'illiyin is a place on the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne where the souls of the believers and their registers of deeds are kept. The phrase: (A register inscribed...83:20) is not the interpretation of 'illiyin, but rather an explication their records of deeds, as in the verse that precedes it:

يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ (...attended by those [angels] who are blessed with nearness to Allah!...83:21) The verb

yash-hadu is derived from shuhud which means 'to attend, to witness, to be present, to observe'. The verse purports to say that the record of deeds of the righteous will be in the custody of angels who are blessed with nearness to Allah. [Qurtubi]. If shuhud is taken in the sense of 'being present', then the attached pronoun will refer to 'illiyin instead of kitab or 'register' (and 'those who are blessed with nearness to Allah' will refer to the righteous people, and not to the angels), and the verse in that case will mean: 'The souls of those blessed with nearness to Allah will be in the place called 'illiyin' because that is the abode of their souls, as sijjin is the abode of the unbelievers. The proof of this is the narrative of 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud 4^b recorded in Muslim in which the Holy Prophet said that the souls of the martyrs are in the crops of green birds, enjoying the rivers and gardens of Paradise, and their abode will be the lamps suspended from [the Divine] Throne. This indicates that the souls of the martyrs will be under the Divine Throne, and will be able to stroll in Paradise. In Surah Yasin, we came across the incident of Habib Najjar, where it is stated that

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ (٢٦)

بِمَا عَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي He was told, "Enter the Garden!" He said, "If my people only knew how my Lord has forgiven me" [36:26]

This indicates that no sooner he passed away than he entered Paradise. Similarly, some Prophetic narratives also show that the souls of the believers are in Paradise. The sum total of these verses and narratives is that the abode of all the souls is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. This is the locale of Paradise, and the souls have been given freedom of movement within the Paradise. Here reference has been made particularly to 'those souls who are blessed with nearness to Allah' because of the most exalted ranks they will enjoy. [This does not, however, mean that souls at the lower ranks will not be in this abode.] In fact, this will be the abode of the souls of all the believers as is narrated by Sayyidna Ka'b Ibn Malik (RA) that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said:

'The soul of a believer is a bird that will be hanging in the tree of Paradise, until it returns to its body on the Day of Judgement.' [Malik and Nasa'i through an authentic chain of narrators. A Tradition of Umm Hani' to the same effect is recorded in Musnad of Ahmad and in Tabarani. See Mazhari].

The Abode of Human Souls After Death

What is the abode of human souls after death? In answer to this question, reports seem apparently different. Narratives were cited in explanation of sijjin and 'illiyun above which showed that the souls of the unbelievers are in sijjin which is beneath the seventh earth, and the souls of the believers are in 'illiyun which is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. Some traditions indicate that the souls of the unbelievers will be in Hell, and the souls of the believers will be in Paradise. Some narratives, like the lengthy narrative of Bara' Ibn 'Azib, suggest that the souls of all the deceased, believers and non-believers, will be in the graves. When the angels carry the soul of a believer to the sky, Allah says: 'Keep the record of deeds of this servant of mine in 'illiyun and return him to the earth, because I have created him from earth, and to it I shall return him, and from it I shall resurrect him.' Complying with this command, the angels return his soul to the grave. Likewise, the soul of the non-believer is carried to the sky, but the doors are not opened for him. The angels will be commanded to

return the soul to its grave. Imam 'Abdul Barr prefers this narrative and believes that the souls of all [believers and non-believers] remain in their graves. As for the first two sets of traditions, there is no contradiction because, carefully considered, 'illiyyun is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne, and this is exactly the locale of Paradise, as is clear from the Qur'anic text **عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ (١٤) عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ** 'by sidrat-ul-muntaha (the lot-tree in the upper realm), near which there is Jannat-ul-ma'wa (the Paradise of Abode), [53:14-15]'. This clearly states that Paradise is near the lot-tree in the upper realm, and ahadith confirm that the lot-tree is in the seventh heaven. Thus it may be argued that since the abode of the souls is 'illiyyun, Paradise must be near it. These souls will stroll in and along the Gardens of Paradise. Therefore, their abode may be said to be Paradise. Similarly, the souls of the unbelievers remain in sijjin which is situated beneath the seventh earth. It is also proved by ahadith that Hell is beneath the seventh earth, and the dwellers of sijjin will receive the heat and torture of the Hell. Therefore, it would be correct to say that their abode is in Hell. However, the hadith that informs us that the souls of the unbelievers will remain in the graves, is apparently contradictory to the preceding two narratives. The Baihaqi of his time, Qadi Thana'ullah Pani Pati, in his Tafsir Mazhari, has reconciled them thus: It is not far-fetched to assume that 'illiyyun and sijjin are the real abodes of the souls, but they have a special connection with their graves. None, besides Allah, knows the actual nature of the connection. However, there is the sun and the moon in the sky, but their rays fall on the earth and provide to it light and heat. Similarly, the souls of 'illiyyun and sijjin may have some spiritual connection with the graves. The scholarly view of Qadi Thana'ullah Pani Pati has just been discussed in Surah Nazi'at, the sum total of which is as follows: There are two types of soul: The one is a subtle substance that permeates the human body. Despite being a material substance, it is too subtle to be visible, and its other name is nafs. The other soul is abstract and non-material, pure essence. The pure, abstract and non-material soul is the life of the first soul, and therefore it is called the 'soul of soul'. Both the categories of souls are connected to human body, but the first type of soul resides in the human body. When the soul leaves the body, death occurs. The second type of soul is connected with the body more closely than the first type, but Allah alone knows the nature of the connection. The first soul, after death, is taken to the heaven, and then returned to the grave. Grave is its abode where it is rewarded and punished. The abstract soul remains in 'illiyyun or sijjin [as the case might be]. Thus we have several views on the issue. The final destination of souls is Paradise or 'illiyyun, or its opposite Hell or sijjin. The abode of the abstract souls is 'illiyyun or sijjin. The souls of the first type, the nafs, or the body, remains in the grave after death. And Allah knows best!

وَفِي ذَٰلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ (and in aspiring for this, the competitors should compete....83:26) The word tanafus means for a few people 'to try or strive to gain some desirable things before others can get them.' Having mentioned the bounties of Paradise, the attention of heedless people are drawn to the fact that they are thinking that certain material things are desirable, and therefore they are competing one another to obtain them before others. They are told that the material blessings [after which they are running] are perishable. They should not be made the ultimate goal of life, nor the object of racing. Man should be content with what he has for the comfort of the fleeting period of this life. If he loses the means, it should not hurt him much, because it is not a loss that cannot be recovered. However, people with aspiration should aspire, race and compete for the blessings of Paradise that are perfect and eternal in every possible dimension. How aptly the late poet Akbar has put it:

'Gain and loss - what fiction is this?

What is lost is lost, what is gained is gained

Say to the mind, the life is little.

If you wish to remind me, remind me of God.'

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ (Indeed those who were guilty used to laugh at those who believed, 83:29). In these verses, Allah depicts fully the attitudes of the followers of falsehood [non-believers] towards the upholders of truth [the believers]. The non-believers used to laugh at the believers in the worldly life. In other words, they would mock at them and despise them. Whenever they would pass by the believers, they would wink at each other in contempt of them. When the non-believers returned home, they would take great pleasure in describing the mocking manner in which they treated the poor believers, saying that Muhammad has misled the simpletons.

If we review the situation today, [it is no better.] People whose minds are contaminated with contemporary secular education, are careless about the religion and the Hereafter. Belief in Allah and the Holy Prophet is nominal. They treat the [religious] scholars and righteous people exactly in the same manner as the non-believers used to treat the Companions in the days of the Holy Prophet . May Allah salvage the Muslims from this painful scourge. There is much solace in this verse for the righteous believers. Never bother about their laughter and mockery. How well a poet puts it:

'So long as we fear people's laughter [at us],

the people will continue laughing at us'

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah At-Tatfif Ends here](#)

84. The Splitting (Al-Inshiqaq)

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ (١) وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ (٢) وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ (٣) وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا
وَتَخَلَّتْ (٤) وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ (٥) يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ (٦)
فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوْتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ (٧) فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا (٨) وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ
مَسْرُورًا (٩) وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوْتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وِرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ (١٠) فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُوا ثُبُورًا (١١) وَيَصْطَلِي
سَعِيرًا (١٢) إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا (١٣) إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَن لَّنْ يَحُورَ (١٤) بَلَىٰ إِنَّ رَبَّهُ
كَانَ بِهِ بَصِيرًا (١٥) فَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالْشَّفَقِ (١٦) وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ (١٧) وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ
(١٨) لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَن طَبَقٍ (١٩) فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (٢٠) وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْءَانُ لَا
يَسْتَجِدُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَكْذِبُونَ (٢٢) وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوعُونَ (٢٣) فَبَشِّرْهُمْ
بِعَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ (٢٥)

Translation

When the sky will split apart, [1]

and will listen to (the command of) its Lord, and it ought to, [2]

and when the earth will be stretched (to give room to more people), [3]

and it will throw up whatever it contains, and will become empty, [4]

and will listen to (the command of) its Lord, and it ought to, (then man will see the consequences of his deeds.) [5]

O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord, then you have to meet Him. [6]

So, as for him whose book (of deeds) will be given to him in his right hand, [7]

he will be called to account in an easy manner, [8]

and he will go back to his people joyfully. [9]

As for the one whose book (of deeds) will be given to him from his back side, [10]

he will pray for death, [11]

and will enter the blazing fire. [12]

He had been joyful among his people. [13]

He thought he would never revert (to Allah). [14]

Why not? Indeed his Lord was watchful over him. [15]

So, I swear by the twilight (after sunset), [16]

and by the night and what it envelops, [17]

and by the moon when it develops at the full, [18]

you shall certainly ascend from stage to stage. [19]

So, what has happened to them that they do not believe, [20]

and when the Qur'an is recited to them, they do not offer *sajdah* (prostration)? [21]

Rather, those who disbelieve deny (the truth). [22]

And Allah is most aware of what they store. [23]

So give him the 'good news' of a painful punishment, [24]

but those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them there is a reward that will never be interrupted. [25]

Commentary

The present Surah depicts the conditions that will prevail on the Day of Judgement, such as reckoning and accountability, reward of good and torment of evil. The heedless man is asked to look into himself and his environs, which will lead him to believe in Allah and the Qur'an. [The powerful opening of the Surah sketches some of the scenes of universal upheaval]. First, it speaks about the sky that will split apart. Then it goes on to speak about the earth that will be stretched and will throw up whatever it contains - whether natural treasures, or buried treasures, or dead human bodies, and then it will become empty. A new earth will be prepared for Hashr (Gathering of the Day of Requital). It will have neither caves nor mountains, neither buildings nor trees. It will be flat and smooth. It will be stretched so that there is ample room for the former as well as the latter generations to gather on the plain. This description has been given in other Surahs with different styles, but in the present verses, there is an addition. About what Allah will demonstrate about the heaven and earth on the Day of Judgement, the following comment is made **وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحَقَّتْ** (and will listen to (the command of) its Lord, and it ought to,...84:5) The verb *adhinat* means 'it will listen'. Here listening includes obedience. The verb *huqqat* may be interpreted as 'It had an obligation to listen and obey Allah's command'.

Two Categories of Divine Commands

The obedience of the heaven and the earth, referred to here, may have two meanings, because the Divine commands are of two kinds:

- 1) the Divinely legislated [tashri'i] injunctions; and
- 2) the cosmic and destined [takwini and taqdiri] commands.

In the former case, the command appears as a law the violation of which is punishable. However, men are not practically coerced in the sense that they become practically unable to violate it. Instead, they have their free will to choose whether to abide by the law or to violate it. Such laws are imposed upon those who are endowed with intellect like humans and Jinn. This divides them into believers and non-believers, obedient and disobedient. In the former case, the commands are implemented by force. No one can deviate from them in the least. The entire universe, including humans and Jinn, follow them by force. The cosmic commands [which Allah has decreed] are applied forcefully and all the creatures, whether believers or unbelievers, pious or impious, have no choice or will but to do according to that command.

'Every particle in this world is bound by the Divine Decree.

Jami, this is the interpretation of the dream of life.'

It is possible that Allah will, on that day, endow the sky and the earth with special sense and perception like humans and Jinn. When they receive a command from Allah, they, of their own volition choose to act upon it. Alternatively, the command may refer to the second kind, that is, the cosmic command that no one can violate.

But the words, **وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ** "and will listen to [the command of] its Lord, and it ought to," are closer to the first meaning of command, while the second one is possible, if these words are taken in their figurative sense.

وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ (and when the earth will be stretched [to give room to more people]...84:3) The word madda means 'to stretch, spread, expand out'. Sayyidna Jabir ibn 'Abdullah (RA) narrates that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said that on the Day of Judgement the earth will be stretched out like leather (or rubber) and expanded into a smooth plain, and there will be just enough space on it for all individuals of human race to keep their feet. To understand this tradition, it is necessary to keep in mind that on the Day of Resurrection all individuals who will have been born from the inception of creation till resurrection will be brought back to life simultaneously. Thus each individual will have just enough space on the earth where he could place his feet. [Transmitted by Hakim with a good chain of authorities - Mazhari].

وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ (and it will throw up whatever it contains, and will become empty...84:4) The earth will, with one convulsion, throw up whatever it contains in its belly, whether natural treasures or buried treasures, or mines, or dead human bodies and their remains and particles.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّكُمْ كَادَحْتُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ كَدْحًا فَمُلِّقِيهِ (٥) (O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord, then you have to meet Him...84:6) The word kadh means to 'exert one's efforts fully', and 'to your Lord' means 'to meet your Lord'. In other words, every effort of man would end at his Lord.

Return to Allah

Mankind is addressed in this verse and shown a road that if he were to think about it carefully, and use his sense and intelligence, he could exert his efforts in the right direction that will ensure for him welfare, well-being and safety in this world, as well as in the Hereafter. First, it has been pointed out that man, whether he is good or bad, believer or non-believer, has the natural tendency to exert himself in order to achieve his goal. A good-natured person will work hard and adopt lawful means to acquire his livelihood and necessities of life. A bad person cannot obtain his needs and objective without working hard. Thieves, robbers, rouges, cheats and looters apply their minds and exert their physical strength in order to achieve their objective. Secondly, it has been pointed out that if the intelligent man were to think carefully, all his movements and pauses are stations of a long journey he is going through, though unconsciously. This journey will end at his presence before Allah, that is, at death. This is stated in the phrase *ila rabbika* 'to your Lord'. This is a statement of reality which none can deny. All efforts, [good or bad], must end with death. The third point is that after death, in the presence of his Lord, he will have to give an account of his movements and deeds, and of his efforts. This is rationally necessary and justified, so that the consequences of good and bad may be separately known, because such distinction is not known in this life. A good person may work hard for a month or so in order to obtain his livelihood and necessities of life, but thieves and looters may obtain them overnight. If there is no time of reckoning or punishment, both of them [the good and the bad] will be equal, which is contrary to reason and justice. At the end, the verse says: **فَمُلِّقِيهِ** (then you have to meet Him.) The translation given above is based on the assumption that the attached pronoun (hi) refers to Allah. The sense is that every person has to meet his Lord and to present himself before him to give the account of his deeds. Another possible interpretation is that the attached pronoun (hi) refers to 'kadh' (working hard). Given this interpretation, the translation of the verse would be: "O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord, then you have to meet it." And the sense would be: 'you have to meet the good or bad consequences of your working hard.

The verses that follow depict separately the consequences of the good and the bad people, of the believers and the non-believers. First, the ledger of deeds must be received in the right or the left hand. Those who receive the ledgers in their right hands will be the inmates of Paradise with its eternal blessings. Those who receive the ledgers in their left hands will be the inmates of Hell. The point for careful consideration is that necessities of life, as well as unnecessary desires are fulfilled by both righteous and wicked people in this world, and thus both

spend their lives in some way or the other, but the consequences of the two [for the Hereafter] are diametrically opposite to each other. One results in eternal and unending comfort, and the other results in eternal perdition, torture and torment. Man still has the chance [while he is living] to redirect his attention to working hard towards switching the situation in a direction that not only fulfils his legitimate needs and desires in this world, but also attains the eternal pleasures of the Hereafter.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوْتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ (٧) فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا (٨) وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا (So, as for him whose book [of deeds] will be given to him in his right hand, he will be called to account in an easy manner, and he will go back to his people joyfully....7-9)

This verse describes the condition of the believers. Their books of deeds will be given to them in their right hands. An easy reckoning will be taken from them and the welcome news of Paradise will be given to them. They will return to their families joyfully. It is reported in the Sahih of Bukhari from Sayyidah 'A'shah (RA) that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) has said:

"He who is required to account for [or questioned about] his deeds will have to be punished."

At this Sayyidah 'A'ishah (RA) asked, "What is the meaning of the [following] verse?" **فِيحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا** (he will be called to account in an easy manner,..84:8). The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) explained that the verse signifies 'the deeds will merely be presented before Allah without being questioned. As for the person whose deeds are scrutinised, he will never be able to escape torment'.

This explanation of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) clarifies that the deeds of the believers will also be presented before Allah, but by virtue of their faith, not all of their actions will be scrutinised. This is referred to as 'account in an easy manner'. The words 'he will go back to his people joyfully' may be interpreted in one of two ways. This may refer to the Hour is who will be his family members in Paradise, or it may refer to his family members in the world who will be present in the Plain of Gathering, and he, after knowing about his success, will impart to them, according to the custom of this life, the welcome news of his achievement. The commentators have mentioned both possibilities in interpreting this sentence. [Qurtubi].

إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا (He had been joyful among his people...84:13). This verse tells us that those who will be given their Record in their left hands from behind their backs, they will desire death and destruction under the impression that this might end their misery. But it will not be possible for them to die. One of the reasons given here for his misery is that he used to live joyfully among his people in the world, and he was completely oblivious of the Hereafter. The believers, on the other hand, never for a moment were oblivious of the Hereafter in the life of this world. At every moment of pleasure and comfort, they were anxious and worried about the Hereafter. The Qur'an quotes the believers on another occasion as saying **إِنَّا كُنَّا فِيهِ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ** 'Indeed we were afraid (of Allah's punishment) when we were amidst of our family, [At-Tur: 26]

In other words, they lived among their families and yet were fearful and conscious of the Hereafter. The consequences of the two groups will be appropriate to their respective positions. Those who led a life of luxury and pleasure in this world with their families oblivious of the Hereafter, their portion will be punishment of Hell in the next world. Those who were aware of reckoning and feared punishment in the next world will live with their families in eternal luxury, pleasure and happiness. This indicates that a believer should not be immersed in the comforts of this life. At no time and in no circumstance should he be oblivious to the reckoning of the Hereafter.

فَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ (١٧) وَأَلْقَمَرٍ إِذَا أَتَسَّقَ (So, I swear by the twilight [after sunset], and by the night and what it envelops, and by the moon when it develops at the full...84:16-18) In these verses Allah takes oath by four phenomena and reinforces what was asserted in **إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ** 'you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord'

If we consider the four phenomena by which oath is taken, it bears evidence to the subject which is forthcoming in the complement of the oath, that is, the condition of man never remains the same at all times. He undergoes changes and unexpected phases all the time. The first phenomenon that brings about a change in his life is the twilight after the sunset, or the red glow that remains on the west side of the sky after the sunset in the evening. This is the beginning of the night. This is the harbinger of a massive change in human conditions, that is, the light is disappearing and a flood of darkness is setting in. The second phenomenon by which oath is taken is night itself which completes the change in his life. The third phenomenon by which oath is taken includes all things that night envelops or shrouds. The primitive sense of the word wasaqa means to 'pile, gather, heap up the thing'. If it is taken in general sense, it embraces every member of the entire universe which the darkness of night covers, such as animals, vegetation, minerals and inorganic matter, mountains and oceans. By extension, the word would comprehend all things that normally disperse in the light of day and retreat to their own places at night. Human beings return to their homes, animals to their habitats and birds to their nests. Business goods and merchandise are or piled up in one place. This massive change is related to man himself. The fourth phenomenon by which oath is taken is in the following verse **وَأَلْقَمَرٌ إِذَا أَتَسَقَ** (and by the moon when it develops at the full...84:18). The word ittisaq is also derived from wasaqa and it means 'to gather'. The 'gathering of moon signifies that it gathered its light, and it became complete and full [badr] the moon of the 14th night. The phrase idhat-tasaqa in relation to moon points to the phenomenon that it goes through various phases. First, it appears as a very fine semicircle. Then its light grows progressively night after night, until it becomes badr kamil [full moon of the 14th night]. Having taken oath by the vicissitudes of the four phenomena, the Surah asserts the subject **لَتَرْكَبَنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ (١٨)** (you shall certainly ascend from stage to stage....84:19) The word tabaq or tabqah refers to a 'stage'. Its plural is tabaqat. The verb latarkabunna is derived from rukub which means 'to mount or mount up'. The verse purports to say that mankind from the inception to the end of his life will continue to mount up stage by stage, or will pass through all the conditions, gradually and in stages referred to in the preceding verses, that is, periods of light and darkness and other phenomena. He never remains in one condition all the time. He gradually goes through the vicissitudes of life.

Vicissitudes of Human Life, His Eternal Journey and His Final Destination

In the first instance the male sperm is united with the female egg to form a new human organism. This is turned into a blood-clot which transforms into a lump of flesh, and the lump is formed into bones, and the bones are clothed in flesh. The limbs of the human body thus were completed. Then the soul was breathed into him, and he became a living human being. His first food in the womb of his mother was the unclean blood of the mother's womb. Nine months later, Allah made his way easy to come into the world. Now instead of the unclean blood, he got the [pure] milk of his mother's [breast]. When he saw the wide atmosphere and air of the world, he began to grow and develop. Within the first two years of his life, he started moving and walking about, and was able to talk. He weaned and began to eat more delicious and different types of food. As he grew a little older, he made play and amusement his daily preoccupation. When his intelligence developed [sufficiently], he was tied up in educational and training activities. When he grew into a youth, he abandoned all previous activities and replaced them with youth activities and ushered himself in a new era where marriage, children and house-keeping became his day-to-day preoccupation. Eventually, this era too neared its end. His physical and other prowess began to give up, and every day he fell prey to new ailments. Old age set in. The final stage of this life, that is, death, began to mount. All this happens in full view of everyone. No one dare deny this. But the ignoramus assumes that death or grave is his final stage, and there is nothing beyond. Allah, the Creator of the universe, the Omniscient, made it known, through the various Prophets [through the ages], to the heedless man that grave is not the final stage of his life, but it is merely a waiting-room to enter an enormously large and gigantic world that is yet to come, where the final examination will be conducted and the final stage of his life will be determined. In this world, he will celebrate the Divine remembrance and enjoy eternal comfort and pleasure or he will suffer eternal perdition and damnation [depending on the final assessment]. This is where the vicissitudes of his life will end. Thus the Qur'an says **إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ أَلْرُجْعَىٰ** 'Surely, to your Lord is the return [96:8]'

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ أَنتَهَىٰ 'and that to your Lord is the end (of every one), [53:42]'

إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا 'you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord [84:6]'

The ignoramus and unmindful man is made aware of the fact that the vicissitudes of life are stages in the journey to his final destination. Man ought to realise that walking, moving about, sleeping, waking, and standing and sitting are conditions, in the process of which he is covering the stages of his journey. Eventually, he will reach his Lord and, accounting for his life-long deeds, he will find his final abode that will be a place of never-ending comfort, luxury and pleasure, or [God forbid!] a place of never-ending retribution, torture and torment. A wise person should treat himself in this world as a traveller and prepare himself for the next world. His main goal in this life should be to cultivate for the next life as the Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said:

"Be in this world as though you are a stranger or a wayfarer."

Under the phrase above *tabaqan* 'an *tabaq* 'from stage to stage', a similar narration is cited by Abu Nu'aim from Sayyidna Jabir Ibn 'Abdullah (RA) that the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) stated that these verses remind the unmindful of his creation, the vicissitudes of his life and instructs him to reconsider his position and the consequences [of his attitude in this life as there is still time] and to prepare for next life. However, despite these clear guidelines, there are people who never desist from their heedlessness. Therefore, the verse concludes

﴿فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ (٢٠) وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْءَانُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ So, what has happened to them that they do not believe, and when the Qur'an is recited to them, they do not offer sajdah [prostration]? (84:20-21)

It means that when the Qur'an, replete with clear guidelines, is recited to them, they do not bow in submission.

The word sajdah / sujud literally denotes 'to bow' and it connotes 'obedience'. Obviously, the word here is not used in its technical sense. It is used in the sense of bowing in submission with respect, humbleness and humility. The reason [for this interpretation] is quite clear. This verse does not command to prostrate at the time of recitation of a particular verse. It is related to the entire Qur'an. If the word sajdah had referred to the technical prostration, it would necessarily entail that prostration be offered at every verse of the entire Qur'an, which by unanimous agreement of the Ummah is not the case. Neither salaf nor khalaf subscribe to this view. Now remains the question whether or not a sajdah is obligatory when this verse is recited. (There is a disagreement among the jurists on this point) By a long stretch of imagination, it is possible to use this verse in evidence or support of arguing in favour of prostration being obligatory on recitation of this verse, as some of the Hanafi jurists have done. According to them, the definite article al- 'the' in the word al-Qur'an stands for the article that is used to indicate previous knowledge, and thus the word al-Qur'an here refers to this particular verse under comment, not to the entire al-Qur'an or the Holy Book. However, this interpretation is after all merely a possibility, but the clear context of the verse indicates that it seems to be far-fetched to take the verse in this sense. And Allah knows best! The true interpretation can be determined by prophetic narratives, the practice of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) and that of the noble Companions. The narratives pertaining to sajdah of tilawah differ. Some indicate that it is an obligatory duty to make sajdah on this verse, and others indicate that it is not. As a result, there is a difference of opinion among jurists. Imam Abu Hanifah holds the view that prostration at this verse is an obligatory duty as is obligatory at other verses of mufassal. Imam A'zam adduces the following Ahadith in favour of his opinion:

Bukhari recorded from Abu Rafi' that he prayed the 'Isha' [Night] prayer behind Sayyidna Abu Hurairah (RA) and the latter recited *إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ* (When the sky will split apart) and at the relevant verse, he prostrated. So, Sayyidna Abu Rafi' (RA) asked him what type of prostration it was. Sayyidna Abu Hurairah (RA) replied: "I prostrated at this verse behind Abul Qasim (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) in a salah, and I will never cease prostrating during its recitation until I meet him on the Plain of Gathering." Muslim transmitted a narrative from

Sayyidna Abu Hurairah (RA) that they prostrated with the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) at relevant verses of this Surah, and of **أَقْرَأَ بِأَسْمِ رَبِّكَ**.

Qurtubi reports from Ibn-ul-'Arabi that the veritable view is that this verse is one of the verses at which it is an obligatory duty to prostrate when read or recited or heard being recited. However, the people among whom Ibn-ul-'Arabi lived' it was not customary among them to prostrate at this verse. They probably followed an Imam, according to whom the prostration was not obligatory. As a result, Ibn-ul-'Arabi says that whenever he led the congregational prayer, he would avoid reciting Surah Al-Inshiqaq, because in his view prostration at the relevant verse is obligatory. If he does not perform the prostration, he would be sinning. If he does perform the prostration, the entire congregation would regard it an unnecessary act. Therefore, he felt he should not unnecessarily split the community. And Allah knows best!

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Inshiqaq Ends here](#)

85. Stellar Formations (Al-Buruj)

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ (١) وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ (٢) وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ (٣) قَتَلَ أَصْحَابُ الْأَخْضُدِ
(٤) النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوَقُودِ (٥) إِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُودٌ (٦) وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ (٧)
وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَن يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ (٨) الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ (٩) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ
جَهَنَّمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ (١٠) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرَىٰ مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ (١١) إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ (١٢) إِنَّهُ هُوَ يُبَدِّلُ وَيَعِيدُ
(١٣) وَهُوَ الْعَفُورُ الْوَدُودُ (١٤) ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ (١٥) فَعَالٌ لَّمَّا يُرِيدُ (١٦) هَلْ أَتَاكَ
حَدِيثُ الْجُنُودِ (١٧) فِرْعَوْنُ وَثَمُودَ (١٨) بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي تَكْذِيبٍ (١٩) وَاللَّهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ
مَحِيطٌ (٢٠) بَلْ هُوَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَجِيدٌ (٢١) فِي لَوْحٍ مَّحْفُوظٍ (٢٢)

Translation

I swear by the sky, the one having stellar formations, [1]

and by the Promised Day, [2]

and by that which attends, and that which is attended, [3]

cursed were the People of the Trench, [4]

the (people of the) fire that was rich with fuel, [5]

when they were sitting by it, [6]

and were watching what they were doing with the believers. [7]

And they had blamed them for nothing but that they believed in Allah, the All-Mighty, the Worthy of All Praise, [8]

the One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is witness over every thing. [9]

Surely, those who persecuted the believing men and the believing women, then did not repent, for them there is the torment of Jahannam (Hell), and for them there is the torment of burning. [10]

As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them there are gardens beneath which rivers flow. That is the big achievement. [11]

The seizure of your Lord is severe indeed! [12]

Surely He originates (creation) and repeats (it after death). [13]

And He is the Most-Forgiving, the Most-Loving, [14]

the Master of the Throne, the Glorious. [15]

He is ever doer of what He intends. [16]

Has the come to you the story of the forces, [17]

of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) and Thamud? [18]

But those who disbelieve are (engaged) in denying (the truth). [19]

And Allah has encircled them from all sides. [20]

The reality is that it is the glorious Qur'an, [21]

(recorded) in the Preserved Tablet (Lauh Mahfuz). [22]

Commentary

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ (I swear by the sky, the one having stellar formations....85:1) The word buruj is the plural of burj which means 'a large mansion or fortress'. The Qur'an says:

وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُشَيَّدَةٍ ...even though you are in fortified castles [4:78]'

Here the word buruj means 'castles'. The primitive sense of the word burj is to become manifest'. The word tabarruj means 'to display one's beauty' as in the verse **وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ** '...and do not display your beauty as it was previously displayed in the Time of Ignorance [33:33]'

According to the majority of commentators like Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas (RA), Mujahid, Dahhak, Hasan Al-Basri, Qatadah, Suddi (RA) and others, the word buruj, in this verse, refers to 'giant stars'. Other commentators take the word buruj, in this place, to refer to mansions and castles that are reserved in the sky for the guardian angels. Some of the later commentators chose the astronomical view in which the sky is divided into twelve parts, each one called a burj. The primitive philosophers believed that the thawabit (stationary) stars are fixed in these buruj. The planets move with the movement of their particular sky and the planets descend in these buruj. But this is absolutely incorrect. According to the Qur'an, Allah has not fixed the stars and planets in the skies. In fact, every star and planet has its own orbit and revolves by itself as in Surah Ya Sin **وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ** '...And each one is floating in an orbit. [36:40]'

The word falak in this verse does not refer to the sky, but rather to the orbits of the stars and planets in which they move. [Mazhari]

وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ (۲) وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ (and by the Promised Day, and by that which attends, and that which is attended...85:2,3) With reference to a prophetic Hadith reported by Tirmidhi, the phrase 'the Promised Day' refers to the Day of Judgement; the phrase 'that which attends' refers to 'Friday'; and the phrase 'that which is attended' refers to the day of 'Arafah. Thus in this verse, Allah has taken oath by four objects:

- 1) 'the sky, the one having stellar formations';
- 2) 'the Day of Judgement';
- 3) 'Friday'; and
- 4) 'the Day of 'Arafah'.

The relationship between the objects of oath and the subject of oath is as follows: They bear evidence to the Divine omnipotence, and they are a proof of reckoning and reward and punishment on the Day of Judgement. Friday and the day of 'Arafah (the main day of Hajj that is 9th Zul-Hijjah of the Islamic Calendar) are blessed days for the believers to accumulate treasures for the Hereafter. Further, the subject of oath curses the infidels who burned the Muslims on account of their faith, and gives cheerful news to the righteous believers of securing elevated ranks in the Hereafter.

The Story of the People of Trench

Verse 4 refers to the People of the Trench. Their story is recounted in a Hadith reported by Imam Muslim as follows: There was an infidel king who lived in bygone times. He had a soothsayer , or, according to some narrations, a magician. The infidel king is identified as the ruler of Yemen. His name, according to Ibn 'Abbas (RA), was Yusuf Dhu Nuwas, and he lived about seventy years before the birth of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam). The soothsayer or magician [occult teacher] said to the king that he should be given an intelligent boy, so that he could train him in the skill of foretelling or the black magic. Accordingly, the king sent a boy, 'Abdullah Ibn Tamir by name, to be trained by the soothsayer or magician [occult teacher]. Whenever the boy went to his teacher, he had to pass by a Christian monk. He followed the true religion of 'Isa (AS) and worshipped Allah. Since the religion of 'Isa (AS) was the true religion in those days, the monk was, in fact, a Muslim. The boy sat with the monk and was very much impressed by his teachings. As a result, he frequented the monk's house and sat with him for long hours before proceeding to his teacher, and ultimately embraced Islam. Allah had blessed him with such a strong faith that he was prepared to bear any pain and persecution for the sake of Allah. His teacher used to beat him for his coming late. On his way back from the occult teacher, he would spend some time again with the monk and used to go home late. The family would then beat him up for being late. But he was so keen to have the company of the monk that he managed to sit regularly with the monk without fear of persecution. Through the blessings of this, Allah had gifted him with many miracles [karamah]. Once it happened that the boy saw a lion has blocked the path and prevented people from passing. They were perturbed. He picked a stone and prayed: "O Allah! If the religion of the monk is true, then kill this beast with this stone [so that people may pass]. And if the soothsayer or magician is true, then the beast must not die with my stone." So praying, he aimed at the lion and it died instantly. The news spread among the people that the boy possesses wonderful knowledge. A blind man heard about this and came up to him. He requested him to restore his sight. The boy conceded on the condition that he embraces Islam. The blind man agreed. The boy prayed and Allah restored his sight. The blind man became Muslim. The king came to know about these incidents, and he got the boy, the monk and the blind were apprehended. They were brought before the king. He got the blind and the monk killed, and ordered that the boy be taken to the summit of a mountain and be thrown from there. But those who had taken him up there fell and died. The boy went home safely. Then the king ordered to have him drowned in the sea. The boy escaped safely, while the people who took him to the sea were drowned. The boy then himself told the king how to kill him. He told him to take an arrow from his quiver and place it in his bow, and reciting, 'In the name of Allah, my Lord' they should shoot. They did that and they boy finally died. In this way, the boy gave his life away but seeing this, the entire nation of the king cried out spontaneously: "We believe in Allah." At this, the king was greatly enraged and, after consultation with his cabinet, ordered for deep trenches to be dug and filled with fire. An announcement was then made that the people must renounce their faith in Allah. If they refuse, they would be thrown into the fiery furnace. Eventually, a woman carrying her infant child was brought to a trench, but she hesitated. Allah granted speech to her child who said: "O mother, be steadfast, because you are certainly on the truth." In this way, many people were burned. According to some reports, about twelve thousand people were burned to ashes and, according to other reports, the number is put more than this. Consequently, Divine wrath descended on the People of the Trench and fiery furnace. Reference in verse 4 is made to this incident after taking an oath.

In a narration of Muhammad Ibn Ishaq, it is reported that the place where the boy 'Abdullah Ibn Tamir was buried had to be dug up for some important reason during the time of Sayyidna 'Umar (RA). It was found that the body of 'Abdullah Ibn Tamir was intact, and he was sitting up. His hand was placed on his hip joint, where the arrow struck him. Someone moved his hand out from that place, and his wound started bleeding. When the hand was placed back in its position, the bleeding stopped. There was a ring in his finger which had the inscription: "Allah is my Lord." The governor of Yemen informed Sayyidna 'Umar (RA) about this, and he wrote back in reply: "Bury the body back as it was with his finger-ring." [Ibn Kathir]

Special Note

Ibn Kathir, with reference to Ibn Abi Hatim, writes that the incidents of 'trenches of fire' took place many times in history in different parts of the world. Then Ibn Abi Hatim specifies three particular incidents:

- 1) a trench in Yemen. [This incident took place during the period of fatrah (the interval between 'Isa (A.S) and the Holy Prophet), about seventy years before the advent of the Prophet ;
- 2) a trench in Syria; and
- 3) a trench in Iran. He further states that the incident the Qur'an refers to here in Surah Buruj is the first one that occurred in Najran, the trench of the kingdom of Yemen, because that was in Arabia.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا (Surely, those who persecuted the believing men and the believing women, then did not repent,...85:10) This verse describes the torment of the wrong-doers who burned the Muslims in the fire pit only on account of their faith. The description points out two things:

- 1) **فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ** (for them there is the torment of Jahannam) and
- 2) **وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ** (and for them there is the torment of burning).

The second sentence may be treated as explicative of the first sentence, a statement for emphasis. It signifies that they will be put into Hell and will have to suffer eternal torment of the fire. Another possible interpretation is that the second statement describes the wrong-doers' torment in this world, as is narrated in some reports. The believers, who had been cast in fire pits, were spared the torture of fire, in that the souls of the believers were taken out before the fire could touch them. Only their dead bodies were lying in the fiery furnace. After that the fire flared up so high that it spread out wildly through the city and burned all those who were watching the fun of burning the Muslims. Only Yusuf Dhu Nuwas managed to run away, and threw himself into the sea in order to save himself from the rage of the fire, but he got drowned and died. [Mazhari].

Attached to the torment of Hell and the torment of burning for the wrong-doers is the restrictive phrase **ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا**: (then did not repent). That is, this torment is for those who did not repent of their deed and did not offer taubah. Thus this part of the verse invites people to repent. Sayyidna Hasan (RA) states: "Look at Allah's compassion and benevolence. They burned Allah's friends alive, yet He invites them towards repentance and forgiveness." [Ibn Kathir].

Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Buruj Ends here

86. The Night-Comer (At-Tariq)

This Surah is Makki and has 17 verses

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ (١) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ (٢) النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ (٣) إِنَّ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ لَمَّا عَلَيْهَا
حَافِظٌ (٤) فَتَنْظُرُ النَّاسُنُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ (٥) خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ (٦) يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ
وَالثَّرَائِبِ (٧) إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ (٨) يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ (٩) فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَلَا
نَاصِرٍ (١٠) وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ (١١) وَالتَّارِضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ (١٢) إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلٌ فَصْلٌ (١٣)
وَمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ (١٤) إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا (١٥) وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا (١٦) فَمَهْلُ الْكَافِرِينَ أَمْهَلُهُمْ
رُويْدًا (١٧)

Translation

I swear by the sky and the Night-Comer, [1]

and what may let you know what the Night-Comer is? [2]

The star of piercing brightness! [3]

there is no human being, but there is a watcher over him. [4]

So, let man consider of which stuff he is created. [5]

He is created of a spouting water [6]

that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones. [7]

Surely He is Powerful to bring him back [8]

on a day when all the secrets will be searched out, [9]

and he will have no strength (to defend), nor a supporter. [10]

I swear by the sky that rains, [11]

and the earth that cracks open (for plants), [12]

this is a decisive word, [13]

and it is not a joke. [14]

They are devising plans, [15]

and I Am devising plans. [16]

So leave the disbelievers at the moment; give them respite for a while. [17]

Commentary

After swearing an oath by the sky and stars, in this Surah, Allah asserts that He has assigned a guardian angel to every human being who watches over his deeds and actions, and accurate and immediate record is kept on the basis of which the reckoning will be made, and on the Day of Reckoning, all secrets will be revealed. The rational conclusion is that man must ponder over the consequences of the deeds he is doing in this life. Therefore, he should not, at any moment of his life, lose sight of what is to happen on the Day of Reckoning. Thereafter, the

verse disposes of a doubt that the Satan perennially casts into the people's hearts. When they are dead and have become dust and decomposed particles, how will they be recomposed and life be brought back? This seems to be an imaginary thought, rather, in the view of the general public, it is impossible. In answer to this doubt, man is invited to reflect on his origin. At the inception, he was created from various elements collected from throughout the world, and Allah's Power transformed them into a human being who is able to listen and see. Allah Who has created him and looked after him is well able to bring him back to life after death. Then some events of the Day of Judgement are mentioned. Then, after swearing an oath by the earth and the sky, the negligent man is told that the Hereafter he is urged to care about is no joke or amusement, but it is a reality that has to come to pass. Towards the end of the Surah, the unbelievers pose the question: If Allah abhors disbelief, idolatry and sins, why then does He not punish us in this life? The Surah ends with a rebuttal to this question. Let us now explain some expressions used in the Surah:

The first oath, in the beginning of the Surah, is by the sky and tariq. The word tariq means the 'Night-Comer'. Stars normally disappear during the day and only appear at night, therefore they are called tariq. The Qur'an itself raises the question:

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ (١) (and what may let you know what the Night-Comer is?...86:2) and then answers the question thus: (The star of piercing brightness!...86:3). The word najm means 'star'. The Qur'an does not specify any particular 'star'. Therefore, it may be applied to any star. Some of the commentators say that najm refers to the Pleiades or Saturn, and they quote specimens of Arabic speech to confirm their argument. The word thaqib means 'piercing brightness'.

إِنْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ (there is no human being, but there is a watcher over him....86:4). This is the subject of the oath. The particle in at the beginning of the statement is used in the sense of 'no', that is, a negative particle; and the particle lamrna is used in the sense of 'but/except', that is, it is an exceptive particle in the dialect of Bam Hudhail. The verse purports to say that there is not a single person over whom there is not a watcher [hafiz]. The word hafiz may mean 'guardian' who may watch over someone's actions and deeds, so that the reckoning is made on that basis. The word hafiz may also be used in the sense of 'one who protects from calamities'. In the first sense, the word hafiz refers to the angels who record the deeds. Here the word hafiz, although appears in the singular form, it is used in the generic sense, because there is not just a single recording angel, but there is a host of them as another verse testifies to this fact **وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ (١٠) كِرَامًا**

كَتَبِينَ 'While [appointed] over you there are watchers, who are noble, the writers [of the deeds], [82:10-11]'

According to the second sense of the word, hafiz refers to the angels who have been appointed to protect man from all kinds of calamities that befall him day and night, except the calamities that Allah has decreed for him, as the following verse explicitly states **لَهُ ۥ مُعَقَّبَاتٌ مِّنۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنۢ خَلْفِهِ ۙ يَحْفَظُونَهُ ۗ مِنۢ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ**

'For him there are angels replacing each other, before him and behind him, who guard him under the command of Allah [13:11]

A tradition has reported the Messenger of Allah (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) saying that Allah has appointed three hundred and sixty angels for every believer. They protect every limb of his. Of the three hundred and sixty, seven angels alone protect man's eye. These angels defend man from every calamity that is not decreed, like a fan chases away the flies coming to a vessel containing honey. If there are no security guards for man, the devils will snatch them away. [Qurtubi].

خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ (٦) يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ (He is created of a spouting water that

comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones...86:6,7). The general body of commentators have explained that the spouting water (sperm) comes out from the loins of men and the chest-bones of women. However, the research of embryological science on the subject shows that the seminal fluid comes out from every part of human body, and every part of the foetus is made of the seminal fluid that has come out from that part of the man's and woman's body. The brain, of course, plays the greatest role in this matter. Thus experience shows that people who indulge in excessive cohabitation mostly suffer from weakness of mental weakness. The embryologists have at the same time discovered that the seminal fluid separates from all parts of the body, and through the spinal cord, collects in the testes and from there it spouts.

If these findings have any value, it is not far-fetched to reconcile them with the explanation of some of the commentators. Embryologists agree that the brain plays the most important role in the preparation of seminal fluid. The representative of the brain is the spinal cord that has come into the backbone from the brain, up to the loins and the testes. Some of its branches have come into the chest-bones. It is likely that the seminal fluid coming from the chest-bones into the woman's seminal fluid and the seminal fluid coming from the loins into a man's seminal fluid have a greater role to play. (Baidawi)

If we analyse the verse of the Qur'an carefully, we notice that it does not specify 'man or woman'. It merely says 'He is created of a spouting water that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones.' This may simply signify that the seminal fluid comes out from the entire body of both men and women. The expression 'the entire body' is understood from the mention of the principal organs of front and back. The front part of the body is chest and the back part of the body is the loin. These are the principal parts of the body. The expression, 'the spouting water that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones' may mean 'comes out from the entire body'.

إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ (٧) (Surely He is Powerful to bring him back...86:8) The word raj' means 'to bring back'. The verse signifies that Allah Who has created him from a drop of seminal fluid is well able to bring him back to life after death a fortiori.

يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ (on a day when all the secrets will be searched out..86:9). The word tubla literally means 'to test/examine' and sara'ir means 'secrets'. On the Day of Reckoning, the secrets will be tested and examined and laid bare. Man's beliefs, his thoughts, and his motives and intentions that were hidden in this life, and no one knew about them, will be revealed in the Hereafter.

Likewise, his deeds and actions that he had done secretly, and no one was aware of them in this world, all of them will be tested and scrutinised on the Plain of Gathering and will be laid bare. Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar has said that on the Day of Judgement Allah will disclose the secrets of all human beings. The sign of every good or bad belief and action will be displayed on man's face, in the form of beauty or darkness or gloom [depending on each individual's situation]. [Qurtubi].

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ (I swear by the sky that rains...86:11) The word raj' refers to 'the rain that comes down repeatedly'. In other words, the rain that comes down and stops and then returns.

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلٌ فَصْلٌ (this is a decisive word..86:13) In other words, the Qur'an is truly a Decisive Word that decides between truth and falsehood, and there is no room for any doubt in it.

Sayyidna 'Ali (RA) says that he heard the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) as saying about the Holy Qur'an:

'[It is] a book which describes the stories of past communities and [it contains] injunctions for future generations. It is truly a Decisive Word. It is no joke.'

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah At-Tariq Ends here](#)

87. The Most Exalted (Al-A'la)

This Surah is Makki and has 19 verses

سَبَّحَ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى (١) الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى (٢) وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى (٣) وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ
الْمَرْعَى (٤) فَجَعَلَهُ عُتَاقًا وَآهْوَى (٥) سَنُفْرُنَكَ فَمَا تَسَى (٦) إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى (٧) وَنُيْسِرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَى (٨) فذَكَرْ إِن نَّفَعْتَ الذِّكْرَى (٩) سَيَذَكِّرُ مَنْ يَخْشَى (١٠)
(١٠) وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى (١١) الَّذِي يَصْلَى النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى (١٢) ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَى (١٣)
(١٣) قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى (١٤) وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى (١٥) بَلْ تُؤَثِّرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا (١٦)
وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى (١٧) إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى (١٨) صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى (١٩)

Translation

Pronounce the purity of the name of your Most Exalted Lord, [1]

who created (everything), then made (it) well, [2]

and who determined a measure (for everything), then guided (it), [3]

and who brought forth pasturage, [4]

then turned it into blackening stubble. [5]

We will make you recite, then you will not forget [6]

except that which Allah wills. Indeed He knows what is manifest and what is hidden. [7]

And We will facilitate for you (to reach) the easiest way. [8]

So, extend advice (to people) if advice is useful. [9]

The one who fears (Allah) will take to the advice, [10]

and it will be avoided by the most wretched [11]

who will enter the Biggest Fire, [12]

then he will neither die therein, nor live (a life worth mentioning). [13]

Success is surely achieved by him who purifies himself, [14]

and pronounces the name of his Lord, then offers prayer. [15]

But you prefer the worldly life, [16]

while the Hereafter is much better and much more durable. [17]

Indeed this is (written) in the earlier divine scripts, [18]

the scripts of Ibrahim and Musa. [19]

Commentary

Ruling [1]

Scholars have ruled that when anyone recites the verse **سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى** (Pronounce the purity of the name of your most exalted Lord...87:1) it is commendable to say:

سبحان ربي الاعلى

'I pronounce the purity of my most exalted Lord.'

This was the practice of all the noble Companions, like Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbaa, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn Zubair, Abu Musa and 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (R.A). Whenever they started reciting the Surah, they would recite:

سبحان ربي الاعلى

'I pronounce the purity of my most exalted Lord.' [Qurtubi].

It should be noted that the desirability of reciting this is outside of the prayer.

Ruling [2]

Sayyidna 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir Al-Juhani narrates that when the Surah Al-A'la was revealed, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) instructed:

'Say this (Subhana Rabbiyal-A'la) in your sujud [prostrations]'

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى (Pronounce the purity of the name of your Most exalted Lord.) The word tasbih means 'to pronounce the purity' and **سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ** signifies to 'honour the name of your Lord'. When the name of Allah is pronounced, it should be done with utmost humility and respect.

His name should be kept pure and free from anything that is unbecoming to His sublime status. Allah should be called by the names He Himself has stated or taught the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam). It is not permitted to call Him by any other name.

Ruling [3]

Besides, it is also included in the above imperative that there are some names exclusively meant for Allah; calling human beings or any other creation by those specific names is contrary to declaring the purity of Allah. Therefore, it is not permissible. [Qurtubi]. Nowadays, people are not particular about names like 'Abdur Rahman, 'Abdur-Razzaq, 'Abdul Ghaffar and 'Abdul Quddus. They call the persons bearing these names 'Rahman', 'Razzaq', 'Ghaffar', 'Quddus' and so on, for short. People have got into the habit of shortening such names without realising that the speakers as well as the listeners are committing a sin. People commit this joyless sin day and night without any reason.

Some commentators interpret the word 'ism' does not mean 'name' in this verse. Instead, they say, it is referring to the Dhat or the 'Being' of Allah. According to the Arabic expressions, this interpretation is not unlikely, and the Qur'an has used the word 'ism' in that sense also. The Hadith that instructs us to recite the tasbih in sajdah [prostration] is not "I pronounce the purity of the name of my most exalted Lord, but "I pronounce the purity of my most exalted Lord". This indicates that in this context 'ism' is not used in the sense of 'name' but it refers to the Being of Allah Himself. [Qurtubi]

Subtle and Profound Wisdom in the Creation of the Universe

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ (٢) وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ (who created [everything], then made [it] well, and who determined a measure [for everything], then guided [it]...87:2,3). All these are the attributes of the 'Most Exalted Lord'. The first attribute is khalaqa which does not simply mean 'to make' or 'manufacture'. It has a deeper significance: 'to bring out something from pure non-existence into the realm of existence without the help of any pre-existing matter'. (This is the correct meaning of 'creation'. If something is made with the help of some pre-existing matter, it cannot be called 'creation' in its original sense.) This is not within the power of anyone else. Only the perfect power of Allah can bring things into existence, whenever He wills, without the help of any pre-existing matter.

The second attribute, which is connected with takhliq (creation), is sawwa. This word is derived from taswiyah, and it literally means 'to make well or equal'. The verse signifies that Allah made the constitution of everything symmetrical or made it congruously consistent in its several parts, the body structure, shape and size, limbs and organs. Man and every other animal is adapted to the requirements of wisdom. The hands and legs, the tips of the fingers and toes have joints with different types of springy connective tissues that make it possible to bend and fold in different ways. If we look at another limb or organ of human body, its symmetry and balance baffles our imagination and is sufficient for us to believe in the consummate wisdom and power of the Creator of the universe.

The third attribute is qaddara which is derived from taqdir and it means 'to determine; to measure; to balance; to design symmetrically; to decree/decide'. The word is used in the last sense here. The verse purports to say that things in the world have not been created without purpose. Everything has been created for a specific purpose, and has been endowed with natural capacities to fit its function. If we look carefully, the principle does not apply only to specific species. Every member of the universe has been assigned a specific function to perform. We witness the manifestation of the assignments in the sky, the stars, lightning, rain, humans, animals, vegetation and minerals.

Maulana Rumi says:

'The earth, the wind, the water and the fire - all of them are slaves of Allah.

According to me and you, they are senseless, but according to Allah, all of them are alive and sensible.

Allah has especially geared man and every species of animals to do particular works and they perform them according to their natural inclination, and their predisposition pivots around their respective tasks.

Allah has created everything for a particular purpose And has filled its heart with inclination towards it.

The fourth attribute of Allah is fa-hada 'then guided it'. In other words, The Creator of the universe did not create things and left them to their own mercy to perform their particular function as they like, but they are shown the way in which they should be performed. As a matter of fact, He guided the entire creation by equipping each member of it with suitable nature to function for which it was created, whether the member is the sky or celestial creation, or it is the earth or the earthly creation. They all possess a special type of sense, though it is of a lower than that of man. The Qur'an says **قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ۖ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ** 'Our Lord is He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, then guided it aright. [20:50]'

As a result, since the inception of their creation, the skies, the earth, the stars and planets, mountains and oceans are all performing their functions accurately, without any failure or deviation. Humans and animals, in particular, whose intellect and sensibility can be observed easily, have been invested with capabilities of fulfilling their

minute needs and repelling harmful things in a way that baffles the one who thinks about it. Since man possesses sense and intelligence of a higher degree, his capabilities may not be so much surprising, but let us look into wild animals, ferocious animals or beasts of prey, birds and insects. Each and everyone of them is able to obtain its necessities of life. They are able to find their habitats. They have not acquired the skills of fulfilling their individual and communal needs through a teacher that may educate or train them, nor did they need any school or college to acquire this knowledge and skill. Their education and training comes directly from the Creator of the universe.

It is this divine guidance that has been referred to in the Holy Qur'an by saying, **قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ** 'Our Lord is He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, then guided it aright. [20:50]'

and in this Surah thus: **وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ** 'and who determined a measure (for everything), then guided (it), [3]'

The Knowledge of Science is a Divine Gift to Man

Allah has equipped man with the higher order of intelligence and sense. The entire universe is made subservient to him, the earth, mountains and oceans and everything created therein are made to serve man and created for his benefit. However, full advantage of them is not possible unless man acquires knowledge and skill to put various things together and produce a new item. Nature has provided man with intelligence and understanding to excavate mountains and dive into the oceans to obtain minerals and marine objects. He composes certain items like wood, iron, steel, copper, brass and so on and makes new items of his need. This knowledge and technology is not dependent on scientific research and college or university education. Even illiterate people have been doing this since the inception of human existence. This is intrinsic science that Allah has endowed upon man as a natural gift. Later, man developed the capability of doing technical and scientific research. He thus made progress in various fields of science and technology. The capability to do this is also a Divine gift.

Obviously, science and technology does not create anything, but it merely shows the way to use the created things. The initial knowledge about their use is taught by Allah, but there is a wide scope to make progress in it by the capabilities Allah has bestowed to man, the manifestation of which we are witnessing in this scientific age day by day, and what further range of these abilities and talents will manifest in future is unknown. All this is the interpretation of hada '[He] guided (it), [3] In other words, Allah has placed in them potentials and capabilities to perform their natural functions. But alas! the scientists are getting more and more negligent, rather blind to these realities day by day

(۳) وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَىٰ (۴) فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَىٰ (and who brought forth pasturage, then turned it into a blackening stubble....87:4, 5). The word mar'a means 'pasturage'. This is the land that has grass growing on it, and that is used for animals to graze. The word ghutha' refers to 'stubble, and scum borne upon the surface of a torrent'. The word ahwa is derived from the root huwwah which refers to 'a kind of black colour that comes upon a dense vegetation'. The verse purports to depict the Divine power and wisdom related to herbage and vegetation. He grows the green vegetation and then He gradually turns it into black colour, and it loses its freshness. This directs man's attention also to his end. His body radiating with health, beauty, smartness and alertness is a Divine gift, but its tenure of life is limited. Eventually it will come to an end.

سَنُقَرِّبُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَىٰ (۶) إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ (We will make you recite, then you will not forget, except that which Allah wills. Indeed He knows what is manifest and what is hidden....87:6,7). In the preceding verses, Allah depicted the manifestation of His Omnipotence and [profound] wisdom. Thereafter, a few guidelines are given to the Holy Prophet regarding his prophetic obligation. Before putting forth the guidelines, he is given the cheerful

news of making his task easier. When the Qur'an was revealed initially, and as Jibra'il (AS) began to recite, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) made haste to repeat, lest any word or sentence should be lost. He was, therefore, told not to make haste with it, and to wait until the angel had delivered the whole message, and then to repeat the words of the revelation, being assured that it was a Divine arrangement, and that nothing would be lost. On this occasion, he is still more plainly told: 'then you will not forget, except that which Allah wills.'

While Allah made the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) remember all of the Qur'an, there were certain verses which Allah made him forget, because they had been abrogated. This was done by Allah's command, and is not done without reason. There are several ways in which this is done. One way of doing this is that a second clear injunction is revealed contrary to the first injunction. Another way of abrogating a particular verse is to obliterate a verse from the memory of the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) and the memory of all other Muslims, as stated in:

مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا Whenever We abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten. [2:106]

Some scholars interpret the exceptive sentence 'except that which Allah wills' differently. They say that for some reason Allah blots out temporarily a verse from Holy Prophet's (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) memory, but he may remember it again, in support of which the following narrative may be adduced: One day the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) recited a Surah, but omitted one of the verses. Sayyidna Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (RA), one of the Prophet's (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) scribes, was present. He thought it might have been abrogated. On inquiry, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) said that it was not abrogated, but that it was omitted by mistake. [Qurtubi]. In this interpretation, it may be summarised that forgetting a verse temporarily, and then remembering it again, does not go against the promise made in this verse. [In fact, it is an exception from this promise.] Allah knows best!

وَيُسِّرْكَ لَيْسْرَىٰ (And We will facilitate for you [to reach] the easiest way....87:8). The phrase 'the easiest way' refers to the sacred laws of Islam. Apparently, according to the demand of the context, it should have been stated 'We will make the Shari'ah easy for you'. But the Qur'an chose, instead, to state 'And We will facilitate for you (to reach) the easiest way. [8]'. The reason for that, probably, is to indicate that Allah will predispose him to the sacred laws, so that they will become part of his nature, and he will become an embodiment of Shari'ah.

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ (So, extend advice [to people] if advice is useful....87:9) The preceding verses described the facilities created by Allah for the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) in performing his Prophetic obligation. This verse commands him to perform his obligation. The verse contains the conditional particle 'in' (if) that apparently makes the sentence a conditional statement. But, in fact, the command is not intended to be made conditional. It is rather an emphatic statement. This is similar to the grammatical phenomenon in many languages. The particle 'if' is sometimes used when something is always true. It is used for introducing a situation that always has the same meaning, result or effect. For example: "If you are a 'man' [obviously he is a man], then you will have to do this work;" In neither of such sentences, the particle 'if' is conditional, but rather emphatic. Likewise, the verse purports to say that preaching truth and righteousness is certainly useful. Therefore, the beneficial thing should never be abandoned at anytime.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ (Success is surely achieved by him who purifies himself,..87:14) The word tazakka is derived from zakah, the primitive meaning of which is 'to purify'. The zakah of wealth is so called because it purifies the rest of man's wealth for him. In this context, the word tazakka is used in a general sense, which comprehends the purity of faith and character, and purity of wealth.

وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى (and pronounces the name of his Lord, then offers prayer....87:15). This covers all categories of prayer, obligatory as well as supererogatory. Some commentators say that it refers especially to 'Id prayers. This interpretation too can fall under the preceding category.

بَلْ تُوْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا (١٥) (But you prefer the worldly life,...87:16). Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (RA) says that people generally prefer the worldly blessings and comforts to the blessings and comforts of the Hereafter, because the former is visible and readily available, while the latter is invisible and unavailable readily. People unaware of reality preferred the visible to the invisible, which became the cause of eternal loss. In order to spare them the eternal loss, Allah, through His Messengers and Books, described to them the blessings and comforts of the Hereafter so clearly as if they can perceive them [through their sense organs]. It has been made plain to them that what they think is readily available and preferred, is actually fragile and will very soon perish. It is unwise to put one's heart into, or faith in, it and waste one's energy on it. Thus the Qur'an says وَأَتَّخِرُهَا حَيْرًا

وَأَبْقَى (while the Hereafter is much better and much more durable...87:17). The verse purports to warn those who prefer this life to the Hereafter that they should use their intelligence to find out what they have preferred and what they have abandoned. They are, first of all, made to realise that the highest degree of comfort and pleasure in this life is not free from the mixture of grief and hardship. In the second place, it is not permanent. We experience in our daily life that a king of today becomes a pauper tomorrow. A vigorous youth of today becomes old tomorrow. In the Hereafter, on the other hand, there will be freedom from both these defects. All its blessings and comforts will be 'much better' and they cannot be compared to the blessings and comforts of this life. Most importantly, it is abqa 'much more durable'.

Let us consider the following scenario: It is said to a person that there are two houses in front of him, one of which is a magnificent mansion, fully furnished and another an ordinary, substandard house, not properly furnished. He has the choice to take the mansion, but only for a month or two. Thereafter, he will have to vacate the mansion. Or he may take the underdeveloped house that he will own permanently. Which of the two houses a wise person will prefer? The answer is obvious that he will prefer the second option. On this analogy, one should prefer the blessings of the Hereafter even if, for argument's sake, they are substandard, because they are permanent and eternal. But the fact is that they are not only permanent, but also much better and far more superior to the worldly comforts. In this situation only an unfortunate fool will prefer the blessings of this life to the bounties of the Hereafter.

إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى (١٨) صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى (١٩) (Indeed this is [written] in the earlier divine scripts, the scripts of Ibrahim and Musa....87:18, 19) In other words, either all the themes of this Surah or its last theme, that the Hereafter is much better and much more durable than this life, was written in the earlier Divine scriptures. It is further explicated that this theme was written in the scriptures of Prophets Ibrahim and Musa (A.S). Probably, it refers to other scriptures that were given to Prophet Musa (A.S) before Torah. It is also possible that it refers to Torah itself.

Themes of the Scripts of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S)

Ajurri transmits a narration from Sayyidna Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari (RA) that he inquired from the Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) as to the contents of the scripts of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) and the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) replied that they contained educating parables. A story is told in it about a tyrant king where he is addressed and told: You haughty, arrogant and oppressive ruler! I did not give you kingdom so that you may amass wealth, but I had given you power so that you may let the supplication of the oppressed against the oppressor reach me, because my law does not reject the supplication of an oppressed, even though it may be uttered by an unbeliever.

Another parable addresses the general public thus: A wise person should divide his time into three parts. One part should be reserved for the worship of his Lord and supplication to Him. The second part should be reserved for self-assessment of his deeds, and reflection on the Omnipotence and creation of Allah. The third part should be allocated for acquisition of livelihood and fulfilling the natural needs. It further imparts that a wise person should keep himself abreast of the circumstances of his time, and keep himself busy in performing his intended work. He should take care of his tongue. He who takes speech as one of his works, his speech will be confined only to the things of real need.

Themes of the Scripts of Prophet Musa (A.S)

Sayyidna Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari says that he then inquired from the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) as to the contents of the scripts of Prophet Musa (A.S) and the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) replied that they contained lessons of wisdom. Some of them are as follows:

- 1) I am surprised at the person who believes that he will certainly die, and yet he is lives happily.
- 2) I am surprised at the person who believes in Divine destiny, and yet he is despondent and aggrieved.
- 3) I am surprised at the person who experiences the vicissitudes of life and rise and fall of nations, and yet he is content with the world.
- 4) I am surprised at the person who believes in the Reckoning of the Hereafter, and yet he abandons [good] deeds.

Sayyidna Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari (RA) says that he asked the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) whether anything from these scriptures was revealed to him, he replied in the affirmative and asked Sayyidna Abu Dharr Ghifari (RA) to recite verses 14-19 of this Surah. [Qurtubi]

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-A'ala Ends here](#)

88. The Overwhelming (Al-Ghashiyah)

This Surah is Makki and has 26 verses

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْعَشِيِّهِ (١) وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَشِيعَةٌ (٢) عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ (٣) تَصَلَّىٰ نَارًا حَامِيَةً
(٤) تُسْقَىٰ مِنْ عَيْنٍ عَائِيَةٍ (٥) لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيحٍ (٦) لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنَىٰ مِنْ
جُوعٍ (٧) وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاعِمَةٌ (٨) لَسَعِيهَا رَاضِيَةٌ (٩) فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ (١٠) لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا
لُغِيَةً (١١) فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ (١٢) فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوعَةٌ (١٣) وَأَكْوَابٌ مَّوْضُوعَةٌ (١٤)
وَنَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ (١٥) وَزَرَابِيُّ مَبْثُوثَةٌ (١٦) أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ (١٧)
وَأِلَى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ (١٨) وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ (١٩) وَإِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ
(٢٠) فَذَكِّرْ— إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ (٢١) لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ (٢٢) إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ وَكَفَرَ (٢٣)
فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ الْعَذَابَ الْأَكْبَرَ (٢٤) إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ (٢٥) ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ (٢٦)

Translation

Has there come to you the description of the Overwhelming Event? [1]

Many faces on that day will be humbled, [2]

working hard, exhausted. [3]

They will enter into the scorching fire. [4]

They will be made to drink water from a boiling spring. [5]

There will be no food for them except from a thorny plant [6]

that will neither nourish, nor satisfy hunger. [7]

Many faces on that day will be full of glamour, [8]

well pleased with their endeavour, [9]

in a lofty garden, [10]

in which they will not hear any absurd talk. [11]

In it there is a running spring. [12]

In it there are couches, elevated, [13]

and goblets, well placed [14]

and cushions, arrayed [15]

and carpets, spread around. [16]

So, do they not look at the camels how they are created, [17]

and at the sky, how it is raised high, [18]

and at the mountains, how they are installed, [19]

and at the earth, how it is spread out? [20]

So, keep on preaching; you are only a preacher. [21]

You are not a taskmaster set up over them, [22]

but whoever turns away and disbelieves, [23]

Allah will punish him with the greatest torment. [24]

Surely towards Us they have to return, [25]

then it is Our job to call them to account. [26]

Commentary

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ (Many faces on that day will be humbled, working hard, exhausted...88:3). On the Day of Judgement, there will be two separate groups of people, believers and unbelievers, and their faces will be different. This verse describes the faces of the unbelievers. They will be downcast. The word khashi'ah from the root word khusha' means 'to humble, humiliate, cast down'. This is the meaning of casting oneself down before Allah in prayer. People who did not cast themselves down before Allah in this world, their faces on the Day of Judgement will be downcast with humiliation and disgrace.

The other conditions of the unbelievers are 'amilah and nasibah. The word 'amilah from 'amal means 'to work hard' and 'amil or 'amilah in Arabic is used for 'a person who works continuously, so as to become completely tired'. The word nasibah is derived from nasab. This word also refers to 'one who toils unceasingly so as to become totally exhausted'. It seems that the latter two conditions of the unbelievers relate to this world, because Hereafter is not a realm in which one has to work to become so tired and exhausted. Therefore, Qurtubi and other commentators are of the view that the humbleness of their faces relates to the Hereafter, but their working hard and being exhausted refers to their work in this world. Given this interpretation, the sense is that many unbelievers exert themselves in their false rituals, and work hard in their presumed acts of worship in the world, as for instance the Hindu Yogis and many Christian monks do. They endure many difficulties in the devotional acts of worship sincerely in order to seek the good pleasure of Allah, but being on wrong and idolatrous ways, they are not acceptable to, or rewarded by, Allah. Thus their faces show signs of exhaustion in this world; and in the Hereafter they will show signs of disgrace and humiliation.

Sayyidna Hasan Basri (RA) reports that when Sayyidna 'Umar (RA) went to Syria, a Christian monk came to him. He was an old man, and on account of his religious exercises and great endeavours, his face was exhausted, his body was dry and his dressing was miserable. When Sayyidna 'Umar (RA) looked at him, he began to weep. People asked him about the cause of his weeping. He replied: "I pity the condition of this old man. This poor soul worked so hard and showed such readiness to lay down his life to achieve a particular purpose (that is, to gain the pleasure of Allah) but, alas! He could not achieve it. Then he recited the following verse **وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ**

عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ (٢) Many faces on that day will be humbled, working hard, exhausted. [88:2-3]

نَارًا حَامِيَةً (...[the] scorching fire...88:4). The word hamiyah literally means 'hot' and 'scorching'. Although this is the natural property of fire that needed no mention, yet the specific reference to this quality of the fire brings out the point that the fire of Hell cannot be compared to the fire of this world. The heat of the fire of this world, some time or the other, is reduced or ends. But the fire of Hell is everlasting and eternal. Its heat will neither reduce nor end.

لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيحٍ (٥) (There will be no food for them except from a thorny plant...88:6) The only food available for the inmates of Hell would be dari'. In the world, this is a kind of thorny grass that spreads on the ground. No animal goes near it. It is foul-smelling, poisonous and thorny. [As interpreted by 'Ikrimah, Mujahid, and quoted by Qurtubi]

How Will Grass or Tree Survive in Hell

One may ask the question that the grass or trees are among things that burn in fire. How will they survive in Hellfire? The answer is that the Supreme Creator Who cherished and sustained them in this world with water and air, has the power and ability to make the fire itself the nutrient of these trees, so that they may flourish.

Another question may be raised here. The Qur'an mentions several things as the food of the inmates of Hell. Here it refers to their food as dari'. On another occasion, it refers to zaqqum, and on a third occasion it refers to ghislin. This verse restricts their food to dari', thus: 'There will be no food for them except from a thorny plant...88:6)

The answer is that the restriction in this verse is in contrast to a palatable food that may be fit for [human] consumption. Dari' is cited here as an example. The verse means that the inmates of Hell will not get any palatable food. They will get worst, most disgusting and loathsome food like dari'. Thus the purpose of mentioning dari' is not restriction. In fact, dari' includes zaqqum and ghislin. Qurtubi says that it is possible there will be different levels in Hell, and on different levels there will be different kinds of food. On one level, there will be dari' and on another level, ghislin, and so on.

لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ (that will neither nourish, nor satisfy hunger...88:7). When the preceding verse was revealed in which it was stated that the inmates of Hell will get food like dari', some of the pagans of Makkah [mockingly] said that their camels eat dari' and yet they are fat and healthy. In response to their statement, the following verse of the Qur'an was revealed which means that they should not compare the dari' of this world with that of the Hereafter. The latter will neither provide nutrition, nor satisfy their hunger.

لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَغِيَةً (١٠) (in which they will not hear any absurd talk...88:11). It includes the words of disbelief, futile or idle talk, obscene language, calumny or false accusation, or any other talk that hurts people's feelings. On another occasion, the Qur'an puts it thus **لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْتِيًا** 'They will hear neither an absurd talk therein, nor something leading to sin, [56:25]

This shows that false accusation and absurd talks are hurtful. That is why the Holy Qur'an has described it as a blessing to the inmates of Paradise that no such foolish words will come across their ears that may pollute their hearts.

Etiquette of Living

وَأَكْوَابُ مَوْضُوعَةٌ (and goblets, well placed...88:14) The word akwab is the plural of kub and it refers to a 'goblet', a 'glass' or a cup for drinking water. It has been qualified by the adjective maudu'ah and it means 'well placed'. This signifies that the glasses or cups or containers will be set in their due places close to water. This description opens an important chapter in setting down some of the rules of correct behaviour in social situations. The drinking containers for water ought to be placed near the water in the designated place. They should not be misplaced so that the other members of the household will have to look for them when they wish to drink water. This situation is irritating. Other household items of daily use, such as cans, glasses, towels, and so on, should be arranged in their designated places, and after using them, they must be kept back in their respective places, so that the other members of the household do not face any difficulty in finding them out. All

this is deducible from the word maudu'ah 'well placed', because Allah has arranged the goblets near the water for the comfort of the inmates of Paradise.

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ (So, do they not look at the camels how they are created...88:17) The Qur'an first described the conditions of the Hereafter; and it then went on to depict the reward of the believers and the retribution of the unbelievers. Now it turns attention to rebuff the obdurate unbelievers' foolish denial of the Hereafter. They reject it on the ground that after death and decomposition of the body and bones it is inconceivable that they would be recomposed and resurrected. For their guidance, Allah invites their attention to reflect carefully on a few of His Signs. There are uncountable Signs of Allah in the universe. These verses refer to four of them specifically which suited the condition of the desert Arabs. They often travelled through the desert. In such a situation, all they saw were camels they travelled on. They mounted camels and covered long journeys. Above them was the sky and beneath them was the earth. All around them [left, right, front and back] they saw mountains. The Arabs are commanded to ponder over these four natural phenomena which make Allah's might manifest.

Among animals, the camel has certain peculiar characteristics that can be a reflection of Divine wisdom and power. It is the largest, most robust and durable animal. Although elephant is a much larger animal than the camel, Allah has mentioned the camel rather than the elephant, because the Arabs knew camels and scarcely saw an elephant. Despite the fact that a camel is such a huge animal, a Bedouin Arab will not find it difficult to look after it even if he is poor. If he is unable to gather or afford food for it, it has to be let loose and will gather its own nutriment and live on leaves. It has a long neck to reach the tops of the high trees. The food of elephants and other animals work out expensive. In Arabian deserts, water is a scarce commodity. It is not available everywhere or anytime. Yet it can survive for about a week without water as Allah's Power has provided it with a small narrow-mouthed pouch in its paunch in which it stores up extra water [which it uses up gradually for seven to eight days]. Thus it is a superb draught beast. Nature has created it uniquely, so that it is perfectly adapted to survive the hazards of the harsh climate of the desert.

There is no need to set up a ladder to climb up the high animal. Allah has divided its legs into three levels. Each leg has two knees that it manoeuvres to sit down so that it becomes easier for riders to climb up and down. It is the chief beast of burden in deserts, and as such, it is able to carry large loads. It is most difficult to travel in daytime in Arabia because of scorching sunlight. Allah has made it possible for the camel to keep on travelling the whole night. Camels are so obedient that that even a little child can lead them along anywhere. Camels are very valuable to them in many other ways that teach man that Allah is Omnipotent and has consummate wisdom.

In Conclusion of the Chapter, the Messenger of Allah is Comforted Thus:

لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ (You are not a taskmaster set up over them,...88:22) The Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) is told that he is only a preacher, and as such he must keep on preaching. He should not worry beyond that. It is for Allah to call the unbelievers to Him to render account of their deeds and actions, and punish them accordingly.

Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Ghashiyah Ends here

89. The Dawn (Al-Fajr)

This Surah is Makki and has 30 verses

وَالْفَجْرِ (١) وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ (٢) وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ (٣) وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ (٤) هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ
لِّذِي حِجْرٍ (٥) أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ (٦) إِرْمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ (٧) الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي
الْبَلَدِ (٨) وَثَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ (٩) وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ (١٠) الَّذِينَ طَعَوْا
فِي الْبَلَدِ (١١) فَأَكْتَرُوا فِيهَا الْفِسَادَ (١٢) فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ (١٣) إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لِبِالْمُرْصَادِ (١٤) فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ ۖ وَنَعَّمَهُ ۖ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ
(١٥) وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ ۖ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهْنَنِ (١٦) كَلَّا بَلْ لَّا تُكْرَمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ
(١٧) وَلََّا تَحْضُونَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ (١٨) وَتَأْكُلُونَ الثَّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَّمًّا (١٩) وَتُحِبُّونَ
الْأَمْوَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا (٢٠) كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا (٢١) وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا (٢٢)
وَجِئَاۤءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّىٰ لَهُ الذُّكْرَىٰ (٢٣) يَقُولُ يَلِيَّتَنِي قَدِمْتُ
لِحَيَاتِي (٢٤) فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يُعَدُّ عَذَابَهُ ۖ أَحَدٌ (٢٥) وَلَا يُوثِقُ وِثْقَهُ ۖ أَحَدٌ (٢٦) يَأْتِيهَا
الْنَفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ (٢٧) أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً (٢٨) فَأَدْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي (٢٩)
وَأَدْخُلِي جَنَّتِي (٣٠)

Translation

I swear by the dawn, [1]

and by the Ten Nights, [2]

and by the even and the odd, [3]

and by the night when it moves away, [4]

Is there (not) in that an oath (enough) for a man of sense? [5]

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with (the people) of 'Ad [6]

of Iram, the men of tall pillars, [7]

the like of whom were never created in the lands, [8]

and (how He dealt) with (the people of) Thamud who had carved out the rocks in the Valley (of Qura), [9]

and with Fir'aun (the Pharaoh), the man of the stakes, [10]

all those who had rebelled in the cities, [11]

and spread a lot of mischief therein. [12]

So, your Lord unloosed on them the whip of torment. [13]

Surely your Lord is ever on the watch. [14]

As for man, when his Lord tests him, and thus gives him honour and bounties, he says, "My Lord has honoured me." [15]

But when he tests him, and thus straitens his provision for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me." [16]

No! But you do not honour the orphan, [17]

and do not encourage one another to feed the needy. [18]

And you devour the inheritance with a sweeping gulp, [19]

and love wealth, with an excessive love. [20]

No! When the earth will be crushed thoroughly to be turned into bits, [21]

and your Lord will come, and the angels as well, lined up in rows, [22]

and Jahannam (Hell), on that day, will be brought forward, it will be the day when man will realise the truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation? [23]

He will say, "O Would that I had sent ahead (some good deeds) for (this) my life!" [24]

So, that day, no one can punish as He will punish, [25]

nor can anyone shackle like He will shackle. [26]

(As for an obedient man, it will be said to him,) "O content soul, [27]

come back to your Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing. [28]

So, enter among My (special) servants, [29]

and enter My Paradise." [30]

Commentary

This Surah, by swearing five oaths in its beginning, emphasises the following fact **إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ** Surely your Lord is ever on the watch. [89:14]

This means that Allah is watching over whatever you do, and reward or punishment for your deeds is certain and inevitable.

The first among the five oaths sworn at the beginning is **وَأَلْفَجْرٍ** Fajr (dawn). It may refer to the dawn of every day that brings about a great change in the world, and thus directs man's attention to the absolute Omnipotence of Allah. It is also possible that it refers to the dawn of some specific day. Commentators like Sayyidna 'Ali, Ibn Abbas and Ibn Zubair (R.A) say that the word is general, and it refers to any dawn. According to another narration of Ibn 'Abbas , it refers to the dawn of the first of Muharram which is the start of the lunar-Islamic calendar. Sayyidna Qatadah , among others, has interpreted it in the same way.

Some commentators, like Mujahid and 'Ikramah, refer this to the dawn of 'the Day of Sacrifice' on the tenth of Dhul Hijjah. A narration from Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas concurs with this view. The reason for this specification is that according to Islamic principles, Allah has made a night to precede the day. All days are preceded by their respective nights, except the 'the Day of Sacrifice', because the night that precedes the Day of Sacrifice is not the night of Sacrifice. In fact, the preceding night, according to Shari'ah, is the night of 'Arafah. Staying at 'Arafat is the most important and foremost rite of Hajj. If a pilgrim is not able to reach 'Arafat on the 9th of Dhul Hijjah, any time in the day or in the night following it to halt there for a while, he will not be considered to have performed Hajj at all. However if he arrives there any time during the night before the break of dawn on the 10th of Dhul Hijjah, his halt in 'Arafah will be acceptable and his Hajj will be considered valid. This shows that the day of 'Arafah

has two nights, one preceding it, and another following it. The Day of Sacrifice [10th of Dhul Hijjah] has no night. From this point of view, the dawn of the day of Sacrifice, among all the days of the year, occupies a special position. [Qurtubi].

Next, it says:

وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ (and by the Ten Nights...89:2) According Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas , Qatadah, Mujahid, Suddi, Dahhak, Kalbi and other leading commentators, the 'ten nights' refers to the [first] ten nights of Dhul Hijjah. It is recorded in Hadith that the Holy Prophet said that the first ten days of Dhil Hijjah are the most meritorious days for Allah's worship. Every fast of the day is equivalent to fasts of the whole year. Worshipping Allah every night during this period is equivalent to worshipping Him on the night of Qadr. [Transmitted by Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah with a weak chain of authorities from Abu Hurairah - Mazhari]. Abu-z-Zubair narrated from Sayyidna Jabir that the Holy Prophet said: **وَأَلْفَجْرٍ (١) وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ** (I swear by the dawn and by the Ten Nights' refers to the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah. Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas said that these are the ten nights that are mentioned in the story of Prophet Musa (A.S): '... then We supplemented them with ten' [7:142]. Thus these are the ten nights in the whole year which are most meritorious. Imam says that the Hadith reported by Sayyidna Jabir indicates that the ten nights of Dhul Hijjah are most meritorious, and that the same ten nights of Dhul Hijjah were designated for Prophet Musa (A.S).

وَالشَّفَعِ وَالْوَاتِرِ (and by the even and the odd,...89:3). The Qur'an has not specified what the words 'the even' and 'the odd' refer to. Therefore, the commentators have assigned different interpretations to them. Nevertheless, it has been mentioned in a Prophetic Hadith narrated by Abu-z-Zubair from Sayyidna Jabir thus:

'Fajr' refers to the dawn, and 'the ten nights' refer to the first ten nights of Dhul Hijjah [which include the Day of Sacrifice], and that al-watr [the odd] refers to the day of 'Arafah [because it falls on the ninth] and ash-shaf refers to the Day of Sacrifice [because it falls on the 10th day of Dhul Hijjah].'

cites this narration and confirms that its chain of authorities is more authentic than the other tradition narrated by Sayyidna 'Imran Ibn Husain which talks about odd [three] and even [two/four] units of prayers. Therefore, Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas Ikramah and Nahhas (R.A) have preferred the view that 'even' refers to the Day of Sacrifice and 'odd' refers to the day of 'Arafah.

Some commentators like Ibn Sirin, Masruq, Abu Salih and Qatadah (R.A) said that 'even' refers to the entire creation, because Allah has created them in pairs, and thus He says:

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ 'And from everything We have created (a pair of) two kinds [51:49]'

- belief/disbelief, happiness/unhappiness, light/darkness, night/day, cold/heat, sky/earth, human/Jinn and male/female as against all of these pairs, Allah is the only One Being 'odd' that does not have a pair:

'He, is Allah, the One, Besought of all, needing none'

وَالَّيْلِ إِذَا يَأْسُرُ (and by the night when it moves away...89:4). The word yasr is derived from sara and means 'to walk in the night' or 'travel by night'. The verse says when the night itself moves away. It signifies 'when the night departs and goes away.' After taking oath by these five items, the next verse says:

هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِي حِجْرٍ (Is there [not] in that an oath (enough) for a man of sense?...89:5). An intelligent person is, in a very special style, invited to think and reflect. The word hijr literally denotes 'to prevent'.

The intellect has been called hijr because it prevents the person from doing which is unbecoming of him - actions or statements. Are these oaths not sufficient for a man possessed of intellect, sound reasoning, understanding and religious discernment? This sentence is in the form of interrogation to awaken man from his slumber. The subject of oaths is implied, though not stated explicitly. The verse purports to say that when man considers into the Majesty of Allah and reflects on the greatness of objects of oaths, it would be confirmed and verified that everyone has to give account of his deeds, and reward and punishment in the Hereafter is sure. In this connection, reference is made to the destruction of three previous nations: [1] the nation of 'Ad; [2] the nation of Thamud; and [3] the nation of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). 'Ad and Thamud are two nations whose genealogy link up with Iram. Thus Iram may refer to both, 'Ad as well as Thamud. Here however with 'Ad only the name Iram is linked for genealogical reasons:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ (٦) إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ (Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with [the people] 'Ad of Iram, the men of tall pillars...(89:6-7). The word 'Irani' in verse [7] is, grammatically speaking, either 'atf bayan (syndetic explicative) or badal (complement). The purpose of the construction is to specify one of the two tribes of 'Ad. This statement specifies that it refers to Ad-ul-'ula (the early generation of 'Ad). A remnant from the former generation is referred to as 'Ad-ul-'Ukhra, because they are linked with their great-grand father Iram more closely than 'Ad-ul-'Ukhra. Here the Qur'an refers to the first tribe as 'Ad Iram. In Surah An-Najm, they are described as عَادًا أَوَّلَى (the earlier 'Ad,) [53:50]'

They are introduced here by the epithet ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ (the men of tall pillars)

The word 'imad' and 'amud' means 'pillar'. The people of 'Ad are mentioned as the men of tall pillars because they were very tall in stature. They were a stronger and more powerful people than any other nations. The Qur'an describes them explicitly, thus لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلَهَا فِي الْأَرْضِ (the like of whom were never created in the lands...89:8) The Qur'an made it clear that this nation was the tallest and the strongest in their physical stature, but the Qur'an did not state the exact measurement of the people because it was unnecessary [for Qur'anic purposes]. Therefore, that detail has been left out. Israelite traditions, however, narrate such incredible reports about their stature, height and power that are difficult to believe. It is reported from Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas (RA) and Muqatil that they were six yards or eighteen feet [5.46] tall. This too seems to be derived from Israelite reports. And Allah knows best!

Some commentators say that 'Iram' is the name of the 'paradise' which 'Ad's son Shaddad had built. The epithet 'possessor of tall pillars' [translated above as 'men of tall pillars'] is used for him. The [so-called paradise] was a lofty structure standing on tall pillars built with gold and silver and studded with jewels, gems and other precious stones, so that people may prefer an instant and ready at hand paradise instead of Paradise of the Hereafter. When this magnificent palace was ready for use, and Shaddad, together with the leaders of his kingdom, wanted to enter, Divine punishment overtook them. They, together with the palaces, were completely destroyed. [Qurtubi]. In this interpretation, the verse refers to a specific punishment which descended upon the paradise built by 'Ad's son Shaddad. In the first interpretation, which the majority of the commentators prefer, it refers to all the punishments that descended upon the nation of 'Ad.

وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ (and with Fir'aun [the Pharaoh], the man of the stakes...89:10). The word autad is the plural of watad that means 'peg or stake or nail'. Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) is referred to as 'the man of the stakes'. There are several reasons for this. Majority of the commentators hold the view that he was so called because of the brute torture and cruel torment he inflicted on the people. When he was angry with people, he would hammer stakes into the ground and tie them to these, so that they could be tortured; or he would hammer stakes

into their hands and feet, as they lay on the ground in the scorching heat of the sun, and leave them to the mercy of snakes and scorpions. Other commentators have recounted a lengthy story about his wife 'Asiyah. She embraced 'Iman (the True Faith) and expressed it to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). This angered him and he inflicted on her the same type of brute torture and destroyed her. [Mazhari].

فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمُ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ (So, your Lord unloosed on them the whip of torment....89:13). The punishment inflicted upon them as a result of their mischief is referred to here as a 'whip of torment'. It signifies that just as lashes are inflicted across different parts of the body, the torment these nations received was similar to it in that they suffered different kinds of punishment.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ (Surely your Lord is ever on the watch....89:14). The word mirsada or marsada [is derived from the root rasada which means 'to lie in wait or on watch']. Thus it means 'an ambush, or a place of observation; it is usually used for a place where persons have to travel through a pass in which someone is lying in wait to strike them'. The verse purports to say that Allah is ever watching and observing their movements and activities. No one should think that he could escape Divine torment, because all are under His authority and Power, and He may administer His punishment whenever He wills. Some commentators state that this verse is the subject of the five oaths mentioned taken in the first five verses of this Surah.

Wealth and Poverty are No Signs of One's Acceptance or Rejection

فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ ۖ وَنَعَّمَهُ ۖ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِي (١٥) وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ ۖ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ (As for man, when his Lord tests him, and thus gives him honour and bounties, he says, "My Lord has honoured me. But when he tests him, and thus straitens his provision for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me...89:15-16). The word 'man' here primarily refers to an 'unbelieving man' who may form any thought about Allah as he feels like, but in its general sense, the word may include a Muslim as well who has the same thought as an unbeliever. When Allah gives abundant wealth and good health to such people, the devil puts into their head two false ideas. First, they succumb to their baser instincts; they become haughty and arrogant; and they think that the wealth and health is the result of their superior intellect, personal capability, efforts and achievement. Secondly, they think that they are enjoying a favourable status with Allah. If they did not enjoy the favourable position with Him, they would not have been granted such an abundance of wealth. By the same token, if Allah curtails their sustenance i.e. they suffer some degree of poverty, they regard it as a curse from Allah, and complain that He is humiliating or dishonouring them, while they deserved honour and respect. The unbelievers and idolaters do hold such thoughts and ideas, as the Qur'an has pointed out on many occasions, but it is regrettable that many Muslims nowadays fall into similar ideas. Allah refutes man's belief by the expression **كَلَّا** 'No/never!' The matter is not as he claims. Wealth does not indicate acceptance of a man by Allah, nor does poverty indicate rejection. [For indeed Allah gives wealth to those whom He loves and those whom He does not love. Likewise, He withholds sustenance /wealth from those whom He loves and those whom He does not love.] Often the matter is quite the contrary. Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) claimed godhead and lordship, yet he never suffered from any headache. Some of Prophets (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) were sliced, by enemies, into two pieces with a saw. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said that the poor refugees will enter Paradise forty years before the wealthy muhajirs (Immigrants). [Imam Muslim has transmitted it from 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar - Mazhari]. In another narration, the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) is reported to have said that whomever Allah loves, He keeps him away from the worldly luxuries as people keep away their sickly patients from water. [Ahmad and Tirmidhi transmitted it on the authority of Qatadah Ibn Nu'man. Mazhari].

Spending on the Orphan is Not Sufficient. Their Respect is Also Necessary

لَا تُحْرِمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ (No! But you do not honour the orphan....89:17). The unbelievers are warned, in these verses, against some of their evil character traits. First, as is mentioned in this verse, they do not honour and treat the orphans kindly. The basic objective of the verse is that they deprive them of their rights, and do not spend on them what is due to them, but the expression used is that they do not honour them, probably to indicate that the requirement of Allah's gratitude, and also of humanitarian sense, is not only that the orphans are given their dues by spending wealth on them, but it is also necessary to honour them and treat them kindly. The guardians should not despise and look down upon their wards, and to discriminate them against their own children. This is apparently a rebuff to the unbelievers who think that wealth is an 'honour' and poverty is a 'dishonour'. After refuting their thoughts and ideas with the expression Kalla 'No/ never!', the verse under comment progresses to say bal 'But' that they are deprived of sustenance, because they squander it in immoral pursuits, depriving the orphans of their rights in it.

وَلَا تَحْضُونَهُ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ (and do not encourage one another to feed the needy....89:18). This is the second evil trait of the unbelievers. The style of this verse, in condemning the evil trait of the unbelievers, indicates that it is an obligation of the affluent to spend on the poor and indigent from their own wealth. Obviously, the poor are unable to spend owing to lack of means, but they should at least encourage others to feed the needy.

وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَمًّا (And you devour the inheritance with a sweeping gulp...89:19). The word lamm means to 'gather, amass, concentrate the thing'. This is the third evil trait of the unbelievers, and the verse signifies that they devour inheritance with voracious appetites however they can get it, whether by lawful means or unlawful means. They gather them all together to make a sweeping gulp. When someone passes away, they take their own shares, together with the shares of others, regardless of whether the shares belong to orphans, widows or people who are absent. [As a matter of principle,] it is not permitted to mix up lawful and forbidden wealth in any transaction. Here, however, 'inheritance' has been particularly mentioned, probably because having a greedy eye on it and pursuing it are a proof of man's greed and voracity for wealth. He stares at it like a beast of prey waiting for the person to die, and looking for the opportunity to distribute the estate. But an honourable man of principle and a noble person would not look at the wealth of the deceased with greedy eyes.

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا (and love wealth, with an excessive love....89:20). The word jamm means 'excessive'. This verse refers to the fourth evil trait of the unbelievers. They have an insatiable love for wealth. The word 'excessive' indicates that love of wealth in itself, in a sober sense, is a natural instinct of man. That has not been condemned here. What is denounced is the excessive or insatiable love of wealth. After describing the evil traits of the unbelievers, the passage reverts to the main theme that was emphasised in the earlier part of the Surah with five oaths, that is, the punishment of the Hereafter. In this connection, it first mentions the process of the end of the world, and subsequently the establishment of the Day of Resurrection, thus:

كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا (No! When the earth will be crushed thoroughly to be turned into bits...89:21). The word dakk literally means 'to pound or crush a thing into bits and pieces'. This refers to the earthquakes that will crush and ground the mountains to dust. The world will thus be dissolved. This will be the first stage of Resurrection. When this stage of Resurrection ends, the second stage of Resurrection will begin. The word dakkan is repeated in order to show that there will be a series of earthquakes before the dissolution of the world.

وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا (and your Lord will come, and the angels as well, lined up in rows....89:22)

They will arrive in the Plain of Gathering. The words 'your Lord will come' is an allegorical expression. No one, besides Allah, knows the nature of His coming. The words 'and the angels [will arrive] as well, lined up in rows' are clear in meaning.

وَجَاءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذُّكْرَىٰ (and Jahannam [Hell], on that day, will

be brought forward, it will be the day when man will realise the truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation?...89:23). No one, besides Allah, knows how exactly 'Hell' will be brought forward in the Plain of Gathering. Apparently, 'Hell' which is at the moment beneath the seventh earth will at that moment will flare up, and the oceans become part of the flame. In this way, Hell during the gathering will be in front of all.

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذُّكْرَىٰ (it will be the day when man will realise the truth, but from where

will he take advantage of such realisation? - 89:23). The word tadhakkur in this context means 'to realise'. The unbelievers will realise the errors of their ways in the Hereafter, but it will be too late, because it is this present world where 'Iman and good deeds benefit the people. The Hereafter is the place only for reckoning and retribution. Man will express his remorse thus:

يَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي (He will say, "O Would that I had sent ahead [some good deeds] for [this] my

life!"....89:24). When he faces the torment of disbelief and idolatry on that day of devastation, man will lament that he should have carried out good deeds and refrained from sin in this world to be saved from punishment in the Hereafter. But it will be of no avail. Allah says: 'So, that day, no one can punish like He will punish, nor can anyone shackle like He will shackle....89:26] Having described the torment of the unbelievers, the conclusion of the Surah gives cheerful news to the believers that they will be admitted into Paradise. Thus it says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ("O contented soul...89:27). Here the soul of the believer is referred to as nafs

mutma'innah 'the contented soul'. The word mutma'innah literally means 'calm'. It refers to the soul that is 'peaceful and tranquil' as a result of remembrance and obedience of Allah. When he abandons it, he feels restless. This is probably the same soul as is made pure, through spiritual exercises and discipline, from the evil traits and bad conduct. Obedience of Allah and His remembrance becomes his predisposition. Shari'ah becomes his nature.

أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ (come back to your Lord....89:28). The words 'come back' indicate that his first place was with

his Lord, and now he is commanded to go back to Him. This confirms the narration that the souls of the believers, together with their Book of Deeds, will be in 'Illiyin. 'Illiyin is a place on the seventh heaven in the shade of the Throne of the Most-Merciful Lord. This is the original resting-place of all human souls, from where they are brought out and put into human body. After death, the souls are returned to that place.

رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً (...well-pleased, well-pleasing....89:28). [The true believer's] soul is well-pleased with decrees

destined by Allah and His legislative commands, and Allah too is well-pleased with His slave. The slave's being pleased with Allah's decrees and injunctions is a sign that Allah is pleased with him. Had Allah not been pleased with him, he would not have had the ability to be pleased with Allah's decree. The true believer's soul is pleased even on his death at the moment of death. Sayyidna 'Ubadah Ibn Samit (RA) narrated from the Holy Prophet , as follows:

"He who loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him; and he who dislikes to meet Allah, Allah dislikes to meet him."

When Sayyidah 'A'ishah heard this, she asked the Holy Prophet : "We will be able to meet Allah only after death, but we do not like death." The Holy Prophet replied: "That is not the case. The truth of the matter is that when death approaches a believer, the angels give him the cheerful news of Paradise and Allah's pleasure. This news makes death dearer to him. Likewise, when death approaches an unbeliever, the torment and punishment is presented to him. This situation makes the death a hateful and reprehensible thing to him." [Transmitted by Bukhari and Muslim - Mazhari]. In short, the love and hatred for death of the present time is not counted. What counts is [the love of] death, or [the love of] meeting Allah at the time of the extraction of soul [from the physical body] and [the love of] Allah's pleasure. This is the significance of the phrase: "Well-pleased, well-pleasing"

فَأَدْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي (So, enter among My [special] servants...89:29). In other words, the contented soul will be addressed [compassionately], and first asked to enter the fold of righteous and sincere slaves, and then to enter Paradise. This indicates that entry into Paradise depends on their being, first and foremost, in the fold of the righteous believers. Then they will enter Paradise all together. This shows that joining the company of the righteous in this world is a sign that he will enter Paradise with them. Thus Prophet Sulaiman (A.S) prayed **وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ**...and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your righteous slaves...[27:19]'

Prophet Yusuf (A.S) prayed **وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ**...and make me join the righteous. [12:101]'

The above supplications indicate that the company of the righteous is such a great blessing that even the Holy Prophets «H cannot do without, as a result they pray for it.

وَأَدْخُلِي جَنَّتِي (and enter My Paradise....89:30). In this verse, Paradise is attributed to Allah, and Allah said 'My Paradise'. This is a great honour, and indicates that Paradise will not only have all sorts of eternal comfort, but above all it is a place of Allah's pleasure.

The preceding verses describe the reward of the believers in such a manner that on behalf of Allah, the angels will address their souls honourably and in a befitting manner, as in the verses. It is not clear when they will be addressed. Some commentators say that they will be addressed on the Day of Reckoning after the reckoning is over. The context of the verses confirms this. The punishment of the unbelievers was described above. That will take place in the Hereafter after the Judgement has been passed. It is obvious that the believers will be addressed at the same time. Other scholars indicate that the believers will be addressed in this world at the time of death. Many authentic traditions bear testimony to the veracity of this view. Ibn Kathir, on the other hand, reconciles the apparently conflicting statements thus: Allah will address the soul of the believers twice with these words. Once at the time of death, and again on the Day of Judgement.

Sayyidna 'Ubadah Ibn Samit's narration cited earlier supports the view that the address will be at the time of death. In a lengthy narration of Sayyidna Abu Hurairah , recorded in Musnad of Ahmad, Nasa'i and Ibn Majah, the Holy Prophet said: "When death approaches a believer, the angels of mercy bring to him a piece of white silk and say: '**Come out [from this body], well-pleased and well-pleasing, to Divine mercy and to the eternal comforts of Paradise**' [to the end of narration.]" Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas says that one day he recited the verse (O contented soul) in the presence of the Holy Prophet , Abu Bakr who was present in the assembly, said: "O Allah's Messenger, what a fine address and honour!" The Holy Prophet said: "Behold, the angel will address you thus after your death."

A Few Strange Incidents

Sa'id Ibn Jubair reports that Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas passed away in Ta'if. After the funeral was prepared, a strange bird, the like of which was never seen before, came and entered the body, but no one saw it coming out of it. When it was lowered into the grave for burial, an invisible voice was heard reciting from the side of the grave

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ Everyone looked around, but could not find anyone. Another incident is recorded by

Hafiz Tabarani in his book Kitab-ul-'Aja'ib. He narrates with his chain of authorities, an incident about Fattan Ibn Razin Abi Hashim that once they were imprisoned in a Roman city. They were presented before their king. The king was an infidel. He coerced them to adopt his religion, and threatened them that if anyone refuses to comply with his command, he would be beheaded. They were a few people. Three of them feared for their lives, adopted his religion and thus became apostates. The fourth person refused to adopt the king's religion. He was beheaded and his head was thrown into a nearby river. When it was thrown, the head went to the bottom of the river. Later, it emerged from the water and came to the surface. Then it looked at the other three persons, and calling

each one of them by name, recited **(٢٦) يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ (٢٧) أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً**

(٢٨) مَرْضِيَّةً (٢٩) فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي (٣٠) وَأَدْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي "O contented soul, [27] come back to your Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing. [28] So, enter among My (special) servants, [29] and enter My Paradise." [30]

After that it dived back into the water.

This was an unusual incident which everyone witnessed and heard. When the Christians of that place witnessed this, almost all of them embraced Islam which shook up the king's throne. The three persons who had become apostates reverted to Islam. Caliph Abu Ja'far Mansur had them all released from their [enemy's] prison.

Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Fajr Ends here

90. The City (Al-Balad)

This Surah is Makki and has 20 verses

لَا أَقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ (١) وَأَنْتَ حِلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ (٢) وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدَ (٣) لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي
كَبَدٍ (٤) أَيْحَسِبُ أَنْ لَنْ يَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ (٥) يَقُولُ أَهْلَكْتُ مَالًا لُبَدًا (٦) أَيْحَسِبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ
أَحَدٌ (٧) أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ (٨) وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ (٩) وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ (١٠) فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ
الْعَقَبَةَ (١١) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ (١٢) فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ (١٣) أَوْ إِطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ (١٤)
يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ (١٥) أَوْ مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ (١٦) ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ
وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ (١٧) أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ (١٨) وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بآيَاتِنَا هُمْ أَصْحَابُ
الْمَشْأَمَةِ (١٩) عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُؤَصَّدَةٌ (٢٠)

Translation

I swear by this city, [1]

and (O Holy Prophet,) you are going to be allowed to fight in this city [2]

and by the father and that which he begot, [3]

Indeed We have created man (to live) in hard struggle. [4]

Does he think that no one has power over him? [5]

He says, "I have spent a lot of wealth." [6]

Does he think that no one has seen him? [7]

Did We not make for him two eyes, [8]

and a tongue and two lips, [9]

and showed him the two ways? [10]

Yet he did not make his way through the steep course, [11]

And what may let you know what the steep course is? [12]

(It is) freeing of the neck of a slave, [13]

or giving food in a day of hunger [14]

to an orphan near of kin, [15]

or to a needy person lying in dust [16]

then he did not join those who believe and advise each other to be patient and advise each other to be merciful. [17]

Those are the People of the Right Hand. (i.e.their books of deeds will be given in their right hands) [18]

As for those who reject Our verses, they are the People of the Left Hand. (i.e. their books of deeds will be given in their left hand.) [19]

Upon them will be the Fire, enveloping them with closed exits. [20]

Commentary

لَا أَقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ (I swear by this city...90:1). The particle la ('no') in the beginning of this sentence has no meaning here. Such particles in Arabic language are commonplace. However, the more appropriate view is that when a Surah begins with a la (no) followed by an oath, it was revealed in refutation to a false assumption of the opponents. In other words, Allah is saying, 'No, what you [the unbelievers] are saying or thinking is not correct, but the truth is what We are swearing about...'. The word al-balad 'the City' refers to the Holy City of Makkah, as in Surah At-Tin [95:3] where Allah swears an oath **وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ** 'by this peaceful City [of Makkah] The adjective attached to the 'City' is 'peaceful'. This shows the superiority and honour of Makkah over other cities. Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn 'Adiyy (RA) reports that when the Holy Prophet of Allah (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) was migrating from Makkah to Madinah, he addressed the city of Makkah and said: "By Allah, you are dearer to Allah than the entire earth. If I was not forced out of this place, I would never have abandoned you." [Transmitted by Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah: Mazhari].

وَأَنْتَ حِلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ (and [O Holy Prophet,] you are going to be allowed to fight in this city....90:2). The word hillun bears two possibilities:

- 1) It could be derived from hulul which signifies to reside in or to descend on some place. In this sense, hillun signifies 'a dweller or resident' and the verse purports to say that the city of Makkah itself is sacred, and since Holy Prophet Muhammad is the inhabitant of this city, it adds to the sanctity, honour and glory of the place. Thus, on account of the Holy Prophet's (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) residing in that city its honour and sanctity has been enhanced and augmented. The second possibility is that it is derived from hillatun which means 'the thing the doing of which is lawful'. From this point of view, hillun could signify one of two things: One that the pagans of Makkah consider it lawful to do the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) any harm, even to kill him, in this City of Makkah which is so sacred that the doing of harm to a living creature in its precincts, not to say of killing it or hunting it, is strictly forbidden even according to their own belief system .
- 2) Secondly, this may be a prophecy that the city of Makkah is going to be made lawful for the Holy Prophet (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) in the sense that fighting in it will be allowed for him for a specified time, and He will alight in this City of Makkah, as it happened on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah. On this occasion, all the injunctions and ordinances of the haram were suspended for one day, and it was made lawful to kill the disbelievers. Mazhari cites three possible meanings, and says that all three of them are equally possible.

وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدٍ (and by the father and that which he begot,...90:3) The word walid refers to Holy Prophet 'Adam (A.S), the father of mankind, and the phrase 'that which he begot' refers to his children from the inception of the world to the end of the world. Thus this phrase swears an oath by Holy Prophet 'Adam (A.S) and all his children. The subject of the oath follows next, thus:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ (Indeed We have created man [to live] in hard struggle...90:4) The word kabad means 'labour, 'toil' or 'difficulty'. The verse purports to say that man's life is a series of hard and toilsome works. Ibn 'Abbas says: 'Man was conceived and held in his mother's womb. The mother bore the pangs of birth. The hardship of sucking the mother's milk and the difficulty of weaning. This is followed by seeking livelihood and other necessities of life with hardship. Then he endures hardships and long-suffering of old age, death, grave, resurrection, accountability of deeds before Allah, reward and punishment.' These difficulties and hardships are

not confined to man. Other animals too share them. Man has particularly been mentioned in this connection because of his intelligence. The more the power of a creature's intelligence, the higher the degree of his legal obligation. Lastly, the greatest difficulty and hardship would be borne at resurrection and life-after-death, when we will be required to give an account of the deeds we might have done throughout our life. Other species of animals will not be required to do this.

Some scholars say that no creation suffers as much difficulties or hardships as human beings, despite the fact that his body is smaller and weaker than most other animals. Man's brainpower, however, is most powerful. Therefore, he has been specifically mentioned. Swearing an oath by Makkah, 'Adam (A.S) and his children, Allah has made it plain that man has been created in difficulties and to endure hardships. This is a proof that man did not come into existence on his own but his Creator is an All-Powerful Being who has, in His wisdom, created every species of creation with specific predisposition and capacity of actions. If man had any part in his own creation, he would never have allowed such difficulties and hardships for himself. [Qurtubi]

Absolute Comfort, Without Hardship, Is Not Possible in the World: Man Must be Prepared to Endure Hardships

The oath and its subject makes plain to man that his desire to live peacefully and comfortably in this world, without enduring any hardship, is a silly idea and false notion, which is not possible to happen. Therefore, it is necessary for difficulty, hardship, distress and affliction to befall every person. Since they are bound to befall, a wise person should be in readiness to work hard for something that may help him for an eternal life. The only factor that will help him for this is faith and obedience to the Truth.

Then, after describing a few of the ignorant disbeliever's qualities, the following verse says about an unbeliever **أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ** (Does he think that no one has seen him?...90:7) that is, his evil deeds. He should realise that his Creator watches every action of his.

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ (٨) وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ (٩) وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ (Did We not make for him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips, and showed him the two ways?...90:8-10)

The word najdain is the dual form of najd which means an elevated or conspicuous road. The word najdain signifies the two high and conspicuous ways of good and evil, or of success and destruction. The preceding verse pointed out the ignorance and heedlessness of man. He thinks that Allah has no power over him, and that there is no one watching over his actions. The current verse mentions a few of the organs and abilities that Allah has endowed him with. If he reflects carefully on these endowments, he will appreciate His infinite wisdom and power within himself. He has a pair of eyes. The optic nerves and tissues are rather delicate. They send nervous impulses to the brain when stimulated by light rays from external objects. The structure of the eye itself is most delicate. Each eye consists of a hollow, spherical capsule [eyeball], made up of several layers and structures. It is set into a socket in the skull, and is protected by eyelids and eyelashes, and eyebrows. It works like an automatic machine. When a harmful object is seen coming from the front, the eyelids close on their own. The eyelashes block the dust from getting into the eyes. The eyebrows help keep things away from falling into the eyes directly from top. The facial bones, especially the orbit [eye socket and the cheek bones], protect the eye, if one were to fall on one's face or something were to fall on the face.

The second gift that man is endowed with is the 'tongue'. This organ -the articulator - is the most amazing and important creation. It is the long piece of flesh fixed to the bottom of the mouth that can represent thoughts of the heart, the automatic and mysterious machine. The heart works in an amazing way. A thought occurs in the heart, the brain interprets it, and prepares appropriate topic and words. The words are uttered by the tongue. Such a complex task is performed so swiftly that the listener does not even realise how many systems have

worked before the distinguishable sounds, letters and words were uttered. Nature has equipped man with two lips that play an important role in articulating the different sounds, letters and words. Nature has made the tongue such a swift-working articulator that within half a minute it may utter a word which may take him out from Hell and admit him into Paradise, as the word of faith, or may endear him to his enemy in the world, as by seeking forgiveness of his shortcomings. The same tongue within the same short span of time may take him to Hell, as by uttering the word of disbelief, or may make him his biggest enemy who was previously his closest friend, as by using obscene language against him. The tongue has many benefits as well as many ways of destruction. It is a double-edged sword that can operate against an enemy, and it can also cut one's own throat. Therefore, Allah has kept it covered within the case of two lips. Probably, this is the reason why the pair of lips is mentioned. The Creator Who has endowed man with tongue has equipped him with a pair of lips in order to protect it. Therefore, he should be careful in its use. He should not unsheathe it unnecessarily. Allah has equipped him with a pair of eyes, a pair of lips and a tongue, and has equipped him with the ability to distinguish good from evil and right from wrong, thus **فَأَلَّهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا** 'then inspired it with its [instinct of] evil and piety [91:8]'. Thus in the first instance man receives guidance from his own conscience. This is supported by the guidance of the Holy Prophets (A.S) and celestial books that clarify it.

In sum, an ignoramus and heedless person, who denies the power of the Omnipotent, should look into his own being, he would be able to observe His attribute of perfect power and consummate wisdom. He should observe with his two eyes and confess with his tongue. He has been shown the two ways of good and evil; and of right and wrong so that he may choose between the two. Obviously, he should choose the good way. In his make-up, there exists the ability to take either way. All these bounties have not motivated man to attempt the steep course. Then the heedless man is warned that he should reflect on the clear proofs and arguments pertaining to Allah's Omnipotence, pertaining to the Day of Judgement, life after death and Reckoning, and believe in these articles of faith. This faith requires that man should be a source of benefit and comfort to others; he should abstain from hurting them; he should believe in Allah; he should amend his own conduct and think of reforming others also, so that, on the Day of Judgement, he may be among the people of the right hand, the inmates of Paradise, enjoying a happy recompense for what he has done in this life. The unfortunate ones who persistently denied the Truth shall be encircled by the Hell-fire. This theme has been taken up from this point onward to the end of the Surah. Failing to do a few of the good deeds have been [selectively] described in a unique style.

فَلَا أَقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ (١١) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ (Yet he did not make his way through the steep course. And what may let you know what the steep course is?...90:11-12)'

The word 'aqabah means 'hill, high place or a steep road'. It also refers to a 'low area of land between two hills or mountains, that is, a valley'. 'Aqabah helps a man in saving himself when pursued by an enemy by ascending the summit of the mountain, or in escaping by descending into the valley. Here the word 'aqabah refers to obedience and devotion. Just as it saves man from an enemy, righteous deeds save man from the punishment of the Hereafter. The righteous deeds are as follows:

فَكَرَّبَةٌ ([It is] freeing of the neck of a slave...90:13). This is a great devotional act [and carries a great reward because] it moulds a man's life.

أَوْ إِطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْجَبَةٍ (or giving food in a day of hunger...90:14). Although it is an act of great reward to feed any hungry person, it carries even a greater reward to feed certain people, as follows **يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ** **(١٥) أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ** (to an orphan near of kin, or to a needy person lying in dust....90:15-16)

If an orphaned family member is given food to eat, its reward is two fold, for satisfying the hunger of a hungry person and for maintaining family ties and fulfilling his rights.

فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ (in a day of hunger...90:14). It means that feeding him in a day when he is hungry will attract more reward. If an orphan is not a close relative or family member, but he is so poor as to be wallowing in dust, spending on him will yield a greater reward. The poorer the person is, the greater will be the reward for the spender.

Obligations of a Believer

ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ (then he did not join those who believe and advise each other to be patient and advise each other to be merciful...90:17). The verse points out that the doing only of good actions mentioned in the foregoing verse is not enough for raising the all round stature of the Muslim community. Good ideals and right principles, combined with continuous and sustained adherence to the path of moral rectitude and teaching of virtues to others, are equally essential for the attainment of the high aim. Thus the verse after 'faith' draws the attention of a believer to his socio-moral obligation to the effect that he ought to teach his other Muslim brothers to be patient and to be merciful. The word sabr signifies 'to withhold oneself from evil deeds and to act upon good deeds'. The word marhamah signifies 'to show mercy to one another or to empathise with others and abstain from hurting them.' This embraces almost all the injunctions of the entire religion.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Fajr Ends here](#)

91. The Sun (Ash-Shams)

This Surah is Makki and has 15 verses

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا (١) وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا (٢) وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّهَا (٣) وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا (٤)
وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا (٥) وَالتَّارِضِ وَمَا طَحَّهَا (٦) وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا (٧) فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا
وَتَقْوَاهَا (٨) قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا (٩) وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا (١٠) كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا (١١)
إِذِ انبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا (١٢) فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا (١٣) فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَدَمْدَمَ
عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا (١٤) وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا (١٥)

Translation

I swear by the sun and his broad light, [1]

and by the moon when she follows him, [2]

and by the day when it shows its brightness, [3]

and by the night when it envelops him, [4]

and by the sky, and the One who built it, [5]

and by the earth, and the One who spread it, [6]

and by the soul, and the One who made it well, [7]

then inspired it with its (instincts of) evil and piety, [8]

success is really attained by him who purifies it, [9]

and failure is really suffered by him who pollutes it. [10]

(The People of) Thamud denied the truth because of their transgression, [11]

when rose up the one who was most wretched of them. [12]

So, the Messenger of Allah said to them, "Be careful of Allah's she-camel and her right to drink." [13]

But they rejected him and killed her, so their Lord sent eradicating torment upon them, and made it equal for all. [14]

And He has no fear of its consequence. [15]

Commentary

Allah swears by the objects and phenomena mentioned in verses [1-7], which gives these creations an added significance and draws man's attention to them. Man ought to reflect on these phenomena and try to appreciate their value and the purpose of their creation. The first oath is taken by:

The First Oath is Taken By:

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا (I swear by the sun and his broad light,...91:1). The phrase 'and his broad light' is, though conjoined to 'by the sun' by means of the conjunctive particle 'and', the context indicates that 'broad light' is in adjectival position qualifying shams 'the sun', that is to say, 'I swear by the sun when it is in the time of forenoon. The word duha is that part of the day when the sun rises [early in the morning] and goes up slightly higher [on the

sky], and its light spreads on the earth. Man observes it to be near to himself and observes it fully on account of lack of heat.

The Second Oath is Taken By:

وَالْقَمَرَ إِذَا تَلَبَّهَا (and by the moon when she follows him,...91:2). This signifies one of two things: [1] The moon following the sun is seen clearly during the middle of the lunar months when the full moon rises to dominate the sky with its radiance after sunset. [2] The phrase 'when she follows him' could signify just as the sun is seen in full in broad light, so does the moon, following the sun, becomes full.

The Third Oath is Taken By:

وَالنَّهَارَ إِذَا جَلَّلَهَا (and by the day when it shows its brightness...91:3). The attached pronoun ha 'its' may possibly refer to the earth or the world, although neither of the nouns precedes it. Such usage in Arabic is commonplace, especially if the phenomenon, such as the earth or the world, with which man is generally familiar. In such a case Arabs commonly refer to the phenomenon simply by using a pronoun without making prior reference to it. The addressee understands the meaning by implication. The Qur'an has many examples of, and bears ample testimony to, this grammatical phenomenon. The verse thus signifies 'by the day and by the world or the earth which the day has brightened up'. In other words, 'by the day when it is fully bright'. Another possibility, which is more pertinent to the context, is that the pronoun 'its' refers to the 'sun' in which case it signifies 'by the day when it brightens up the sun'. This relation of attribution, in this case, would be a metaphorical relationship. Although the sun is usually understood to be the cause of the day to come out, here the day is said to brighten up the sun. Thus the verse would signify 'when the sun is seen brightened up because the day is out'.

The Fourth Oath is Taken Thus:

وَاللَّيْلَ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا (and by the night when it envelops him,...91:4). In other words, when it [the night] sets in, the brightness of the sun is concealed [and only darkness prevails].

The Fifth Oath is:

وَالسَّمَاءَ وَمَا بَنَاهَا (and by the sky, and the One who built it...91:5). Most clearly the context suggests that the ma may be taken as infinitival particle [masdariyyah], signifying 'by the sky and its make' as elsewhere in the Qur'an **عَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي** ...how my Lord has forgiven me [36:27]

(It should be kept in mind that the translation of the text is not based on this construction. It is based on taking 'ma' as mousulah in the sense of 'the one' as adopted by Maulana Thanawi, and explained by the author in the following verse. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani))

The Sixth Oath is:

وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا طَحَّهَا (and by the earth, and the One who spread it...91:6). The ma in this phrase too stands for masdariyyah or infinitival particle, signifying 'by the earth and its expanse'. The word tahwun means 'to spread'. Thus in the two verses above attention has been focused on the great Designer and Architect of the sky and earth [that is, the universe], and on the perfection and complete freedom from flaw or defect in the design and creation of the universe. Sayyidna Qatadah (RA) and others reported this interpretation. Kashshaf, Baidawi and Qurtubi preferred this interpretation. Some of the commentators have taken ma in the sense of man 'the One Who' and refer it to 'Allah', signifying 'by the sky and its Maker and by the earth and One who spreads it. Thus far, all the oaths were taken by the created objects and phenomena. In between is taken oath by Allah. And Allah knows best!

The seventh oath is taken thus:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا (and by the soul, and the One who made it well,...91:7) If, in this phrase, the particle ma is taken to function as infinitival particle, it signifies 'by the human soul and its perfection'. If ma is taken in the sense of man (), it signifies 'by the soul and the One who proportioned it'. The word taswiyah means, to proportion, balance, perfect. The meaning of this word has been explained in the previous Surah.

فَأَلَّهَمَّهَا فَجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا (then inspired it with its [instincts of] evil and piety...91:8) The word ilham denotes 'to cast into the heart'. The word fujur denotes 'open transgression'. The meaning of taqwa is well-known. This sentence is linked with the seventh oath **وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا** 'and by the soul, and the One who made it well, [91:7]', signifying that Allah has equipped man with human soul which has the capacity to distinguish between good and bad, and right and wrong. In other words, in his make-up Allah has built in him a special ability to choose freely the righteous path or the sinful path. Whichever way he takes out of his own free will, he will be rewarded or punished. This interpretation is deducible from a traceable Hadith which is transmitted by Muslim on the authority of Sayyidna 'Imran Ibn Husain . The Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting in the company of his followers. They asked him a question regarding Divine Destination. In response, the Holy Prophet recited this verse. This verse will allay the doubt about Divine Destination only if the words 'then inspired it with its (instincts of) evil and piety, [91:8]' are taken in the sense that human soul has been inspired with conscience to distinguish between right and wrong, and has also been granted the ability to do good as well as the ability to commit sin. Man is not a creature of pure force or coercion. He has free will to choose his path of good or evil. He, in fact, has the option to do good or refrain from sin. The choice is his, for which he is rewarded or punished.

Sayyidna Abu Hurairah and Ibn 'Abbas report that whenever the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the verses [91:7-8] under comment would stop and recite the following supplication aloud:

'O Allah! Give my soul its good. You are its Guardian and Master, and the best to purify it.'

(٨) قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا (٩) وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا (success is really attained by him who purifies it, and failure is really suffered by him who pollutes it...91:10). This is the subject of the seven oaths. The primitive meaning of tazkiyah is 'inner cleanliness', signifying 'he who obeyed Allah and purified his inner and outer selves.' Verse [10] signifies 'he who caused his soul to sink in the swamp of sins will be deprived'. The word dassa is derived from the basic word dass' which denotes 'to bury in the ground' as for instance it occurs elsewhere in the Qur'an, thus **أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ** ...or put it away into the dust? [16:59]

Some of the commentators have analysed that the pronouns of zakka 'He purified' and dassa 'He caused to pollute' as referring to 'Allah', signifying that 'he is successful indeed whose soul Allah has purified and he has failed whose soul Allah pollutes'. This verse has divided the entire mankind into two groups: [1] successful; and [2] unsuccessful. An example of the second group has been cited to show how it rejected the message of Allah and consequently how Allah destroyed them. Such a group will receive severe punishment in the Hereafter. Sometimes, however, an instalment of punishment is meted out to them in this world as in the case of Thamud. Their story is recounted fully in Surah A'raf [S.7:73-79; S.11:61-68; S.26:141-159; S.27:45-53; S..41:17-18; S.54:23-32; and S.69:4-5]. Here a brief reference is made to that story and their punishment.

فَدَمَدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُم بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا (...so their Lord sent eradicating torment upon them, and made it equal for all. And He has no fear of its consequence....91:14-15). The word damdama refers to such tormenting scourge as is unleashed on a person or a nation again and again, until it destroys or crushes them completely. Fasawwaha signifies that the scourge overtook the entire nation, men, women, children, and young and old.

In conclusion, the verse says **وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا** 'Allah has no fear of its consequence'. It means that Divine torment that destroys a nation completely cannot be compared to the torment inflicted by the greatest king of this world, because a tyrant king who destroys his people on a large scale, fears for his life, lest the survivors or the supporters of the people destroyed should revenge on him and rebel against him. Whoever destroys others is himself in danger of avenge. Those who attack others must necessarily bear the brunt of counter-attack except Allah. When a people incur Divine punishment and are thus destroyed, Allah has no fear from any one.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Ash-Shams Ends here](#)

92. The Night (Al-Lail)

This Surah is Makki and has 21 verses

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَىٰ (١) وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّىٰ (٢) وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ (٣) إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّىٰ (٤) فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ (٥) وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ (٦) فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ (٧) وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىٰ (٨) وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ (٩) فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ (١٠) وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّىٰ (١١) إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَىٰ (١٢) وَإِنَّ لَنَا لَلْآخِرَةَ وَالْأُولَىٰ (١٣) فَأَنْذَرْتُمْ نَارًا تَلْظَىٰ (١٤) لَّا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى (١٥) الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ (١٦) وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى (١٧) الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّىٰ (١٨) وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَىٰ (١٩) إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَىٰ (٢٠) وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَىٰ (٢١)

Translation

swear by the night when it covers (the sun), [1]

and by the day when it is unveiled, [2]

and by the One who created the male and the female, [3]

your efforts are diverse: [4]

As for the one who gives (in charity) and fears Allah, [5]

and believes in the best (religion), [6]

We will facilitate for him the way to extreme ease (i.e. the comforts of Paradise). [7]

But the one who is miser and deems himself self-sufficient, [8]

and rejects the best (religion), [9]

for him We will facilitate the way to extreme distress. [10]

And his wealth will not help him when he will fall down (into Hell). [11]

Of course, it is undertaken by Us to guide, [12]

and in Our control is the Hereafter and the worldly life. [13]

So I have warned you of a blazing fire. [14]

None will enter it but the wretched one [15]

who rejected (the truth) and turned away (from it). [16]

And saved from it will be the most God-fearing one, [17]

who gives his wealth (in charity) to become purified, [18]

while no one has conferred any favour on him for which he would give a return, [19]

but (he gave his wealth in charity) only to seek the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High. [20]

And surely he will soon be happy. [21]

Commentary

إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّىٰ (your efforts are diverse....92:4). This statement is like the statement in Surah Inshiqaq, verse [6] إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا' O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord. [84:6]'

which has already been explained in that Surah. The sense is that man, by his nature, is used to making efforts for one objective or another. But the nature and the results of these efforts are different. Some people work hard for an objective that brings eternal happiness to them, and others work hard for an objective that makes them suffer eternal perdition. It is reported in a Tradition that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Each morning when a man gets up, he goes to conduct his business and keeps himself busy. His business is either successful and emancipates himself from Hell, or unsuccessful and his efforts become the cause of his destruction." Therefore, a wise person should first apply his mind to think whether his efforts will pay dividends, and he should never undertake those efforts that bring about temporary comfort and pleasure, but eternal perdition and grief.

The Two Diverse Types of Human Efforts Divide Humankind into Two Groups

The Qur'an further shows that, broadly speaking, the humankind may be divided into two opposing groups in terms of their opposing efforts. Each of the two groups are characterised by three qualities. The first group is a successful one, and its three characteristics are: [1] they give in charity in the cause of Allah; [2] fear Allah and avoid violating the injunctions of Allah in every aspect of life; and [3] believe in the 'best word'. The 'best words' refer to the credo of 'there is no god but Allah' [as Ibn 'Abbas, Dahhak (R.A) have explained]. Testifying to the kalimah signifies 'to profess the True Faith'. Faith or belief is the essence of all actions, and comes first in order of rank, but on this occasion, it is mentioned last, probably because the main theme in this context is that of physical exertion, efforts and actions. Tman or faith, on the other hand, pertains to the heart. It signifies the acceptance and confirmation of Allah and His Messenger with one's heart. Confession of this must be made by means of reciting kalimah shahadah 'testimony of faith'. Obviously, none of these things involve physical exertion or effort, nor are they generally counted as actions.

The second group is [the unsuccessful one] and its three characteristics are: [1] they are misers to such an extent that they even fail to pay the zakah and other obligatory alms; [2] they deem themselves self-sufficient rather than obeying Allah; and [3] they reject the 'best word' [that is, the kalimah of 'Iman]. Referring to the first group, the verse says:

فَسَنِّيَسِّرُهُ وَاللَّيْسُرَىٰ (We will facilitate for him the way to extreme ease [i.e. the comforts of Paradise]....92:7).

The word yusra literally denotes 'ease and comfort' or a thing in which there is no difficulty, but here it refers to "Paradise". Likewise, referring to the second group it says:

فَسَنِّيَسِّرُهُ وَاللَّعُسْرَىٰ (for him We will facilitate the way to extreme distress...92:10). The opposite of yusra is

'usra which literally denotes 'extreme distress, referring to "Hell". The two statements signify that those who exert their efforts in the first three acts, that is, spending in the cause of Allah, fearing Allah and testifying to the kalimah, Allah will pave their way to extreme ease, that is, to deeds that will lead them to the comforts of Paradise. On the other hand, those who exert their efforts in the latter three acts, Allah will pave their way to extreme distress, that is, make easy for them to perform deeds that will lead them to Hell. By right, here it should have been said that the deeds of Paradise or Hell are made easy for them, because 'easy' or 'difficult' qualify deeds, and not persons or people. But the Qur'an says that the people or the people themselves will be made easy to do the deeds. This probably implies that the first group will be predisposed to behave in a particular way that behaving otherwise will make them feel uneasy. The second group will be predisposed to behave in a way

that will make them feel comfortable to do deeds of Hell, and they will feel uneasy doing deeds of Paradise. Each of these two groups will have their own nature and predisposition, and will find it easier to behave in that particular way. A Hadith confirms that the Messenger of Allah said:

"Perform deeds, for everyone will have the deeds of what he was created for [Paradise or Hell] made easy for him. Those people who are the people of happiness, they will have the deeds of the people of happiness made easy for them. And those who are the people of misery, they will have the deeds of the people of misery made easy for them."

But both these things are the results of the use of the God-given choice and free will. Therefore, man is rewarded or punished.

Thereafter the unfortunate inmates of Hell are warned, thus:

وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّى (And his wealth will not help him when he will fall down...92:11). The word taradda literally denotes 'to fall into a pit and perish'. The expression 'When he fall' signifies that when Divine decree regarding his destruction comes into operation, nothing - not even his wealth - will save him, whether in grave after his death, or on the Day of Judgement, when he will be falling into the abyss of Hell.

(١٤) لَّا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى (١٥) الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى (None will enter it but the wretched one who rejected [the truth] and turned away...92:16). This describes the fire of Hell. It is quite clear that only a kafir will reject Allah and His Messenger. Apparently, it seems that a sinful believer who does not reject the truth will not enter Hell, whereas the Qur'an and Hadith are replete with clear texts that a sinful believer will enter Hell, unless he had repented, or someone interceded for him, or was forgiven out of pure Grace. He will abide in Hell until he has received punishment for the sins he has committed. After paying for his sins, he will be taken out of Hell, and through the blessings of his faith, he will be admitted into Paradise.

Apparently, the wordings of the verse are contrary to this interpretation. Therefore, it is necessary that the interpretation of the verse under comment be brought in line with other Qur'anic verses and authentic Ahadith. Its plain and simple interpretation would be that this verse refers to entering the Hell for good, which is peculiar to the unbelievers. They will be tortured eternally in the Hell-fire. The sinful believers, on the other hand, will receive punishment for their sins and will eventually - at some time or the other - be taken out of Hell. Other scholars of Tafsir have given some other interpretations too, which can also be appropriate. Tafsir Mazhari has come up with another explanation according to which 'the wretched one' and 'the most God-fearing one' should not be taken in its general sense. Both words refer particularly to people who lived during the blessed time of the Holy Prophet . From amongst them, no Muslim, who lived at that time, will enter Hell through the blessings of the Holy Prophet's company, even though he might have committed some sins incidentally.

All of The Blessed Companions Will be Saved from the Ordeal of Hell

The reason for this is that the Companions rarely ever committed sins. Furthermore, even if they did commit sins, they must have repented by dint of the fear of the Hereafter - as their living conditions indicate . If any of them committed a sin, his good deeds are so many that they can wipe out the sin as the Qur'an says **إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ** ...Surely good deeds erase bad deeds...[11:114]'

Adopting the company of the Holy Prophet is an act that can outweigh all other good deeds. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said regarding the righteous members of the community:

'The one who sits with them is never deprived, and the one who feels happy in their company is never unsuccessful.' [Sahihain]

Obviously, a person who sits in the company of the Holy Prophet and is his intimate associate cannot be wretched. Therefore, there are express texts available in the authentic Traditions that all the noble Companions are safe from the punishment of Hell. The Qur'an itself bears testimony that **وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ**...and to each Allah has promised good [4:95]

Husna in this statement refers to 'Paradise'. In another verse, the Qur'an says **إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ عَتَاهَا مُبْعَدُونَ** Surely, those for whom the good (news) from Us has come earlier shall be kept far away from it. [21:101]

Husna in this statement also refers to 'Paradise'. The pronoun 'it' in the phrase 'from it' refers to 'Hell', signifying that they will be far away from Hell. A Tradition says that 'Hell-Fire will not touch him who has seen me'. [Tirmidhi transmitted it from Jabir].

وَسَيَجْزِيهَا الْآتِقَىٰ (١٧) الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ ۖ يَتَزَكَّىٰ (And saved from it will be the most God-fearing one who gives his wealth [in charity] to become purified,...92:17-18). This verse describes the reward of the most God-fearing person, as opposed to the punishment of the most wretched in the preceding verse. The word atqa is the superlative form and signifies a man of taqwa, that is, the most God-fearing person, who spends his wealth in obedience of his Lord in order to purify himself from sins, will be kept far away from the fire of Hell.

The wordings of the verse give good news, in general, to anyone who spends in Allah's cause in a state of faith, but the occasion of revelation indicates that atqa refers to Sayyidna Abu Bakr As-Siddiq in particular. Ibn Abi Hatim reports from Sayyidna 'Urwah that seven Muslims had been enslaved by the Makkan disbelievers. When they became Muslims, they were persecuted in a variety of ways. Sayyidna Abu Bakr spent a great amount of his money, and purchased them and set them free. Verses [17-21] were revealed on this occasion. [Mazhari]

وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ ۖ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْرَىٰ (while no one has conferred any favour on him for which he would give a return,...92:19) Sayyidna Abu Bakr did this great favour by spending abundant wealth. The emancipated slaves had not done him any favour in the past, so that one could say that he was returning their favour. He took this step for one purpose only as the verse says:

إِنَّا أَسْتَعَاءَ وَجْهَ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَىٰ (but [he gave his wealth in charity] only to seek the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High...92:20). Mustadrak of Hakim records that it was a usual practice of Sayyidna Abu Bakr that he used to purchase Muslim slaves from the disbelievers and set them free whenever he found them in their bondage. Generally, these people were weak and helpless. Abu Qahafah, the father of Abu Bakr, said to him: "Since you are emancipating slaves, why do you not set free strong and brave people, so that they may assist you in fighting the enemies and protect you." He replied: "My purpose of emancipating them is not to expect any benefit in return. My only purpose is to seek the pleasure of Allah." [Mazhari]

وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَىٰ (And surely he will soon be happy...92:21). Whoever spends in Allah's way with pure and good intentions of pleasing Allah, and not for any personal worldly gains, will acquire the pleasure of Allah in the Hereafter by achieving the wonderful and eternal blessings of Paradise. It is confirmed that these verses were revealed about Sayyidna Abu Bakr. Therefore, this last verse of the Surah is a great and splendid news and honour for him given in this very world by Allah.

Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Lail Ends here

93. The Forenoon (Ad-Duha)

This Surah is Makki and has 11 verses

وَالضُّحَىٰ (١) وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ (٢) مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ (٣) وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ (٤) وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ (٥) أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ (٦) وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ (٧) وَوَجَدَكَ عَابِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ (٨) فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ (٩) وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ (١٠) وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ (١١)

Translation

I swear by the forenoon, [1]

and by the night when it becomes peaceful, [2]

your Lord (O Holy Prophet,) has neither forsaken you, nor has become displeased. [3]

And the Hereafter is much better for you than the present life. [4]

And of course, your Lord will give you so much that you will be pleased. [5]

Did He not find you an orphan, and give you shelter? [6]

And He found you unaware of the way (the Shari'ah), then He guided you. [7]

and He found you in need, then made you need-free. [8]

Therefore, as for orphan, do not oppress him, [9]

and as for the beggar, do not scold him. [10]

And about the bounty of your Lord, do talk. [11]

Commentary

Occasion of Revelation

Bukhari, Muslim and Tirmidhi have narrated from Sayyidna Jundub that once a finger of the Holy Prophet was wounded and started bleeding, he said:

'You are merely a finger that is bleeding; [what does it matter] if you are hurt: it all happened in Allah's cause.'

Sayyidna Jundub narrated this incident and said that revelation of the Qur'an to the Holy Prophet came to a halt, and that Jibra'il (A.S) stopped coming to him for a while. The unbelievers taunted, saying: "Muhammad's Lord has forsaken him, and is displeased with him." Surah Ad-Duha was revealed on this occasion. According to the narration in Bukhari by Sayyidna Jundub, the Holy Prophet was unable to wake up for a few nights for tahajjud prayer owing to illness. In this narration, there is no mention of 'delay in revelation'. In Tirmidhi's narration, there is mention about the 'delay in revelation' but no mention about his inability to wake up for tahajjud prayer. These reports are not conflicting. The narrator might have narrated one incident at one time, and reported another incident at another time. The lady who taunted the Holy Prophet was Umm Jamil, the wife of Abu Lahab, as other reports indicate. 'Delay in revelation' took place twice. Once in the very early stage of the call. This is known as fatrah al-wahy 'temporary break in the revelation'. This was the longest period. Another narration states that when the pagans or the Jews asked the Holy Prophet about the soul, he promised them that he would give them

a reply the next day. However, he forgot to add insha 'Allah (if Allah wills). As a result, revelation ceased for a few days. The pagans began to taunt the Holy Messenger , saying that Allah had abandoned him, and is displeased with him. It was on this occasion that the Surah was revealed.

وَلِآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ (And the Hereafter is much better for you than the present life...93:4). The word 'akhirah may be taken in its popular sense of the 'Hereafter' and its opposite 'ula may be taken in the sense of the present 'world'. With these words, Allah tells the Holy Prophet not to be disturbed by the taunts of the pagans, because they will see in this world that their assumptions and accusations were absolutely false. In the Hereafter, he will be blessed with Divine favours to his heart's content - much more than what he will receive in this fleeting world. The word 'akhirah may also be taken in its primitive sense i.e. 'the later state or condition' as opposed to 'ula 'the former state or condition'. The verse, in this case, would mean that every succeeding moment of the Holy Prophet's life is better than the preceding one. It includes progress in knowledge and wisdom, as well as in degrees of his nearness to Allah, and it also includes progress in economic and political fields.

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ (And of course, your Lord will give you so much that you will be pleased...93:5). Allah does not specify here what he will give him. The statement is open and general. The Holy Prophet will be granted everything he desires so much that he will be pleased. Among his desired thing is the progress of Islam; the general spread of Islam in the world; fulfilment of every need of the Ummah; triumph of the Holy Prophet himself over his enemies and raising the word of Allah in the land of the enemy. When this verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet said:

If that is the case, then I will not be pleased as long as one [single member] of my Ummah [remains] in Fire.' [Qurtubi].

In a narration by Sayyidna 'Ali , the Holy Prophet said: "Allah will accept my intercession for my Ummah [community]. Allah will ask: Muhammad, are you pleased?" He will reply: "My Lord, I am pleased." Muslim records from Sayyidna 'Amr Ibn-ul-'As to the effect that the Holy Prophet recited a verse concerning the Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) **فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ كَافِرٌ بَرِّحِيمٌ** ...So, one who follows me is surely mine, and the one who disobeys me, then You are Most Forgiving, Very Merciful. [14:36]

Then he recited a verse which contains the words of Sayyidna 'Isa (A.S) **إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ** If You punish them, then, they are Your slaves [5:118]

Then he raised his hands, he wept and prayed:

'O Allah, my ummah, my ummah!'

Allah sent Jibra'il (A.S) to inquire as to why he was weeping [while Allah knows the reason]. Jibra'il Amin (A.S) came and inquired why he was weeping. The Holy Prophet replied: "I seek my ummah's forgiveness." Allah sent Jibra'il (A.S) back to inform him that He has pardoned them, and that Allah would please him and would not displease him regarding his ummah.

In response to the unbelievers' taunts, it was briefly mentioned that the Holy Prophet has already been blessed with many Divine favours. The Surah elaborates on three of them in particular.

Favour [1]

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ (Did He not find you an orphan, and give you shelter?...93:6). The Holy Prophet was an orphan. His father died before he was born, leaving no wealth or property to look after him. The words 'and gave you shelter' signify that the Holy Prophet received such deep love and affection from his grand-father, 'Abdul-Muttalib, and after him from his uncle, Abu Talib, who took care of him more than their own children.

Favour [2]

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ (And He found you unaware of the way [the Shari'ah], then He guided you....93:7). The word dall has two meanings: [1] stray; and [2] unaware. Here it stands for the second meaning. The verse signifies that before Muhammad was commissioned as the Prophet, he was unaware of Divine Shari'ah. He was granted the status of the Prophet and thus was guided.

Favour [3]

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ (and He found you in need, then made you need-free....93:8). The word 'a'il is derived from 'ailah which means 'to be in need'. The verse signifies that Allah found him impoverished and enriched him. This happened in the beginning through a business partnership with Sayyidah Khadijah al-Kubra, then once she became his wife and 'Mother of the Faithful', her entire wealth was devoted to his service.

After elaborating on the three favours of Allah, three injunctions follow:

Injunction [1]

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ (Therefore, as for orphan, do not oppress him,...93:9). The word qahr means 'to treat people who are less powerful in an unfair and cruel way'. In the present context, the verse means: 'Since you were a poor orphan, and Allah sheltered you, do not oppress the orphan.' [In words, 'do not seize their wealth by force and squander it. Do not scorn them, humiliate them or despise them. Rather, you should be kind and gentle to them.'] As a result, the Holy Prophet emphasised that the orphan be treated kindly and gently, and has forbidden any hurting attitude towards them. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said that the best house of a Muslim is the one in which there is an orphan who is treated kindly, and with love and affection. The worst house is the one in which there is an orphan who is treated badly. [This is transmitted by Bukhari in Al-Adab-ul- Mufrad, and by Ibn Majah and Baghawi, as quoted by Mazhari]

Injunction [2]

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ (and as for the beggar, do not scold him....93:10). The verb tanhar is derived from nahr which means 'to scold'. The word sa'il means 'one who asks'. It includes a person who asks people's wealth, that is, a beggar, and it also includes the one who asks a question of knowledge, that is, an academic investigator. The Holy Prophet has forbidden to berate either of them. The best course of action is to give the beggar something. If one is unable to give a beggar anything, one should at least apologise to him politely [so as not to give him any further grief]. Likewise, anyone who is searching knowledge and asks questions, it is forbidden to respond to him harshly and unkindly. The teacher should reply kindly and politely. However, if the investigator is unreasonable in his approach, it is permissible to scold him to the degree that is necessary.

Injunction [3]

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ (And about the bounty of your Lord, do talk....93:11). The verb haddith is derived from tahdith which means 'to talk' meaning, 'just as you were poor and needy, and Allah made you wealthy, then talk about Allah's favours upon you'. Talking about Divine favours to people is one way of thanking Allah. If a person has done something good to another, he should be thanked. Therefore, the Holy Prophet is reported to

have said: "Whoever is not thankful to people on their favours is not thankful to Allah." [This is transmitted by Ahmad. The chain of authorities are reliable - vide Mazhari].

The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "Whoever has done good to you, you ought to return the good. If you are unable to return the pecuniary good, then praise him in public, because he who praises people in public fulfils his moral obligation." [Al-Baghawi transmitted it from Jabir Ibn 'Abdullah, vide Mazhari].

Ruling

It is obligatory to offer gratitude to Allah on every favour He has bestowed. (But the way of offering gratitude may be different.) If Allah has granted a person wealth, a part of that wealth may be spent with the sincerity in Allah's way. If Allah has given a person strong body, his bodily strength may be utilised in fulfilling Divine obligations. If Allah has granted a person Divine knowledge, he should impart it to others. [Mazhari].

Ruling

It is sunnah to recite takbir at the beginning of every Surah from Surah Duha to the end of the Qur'an. The wordings of the takbir, according to Shaikh Salih al-Misri, are as follows:

'There is no god except Allah and Allah is the greatest' [Mazhari].

According to Ibn Kathir, the takbir may be recited at the end of every Surah and, according to Baghawi, it may be recited once at the beginning of every Surah. [Mazhari]. Either way the requirement of sunnah will be fulfilled. And Allah knows best!

Note

In most Surahs from Surah Duha to the end of Qur'an, Allah's special favours upon the Holy Prophet and his special virtues and characteristics are mentioned. In a few of the Surahs, the Day of Judgement and its conditions are mentioned. The earlier part of the Qur'an asserts the greatness and authenticity of the Qur'an, while the later part asserts the greatness of the personality to whom the Qur'an was revealed.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Ad-Duha Ends here](#)

94. Peace of Heart (Al-Inshirah)

This Surah is Makki and has 8 verses

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ (١) وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ (٢) أَلَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ (٣) وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ
ذِكْرَكَ (٤) فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا (٥) إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا (٦) فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ (٧) وَإِلَىٰ
رَبِّكَ فَارْجِعْ (٨)

Translation

Did We not cause your bosom to be wide open for your benefit? [1]

And We removed from you your burden [2]

that had (almost) broken your back, [3]

and We raised high for you your name. [4]

So undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. [5]

Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. [6]

So when you are free (from collective services), exert yourself (in worship), [7]

and towards your Lord turn with eagerness. [8]

Commentary

It was mentioned at the end of the preceding Surah that twenty-two Surahs from Surah Ad-Duha to the end of the Qur'an are mainly concerned with Divine favours conferred upon the Holy Prophet and with his greatness. Only a few Surahs are concerned with the conditions of the Hereafter or some other subject. Surah Al-Inshirah is concerned with special favours that Allah conferred upon the Holy Prophet. Its style is the same as that of the preceding Surah - the interrogative style. In the preceding Surah, the style was 'Did He not find you...?' [Here the style is]:

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ (Did We not cause your bosom to be wide open for your benefit?...94:1). The word shark literally denotes 'to open, to cause the bosom to be widely opened'. [In the present context] it is to cause the bosom to be wide open to comprehend the Divine mysteries. The verse signifies that Allah illuminated his bosom with wisdom, Divine light and peace and made it spacious, vast and wide as is said in another verse **فَمَنْ** يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ ۖ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ ۖ لِلْإِسْلَامِ 'So, he whom Allah wills to give guidance, He opens his heart for Islam. [6:125]'

The Holy Prophet's bosom was expanded to receive the knowledge and wisdom and the gracious morals and ethical qualities, which the greatest philosophers could not match. As a result of this expansion of heart, tawajjuh ilal-makhlugh (attentiveness to the creation) did not disturb his attentiveness to and concentration on Allah. Some of the authentic Traditions report that the angels, with Allah's permission, physically opened the blessed chest of the Holy Prophet. Some of the commentators interpret this 'expansion of the chest' to refer to the same miracle, as mentioned in Ibn Kathir and others. And Allah knows best!

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ (٢) أَلَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ (And We removed from you your burden that had [almost] broken your back...94:2-3). The word wizr literally denotes 'burden' and the phrase naqd-uz-zahr means

'to break one's back as for instance when a heavy load is put on one's back, it bends'. This verse signifies that Allah had relieved him of his burden that was breaking his back. What was that burden or heavy load? One answer to this question is that now and then the Holy Prophet did certain permissible deeds, thinking that they were of benefit and in the interest [of spiritual development]. Later on he discovered that they were not in keeping with wisdom, or they were undesirable. The Holy Prophet was conscious of his high status and close proximity to Allah. He regarded even such things as serious infractions. This was naturally a very heavy load that made him grieved. But Allah relieved him of his burden in that a blanket pardon was granted to him and it was declared that he would not be held accountable for such things.

Some commentators say that wizr (burden) refers to the effect of revelation. It weighed heavily on him in the initial stages of the Prophet-hood. He was saddled with a nerve-racking and back-breaking task of raising [a morally degenerated people], through propagation of Tauhid and elimination of kufr and shirk, [from the depths of moral turpitude to the peaks of spiritual excellence, and then through them to cleanse and purify the whole of mankind of the dross of iniquity, ignorance and superstition]. The task enjoined **فَأَسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أَمَرْتِ** So, stand firm - as you have been commanded [11:112]'

The Holy Prophet used to feel the heavy weight of this task and responsibility. Some narration report that a few strands of his beard had turned grey as a result of this command. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said that the following verse has made me old **فَأَسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أَمَرْتِ** So, stand firm - as you have been commanded [11:112]'

Verses [2-3] give the cheerful news that Allah will remove from him the load which was weighing down his back. The following verses show how the back-breaking load will be removed, and every difficulty will be followed by ease and relief. By means of expansion of bosom, Allah gave the Holy Prophet so much of courage that no instance of hardship seemed hardship, and no burden of any magnitude seemed a burden. And Allah knows best!

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ (and We raised high for you your name....94:4). The meaning of raising the name of the Holy Prophet is that his blessed name is remembered together with the name of Allah in all the symbols of Islam, like the kalimah, the adhan, the iqamah, and in sermons from the minarets and pulpits [throughout the world]

(I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah; I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.)

No sensible person utters the Holy Prophet's name without respect and honour even though he may not be a Muslim.

The Command for Teachers and Preachers to Remember Allah During Spare Hours

فَرَعْتَ فَأَتَّصِبْ (٧) وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْجِعْ (So when you are free [from collective services], exert yourself [in worship], and towards your Lord turn with eagerness....94:8). The Holy Prophet is commanded in these verses that when he has finished his day's work of teaching and training his followers and other temporal affairs, he should turn to Allah as ever with all his heart, that is, prayers, remembrance of Allah, supplication and seeking Allah's pardon. This is the interpretation assigned to this verse by most commentators. Some scholars have interpreted it differently, but the foregoing interpretation appears to be the closest. The sum total of this interpretation is as follows: The Holy Prophet exerted himself greatly to spread the word of Allah and reform human beings. Exerting himself to human reform was his greatest form of 'worship' but it was 'indirect worship' through planning and executing the plan of human reform. The verse purports to say that the indirect worship is not sufficient. So, when he is free from collective services to humanity, he should devote time to turn to Him by carrying out 'direct worship' by turning to Allah in prayer for the success of his efforts, because this 'direct

worship' is what man is created for. Probably, that is why the 'indirect worship' has been mentioned as something that may be finished and one may be free from, because that is based on need, and a believer can free himself from it, but the 'direct worship' of Allah is such that he cannot free himself from it. He has to spend his entire life and expend all his energy in it.

Note

This indicates that scholars [who are involved in education, propagation and human reform] should not be unmindful of 'direct worship'. Some time should be devoted specifically, in privacy, to attentiveness to, and remembrance of Allah as the biography of the righteous predecessors bear testimony to the fact that without it neither education nor preaching can be effective. It would be devoid of light and blessings.

The word fansab derived from nasab means 'to be tired'. The verse signifies that one should tire oneself when carrying out acts of worship. One should not carry out acts of worship only when one finds it convenient. Binding oneself to a wazifah (a usual course of optional worships) is itself quite exerting and tiring, no matter how little.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Inshirah Ends here](#)

95. The Fig (At-Tin)

This Surah is Makki and has 8 verses

وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونَ (١) وَطُورِ سِينِينَ (٢) وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ (٣) لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ (٤) ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ (٥) إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ (٦) فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدَ بِالذِّينِ (٧) أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمَ الْحَاكِمِينَ (٨)

Translation

I swear by the Fig and the Olive, [1]

and by Tur, the mount of Sinai, [2]

and by this peaceful city, [3]

We have created man in the best composition, [4]

then We turned him into the lowest of the low, [5]

except those who believed and did righteous deeds, because for them there is a reward never ending. [6]

So, what can make you, after all this, to deny the Requital? [7]

Is Allah not the Greatest Ruler of all the rulers? [8]

Commentary

وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونَ (I swear by the Fig and the Olive...95:1). This verse takes an oath by four objects. Two of them are trees, the fig tree and the olive tree. [The third object] is Tur, the mount of Sinai, and the fourth object is the City of Makkah. The two trees have been specified because they possess abundant blessings and advantages in the same way as Tur and the City of Makkah possess abundant blessings. Some authorities say that the 'fig' and the 'olive' symbolise, in this context, the lands in which these trees predominate: that is, the countries bordering on the eastern part of the Mediterranean, especially Palestine and Syria. Most of the Prophets lived and preached in these lands, including Holy Prophet Ibrahim (A.S). The latter Prophet was made to migrate from here to Makkah. The oaths, in this way, comprehend all the holy places where Allah-inspired men were born and raised as Prophets. Syria was the land and home of all the Prophets. Mount Sinai stresses specifically the messengership of Musa (A.S) where Allah spoke to him. 'Peaceful City' refers to Makkah, the birth-place and residence of the Final Messenger of Allah.

The subject of the four oaths is, لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ (We have created man in the best composition...95:4). The word taqvim literally denotes 'to set a thing aright or lay the foundation straight or even; or to form something into an appropriate shape in a moderate regulation'. The verse signifies that man has been endowed with the best natural powers and qualities which other creatures have not been endowed with. Physically too he is cast in the best composition - having no parallel in other creatures.

Man is the Most Beautiful of Allah's Creation

Allah has created man the most beautiful of all His creation. Ibn Arabi asserts that there is no creature of Allah more beautiful than man, because Allah, besides granting him life, he gave him knowledge, power, speech, hearing, sight, planning and wisdom. All these, in fact, are the qualities of Allah. It is mentioned in a hadith of Bukhari and Muslim:

'Allah has created Adam in His image'

It could only mean that man has been characterised by some of the qualities of Allah, because Allah is beyond any [physical] shape or image. [Qurtubi].

A Wonderful Story of Human Beauty

Qurtubi, on this occasion, cites a story of 'Isa Ibn Musa Hashimi. He was a high ranking officer in the royal court of Caliph Abu Ja'far Mansur. The officer loved his wife very much. Once he was sitting with his wife in a moonlit night and suddenly cried out:

'You are divorced thrice if you are not more beautiful than the moon.'

As soon as the wife heard this, she went into seclusion and veiled herself, on the grounds that the husband has pronounced three express divorce on her. It was said in joke. However, the law of express divorce is that it becomes effective whether uttered jokingly or seriously. 'Isa Ibn Musa spent the night restlessly and in grief. The next morning, he paid a visit to Caliph Abu Ja'far Mansur and recounted to him the whole story. Caliph Abu Ja'far Mansur invited all the jurists of the city and put the case before them. All the jurists unanimously agreed that the divorce has become effective, because no human being can possibly be more beautiful than the moon. There was, however, one scholar, a student of Imam Abu Hanifah, who remained silent. Mansur asked him: "Why are you so quiet?" He recited 'Bismillah to the end' and then recited Surah Tin and explained: "Ruler of the Faithful, Allah says that He has created man in the best composition or in the finest mould. Nothing can be more beautiful than man." Having heard this, all the scholars and jurists were perplexed. None of them opposed him. Mansur ordered that the divorce is not effective.

This indicates that man is the most beautiful creation of Allah outwardly and inwardly, in terms of elegance and attractiveness and in terms of bodily structure. Every limb of the human body is able to move in many different ways. He is able to hold, move and lift various things by moving his hands and arms. The thumb alone is a masterpiece of creation without which man will not be able to hold things. The functioning of the ears, the eyes, the mouth, the teeth, the nose, the chest and the stomach are all wonders in their own right. Gathered together on his head, they form a beautiful and coherent assortment, each one complementing the other. The flexibility of the tongue, the arrangement of the teeth and the mastery of the vocal cords allow him to roar like a lion and sing as beautifully as a nightingale. All this makes human body look like a sophisticated factory where automatic machines are able to accomplish the delicate work. This is the reason why philosophers call man 'microcosm' [a miniature universe as opposed to 'macrocosm' {a large universe}]. The microcosm epitomises the macrocosm. [Qurtubi]

The Sufis have supported this concept. Some scholars have analysed in detail - from head to toe - to show how man is the epitome of the large universe.

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ (then We turned him into the lowest of the low...95:5). In the preceding sentence, it was stated that man is created in the best composition and is the most beautiful being. In the prime of his life, man is brimming with strength and vigour and all his faculties are functioning at their best. As opposed to that, this sentence states that when man ages, he physically grows weaker and his health deteriorates all the time. He even begins to lose his physical beauty. He no longer has a good-looking and attractive face. He begins to look uglier. He becomes useless and a burden to others. Other animals, on the contrary, are useful to the end of their lives. Man utilises them for milk, for mounting, for luggage-loading and for myriad of other things. When they are

slaughtered or dead, man still utilises their hide, hair, bones and every other part or fibre of theirs usefully. Man, on the other hand, becomes useless when he falls ill or grows old. From the worldly point of view he is unable to do anything. Even when he dies, no part of his body is of any benefit to any man or animal. In short, the phrase 'the lowest of the low' refers to bodily condition. His body bends over and legs can barely carry him. The man who was once supporting others now needs others to support him. [Dahhak and others vide Qurtubi].

إِنَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ (except those who believed and did righteous deeds, because for them there is a reward never ending....95:6). The foregoing interpretation of the preceding verse should not be misunderstood. The exceptive sentence does not mean that the believers will not attain to decrepit old age. It would not be correct to exclude the believers from this, because some of them are also overcome by the senility of old age. The sense, however, is that they do not suffer a big harm due to their physical or mental deterioration in old age. Only those will suffer from it who spent their entire energy on improving their physical condition that has now ended. They shall have no portion of it in the Hereafter. The righteous believers will have an unfailing reward. This verse makes it clear that even after reaching old age, a believer never becomes useless. Even in decrepitude he can accumulate rewards - comfort and high positions - for the Hereafter that are eternal. During the period of senility when he is unable to do righteous deeds, the good deeds will be recorded in his Record Book which he used to do in good health. Sayyidna Anas narrates that the Holy Prophet said that when a Muslim falls ill Allah instructs the recording angels to record the good deeds he used to perform in good health. [Al-Baghawi transmitted it in Sharh-us-Suunah from Abu Musa, and Bukhari has reported the same rewards for a traveller and a person suffering from a disease.] Here instead of mentioning the rewards and blessings of Paradise for the righteous believers, the verse reads, **فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ** (for them there is a reward never ending.) This could signify that their reward starts in this mortal world [and continues in the Hereafter eternally]. Allah gathers around them in their decrepit old age such sincere companions who benefit from them spiritually until the last moment of their life. They serve them in every possible way. The righteous servants of Allah in decrepitude are productive while generally the senile and people in bad health are thought to be unproductive.

Some commentators say that the statement - **رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ** (We turned him into the lowest of the low) does not refer to human beings in general. It refers specifically to unbelievers who destroyed the God-given best composition, human perfection, honour and intellect by pursuing physical pleasures. As a result of their ingratitude, they will be turned into the lowest of the low. In this interpretation, the exception **إِنَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا** (except those who believed and did righteous deeds, because for them there is a reward never ending) will carry its basic interpretation, in that they will not be turned into the lowest of the low. For those who believed and did righteous deeds, there is a reward that is unending. [Thus in al-Mazhari].

فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالذِّينِ (So, what can make you, after all this, to deny the Requital?...95:7). In the preceding verses man is made to realise that Allah created him, He bestowed on him special favours and the revolution that He brought about in his old age. Man will move from stage to stage, finally reaching the grave and the Hereafter. But he rejects the Hereafter, as a result he is warned. He has seen the scenes of Divine omnipotence and revolutions - how dare he denies and rejects the Hereafter! Is Allah not the Greatest Ruler of all the rulers? [8]

Ruling

Sayyidna Abu Hurairah narrates that the Holy Prophet said that while reciting Surah At-Tin, when one reaches the end of it:

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمِ الْحَاكِمِينَ 'Is Allah not the Greatest Ruler of all the rulers? [8]'

one should recite:

بلى و انى على ذالك من الشاهدين

'Yes, indeed, Allah is the Ruler of the rulers, and I bear witness to it.'

The jurists have ruled that it is mustahab (preferable/desirable) to recite the words.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah At-tin Ends here](#)

96. The Clot (Al-Alaq)

This Surah is Makki and has 19 verses and one section

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ (١) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ (٢) أَقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ (٣) الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ (٤) عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (٥) كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِيَطْغَىٰ (٦) أَنْ رَءَاهُ اسْتَعْتَىٰ (٧) إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ (٨) أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَىٰ (٩) عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّىٰ (١٠) أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ الْهُدَىٰ (١١) أَوْ أَمَرَ بِالْتَّقْوَىٰ (١٢) أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ (١٣) أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَىٰ (١٤) كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ لِنَسْفَعَنَّ بِالنَّاصِيَةِ (١٥) نَاصِيَةٍ كَذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ (١٦) فَتَنْدَعُ نَادِيَهُ (١٧) سَنَدَعُ الزَّبَانِيَةَ (١٨) كَلَّا لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَمَعْنَاهُ جَمْعًا (١٩) ﴿١٩﴾

Translation

Read with the name of your Lord who created (every thing), [1]

He created man from a clot of blood. [2]

Read, and your Lord is the most gracious, [3]

who imparted knowledge by means of the pen. [4]

He taught man what he did not know. [5]

The fact is that man crosses the limits, [6]

because he deems himself to be free of need. [7]

Surely to your Lord is to return. [8]

Have you seen him who forbids [9]

a slave of Allah when he prays? [10]

Tell me, if he is on the right path, [11]

or bids to piety, (would the former still forbid him?) [12]

Tell me, if he rejects (the true faith) and turns away, [13]

does he not know that Allah is watching (him)? [14]

No! If he does not desist, We will certainly drag (him) by forelock, [15]

a lying, sinful forelock. [16] So let him call the men of his council, [17]

We will call the soldiers of the Hell. [18]

No! Never obey him, and bow down in sajdah, and come closer. [19]

Commentary

Beginning of The Qur'anic Revelation

It is universally agreed that the first five verses of Surah Al-'Alaq or Iqra' mark the very beginning of Qur'anic revelation. [Baghawl]. Bukhari, Muslim, other authentic sources and overwhelming consensus of scholars, ancient and modern, all concur on this point. However, some scholars state that Surah Al-Muddaththir was the first Surah to be revealed, and yet others say that Surah Al-Fatihah [The Opening] was revealed first. It is possible to reconcile between these different views as follows: After the revelation of Surah Al-'Alaq or Iqra', there was a temporary break in the revelation during which the Holy Prophet used to be very sad, but after some time, the Angel Jibra'il appeared to him once again, and he faced the same situation as he faced when the first verses of Surah Iqra' were revealed to him. On this occasion, the opening verses of Surah Al-Muddaththir were conveyed to him by the angel. From this point of view, it may be said that the first Surah to be revealed after the temporary break was Surah Al-Muddaththir. Some of the Companions held the view that Surah Al-Fatihah was the first Surah to be revealed. They probably meant to say that this was the first Surah to be revealed in a complete form. Undoubtedly, some verses (of Surahs Al-'Alaq or Iqra', Al-Muzzammil and Al-Muddaththir) were revealed earlier, but the rest of the verses of those Surahs were revealed at later dates. Al-Fatihah is the first Surah that was revealed to the Holy Prophet in its entirety, all seven verses at once. [Mazhari]

The Holy Prophet's First Experience of Revelation

In a lengthy narration, as recorded in the Sahihs of Bukhari and Muslim, the Mother of the Faithful, Sayyidah 'A'ishah says that revelation to the Messenger of Allah was started by true dreams. Whatever he saw in a dream would happen in reality as clearly as the light of dawn. Then solitude became dear to him, and he used to seclude himself for worship in the cave Hira', (a cave in the mount known today as 'Jabal-un-Nur, which is clearly visible in front of Jannat-ul-Ma'la, the famous graveyard of Makkah) and therein he devoted himself to Divine worship for several nights before he came back to his family and took provisions for his retirement; then he would return to the Mother of the Faithful, Sayyidah Khadijah and take more provisions for a similar period. (The period of his stay in the cave is mentioned differently by different reports, but the report of sahihain maintains that it was a month, the whole month of Ramadan. Authentic traditions are silent about the mode of worship he adopted during this period. Some scholars have opined that he used to worship according to the Shari'ah of Nuh, Ibrahim and 'Isa (A.S), but neither any authentic report supports it, nor is it likely, because he was an 'ummiyy (unlettered). It is, therefore, more likely that his worship was concentration and reflection on Allah Almighty and His omnipotence until the Truth, that is, the revelation came to him while he was in the cave of Hira'; so the angel came to him and said, 'Read'. The Holy Prophet replied, 'I am not the one who can read'. (The Holy Prophet was under the impression that he was directing him to read a written document. Since the Holy Prophet could not read or write, he replied accordingly.) Then the angel embraced him and pressed him so hard that he felt extreme pain, then he released him and said, 'Read'. The Holy Prophet replied, 'I am not the one who can read'. Then he embraced him and pressed him a second time so hard that he felt extreme pain, then he released him again and said, 'Read'. The Holy Prophet replied, am not the one who can read'. Then he embraced the Holy Prophet and pressed him a third time, then he released him and said, **أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ (١) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ (٢) مِنْ عَلَقٍ (٣) الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ (٤) عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ** Read with the Name of your Lord Who created [everything], He created man from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the most gracious, who imparted knowledge by means of the Pen. He taught man what he did not know.'

The Messenger of Allah returned with this message [of five verses] while his heart trembled and he came to Sayyidah Khadijah, saying 'wrap me up, wrap me up', and she wrapped him up, until the awe left him. (It should be noted that the fear felt by the Holy Prophet was due to the great responsibility delegated to him, and due to the unusual event of seeing an angel in his original form.)

Then he said to Sayyidah Khadijah while he related to her what had happened: "I feared for myself." Sayyidah Khadijah said: 'Nay, by Allah, Allah will never expose you to disgrace, because you unite the ties of kinship, and bear the burden of the weak, and earn for the destitute, and offer hospitality to the guests, and help (people) in real distress.'

Then Sayyidah Khadijah took him to her cousin, Waraqah Ibn Naufal. He was a man who had adopted Christianity (which was a true religion at that time) during the days of Ignorance, and he used to write the Hebrew script, and translate it into Arabic. He was a very old man who had turned blind. Sayyidah Khadijah said to him, O Uncle's son! Listen to your brother's son. Waraqah asked him, My brother's son! What have you seen? So the Messenger of Allah related to him what he had seen. Waraqah said to him, This is the very same confidant [angel Jibra'il (A.S)] whom Allah sent to Holy Prophet Musa (A.S); would that I were a young man at this time - would that I were alive when your people would expel you! The Messenger of Allah asked in surprise, "Will they expel me?" He replied. Yes; never has a man appeared with the like of that which you have brought, but he has been held in enmity; and if your time finds me alive, I shall help you with the fullest support. After that, not much time had passed before Waraqah died, and the revelation broke off temporarily. [Bukhari and Muslim]

The temporary break of revelation, according to Suhaili, lasted for about a year and half. Other reports say that it lasted to about three years. [Mazhari]

Verse [1] **أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ** (Read with the Name of your Lord, Who created [everything]) In the prepositional phrase bismi rabbika [with the name of your Lord], the addition of the word ismi is significant in two ways [1] that whenever the Qur'an is being recited, the reader should begin by reciting the formula **بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ** "With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful". When Jibra'il Amin (A.S) suddenly appeared to the Holy Prophet and said 'iqra' (read), he tendered apology that he is unable to read or recite, because he is unlettered. The phrase b-ismi rabbika points to the fact that under present circumstances you, O Holy Prophet, may be 'ummiyy' or unlettered, but Allah has the power to grant you the highest level of knowledge, the most elegant style of oration and eloquence, so that you would surpass and subdue the most educated or literate people, as it became manifest later on. [Mazhari]. [2] Allah has many Beautiful Names, but the blessed name rabb is particularly chosen in the verse here probably because it supports and emphasizes the theme that Allah cherishes and sustains the Holy Prophet through all the different stages of his development, until he is fully consummated. He can make him read and recite, despite being unlettered. In the relative clause al-ladhi khalaqa [Who created], particularly contains the Divine attribute of takhliq [creating] presumably because the first Divine favour is wujud or 'existence' as a result of His drawing out beings from the realm of non-existence into the realm of existence. Many other favours of His follow. The verb khalaqa [created] is transitive and it requires an object that is absent here. This indicates the verb is used absolutely, and it signifies that the Creator has created the entire universe and every existent thing it contains.

Verse [2] **(۱) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ** (Created man from a clot of blood.) The previous verse referred to the creation of macrocosm, the large or entire universe in general. In this verse, the phrase is khalaqa'l-insan which refers to the creation of microcosm 'the best, noblest or most honourable creation', Man. If analysed carefully, we notice that man is the epitome of macrocosm or the large universe. He is a small scale representation, analogue, or miniature of the large and complex universe. Another reason why man has been particularly mentioned is that the purpose of Prophet-hood, messenger-hood and revelation of the Qur'an is the implementation of Divine ordinances, injunctions and laws and acting upon them: This is the essential peculiarity of mankind. The word 'alaq, being the plural of 'alaqatun, means 'congealed blood'. The creation of man has passed and passes through various phases. His primordial creation is from the four major elements, that is, earth, water, fire and air. His procreation is from an insignificant and humble state, the sperm which then transforms

into congealed blood. This is the primary state of the embryo which happens after the conception. Then it takes the shape of a lump of flesh and then the skeletal structure is created. 'Alaqah is the middle phase in the whole process of creation. The specific mention of 'alaqah covers the initial stage and the final stage of the process of creation.

Verse [3] **اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ** (Read, and your Lord is the most gracious.) The command iqra' [Read] has been repeated in this verse for two reasons: The first command in verse [1] was for the Holy Prophet himself to read or recite. The second command in this verse is to proclaim, convey, communicate and teach or preach. It is not inconceivable that the command iqra' is repeated by deliberate design for emphasis. The Divine attribute al-Akram 'the Most Gracious' signifies that Allah did not create the world or man for any ulterior motive, for selfish motivation or for His own benefit. He has done it out of His infinite grace, generosity and magnanimity. He endowed upon the universe the great favour of existence without asking for it.

Verse [4] **الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ** (Who imparted knowledge by means of the Pen.) The preceding verse spoke of the creation of man. The current verse speaks of man's education or literacy, because knowledge, as part of education and literacy, distinguishes man from all other animals and creatures, and occupies the position of the crown of creation. There are two means, methods or media through which knowledge is imparted: [1] oral or spoken method or by word of mouth; and [2] Pen or written method. The command iqra' [read] at the beginning of Surah refers to the oral or spoken method. However, the current verse, which speaks more explicitly about imparting knowledge, speaks of the written method of recording and transmitting knowledge from generation to generation.

Pen and Writing: The First and Most Important Means of Transmitting Knowledge

An authentic narration of Sayyidna Abu Hurairah reports that the Messenger of Allah said:

"When Allah created the creation, He inscribed a document which is with Him above the Throne: Indeed My mercy has preceded My anger."

In another narration, the Messenger of Allah is reported to have said:

"The first thing Allah created was the pen. He told it to write, so it wrote what was to take place till Doomsday. This is with Allah on His Throne." [Qurtubi]

Three Types of Pen

Scholars have said that there are three types of pen in the world:

- 1) a Pen that Allah created with His own hand and instructed it to write the decree of the universe;
- 2) the pen of the angels who record the events that are to occur and their magnitude, they also use it to record the deeds of human beings;
- 3) and the pen of human beings, which they use to reduce their speech to writing.

Writing, in fact, is a kind of speech [or a manifestation of it]. Humans are biologically programmed by Allah for speech, and it is thus natural, inborn and innate faculty. [Qurtubi] The leading authority on Tafsir, Mujahid, cites from Abu 'Amr that Allah created four things in the entire universe with His own Creative hand, and the rest of the creation came into being by His cosmic command of kun [be] and they became. The four things are:

- 1) the pen;
- 2) The Divine Throne;
- 3) the Garden of Eden;
- 4) and Holy Prophet 'Adam (A.S).

Who was First Trained in the Writing Skill and Art?

Scholars have differed on this question. Some say the art and skill of writing was first imparted to the father of mankind, i.e. the prophet 'Adam (A.S) and he was the first one to write. [Ka'b Ahbar]. Others say that this art was first taught to the Holy Prophet Idris (A.S) and he was thus the very first scribe. [Dahhak]. Some others have observed that the art and skill of writing is the Divine knowledge given as a gift to anyone whom Allah wills

Writing Skill and Art: A Great Divine Gift

Sayyidna Qatadah has stated that Pen is a great Divine gift. If Allah had not granted man the art and skill of writing with pen, it would not have been possible for him to preserve or protect the religion in its pristine form, nor would it have been possible for him to conduct his worldly affairs in the proper manner. Sayyidna 'Ali has stated that it is a great generosity that Allah has granted His servants knowledge of things they did not know. He drew them out from the darkness of ignorance and brought them into the light of knowledge. He urged them to acquire the art and skill of writing as it accrues great benefits. Only Allah is able to keep count of the benefits of writing. All sciences and philosophies are codified by means of pen. The history of the former and latter nations are compiled by means of pen. Their chronicles and monographs are preserved in writing. The Divinely revealed Books are committed to writing, and shall be preserved till the world lasts. 'The pen' is thus able to make great contribution towards the propagation and dissemination of spiritual sciences and Divine secrets revealed by the Qur'an and of physical sciences to which the study of the Qur'an imparted a great stimulus. Without the pen, all worldly and religious works will come to a standstill.

Writing Skill and Art: Attitude of Scholars in All Ages

Scholars of the former and the latter times have always realised the stupendous role pen plays in the preservation and transmission of knowledge, as a result they made a great use of it and left behind a huge legacy of books and writings. It is regretful to notice that in this age students and scholars have ignored the importance of this skill and art. As a result, scarcely a few people in a few million people have mastered the art, or developed the skill, of writing. To Allah do we direct our complaint!

Writing Skill and Art: The Reason Why the Holy Prophet was Not Taught

It is really very significant that mention should have been made of 'Pen' in a Book which was revealed to a person, the Final Messenger, who himself did not know how to read and write. The reason for this is the profound Divine wisdom underlying it. Allah had willed that the dignity and status of the Final Messenger should be far above the thinking of the general populace. Allah placed the Holy Prophet in an environment which was not favourable for any spontaneous accomplishments, nor was it conducive to any achievements by natural exposure. His birth-place was the rugged and rocky mountainous terrain. The desert of Arabia had fewer plants apart from the date-palms, little water apart from the zam zam well and the weather was always dry, far away from civilisation, and completely cut off from the cradle of knowledge and wisdom. The communications system or network was inaccessible; as a result, the people of Arabia had no contact with Syria, Iraq, Egypt and other civilised areas of the world. Hence, all the Arabs were referred to as 'unlettered' who generally had no respect for knowledge, wisdom and writing. Very rarely people had the opportunity to learn knowledge or to acquire the art and skill of writing. The Holy Prophet was born in such bare region, among such illiterate tribes and in such harsh environment. He was never given the opportunity to become literate. It was inconceivable that a person born in such a surrounding will be gifted with knowledge, wisdom and high morals. He was, however, suddenly granted the cloak of Prophethood, together with incessant flow of knowledge and wisdom. The greatest of poets and orators of Arabia were subdued by the eloquence of the unlettered Holy Prophet. This was his open and overt miracle. Every open-minded person should be able to see with his eye of certainty that his attainments were not the result of acquisition by his own efforts or human exertion, but they were the result of the invisible generosity of Allah Who endowed him with the Prophetic gift. This is the Divine wisdom underlying the reason why the Holy Prophet was not trained in the skill and the art of writing. [Adapted from Qurtubi]

Verse [5] **عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ** (Taught Man what he did not know.) The preceding verse was concerned with a particular means of teaching, namely, 'pen', the written method.

Many Other Means of Teaching

The present verse purports to say that the real teacher is Allah, and He has innumerable ways and means, besides pen, to impart knowledge. Therefore, the verse says that Allah taught man things with which he was unacquainted previously. The verse does not mention 'pen' or any other means of teaching. The reason for that is man is taught from the very inception of his life. First, he is gifted with intellect, the greatest means of receiving knowledge. Man, by the right use of intellect, is able to understand many things. Further, his entire environment is the manifestation of the perfect power of Allah and studded with the evidence of Divine power by witnessing which he is able to recognise his Creator. Revelation and inspiration are other means of knowledge. The knowledge of many essential things are learnt intuitively. Intuition is the God-given ability to know or understand things through feelings, rather than by considering facts or evidence. As a result, there is no need for tongue or pen. When a baby is born, it is not conscious of how its environment operates. However, it instinctively reaches out for the mother's breast, when it feels hungry and feeds itself. Who teaches it and who can teach it? Allah has taught it the 'skill' of crying since its birth. The cry of the baby is the means of satisfying all its needs. When it cries, it becomes a cause of concern for the parents to find out what is wrong. The baby's cry satisfies its hunger, thirst, heat and cold. Who teaches the new-born baby how to cry? All this is instinctive knowledge with which Allah has programmed every living organism, especially man. After the instinctive knowledge, man's knowledge continues to increase by word of mouth, and then by the supra-rational organ of intuition, called the heart.

Apparently, there was no need to say **مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ** (...what he did not know) because normally knowledge is imparted of things that are not known. It is explicitly stated here, probably because man may not assume that the God-given knowledge and skills are the results of his own efforts and exertion. The concluding phrase **مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ** "what he did not know" has been added in order to make man realise that there was a time when he knew

nothing, thus in [16:78] we came across **أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِّنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَّا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا** (And Allah has brought you forth from your mothers' wombs when you knew nothing...). This shows that knowledge is not an ingrained personal excellence of man. It is the gift of the Creator and the Master. [Mazhari]. Some scholars interpret the word 'man' to be referring to the Holy Prophet 'Adam (A.S) because he was the first man to whom knowledge was imparted, thus in [2:31] **وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا** (And He taught 'Adam the names, all of them...). And others say the reference is to the Final Messenger whose knowledge embraces the knowledge of all the previous Prophets.

As stated earlier, these five verses of this Surah represent the very beginning of the revelation of the Qur'an. Verses [6-19] of the Surah are of much later date. We assert this on the following grounds: These verses were revealed in connection with an incident in which Abu Jahl prevented the Holy Prophet from offering salah. In the initial stages of revelation and Prophet-hood, the Holy Prophet had no enemies in Makkah. All used to call him by the title of 'al-Amin' [the honest or upright]. They respected and loved him. Abu Jahl's enmity and opposition obviously started when the Holy Prophet proclaimed his propagation openly, called the people towards Islam publicly, and performed the salah in the Sacred Mosque. Salah was prescribed on the Night of Ascent, (Mi'raj). Therefore, prevention from salah, referred to in these verses, may not be imagined before that time.

Verses [6-7] **كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَّا كَرِهٌ (٦) أَن رَّعَاهُ أَسْتَعْتَىٰ (٧)** (The fact is that man crosses the limits, because he deems himself to be free of need.) Although the verse immediately refers to a particular person, namely, Abu Jahl who insulted the Holy Prophet, the statement is general which draws man's attention to one of his weaknesses. So long as man is in need of others, he walks straight; but when he thinks that he does not need

anyone, he tends towards transgression, and develops the tendency to wrong-doing, tyranny and oppression. This is generally the behavior of the affluent people, government officials, and people with abundant children and friends or servants. They become purse-proud and intoxicated with the leadership power they exercise on their groups. Abu Jahl was a typical example of this. He was one of the well-to-do and prosperous people of Makkah. All the members of his tribe and inhabitants of the city respected and obeyed him. He became arrogant and insulted the leader of all the Prophets - the noblest of creation. The next verse warns such arrogant people about the evil consequences of their behaviour.

Verse [8] **إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ أَلْرُّجَىٰ** (٧) (Surely to your Lord is the Return.) The word ruj'a, like bushra, is the verbal noun of infinitive - meaning all will be returning to their Lord. The apparent meaning is 'returning to the Lord after death and giving account of good and bad deeds and seeing with their own eyes the evil consequences of arrogance.' The profounder meaning of the verse is that though man has been endowed with great natural powers and has been created in the best make, he errs grievously if he thinks that he can ignore Allah's help and guidance. He constantly stands in need of Divine assistance, because his capacities and capabilities - either as an individual or in his collective capacity - are at best limited. The proud and arrogant man is thus not self-sufficient. If he thinks deeply, he will find that he needs Allah for every movement and pause. If He has apparently not made any member of the human species in need of another, he is at least in need of Allah for all his needs. Thinking that human beings are not in need of one another is also a fallacy. Allah has made man a social being, and as such he cannot satisfy all his needs by himself. Allah has made the social system or network such that all human beings need one another to satisfy their needs some time or the other. Let us consider an example: A fresh morsel of food that goes into our mouth and we swallow it unreflecting, is the result of thousands of human beings and animals who worked hard for a long period of time. It is not possible for anyone to engage so many thousands of human beings in his service. The same applies to clothes and other needs which require the services of thousands of millions of humans and animals to prepare the needful things. None of them is his servant. Even if he hires them at a rate of wages to work for him, it would not be possible for him to pay them their wages or salary. This secret or mystery dawns upon man when he realizes that the system of preparing all his needs is set into motion by the consummate wisdom of the Creator of the universe. He inspired someone to become a farmer, He cast into another's mind to become a woodcutter or a carpenter, He kindled in someone else's mind to become a blacksmith, He stimulated others to be content with labouring or working for somebody else, He ignited in others the burning desire to be involved in commerce or business, trade or industry. In this way, Allah has set up a bazaar of human needs which no government, nor its legal system or an individual could ever set up. A careful thinking along this line must lead us to the natural corollary that **إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ أَلْرُّجَىٰ** (٧) "Surely to your Lord is the Return.", that is, we witness that ultimately all things are under Divine power and wisdom.

Verses [9-10] **أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَىٰ (٩) عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّىٰ** (Have you seen him who forbids a slave of Allah when he prays?) From here to the end of the Surah, the verses allude to an incident. When the Holy Prophet was enjoined to perform the salah, he started performing it at first privately, later in public in the Sacred Mosque. Abu Jahl stopped him from performing salah and threatened him that if he were to perform salah and prostrate, he would [God forbid!] trample his neck. Verse [14] **أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَىٰ** (Does he not know that Allah is watching?) is in response to the threat made by Abu Jahl, and the verse does not mention whom He is watching. It is of general application - He is watching the pious personality who is performing the salah, as well as the wretched, miserable person who is obstructing the performance of the salah. Here the statement merely asserts that Allah is watching everything and everyone. It does not specify what will happen at Resurrection, because the horrible, terrible and dreadful scenes of that are unimaginable.

Verse [15 - concluding part] **لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ** (...We will certainly drag [him] by forelock.) The nasfa'an is derived from the infinitive safuun which means 'to seize and drag' and the word nasiyah means 'forelock', that is, the front part of a person's hair that falls forward over the forehead. When a person's forelock is seized, he becomes helpless in the hands of the seizer.

Verse [19] **كَلَّا لَا تُطِعْهُ وَأَسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ** (No! never obey him, and bow down in sajdah {Prostration}, and come closer.) The Holy Prophet is advised to ignore and disobey Abu Jahl when he stops him from praying. He is asked to be steadfast in prayer and prostration.

Acceptability of Supplication in the Posture of Prostration

It is recorded in Abu Dawud on the authority of Sayyidna Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah said: **(The closest that a servant can be to his Lord is when he is in prostration. Therefore, make abundant supplications [while prostrating])** Another authentic Tradition states: **(...because it is fitting and proper that supplications be accepted in the state of prostration.)**

Ruling

It is valid to supplicate in the supererogatory (nafl) salah while prostrating. In certain narrations, special words of the supplications are recorded from the Holy Prophet. It is better to recite those transmitted prayers of the Holy Prophet. There is no proof or evidence of such supplications in the prostration of obligatory salah, because the obligatory salah needs to be short.

Ruling

A prostration is compulsory for one who recites this verse and listens to it. A narration of Sayyidna Abu Hurairah states that the Messenger of Allah jfl used to prostrate when he recited this verse. Allah knows best!

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Alaq Ends here](#)

97. The Qadr (Al-Qadr)

This Surah is Makki and has 5 verses

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ (١) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ (٢) لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ (٣)
تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَكِ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ (٤) سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ (٥)

Translation

We have sent it (the Qur'an) down in the Night of Qadr. [1]

And what may let you know what the Night of Qadr is? [2]

The Night of Qadr is much better than one thousand months. [3]

The angels and the Spirit descend in it, with the leave of your Lord, along with every command. [4]

Peace it is till the rising of dawn. [5]

Commentary

Occasion of Revelation

Ibn Abi Hatim has reported from Mujahid (as mursal hadith) that the Messenger of Allah was told about a mujahid [warrior in the cause of religion] from amongst the Children of Israel who carried weapons of war on his shoulders for a thousand months during which time he never laid down his arms. The Companions were amazed when they heard this. On that occasion, this Surah was revealed which describes that worship in the Night of Qadr granted to this Ummah exceeds by more than a thousand months of jihad persistently fought by that warrior. According to another narration of Mujahid cited in Ibn Jarir, a worshipper from among the Children of Israel used to worship Allah the whole night, and as soon as the dawn broke, he would arm himself and fight the whole day. This continued consecutively for a thousand months. This Surah was thus revealed. This shows the superiority of the Ummah of the Holy Prophet, and that the Night of Qadr is a special characteristic of this ummah. [Mazhari].

Meaning of the Night of Qadr

One meaning of the word Qadr is 'greatness, honour or dignity'. Zuhri and other scholars have assigned this meaning to it. The night is called the Night of Qadr because it is a night of greatness, honour, majesty and dignity. Abu Bakr Warraq has stated that this night is so called because a person becomes a man of honour and dignity on account of repentance, seeking pardon and righteous acts during this night, whilst prior to this he might have lacked honour and dignity on account of unrighteous life he might have led.

Another meaning of the word Qadr is 'predestination'. From this point of view, the night is so called because the destiny of individuals and nations that was decided in pre-eternity is assigned to the relevant angels who are appointed for cosmic planning. Every man's age, death, sustenance, rain and other things are measured out to the angels to be implemented for a complete year from one month of Ramadan to another. If an individual is destined to perform Hajj in the forthcoming year, it will be prescribed. According to Ibn 'Abbas, there are four angels in charge of cosmic planning: [1] Israfil; [2] Mika'il; [3] 'Izra'il; and [4] Jibra'il (A.S).

It is clearly stated in [44:3-5] إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُّبْرَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ (٣) فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ

حَكِيمٍ (٤) أَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ We have sent it down in a blessed night, (because) We had to warn (people). [3] In that (night), every wise thing is decided [4] through a command from Us. We were to send the Messenger [5]. (44:3-5)

'Laylatun Mubarakah' or the 'blessed', according to overwhelming scholars of the Qur'an, refers to the Night of Qadr. The angels record and descend with whatever Allah has destined or decreed for the coming year. Some scholars hold that the 'blessed night' in 44:3 refers to the fifteenth night of Sha'ban, that is, 'Laylatul Bara'ah' or the 'Night of Immunity'. This view may be reconciled with the former one by holding that the initial Divine decrees are decided on the Night of Immunity, and the details are recorded and handed over to the relevant angels on the Night of Qadr. This is supported by a narration of Ibn 'Abbas which Baghawi has recorded on the authority of Abud-Duha which states that Allah decrees all cosmic matters on the Night of Immunity, but they are only handed over to the relevant angels on the Night of Qadr. [Mazhari].

Date of the Night of Qadr

It is explicitly stated in the Qur'an that the Night occurs in the blessed or auspicious month of Ramadan, but its exact date has not been disclosed. As a result, it is disputed and debated among scholars. There are about forty opinions recorded. Mazhari states that the most authentic opinion is that the Night of Qadr occurs in the last ten nights of Ramadan, but no specific date has been fixed. It could be any of the last ten odd nights which may alternate from year to year. According to authentic Traditions, it could be one of the following nights: 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29. Thus all the apparently conflicting Traditions relating to the odd nights are reconciled. All the Traditions pertaining to the date of the Night are authentic, and there is no need for any convoluted interpretation. Most eminent jurists - like Aba Qilabah, Imam Malik, Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Sufyan Thawri, Ishaq Ibn Rahwaih, Abu Thawr, Muzani, Ibn Khuzaymah and others - agree that the Night occurs in the last ten odd nights, alternating. Imam Shafi'i has two opinions. In one he sides with the majority, and in another he holds that the night is fixed and does not alternate. [Ibn Kathir].

Sayyidah 'A'ishah's narration is recorded in Sahih of Bukhari, according to which the Messenger of Allah is reported to have said: **"Look for the Night of Qadr in the last ten nights of Ramadan."** Ibn 'Umar narrates, as recorded in Sahih Muslim, that the Messenger of Allah said: **"Search for it in the last ten odd nights of Ramadan."** [Mazhari].

The Value and Importance of the Night and a Special Du'a for the Night

The greatest virtue of the Night is mentioned in the Surah itself, that is, the acts of worship performed in this single night is better than worship in one thousand months which amounts to eighty-three years and four months. The figure here and elsewhere in the Qur'an does not signify its precise number, but simply denotes a very large or high number. Allah alone knows how much more or better.

It is recorded in Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Sayyidna Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah said: "He who spends the Night of Qadr in the worship of Allah, all his past sins will be forgiven." Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas narrates that the Messenger of Allah said: "All the angels resident at the 'Lote Tree of the Uttermost Boundary' descend in the leadership of Sayyidna Jibra'il (A.S) and greet every believer, man or woman, except one who takes wine or eats pork." Another narration reports that anyone who is deprived of the good of the Night of Qadr is in fact deprived of all good. On the Night of Qadr some people experience and witness special anwar [lights]. However, it may be noted that this is not experienced or witnessed by all and sundry nor is it part of the blessings and reward of the Night. Therefore, people should not concern themselves about it.

Sayyidah 'A'ishah once asked the Messenger of Allah what supplication she should make if she finds the Night. The Messenger of Allah advised her to make the following supplication: **"O Allah! Verily, You are the Oft-Pardoning, You love to pardon, so do pardon me."** [Qurtubi].

Revelation of the Holy Qur'an

Verse [1] **إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ** "We sent it [the Qur'an] down in the Night of Qadr." This verse makes explicit that the Holy Qur'an was revealed on the Night of Qadr. This could have one of two meanings: [1] the

entire Holy Qur'an was revealed on this Night from the Preserved Tablet. Then Sayyidna Jibra'il (A.S), according to the exigency of circumstances, brought it down to the Messenger of Allah piecemeal over a period of twenty-three years; and [2] it is related that the first revelation, consisting of the opening verses of Surah [96], took place in the month of Ramadan on the Night of Qadr, when the Messenger of Allah «|f was at his devotion in the cave of Hira'. The rest of the Qur'an was revealed little by little according to the need of different occasions.

All Heavenly Books Were Revealed in Ramadan

Sayyidna Abu Dhar Ghifari narrates that the Messenger of Allah said: "Holy Prophet Ibrahim's (A.S) Scriptures were revealed on 3rd of Ramadan; Torah was revealed on 6th of Ramadan; Injil was revealed on 13th of Ramadan; Zabur was revealed on 18th of Ramadan; and the Holy Qur'an was revealed on 24th of Ramadan." [Mazhari].

Descent of the Angels and the Spirit with Divine Decrees

Verse [4] **تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ** (The angels and the Spirit descend in it, with the leave of their Lord, along with every command.) 'Spirit' here refers to Jibra'il (A.S).

Sayyidna Anas narrates that the Messenger of Allah said: "When the Night of Qadr occurs, Jibra'il SSIsS descends on the earth with a huge throng of angels and all of them pray for every servant of Allah, man or woman, busy in salah or dhikr, to be blessed by Allah." [Mazhari]. In the phrase **مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ** (along with every command), the preposition min is used in the sense of 'with' as in [13:11] **يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ** The verse under comment means the angels bring down, during the Night of Qadr, the decree for everything destined to occur in the coming year. Some of the commentators, like Mujahid and others, say that the phrase **مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ** min kulli amrin is syntactically related to salam, and the word 'Amr means 'every thing'. Thus they interpret the statement to mean: 'The night is a security from every evil, harm and calamity.' [Ibn Kathir].

Verse [5] **سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ** (Peace it is till the rising of dawn.) The word Salam [peace] stands for a complete sentence meaning 'it is all peace, equanimity and complete goodness, having no evil in it.' [Qurtubl]. Some scholars treat the word Salamun as a sentence qualifying **مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ** min kulli amrin, meaning 'the angels come with every such matter which is good and peace'. [Mazhari].

The concluding expression of the verse **هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ** means the blessings of the Night of Qadr are not restricted to any particular part of the night. They start descending at the fall of night and continue till the break of dawn.

Special Note

According to there verse 'The Night of Power is better than a thousand months' which equals eighty-three years and four months. Obviously, each year will contain a laylatul Qadr which will be better than a thousand months. As a result, the Night of Qadr will recur ad infinitum, that is, repeat or continue without an end. For this reason, some of the commentators say the expression 'more than a thousand months' does not include nights of Qadr. Thus this should not pose any problem. [Ibn Kathir on the authority of Mujahid].

On account of geographical positions, the time will vary from place to place. As a result, the Night of Qadr will not occur in all the regions of the world simultaneously. This is not a problem because people of each location should calculate and consecrate the night and receive its blessings according to their geographical position. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

Ruling

If anyone performs the 'Isha' and Fajr salahs in congregation, he will receive the blessings and reward of the Night of Qadr. The more one performs acts of worship in this night, the more he shall receive its blessings. It is recorded in Sahih of Muslim that Sayyidna 'Uthman narrates that the Messenger of Allah said: "If a person performs his 'Isha' salah in congregation, he will attain the blessings of spending half the night in devotion; and if he performs Fajr salah in congregation, he will attain the blessings of spending the entire night in devotion."

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Qadr Ends here](#)

98. The Clear Proof (Al-Bayyinah)

This Surah is Makki and has 8 verses

لَمْ يَكُنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنْفَكِينَ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ (١) رَسُولٌ مِّنْ
اللَّهِ يَتْلُوا صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً (٢) فِيهَا كُتِبَ قِيمَةٌ (٣) وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَةُ (٤) وَمَا أَمُرُوا إِلَّا لِيعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقِيَمَةِ (٥) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ فِي نَارِ
جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أُولَئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ (٦) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ هُمْ
خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ (٧) جَزَاءُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ (٨)

Translation

Those who disbelieved from among the People of the Book, and the polytheists, were not (expected) to desist (from their wrong beliefs) unless there came to them a clear proof, [1]

a messenger from Allah who recites the purified scrolls [2]

containing (right and) straight writings. [3]

And those who were given the Book did not disagree but after the clear proof came to them, [4]

while they were not ordered but to worship Allah, making their submission exclusive for him with integrity, and to establish salah and pay zakah. And that is the way of the straight religion. [5]

Surely those who disbelieved from among the People of the Book and the polytheists will be in the fire of Jahannam, in which they will be living forever. Those are the worst of all human beings. [6]

As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, they are the best of all human beings. [7]

Their reward, with their Lord, is gardens of eternity beneath which rivers flow in which they will be abiding forever. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. That is for him who has awe of his Lord. [8]

Commentary

Situation of the People of the Book and of the Pagan Arabs Before the Advent of the Final Messenger of Allah

Verse [1] لَمْ يَكُنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنْفَكِينَ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ (Those who disbelieved from among the People of the Book, and the polytheists, were not (expected) to desist (from their wrong beliefs) unless there came to them a clear proof) draws attention to the situation of the world before the advent of the Messenger of Allah : The entire world was sunk deeply in the darkness of ignorance, superstition, corruption, disbelief and paganism. When the whole world was so benighted, the infinite grace, mercy and wisdom of the Lord of the worlds bubbled up to dispel the darkness, to cure the obnoxious diseases and to dissipate the universally prevailing calamities. The moral and spiritual maladies were acute, excruciating, serious and severe. As a result, there was a need for an effective, expert and a competent healer who would be able to cure them. Such a healer was raised in the person of the Final Messenger of Allah who is described as al-Bayyinah 'The Clear Proof. The healer came with a Book. Now follows some of the important characteristics of the Holy Qur'an.

Verses [2-3] **رَسُولٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً (٢) فِيهَا كُتُبٌ قَيِّمَةٌ** (a messenger from Allah who recites the purified scrolls containing [right and] straight writings. - 98:2,3) The verb yatlu is derived from the infinitive tilawah, meaning 'to read out or to recite'. However, not every reading or reciting is tilawah, but only the one that is very closely followed according to the teacher's instruction. Probably, this is the reason why the word tilawah is specifically used, in common idiom, for 'the recitation of the noble Qur'an'. The word suhuf is the plural of sahafah and it refers to 'a leaf or a page of a book or some leaves of paper on which something is written'. The word kutub is the plural of kitab and it may mean: [1] a leaf or page of a book or some leaves of paper on which something is written. From this point of view, the words kutub and suhuf are synonyms; or [2] now and then the word kitab [pl. kutub] is used in the sense of a 'writ' as in [8:68] **لَوْ أَن كُتِبَ مِّنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقٌ** "Had there not been a writ from Allah which came earlier..." the word kitab is used in the sense of a 'writ'. In this context, the second sense seems to fit in more appropriately because if it is taken in the first sense, the words kutub and suhuf, being synonyms, the prepositional phrase fiha is rendered meaningless. The pronoun -ha in the phrase refers to suhuf, and the two statements would mean: 'reciting purified written pages in which are true written pages'. This is not in keeping with the lofty rules and principles of Qur'anic eloquence.

The word **مُطَهَّرَةً** mutahharatan [purified] is an adjective qualifying the noun suhuf [pages/scrolls]. According to Ibn 'Abbas, the Scriptures are completely free from all possible flaws, forgeries, doubt, hypocrisy and deviations. The word qayyimah is used in the sense of 'straight', and is the adjective of the noun kutub, and it means its laws, ordinances and injunctions are upright, straight, just and balanced. It could also mean 'lasting and permanent'. In this instance, the phrase would signify that the Divine injunctions of the Holy Qur'an will last permanently till the Day of Judgement. The verse thus purports to say that the sending of the Holy Prophet Muhammad [as the Clear Proof] was essential to the transformation of the people of earlier revelations and the pagans who had ended up in disbelief and could not have departed from their erring ways without the help of his Prophetic mission. His mission was to recite the pure scrolls to them which contained clear Divine injunctions. Initially he did not recite from the Scriptures but from his memory, but the sense here is that he recited to them a discourse that was later written and preserved in scrolls. The Qur'an [as the Clear Proof] is the compendium of all that is good, lasting and immutable teachings.

Verse [4] **وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ** (And those who were given the Book did not disagree but after the Clear Proof came to them.) The verb tafarraqa here means 'to deny, reject or differ and disagree'. The verse means to say that the People of the Book had eagerly awaited the advent of a great Holy Prophet about whom clear prophecies were found in their Scriptures, clear description of the Holy Prophet was given, in that the Qur'an would descend upon him and it would be compulsory for them to obey and follow him, but when he appeared in fact, then instead of accepting him, they rejected him. The Qur'an points out that there was a complete agreement among the Jews and the Christians that the Final Messenger will make his appearance, as in [2:89] **وَكَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا** "...while earlier, they used to seek help against those who disbelieved..." That is, the Torah had in several places foretold the coming of the Holy Prophet. In fact, the Jews themselves used to tell the pagan Arabs that a new Prophet was soon to come who will vanquish them, and the Jews claimed that they would be with him, so they would be victorious. Further in [2:89] the Qur'an states **فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ** "...yet when there came to them that they did identify, they denied it...". The phrase 'that they did identify' could refer to the 'Final Messenger' or the 'new Divine Book [the Qur'an]' or the 'religion of Truth'. The same theme runs through the verse under comment: Many people accepted the new Prophet, the new Book and the new religion in terms of the prophecies made in their revealed Scriptures, but a large number, especially the Christians, rejected them. It is a strange phenomenon

that before his advent they believed in him without a single dissenting voice, but when he appeared as the Clear Proof, dissention arose and a large number rejected him while a small number believed in him.

Since this phenomenon was restricted to the People of the Book, it did not include the pagans, unlike verse [1] which includes the pagans also. Allah knows best!

Verse [5] **وَدَّالِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ** (And that is the way of the straight religion.) The word qayyimah [the straight] is apparently the qualifier of the noun kutub [Books] which occurred earlier. Some treat the adjective as qualifying the noun millah [religion]. The verse purports to say that Allah commanded the People of the former Scriptures that they should render full and sincere obedience to Divine commandments, that is, to worship Allah alone. They should also establish the regular prayers and pay the obligatory alms. Then the Qur'an reminds them that this is not their distinctive feature exclusively. All former religions that are upright and received Books from Allah have the same features. This is the true religion of all the Prophets that they preached to their respective people. It would appear that the phrase kutubun qayyimah [(right and) straight writings], contextually, refers to the Qur'anic ordinances and injunctions. From this point of view, the verse would signify that the ordinances and injunctions of the Shari'ah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad are exactly the same as those that were given to them in their revealed Scriptures. They were not divergent so that they could find a pretext to oppose.

Verse [8] **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ** (Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him; that is for him who fears his Lord.) This verse points to the highest stage of spiritual development of the inmates of Paradise, that is, the Divine pleasure with no danger of Divine displeasure. This is the greatest reward with which the people of faith will be blessed. The God-fearing people are well-pleased with Him because of the comprehensive favours He has given them. Sayyidna Abu Sa'id Khudri narrates that the Messenger of Allah said:

"Undoubtedly, Allah shall address the inmates of Paradise: **'O Inmates of Paradise!'**"

They will reply: **Our Lord, we are present and ready to carry out Your orders. All good is in Your control.'**

Allah shall ask them: **Are you happy?'**

They will submit: **'How can we not be happy when You have given us what You have not bestowed on any of Your creation?'**

Allah will tell them: **'Shall I not grant you something superior to all of this?'**

They will exclaim: **'What can be superior to this?'**

Allah will reply: **'I shall grant you My pleasure, and I will never be angry with you in the future.'** [Transmitted by al-Bukhari vide Mazhari].

It should be noted here that there are two types of rida [pleasure]:

One in general sense; and second in specific or higher sense. In the general sense, rida' bil-qadr (i.e. to be pleased with every decree of Allah) is part of the obligations of a servant of Allah. A consummated slave is only ever satisfied and content with Allah Himself, and thus sincerely accepts the Divine decree. However, here the word is used in the higher sense, that is, Allah bestows upon a slave all his specific wishes and ambitions without leaving out any of them as in [93:5] **وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى** (And of course, your Lord will give you so much that you will be pleased.) Here also the word 'rida' means the fulfillment of every wish of the Holy Prophet .

When this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah expressed his wish and ambition that he would not be pleased until every single believer is taken out of Hell. [Mazhari]

Verse [8 - the concluding phrase] **ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ** (...That is for him who has awe of his Lord.) The word 'fear' or 'awe' here is not used in the sense of an 'agitated, disturbed or perturbed feeling' which we naturally have for an enemy, a beast, a ferocious animal or an obnoxious thing that might harm us. 'Khashyatullah' (Allah's awe) is, on the contrary, a feeling of deep, reverential awe that leads man to Allah's obedience. It is the awe of Allah's Majesty and His Incomparability that makes the perfect slave do every work under every circumstance to attain the Divine pleasure and evade every occasion of His displeasure. This is the axis on which rotates the religious perfection and all bounties of the Hereafter.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Bayyinah Ends here](#)

99. The Quake (Az-Zalzalah/Al-Zilzal)

This Surah is Madani and has 8 verses

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُلْزَالَهَا (١) وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا (٢) وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا لَهَا (٣)
يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا (٤) بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا (٥) يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصُدُّ النَّاسُ أُمَّتَاتًا لِّئِرْوَأَ أَعْمَلِهِمْ
(٦) فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ (٧) وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ (٨)

Translation

When the earth will be trembled with its quake, [1]

and the earth will bring forth its burdens, [2]

and man will say, "What has happened to it?" [3]

That day it will describe all its happenings, [4]

because its Lord will have so commanded it. [5]

That day the people will come back (from the place of reckoning) in different groups, so that they may be shown (the fruits of) their deeds. [6]

So, whoever does good (even) to the weight of a particle shall see it. [7]

And whoever does evil (even) to the weight of a particle shall see it. [8]

Commentary

The Merits of Surah Az-Zilzal

Sayyidna Anas and Ibn 'Abbas (R.A) report that the Messenger of Allah said that Surah Al-Zilzal equals half the Qur'an, Surah Al-Ikhlâs equals a third of the Qur'an and Surah Al-Kafirun equals a quarter of the Qur'an. [Transmitted by al-Tirmidhi, al-Baghawi and al-Mazhari].

The Scene of the Day of Resurrection

Verse [1] **إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُلْزَالَهَا** (When the earth will be trembled with its quake.) It is not clear whether this earthquake refers to the convulsion that will take place in the world before the 'first blowing of the trumpet', as is mentioned in connection with the portents of the Doomsday, or it refers to the quake that will occur after the 'second blowing' when the dead bodies will be resurrected and thrown out of their graves. Narratives and views of the commentators differ on this issue. It is not inconceivable that many quakes and convulsions would occur: first, before the 'first blowing'; and second, after the 'second blowing' at the time of raising the dead. Here it probably refers to the second quake, and the context supports it, because the Surah later on describes the scenes of the Day of Resurrection, such as reckoning, weighing and evaluating of deeds, and recompense. Allah knows best. [Mazhari]

Verse [2] **وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا** (and the earth will bring forth its burdens.) Muslim has recorded in his Sahih from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah said:

"The earth will throw out the pieces of its liver [contents]. Gold and silver will come out like columns. A murderer will come and say: 'I killed for this?' The one who broke the ties of kinship will say: 'For this I severed

the ties of kinship?' The thief will say: 'For this I got my hand amputated?' Then they will leave it there, and no one will take anything from it."

Verse [7] **فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ** (So, whoever does good [even] to the weight of a particle shall see it.) The word 'good' here refers to what is good in terms of Shari'ah, that is, only a good deed done in the wake of faith is recognized by Allah. Any good deed done in the state of disbelief is not recognized, and consequently it will not be rewarded in the Hereafter, though it might have been rewarded in this world. It is argued on the basis of this verse that anyone who has an atom's weight of faith will eventually be taken out of Hell. The reason being that, according to the promise made in this verse, man must reap the fruit of his righteousness in the Hereafter. If he has not done any righteous deeds, faith itself is a great righteousness. Thus no matter how sinful a believer may be, he will not be condemned to Hell for good. On the other hand, if a non-believer has done tons of good deeds, they will be rendered vain in the Hereafter on account of lack of faith. He will, however, receive reward for them here in this world.

Verse [8] **وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ** (And Whoever does evil [even] to the weight of a particle shall see it.) By 'evil' here is meant the evil for which the evil-doer has not repented. The Qur'an and the Sunnah bear ample testimony to the fact that any sinner who sincerely repents for his sins Allah will most certainly accept his repentance. However, the sins for which the sinners have not repented in this world shall certainly bring their results, no matter how trivial or petty they might have been in their appearance. That is why the Messenger of Allah »H warned Sayyidah 'A'ishah to beware of the sins that are belittled, for indeed they will be taken account of by Allah." [Transmitted by Nasa'i and Ibn Majah].

Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud says that this verse is most robust and comprehensive verse of the Holy Qur'an. Sayyidna Anas in a lengthy narration reports that the Messenger of Allah referred to this verse as "**the unique, most comprehensive verse**".

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Az-Zalzal/Al-Zilzal Ends here](#)

100. The Charges (Al-Adiyat)

This Surah is Makki and has 11 verses

وَالْعَدِيَّتِ صَبْحًا (١) فَالْمُورِيَّتِ قَدْحًا (٢) فَالْمُغِيرَاتِ صُبْحًا (٣) فَأَثَرْنَ بِهِ نَقْعًا (٤)
فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا (٥) إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُودٌ (٦) وَإِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ دَأْلِكَ لَشَهِيدٌ (٧) وَإِنَّهُ
لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٨﴾ أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ (٩) وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ
(١٠) إِنَّ رَبَّهُم بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ (١١)

Translation

I swear by those (horses) that run snorting, [1]

then those that create sparks by striking (their hoofs) on the stones, [2]

then those that invade at morning, [3]

and raise a trail of dust therein, [4]

then enter, at the same time, into the centre of the (opposing) host, [5]

man is, indeed, very ungrateful to his Lord, [6]

and he himself is a witness to that fact. [7]

And in his love for wealth, he is very intense. [8]

Does he not then know (what will happen) when all that is contained in the graves will be overturned, [9]

and all that is contained in the hearts will be exposed. [10]

Surely your Lord, that day, will be fully aware of them. [11]

Commentary

Place of Revelation

According to Sayyidna Ibn Mas'ud, Jabir, Hasan Basri, 'Ikramah and 'Ata' (R.A), Surah Al-'Adiyat was revealed in Makkah and according to Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas, Anas, Imam Malik and Qatadah, the Surah was revealed in Madinah. [Qurtubi].

In this Surah Allah describes the special features of war-horses or chargers, and swears by them. The subject of the oath states that man is very ungrateful to his Lord. It has been explained time and again previously that it is the prerogative of Allah to swear oath by any of his creatures to recount an event or set down ordinances. It is not permitted for any of the human beings to take oath by any of the creatures. The purpose of swearing an oath is to confirm or give weight to a subsequently stated truth. It is also mentioned earlier that when the Holy Qur'an swears an oath by an object, it has some nexus with the subject of the oath. Here the hard tasks of the war-horses are called to bear testimony to the fact that man is very ungrateful for Allah's favours. In other words, man needs to look at the horses, especially the war-horses, who risk their lives to travel under very dangerous and difficult conditions, especially in the battlefields where they follow the commands of their masters, whereas man has not created them, he has not even created the fodder he gives to them. His task is merely to give them the fodder that Allah has created. The horses recognize and acknowledge this little favor man does to them, and are prepared to risk their lives and bear the greatest of hardships. As against this, Allah has created man with an insignificant drop of sperm and endowed him with high faculties, abilities, intellect and senses to perform various

types of tasks, thus making him the crown of His creation. He [Allah] provided him with all types of food. Facilities are created for all his needs and necessities in an amazing manner. But man does not recognize and acknowledge any of these sublime favours, nor does he express his gratitude to his Creator.

Lexicographical Analysis

The word **وَالْعَدِيَّتِ** 'adiyat is derived from the root 'adw which means 'to run'. The word **ضَبِح** dabh means 'the sound coming out of the chest of a horse when it runs fast and breathes laboriously; panting.' The word **مُورِيَتِ** muriyat is the active participle of the infinitive of 'ira'. The infinitive means 'to strike or produce fire with a particular piece of wood.' The word **قَدَحَ** qadh means 'to strike or produce fire with a flint; striking sparks of fire when the horse runs fast on a rocky ground with horse-shoes on'. The word **مُغِيرَاتِ** mughirat is active participle of the infinitive **اِغَارَةَ** igharah. The infinitive means 'to attack, or make a sudden hostile excursion upon, an enemy'. The word **سُبْحًا** subh means 'morning or dawn'. This time has been specifically mentioned because it was the practice of Arabs to attack their enemy at dawn, and not at night in order to show off their bravery. They thought making a hostile excursion on the enemy in the darkness of night was an act of cowardice. The word **أَثْرَانِ** atharna is derived from 'itharah, which means 'to raise dust'. The word **نَقَعًا** naq' means 'dust'. This implies that the dust became stirred up and spread upon the horizon, especially in the morning when the horses run fast. Normally, this is not the time for clouds of dust to fly in this way, unless it was caused by very fast running.

Verse [100:5] **فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا** (then enter, at the same time, into the centre of the [opposing] host) In other words, they penetrate into the centre of the enemy forces without the least degree of fear.

The word **كَانُودٌ**, (100:6) according to Hasan Basri , refers to the one who counts the calamities that befall him, and forgets Allah's favours. Abu Bakr Wasiti said that kanud is the one who spends the bounties of Allah for sinful purposes. Tirmidhi said that kanud is the one who looks at the bounty, and not at the Bounteous Lord. In short, all these interpretations lead to the sense of 'ungratefulness to favours and bounties' and hence the expression kanud means 'ungrateful'.

Verse [100:8] **وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ** (and in his love for wealth, he is very intense.) Literally, the word **khair** means 'any good thing'. Idiomatically, the word **khair**, in Arabic, means 'wealth' implying that 'wealth' is an embodiment of goodness and benefit. However, some type of wealth can involve man in untold misery. In the Hereafter, this will be the position of all wealth acquired through unlawful means. Sometimes, wealth in this world too can prove to be nuisance and disaster. Nonetheless, according to Arabic idiom, worldly goods in this verse have been described as **khair** as the same word in another verse [2:180] **إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا** "...he leaves some wealth...". In this verse as well the word **khair** means 'wealth'.

To recap, having taken oath by war-horses, the subject states two points:

- 1) man is ungrateful or he is a blamer of his Lord who remembers misfortunes and forgets His favours; and
- 2) he is passionate in his love for wealth.

Both these points are evil, rationally as well as from the Shari'ah point of view. These statements warn man against these evils. The evil of ingratitude is quite obvious and needs no elaboration, but the evil of man's violent love for wealth is not that obvious, and needs some elaboration. Wealth is the axis of man's needs and necessities. Shari'ah has not only permitted its acquisition, but it has also made its acquisition obligatory to the degree of his needs. Therefore, what is condemned in the verse is either the 'intense' or excessive love for wealth that makes one neglectful to one's obligations, and oblivious of the divine injunctions, or the sense is that earning

wealth, even saving it according to one's needs is though permissible, having its love in the heart is bad. Let us consider the following illustration: When man feels the need to answer the call of nature, he does it out of necessity. In fact, he makes arrangements for it, but he does not develop love or passion for it in his heart. Likewise, when he falls sick and takes medication, or even undergoes surgery, but he does not develop attachment for it in his heart. He does it only out of necessity. The believer should treat the wealth in this way: A believer should acquire wealth, as Allah has commanded him, to the extent of his need, save it, look after it and utilize it whenever and wherever necessary, but his heart should not be attached to it. How elegantly Maulana Rumi has put it in one of his verses!

"As long as the water remains under the boat, it helps the boat [to sail]; but if the water seeps into the boat, it sinks it."

Likewise, as long as the wealth floats around the boat of heart, it would be useful; but when it seeps into the heart, it will destroy it. Towards the conclusion of the Surah a warning has been sounded against these two evil qualities of man for which he will be punished in the Hereafter.

Verses [100:9-11] **أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ (٩) وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ (١٠) إِنَّ رَبَّهُم**

بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ (Does he not then know [what will happen] when all that is contained in the graves will be overturned, and all that is contained in the hearts will be exposed. Surely your Lord, that day, is fully aware of them.) Divine retribution will be meted out, in the Hereafter, to each person commensurate with his deeds, good or bad, as Allah is well-aware of them. Therefore, it would be wise for man to abstain from ingratitude, and he should not have such a violently passionate love for wealth and indulgence in worldly riches as to be unable to separate the good from the bad.

Special Note

The current set of verses describes these evil qualities of man in general terms, while Prophets (A.S), friends of Allah and many of His righteous servants are free from these evil qualities or from any earthly attachments. They acquire wealth through lawful means and abstain from acquiring it through unlawful means. They are ever so grateful to Allah for the wealth He has given them and spend it in the way of Allah. So how these evils are attributed to man in general terms? The answer is that most people have these evil qualities, but this does not imply that all, without any exception, are characterized by these qualities. The upright people are excluded from the general statement. Some of the scholars restrict the word 'man' to 'unbelievers'. These two evil qualities are the essential characteristics of unbelievers, and if they are found in a Muslim [God forbid!], he needs to reflect and be careful. Allah knows best!

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Adiyat Ends here](#)

101. The Striking Event (Al-Qari'ah)

This Surah is Makki and has 11 verses

أَلْقَارِعَةُ (١) مَا أَلْقَارِعَةُ (٢) وَمَا أَذْرَبِكَ مَا أَلْقَارِعَةُ (٣) يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ
الْمَبْثُوثِ (٤) وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ (٥) فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ (٦) فَهُوَ فِي
عَيْشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ (٧) وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ (٨) فَأُمُّهُ (٩) هَاوِيَةٌ (٩) وَمَا أَذْرَبِكَ مَا هِيَ
(١٠) نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ (١١)

Translation

The Striking Event! [1]

What is the Striking Event? [2]

And what may let you know what the Striking Event is? [3]

(It will happen) on a day when people will be like scattered moths, [4]

and the mountains will be like carded wool. [5]

Then, the one whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy [6]

will be in a happy life. [7]

But he whose scales are light, [8]

his abode will be Abyss. [9]

And what may let you know what that (Abyss) is? [10]

A blazing fire! [11]

Commentary

Human Deeds, Good or Bad, will be Weighed

This Surah mentions the weighing of human deeds. He whose scales are heavy will be led to Paradise, and he whose scales are light will be led to Hell. Please see Ma'arifur Qur'an, Vol. 3/ pp 539-547, for a full and complete analysis of the Weighing of human deeds. The analysis also allays the doubts raised against the concept of weighing of deeds.

Ma'arifur Qur'an, Vol. 3/ pp 539-547 (Reproduced in Full)

وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ (٨) فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (٨) وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ (٩)
فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يِظْمُونَ (٩) وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعِيشًا قَلِيلًا مَا تَشْكُرُونَ

Translation

And the Weighing on that day is definite. So, those whose scales are heavy, they are the successful. [8]

And those whose scales are light, they are those who have brought loss to themselves, as they used to be unjust to Our verses. [9]

And We gave you a place on earth, and made for you therein the means of living. Little you are grateful. [10]

Commentary

In the first verse, it was said: **وَأَلْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ** (And the Weighing on that day is definite). It means that the weighing of good and bad deeds on the day of Judgement is due and true. There is no room for doubt in it. Here, the hint given is that let no one be deceived by the idea that things which usually get to be weighed or measured are things having some weight or heaviness. Human deeds, good or bad, have no body or mass which could be weighed. How, then, would deeds be weighed? First of all, the reason is that the authority of Allah is absolute. He is powerful over everything. Why then, would it be necessary that something we cannot weigh could not be weighed by Allah Almighty as well? Then, other than that, we have before us, in our time, countless new instruments which claim to weigh or measure anything in the world. They no more need the traditional balance or scales or rod or tip. Modern instruments can weigh what nobody ever thought could be weighed, air, electric current, heat, cold, and so many other things. A meter is all you need. Now, if Allah Almighty, the Maker of makers, in His perfect power, could weigh or measure human deeds - with or without a device - what is there in it which would make it to be something far out to believe? Leaving this aside for a moment, the Creator of the Universe does have the power to transform our deeds at some time into a material presence, even give it some shape or form (interesting that people would believe something like this happening in a Spielberg movie, yet squirm at the religious view of things as would come to pass). There are many Al).adlth from the Holy Prophet ~J ~ illl.)...:> which confirm that human deeds will appear in particular shapes and forms during Barzakh (the post-death - pre-resurrection state) and Mahshar (Resurrection). Good deeds of a person will, in forms beautified, become the companions of the grave - and evil deeds would crawl all over in the form of snakes and scorpions. A l:adlth says that a person who has not paid the Zakah due against his wealth, that wealth will reach his grave in the shape of a poisonous snake to bite him and say: I am your wealth, I am your treasure.

It is said in a Saheeh Hadith that Al-Baqarah and 'Al-'Imran, the two Surahs of the Holy Qur'an will come on the plains of Resurrection in the form of two dense clouds and cast their shade over those who used to recite these Surahs.

Similarly, there are countless narrations from Hadith, all authentic and reported reliably, which indicate that once these good and bad deeds of ours pass away from this mortal world, they will transform into particular shapes and forms and be there on the plains of Resurrection in a material presence.

There are even verses of the Qur'an which confirm it. It is said **وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا** that is, 'what people had done in the world, they would find that present there - 18:49.' In a verse of Surah Az-Zalzalah, it is said:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ۗ (٧) وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ۗ (٨)

'whoever does good even the weight of a particle shall see it on the day of Qiyamah, and whoever does evil even the weight of a particle shall see that too in Qiyamah.' Things as described here obviously lend to the possibility that human deeds will come in some nuclear form of existence. This is something which needs no further enterpretations as what is crucial is the compensation of deeds which will exist and be perceptible.

Under these circumstances, weighing deeds does not remain something difficult or far out. But, human beings are what they are. Given their limited framework of reasoning, they take everything on the analogy of their own present state of being and this is the criterion they have to judge things around them. So used to it they are that they just cannot act otherwise. It is this state of being of theirs which the Qur'an has put in} words which appear in Surah Ar-Rum: **يَعْمُونَ ظَهْرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَفْلُونَ**. It means that 'these people know an obvious aspect of mortal life (and that too, not the whole of it) and about the Hereafter they are totally heedless - 30:7.' In their onslaught on the obvious and the perceptible, they will shake the earth and the space to find out the unfound, but the great field of the reality of things the unfolding of which has to take place in the 'Aakhirah is something they are totally unaware of.

Therefore, in this verse, special care has been taken while saying: **وَأَتَّوَزَنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ** (And the Weighing on that day is definite) so that man, all infatuated with the obvious, may not be able to deny the weighing of deeds in the Hereafter - which stands proved from the Holy Qur'an and is the collective belief of the Muslim Ummah.

That there will be the weighing of deeds on the day of Qiyaamah is a subject dealt with in many verses of the Holy Qur'an from various angles, and in Hadith, its details abound.

The Weighing of Deeds: A Doubt and its Answer

Out of the details on the weighing of deeds appearing in the Madith of the Holy Prophet the first to ponder about is the oft-narrated statement that, on the day of Resurrection, the heaviest in weight shall be the Kalimah: (There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah). The scalepan which holds this Kalimah shall outweigh the rest.

Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban, Baihaqi and Hakim have reported from Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (RA) that the Holy Prophet said: A man of my Ummah will be brought before the entire creation on the plain of Resurrection. Then, ninety nine of his Books of Deeds will be brought in. Each scroll of his Book of Deeds will be as long as far he could see - and all these Books of Deeds shall be full of sins and evils. This person will be asked if everything written in these Books of Deeds was correct, or had the angels done any injustice to him, or had they written anything there which was not as it happened. He will admit: O my Lord, whatever is written there is correct. But, in his heart, he will be nervous while worrying about how would he find his deliverance from this situation. That will be the time Allah Ta'ala will say: Today, there is no injustice for anyone. Against all your sins, We have a testimonial of your being good, with Us, written where is your Kahmah? '(there is no god but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger). That person will say: O my Lord, what weight this little note will carry against such a big black Book of Deeds? Then, it would be said: No injustice will be done to you. Then, all those Books of Deeds full of sins will be placed in one scalepan and in the other, this note with the Kalimah of 'Tman on it. The scalepan with the Kalimah on it shall weigh heavier and the scalepan with all those sins on it shall turn to be lighter. After having related this event, the Holy Prophet said: Nothing can weigh more than the name of Allah. (Mazhari)

According to a narration from Sayyidna Ibn 'Umar (RA) in Musnad al-Bazzar and Mustadrak Hakim, the Holy Prophet said: At the time of his death, Nuh (AS) assembled his sons around him and said: I order you to abide by the Kalimah: (La Ilaha Illallah) because, should the heavens and the earth be placed in one pan of the scale and the Kalimah: (La Ilaha Illallah) in the other, the pan containing the Kalimah shall invariably remain heavier. Other narrations on the same subject have been reported from Sayyidna Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas and Sayyidna Abu-ad-Darda' (RA) supported by reliable transmitting authorities and are spread over in various Ahadith collections. (Mazhari)

According to these narrations, a believing Muslim who recites the Kalimah shall always find the scale heavier in his favour, no matter how many sins he carries on him. But, many other verses of the Qur'an and narrations of Hadith prove that the good and bad deeds of a Muslim shall be weighed. For some, the scalepan with good deeds will be heavier, for some others, that of sins. The one whose scalepan with good deeds is heavier will have his salvation while the one whose scalepan with sins and evils is heavier will have his punishment. For example, in Surah Al-Anbiya' it is said:

**وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ
أُنْتِهَا بِهَا وَكْفَىٰ بِنَا حَسِيبِينَ**

And We shall set up Scales of Justice on the day of Judgement. Then, not the least injustice will be done to anyone. And if there be (good or bad) the weight of a mustard seed, We shall bring it (to account on the scale for deeds) and We are sufficient to take account - 21:47.

And in Surah Al-Qari'ah, it is said:

**(٥) فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ ۖ (٦) فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ (٧) وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ ۖ
(٨) فَأَمَّهُ هَٰوِيَةٌ**

Whoever has his scale of good deeds heavy will be in life blissful and whoever has his scale of good deeds lighter, his place will be Hell -101:6-9.

Explaining these verses, Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas (RA) said: The believer whose good deeds on the scale are heavier will go to Jannah with his deeds - and the one whose evil deeds on the scale are heavier will be sent to Jahannam with his deeds. (Reported by Al-Baihaqi in Shu'ab al-Tman - Mazhari)

Based on a narration from Sayyidna Abii Hurairah (RA) it has been reported in Abii Dawud: If a shortage is found in the Faraiej. of a servant, Allah Ta'ala will ask if that servant has some Nauefil to his credit. If they are there, the shortage of the obligatory will be compensated by the voluntary. (Mazhari)

The outcome of all these verses and Hadith narrations is that the scale will some times be heavier in favour of a believer and lighter at some others. Therefore, scholars of Tafsir say that this shows that weighing in Mahshar (Resurrection) will be twice. First to be weighed will be belief and disbelief through which distinction will be made between a believer and a disbeliever. In this weighing whoever has even just the declaration of faith (Kalimah) in the Book of Deeds, his or her scale will become heavier and he or she will be separated from the group of disbelievers. Then, there will be a second weighing of good and bad deeds. In this, the good deeds of one believer will be heavy on the scale while the other will find the scale heavy with evil deeds - and everyone will have his or her punishment or reward in accordance with that. Thus, the subject as dealt with in all these verses and narrations of Hadith becomes synchronized. (Bayan al-Qur'an)

How Would Deeds Be Weighed?

According to a Hadith narrated by Sayyidna Abu Hurairah (RA) which appears in Al-Bukhari and Muslim, the Holy Prophet said: On the day of Qiyamah, there will come some heavy people whose weight, in the sight of Allah, will not be worth the weight of even a mosquito - and, in support, he recited the verse of the Qur'an: **نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ**

الْقِيَامَةِ وَرَثًا that is, on the day of Qiyamah, We will not give them any weight - 18:105 (Mazhari).

And featuring the virtues (manaqib) of Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (RA) there is a Hadith in which the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: His legs look so thin but, by Him in whose hands lies my life, on the balance of justice for the day of Qiyamah, their weight shall be more than the weight of the mountain of Uhud.

Then, there is the Hadith of Sayyidna Abu Hurairah (RA) with which Imam al-Bukhari has concluded his book, the Sahih. In it, it is said that there are two words very light when said but very heavy when weighed on the Scale of Deeds, and with Allah, they are dear, and they are: (**Subhanullahi wa bi-hamdihi** : Pure is Allah and Praised is He) **Subhanullahil Adheem**: Pure is Allah the Great).

As narrated by Sayyidna 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (RA) the Holy Prophet used to say that saying: **Subhanullah** fills half of the pan on the scale of deeds while saying: (Alhamdulillah) fills the other half.

Abu Dawiid, Tirmidhi and Ibn Hibban report with sound authority from Sayyidna Abu Darda (RA) that the Holy Prophet said: No deed will be heavier than good morals on the scale of deeds.

And to Sayyidna Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (RA) the Holy Prophet said: I tell you about two things doing which is not hard for anyone - but, on the scale of deeds, they shall be the heaviest –

- 1) good morals, and
- 2) usually observing silence, that is, not talking unless necessary.

In his Kitab al-Zuhd, Imam Ahmad has reported from Sayyidna Hazim (RA) that angel Jibra'il al-Amin came to the Holy Prophet while someone there was weeping in fear of Allah. Jibra'il al-Amin said: All human deeds will be weighed, but human tears flowing from the fear of Allah and 'Aakhirah is a deed which would not be weighed. Rather, one such tear would put off the wildest fire of Jahannam. (Mazhari)

A Hadith says about a person present on the plain of Resurrection. When he will look at his Book of Deeds, he will notice very few good deeds there. He' will be nervous. All of a sudden, something will rise like a cloud and fall right into the scalepan of his good deeds. He will be told that this was in return for his teaching of the faith which multiplied onwards when people acted in accordance with it, and there was a share kept aside for him with each single follower of his teaching. (Mazhari, from Sayyidna Ibn al-Mubarak)

Tabarani reports from Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas (RA) that the Holy Prophet said: A person who goes to the graveyard with the Janazah, two karats will be placed on his scale of deeds. Other narrations say that the weight of this karat will be equal to the mountain of Uhud.

He has also reported from Sayyidna Jabir (RA) that the Holy Prophet said: One's first deed to be placed on the scale of deeds will be the good deed of spending on one's family and taking care of their needs.

Imam al-Dhahabi has reported from Sayyidna 'Imran ibn Husayn (RA) the Holy Prophet said: On the day of Qiyamah, when the ink used by the 'Ulama to write about the religion and its rules will be weighed against the blood of shuhadil (martyrs), the weight of the ink used by 'Ulama will turn out to be more than the weight of the blood of martyrs.

There are many more Ahadith relating to the weighing of deeds as in Qiyamah. Some of them have been mentioned here as they shed light on the merit and worth of particular deeds.

The mode of weighing deeds as mentioned in these narrations of Ahadith seems to be different. Some indicate that the doers of deeds will be the ones weighed and it will be they who would be heavy or light according to their deeds. Some others show that their Books of Deeds will be weighed. Still others prove that deeds themselves would become personified and they will be measured. 'I'afsir authority, Ibn Kathir, after having reported all these narrations, has said that it is possible that the weighing is repeated several times in different

ways and, it is obvious, the full reality of these matters is known to Allah Ta'ala alone - and for doing what one does in real life, it is, for all practical purposes, not necessary to know this reality. Quite sufficient for us is to know that our deeds shall be weighed. If our deeds turn out to be lighter on the scale of deeds, we shall deserve punishment. Then, it is an entirely different matter that Allah Ta'ala, in His grace, by Himself, or by the intercession of a Nabiyy or Waliyy, forgives us our sins and we stand delivered from punishment.

As for the likelihood that some people will have their salvation on the sole virtue of their having said and believed in the Kalimah of 'Iman (La Illiha Illallah) and all sins accruing to them will be forgiven because of that - as narrated in some of these narrations - that belongs to the exception mentioned above and which is beyond the general regulation and is a special manifestation of the grace and mercy of Allah Ta'ala.

In the two verses the Tafsir of which you have just read through, sinners were warned against the disgrace on the plain of Resurrection and the Divine punishment that would come in its wake. Then comes the third verse which mentions the blessings of Allah Ta'ala and persuades people to accept truth and act accordingly by suggesting that Allah has bestowed on them full ownership and control on the earth and has opened thousands of avenues of comfort for them. It is as if the Master of the Universe has made this whole earth and what it contains a giant warehouse of human needs and comforts, a most comprehensive inventory of that inside it. Now, what is left for human beings to do is to learn to go in there, take out what they need and use it how they will. Science and technology are essentially no more than a trained method of taking out things created by the Master of the Universe and stored in this warehouse, properly and nicely, and use it soundly and beneficially. One who is short on sense and manners and does not know how to take things out from this warehouse, or does not understand how to use what he has taken out, he remains deprived of their benefits. An intelligent person benefits from both.

In short, Allah Ta'ala has placed all that human beings need on and in this earth which demands that they should be grateful to Him all the time under all conditions. But, human beings are prone to heedlessness. They would not take much time to forget the favours of their Creator and Master - only to return to the same world of things. So, at the end of the verse, it is in a mode of complaint that it was said: **قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ** (Little you are receptive to advice).

TAFSEER OF SURAH NOW RESUMES!

We have also explained there that it appears from reconciliation of conflicting narrations and Qur'anic verses that the weighing on Plain of Resurrection will take place twice. The first weighing will be to separate the believers from the non-believers. Anyone whose Book of Deeds is put on the scale and contains the belief ('Iman) will be heavy, and the scale of anyone whose Ledger of Deeds does not contain 'Irriyan will be light. At this stage, the believers will be separated from the non-believers. Weighing on the second time will be to distinguish between good and evil deeds of the believers. The reference, in the present Surah, is probably to the first weighing in which the scale of every believer will be heavy regardless of his other deeds, while the scale of an unbeliever will be light, even though he might have performed some good acts.

It is explained in Mazhari that the Holy Qur'an generally contrasts the unbelievers and righteous believers, when speaking of retribution [reward or punishment], because the latter are the perfect believers. As for the believers who have performed righteous as well as unrighteous deeds, the Qur'an is generally silent on the issue. However, the principle may be noted that on the Day of Judgement human deeds will not be counted, but weighed. Fewer good deeds with high degree of faith and sincerity, and in accordance with Sunnah will be heavier than many good deeds - prayers, fasting, charity and pilgrimage with lesser degree of faith and sincerity, or not completely in accordance with Sunnah.

102. Competetion in Amassing (At-Takathur)

This Surah is Makki and has 8 verses

أَلْهَيْكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ (١) حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ (٢) كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ (٣) ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ (٤)
كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ (٥) لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ (٦) ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ (٧) ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ
يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ (٨)

Translation

You are distracted by mutual competition in amassing (worldly benefits), [1]

until you reach the graves. [2]

No! (This is not a correct attitude.) You will soon know (the reality). [3]

Again, you will soon know. [4]

No! if you have had sure knowledge (of the Hereafter, you would not have been so distracted) [5]

You will certainly see the Hell, [6]

then you will see it with an eye of certainty. [7]

Then you will be asked about all the pleasures (you enjoyed in the world). [8]

Special Merit of Surah At-Takathur

The Messenger of Allah is reported to have once asked the noble Companions: "Is there anyone from amongst you who has the strength to recite one thousand verses a day?" The blessed Companions replied: "Who can recite a thousand verses a day?" The Holy Prophet said: "Can you not recite Surah At-Takathur?" This implies that Surah At-Takathur equals in weight and worth to a thousand verses, thus stressing its great importance. [Mazhari with reference to Hakim and Baihaqi on the authority of Ibn Umar].

Commentary

Warning Against Materialistic Attitude

Verse [1] **أَلْهَيْكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ** (You are distracted by mutual competition in amassing [worldly benefits].) The word takathur is derived from the root kathrah, and means 'to amass much wealth'. Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas and Hasan Basri have assigned this interpretation to it. Qatadah says that this word is also used in the sense of 'taking pride in the abundance of material goods'. Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas reports that the Messenger of Allah recited this verse and explained its meaning, thus: "Acquiring wealth but not paying out of it the obligatory dues." [Qurtubi].

Verse [2] **حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ** (until you reach the graves.) Here the words 'reaching the graves' mean 'to die and be buried in the graves', as the following Prophetic Hadith bears testimony to this interpretation. Referring to verse [2] of this Surah, the Messenger of Allah said: "until death overtakes you" [Ibn Kathir, from by Ibn Abi Hatim]. The verse thus implies that many people are engrossed in acquiring worldly goods and racing each other in wealth and children etc. and remain neglectful of the Hereafter till death comes upon them, and then they are seized by the divine punishment. Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Shikhkhair reports that one day he visited the Holy Prophet while the latter was reciting Surah At-Takathur and was saying:

"The Son of 'Adam says: 'My wealth, my wealth.' But you do not reap any benefit from your wealth except for that which you ate and you finished it, or that which you clothed yourself with and you wore it out, or that which you gave as charity and you have spent it."

And in a narration by Muslim: "Everything else other than that will go away, and he will leave it for other people. (i.e. inheritors)" [Ibn Kathir and Qurtubi as transmitted by Muslim, Tirmidhi and Ahmad].

Imam Bukhari records from Sayyidna Anas that the Messenger of Allah said:

"If the Son of 'Adam has a valley of gold, he would love to have two valleys, and nothing but the dust of grave will fill his mouth. And Allah accepts the repentance of him who turns to Him in penitence."

Sayyidna 'Ubayy Ibn Ka'b , referring to the Tradition quoted above, says, "We used to think that this was a part of the Qur'an until the first verse of Surah At-Takathur was revealed." It seems that the Holy Prophet recited the verse and interpreted it in his own words. As a result, some of the Companions were under the impression that the Prophetic words were part of the Qur'an. Later on, when the Surah was recited in its entirety, it did not contain the Prophetic words. This made them realize that the Prophetic words were actually of explanatory nature, and not part of the Qur'an.

Verse [102:5] **كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْمُونَ عِمْ أَتَقِين** (No! if you have had sure knowledge..) The word 'if requires a principal clause that seems missing here, but the context suggests that the sense is the following: "If you had the sure knowledge of accountability on the Day of Judgement, you would not have engrossed yourselves in mutual competition in acquiring worldly goods and taking pride in their abundance."

Verse [102:7] **ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ أَتَقِين** (...then you will see it with an eye of certainty.) The phrase "ain-ul-yaqin" (translated above as 'eye of certainty') refers to the certainty attained by physical observation, and this is the highest degree of certainty. Sayyidna Ibn Abbas reports that when Holy Prophet Musa (A.S) was on the mount of Tur, his people started worshipping a calf. Allah informed him about this while he was still on the mountain. This piece of information did not affect Musa (A.S) so much. However, when he returned and saw the Children of Israel, with his own eyes, worshipping the calf, he became so indignant that the tablets of Torah involuntarily fell from his hands. [Transmitted by Ahmad and Tabarani with an authentic chain of narrators, as quoted by Mazhari].

Verse [102:8] **ثُمَّ لَنَسْأَلَنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ** (Then you will be asked about all the pleasures [you enjoyed in the world].) This means that, on the Day of Judgment, all of you will be questioned whether you had shown gratitude towards Allah's favors, or did you misuse them and were ungrateful to Allah? Some of these favours and bounties are explicitly mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'an: **إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عِنْدَهُ مَسْئُولًا** (...Surely, the ear, the eye and the heart - each one of them shall be interrogated about.) [17:36]

These organs and their faculties comprehend millions of blessings of Allah, and man will be questioned as to how he used them every moment of his life.

The Messenger of Allah is reported to have said that first question that will be put by Allah to every person is: "Did I not give you good health, and did I not give you cold water to quench your thirst?" (Tirmidhi, and Ibn Hibban, with rating as sahih, from Abu Hurairah , as quoted by Ibn Kathir)

The Messenger of Allah is also reported to have said that no man will be able to move from his place unless he answers five questions:

- 1) How did he spend his life?;
- 2) In what pursuits did he expend his youthful energy?;
- 3) How did he earn his wealth - (by lawful means or unlawful means?);
- 4) Where did he spend his wealth - (in lawful ways or unlawful ways?;) and
- 5) Did he act upon the knowledge Allah gave him? (Bukhari).

Mujahid, the leading authority on Tafsir, says that this question on the Day of Judgement relates to every delight of the world that he enjoyed - whether it is in connection with food, clothes, house, wife, children, kingdom, government or honor. Qurtubi, having cited this, concludes that this is absolutely true, because the question does not specify any particular blessing.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah At-Takathur Ends here](#)

103. The Time (Al-'Asr)

This Surah is Makki and has 3 verses

وَالْعَصْرِ (١) إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ (٢) إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا
بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ (٣)

Translation

I swear by the Time, [1]

man is in a state of loss indeed, [2]

except those who believed and did righteous deeds, and advised each other for truth, and advised each other for patience. [3]

Virtue of [Studying] Surah al-'Asr

Sayyidna 'Ubaidullah Ibn Hisn reports that whenever two Companions of the Holy Prophet met, they would not part company until one of them had recited Surah Al-'Asr in its entirety to the other. [Transmitted by At-Tabarani]. Imam Shafi'i says that if people thought about Surah Al-'Asr carefully, it would be enough for their guidance. It is a concise but comprehensive Surah, which in three verses, outlines a complete way of human life based on the Islamic worldview.

In this Surah, Allah swears an oath by the 'Time' and says that mankind is in a state of loss; exception, however, is made of people who are characterized by four qualities: [1] faith; [2] righteous deeds; [3] advising each other for Truth; and [4] advising each other for patience. This is the only path to salvation in this world, as well as in the next world. The Qur'anic prescription comprises, as we have just seen, of four elements. The first two of them relate to man's own personal betterment, and the other two relate to other people's guidance and reform. [Ibn Kathir].

Commentary

Relationship Between 'Time' and 'Human Loss'

The first point we need to analyze here is the relationship between the 'oath of time' and 'its subject' because there needs to be a relationship between an 'oath' and its 'subject' The commentators, generally, state that all conditions of man, his growth and development, his movements, his actions and morality - all take place within the space of 'Time'. Man will lose the capital of his existence. Hours, days, months, and years of life pass quickly, spiritual and material potentialities decline, and abilities fade. Man is like a person who possesses great capital and, without his permission and will, every day, a portion of that capital is taken away. This is the nature of life in this world; the nature of continual loss. How well this has been put poetically:

"Your life comprises a few breaths that can be counted; when one of them is sent out, a part of your life has diminished."

Allah has granted man the invaluable capital of his life, so that he may invest it in profitable business venture. If he invests his capital of life sensibly in good works, there will be no limit to the profitable returns; but if he invests it unwisely in evil works, then, let alone attracting profitable returns, he will even lose his capital, and. In addition, he will incur the dreadful scourge of committing numerous sins. If however a person did not invest his life-capital in good deeds or in evil deeds, then he, at least, loses both the profit as well as the capital. This is not merely a poetic imagery, but is supported by a Prophetic Hadith, according to which the Messenger of Allah »ft is reported to have said:

"When a person wakes up in the morning, he invests his soul or life in a business enterprise: some of the investors free or save the capital from loss and others destroy it."

The Qur'an itself has used the word *tijarah* in relation to 'faith' and 'righteous deed', thus **هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ** **تِجْرَةٍ تُنجِيكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ** [61:10]"...shall I tell you about a trade that saves you from a painful punishment?"

Since 'Time' is man's capital of life, the man himself is the trader. Under normal circumstances, his capital is not a frozen thing that may be kept for a while and used up later when the need arises. The capital is fluid or flowing all the time, every minute and every second. The man who invests it needs to be very wise, intelligent and agile, so that he is able to swiftly and readily reap the profit from a flowing capital. One of the old scholars said that he had learnt the meaning of this verse from an ice-seller whose trade required utmost diligence, and if he were neglectful for a moment, his entire capital would melt away. That is why this verse has sworn an oath by the 'time' to indicate that it is a melting capital, and the only way to escape loss is to take every moment of his life as valuable, and use it for the four acts mentioned in the Surah.

Another possible reason for swearing by 'Time' may be that the 'Time' (in the sense of history) bears testimony to the fact mentioned in the Surah. If one thinks on the causes of the rise and decline of individuals and nations, he would certainly believe that it is only these four acts (mentioned in the forthcoming verses) that may ensure the real success and betterment of mankind. Whoever has ever abandoned them has suffered a great loss, as is evident from numerous events recorded by history.

Let us now study the 'four principles' mentioned in the Surah. As pointed out earlier, faith and righteous deeds are related to man's moral and spiritual growth and development. They are not in need of elaboration. However, the last two principles ['advising each other for truth'] and ['advising each other for patience'] require some elaboration.

The infinitive *tawasi* is derived from *wasiyyah* which means 'to advise somebody strongly and effectively about the best thing to do in a particular situation'. The term *wasiyyah* also refers to a 'will or testament' where a testator advises his executor regarding the disposal of his estate on his death.

The two parts are in fact two chapters of the same testament: [1] advice to truth; and [2] advice to patience and fortitude. These two concepts may be explained in different ways. One way to explain them is that *haqq* ('truth') refers to the package of 'correct faith' and 'good deeds', and *sabr* ('patience') refers to abstinence from all sins and evil deeds. Thus the first concept refers to 'enjoining good actions' and the second concept refers to 'forbidding evil actions'. The cumulative sense of the Surah is that believers have been enjoined not only to adopt right faith and good deeds themselves, but to advise others strongly and effectively to adopt them, and thus help in the creation of a healthy atmosphere around them.

It is also possible to interpret 'Truth' as referring to articles of faith, and to interpret 'patience' as referring to all good actions and abstinence from evil deeds. The word *sabr*, originally meaning 'to withhold oneself and to bind oneself', encompasses binding oneself down to the performance of righteous deeds and abstaining from sins.

Hafiz Ibn Taimiyyah has stated in one of his monographs that there are normally two factors that restrain a person from faith and righteous deeds: The first cause is some doubts about the true faith. When such doubts arise in the mind of people, it destroys their faith and leaves them confused and confounded. As a result, it adversely affects their righteous deeds. The second cause is the selfish desires that stop man from doing good, and involve him in evil deeds. In this situation, he theoretically believes that he should do good and abstain from sins, but his selfish desires lead him to stray from the right path. The current verse indicates to remove both

causes of one's distraction. By stressing upon 'advice of truth' it has catered to the first cause, and that it should be removed by reforming others on theoretical and academic level, and by emphasizing on 'advice of patience' it has taken care of the second cause by enjoining upon the Muslims to advise others to give up the base desires and remain firm against their evil demands. Put differently, 'enjoining the truth' means 'improving the knowledge of Muslims or their intellectual development' and 'enjoining patience' means 'improving the practical life of Muslims'.

Need to Salvage the Entire Muslim Society

This Surah lays down the important principle of guidance for the Muslims that inviting other Muslims to keep to the true faith and good deeds is as much necessary as their own submission to the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. Without sincere efforts, to the best of one's ability, to invite others to the right path, one's own good deeds are not enough to one's salvation. Especially, if a person does not take care of the spiritual and moral welfare of his wife, children and family and turns a blind eye to their unrighteous deeds, he is blocking his way to salvation - no matter how pious he himself might be. Therefore, the Qur'an and the Sunnah make it obligatory upon every Muslim to do his best to invite others to the good deeds, and warn them against the evil acts. Unfortunately, let alone the general public, many learned people are lax in this matter. They think it is sufficient for them to be concerned about their own moral and spiritual well-being. They are not concerned about the well-being of their family and children. May Allah grant us the ability to act upon this verse.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-'Asr Ends here](#)

104. The Backbiter (Al-Humazah)

This Surah is Makki and has 9 verses

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ (١) الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ (٢) يُحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ (٣) كَلَّا
لِيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ (٤) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ (٥) نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْقُودَةُ (٦) الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى
الْأَفْئِدَةِ (٧) إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّوَصَّدَةٌ (٨) فِي عَمَدٍ مُمَدَّدَةٍ (٩)

Translation

Woe to every backbiter, derider [1]

who accumulates wealth and counts it. [2]

He thinks that his wealth has made him eternal. [3]

Never! He will certainly be thrown into the Crusher. [4]

And what may let you know what the Crusher is? [5]

It is Allah's kindled fire, [6]

that will peep into the hearts. [7]

It will be closed on them, [8]

in outstretched columns. [9]

Commentary

Warning Against Dreadful End of Those Committing Three Obnoxious Sins

This Surah warns of the severe punishment on three grave sins, and then highlights the nature of that severe punishment. The three sins are backbiting, deriding and selfish hoarding of wealth. The words hamz and lamz are used in several senses. Most commentators agree that the word hamz, from which is derived the word humazah, means to 'backbite', that is, to speak ill of a person behind his back. The word lamz, from which is derived the word lumazah, means to 'slander' or 'to deride', that is, to speak ill of a person to his face. Both these sins are morally and socially obnoxious and deadly. The Qur'an and the Sunnah have sounded a stern warning against these sins. However, 'backbiting' is, from one perspective, worse than 'slander'. 'Backbiting' is worse because the ill of a person is spoken behind his back; the victim is not present to defend himself and put an end to it; thus the sin continues to be committed to a greater and increasing degree. 'Slander', on the other hand, though an obnoxious sin in itself, is relatively less in degree than backbiting, because the victim is present to defend himself and put an end to face-to-face insulting or fault-finding with him. From another perspective 'slander' is worse than 'backbiting', because to speak ill of a person to his face is tantamount to insulting him and denigrating him. This is morally and socially more harmful and hurting, and therefore its punishment is more dreadful. According to a Hadith, the Holy Prophet has said,

"The worst servants of Allah are those who speak ill of someone, creating enmity between friends and finding fault with innocent people."

The third evil quality denounced severely in this Surah is greed, that is, the selfish hoarding of wealth, against which is the stern warning of the dreadful end of those who have passion for worldly riches. This verse, however, refers to the love of, and passion for, wealth which is accumulated and counted over and over again. Other verses

and Ahadith bear testimony to the fact that amassing of wealth in principle is not prohibited or sinful. Therefore, verse [2] must be interpreted in the light of those verses and traditions. This verse purports to say that anyone who accumulates wealth and does not pay his obligatory dues or has greed for wealth that leads him to pride and arrogance, or has love of wealth that engrosses him in the hoarding of wealth so profoundly that he forgets his religious obligations, his practice is condemned in the strongest terms, and a person attaching such profound love, greed and passion for material riches will suffer eternal perdition as described in the verses that follow.

Verse [104:7] **تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى النَّفْسِ** (that will peep into the hearts). In other words, the fire of Hell will reach their hearts. The basic property of fire is to burn every particle of the things that fall into it. When people are put into the Hell-fire, it will devour every limb and organ of the body until it reaches their heart, but the person will not die. This characteristic of the Hell-fire is especially highlighted in the verse because the fire of this world kills the person even before reaching the heart. The fire of the Hell, on the other hand, will reach the heart in the state of life, and man will experience the torture of the burning of the heart while alive.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-'Humazah Ends here](#)

105. The Elephant (Al-Fil)

This Surah is Makki and has 5 verses

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ (١) أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضَلُّيلٍ (٢) وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا
أَبَابِيلَ (٣) تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ (٤) فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ (٥)

Translation

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant? [1] Has He not turned their plan into nullity? [2] And He sent upon them flying birds in flocks, [3] throwing upon them stones of baked clay, [4] and thus He turned them into an eaten-up chaff. [5]

Commentary

The Subject-Matter of the Surah

This Surah refers to the story of the People of the Elephants who came with an army of elephants for the purpose of destroying the House of Allah in (The Holy Ka'bah) in Makkah. But their plan backfired and the Divine scourge overtook them. Allah destroyed the army with a flock of ordinary birds. Thus their plans were foiled and thwarted.

When Did the Event Take Place?

This event took place in the very year in which the Holy Prophet was born at Makkah, according to some traditions and the popular view among the historians. [Ibn Kathir]. The scholars of hadith have taken this event as a special type of mu'jizah (miracle) of the Holy Prophet, but the term mu'jizah, in its real sense, refers to an abnormal event shown by Allah to prove the claim of a prophet to having been sent by Him. Therefore, a mu'jizah is shown after a prophet's Divine commission. However, sometimes it happens that a miraculous event takes place before a prophet's claim to prophet-hood. This, in the parlance of the scholars of hadith, is called irhas which means 'prologue or introduction'. The word irhas means a 'foundation stone' [Qamus]. As the miraculous events taking place before the advent of prophets or before their claim to prophet-hood are meant to introduce and affirm that soon a particular prophet will be Divinely commissioned, they are referred to as irhas. Many miraculous incidents of this nature [irhasat] occurred before the birth and the advent of the Holy Prophet, and one of them was the incident of the 'People of the Elephants' who were miraculously prevented by the Heavenly scourge from destroying the House of Allah.

Story of the People of the Elephants

Ibn Kathir, the leading authority on Prophetic Tradition and history, recounts the story as follows: Yemen was under the control of the rulers of Himyar. They were idolaters. Their last king was Dhu Nuwas, an idolater himself, was the enemy of the righteous Christians of his time, who believed in and worshipped One Allah. He persecuted the believers, who were opposed to idol-worship, by burning them alive. Most scholars agree that he killed, in cold blood, by throwing about 20 000 sincere and righteous Christians in his city into a large fire pit, burning them alive in an effort to get them to give up their sincere religion. This is the story of the 'People of Fire-Pit' referred to in [85:4-7]. Two men somehow managed to escape from him. They fled to Syria and took refuge with Caesar, who was himself a Christian and the emperor of Syria. They requested the emperor to avenge this cruel act of Dhu Nuwas. Caesar wrote to Najashi (Negus), the king of Abyssinia [now Ethiopia], who was closer to the home of the man. Najashi sent two governors with him: Arbat and Abrahah, along with a huge army.

The army invaded Yemen and freed the whole country from the possession of Himyar. Dhu Nuwas tried to escape, but was drowned in the sea and died. Yemen thus became part of the Abyssinian dominion and Abrahah was appointed its viceroy. However, he and Arbat fought each other until Arbat was eventually killed and Abrahah emerged victorious. The latter was appointed the commander of the Abyssinian army in Yemen, and the

governor of that region. Having captured Yemen, he built a superbly luxurious cathedral in his area. The purpose was to attract the people of Yemen to make pilgrimage to this cathedral instead of Ka'bah in Makkah. It was huge and tall so that a person standing at the bottom was not able to see the top. He decorated the structure with gold, silver and other precious gems. In short, he meant it to be an architectural masterpiece, second to none or unsurpassed in the world, to be revered by all and sundry and divert pilgrims from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to his cathedral in Yemen. He did this after he had witnessed the love and enthusiasm of the Yemeni Arabs - which were the same as those felt all over the Arabia - for the Ka'bah, with the aim of making them forsake their attachment to the Mosque of Makkah and turn instead to his new luxurious cathedral. Thus he proclaimed throughout his kingdom that no one should ever visit the Ka'bah in Makkah, and that the pilgrimage should from now on take place to his so-called 'Ka'bah' in Yemen.

Although the Arabs were idol-worshippers, the love and reverence for the religion of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) and the Ka'bah had permeated their hearts. As a result, the 'Andan, Qahtan and Quraish tribes were enraged and infuriated by this proclamation. One night, someone entered the church and defecated in it. According to other narratives, a nomadic tribe halted near the church and started a fire for their own needs. The wind on that day was blowing violently and the cathedral caught on fire and sustained much loss. When Abrahah came to know about it, and learnt that a Quraishi had done this, he swore to march to the House of Makkah and destroy it stone by stone. Thus he prepared himself and set out with a huge and powerful army, so that none might prevent him from carrying out his mission. He asked for Najashi's permission. He permitted him and sent for him, particularly for this expedition, a special elephant whose name was Mahmud. It was unusually huge in size and powerful in strength the like of which had never been seen before. The king of Abyssinia sent in eight more elephants as reinforcements for the army. Their intention was to use this extraordinary elephant to demolish the Ka'bah. They planned to do this by fastening chains to the pillars of the Ka'bah and placing the other ends around the neck of the elephant. Then they would make the elephant pull on them in order to tear down the walls of the Ka'bah [God forbid!] all at once. When the Arabs heard of Abrahah's expedition, they considered it their moral obligation to defend the Sacred House and thwart the evil plans of the conspirators. Thus, the Arabs raised a large army under the command of Dhu Nafr, a Yamenite Arab. He called the Arabs to go to war against Abrahah and fight in defense of the Sacred House, so that the enemy is unable to tear it down. The people responded to him readily and entered into battle with the enemy, but he defeated them. This was due to Allah's will that no humans should protect His House and His intent to expose the enemy to embarrassment and venerate the Sacred Sanctuary to the highest degree. Dhu Nafr was captured and taken prisoner.

The army continued on its way until it came to the settlement of the Banu Khath'am tribe. Their leader, Nufail Ibn Habib, led his entire tribe against the army, but they too were defeated and Nufail was taken prisoner. Abrahah at first decided to kill him, but at second thought he forgave him and took him as his guide to show him the way to Hijaz.

When the army approached Ta'if, the people of Thaqif went out to Abrahah. They wanted to pacify him, because they had heard about the fate of those who had resisted him previously. Also, they were afraid that he would demolish their temple consecrated in the name of their idol Al-Lat. Therefore, they did not resist him on the understanding that he would not touch the idol of Lat. He was compassionate to them, and they sent a guide with him by the name of Abu Righal. When they arrived in a place called Al-Maghmas, near Makkah, they settled there. This was the pasture where the camels of the Quraish grazed. Abrahah sent his troops on a foray to capture the camels and other grazing animals of the Makkans. They accomplished their mission. They also drove away about two hundred camels of 'Abdul-Muttalib, grandfather of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the leader of the Quraish. Abrahah then sent an emissary named Hanatah Al-Himyari to enter Makkah and bring to him the leader of the Quraish. He mandated him to convey to the leader of the Quraish his message that the king did not come to fight with the Makkans unless they stood in his way of destroying their Sacred Sanctuary. Arriving in the city,

Hanatah was directed to 'Abdul-Muttalib Ibn Hashim, to whom he communicated Abrahah's message. According to Ibn Ishaq's narration, 'Abdul-Muttalib replied: "By Allah! We too have no desire to fight him, nor do we have the might to do so. This is the Sacred Sanctuary of Allah built by His friend Prophet Ibrahim (A.S). If He wills to prevent Abrahah from pulling it down, He will protect it. And if He allows him to approach it, by Allah, we have no means to defend it." So Hanatah told him: "Come with me to Abrahah." So 'Abdul-Muttalib went with him.

When Abrahah saw him, he was highly impressed, because 'Abdul-Muttalib had the most handsome, charming and attractive personality. He descended from his throne and sat with the latter on a carpet on the ground. He then said to his interpreter to ask him: "What do you need?" 'Abdul-Muttalib replied to the interpreter: "I want the king to give back my two hundred camels which his soldiers have taken from me." Then Abrahah told his interpreter to relay to him: "When I first set my eyes on you, I admired you greatly and had great respect for you. But all that is now lost. You speak only of your two hundred camels while you fully well know that I have come to tear down your Ka'bah which is the embodiment of your religion and the religion of your forefathers. You did not even say a single word to persuade me to spare it." 'Abdul-Muttalib calmly responded: "I am the owner of my camels and am concerned about them. I am not the owner of Allah's House. The Master of the House knows how best to protect His House." Abrahah rudely rebuffed: "Your God cannot protect it from me." 'Abdul-Muttalib made a rejoinder: "Then do as you like or [take your chance!]" According to other narratives, there were other chiefs of Quraish with 'Abdul-Muttalib at the time of this negotiation. They proposed to Abrahah that if he withdrew from the Sanctuary, the entire region of Tihamah would pay him a third of their agricultural produce annually as tribute. But he turned down the offer. He then gave back 'Abdul-Muttalib's camels to him. 'Abdul-Muttalib took his camels and went back home, ordering his people to leave Makkah and seek shelter at the top of the mountains. He feared that atrocities might be committed by the army against them. Then he went with a few figures of the Quraish to the Sacred Sanctuary. He held the metal ring of the door of Ka'bah and prayed Allah to give them victory over Abrahah and his army. While hanging on to the ring of the Ka'bah's door, he earnestly implored: "We have no strength to face the army of Abrahah. So, O my Lord! Defend Your Ka'bah." Having so prayed in all earnestness, 'Abdul-Muttalib led all the Makkans to the neighbouring mountains, because they were convinced that Allah's scourge would overtake Abrahah and his troops. This is the reason why they spoke to Abrahah about their camels, and not about the House of Allah.

When the next morning dawned, Abrahah prepared to enter the sacred city of Makkah. He prepared the elephant named Mahmud and mobilized his army, and they turned the elephant towards the Ka'bah. At that moment Nufail Ibn Habib, whom Abrahah had captured earlier, approached it and stood next to it, and taking it by its ear, he said: "Return safely where you came from, because you are, verily, in the Sacred City of Allah." Then he released the elephant's ear and it knelt and sat down forthwith. The elephant drivers exerted all efforts to persuade the elephant to enter the City, but their efforts were in vain. Then they tried striking it with large iron spears and putting iron arrowheads in its trunk. They beat it on its head with axes and used hooked staffs to pull it out of its resistance and make it stand, but it refused. So they turned it towards Yemen, and it rose and walked quickly. Then they turned it towards Syria, it walked fast. Then they turned it towards the east and it walked briskly. Then they turned it towards Makkah, it knelt and sat down again.

This was one aspect of the manifestation of the Divine power unfolding itself miraculously. On the other hand, some flocks of birds were seen coming from the sea. Each bird carried three pebbles of the size of gram seeds or lentils, one in each claw and two in its beak. According to Waqidi's narration, the birds looked unusual which were never seen before. They looked smaller than pigeons, and their claws were red in colour. They flew over Abrahah's army and pelted them with the pebbles. Each pebble was more devastating than the bullet of a revolver. When it fell on anything, it tore directly through the body and settled deep in the ground. Seeing this scourge, the elephants fled in panic, except one which was harmed and destroyed by the pebble. Not all of Abrahah's men were destroyed instantly. People escaped in different directions. They died excruciatingly on their

way back. As Allah had willed that the most distressful scourge should be inflicted upon Abrahah, He did not allow him to die immediately. In fact, Allah afflicted him with a deadly disease. A kind of poison spread thoroughly through his entire body and caused every single part to decay - his limbs began to rot and separate from the rest of his body and he started losing one finger after another. His body was carried back in that state to Yemen. By the time they arrived back in San'a', the capital of Yemen, his body was broken down limb by limb until he eventually died. Two of Mahmud's (name of elephant) drivers remained in Makkah, but both of them became blind and paralyzed. Muhammad Ibn Ishaq reports that Sayyidah 'A'ishah narrates that she saw them blind and paralyzed. Her sister, Sayyidah Asma', says that she saw the two blind and paralyzed men begging. The 'People of the Elephants' is a momentous event in Arab history, which was witnessed by hundreds of Arabs. It is to this well-known historical incident that this Surah refers.

Conclusion

The miraculous event of the 'People of the Elephant' enhanced in the hearts of the entire Arabian society the love, respect and honor of the Quraish. When Arabia witnessed that Allah has, on their behalf, miraculously destroyed their enemy, they were convinced that the Quraish are men of God, and custodians of the Sacred House of Allah [Qurtubi]. That is why they were respected and protected wherever they went; although other caravans in Arabia had to fear attacks from highway robbers, the Quraish travelled untouched and enjoyed high social status. As a result, they could freely and safely carry out their commercial activities in the neighbouring states, and enjoy economic prosperity. The Surah that follows refers to these journeys and invites the Quraish to be thankful to Allah and worship Him alone for providing them with all of their needs.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Fil Ends here](#)

106. The Quraish (Al-Quraish)

This Surah is Makki and has 4 verses

لِيَأْيَلِفَ قُرَيْشٍ (١) إِلْفِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ (٢) فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ (٣) الَّذِي
أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِّنْ جُوعٍ وَعَآمَنَهُمْ مِّنْ خَوْفٍ (٤)

Translation

Because of the familiarity of the Quraish, [1]

that is, their familiarity with the trips of winter and summer, [2]

they must worship the Lord of this House, [3]

who gave them food against hunger, and gave them security against fear. [4]

Commentary

The Subject-Matter of Surah Al-Fil and Surah Al-Quraish

All commentators concur that the subject-matter of the two Surahs is so closely related that in some of the copies of the Qur'an they had been written as a single Surah without the insertion of bismillah between them. But when Sayyidna 'Uthman compiled a standard copy of the Holy Qur'an with the consensus of all the companions of the Holy Prophet, he separated these two Surahs and inserted bismillah between them, and the two Surahs.

Lexical Analysis

لِيَأْيَلِفَ قُرَيْشٍ (Because of the familiarity of the Quraish 106:1). The particle li is a preposition. According to the rules of Arabic grammar, it should be linked with another sentence. What is that sentence here? In answer to this question, different possibilities are highlighted by the exegetes.

Keeping in view the close relation of the present Surah with the previous one, some of them have held that the following sentence should be taken as understood here: "We [Allah] destroyed the 'people of the elephant' so that the Quraish, who were familiar with two commercial trips during winter and summer, may not have any obstacle in their trips, and by this trading activity they might develop a certain prestige for them and respect them." A second school of interpreters has taken the following sentence as understood: (One should wonder on the Quraish undertaking winter and summer journeys freely and safely.) A third school of interpreters says that this is the lam of ta'lil and it is syntactically related to the sentence that follows it **فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ** (they must worship the Lord of this House.) The Surah draws attention to the fact that the Quraish used to make two trade-journeys - one in winter to Yemen and another in summer to Syria. These trade-journeys made them wealthy and affluent. This was possible because Allah annihilated their enemies, the people of the elephant, in an exemplary way and created in the hearts of the people an awe and reverence for them. People held them in high esteem, respect and honor in all the territories where they went.

Superiority of Quraish

This Surah indicates that Quraish, of all the tribes of Arabia, was most acceptable in the sight of Allah. The Prophet is reported to have said: "Verily, Allah selected Kinanah from the offspring of Prophet Isma'il (A.S) and selected Quraish from the progeny of Kinanah. From the Quraish, Allah selected Banu Hashim and from Banu Hashim He selected me." [Baghawi on the authority of Wathilah Ibn Asqa']. Another Tradition reports that the Messenger of Allah said: "People will follow Quraish in matters of good as well as in matters of evil." [Muslim on the authority of Jabir, as quoted by Mazhari]. The reason for the selection of the tribes mentioned in the first

Tradition is presumably on account of their special abilities, innate capacities and natural endowments. Even in the days of paganism and ignorance, when people practiced kufr and shirk, their morals and inborn abilities were of a very high standard. They had the perfect capacity to accept the truth. This is the reason why most of the blessed Companions and Friends of Allah were Quraishites. [Mazhari]

Verse [106:2] **رَحْلَةَ الشَّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ** (...their familiarity with the trips of winter and summer.) It is a known fact that Makkah is situated in an utterly bleak and arid valley where no agricultural produce grows, nor are there any orchards where the people of Makkah could reap any kind of fruits. Therefore, the founder of the House of Allah, Sayyidna Ibrahim Khalil-ullah (A.S), prayed to Allah at the time of founding the city, thus **رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا** **بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ** [2:126] (My Lord, make this a city of peace, and provide its people with fruits) and this fact is mentioned in [28:57], thus: **يُجْبَىٰ إِلَيْهِ ثَمَرَاتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ** (to which the fruits of everything are drawn)". The Quraish thus needed to make these commercial trips out of Makkah into the neighboring territories to bring the necessities of life to their city. Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas reports that the people of Makkah were in a state of abject poverty and Hashim, the great grandfather of the Prophet, exhorted the Quraish to undertake the trading caravans to the neighboring territories. As Syria was a cold region, they went there in summer; and Yemen had a warm climate, so they went there in winter to carry out their commercial activities. They, after their commercial ventures that brought to them great profits and gains, would return to their city safely due to the respect that the people had for them, because they were the keepers and custodians of Allah's sanctuary. Therefore, whoever knew them would honor them. Even those who came to them and traveled with them, would be safe because of them. Hashim was the leader of the Quraish and maintained the economic principle to distribute among the rich and the poor members of the Quraish the gains and the profits made in their business. As a result, even the poor people lived like the wealthy people. Furthermore, an additional Divine favour was granted to them: Allah spared them the trouble of making these annual trips, in that the areas adjacent to Makkah such as Yemen, Tabalah and Harsh were made fertile, fecund and productive where corns, food grains and other agricultural produce grew abundantly - even more than their need. As a result, they had to carry these agricultural produce to Jeddah where they sold them. Thus most of the necessities were available in Jeddah. The people of Makkah, instead of undertaking the two long journeys, went to Jeddah, merely two stations away, to bring their necessities of life. In the current verse, Allah mentions His favour upon them.

Verse [106:3] **فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ** (they must worship the Lord of this House.) Having mentioned the Divine favors, the Quraish are especially enjoined to express their gratitude to 'the Lord of this House'. Here, out of many attributes of Allah, 'the Lord of this House' is singled out, because it was this House that became the source and fountain of all blessings for them.

Verse [106:4] **الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِّنْ جُوعٍ وَعَآمَنَهُمْ مِّنْ خَوْفٍ** (Who gave them food against hunger, and gave them security against fear.) The verse comprehensively captures all that was needed for the Quraish to live happily and peacefully in the world. The first phrase (Who gave them food against hunger) implies that they were provided all year round with every kind of fruit and food. The security referred to in the second phrase **وَعَآمَنَهُمْ مِّنْ خَوْفٍ** (and gave them security against fear) includes security from enemies and robbers (who, out of their respect to them as guardians of Ka'bah, spared them from their attacks), and it also includes security from the punishment in the Hereafter (for those who fulfilled the necessary conditions of faith).

Special Note

Ibn Kathir says that whoever worships Allah according to the command given in this verse, Allah will give him safety, not only in this world, but also security from punishment in the Hereafter. And whoever deviates from this command, He will deprive him of both types of safety and security as exemplified in the following verse [16:112]:

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ ءَامِنَةً مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِّنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ
اللَّهِ فَأَذَقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ

(And Allah has given an example that there was a town, secure and satisfied, with its sustenance coming in plenty from every place. Then, it turned ungrateful to the bounties of Allah; so, Allah made it taste hunger and terror [cast over it] like a garment in return of what its people used to do. [16:112])

A Great Benefit

Abul Hasan Qazwini has stated that anyone who fears his enemy or an affliction, should recite Surah Al-Quraish. It will give him security from fear and calamity. This is cited by Imam Jazri and he says that this Surah has been tried and tested successfully for this purpose. Qadi Thana'ullah Pani Patti cites this in his Tafsir Mazhari and says that his Shaikh Mirza Mazhar Jan-i-Janan instructed him to recite this Surah at the time of fear and danger, and said its recitation has been tested and tried to avert all kinds of calamities and afflictions. Qadi Thana'ullah says that he has experienced it several times.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Quraish Ends here](#)

107. The Small Gifts (Al-Ma'un)

This Surah is Makki and has 7 verses

أَرَعَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالذِّينِ (١) فذَلِكَ الَّذِي يُدْعُ الْتَيْمِمْ (٢) وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ
(٣) فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ (٤) الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ (٥) الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ (٦)
وَيَمْتَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ (٧)

Translation

Have you seen him who denies the Requital? [1]

So he is the same one who pushes away the orphan. [2]

and does not persuade (others) to feed the needy. [3]

So, woe to those performers of salah, [4]

who are neglectful of their salah, [5]

who (do good only to) show off, [6]

and refuse (to give even) small gifts. [7]

Commentary

The Love of the World Causes Nations to Lose Faith and Consign Allah to Oblivion

This Surah denounces some of the evil actions of the pagans and the hypocrites, and it holds out a threat of destruction to those who commit them. If these evil actions are committed by believers, who do not reject the true faith, they are still heinous and gravely sinful, but the threat of chastisement made in this surah does not apply to them. Therefore, verse [107:1] **أَرَعَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالذِّينِ** (Have you not seen him who denies the Requital?), as a preamble, makes plain that the person who performs these evil deeds is one who cries lies to the Doom, and thus the warning of punishment mentioned in this Surah is for those who deny the religion and the Day of Judgement. The verse contains a subtle indication that the moral sins condemned in this Surah are far too inconceivable from a believer; only a non-believer or hypocrite would commit them. The morally bad and sinful deeds mentioned here are:

- 1) oppressing and insulting the orphan, and being unkind to them;
- 2) despite the means, failing to feed the poor or failing to urge others to feed them;
- 3) praying [in public only, not in private] only to show the people; and
- 4) failing to pay the Zakah [obligatory alms].

These actions are intrinsically bad and gravely sinful, but their commission in the wake of kufr [disbelief] and takdhib [rejection] are even more aggravating, because they attract eternal perdition, which in this Surah is described as wail [heavy affliction or calamity or disaster or destruction].

Verses [107:4-6] **فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ (٤) الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ (٥) الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ (٦)** (So woe to those performers of salah who are neglectful of their salah, who [do good only to] show off.) These verses describe the characteristics of the hypocrites who used to perform the prayers only to make a display of them to the people and prove that their claim of being sincere Muslims is true. As they do not believe in the obligatory nature of the prayers, they are not regular at them, and they do not observe the prescribed times, but offer them

carelessly at the eleventh hour or completely out of time. They perform them only when they must to make a display of them, otherwise they have no place in their lives. The preposition 'an (translated above as 'of) in the prepositional phrase **عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ** "[neglectful] of their salah" is significant. It indicates that they [the hypocrites] are neglectful of the very concept of salah. This does not refer to the unintentional errors, slips and mistakes that Muslims make in their prayers. The Holy Prophet also made this type of unintentional mistakes in his prayers. The warning of Hell by the expression of wail does not apply to such mistakes. If that was the case, the prepositional phrase would have been fi salatihim [in their prayers] instead of ['an Salatihim [neglectful of their prayers].

Verse [107:7] **وَيَمْتَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ** (And refuse [to give even] small gifts.) The word ma'un literally means 'any small or petty thing' and idiomatically it refers to 'small household articles of common use such as axe, hoe, cooking pot which at the time of need neighbours borrow from one another'.

Anyone who is unwilling to lend such small items is morally a very miserly and mean person. However, in the current verse the word ma'un is taken in the sense of Zakah [obligatory alms] because it is a little amount out of much wealth - only 2 1/2% out of the entire wealth. Majority of the commentators - like Sayyidna 'Ali, Ibn 'Umar, Hasan Basri, Qatadah, Dahhak (R.A) and others - hold the view that ma'un implies Zakah. [Mazhari]. The threat of wail (torment of Hell) can only be for failure to fulfil one's legal obligation. Giving small items to help out one's fellow human beings is a humanitarian and philanthropic gesture that carries much reward in the Hereafter, but it is not an obligation at all, the violation of which could lead to eternal perdition. Traditions reporting that ma'un refers to pots and pans, and other household items of daily use are to show that if a person is reluctant to part with such small items, how will he have the heart to part with 2 1/2% of his wealth? The Traditions purport to say that these people are so narrow-minded that they are not willing to make the least bit of selfless sacrifice for the welfare and well-being of others. They are morally mean, low and miserly in the extreme. Therefore, they do not pay their legal alms. Thus the threat of punishment in Hell-fire is not on account of failure to do one's neighborly acts of kindness, but for failure to pay the legal alms and perhaps for their extreme niggardliness.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-'Ma'un Ends here](#)

108. The Kauthar (Al-Kauthar)

This Surah is Makki and has 3 verses

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَكَ الْكَوْثَرَ (١) فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَتَّحِرْ (٢) إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ (٣)

Translation

(O Prophet,) surely We have given to you Al-Kauthar (a river in Paradize). [1]

So, offer salah (prayer) to your Lord, and sacrifice. [2]

Surely it is your enemy whose traces are cut off. [3]

Commentary

Cause of Revelation

It is reported by Ibn Abi Hatim, on the authority of Suddi, and by Baihaqi, in Dala'il-un-Nubuwwah, on the authority of Muhammad Ibn 'Ali Ibn Husain, that the Arabs used to taunt and revile people who have lost their male issues. They used to refer to such a person as 'abtar', meaning 'having no male offspring or no male issue'. In keeping with this social evil, when the young son of the Holy Prophet, namely Qasim passed away, some leaders of Quraish, especially 'As Ibn Wa'il, started taunting the Holy Prophet telling the people that they no longer need to bother about him, because he had no sons to carry on his name and that he would be forgotten after his death; he is 'abtar', that is, his lineage is cut off. On this occasion, the Surah was revealed. [Baghawi, Ibn Kathir, Mazhari].

According to some narratives, Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, a Jew of Madinah, came to Makkah and the Quraish asked him: "You are the leader of the people. What do you think about this young man who claims that he is better than us (in religion), while we are the people who serve the pilgrims; we are the custodians of Ka'bah and supply water to the pilgrims." He replied: "You are better than him." This Surah was revealed on that occasion. [Ibn Kathir cites this incident from Bazzar with an authentic chain of narrators; and Mazhari says that Muslim also transmitted the incident].

According to these narrations, this Surah was sent down when the unbelievers of Makkah taunted the Holy Prophet because he had lost all his male issues, and called him 'abtar' or insulted him for some other reason. The present Surah gives an answer to the taunts of the unbelievers, and maintains that there is no justification for calling the Holy Prophet an 'abtar' only because he had no male child alive, not only because his lineal offspring will remain till the Day of Judgment, though from his daughters, but he was destined to be the spiritual father of a multitude of sons in all ages to the end of time, sons who were to be far more faithful, obedient and loving than the sons of any father, and they will outnumber the followers of all the Prophets that came before him. The Surah has also dismissed the statement of Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, and highlights the great honour and respect given to him by Allah.

The River or Fountain of Kauthar

Verse [108:1] **إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَكَ الْكَوْثَرَ** ([O Prophet,] surely, We have given you Al-Kauthar [a river in Paradize].)

The word Al-Kauthar¹ literally means 'abundant goodness'. Imam Bukhari has recorded on the authority of Sa'id Ibn Jubair that Ibn 'Abbas said about 'al-Kauthar': 'It is the abundant goodness that Allah gave to him [Holy Prophet]'. A special pupil of Ibn 'Abbas said: "I asked Sa'id Ibn Jubair that people claim that it is a river in Paradise." Sa'id Ibn Jubair replied that the river in Paradise is part of the goodness that Allah gave him. Therefore, Mujahid interprets that it is the abundant goodness of this world, as well as of the next world. This explanation includes the river in Paradise and other things as well.

The following Hadith is recorded in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud and Nasa'i from Sayyidna Anas that he said:

"While we were with the Messenger of Allah in the mosque, he went into some kind of slumber or doziness. Then he lifted his head smiling. We asked : 'O Messenger of Allah! What has caused you to smile?' He replied: 'A Surah has just been revealed to me.' Then he recited Bismillah and Surah Al-Kauthar. Then he asked: 'Do you know what is Al-Kauthar?' We replied: 'Allah and His Messenger know best,' He said: 'It is a river that my Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, has promised me and it has abundant goodness. It is a fountain where my Ummah will come on the Day of Judgement. Its containers are as numerous as the stars in the sky. Then a servant of Allah from among them will be prevented from it, and I will say: 'O Lord! Verily, he is from my Ummah [followers.] ' Then Allah will say: 'You do not know what he introduced [or innovated] after you.'"

This is the wording of Muslim, Ibn Kathir, having cited this Tradition, writes further:

"It is reported regarding the description of the fountain on the Day of Judgement that two channels will lead from the sky to supply the fountain with the water of Kauthar. It will have more cups than the stars in the sky."

The Tradition cited above clarifies many points.

- 1) It indicates the cause of the revelation of Surah Al-Kauthar.
- 2) It gives its authentic interpretation, that is, 'abundant goodness' and that it includes the fountain of Kauthar which will quench the thirst of the Prophet's followers on the Day of Judgement.
- 3) The actual river of Kauthar is in Paradise, and the fountain of Kauthar will be on the Plain of Gathering. Two channels will flow from the river of Paradise into the fountain of Gathering, augmenting its supply of water.
- 4) It reconciles the narratives that tell us that the believers will arrive at the fountain of Kauthar before their entry into Paradise.
- 5) Some people will be turned away from the fountain, because they later on turned away from Islam, or they were not Muslims at all, but expressed their Islam only hypocritically. Their hypocrisy was exposed after the Holy Prophet .

Allah knows best!

There are Traditions that describe the cleanness and sweetness of water of Kauthar, and that its banks are adorned with pearls. These qualities cannot be compared with anything in this world.

If the revelation of Surah Al-Kauthar is in response to the taunting of the heathens who called him 'abtar' because he had lost his sons, as explained earlier, this Surah comforts him. They used to say that when he would pass away, there shall be none to take his name on account of having no male offspring and his activities will cease. This Surah tells him that he has been granted Al-Kauthar and completely dismisses the reproach of his enemies, in that his lineage does not stop here in this world, but his spiritual lineage will continue till the Day of Gathering. His spiritual sons and daughters will outnumber the Ummahs of the previous Prophets. They will also enjoy the greatest respect and honour.

Prayer and Sacrifice

Verse [108:2] **فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرِ** (So, offer salah [prayer] to your Lord, and sacrifice.) The imperative inhar is derived from nahr which means 'to sacrifice by stabbing upwards into the jugular vein [the way of slaughter for camels as opposed to other cattle]'. As the Arabs generally used to sacrifice camels, the verse employs the imperative wanhar. Occasionally, the word nahr is used in the general sense of 'sacrifice'.

Verse [108:1] vehemently denounces the false notion of the unbelievers and gives glad tidings of Kauthar to the Messenger of Allah in this world as well as in the next world. He will have the abundant goodness in both the worlds immeasurably. The current verse directs the Holy Prophet the way to express his gratitude to Allah on this good tiding: [1] prayer; and [2] sacrifice. Salah is the highest form of physical worship; and sacrifice is highest form of pecuniary or monetary form of worship.

Sacrifice in the name of Allah is a fight against idolatry, because the idolaters used to sacrifice in the name of their idols. On that basis, Islamic sacrifice is distinctive and important. On another occasion, the Qur'an jointly mentions prayer and sacrifice, thus: [6:162] **قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ**

الْعَالَمِينَ My prayer, my offering, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. [6:162]

According to Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas , 'Ata', Mujahid, Hasan Basri (R.A) and others, the imperative wanhar means 'sacrifice or offer oblation'. Some people have attributed to some leading exegetes that they have taken this imperative to mean: 'Fold your hands or arms on the chest' Ibn Kathir holds such narrations as 'munkar', (that is, a narration which is narrated by a weak narrator and contradicts the narration of a stronger and more reliable authority.)

The Enemy of the Prophet is Cut Off

Verse [108:3] **إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ** (Surely, it is your enemy whose traces are cut off.) The word shani' as used in the original is derived from sha'n and means 'one who hates, traducer, insulter'. This verse was revealed in connection with the unbelievers who used to taunt the Messenger of Allah and referred to him as 'abtar'. Most narratives identify the traducer as 'As Ibn Wa'il, others identify him as 'Uqbah and yet others identify him as Ka'b Ibn Ashraf. Allah granted the Messenger of Allah the Kauthar, that is, abundant goodness which includes a multitude of children. How wonderful are the works of Allah! There is no scarcity of lineal children of the holy Prophet . Furthermore, a Prophet is the spiritual father of his entire Ummah which comprises his spiritual children. The Holy Prophet is the spiritual father of his entire Ummah till the end of time and as such will have the largest number of spiritual children compared to the Ummahs of the previous Prophets. In this way, the enemy has been rebutted, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, their argument has been rebuffed that it is not the Prophet , but his enemies are, 'abtar' or cut off.

Note

Imagine how Allah has raised the name of the Holy Prophet and exalted his reputation in every nook and corner of the world since the inception of his prophet-hood till today, and it will continue to be so until the end of time.

His blessed name is recited along with Allah's name five times a day from the minarets. In the Hereafter, he will be granted the (Al-Maqam Al-Mahmud) Praised Station where he will make the Grand Intercession on behalf of the entire progeny of 'Adam (A.S). On the contrary, ask the world history: Where are the children of 'As Ibn Wa'il?

Where are the children of Ka'b Ibn Ashraf? where are the children of 'Uqbah, and what happened to their families? Their very own names have been lost to the world. No one cares to remember them. They have become unknown who thought that soon the Holy Prophet will become unknown. They have left this world and the strings of their lineage have been cut off. Their names have been preserved in Islamic traditions only for purposes

of interpretation of relevant verses **فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ** "So, O People of insight, take note!" [59:2].

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Kauthar Ends here](#)

109. The Disbelievers (Al-Kafirun)

This Surah is Makki and has 6 verses

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ (١) لَّا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ (٢) وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ (٣) وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ
مَا عَبَدْتُمْ (٤) وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ (٥) لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ (٦)

Translation

Say, "O disbelievers, [1]

I do not worship that which you worship, [2]

nor do you worship the One whom I worship. [3]

And neither I am going to worship that which you have worshipped, [4]

nor will you worship the One whom I worship. [5]

For you is your faith, and for me, my faith." [6]

Commentary

Virtues and Characteristics of the Surah

Sayyidah 'A'shah reports that the Messenger of Allah has said that it is better to recite two surahs in the sunnah prayer of fajr, namely, the Surah Al-Kafirun and Surah Al-Ikhlâs. [Transmitted by Ibn Hisham as quoted by Mazhari]. Ibn Kathir cites several traditions in which a large number of Companions report that they heard the Messenger of Allah often recite Surah Al-Kafirun and Al-Ikhlâs in the sunnah prayer of fajr and maghrib. Some of the Companions requested the Messenger of Allah to teach them some supplications to recite at the time of sleeping. He taught them to recite Surah Al-Kafirun and said that this will give them immunity from idolatry. [Transmitted by Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud]. Sayyidna Jubair Ibn Mut'im says that the Messenger of Allah asked him whether he wished to be the happiest, most prosperous and well-to-do person among his comrades when he goes out on a journey. He replied: "Yes, Messenger of Allah, I certainly do wish that." The Holy Prophet asked him to recite the last five surahs of the Qur'an starting from Surah Al-Kafirun to the end, and to start every surah with Bismillah, and to end with Bismillah. Sayyidna Jubair says that in those days he used to be distressed, miserable and man of little provisions for journeys compared to his comrades. But when he started acting upon this teaching of the Messenger of Allah, he became more prosperous than others. [Mazhari with reference to Abu Yala]. Sayyidna 'Ali reports that once a scorpion bit the Messenger of Allah, so he asked for water and salt. He applied the water on the spot where the scorpion bit him, and he recited Surah Al-Kafirun, Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Nas. [Mazhari]

Cause of Revelation

Ibn Ishaq reports from Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas that Walid Ibn Mughirah, 'As Ibn Wa'il, Aswad Ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib and Umayyah Ibn Khalaf approached the Messenger of Allah and proposed a compromise to him to the effect that he should worship their idols for a year, and they would worship Allah for a year. [Qurtubi]. According to Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas, as recorded in Tabarani, the pagans of Makkah proposed to the Messenger of Allah: "We shall give you so much of wealth that you will become the richest man in Makkah; we shall give you whichever woman you like in marriage; we are willing to follow and obey you as our leader on condition that you do not speak ill of our gods. If you do not agree to this, then let us agree that you worship our gods for a year and we would worship your God for another year" [Mazhari].

According to Abu Salih's report, Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas narrates that the pagans of Makkah made the following proposal for compromise: "At least touch some of our gods, we will believe in you." Upon this, Jibra'il (A.S) descended with Surah Al-Kafirun.

This Surah is the Surah of disavowal from the actions of the pagans, and enjoins the Muslims to worship Allah alone to the exclusion of all forms of pagan worship.

The Traditions cited above indicate that the pagans had made many proposals to the Holy Prophet not once or in a single session, but on different occasions and in different sessions in the hope that at one time or another a compromise might be reached. Therefore, there was a need to respond to all the proposals definitely and decisively, and thus frustrate their hope once and for all. All these incidents might have taken place at different times and different places. The purport of the Surah is to prevent or prohibit any such compromise.

Verse [109:2] **لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ** (I do not worship that which you worship,) In this Surah, the statements are repeated. The repetition has been explained in different ways by different authorities. Bukhari explains it thus: When two identical, or near identical, expressions occur side by side, many commentators interpret one of them as happening in the present time and the other as going to happen in the future time. Thus there is no meaningless repetition. The second and the third verses refer to the present time, meaning 'I do not worship at the present time what you are worshipping, nor do you worship at the present time what I am worshipping'. That is, 'I believe in Oneness of Allah and worship Him only, whereas you believe in multiple gods and goddesses and worship them'. Verses [4 and 5] refer to the future time, meaning 'neither is there a possibility that I will ever worship what you are going to worship in the future, nor will you worship what I will persist in worshipping'. In other words, 'I will persist in my belief of Divine Oneness and worship of Him and you will persist in belief of multiple gods and goddesses and worship of them'. Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi has preferred this interpretation in Bayanul-Qur'an, (and the translation given above is based on it.) However, he disagrees with Bukhari's interpretation of the word din, which Bukhari interprets as 'the religion of disbelief and the religion of Islam' respectively, in verse [6] **لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ** "For you is your faith, and for me, my faith" meaning the proposed compromise or peace agreement is not acceptable. I shall continue to follow my faith and you may go on following your faith, and suffer its disastrous consequences. In Bayanul-Qur'an, however, the word din has been interpreted as jaza' or 'retribution or requital'.

Ibn Kathir prefers another interpretation. He expounds that the particle ma is used in two ways: [1] as mawsulah or relative pronoun in the sense of al-ladhi [that which]; and [2] as masdariah transforming into infinitive the verb it governs. In this Surah, the first ma is a relative pronoun in the sense of al-ladhi, and the second ma is an infinitival particle. Thus in verses [2 & 3] the particle is a relative pronoun and may be paraphrased thus: 'I do not worship the deities that you worship nor do you worship the One Whom I worship' and in verses [4 & 5] the particle is an infinitival particle and may be paraphrased thus: **ولا انا عابد عبادتكم ولا انتم عابدون عبادتي** 'I will never adopt your mode or manner of worship, nor will you adopt the manner in which I worship'. In this way, verses [2 & 3] show that the objects of worship are different from each other, and verses [4&5] show the differences in the modes of worship. In sum, 'neither our objects of worship, nor our manner of worship, are commonly shared by us; they are different.' In this way, it is seen that there is no real repetition, because while the formal expressions might be identical or near identical, but deeper semantic meanings are different. The mode of worship was revealed to the Prophet by Allah vfgf and passed on to the Muslims through him. The pagan manner of worship is self-fabricated. Ibn Kathir prefers this interpretation, and says that this is the exact meaning that emanates from the credo of Islam: **"There is no object worthy of worship except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah"**. Only the mode and manner of worship sanctioned by Allah is credible, and should be followed by Muslims. Ibn

Kathir adds that the concluding verse **لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ** (For you is your faith, and for me, my faith) yields the sense of other verses in the Qur'an, as for instance in [10:41] **وَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ**

And if they belie you, say, for me, my deeds, and for you, your deeds and in [28:55] **لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ**

(For us, our deeds, and for you, your deeds). Thus the sum total of the word din, according to Ibn Kathir, refers to the 'deeds of religion' and its purport would be the same as explicated in Bayanul-Qur'an, in that each one will be requited for his own deeds.

Other commentators have interpreted the two sentences in a third way. According to them, the particle is retained in both places as a relative pronoun, and in both the sentence is taken as representing present tense. They in fact maintain that the repetition of the two sentences have been used as a rhetorical device and employed by deliberate design to secure emphasis. Not every repetition is unpleasant or meaningless, even though the same idea may be reiterated by the same wording, as for instance in [94:5-6] **فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا**

(Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease) Verse [6] is the repetition of verse [5] and is deliberately reiterated to secure emphasis, as well as to reject outright the several proposals made on different occasions. [Ibn Kathir, Ibn Jarir].

Peace Treaty With Unbelievers is Permissible in Some Cases But Not in Others

Surah Al-Kafirun dismisses out of hand the many proposals of compromise offered by the pagans and declares dissociation from them. But the Holy Qur'an itself has said in [8:61] **وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا** (And if they tilt towards peace, you tilt towards it." that is, enter into peace treaty with the infidels or pagans or non-Muslims. Moreover, when the Holy Prophet migrated to Madinah, he entered into peace treaty with the Jews . Therefore, some of the commentators have opined that Surah Al-Kafirun has been abrogated. Their basic argument pivots around the verse **لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ** (For you is your faith, and for me, my faith). They contend that this is apparently in conflict with the ordinances of jihad, but this is not true, because the verse does not guarantee, nor does it even permit, the infidels to maintain their infidelity. It simply means what is stated in [28:55] **لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ** (For us, our deeds, and for you, your deeds), that is, as you sow, so shall you reap. In fact, the correct position held by the majority of the scholars is that this Surah is not abrogated. The proposals of compromise that were offered by the pagans at the time of the revelation of the present Surah are still prohibited, and the peace treaties allowed by 8:61 or entered into by the Holy Prophet are still permissible. It is necessary to understand the circumstances and conditions of the treaty and take a proper decision accordingly. In one of his Traditions, the Holy Prophet laid down the general principle of peace treaty with the infidels and pagans, thus: **(Every compromise is permitted except the one which turns prohibited things into lawful and lawful things into forbidden.)** If the various peace proposals made by the pagans are carefully analyzed, they were all certainly and definitely purported to mix elements of pagan beliefs and practices with Islamic beliefs and practices, thus creating confusion; and in some cases they required Muslims to renounce Islam [albeit temporarily] and commit themselves to paganism. Surah Al-Kafirun denounces such treaties, and declares dissociation from paganism. Analyzing the peace pact with the Jews, on the other hand, it is seen clearly that it did not in anyway require Muslims to denounce or renounce Islam, nor did it require them to mix elements of un-Islamic beliefs with the true faith. Islam is the religion that stands for tolerance, kindness, politeness and peace more than any other religion. However, all these ethical principles can be applied in the matters of human rights. There is no room for compromise in the matter of Divine Law or the basic tenets of Divine religion. Allah knows best!

Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Kafirun Ends here

110. The Help (Nasr)

This Surah is Madani and has 3 verses

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ (١) وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا (٢) فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا (٣)

Translation

When there comes Allah's help and the Victory, [1]

and you see people entering Allah's (approved) religion in multitudes, [2]

then pronounce the purity and praise of your Lord, and seek forgiveness from Him. Surely He is Ever-Relenting. [3]

Commentary

Name of the Surah and Place of its Revelation

According to the consensus of scholars, this Surah was revealed in Madinah. Its other name is Surah At-Tawdi'. The word Tawdi' means 'to bid farewell'. As this Surah indicates the approach of the demise of the Holy Prophet , it bids farewell to him and is thus entitled Surah At-Tawdi'.

The Last Surah and the Last Verses of the Noble Qur'an

It is recorded in Sahih of Muslim on the authority of Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas that Surah An-Nasr was the last Surah to be revealed. [Qurtubi]. This means that this was the last complete Surah that was revealed to the Holy Prophet . No complete Surah was revealed after this. Some individual verses reported to have been revealed after this are not in conflict with this statement, because no complete Surah was sent down after the present one. It is like Surah Al-Fatihah which is said to be the first Surah, while a few verses of Surah Al-'Alaq, a few verses of Surah Al-Muddaththir, and a few verses of other Surahs were revealed even before Surah Al-Fatihah, because it means that it was the first Surah to be revealed completely. No complete Surah was revealed before Al-Fatihah.

Sayyidna Ibn 'Umar reports that this Surah was revealed during the Farewell Pilgrimage, and shortly after that a fragment of verse [3] of Surah [5] **الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ** (...Today, I have perfected your religion for you [5:3]) was revealed. After these two revelations, the Messenger of Allah lived only for eighty days, after which he passed away. After these two revelations, the Holy Prophet received the verse of kalalah. Then the Holy Prophet | lived for fifty days. After that he received the following verse [9:128] of Surah [9] **لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ** (Surely, there has come to you a Messenger from amongst you, hard on whom is your suffering, for the good of you he craves...) After this revelation, he lived for 35 days. After this verse was revealed the following verse: [2:281] **وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ** (And be fearful of a day when you shall be returned to Allah...). After this verse he lived only for twenty-one days, and according to Muqatil, he lived for seven days only and passed away. [Qurtubi].

Verse [110:1] **إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ** (When there comes Allah's help and the victory). The expression 'victory' here is in reference to 'the promised Victory or Conquest of Makkah'. There is complete unanimity on this historical fact. However, the scholars disagree whether this Surah was revealed before or after the Conquest. The phrase idha ja'a [when there comes] apparently indicates that its revelation took place before the Conquest. Ruh-ul-Ma'ani cites a narration from Al-Bahr-ul-Muhit which concurs with this view, in which it is stated that this Surah was revealed while returning from the expedition of Khaibar. It is a known fact that the victory of Khaibar took place prior to the Conquest of Makkah. Ruh-ul-Ma'ani cites, on the authority of 'Abd Ibn Humaid, Sayyidna

Qatadah's statement that the Prophet lived for two years after the revelation of this Surah. Narratives that report that it was revealed on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah or on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage may be explained by saying that the Holy Prophet might have recited this Surah and proclaimed it on one of those occasions; as a result people must have thought that it was revealed on that occasion. Please refer to Bayanul Qur'an for fuller explanation.

Several Prophetic Traditions and statements of the Companions narrate that this Surah indicates that the Holy Prophet has fulfilled his task, and accomplished his mission of life, and he could look forward to returning to his Lord in full favour as his death was approaching fast. The Surah teaches the Holy Prophet the beautiful manners of asking Allah's forgiveness and offering constant praise and thanks to his Lord.

It is reported in Muqatil's narration that when this Surah was revealed, the Holy Prophet recited it in a gathering of the blessed Companions, among whom were Sayyidna Abu Bakr, 'Umar, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas . All were happy at the revelation of this Surah, because it contained the glad tidings of the Conquest of Makkah, but Sayyidna 'Abbas began to weep. The Holy Prophet asked him the reason for weeping, and he replied that it covertly conveys the termination of your life and nearness of your death. The Holy Prophet confirmed this. Sahih of Bukhari records a similar explanation of this Surah given by Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas in which there is the addition that when Sayyidna 'Umar heard this, he concurred with him and said: 'I do not know anything about it other than what you [Ibn 'Abbas] have said'. [Transmitted by Tirmidhi who graded it as hasan, sahih vide Qurtubi]

Verse [110:2] **وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا** (And you see people entering Allah's [approved] religion in multitudes,) Before the conquest of Makkah there were many people who were almost convinced of the verity of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and Islam, but there were several factors that were obstructing them to embrace the religion. Some people were afraid of the Quraishite opposition, or they were hesitant for some other reason. The Conquest of Makkah removed those obstacles, and people entered the fold of Islam in throngs. Seven hundred people from Yemen embraced the religion, and joined the Holy Prophet . On the way, they recited the call to prayer [adhan] and recited the Qur'an. In this way, the populace of Arabia embraced the religion of Islam and entered into its fold in droves.

When the Approach of Death is Sensed, One Needs to Exert Oneself Immensely in Tasbih and Istighfar

Verse [110:3] **فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْهُ** (then pronounce the purity and praise of your Lord, and seek forgiveness from Him...) Sayyidah 'A'ishah Siddiqah says that after the revelation of this Surah, whenever the Messenger of Allah performed a prayer, he would recite the following supplication: (I pronounce Your purity, O Allah, our Lord, and praise be to You, O Allah, forgive me.) [Bukhari].

Sayyidah 'Umm Salamah says that after the revelation of this Surah, the Messenger of Allah used to often recite the following supplication: (I pronounce the purity of Allah, and praise be to Him. I seek Allah's forgiveness and I repent to Him.) He used to say, "I have been commanded to do so." In evidence, he used to recite this Surah.

Sayyidna Abu Hurairah says that after the revelation of this Surah, the Messenger of Allah used to exert himself in the worship of Allah so immensely that his feet would swell. [Qurtubi].

Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Nasr Ends here

111. The Palm Fibre (Al-Lahab)

This Surah is Makki and has 5 verses

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ (١) مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ ۖ وَمَا كَسَبَ (٢) سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ (٣)
وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ ۖ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ (٤) فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ (٥)

Translation

Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab, and perish he! [1]

Neither his wealth availed him, nor what he earned. [2]

He will soon enter a fire, full of flames, [3]

and his wife as well, the wicked* carrier of firewood. [4]

In her neck there is a rope of twisted palm-fibre. [5]

* (The word 'wicked' is though not available in the text in express terms, the *nasb* on *hammalah*, which is termed in Arabic grammar as '*nasb 'aladh-dhamm*' carries this meaning. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

Commentary

Name and Nickname of Abu Lahab

Abu Lahab [Father of Flame] was the Nickname of 'Abd-ul-'Uzza, one of the sons of 'Abdul-Muttalib. As he was ruddy in complexion, he was nicknamed Abu Lahab [Father of Flame]. The Qur'an did not mention his real name, because it smacked of paganism, and the last element 'lahab' [Flame] in the nickname has also nexus with the flame of Hell. This person was the inveterate enemy and persecutor of the Holy Prophet, and violently opposed Islam. Whenever the Holy Prophet invited the people to Islamic Faith, he would stand up and cry lie to his message. [Ibn Kathir]

Cause of Revelation

It is recorded in the two Sahihis that when the verse **وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ** (Warn your closest relatives - 26:214) was revealed, the Holy Prophet ascended the mount Safa and cried out to the tribe of Quraish in a manner that was known among them for warning of an attack by the enemy. Some narratives maintain that he called the different Makkan clans by name, the clan of Banu 'Abd Munaf, Banu 'Abdul-Muttalib and others. All the clans of Quraish gathered around him, and he said to them: 'If I were to tell you that the enemy is about to attack you in the morning or in the evening, would you believe me?' They all unanimously replied in the affirmative. Then he said: 'Verily, I am a warner sent to you before the coming of a severe torment (as a result of disbelief or paganism). Abu Lahab then responded: 'Ruin may seize you! Is it for this purpose that you have called us together?' and picked up a stone to hit him. Thus this Surah was revealed.

Verse [111:1] **تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ** (Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab, and perish he!) The word *yad* literally means a 'hand'. Because hands play a very important role in all of human works and actions, often *yad* (hand) refers to the human person, as in the phrase **ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْت يَدَاكَ** (...All this is due to what your hands have sent forth...22:10). Baihaqi has recorded on the authority of Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas that one day Abu Lahab said to the people that Muhammad says that such-and-such a thing will happen after death. Then, pointing to his hands, said that none of those things have come into these hands; then he addressed his hands and said: (Perish you! I do not see any of the things Muhammad said in you.) Therefore, the Qur'an attributes his destruction to his hands.

The verb tabba is derived from tabab which means 'to perish'. In verse [1], the first sentence **تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ** (Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab) is in the form of a prayer invoking or imprecating destruction upon Abu Lahab, and the second sentence wa tabba is the declarative sentence prophesying the consequence of the invocation. The first sentence was invoked against him to satisfy the indignation of the Muslims, because when Abu Lahab imprecated destruction upon the Holy Prophet , it was the desire of the Muslims that imprecation be invoked against him.

Allah thus fulfilled their desire, and also informed them that the invocation has taken effect and he perished. Seven days after the battle of Badr, he developed a terrible case of plague because of which people avoided him. They regarded the disease as infectious and were afraid that it might be transmitted by contact, so they forced him to live in an isolated house, and they did not come into contact with him at all. He at last died in this state. His dead body lay untouched in his house for three days. When his body began to rot giving out unbearable stench, people taunted his sons, and they hired labourers to take it away and bury it. They dug a pit in the ground, pushed his body into it with a stick and covered it with stones. [Bayan-ul-Qur'an from Ruh].

Verse [111:2] **مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ ۖ وَمَا كَسَبَ ۗ** (Neither his wealth availed him, nor what he earned.) The phrase ma kasab [what he earned] could refer to the profits that accrued to him from investment of his wealth in business, and it could also imply 'children', for the children of a person are also referred to (in Arabic) as his earning. Sayyidah 'A'ishah reports that the Messenger of Allah said:

"The best and the purest thing a man eats is from his earnings and his children are part of his earnings".

This means that eating from the earnings of one's children is tantamount to eating from one's own earnings. [Qurtubi]

Therefore, Sayyidah 'A'ishah, Mujahid, 'Atif, Ibn Sirin and others interpret ma kasab [what he earned] as referring to 'children'. Allah had granted Abu Lahab abundant wealth and many children, and these two factors led him to be ungrateful, and caused him to be proud and arrogant. Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas says that when the Messenger of Allah called his people to faith and warned them about the Divine punishment, Abu Lahab said: "Even if what my nephew says is true, I will save myself from the painful torment on the Day of Judgement with my wealth and my children." Thus Allah revealed verse [2] , that is, when the Divine torment seized him in this world, neither his wealth nor his children benefited him!

Verse [111:3] **سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ** (He will enter a fire, full of flames.) That is, either on the Day of Judgment or immediately after his death, while in grave, he will be pushed into the blazing fire. There is a rhetorical relationship between Abu Lahab and dhata lahab [full of flames].

The Fate of Umm Jamil, the Wife of Abu Lahab

Verse [111:4] **وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ ۖ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ۗ** (And his wife as well, the wicked, the carrier of firewood.) As Abu Lahab was a vehement enemy of the Holy Messenger , his wife too was supportive of her husband in his disbelief, rejection, obstinacy, and in persecuting the Holy Prophet . She was a sister of Abu Sufyan, and daughter of Harb Ibn 'Umayyah. Her nickname was Umm Jamil. The Qur'an makes plain in this verse that this wretched woman will also roast with her husband in the fire of Hell. She is described as **حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ۗ** which literally means 'the carrier of firewood'. Idiomatically, Arabs use this expression to refer to a 'tale-bearer ', that is, one who gathers pieces of gossip and carries them between individuals and families in order to ignite the fires of discord and enmity between people, exactly as one would gather firewood to kindle the fire. This telltale woman improperly carried information concerning the private affairs of the Messenger of Allah , and the blessed Companions in an

attempt to ignite and instigate trouble. In this verse too, the phrase 'the carrier of firewood' has been interpreted by Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas , Mujahid, 'Ikrimah (R.A) and a group of commentators to mean that 'She was a tale-bearer' while Ibn Zaid, Dahhak and other commentators (R.A) retain it in its original sense, and explain that she literally used to collect thorny branches from the jungle, and place them in the path of the Messenger of Allah in order to harm him - hence the description: 'carrier of firewood'. [Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir].

Some scholars explain that just as she used to help her husband in this world to promote disbelief and tyranny and to assist him in harming the Messenger of Allah , she will add to the torment of her husband in the Hereafter. She will collect the branches of zaqqum and other trees and add them as fuel to the fire of Hell in which her husband would be roasting. [Ibn Kathir].

Tale-Bearing: A Gravely Major Sin

It is recorded in the two Sahihs that the Messenger of Allah is reported to have said that a tale-bearer (to harm others) will not enter Paradise. Fudail Ibn 'Iyad says that there are three evil deeds of man that destroy all his righteous actions . They are:

- 1) backbiting;
- 2) tale-bearing; and
- 3) lying.

'Ata' Ibn Sa'ib says that he asked Sha'bi about the Prophetic Tradition in which the Messenger of Allah is reported to have said: "Three types of people will not enter Paradise:

- 1) a murderer;
- 2) a tale-bearer; and
- 3) a trader who is involved in usury."

'Ata' says that I cited this Tradition to Sha'bi and asked him in a surprising tone that the Holy Prophet has equated 'a tale-bearer' with a murderer and a usurer. He replied: "Indeed, tale-bearing is the root cause of murder and usurpation of wealth." [Qurtubi]

Verse [111:5] **فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ** (In her neck there is a rope of twisted palm-fibre.) The masd with the letter-s-bearing sukun [quiescence or rest] is an infinitive which means 'to twist rope or cord, or to twist it strongly and tightly'. If the word is read as masad with the letters m-s bearing fatha [= a-a], the word refers to fibres. It is also a rope made of 'twisted fibres of palm tree' or 'tightly braided fibres of coconut tree' or 'cord that has been woven strongly' or 'coil or cable formed by winding iron strands together'. [al-Qamus]. Some scholars have preferred to translate it specifically as 'a rope made of twisted fibres of palm tree' and no other string or twine. This is in conformity with the general usage of the Arabs. Basically, it refers to any string or twine or rope or cord or coil or cable formed by intertwining strands of any material. In keeping with this general sense of the word, Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas , 'Urwah Ibn Zubair and others said that in this context the phrase **حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ** "rope of masad" refers to 'rope formed by twisting iron strands'. This will be her condition in Hell where an iron-collar will be in her neck. Sayyidna Mujahid interprets min masad as min hadid, that is, 'of iron'. [Mazhari].

Sha'bi, Muqatil and other commentators have taken the phrase min masad to refer to 'a rope made of twisted fibres of palm tree' and said that Abu Lahab and his wife were extremely wealthy and were looked upon as leaders of their nation but, on account of his wife's mean disposition and miserliness, she used to collect firewood from the jungle, bind them together with a rope, place the bundle on her head and put its rope round her neck, so that it might not fall from her head. This practice of hers one day led to her destruction. She had a bundle of wood on her head and the rope in her neck. She felt tired and sat down. Then fell, was choked and died.

According to this second interpretation, the verse describes her mean disposition and the disastrous consequences of her sadistic behavior. [Mazhari]. However, such a conduct in Abu Lahab's family, especially of his wife, was hardly conceivable; therefore, most commentators have preferred the first interpretation. Allah knows best!

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Lahab Ends here](#)

112. The Sincerity (Al-Ikhlās)

This Surah is Makki and has 4 verses

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ (١) اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ (٢) لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ (٣) وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ (٤)

Translation

Say, "The truth is: Allah is One. [1]

Allah is Besought of all, needing none. [2]

He neither begot anyone, nor was begotten. [3]

And equal to Him has never been any one." [4]

Commentary

Cause of Revelation

Tirmidhi, Hakim and others have recorded that the pagans of Makkah asked the Messenger of Allah : "O Muhammad! Tell us about the ancestry of your Lord." So Allah revealed this Surah. Some narratives ascribe this inquiry to the Jews of Madinah. In view of these conflicting reports, there is a divergence of opinion as to whether this is a Makki Surah or Madani Surah. According to Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud , Hasan Basri, 'Ata', 'Ikrimah and Jabir (R.A), the Surah is Makki and, according to Qatadah, Dahhak (R.A) and others, it is Madani. According to one narration of Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas , it is Makki and, according to another, it is Madani [Qurtubi],

According to another narration, the pagans added to their question whether Allah was made of gold, silver or some other stuff, in response to which this Surah was revealed.

Virtues of the Surah

Imam Ahmad has recorded a narration in his Musnad that a person came up to the Messenger of Allah and said, "I love this Surah [Al-Ikhlās] immensely." The Holy Prophet replied: "Your love for it will cause you to enter Paradise." [Ibn Kathir].

Tirmidhi has recorded on the authority of Sayyidna Abu Hurairah that once the Messenger of Allah asked the people to gather and said: "I shall recite to you a third of the Qur'an?" When the people had congregated, he recited Surah Al-Ikhlās and said: "This is equal to a third of the Qur'an." [Muslim].

In a lengthy Hadith, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi and Nasa'i have recorded that the Messenger of Allah said: "Anyone who recites Surah Al-Ikhlās and the mu'awwadhatāin (i.e. the last two surahs of the Holy Qur'an) morning and evening, they shall be sufficient for him." In another narration, the wordings are: "They will suffice him against every affliction." [Ibn Kathir]

Imam Ahmad has recorded a narration in his Musnad on the authority of Sayyidna 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir that the Messenger of Allah said: "I shall show you three such Surahs that are revealed in Torah, Injil, Zabur and the Qur'an. Do not sleep at night until such time that you have recited them. They are Surah Al-Ikhlās and the mu'awwadhatāin." Sayyidna 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir says that since I have heard this, I did not miss reciting them. [Ibn Kathir].

Oneness of Allah

Verse [112:1] **قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ** Say, (The truth is: Allah is One.) The imperative qul (Say) is directly addressed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, thus indicating that he is Allah's Prophet and Messenger. This verse directs and commands him to convey Allah's message to mankind. 'Allah' is the personal name of that Necessary Being Whose non-existence is inconceivable. He comprises all the attributes of perfection and is free from, or above, or overrides all kinds of imperfections. The epithets ahad and wahid are both applied to Allah which are normally translated as 'One' but the word ahad includes an additional sense which signifies that Allah is beyond composition, plurality and resemblance, which means that He is neither composed of any elements, nor does He have any partner, nor has He any resemblance to anything. This is a response to those who asked about Allah whether He is made of gold or silver or pearls. This concise statement covers all aspects of discussion on the Divine Being and His attributes. The imperative qul [say] points to the messengership of the Holy Prophet. If analyzed properly, this brief sentence covers all the detailed discussions expounded in voluminous books of theology.

Verse [112:2] **اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ** (Allah is Besought of all, needing none) The word samad bears several literal senses. Therefore, the Qur'anic exegetical scholars have assigned different meanings to this verse. Tabarani, the leading authority on Prophetic Traditions, in his kitab-us-Sunnah, has collected all the interpretations of the Divine attribute As-samad and concluded that they are all authentic, and comprehend all the attributes of our Lord that have been assigned to Him, but originally it refers to 'the chief who has no superior and to whom the people turn for the fulfilment of their desires and needs; thus all people depend on him, but he does not depend on any one.' [Ibn Kathir].

Allah is Above Having Children and Procreating

Verse [112:3] **لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ** (He neither begot anyone, nor was begotten.) This verse responds to those who had questioned about the ancestry of Allah. There is no analogy between Allah, the Creator, and His creation. While His creation comes into being through the biological process of procreation, Allah Himself has no children, nor is He the child of anyone.

Verse [4] **وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ** (And equal to Him has never been any one.) The word kufuwan, as used in the original, means an 'example', a 'similar thing', 'one equal in rank and position'. Thus this verse means that there is no one in the entire universe, nor ever was, nor ever can be, who is similar to Allah, or equal in rank with Him, or resembling Him in His attributes, works and powers in any degree whatsoever.

Surah Al-Ikhlâs: A Comprehensive Concept of Allah's Oneness and a Complete Negation of Shirk

There were many types of people who denied the Divine Oneness, and set up partners or rivals to Allah. Surah Al-Ikhlâs negates all types of such wrong belief systems, and imparts a comprehensive lesson of Divine Oneness. Among the unbelievers, several types may be identified. There is a group that denies the very existence of God [the atheists]. Another group believes in the existence of God, but denies that His existence is 'Necessary'. A third group believes in God's existence and in His existence as 'Necessary' but denies His attributes of perfection. A fourth group believes in God's Necessary Existence and in His attributes of perfection, but denies Oneness of God and believes in and worship more than one gods and goddesses, and thus practices polytheism. Verse [1] refutes vehemently all such false belief systems. Verse [2] refers to the practices of those who do worship Allah alone, but believe that there are also other helpers who can fulfil their needs, desires and ambitions. The Divine attribute As-samad denounces outright any such notion. A fifth group ascribes children to Allah and the phrase lam yalid [He neither begot anyone] repudiates this notion of theirs in the strongest terms. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Ikhlās Ends here

113. The Day Break (Al-Falaq)

This Surah is Madani and has 6 verses

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ (١) مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ (٢) وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ (٣) وَمِنْ شَرِّ
الَّيْقَاتِ فِي الْتُعَدِّ (٤) وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ (٥)

Translation

Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of the daybreak [1]

from the evil of everything He has created, [2]

and from the evil of the dark night when it penetrates, [3]

and from the evil of the women who blow on the knots, [4]

and from the evil of an envier when he envies. [5]

Preliminary Remarks

This and the next Surah were revealed on the same occasion, and in the same event, as will be explained in the 'cause of revelation'. Hafiz Ibn-ul-Qayyim has, therefore, written their commentary together. He writes that their blessings and benefits are abundant. All of the people require them and no one can dispense with them. They are very efficacious remedy for sorcery or magical spell, evil eye, and for all of the physical and spiritual calamities. In fact, if its reality is grasped fully, people will understand that they require it more than their breath, food, water, clothing and everything else.

Commentary

Cause of Revelation

Musnad of Ahmad records that a Jewish person cast a magical spell on the Holy Prophet , as a result of which he fell ill. Jibra'il (A.S) came to him and informed him that a particular Jew had cast a spell on him, that he had tied knots in his hair to accomplish this objective, and it is thrown into a particular well. The Holy Prophet sent some of his Companions to bring it from the well Jibra'il (A.S) had described. The Holy Prophet untied the knots, and he was instantly cured. Jibra'il (A.S) informed him of the name of the Jew and the Holy Prophet knew the culprit, but it was not in keeping with his compassionate disposition to avenge anyone in his personal matter. Therefore, this was never brought to the attention of the Jew guilty of the black magic, nor did any sign of complaint ever appear on the blessed face of the Holy Prophet . Being a hypocrite, he regularly attended the Holy Prophet's gatherings.

The details of this incident are recorded in Sahih of Bukhari on the authority of Sayyidah 'A'ishah that a Jewish man cast a magic spell on the Holy Prophet , as a result of which he sometimes felt confused whether or not he had done something. One day the Holy Prophet said to Sayyidah 'A'ishah that Allah has shown him what his illness was and added: "Two men came to me in my dream. One of them sat by my head side while the other sat by my feet, and the following conversation ensued:

Question: 'What is wrong with this man?'

Answer: 'He is bewitched.'

Question: 'Who has bewitched him?'

Answer: 'Labid Ibn A'sam. He is a member of the tribe of Banu Zuraiq who is an ally of the Jews, a hypocrite.'

Question: 'With what did he bewitch him?'

Answer: 'With a comb and hair from the comb.'

Question: 'Where is the comb?'

Answer: 'In the dried bark of a male date palm under a rock in a well called Dharwan.'"

Sayyidah 'A'ishah says that the Holy Prophet went to the well to remove the comb with the hair and said: "This is the well I was shown in my dream." He removed it from the well. Sayyidah 'A'ishah asked the Holy Prophet : "Will you not make this public?" He replied: "Allah has cured me and I hate to cause harm to anyone." This implies that the Holy Prophet did not want to be the cause anyone's molestation, death or destruction, because this is what would have exactly happened if the incident was publicised.

According to a narration in Musnad of Ahmad, this illness of the Holy Prophet lasted for six months. According to other narratives, some of the Companions knew that this wicked act was performed by Labid Ibn A'sam, and they courteously said to the Holy Prophet : "Why should we not kill this wicked person?" He made the same reply to them as he did to Sayyidah 'A'ishah . According to Imam Tha'labi's narration, a Jewish boy was the attendant of the Messenger of Allah , the hypocritical Jew flattered the boy and talked him into getting for him strands of the Prophet's hair from his comb, and a few of its teeth. Having obtained these items, he tied eleven knots on a string and a needle was stuck into each knot. Labid then placed this spell in the spathe of a male palm tree, and buried it under a stone in a well. On this occasion, the two Surahs were revealed, comprising eleven verses. The Messenger of Allah recited one verse at a time and untied one knot each time, until all the knots were untied, and he felt freed from the tension of the witchcraft. [All these narratives have been adapted from Ibn Kathir.]

Magic and its Effect on the Holy Prophet

Some people are surprised that the Messenger of Allah should be affected by black magic. This is because some people do not have a complete grasp of how magic operates. It actually operates under physical causes, and the Messenger of Allah was not immune to the influence of physical causes, as for instance feeling the burning or heating sensation of fire, and feeling the cooling sensation of water; or certain natural factors causing fever or body temperature to rise; or other factors causing aches and pains, and other illnesses. The Holy Prophet , or any other prophet for that matter, was not immune to the effects of such natural or physical causes. They can be affected by the hidden operations of magic which are no less natural or physical. Please see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ma'arifur Qur'an, Vol. 1/ pp 264-278 for fuller explanation, especially p. 276 on 'Magic and Prophets'

Ma'arifur Qur'an, Vol. 1/ pp 264-278 (Reproduced in Full)

وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ الْمَلَائِكَةِ بِيَاثِلَ هَرُوتَ وَمَرُوتَ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ وَلَبِئْسَ مَا شَرَوْا بِهِ أَنفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

Translation

And they followed what the devils used to recite in the reign of Sulayman (Solomon) -- it was not Sulayman who became an infidel, but the devils did become infidels, teaching people magic, and what had been sent down to the two angels, Harjit and Marut, in Babylon. And these two did not teach anyone without having said, "We are

nothing but a trial, so do not go infidel." Then, they used to learn from them that with which they could separate man from his wife. But they were not to bring harm through it to anyone, without the will of Allah. And they used to learn what harmed them and did no good to them. And they certainly knew that he who buys it has no share in the Hereafter. And, indeed, vile is the thing for which they sold themselves away. Only if they knew! And had they accepted the faith, and been God-fearing, the reward from Allah would have always been far better. Only if they knew! (2/ 102 - 103)

Commentary

In connection with these two verses, some commentators have reported certain Judaic traditions, which have given rise to a number of doubts, especially in the minds of Muslims with a Western orientation. Maulana Ashraf 'All Thanavi has provided very simple and clear solutions to these exegetical problems, and we shall reproduce them here:-

- 1) The Jews were impertinent and senseless enough to attribute magic and sorcery to a prophet -- namely, Sayyidna Sulayman (Solomon (AS)). So, in saying that they used to learn the black arts of the devils (Shayaitin), the Holy Qur'an takes care to deny, as a parenthesis, such a vile allegation against Sayyidna Sulayman (AS).
- 2) These verses condemn the Jews for indulging in black magic. In connection with the verses, some commentators have reported a long and well-known story about a woman called Zuhrah, which is not based on any authentic Islamic tradition. Those scholars who have found the story to be infringing the regulations of the Shari'ah, have rejected it as mere fiction; but those who believe that it can be interpreted so as to come in line with the Shari'ah, have not dismissed it totally. For the moment we are not concerned with the question whether the story is true or false. But what we would like to insist upon is the fact that a proper understanding does in no way depend on this story.
- 3) The Jews knew very well that their indulgence in black magic was not only a sin, but also involved infidelity (Kufr). They could also see that such activities would do them no good even in this world, for their sorcery could not harm anyone except when Allah willed it so. Thus their practice went against their knowledge, and they made no use of their understanding to see this discrepancy. That is why the Holy Qur'an, to begin with, states that they "knew", and then goes on to negate this 'knowledge' by saying, "Only if they knew!" For, if one does neither act upon what one knows nor tries to understand it properly, one's knowledge is no better than ignorance.
- 4) There was a time when black magic had grown very popular in the world, particularly in Babylon. Seeing its astonishing efficacy, ignorant people began to confuse its effects with the miracles of prophets, and to suppose that the two were identical in nature. Some even looked upon magicians as being holy men, and worthy of being obeyed; still others actually started learning and practising black magic as if it were a good deed bearing a divine sanction. *(Just as there has been a sudden outburst of enthusiasm for the occult sciences in the West since the middle of the sixties in this century, particularly in America where even the universities have been inundated by it.)*

In short, this extraordinary veneration for magic and magicians had become a potent source of misguidance. In order to eradicate this misunderstanding, Allah sent down to Babylon two angels, Harut and Mariit, for informing the people as to the true nature of magic and as to its different forms, so that they should distinguish it from the miracles of prophets, and keep away from obeying magicians and practising magic themselves. Just as the prophethood of prophets is divinely confirmed through miracles, signs and rational or other arguments, in the same way the angelical nature of Hariit and Mariit was confirmed on the basis of different signs and arguments, so that people should listen attentively to them and follow their guidance. This particular function was not assigned to the prophets for two reasons. Firstly, the need of the hour was to establish a distinction between the prophets and the magicians, and, the prophets being in a way a party to the dispute, it was proper that a third

party should be the arbitrator. Secondly, the necessary distinction between the two could not, in a normal course, be defined without citing and reporting the verbal formulas employed in magic. Merely to report heretical speech is not in itself a heresy - this is a logical and rational principle, and the Shari'ah too accepts it. So, the prophets could have been allowed to cite these formulas; but, they being a manifestation of divine guidance, Allah did not ask them to perform such a function, and chose two angels for the purpose. For, Allah's commandments are of two kinds -- those pertaining to Takwin (creation and the cosmic order), and those pertaining to Tashri' (legislation) -, and it is quite possible that sometimes the two may not seem to accord with each other. The order of creation is made up of good and evil both, and it is the angels through whom divine commandments are enforced in this sphere. So, the angels are made to do things which, in the perspective of the cosmic order, always lead to general good, but which, in so far as they necessarily involve some kind of partial disorder, are seen to be evil -- for example, the growth and upkeep of a human tyrant, or of a harmful beast, each of which is right in the context of the order of creation, but wrong from the point of view of the order of legislation. On the other hand, the prophets are entrusted only with the functions of the legislative order, which are, in their general as well as particular applications, nothing but good.

Although, in view of the ultimate purpose, this reporting of the formulas of magic too was related to the legislative order, yet there . was probability -- which even materialized -- that a reporting of such formulas could give an incentive to the practice of black magic. So, Allah preferred not to make the prophets even an indirect means of such reprehensible activities. All the same, the prophets too were made to serve the main purpose by announcing the basic regulations of the Shari'ah with regard to magic, though not the details pertaining to the minor rules derived from them, for that could have possibly given rise to temptation. We shall explain it through an analogy. The prophets have, for example, told us that it is forbidden to accept a bribe, and have also explained the nature of bribery, but have not given us the details as to how a bribe is given or taken, for a delineation of such minute details would have served only to teach men the different methods of giving or taking a bribe. Or, take an example from different branches of magic. If one utters a certain formula, one would, on getting up from the bed in the morning, find money under his pillow or in his pocket. The Shari'ah makes it quite clear that such a practice is not, in principle, legitimate, but does not specify what that formula is.

In short, the two angels came down to Babylon, and started the work assigned to them -- that is to say, they used to explain the basic principles of magic, its different forms and the specific formulas, and then used to dissuade the people from getting themselves involved in these activities or with the magicians. Their work was exactly like that of a scholar who, finding that illiterate people sometime fall into uttering heretical words or phrases on account of their ignorance, should collect in his speeches or writings all such phrases that have gained currency, and inform them as to what they must carefully avoid.

Now, all sorts of people started coming to the angels for seeking information about the nature and the specific formulas of a magic lest ignorance should lead them into error, in the matter of doctrines or that of deeds. In order to provide the correct teaching on this subject and to protect the people from error, the angels were scrupulous enough to make it a point to warn them of possible dangers in giving them the information. They insisted on making it quite clear that in allowing them to provide this kind of information to the people in general, Allah intended to put His servants through a trial, for He would see who uses this knowledge for protecting his 'Iman (faith) by recognizing evil and avoiding it, and who falls into misguidance by adopting evil that he has come to recognize as evil -- a choice which can easily lead one into Kufr (infidelity) in the matter of deeds or in that of doctrines. The angels repeatedly advised them to seek this dangerous information only with a good intent and to remain steadfast in this good intent, and not to misuse the knowledge so as to earn perpetual damnation.

The angels could not be more honest and forthright. So, they explained the basic principles of magic and even the subsidiary details to all those who were ready to take the pledge to remain steadfast in their faith. Of course, if anyone broke the pledge and fell into transgression or infidelity, it was his own business, and the angels could not be held responsible for it. Some were true to their promise, while many did not fulfil the pledge, and made their knowledge of magic a means of doing harm to people -- this in itself is sin and transgression, while some modes of magic actually involve infidelity (Kufr). Thus, through a misuse of their knowledge of magic, some turned into sinners and others into infidels.

Let us repeat that the angels had taught magic for the purpose of reforming the people and helping them to keep to the straight path, but those who misused this teaching did so out of their own perversity. An example would make the situation still more clear. Let us suppose that a man goes to a master of the Islamic sciences, who is an expert in the traditional branches of learning and in philosophy as well, and who also acts upon his knowledge, and this man requests the master to teach him philosophy, ancient or modern, so that he may protect himself against the doubts raised by the philosophers with regard to Islamic doctrines, and may also be able to give a satisfactory reply to those who raise such doubts. Apprehending that he might turn out to be insincere, and might finally bring the knowledge of philosophy to the aid of false and anti-Islamic ideas, the master warns him against such an eventuality, and the man takes a pledge that he would not misuse his knowledge. Having satisfied himself, the master gives him a thorough training in philosophy. But the man, contrary to his promise, begins to accept the anti-Islamic and false theorizing of philosophers as the truth. Obviously, in such a case, the teacher can in no way be held responsible for the way the pupil behaves. Similarly, there can be no room for doubting the integrity of these two angels.

Although Allah Himself knows how things were, yet one can suppose that once the angels had done the work assigned to them, they must have been recalled to the Heavens. (Bayan al-Qur'an)

What is Magic? Definition and effects

Since the study of magic has been enjoying a weird currency in the Western countries since 1968, and has sometimes been accepted as a part of academic research, we had better consider the subject at some length from the Islamic point of view. According to the authoritative Arabic dictionary "Al-Qamus", the word Sihr (Magic) signifies an effect the cause of which is not apparent, whether the cause may actually lie in something which possesses a luminous quality (as the effect of certain phrases), or in things with an extra-sensory reality (as the effect produced by jinns and devils), or in the power of imagination (as the effect of hypnotism), or in things which are sensory yet hidden (as a magnet drawing to itself a piece of iron, when the magnet is concealed from the onlookers; or the effect of drugs, when they have been furtively administered; or the influence of stars and planets). The causes at work being numerous, the forms of magic too are numerous.

Magic and Charms

In everyday language, magic signifies those practices which involve the co-operation of jinns and devils, or the exercise of the power of imagination, or the use of certain words or phrases. It is a rationally established proposition, accepted by ancient philosophers and by some of the modern ones as well, and equally confirmed by observation and experiment, that words and phrases in themselves possess a certain efficacy, and that when certain letters, words or phrases are recited or written down for a specified number of times, they produce certain specific results. Similar results are obtained by employing human hair or nails or the clothes worn by the person concerned, etc. - a practice which is usually described as the preparation of "Charms". All such things are commonly known as magic.

Sihr or Magic: The Islamic view

But in the terminology of the Holy Qur'an and the Ifadith, Sihr (magic) refers to all those usual happenings which have been brought about with the active help of the devils (Shayatin), won over through certain practices likely to please them. There are several ways of pleasing the devils. Sometimes one sings the praises of the devils, and sometimes recites formulas of a heretical nature which deny Allah or associate others with Him. The worship of stars and planets too gladdens their heart, as do certain evil deeds - for example, preparing a charm with the blood of a person killed unlawfully, or refusing to adopt the prescribed modes of purifying one's body, or living constantly and deliberately in a state of uncleanness and impurity. Just as the aid of the angels can be won only through those modes of speech and action which they like (for example, remembrance of Allah, fear of Him and obedience to His commandments, cleanliness and purity, avoidance of all kinds of dirtiness, physical or otherwise, and good deeds in general), similarly the co-operation of the devils can be obtained through those modes of speech and action which are pleasant to them. That is why only those are successful in the practice of black magic who are habitually unclean and impure, avoid required purification and remembrance of Allah, and are given to all kinds of evil deeds - for example, it is usually during the period of menstruation that women become effective in the practice of black magic. So much for black magic or sorcery in the exact sense of the term. As for sleights of hand, mesmerism, hypnotism, or the tricks of jugglers, they are sometimes described as magic only by an extension of the meaning of the word, or metaphorically. (Riih al-Ma'ani)

Kinds of Magic

In his "Mufradat al-Qur'an", Imarn Raghil al-Isfahani says that there are several kinds of magic. Firstly, there are sleights of hand, like those of jugglers, which deceive the eyes of the onlookers, but have no further substance. Then, there are ways of influencing the imagination of others through the concentration of one's own powers of thought so that they begin to see or feel things which do not really exist as happens in mesmerism or hypnotism. Such a result is sometimes obtained with the help of the devils (Shayatin) too. In speaking of the magicians of the Pharaoh, the Holy Qur'an says: **سَحَرُواْ أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ** "They cast a spell on the eyes of the people" (7:116).

Or, in another place **مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهُ تَسْعَىٰ** "Through their magic Moses came to think that they (ropes turned into serpents) were running about" (20:66). Obviously, this piece of magic had to do with influencing of the imagination. The second of these verses employs a verb which has the same root as the noun Khayil (thought), and hence clearly states that the ropes and the wands cast down by the magicians had neither turned serpents nor made any movement, but the imagination of Sayyidna Miisa (Moses jUI ~) had been affected so as to see them running about in the shape of serpents. The Holy Qur'an also indicates the other way of influencing men's imaginations which involves the help of the devils (Shayatin) **هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَن تَنْزَلُ الشَّيَاطِينُ** **(٢٢١) تَنْزَلُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ آفَاكٍ أَثِيمٍ** "Shall I tell you on whom the devils descend? They descend on all those who are slanderers and sinners." (26:222)

Still another kind of magic is that which can change the very nature of a thing - for example, turning a man into a beast or into a stone. Scholars like Imam Raghil al-Isfahani and Abii Bakr al-Jassas deny that magic can totally change the nature of a thing, but confine the efficacy of magic only to influencing the imagination and to deceiving the eyes of the onlookers. This is also what the Mu'tazilah thought of the matter. But most of the scholars hold that neither the Shari'ah nor any rational argument forbids the possibility of trans-substantiation or the changing of one thing into another, like a living body turning into a stone. As for the well-known principle of the classical philosophers that the change of the "essences" (Haqa'iq) is not possible, it concerns the "essences" of the three categories - the Impossible, the Possible and the Necessary --, for, rationally speaking, it just cannot be that something impossible should become possible, or that something possible should become impossible. And as to the Holy Qur'an putting down the magic of the Egyptian sorcerers as only an impact on the imagination, it does not necessarily mean that all the forms of magic should be no more than an influencing of the imagination. Moreover, certain scholars have seen an argument in favour of the possibility of trans-substantiation through

magic in a saying of Ka'b al-Ahbar, reported by Imam Malik in his Muwatta' on the authority of Qa'qa' ibn Hakim: "Were it not for these phrases which I recite regularly, the Jews would have changed me into a donkey." "A donkey" is, no doubt, a usual metaphor for "a fool." But it is not proper to turn away, unnecessarily, from the literal meaning to a metaphorical one. So, the sentence means just what it says - that if the recitation of the phrases had not protected him, the Jewish sorcerers would have changed him into a donkey. The saying, thus, establishes two things. Firstly, it is possible to change a man into a donkey; secondly, the phrases he used to recite had the property of making the magic of the sorcerers lose its efficacy. On being asked what these phrases were, the scholar Ka'b al-Ahbar taught his listeners the following words of prayer:

"I seek the protection of Allah the Great, greater than whom there is none; and I seek the protection of the perfect words of Allah which no man, virtuous or wicked, can even transcend; and I seek the protection of all the Beautiful Names of Allah, those of them which I know and those which I do not know, from the evil of everything which Allah has created, to which He has given existence, and which He has spread (over the earth or the universe)."

To sum up, all the three forms of magic are possible, and can manifest themselves in actual fact.

Miracles

Now, let us turn to another important aspect of the question.

Through prophets and saints certain events come into manifestation which normally and habitually never happen, and are hence designated as *Kharq al-'Adah* (contrary to the habitual). The Islamic term for the miracles of prophets is *Mu'jizai*, and for those of saints, *Kariimat*, The effects produced by such miracles are in appearance sometimes similar to those produced by magic. This external resemblance leads some ignorant people to confuse the one with the other, and they begin to have a reverence for magicians which is totally out of place. So, one must understand the difference between the two clearly. (**Editorial Note on *Mu'jizah* or *Miracle***: For all the unusual events and unprecedented happenings the English language has but one word, 'Miracle' which makes it impossible for the reader in that language to mark the subtle difference in various forms of miracles. Briefly, therefore, the different forms of miracles with their distinct objections are explained here. It is hoped that this will help the readers have a clearer conception of *Mu'jizah*.)

These terms are used in Arabic language to define and differentiate the unprecedented happenings and here each of them is explained, so as to clearly differentiate them. Qualitatively, there is, apparently no difference in all of them.

Mu'jizah is the unusual event which occurs at 'the hands of a prophet.

It is purely an act of Allah. A prophet's own volition has no part in the working of it. For those who witness a *Mu'jizah* it is compulsory to believe in it.

Karamah -- another mode of unusual happenings; is also an act of Allah; it appears at the hands of a Man of Allah. The basic difference in *Mu'jizah* and *Kariimahi* is that one who performs *Mu'jizah*; addresses himself as a prophet, a Man of Allah has no such claim. In both *Mu'jizah* and *Karamah* the usual cause and effect link is absent. Things happen but without any cause; and there is usually a total transformation of the nature and behaviour of objects in *Mu'jizah* and *Kariimah*, What is required is a generalized belief in them. Allah chooses whoever He wills for *Mu'jizah*. and *Kariimah*. No degree of stringent discipline can give the power to make the unusual happen.

Irhas is also a kind of *Karamah*. It heralds the coming of a prophet. It usually occurs at the hands of the one who is closely related to the prophet: the unprecedented happenings in the life of Mariam, mother of prophet 'Isa (AS) or the various unusual events that began occurring to and around Arminah -- the blessed mother of our Holy Prophet; for instance, she had no pangs of birth, towards the close of the birth period she used to hear stranger

voices greeting her, although she saw no one. It is compulsory to believe in such events of Irhas as have been mentioned in the Qur'an and believe in a general manner, that Irhas is usually associated with the coming of a prophet.)

The Difference between Miracle and Magic

The miracles of prophets and saints are different from magic, firstly, in their respective natures, and, secondly, with regard to the signs and indications attendant upon each. As for the difference in their natures, it lies in the fact that the results produced through magic depend on the law of causality as much as do the ordinary and usual events in the physical world, the only distinction being that the causes are in the latter case quite clear or easily observable, while in the former they are different for a common man to detect. Where the causes are evident, the effects are immediately referred back to them, and the events thus produced are not considered to be astonishing, but where the causes are hidden or obscure, the events produced by them arouse wonder and amazement, and those who are ignorant of the causes readily come to believe that the things have happened in contravention of the habitual laws of the physical universe. (In the West, they describe such events as being "supernatural", although the Latin word *Natura*, which is the equivalent of the Greek word *Phusis*, does, at least in its original sense, cover all that has been created, whether it lies in the domain studied by empirical science or beyond it) What these people do not realize is that such happenings are as much due to certain causes as the habitual events - the cause in the case of extraordinary happenings often being the activity of a jinn or a devil (Shaytan). For example, a letter suddenly falls in front of a man, and on reading it he finds that the letter has been written just this day and is coming from a distance of ten thousand miles. Now, the onlookers would call it a "supernatural" event, for they do not know that Allah has given the power of doing such things to jinns and devils. Once one comes to understand the means through which things of this nature take place, one would no longer see them as "supernatural", or even as being contrary to "habit". In short, all the results obtained through magical practices are, in fact, due to the operation of physical causes, but in the eyes of common people they acquire the illusory appearance of "supernatural" events, simply because the operative causes are hidden from them.

On the other hand, miracles happen directly under divine command without the intervention of physical causes. For example, the Holy Qur'an tells us how the tyrant N amriid (Nimrod) threw Sayyidna Ibrahim (Abraham AS) into a blazing fire, and how Allah commanded the fire to grow cold for him, but not so cold as to do him harm -- and the fire obeyed the command, and, instead of scorching him, provided a place of safety. This was a direct divine act, and hence a miracle. Now, we sometimes hear of men who, having applied certain chemicals to their body, can enter a fire without being scorched. This is not a miracle, for the operative cause is of a physical nature - that is, the chemicals. These chemicals are not known to people in general, and they are deluded into believing such a performance to be a "supernatural" event going beyond the realm of "the habitual". The Holy Qur'an itself leaves no doubt as to a miracle being directly an act of Allah Himself. In the Battle of Badr, the Holy Prophet ~ took up a handful of pebbles, and threw them at the army of the infidels, which blinded their eyes. Referring to this miracle, the Holy Qur'an says: **وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ** When you threw (the pebbles), it was not you who threw, but Allah who threw (them)" (8:17). The statement is explicit enough, and means that the miraculous result produced by a handful of pebbles was not the work of the Holy Prophet ~ , but the act of Allah Himself.

Miracle and Magic: How to distinguish between them?

Having explained the difference between the nature of a miracle and that of magic, we must now turn to another important question -the results produced by each of them being in appearance the same, how is the common man to know the difference between the two? In fact, Allah has given to each certain characteristic features which can help the common man to distinguish miracles from magic. Firstly, miracles are manifested through those whom everyone knows to be clean in body, pure in deeds and God-fearing. On the contrary, magic shows

its effectiveness through those who are unclean in body, dirty in deeds, shunning the worship of Allah and His remembrance. This is a distinction which everyone can observe with his own eyes. Secondly, Allah has so ordained things that if a man pretends to be a prophet and claims to perform miracles, and yet tries to practise magic, his magic is never effective, but he can be effective in magic so long as he does not lay a claim to prophethood.

Magic and Prophets

As to the question whether magic can have an effect on prophets, we shall say that it can. As we have explained above, magic operates through physical causes, and prophets are not immune to the influence of physical causes. Just as they feel the effects of hunger and thirst, fall ill and get healed through the operation of apparent physical causes, in the same way they can be affected by the hidden operations of magic, which are no less physical. Let us add that being affected by magic does in no way go against the dignity of the station of prophethood -- no more than would thirst or hunger. Authentic ahadith report that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was affected by the magic spell cast by the Jews, that he came to know of it through revelation, and that he took certain measures to free himself of its effects. The Holy Qur'an too tells us how Sayyidna Miisa (Moses r~J1 ~) experienced the effects of magic when the sorcerers cast a spell on his eyes, and the ropes and the sticks thrown by them began to look like running serpents, so that he was really frightened (20:66,67).

Injunctions of the Shari'ah with regard to Magic

As we have already said, Sihr (magic), in the terminology of the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith, refers only to those practices in which one seeks the help of jinns and devils (Shayatin) by gaining their pleasure through the adoption of certain phrases or actions that involve infidelity (Kufr) and association (Shirk) or sin and transgression, and thus brings about certain extraordinary and unusual events. The magic of Babylon, mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, was just this, and it is this form of magic which it condemns as infidelity or Kufr (Jassas). According to Abu Mansur, the most valid and correct view in this respect is that each and every form of magic does not, unconditionally and absolutely, constitute infidelity, but only that form which employs actions or speech contrary to the tenets of faith ('iman). (Ruh al-Ma'ani)

As everyone knows, the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith repeatedly enjoin upon the Muslims to consider the Shayatin one's enemies, to hate them and to curse them. Seeking to please them and to win their friendship, in contravention of such clear commandments, is in itself a sin. Moreover, they are pleased only when one indulges in Kufr (infidelity) or Shirk (association), and thus forfeits one's faith ('Iman) altogether, or at least in disobedience and transgression, displeasing Allah and His angels by wallowing in dirt and impurity -- which becomes an additional sin. And if one makes use of magic for doing some harm to a human being unlawfully, it is still one more sin.

Thus, what the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith call Sihr can never be free either of infidelity in the matter of faith, or at least of infidelity in the matter of actions. If, in order to please the Shayatin, one adopts actions or speech involving infidelity or association, one would be committing an act of real infidelity in the matter of faith; and even if one manages to avoid infidelity and association in speech or action, but indulges in other sinful activities, one would not remain free from infidelity in the matter of actions. This is what the Holy Qur'an means when, in the present verses, it designates magic as Kufr.

To sum up, when magic employs actions or speech involving infidelity (such as seeking the help of Shayatin, or believing the stars and the planets to be effective in themselves, or claiming prophethood by presenting the results of magical procedures as miracles, etc), such a magic, according to the consensus, constitutes infidelity; and when magic does not involve acts of infidelity but only the commission of sinful acts, such a magic is a major sin.

Now, let us add some subsidiary injunctions with regard to magic.

- 1) Since magic is not usually free from infidelity in the matter of faith or in that of action, it necessarily follows that it is forbidden to learn or teach or practice it. Some jurists, however, allow one to learn magic for the purpose of protecting Muslims from harm, but one must not try to learn more than is necessary.
- 2) If in preparing charms and amulets the help of Jinns and Shayiitin. has been sought, they too come under the category of Sihr, and are thus forbidden. If the words employed in the charms are vague, and one does not exactly know what they mean but suspects that they are invocations addressed to idols or Shayatin, even such charms are forbidden.
- 3) As for the other forms of magic beside the Sihr, like that of Babylon, condemned by the Holy Qur'an and the Ifadlth, if they involve Kufr and Shirk in some way, they too are forbidden.
- 4) If there is a form of magic which employs words or actions or other elements to which the Shari'ah does not object, then it is permissible on condition that it is not used for a purpose which the Shari'ah forbids.
- 5) It is permissible to use the verses of the Holy Qur'an, or the Divine Names or the words of the Haditli in preparing charms and amulets, or as a recitation or invocation for gaining divine help in order to attain a desired end. But if such a use of the sacred texts or words is made for a reprehensible purpose, like doing harm to someone without an excuse, even that is forbidden. (Shami, Fatawa Qadi Khan)

A doctrinal point

Verse 102 says: "They could not thus do any harm to anyone, except with the permission of Allah". This shows that causes in themselves and by themselves cannot produce the effects one usually associates with them, and it is Allah who creates the effects .as much as the causes. (Bayan al-Qur'an)

TAFSEER OF SURAH NOW RESUMES!

Mu'awwadhatain are Surahs that Afford Protection Against Physical and Spiritual Afflictions

It is a settled doctrine of every believer that Allah is the intrinsic cause of every gain and loss in this world as well as in the next world. Without the Divine will not a jot of gain or loss can be caused to anyone. The only way to fortify against all physical and spiritual injuries and harm is for man to place himself under the protection of Allah, and by his actions he should attempt to make himself capable of entering the Divine shelter.

Surah Al-Falaq directs how to seek the Divine protection against worldly calamities, and Surah An-Nas tells the way to seek Divine protection against the calamities of the Hereafter.

Virtues of Mu'awwadhatain

Sahih of Muslim records a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidna 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir who reports that the Messenger of Allah said: "Do you not see that there have been revealed to me verses tonight the like of which has not been seen before? Those are Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Nas." According to another narration, the like of Mu'awwadhatain has not revealed even in Torah, Injil, or Zabur or anywhere else in the Qur'an. Another narration of Sayyidna 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir reports that the Messenger of Allah taught him Mu'awwadhatain while they were on a journey. Then he recited them in the maghrib salah and said: "Recite these two Surahs whenever you go to sleep and whenever you get up." [Nasa'i] According to another report, the Messenger of Allah has advised people to recite these two Surahs after every salah [Transmitted by AbuDawud and Nasa'i].

Imam Malik recorded from Sayyidah 'A'ishah : "whenever the Messenger of Allah suffered from an ailment, he would recite the Mu'awwadhatain, blow over his hands, and then wiped his whole body with those hands. When his pain became acute on his death-bed, I would recite the Mu'awwadhatain, blow over his hands, and then he wiped them over himself, because my hands could not be the fitting substitute for his blessed hands. [All these narratives have been adapted from Ibn Kathir].

Sayyidna 'Abdullah Ibn Khubayb reports that it was raining one night and the sky had become intensely dark. We went out looking for the Messenger of Allah , and when he was found, he said: "Say ." He asked: "What should I say?" He said: "Recite and Mu'awwadhatain. Reciting them thrice in the morning and thrice in the evening will fortify you against all kinds of perturbations."

In sum, it was the practice of the Messenger of Allah and his Companions to recite these two Surahs to protect themselves against all types of privations, trials and tribulations of life in this world, as well as of life in the next world.

Lexicological Analysis of Important Words and Interpretation of the Surah

Verse [113:1] **قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ** (Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak.") The word falaq means 'to split or cleave' and here it is used in the sense of 'break of dawn'. In another verse, a similar quality of Allah is used in [6:96] **فَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ** ([He is] the One who causes the dawn to break). Of all the Divine attributes, this particular attribute is used presumably because the darkness of night often causes evils and difficulties, and the daylight removes them. This attribute of Allah points to the fact that anyone who seeks protection in Allah, He will remove all afflictions from him. [Mazhari]

The Word Sharr: 'Allamah Ibn Qayyim's Exposition

Verse [113:2] **مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ** (From the evil of everything He has created.) 'Allamah Ibn Qayyim expounds that the word sharr (evil) is employed in two different senses: [1] pain, loss, injury, trouble, grief, distress and affliction which affect man directly, and they are by themselves troubles and afflictions; and [2] the factors that cause losses, injuries and afflictions. The second type covers unbelief, idolatry and all sins. The things from which the Qur'an and Sunnah require man to seek refuge in Allah are either of these two types. The Traditional supplication that is masnun after salah includes seeking of refuge from four things: [1] punishment of the grave; [2] punishment of the Hell-Fire; [3] hardships and privations of life; and [4] trials and tribulations of death. Of these, the first two are afflictions and punishments in their own right, and the last two are causes of afflictions and punishments.

Verse [113:2] **مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ** (From the evil of everything He has created) covers the evil of the entire creation. This verse was sufficient to guard against all mischief and calamities. But three particular forms of evil have been singled out to seek protection which often cause calamities and afflictions.

The first thing singled out appears in verse [113:3] **وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ** (and from the evil of dark night when it penetrates.) The word ghasiq is derived from ghasaq (to become dark or intensely dark). Thus Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas , Hasan and Mujahid say that the word ghasiq stands for 'night'. The verb waqaba is derived from wuqub which means for utter darkness 'to overspread completely and intensely'. The verse means: I seek refuge in Allah from the night when its darkness has completely and intensely overspread'. The word 'night' has been specifically mentioned because this is the time when Jinn, Satans, harmful insects, animals and reptiles appear. Thieves and robbers emerge at this time to carry out their crimes of stealing and other acts of wickedness. The enemies attack at this time. Black magic has the worst effect when it is intensely dark at night. As soon as the dawn approaches, the effects of all these things disappear and fade away. ['Allamah Ibn Qayyim]

Verse [113:4] **وَمِنْ شَرِّ أَلْفَاةٍ فِي الْعُقَدِ** (and from the evil of the women who blow on the knots.) The word naffathat is derived from nafth which means 'to blow'. The word 'uqad is the plural of 'uqdah which means 'a knot'. The magicians usually tie knots on a string or piece of thread, recite magical incantations or formulae and blow on them as they do so. The phrase **أَلْفَاةٍ فِي الْعُقَدِ** (...the women who blow on the knots) refers to

female magicians. It is possible that the pre-adjectival noun of the adjective naffathat be nufus [souls]. Thus this verse may be translated as 'the evil souls who blow on knots'. This translation would include men and women who carry out this evil practice. But most probably its pre-adjectival noun is 'womenfolk'. Women have been specifically mentioned perhaps because generally womenfolk have the natural disposition to carry out the evil practice of witchcraft; or probably because Labid Ibn A'sam, whose black magic was the cause of revelation of this Surah, got this most heinous act done by his daughters. Hence, the act of witchcraft is ascribed to them.

The reason why protection is sought against magicians is firstly that the cause of revelation of these two Surahs was the incident of magic. Secondly, people are normally unaware of the act of magicians, and they do not pay attention to getting themselves exorcised. They are under the impression that it is some kind of medical ailment and try to get themselves medically cured. In the meantime the magical effect continues to grow worse.

The third thing from which people are asked specifically to seek protection is hasid [jealous] and hasad [jealousy]. This has been specified for the same reasons as given above, because black magic was worked on the Prophet on account of jealousy. The Jews and the hypocrites could not bear to see the rapid progress and expansion of Islam. They could not defeat him in outer combat; therefore they tried to satisfy their jealousy by performing witchcraft on him. There were uncountable number of green-eyed monsters against the Prophet. That is the major reason why protection was sought against them. Jealousy of the jealous one gives him restless days and sleepless nights. He is at all times after causing loss to his envied person. Therefore, the harm he wishes to inflict is severe.

Hasad [Jealousy] and Ghibtah [Envy]

The Arabic word Hasad, the English equivalent of which is 'jealousy', is invariably used in the bad sense. It generally means to desire the deprivation of the other man rather than one's own acquisition of any bliss that he may possess. Simply put, Hasad means that a person should feel unhappy at the better fortune and good quality that Allah has granted to another, and wishes that it should be taken away from the other person and given to him, or at least the other should be deprived of it. Hasad in this sense is totally forbidden and a major sin. This is the first sin that was committed in the heaven and also the first one committed on the earth. The Iblis was jealous of 'Adam (A.S) in the heaven and the latter's son Qabil was jealous of his brother Habil on earth. [Qurtubi].

Ghibtah, on the other hand, means to desire for oneself the same blessing as the other man has, without any idea of the latter's losing it. This is not only permissible but also desirable.

Summary and Conclusion

Apart from the general protection that is sought in this Surah, protection is sought from three specific evils. These are mentioned separately in verses three, four and five. Furthermore, in the first and the third specific evils particular restrictions are placed. The first specific evil ghasiq [darkness] is restricted by the phrase **إِذَا حَسَدَ** "when it penetrates".

The third specific evil hasid is restricted by the phrase **إِذَا وَقَبَ** "when he envies". The practice of witchcraft is left unrestricted because its harmful effect is general. The harmful effect of darkness is felt when there is total absence of light, plunging the night in intense and utter darkness. Likewise, jealousy may not cause harm to its object until the jealous one takes a practical step with word or deed to satisfy his heart. For until he takes a practical step, his being unhappy may be harmful to himself, but it is not harmful for the other person so that he may seek refuge from it. Hence, restrictions are placed on the first and the third specific evils.

Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah Al-Falaq Ends here

114. The Mankind (An-Nas)

This Surah is Madani and has 6 verses

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ (١) مَلِكِ النَّاسِ (٢) إِلَهِ النَّاسِ (٣) مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ (٤)
الَّذِي يُوسِّسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ (٥) مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ (٦)

Translation

Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, [1]

the King of mankind, [2]

the God of mankind, [3]

from the evil of the whisperer who withdraws (when Allah's name is pronounced), [4]

the one who whispers in the hearts of people, [5]

whether from among the Jinn or Mankind. [6]

Commentary

Introductory Remarks

This Surah, the second of the Mu'awwadhatin, constitutes an extension of its predecessor and is in a way complementary to it, in that in Surah Al-Falaq the believers were enjoined to seek refuge with Allah against the hardships and privations of life in this world, while in the current Surah protection is sought from the trials and tribulations of the Hereafter. It was explained in Surah Al-Falaq that the word sharr could stand for 'evil' or 'harm' or even 'that which causes harm, anguish or distress'. In the present Surah, we are to seek refuge from the evil that is the cause of all sins, namely, the whisperings and insinuations of Satan. As the anguish and distress of the Hereafter is most severe, the Qur'an appropriately emphasizes at the end to seek Allah's protection against these evil powers.

Verse [114:1] قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ Say, (I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind,) The attributive name of Allah rabb stands for 'one who nurtures', and implies that the Supreme Nurturer takes care of everything under all circumstances. In the present verse, He is referred to as 'the Lord of mankind', while in the previous Surah He was referred to as 'the Lord of the daybreak', because in the foregoing Surah the purpose was to seek protection against the outer bodily hardships and privations of life, and they are not confined to human beings. Animals also suffer bodily hardships and difficulties, unlike the Satanic instigations which are restricted to man, and the Jinn are subjoined to him. [Mazhari from Baidawi]

Verses [114:2 & 3] مَلِكِ النَّاسِ (٢) إِلَهِ النَّاسِ (the King of mankind, the God of mankind.) The reason for adding these two attributes is that the word rabb, attributed to a particular thing, could refer to someone other than Allah also, as for instance rabb-ud-dar [land-lord] or rabb-ul-mal [owner of wealth]. But not every master or owner is a king. That is why the attributive name malik [King] has been added to indicate that He is not only the 'Lord of mankind' but also the 'King of mankind'. Furthermore, not every king is worthy of worship. Thus the third attributive name ilah [God] has been added to nas [people]. The Divine wisdom in combining all three Divine attributes is that each attribute motivates protection. Every master has servants and takes care of them. Likewise, every king has subjects and looks after them. That the worshipped God protects His worshipper is even more obvious. Only Allah, and no other being, is characterized by these three attributes simultaneously. Therefore,

seeking Allah's protection by invoking these attributes is the greatest protection, and the invocation is readily acceptable.

Since the first sentence contains the word nets (people), the second and the third verses should apparently refer to them with the pronouns by saying, malikihim [their king] rather than repeating the word nas (people). However, this is an occasion of supplication and praise, and as such repetition needs to be employed by deliberate design to add force and clarity to the sublime emotion by creating natural rhyme, rhythm and melodic sequence. Some scholars have explained the repetition of the word 'nas' differently. They say that the word nas occurs five times in this Surah. In its first occurrence, it refers to the children. The word rabb that refers to nurturer-ship of Allah is a hint to this, because children need nurturing the most. Its second occurrence refers to youth, and the hint in the context is the word malik which refers to kingship of Allah. It bears political connotation and is appropriate to the youth. Its third occurrence refers to old age. Old people cut themselves off from the world and look up to Allah alone as the real support of life, and render Him alone true and unconditional obedience and to make Him alone the real object of his love and adoration. The context for this is ilah [God] which points to the Divine worship. Its fourth occurrence refers to the righteous servants of Allah. The contextual hint for this is the word waswasah [evil whisperings] because the devil is the enemy of the righteous servants of Allah. His work is to cast evil prompting into the hearts of such people. Its fifth occurrence refers to mischief-makers because protection is sought from their mischief.

Verse [114:4] **مِن شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ** (from the evil of the whisperer who withdraws [when Allah's name is pronounced].) After invoking three attributes of Allah, the present verse describes the one from whom protection is sought. He is 'the whisperer who withdraws'. The word waswas is originally an infinitive in the sense of waswasah 'to whisper [that is, to use breath instead of voice, when saying something in barely audible way]'. But here it is used as an hyperbolic expression to refer to 'Satan' in the sense that 'he is an embodiment of whisper'. Whispering of the Satan means that he invites people to his obedience by a superstitious discourse in a way that its subject is cast into man's heart, but no voice is heard. [Qurtubi].

The word **خَنَّاس** khannas is derived from khanasa which means 'to sneak, recede or withdraw furtively'. The Satan is so named because he puts himself in a squatting [perched] position on the heart of man. So, when the latter becomes heedless, the former whispers, but when he remembers Allah, he withdraws furtively. When man becomes unmindful of Allah again, the Satan returns. Whenever man remembers Allah, he withdraws. This practice continues persistently. The Messenger of Allah is reported to have said:

"Allah has built two houses in the heart of man, in one of which an angel resides and in the other the Satan. The angel urges him to do good works and the Satan induces him to do evil works. When man remembers Allah, the Satan withdraws. And when he stops remembering Allah, the Satan perches on the heart of man and pecks with his beak to whisper into it to do evil things." [Transmitted by Abu Ya'la on the authority of Anas , as quoted by Mazhari].

Verse [114:6] **مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ** (whether from among the Jinn or Mankind.)

This is explicative of the expression waswas occurring in verse [4], meaning that the devils from amongst mankind and the Jinn whisper into the breasts of mankind. Thus the Messenger of Allah has been enjoined to constantly seek protection against the mischief of sneaking devils, whether from amongst the Jinn or from amongst human devils. A question may arise here. It is obvious that the Satans can cast a voiceless evil prompting furtively into the hearts of people, but how the human devils can cast evil whisperings? They come forward publicly and use their voice, which is not waswasah [whisper]. The answer is that human beings too often cast doubts in the minds of people in an indirect way without uttering them explicitly. Shaikh Tzuzdin Ibn 'Abdus-

Salam states, in his monograph 'al-Fawa'id fi Mushkilat-il-Qur'an', that the 'whisperer from mankind' refers to the whispering of one's own nafs (base faculties of the man himself). Just as the Satan casts evil thoughts into man's mind, likewise the base self of man urges him to do evil works. That is why the Messenger of Allah has directed us to seek protection in Allah from the evil of our own self in the following supplication:

"O Allah! I seek asylum in You from the evil of myself, from the evil of the Satan and from the evil of idolatry."

The Importance of Seeking Protection Against Satanic Whisperings

Ibn Kathir states that Allah invokes three of His attributive names in this Surah, rabb [Lord], malik [King] and ilah [God], and instructs man to seek refuge with Him against diabolical whisperings, because a Satanic companion is attached to every man, and at every step of the way, the latter's attempt is to destroy the former in different ways. First of all, he induces him to commit sins, and paves the way for him to wilfully violate the Divine laws and injunctions. If he does not succeed in this, he tries to contaminate and destroy his acts of obedience and worship by casting the thoughts of dissimulation, hypocrisy, pride and arrogance. He attempts to create doubts about authentic beliefs and doctrines of Islam in the minds of the learned scholars. The only one who can be saved from the evil of such Satanic pranks is the one whom Allah gives His protection.

The Messenger of Allah is reported to have said: "There is not a single one of you, but his companion [a devil] has been assigned to him." The Companions enquired: 'Is such a devil companion joined to you also, O Messenger of Allah,?' He replied: 'Yes. However, Allah has helped me against him and he has become submissive to me. As a result, he only commands me to do good.'"

It is also confirmed in the two Sahihs from Sayyidna Anas , who reported the story of Sayyidah Safiyyah . Once while the Messenger of Allah was performing I'tikaf in the mosque, one of his wives Sayyidah Safiyyah paid him a visit. When she decided to leave, he gave her company to the boundaries of the mosque. On the way, two men of the Ansar saw them together, The Holy Prophet said: "Wait! This is Safiyyah bint Huyayy [my wife]!" The two Companions exclaimed: "Pure is Allah, O Messenger of Allah, [how can we have ill thoughts about you?]" The Messenger of Allah replied: "Indeed, the devil runs through man's veins like the blood circulates. I feared that he might whisper evil thoughts in your minds. [That is why I had to call you and clarify that the lady with me was no other than my own wife.]"

Special Note

Just as it is necessary for man to avoid evil deeds, it is essential for Muslims to avoid occasions that may cause others to have ill thoughts about them. Should there arise an occasion which may give rise to such bad thoughts, they should immediately clarify the situation, and put an end to it then and there. In sum: This Tradition indicates that Satanic pranks are highly dangerous. It is not easy to avoid them unless we seek refuge with Allah

A Clarification

There are two types of evil thoughts:

- 1) voluntary;
- 2) and involuntary.

Here we are warned against voluntary thoughts that proceed from the will or from one's own free choice. The involuntary thoughts are thoughts that occur without one's will or free choice. Such thoughts come to mind involuntarily and pass away. They are not harmful, nor are they sinful as long as they do not act upon them or speak about them.

A Subtle Difference Between the Two Surahs of Mu'awwadhatain

In the present Surah, rabb [Lord], malik [King] and ilah [God], three Divine attributes have been invoked, while the evil from which protection is sought is only one, that is, the whispering. Conversely, in the previous Surah, only

one attribute of Allah is mentioned, that is, rabb-il-falaq [Lord of the daybreak], but the evils from which protection is sought are many which are mentioned in three verses. This goes to show that the mischief of the Satan is the worst type of evil. The hardships and calamities that befall man in this world, affect his body and mundane affairs, unlike the Satanic pranks which affect man's mundane affairs as well his affairs of the Hereafter. The Satan is always after destroying man's after-life, and that is the most dangerous situation. If man suffers from physical injury or harm, he can find cure or remedy for it; but because the Satan lurks or lies hidden in ambush in every nook and corner of man's life to assault him unnoticed and pull him downwards, away from the Divine, it is not possible to resist him except with the protection granted by Allah. (Therefore, protection from him is sought by invoking three attributes of Allah.)

Human and Satanic Enemies: Their Differential Treatments

One may have some enemies from mankind, and some from Satanic origin. The Holy Qur'an has directed us to deal with these two kinds of enemies in different ways.

Ibn Kathir in the preface of his commentary of the Holy Qur'an has cited three verses of the Holy Qur'an pertaining to this subject. All three of them have two parts. In the first part, Allah has instructed man to treat his human enemy with kindness, politeness, patience, mercy and compassion. If he does not desist from his evil ways, then, jihad is prescribed in other verses. We need to wage armed struggle against the devilish elements of human society. But the only way to resist the Satanic enemy is to seek refuge with Allah. The first verse to this effect is in Surah Al-A'raf [7:199] **خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ** (Take to forbearance, and bid the Fair and ignore the ignorant.)

This pertains to defence against human enemy: In other words we need to grant courteous allowance for his offence, bid him to do good and forego revenge against injustice he might have committed. We must be easy in dealing with him and avoid causing him difficulty. This injunction is defence against human enemy and must be carried out in the first instance. But the next verse [7:200] of the same Surah pertains to the Satanic enemy as follows: **وَأِمَّا يَنْزِعَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ** "And if you are stricken with a strike from the Satan, seek refuge with Allah. Surely He is All-hearing, All-knowing."

In other words, if an evil suggestion comes to us from the Satanic enemy, then we need to seek refuge in Allah.

The second verse is in Surah Al-Mu'minun [23:96-98] **أَدْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ** "Repel evil with that which is best.

And say: **وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ (٩٧) وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبَّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ** 'O my Lord, I seek Your refuge from the from the strokes of the satans, and I seek Your refuge from that they come to me".

In the first sentence of these verses, the direction is given to repel the evil caused by human beings with good behaviour. But, when it comes to repel the evil caused by Satan, the direction given is to seek refuge in Allah.

The third verse dealing with the same subject is: [41:34] **أَدْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ** Repel (evil) with what is best, and you will see that the one you had mutual enmity with him will turn as if he were a close friend." [34]"

This part of the verse directs how to repel the evil caused by human enemy. If we repel evil deed with a better deed, it would be possible for us to win over our human enemies and they would become our most devoted

friends. As opposed to a human enemy, the other part of the situation is contained in the next verse [36]. It deals with the slinking devil who is invisible, but effective in his attack. The verse reads **وَأِمَّا يَنْزِعَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ** "And should a stroke from Shaitan (Satan) strikes you, seek refuge with Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing." [41:36]

The wordings of this verse are more or less the same as they occur in Surah Al-A'raf. In other words, if an evil suggestion comes to us from the Satan, we are required to seek refuge in Allah, because that is the only defensive weapon against the invisible slinking, sly and cunning enemy. [Ibn Kathir]

In sum, all three sets of verses discussed above enjoin that a human enemy needs to be treated at first kindly, politely, patiently and compassionately, because human nature was in the primordial state created uncorrupted, and as such kindness, politeness, mercy and pardon could subdue him. However, human beings who have lost their primordial state of innocence, and are deeply sunk in the ocean of ignorance, the passions and the vices of the lower self or base self drag man downwards away from Allah. Some have become infidels, unbelievers and tyrants. They have thus become frontal enemies and come out armed with weapons of war to wage a frontal combat against the believers. The Qur'an prescribes in other verses that such human enemies should be repelled by force of arms. Unlike the accursed Satan, he is evil in his primal nature, and as such kindness, compassion and pardon does not bring a good effect on him. It is also impossible to have an armed conflict with him. So, the only defence against such an enemy is the celestial weapon of dhikrullah [Allah's Remembrance] and ta'awwudh [seeking refuge with Allah], with which the entire Qur'an is replete and the Qur'an appropriately ends with it.

Moreover, while dealing with a human enemy, a believer is never a loser. If he overcomes the enemy and prevails upon him, his victory is obvious. If the enemy overcomes him or even kills him, then too he will attain high rewards, and a high degree of martyrdom in the Hereafter which is far better than any worldly attainments. In other words, if a believer is defeated by a human enemy he has not lost anything nor is he harmed in anyway. But the case of the Satanic enemy is totally different. It is sinful to flatter him or please him; and if someone is defeated by him, it is to destroy his entire future in the Hereafter. This is the reason why the best defensive weapon against him is to seek refuge in Allah. This celestial weapon is so powerful and potent that all Satanic guile and treacherous cunning or craft are rendered weak and ineffective.

The Guile of Satan is Feeble

On account of the reasons given above, it may not be misunderstood that fighting the Satan is difficult. To dispel this misunderstanding, Allah has said **إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا** "...No doubt, the guile of the Satan is feeble." (4:76)

It is further clarified in Surah An-Nahl **فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ (٩٨) إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ (٩٩) إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ** "So, when you recite the Qur'an, seek the protection of Allah against Satan, the accursed. He is such that he has no power over those who believe in Allah and place trust in their Lord. His power is only over those who befriend him and those who associate partners with Him. [16:98-100]"

Please see Ma'ariful Qur'an, Vol. 5/pp 412-415 for concise commentary and fuller details of related rulings.

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ (٩٨) إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ (٩٩) إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ
بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ

Translation

So, when you recite the Qur'an, seek the protection of Allah against Satan, the accursed. [98]

He is such that he has no power over those who believe and place trust in their Lord. [99]

His power is only over those who befriend him and those who associate partners with Him. [100]

Sequence of Verses

Emphasis was laid in previous verses over the fulfillment of the covenant with Allah following which stated there was the importance and desirability of acting righteously in one's life. That one neglects to follow these commandments happens because of Satanic instigations. Therefore, this verse teaches us to seek protection against Satan, the accursed - something needed in every good deed. But, it will be noticed that it has been mentioned particularly with the recitation of the Qur'an. One reason for this particularization could also be that the recitation of the Qur'an is an act so unique that the Satan himself runs away from it. As said poetically:

Satan bolts from people who recite the Qur'an!

Then, there are specified Verses and Chapters which have been tested and they produce the desired result in removing the traces of Satanic inputs particularly. That they are effective and beneficial stands proved from definite textual authorities (nusus) - Bayan al-Qur'an. Despite this factor, when came the command to seek protection from the Satan in conjunction with the recitation of the Qur'an, it becomes all the more necessary with other deeds.

In addition to that, there is always the danger of Satanic instigations intruding into the recitation of the Qur'an itself. For instance, one may fall short in observing the etiquette due during the recitation or that it remains devoid of the essential spirit of deliberation, thinking, submission and humbleness. So, for this too, it was deemed necessary that protection from Satanic instigations should be sought (Ibn Kathir, Mazhari and others).

Commentary

In the preface of his Tafsir, Ibn Kathir has said: Human beings have two kinds of enemies. The first ones come from their own kind, like the general run of disbelievers. The other kind is that of the Jinn who are diabolic and disobedient. Islam commands defence against the first kind of enemy through -Jihad involving fighting and killing. But, for the other kind, the command is limited to the seeking of protection from Allah only. The reason is that the first kind of enemy happens to be homogenous. Its attack comes openly, visibly. Therefore, fighting and killing in -Jihad against such an enemy was made obligatory. As for the enemy of the Satanic kind, it is not visible. Its attack on humankind does not take place frontally. Therefore, as a measure of defence against such an enemy, the seeking of the protection of such a Being has been made obligatory that no one is able to see, neither the humankind, nor the Satan. Then, there is that subtle expediency in entrusting the defence against Satan with Allah. Is it not that one who stands subdued by the Satan is actually rejected and deserving of punishment in the sight of Allah? Quite contrary to this is the case of the humanoid enemy of human beings, that is, the disbelievers. If someone is subdued or killed while confronting them, he becomes a martyr (shahid), and deserving of reward from Allah (thawab)! Therefore, when one confronts an enemy of human beings with all his strength, it turns out

to be nothing but beneficial, no matter what the circumstances - either he would prevail over the enemy and put an end to his power, or would himself embrace shahCidah (martyrdom in the way of Allah) and deserve the best of returns with Him.

Related Rulings (masa'il)

1. The reciting of: **اعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم** (a'Udhu billahi minash-shaitanir-rajim: I seek protection with Allah from Shaitan, the accursed) before initiating the recitation of the Qur'an stands proved from the Holy Prophet in order that the command given in this verse is carried out.

But, not doing it occasionally also stands proved from authentic (Sahih) Ahadith. Therefore, the majority of Muslim scholars have not classed this injunction as obligatory (wajib). Instead, they have declared it to be Sunnah, a position on which Ibn -larir al-Tabari has reported a consensus (ijma') of the scholars of the Muslim community. As for Hadith narratives carrying the word and deed of the Holy Prophet;, whether those of reciting: **اعوذ بالله** (a'Udhu billahi) under most conditions or those of not reciting under some, all these have been mentioned exhaustively by Ibn Kathir at the beginning of his Tafsir.

2. Should ta'awwudh that is, a'Udhu billahi ', be recited only at the beginning of the first raka'ah while in Salah, or should it be done at the beginning of every raka'ah? Views of leading Muslim jurists differ in this matter. According to the great Imam Abu Hanifah (RA), it should be recited only in the first raka'ah. while Imam Shafi (RA) declares its recitation at the beginning of every raka'ah as commendable (trunustahabb). Arguments given by both have been presented in Tafsir Mazhari with full elaboration. (p. 49, v. 5)
3. While reciting the Qur'an - whether in Salah or out of it - the saying of 'a/iidhii bil-liih' is a Sunnah. The rule applies to both situations equally. But, after it has been said once, one may go on reciting as much as one wishes to, for the same single ta'awwudh (said at the beginning) is sufficient. Yes, if one abandons the recitation in the middle, gets busy with some mundane chore and then resumes it all over again, one should re-initiate the recitation by saying a'Udhu billahi and 'bismillah' once again at that time.
4. 4. Saying a'Udhu billahi before reading any word or book other than the Qur'an is not a Sunnah. There, one should recite only bismillah. (Al-Durr al-Mukhtar, Sham!)

However, the Ahadith teaches the saying of ta'awwudh during other things done and situations faced. For example, when someone gets very angry - so says the Ahadith - the heat of the anger goes away by saying: **اعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم** (a'Udhu billahi minash-shaitanir-rajim: I seek protection with Allah from Shaitan, the accursed)). (Ibn Kathir)

It also appears in Hadith that, before going to the toilet, saying:

O Allah, I seek protection with you from the foul and the impure is commendable (mustahabb). (Shami)

The way of Faith and Trust in Allah is the way of freedom from the power and control of the Shaitan

Verses 99 and 100 make it clear that Allah Ta'ala has not given the Shaitan the kind of power which would disarm any human being and compel him to become helpless and take to evil. So, should one opt for not using his capability of choice and control because of sheer carelessness or some selfish motive, then, this would be his own fault. Therefore, it was said that people who have faith in Allah and who, rather than trust their will power in their states and actions, place their ultimate trust in Allah Ta'alii for He is the One who gives us the ability to do everything good and also the One who shields us from everything evil. The Shaitan cannot possess and dictate such people. Of course, those who elect to befriend none but the Shaitan because of their selfish motives,

particularly like things about him and go about associating others in the pristine divinity of Allah 'I'a'alji, then, the Shaitan is all over them, in possession, in control, and would not let them go towards anything good while, in every evil, they are right in front.

The same subject has been taken up in verse 42 of Surah al-Hijr where Allah Ta'ala has Himself refuted the claim of the Shaitan by saying: **إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ** (Surely, My servants [are such that] you have no power over them - except [over] the one who follows you from among the astray - 15:42).

TAFSEER OF SURAH NOW RESUMES!

Relationship Between the Prologue and the Epilogue of the Qur'an

Allah prefaced the Qur'an with Surah Al-Fatihah which began with His Personal name. It further described His predominant attributes as being Rabb or Maintainer of the universe; as being the All-Merciful and Very Merciful and the Sole Judge of rights and wrongs. It defined religion as being His worship alone and imploring Him alone for help - all else being powerless in comparison. It further taught man to pray for true guidance so that he is able to find the right path, and be established in it. He is taught to pray to be saved from being among those who are condemned and those who have lost the right path after having received it. These factors serve the purpose of man's success and prosperity in this world and in the next world, that is the Hereafter. However, in the process of achieving this purpose man is obstructed by the accursed Satan. He lays various traps inconspicuously utilizing people's different weak points, their sensual and unhealthy desires which he detects and exploits. The Satanic traps or snares need to be shattered or broken to pieces. Seeking refuge in Allah is the only effective protection against these evil powers. That is why the Qur'an most fittingly ends on this.

Conclusion

All Thanks are due to Allah that the tafsir of the noble Qur'an has ended with the grace of Allah, and His kindness and help. Praise be to Allah from the beginning to the end, outwardly and inwardly non-manifestly and manifestly. We would not have found the way, had Allah not guided us. May Allah shower His blessings upon the best of creation, Muhammad , His chosen Messenger, the Seal and the leader of the Prophets and Messengers (A.S). Upon him and the other Messengers be His blessings and peace, upon his family and his Companions, all of them. O 'Our Lord, accept from us! Indeed, You - and You alone - are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing! This work completed on Saturday morning 21st of Sha'ban 1392 AH. Co-incidentally, this is the day I was born. I completed 77th year of my life and turned 78 years old. I pray to Allah and hope that the last days of my life would be the best part of my life, doing the best deeds; and that the best days of my life would be the day when I meet my Lord with the blessing of His clear Book and His trustworthy Prophet ; and that the efforts of this humble servant would be accepted, whose soul was exhausted by ailments,

grief, distress and anxieties, and lack of strength; and that He would pardon my errors and shortcomings if the obligations toward His noble Book were not fulfilled; and that the Muslims would benefit by it for aeons of time; and that He makes this work a treasure-trove for the Day when there will be no trading and no friendship, when neither wealth nor family will be of any help. My ability and help to do things come from Him. Pure is Allah; praise be to Him; Pure is Allah, the Great!

The 8th volume of Tafsir of Ma'arifur Qur'an was revised between 3rd of Ramadan 1392 AH and Friday 10th of Shawwal 1392 AH, taking about forty days. Praise be to Allah!

Alhamdulillah, the revision of the English version is completed on the night of 29 Ramadan 1424 A.H. corresponding to 25 November, 2003. May Allah bless this humble effort with His approval and pleasure, and make it beneficial for the readers. 'Amin

Sadaqallah-ul-'Azim

Wa sallallahu 'ala nabiyina Muhammadin wa 'ala 'Alihi wa sahbihi wa sallam.

Alhamdulillahiladhil-ladhi Ibni'matihi tatimmussalihah

The translation of the text of the Holy Qur'an completed on 16 Rabi'ul-Awwal 1424 A.H. corresponding to 19 May 2003 at Karachi on 11:25 forenoon.

Muhammad Taqi Usmani, May Allah forgive him, and accept this humble effort in the service of the Holy Qur'an, His eternal book of guidance. May Allah give us tawfiq to recite it and understand it.

[Alhamdulillah The Commentary on Surah An-Nas Ends here](#)