

vol. [10]

REFLECTIONS

**EL SHA'RAWY**  
**الشعر اوان**

فواطـر

المجلد [10]



*In the Name of God,  
the Most Merciful,  
the Dispenser of Mercy.*

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AL HOŞN RESEARCH & STUDIES CENTRE

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info@alhosnuae.ae

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the chapter of

***Yunus***



## **In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy**

**T**he chapter of *Yunus*<sup>(1)</sup> begins with Allah's saying, 'In the Name of Allah<sup>(2)</sup>, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful' which is considered one of the verses. It raises a question: Is it one of the verses of each chapter or was it revealed as a means of introducing a new chapter and separating chapters? The Quran contains one hundred and fourteen chapters, and 'In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful' is mentioned at the beginning of one hundred and thirteen chapters and in the middle of the chapter of *al-Naml*: 'Indeed, it is from Solomon, and indeed, it reads: "In the name of Allah , the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful."' (*an-Naml*: 30) Thus, it is part of a verse in the chapter of *al-Naml*. The religious scholars said that it is one of the verses of each chapter that is recited aloud in the daily prayers. It is the first verse of each chapter. Other scholars said that it has been revealed in order to separate between chapters, but if this were the case, it would not appear in chapter *al-Fatiha* as it is the first chapter in the Quran. However, the one who holds such an opinion says that 'In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful' occurs at the beginning of the chapter of *al-Fatiha* as a

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- (1) The chapter of Yunus was revealed in Mecca, and it contains one hundred and nine verses. Some of its verses were revealed in Medina, a point regarding which scholars had controversial opinions. Ibn 'Abbas said that three verses of this chapter were revealed in Medina which are: 'So if you are in doubt, [O Muhammad]...' to '....will not believe' (*Yunus*: 94-96).
- (2) The Islamic conception of 'Allah' is not the same as the Christian and Jewish conception of 'God'. However, the word 'Allah' does not refer to a tribal god or God of only Muslims, it refers to the Creator of the whole world, the One God (who has no son). We prefer, however, to use 'Allah' rather than 'God' as it has a unique character: it cannot be used to refer to any false gods and does not have any derivatives like goddess, gods, etc. It is a unique word used solely to describe the One God of this universe.

blessing. However, I hold the opinion that it is one of the verses of the chapter of *al-Fatiha*, and it is assumed to be so in all the publications of the Quran, as it is numbered as verse number, and '[All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds' (*al-Fatiha*: 2) is verse number two; however, in the rest of the chapters of the Quran, it is not numbered as a verse; rather, the verse that immediately follows it is numbered as verse number one. The vast majority of religious scholars consider it as a verse of the Quran, but it is not a verse of each chapter except the chapter of *al-Fatiha*. At the beginning of our commentary on the Holy Quran, we had said that man should begin every action by uttering the Name of Allah because he performs every action depending on Allah's subjection of things to him. For example, when he tills the earth, plants the seeds, and waters the field, , it is Allah Who allows the crops to grow. A person may till land, but he does not cause plants to grow since he does not know how Allah packs all the plants in the seeds. Therefore, Allah says: 'and have you seen that [seed] which you sow? Is it you who makes it grow, or are We the grower?' (*al-Waqi'a*: 63-64) There are certain actions that man performs not thanks to his own capabilities, but due to Allah decreeing such actions to be fulfilled. Man has no power over the wind, or over any of the other elements on earth. When you think about the simple plant that grows out of a bulb or that grows out of a seed which you planted in a moist soil, you will find that tiny seedlings sprout from this seed. Then the seedlings develop the roots, so how is this fragile little seedling able to penetrate the layers of earth above it? If this seed is found on a rocky mountain, the seedling will sprout forth from any fissure in the mountain- this is the power of that simple seed which human beings regard as insignificant and so fragile. In addition, you are probably unaware of the tremendous waterpower which was previously used before dynamite was invented, when people wanted to break down a rocky mountain. They used to open a hole in the mountain and place a plank of wood inside this hole; then they would soak this piece of wood with water; as soon as wood absorbed the water, the mountain would crumble.

When you plant a seed in the earth, this seed sprouts into a simple plantlet which forms roots in order to absorb the nutrients from the soil. Before this phase, the seed depends on the nutrients contained within it in order to form



the roots which become firmly implanted in the soil. Then the tiny seedling develops two small green leaves. Human beings were unaware of the complexity of this process until very recently as it is one of those bounties granted by Allah to human beings before they learned about it through scientific research. Thus, when you plant your seeds, it is not your own power that makes them grow; rather, it the Power of the One Who has subjected the land to you. Therefore, when you start to plant your seeds by 'In the Name of Allah', this indicates that you acknowledge that Allah is the One Who has subjected the land to you. When you start to lift a heavy load by saying, 'In the Name of Allah', you make use of the power granted to you by your Creator; furthermore, since you may try to lift a heavy load, the nerve impulses emanating from your brain might not reach your arms, and the reaction of your arms may delay. Therefore, before you begin your work, whatever it is, you should understand that you do not perform it with your own power, but you use that which Allah has subjected to you. Thus, you should begin every action by saying, 'In the Name of Allah', as Allah *the Most High* has put everything at your service. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad said, 'Every matter that does not start with remembrance of Allah is incomplete.'<sup>(1)</sup>

If you rely on your own power only without mentioning the Name of Allah, nothing will be subjected to you since Allah is the One Who subjects things to you. Therefore, you should begin all your actions with mentioning the Name of Allah. In political terms, a judge issues his verdict by saying: 'In the name of the constitution, I have reached the following judgment.' This means that he is not pronouncing a judgment based on his own subjective view, but according to the constitution.

Thus, when you start your work mentioning the Name of Allah, you remind the object which is subjected to you that it helps you out of Allah's Will. When you start any work with remembering the One Who has granted

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(1) The Arabic word 'al-Abtar' is a hyperbole which is balanced morphologically at 'af'al'. The Arabic word '*batr*' literally means 'cutting off' in English. The word '*al-abtar*' is mentioned in the Arabic text of Allah's saying, 'Surely your enemy is the one who shall be without posterity.' (*al-Kawthar*: 3) The intended meaning is that any deed which does not start with the Name of Allah or glorifying Him will be without posterity.

you and all things around you power, you absolve the belief that you do things due to your might and power.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful'. This refers to the mercy which Allah shows to His living creatures. This formula also removes hardship from the disobedient person who makes use of Allah's bounty in the Name of the One Whom he has disobeyed. Allah reminds you that He is the Most Gracious, and the Most Merciful. The chapter of *Yunus* begins with the following verse:

الرَّ تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ

***Alif Lam Ra*, These are the verses of the wise Book [1]  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 1)**

'*Alif Lam Ra*' are three Arabic letters. The chapter of *al-Baqara* and the chapter of *Al-'Imran* start with the letters '*Alif Lam Mim*', the chapter of *al-A'raf* starts with the letters '*Alif Lam Mim Sad*' and the chapter of *Yunus* starts with '*Alif Lam Ra*'. We notice that in all these cases, these expressions are names of letters. Everything has a name and *musamma* (the object named). My name is Ash-Sha'rawi, and *al-musamma* (the object named) here is my outward form. Thus, when a name is uttered, my outward form of the object comes to mind. When we say, for instance, 'sky' what comes to mind is 'all that is above you', and when we say 'mosque' what comes to mind is that place where people offer their prayers.

Thus, there is a difference between the name and the *musamma* (the object named). All human beings, literate or illiterate, can speak, but only a literate person knows the names of the letters. We may ask those who learn English to spell the names of letters. Therefore, a literate person knows that the word *akalt* consists of the following letters: *Hamza*, *Kaf*, *Lam* and *Ta*. Some chapters of the Quran begin with *Alif Lam Mim* which are names of letters not *musammas* (the object named) of these letters. Since Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was illiterate, who taught him the names of these letters? Therefore, these letters indicate that he was illiterate, and no teacher taught him, yet, he uttered the names of letters, '*Alif Lam Mim*'. When you

consider the names of these letters mentioned at the beginning of chapters of the Quran, you will find that they are fourteen of them.<sup>(1)</sup> Some of them are mentioned many times<sup>(2)</sup> and in different combinations. In addition, they constitute half of the Arabic alphabet. It is remarkable indeed that the description of the alphabetical letters emerged after the Quran had been revealed. The letters are divided into various categories: *majhurah* (strongly pronounced letters), *mahmusah* (letters pronounced inaudibly), *raqiqah* (letters pronounced softly), and *rakhwah* (the weak letters which are not stressed during pronunciation due to their weakness). When exploring these letters, you will find that the fourteen letters that occur at the beginnings of certain chapters represent all the different categories of letters in the Arabic alphabet.

Allah *the Most High* uses different combinations of these letters at the beginning of different chapters; sometime He uses only one letter such as the following verse: ‘*Sad*. By the Quran with its reminding’ (*Sad*: 1), Allah *Glorified is He* also says: ‘*Qaf*. By the honored Quran’ (*Qaf*: 1), Allah *Glorified is He* also says: ‘*Nun*. By the pen and what they inscribe’ (*al-Qalam*: 1). Accordingly, three chapters begin with one letter. There are other chapters which begin with two letters such as *Ta Ha*, *Ya Sin*, *Ta Sin* and *Ha Mim*. There are chapters which begin with three letters, *Alif lam Mim* such as *al-Baqara*, *Al-’Imran*, *al-’Ankabut*, *ar-Rum* and *as-Sajda*. There are some chapters which begin with *Alif Lam Ra*. As well, there are three chapters the first two letters of which are *Alif* and *Lam*, but they differ in the third letter which is *Mim* and *Ra*. The chapters of *Yunus*, *Yusuf*, *Ibrahim* and *al-Hijr* begin with *Alif Lam Ra*. The chapter of *al-A’raf* begins with four letters, *Alif Lam Mim Sad*, and the chapter of *ar-Ra’d* begins with the letters *Alif Lam Mim Ra*.

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- (1) Some religious scholars have tallied up these disjointed letters that occur at the beginnings of chapters and found that they are fourteen. Using these letters, they formed the following sentence: (*nass qati’ hakim lahu sir*), meaning ‘a decisive sagacious text with a secret’.
  - (2) The religious scholars held different opinions regarding the meaning of these letters; some say that Allah has kept their secret to Himself, others say that they represent the names of these chapters, and others say that they are related to the Names of Allah and His Attributes: the letter ‘*Alif*’ refers to the first letter of the Name of Allah in Arabic, while the letter ‘*Lam*’ refers to Allah’s Name ‘*Al-Latif*’, and the letter ‘*Mim*’ refers to the first letter of the Name of Allah ‘*Al-Majid*’.

Some chapters begin with five letters such as *Maryam* which begins with *Kaf Ha Ya 'Ain Sad*, and chapter *ash-Shura* which begins with *Ha Mim 'Ain Sin Qaf*. Sometime a letter or two letters occur at the beginning of a chapter, but they are not considered an independent verse. Two chapters begin with letters which are regarded as independent verses such as '*Ta Ha*' and '*Ya Sin*', while the chapter of *al-Naml* starts with '*Ta Sin*', but these two letters are not considered as an independent verse. This shows that the Quran is *tawqifi*<sup>(1)</sup> and does not follow a certain pattern in order to draw our attention to the fact that Allah *the Almighty* revealed these letters in this way. For instance, we find the Arabic word *ism* (name) in the Quran in the expression '*bism Allah*' (in the Name of Allah) which is written without the letter *Alif*<sup>(2)</sup> which is known in Arabic grammar as '*Alif wasl*' (The letter *Alif* which is pronounced but not written nor is not dropped while writing in the first verse of chapter *al-'Alaq*: 'Recite in the name of your Lord who created.' (*al-'Alaq*: 1)

Another example: if you look up the word *tabarak* in the Holy Quran, you will find that the letter *ba* is followed by the letter *Alif*<sup>(3)</sup> but sometimes this word occurs without the letter *Alif*. In addition, the word *al-banat* sometimes

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(1) The word '*tawqifi*' means that Allah has instructed Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* regarding everything in the Quran, including the openings of chapters, the breaks between verses, and the order in which the chapters of the Quran are arranged. Matters relevant to the Quran were not left up to Prophet Muhammad or his Companions to decide, as Allah revealed them to Prophet Muhammad by Jibril (Gabriel).

(2) The word '*bism*' (in the Name of) is mentioned four times in the Quran with the letter '*Alif*' such as in the following verses: 'Recite in the name of your Lord who created.' (*al-'Alaq*: 1) 'So exalt the Name of your Lord, the Most Great' is mentioned in three verses in the Quran. (*al-Waqi'a*: 74 and 52) and (*al-Waqi'a*: 96)

The word '*bism*' (in the Name of) is mentioned without the letter '*Alif*' three times in the Quran: *al-Fatiha*, 'And [Noah] said, "Embark therein; in the name of Allah is its course and its anchorage..." (*Hud*: 41) and 'Indeed, it is from Solomon, and indeed, it reads: 'In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.' (*an-Naml*: 30) This is in addition to the *Basmalah* (saying, "*Bismillah ar-Rahman, ar-Rahim* [In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful]").

(3) The word '*tabarak*' is mentioned in the Quran 9 times, two of which are without '*Alif*', such as in Allah's sayings: 'Blessed is the name of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.' (*ar-Rahman*: 78), 'Blessed is He in whose hand is dominion...' (*al-Mulk*: 1) and the other seven verses are: '...blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds.' (*al-A'raf*: 54), '...So blessed is Allah, the best of creators.' (*al-Mu'minun*: 14), (*al-Furqan*: 1, 10 and 61), (*Ghafir*: 1) and (*az-Zukhruf*: 85)

occurs with the letter *Alif* included and sometimes not.<sup>(1)</sup> These examples show that the Quran does not follow a fixed order in regard to writing. Allah has willed the order of the writing of the Quran to be a miracle, just as its linguistic expressions and grammatical structure. Some people said that the Prophet's Arab contemporaries did not master writing, but we see that had they not been familiar with it, so much so that they would not have written the word *bism* without the letter *Alif* where it should occur in this way. They knew that the Quran must be written exactly in the manner which Jibril (Gabriel) had revealed to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in the manner which Allah *the Almighty* intended.<sup>(2)</sup> Another remarkable fact is that all the verses of the Quran are styled according to the principle of *wasl* (ending the word with a vowel), as no Quranic chapter is concluded with a word that ends with *sukun* (a consonant point at the end of a word).

An example of this point is Allah's saying, '... and He is the Lord of the Great Throne.' (*at-Tawba*: 129) in which the last letter ends with a *kasra* (vowel point that sounds like 'i') and not a *sukun* (a consonant point at the end of a word). This allows for a smooth transition with the next chapter which starts with 'In the Name of Allah'. This shows that all of the verses of the Quran are connected with one another. Beware of rendering the Quran '*Idin*,<sup>(3)</sup> which means tackling the verses of the Quran separately from one another, as it as a whole is connected. There are no instances, when reciting the Quran, where you are obligated to pause, as all the verses of the Quran are based on the principle of *wasl* (connection). Likewise, the last word ends with *Fat-hah* (vowel point that sounds like 'a') and should be read in the accusative case, as

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- (1) The word 'al-banat' is mentioned in the Quran 12 times, three of which are mentioned without the letter '*Alif*', as in the following verses: 'But they have attributed to Allah partners - the jinn, while He has created them - and have fabricated for Him sons and daughters without knowledge...' (*al-An'am*: 100) 'And they attribute to Allah daughters - Exalted is He - and for them is what they desire.' (*an-Nahl*: 57) and 'Or has He daughters while you have sons?' (*at-Tur*: 39)
  - (2) This is an important branch of the sciences of the Quran: calligraphy of the Quran, which the scholars tackled profoundly. They agreed not to deviate from the rules of calligraphy which the earlier predecessors followed. The scholars tackled the secrets and reasons behind the rules of calligraphy. See: *Al-Burhan fi 'Ulum Al-Quran* by Az-Zarkashi (1: 376-431) and *Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum Al-Quran* by as-Suyuti (4: 145-166)
  - (3) '*Idin* means divided into portions.

it is followed by: 'In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful'. We do not put a *sukun* (a consonant point at the end of a word) on the last letter of any chapter since it is connected with the following chapter. When it even comes to the rules of *tajwid* (reciting the Quran following the rules of recitation), the letters which necessitate *iq'lab* (pronouncing the Arabic letter *nun*, which has no vowel point and *Tawin* as *mim*), if we come across an instance of *izhhar* (pronouncing the letter completely and clearly from its articulation point without a *ghunnah*), we should pronounce it in this manner because the verses of the Quran are linked with each other. A person may say that as the Quran is based on the principle of *wasl*, the verses of the Quran that start with separate letters should be read as one word; for example, they should not be read as '*Alif Lam Mim*', but as '*alam*'.

However, the separate letters of the Quran which appear at the beginning of certain chapters should be pronounced separately. Accordingly, we should pronounce the letter '*Alif*,' then '*Lam*' then '*Mim*', and each of which is separated by a pause, because these letters were revealed in this way and Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* taught Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to recite them in this way. There is wisdom behind reading them in this way, whether you are able to understand it or not.

The Quran was revealed to Arabs, many of whom remained disbelievers and vehemently resisted the Message of Prophet Muhammad and waited for anything they perceive as error in order to express serious doubt in the authenticity of the Quran. However, did any of the disbelievers ever ask about the meaning of '*Alif, Lam, Mim*'? None of them ever brought this matter up, even though they strived to find an error in the Quran. In fact, they were quite aware of the extreme eloquence of the Quran. This indicates that they understood the meaning of such expressions as '*Alif Lam Mim*' thanks to their mastery of the Arabic language. Had they not understood such expressions, they would have immediately impugned the Quran; however, they never did so.

The companions of the Prophet, who were so eager to understand everything about the Quran, did not ask the Prophet about the meaning of '*Alif Lam Mim*'. They reacted to such expressions, not with their minds, but with an intuitive understanding of the divine secret in them because the human soul cannot

reject anything that comes from Allah *the Almighty*. Even if the mind cannot understand it, it will not reject<sup>(1)</sup> it and the soul becomes comfortable with it.

We gave the following example previously: When Pharaoh's people kept the Israelite women alive and killed the men, what did Musa's (Moses') mother do? Allah *the Exalted* inspired her to act in the manner described in the following verse: 'We inspired Musa's (Moses) mother by saying, "Suckle him, and then, when you fear for his safety, put him in the river. Do not be afraid, and do not grieve...."' (*al-Qasas*: 7) If you say to any mother to throw her infant in the river if she fears for him, she will never act on this suggestion. Musa's (Moses') mother could have tried to hide him by any means. However, throwing him in the river in the hope of saving him from slaughter cannot be imagined. This is what the All Gracious inspired her to do so Satan can never interfere in it. Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* reassured her as explained in the following verse: '... when you fear for his safety, put him in the river ....' (*al-Qasas*: 7). This is in order for her to prepare herself for this incident before it takes place. Then Allah *the Most High* ordered her to do what is revealed in the following verse: 'We inspired your mother by saying, "Put your child into the chest, then place him in the river...."' (*Ta Ha*: 38-39) The speech in this verse is urgent, for it is the time to act; Allah *Glorified is He* reassured her that He ordered the river to cast Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* safely to the bank: '... and the river will throw it onto the bank....' (*Ta Ha*: 39) Then Allah ordered Musa's (Moses') enemy to take and raise him: '... he will be taken in by an enemy of mine and his ....' (*Ta Ha*: 39) Thus, Allah's order can never be disobeyed. Similarly, a believer accepts expressions such as '*Alif Lam Mim*' as containing Divine mysteries and should not judge them according to his understanding.

I advise anyone who recites the Quran as a form of worship not to preoccupy himself with the meanings of these expressions. This is contrary to the opinion stating that one should recite so as to understand the meaning, for

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(1) *It was narrated on the authority of 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb who said: 'If the religion were based on opinion, it would be more important to wipe over the under parts of the leather socks than the upper, but I have seen Allah's Messenger peace and blessings of Allah be upon him wiping over the upper parts of his leather socks.' [Related by Abu Dawud in his Sunnan (163) and Ad-Daraqutny in his Sunnan] (1/199)]*

he who wishes to understand the meaning will ask to know the meaning of each expression. Thus, if you recite the Quran for the sake of worship, you should recite it while bearing in mind the Divine mysteries that it contains; thereby, you will avoid limiting the grandeur of the Quran to your limited knowledge as a human being. Therefore, when reading the Quran for the sake of worship, we should tackle its expressions as containing Divine mystery. Not everyone who reads the Quran is an expert linguist who knows the root of every word; many people are illiterate and use the Quran as a means to worship and draw closer to Allah. Therefore, they tackle the Quran as containing divine secrets.

There is an example from our own daily lives—and to Allah belong the utmost example of perfection—we see that the army sometimes uses passwords which do not always have a meaning; however, no one can enter or exit the barracks without uttering this password. Let this password be ‘lentils’, for example. The person who knows this password understands that it can save his life. Upon returning to his battalion, the soldier utters the word ‘lentils’, whereby the guards at the gate recognise him as being one of the army. If someone who does not know the password and tries to enter, he may be killed. Those who know it utter it without asking about its meaning as they learn it from the person who has ordered them to say it. The ancient Arabs understood that the disjointed letters at the beginning of certain chapters have meanings, and there are certain indications for them in their language. For example a poet<sup>(1)</sup> says:

Wake up and give us a cup of wine in the morning,

He also says:

If any person treats us ignorantly

We will treat him more ignorantly.

What is Arabic word *ala* used in the Arabic version of this line of poetry? The meaning of the verse is quite clear without it. However, the ancient Arab

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(1) ‘Amr ibn Kalthum Abu *Al-Aswad* was a poet who belonged to the pre-Islamic era and was a first-rate poet. He was born in the north of the Arabian Peninsula, led his tribe while he still a young man. He led a long life and died forty years before the *Hijra*. *Al-Mu‘llaqa* is one of these most famous works. (See *Az-Zirikli's Al-A‘lam*, 5: 84).



recited this line of poetry and knew that language is a means of communication between the speaker and the listener. The speaker is in control of the discussion, but the listener is the recipient of the speech; when you direct your speech to a listener, his mind might be preoccupied with other things. Therefore, by the time you have the listener's full attention, he may have already missed some of your words, so you draw his attention to what you have said in order for him to grasp what you say.

Perhaps Allah *the Exalted* uses the expression '*Alif Lam Mim*' to draw our attention to the content of the verses. Perhaps Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* who had been illiterate and had not known the names of letters, uttered these letters after receiving knowledge from Allah in this regard. The means of understanding will remain unlimited until the Day of Judgement, since if they were not so, all the meanings of Allah's sayings would be grasped by people. However, Allah *Glorified is He* has willed for us to continue to extract new meanings from the Quran over the ages. The Quran is the sayings of Allah which represent His Attributes. It is well known that Allah's Attributes have unlimited perfection. If you were to know all their significances, it would mean that this perfection is finite, but the meanings of the Quran are unlimited.

The miraculous nature of the Quran, which Allah *the Almighty* has revealed to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* lies in the fact that it is in the language at which his people excelled. Thus, Allah challenged them at that which they excelled at, as they were not able to produce something of equal calibre. If Allah *the Most High* had revealed the Quran in a language other than their own, they would have justified their inability to bring about anything similar to it since it contains new alphabetical letters with which they were unfamiliar.

Allah has willed for the Quran to be composed of the same letters which they used during their speech and willed that the letters, words, verses, and expressions of the Quran are such that they are impossible to replicate, for the Speaker is of a completely different level. Thus, the greatness of the Quran is not derived from the letters of the Arabic alphabet, but from its meanings and overall order of these letters as the letters are the same. The Quran is a miracle

since it is said by Allah *the Almighty*. In order to clarify this idea, we have previously given the following example: If we want to gauge the skill level of fabric weavers, we will supply each one of them with some wool, cotton and silk which represent different kinds of raw material. Then we ask them to produce a piece of cloth using all three materials in order to know the superior weaving skills.

We will surely hear someone saying that the final product of wool is bound to be rough, and the cotton weaver will produce a piece of cloth with cotton-like qualities, whereas the silk weaver will make a smooth piece of cloth. However, if we give them each the same type of material - wool, cotton or silk-we will truly know which of them is the most proficient weaver, Thus, if the Quran had been revealed in letters and words that were not from the Arabic alphabet, they would have said that if we were conversant with these letters and words, we could have come up with something better.

Therefore, Allah *the Most High* decreed for the Quran to be made up of letters and words with which Muhammad's people were familiar. Many people were preoccupied with the opening letters of some chapters of the Quran; they were seeking some knowledge about them after the intermingling of different cultures and the Arabic language has not had the same status it enjoyed when the Quran was revealed. Those who possessed proficient knowledge of Arabic during the era of Prophet Muhammad heard these letters in the beginning of certain chapters of the Quran and they accepted them. Allah says: '*Alif Lam Ra*. These are the verses of the wise Book.' (*Yunus*: 1) The word *tilk* (These) which is mentioned in the Arabic version of the verse, is a demonstrative pronoun, which should be distinguished from second person pronouns because some people confuse the two. A demonstrative pronoun is that which points to something such as *hadha*, *dha* and *tilk*. *Hadha* is a masculine form of demonstrative pronoun. For example, *hadha qalam jamil* (this is a beautiful pen), but in the following example, *tilka ad-dawah jamila*, (this inkwell is beautiful), *tilka* is a feminine form of demonstrative pronoun. The letter *Kaf* in the Arabic word *tilka* refers to second person pronoun and the *ta'* in the same word is a feminine demonstrative pronoun which refers to the verses, while the letter *Kaf* refers to the person being addressed: Prophet Muhammad

*peace and blessings be upon him*. Therefore, the meaning of this verse is that: these are the verses, O, Muhammad.

In the light of these differences between demonstrative pronouns and second person pronouns, the expressions of the Quran differ. For example, Allah says: ‘...for those are two proofs from your Lord...’ (*al-Qasas*: 32) The word *dhanika* (those) is a dual pronoun indicating the staff. Allah also says: ‘And put your hand into the opening of your garment...’ (*an-Naml*: 12) Allah also says: ‘That is from what my Lord has taught me...’ (*Yusuf*: 37) This is what Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) *peace be upon him* told the two prisoners who shared his cell. The structure of the sentence reveals that he was addressing two people, but he refers to the interpretation with the term *dha* which is mentioned in the Arabic version of the verse. When Al-‘Aziz’s wife called the women to witness the beauty of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) *peace be upon him* and gave them each a knife, she said, ‘*ukhruj ‘alayhin*’ (reveal yourself to them) since he is a singular masculine, while they are a plural feminine. The verse in which this incident is mentioned contains a plural feminine pronoun as well as a singular masculine demonstrative pronoun. Thus she says, ‘That is the one about whom you blamed me...’ (*Yusuf*: 32). *Dha* is a demonstrative pronoun referring to Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), and *kunna* is a second person pronoun referring to the group of women. The following verse addresses a group of people: ‘And that was your assumption which you assumed about your Lord ...’ (*Fussilat*: 23)

Therefore, the difference between the demonstrative pronouns and second person pronouns is clarified. The *Ta’* here refers to the verses, which are considered feminine in Arabic, and the one who is originally addressed by this verse is Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

The word *al-ayat* is the plural of the word *aya* which literally means a wondrous object. It is common in Arabic that this word is used to refer to extreme beauty and splendour. This word also can refer to many things; it can refer, for example, to the miracles which Allah *the Almighty* granted His Messengers in order to prove their truthfulness: ‘...No matter what sign you bring us with which to bewitch us, we will not be believers in you.’ (*al-A’raf*: 132) It can also refer to the marvellous phenomena of the universe, as in Allah’s saying:

‘...And a sign for them is the night. We remove from it [the light of] day....’ (*Ya Sin*: 37) Allah *Glorified is He* also says: ‘And we have made the night and day two signs ....’ (*al-Isra*’: 12) Allah *the Most High* also says: ‘And we made the son of Mary and his mother a sign ....’ (*al-Mu’minun*: 50)

Accordingly, the word *aya* may refer to a sign or phenomenon in the universe, or it may refer to a miracle performed by one of the prophets in order to prove that they were sent by Allah in order to convey the Divine Message. It may also refer to the verses of the Quran which challenge disbelievers to produce something similar.

In the following verse, ‘*Alif Lam Ra*, These are the verses of the wise Book’ (*Yunus*: 1), the intended meaning of the word ‘*ayat*’ is the Quranic verses. Since Allah is the Creator of the signs of the universe and the miracles performed by His Messengers, along with being the One Who revealed the Quran, there is no contradiction between all of different significances of the word *ayat*, as their source is the same. In Allah’s saying, ‘*Alif Lam Ra* These are the verses of the wise Book’ (*Yunus*: 1), the word ‘*Al-hakim*’ literally means the one who wisely puts everything in its proper place, as he does not consider matters from the apparent perspective and overlooks the negative consequences that may arise in the future. For example - and to Allah belongs the utmost example of perfection - you may attain something, thinking that it will relieve you of other troubles, but it may worsen your troubles. There are various types of medicines from which a doctor prescribes a number of medicines which suit a patient while trying to do his utmost to spare his patient the undesirable side effects of the medicines. There is considered wisdom as the doctor does not prescribe a single medicine, which may cause negative side effects, but he prescribes several medicines, which may mitigate the negative side effects that may occur. Thus, this is a form of wisdom since he is taking precautionary, proactive measures to avoid possible negative side effects.

In the early fifties, scientists tried to reduce the devastating effects which insects had on crops, so they invented a chemical substance known as ‘DDT’ to combat insects. These scientists boasted about the effectiveness of the pesticide they invented. However, they discovered that this chemical substance also had an extremely adverse effect upon all living creatures, and nowadays people

are forbidden from using this chemical substance. The invention was created without wisdom because though this product had benefits, it also had many harmful side effects, as it poisoned farm animals and crops.

Therefore, wisdom means putting everything in its proper place so that it brings about benefits without causing harm in the future. Allah *the Almighty* has disclosed His Doctrine to us through the Holy Book to guide us to that which will rectify our affairs. If we apply this doctrine, we will attain benefits, along with experiencing no harm. We mentioned previously the bounties which Allah *the Exalted* has bestowed upon us in the universe; He has created animals in order for us to benefit from their milk, wool, leather, and meat. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘And they carry your loads to a land you could not have reached except with difficulty ....’ (*an-Nahl*: 7) This means that these animals provide us with comfort. Man has invented vehicles which carry the load for us and enable us to reach our destination with less effort on our part, but these inventions serve our human welfare. Human beings used to use donkeys and mules to carry the loads and luggage, but now they have invented many vehicles and large trucks which haul tons of materials and merchandise; however, we did not anticipate the fact that these machines emit exhaust which pollute the air, whereas the excretions expelled by donkeys or mules fertilise soil.

Thus, if the automobile industry does not somehow manage to reduce the pollution which vehicles produce, it will be regarded as lacking wisdom; there is a great need for conducting researches on getting rid of the harms caused by fuel combustion. Accordingly, we can benefit from the speed of cars and their capacity to haul large quantities of goods, while removing their harmful side effects. Thus, wisdom means putting everything in its proper place in such a way that involves permanent benefits without causing any harm. Someone may ask what the meaning of Allah’s saying ‘*Al-kitab al-hakim*’ is. Does it mean that the Book itself is wise or that this wisdom is derived from the All-Wise Who has revealed the Book? It means that the Quran is full of wisdom derived from Allah *the Almighty*. In other words, it is the Book that has been revealed by the Wise Lord. The word *hakim* (wise) is morphologically balanced to the form *fa’il* and has the same morphological balance of the word *karim* (the All-Generous) and *rahim* (the All-Merciful). Sometimes the

word is morphologically balanced to the form *fa'el*, and at other times, it is morphologically balanced to the form *fa'il*. Its position in the sentence determines the form it takes.

The meaning of the word *hakim* (which is an adjective derived from the Arabic verb *Hakama* that means to rule, to judge or to do something perfectly, and the other form of the same verb *Hakuma* which means to be wise) is clarified to us by its context: if we attribute it to the word *hukm* (the infinitive of the verb, meaning ruling), then the 'wise book' means the 'rule' or 'command', and it is clear that the Quran is like a decree issued by Allah *Glorified is He*. If we attribute the adjective 'wise' to the nominative case *Hakim* which means 'judge' or 'arbiter', then it is clear that the Quran is also *hakim* which means one that pronounces judgments in various matters, in order to bring out the truth of these matters. Thus, it can be said that the Quran pronounces judgments in all matters relating to the faith. Furthermore, the highest and the most crucial matter in which the Quran pronounces a judgment is the testament of faith, 'There is no deity but Allah'. Anyone who says something or acts in a way contrary to this principle is an 'offender' (*zalim*). Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...for such [a false] ascribing of divinity is indeed an awesome wrong!' (*Luqman*: 13) The Quran resolves all of these issues, and it is the ultimate arbiter in these matters.

If you describe the Quran as *muhkam* (made with wisdom and precision), you, thereby, attribute it to Allah *the Exalted*. If you describe it as *hakim*, this is also correct since the Quran is the ultimate 'arbiter' resolving the ultimate doctrinal issue that is 'There is no deity but Allah'. This is the testament upheld by Allah concerning Himself; it is a witnessed testament to Him by the angels and it is an evidential testament to Him by other created beings; Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Allah [Himself] proffers evidence—and [so do] the angels and all who are endowed with knowledge ....' (*Al-Imran*: 18) When the Quran judges this matter, it pronounces a fair judgment that brings to light the truth of this most important creed. The Quran is also the arbiter of all actions, for it shows what is *halal* (allowable) and what is *haram* (prohibited); it actually lays down a clear barrier between what is *halal* and what is *haram*. The Quran is also the arbiter of behaviour and actions. Thus, the word *hakim* (arbiter) means that which brings to light the truth in matters that are disputed and debated.

On the other hand, the word *hakim* can either have the meaning of *fa'il* (subject of a verb), or it can have the meaning of *maf'ul* (object of a verb), or that which has acquired wisdom since it is made by someone who is wise; thus, the meaning of *muhkam* is 'precisely and perfectly made'. If the word *hakim* takes the format of *fa'il*, it then conveys the meaning of *hakim* which implies that there are two parties: one party that is asserting an account of events and another that is contesting this account; it also means a judge who judges the two positions on their respective merits and who pronounces a fair judgment.

Basically, the Quran represents a 'judge' settling the supreme issue of a debate between humans; some of them denying the existence of a Allah (atheists), while others say that there indeed exists a deity that it is not Allah, along with others saying that Allah shares His Powers with certain associates. The Quran comes and decisively settles these matters, pronouncing a clear judgment. The Quran tells those who say, 'There is no deity named Allah' that they are lying; those who say, 'There is a deity other than Allah' that they are lying and those who say, 'Allah shares his divinity with other associates' that they are also lying. He is, in fact, One God. This is the first judgment which the Quran pronounces on the summit of the doctrine.

Furthermore, since the judgment pronounced by the Quran on the essence of this doctrine is true, then the reception of the rest of the doctrine will be one and the same; there are not multiple deities that are vying with each other for power and influence nor are they contradicting each other; there is only One God Who issues a single judgment, internally consistent, Who obligates all human beings with religious duties and Who brings them all out of their subjective whims, thus, unifying them according to His Will. The Quran is also an arbiter of actions, for people might have different opinions regarding any given action; some might say that it is a virtuous action, while others might say that it is abominable. The Quran pronounces the ultimate judgments on matters and defines what good conduct is, and then commands people to abide by it. Furthermore, it determines what actions are vile, and thus, prohibits people from engaging in them. Likewise, the Quran separates between what is *halal* (allowable) from what is *haram* (prohibited). Thus, the Quran has pronounced judgments regarding the ultimate doctrine, regarding actions and behaviour

and also regarding what is *halal* and what is *haram*. However, the Quran is also the arbiter of another important matter, almost as important as the essence of this doctrine, which is the truthfulness of the Prophets who deliver Allah's Message on His behalf. A Prophet who is delivering Allah's Message on His behalf must be a truthful Messenger, along with being sincere and speaking the truth. The Quran pronounces a judgment on this matter through the very fact that it is a miracle. Thus, for sceptics who doubt the truthfulness of Muhammad's prophethood, the Quran challenges them to try and produce a writ of similar calibre and quality. Furthermore, if they were to stand incapable of doing so, then the Prophet himself tells them that this Quran is not his own words, rather, it is the words of the One Who has created both the Prophet and them.

Whether the adjective *hakim* is derived from the nominative case or the objective case, it is related to the principle meaning of putting everything in its proper place in such a way that ensures continuous benefit that will always be derived and harm that will always be evaded. Then, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

أَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَنْ أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا  
 أَنْ لَهُمْ قَدَمٌ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ إِنَّ هَذَا السَّاحِرُ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾

**Is it so surprising to people that We have revealed to a man from among them that he should warn people, and give glad news to those who believe, that they are on a sure footing with their Lord? [Yet] those who disbelieve say, 'This man is clearly a sorcerer' [2] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 2)**

What is it that is strange about Allah *the Almighty* inspiring a man from your own midst to deliver His warning, and His good tidings? What is it that seems to incredible to you? What is the improbable element in this matter? This perceived 'strangeness' of the matter is indicated in the latter part of the previous chapter: 'A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves.' (*at-Tawba*: 128) This means that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is a human being, and he is also an Arab who descends from their own tribe and whose temperament and behaviour they are fully familiar with.



What is strange about the fact that Allah *the Most High* has selected him as His Messenger to you? You have consulted him regarding numerous matters before he had become the recipient of Divine Revelation; in fact, you had recognised and respected his honourable, sincerity and generosity. You have taken and trusted his advice on many previous occasions. For instance, when you (the Arab Tribe of Quryash) disagreed on the family who should have put the Black Stone inside the Ka'ba (The Sacred House of Allah), every family of the tribe proclaimed that they were more worthy to have the honour of placing the black stone in its place. What happened was that they decided to consult the first person who entered, and it was Allah's Will that the first person to enter was Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah. How did he resolve this issue even though he had not yet received Divine Revelation at that point? It was his natural disposition that qualified him for receiving the Divine Revelation. Thus, what did Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* do to resolve this issue? He asked that a large piece of cloth be brought to him, and he placed the black stone on the cloth. Then, he told them that one man of each family should grab part of the ends of the cloth, and they, as a group, carried the stone to its proper place. This kind of decision exemplifies the pure, primordial human nature. We also note the case of the companion Abu Bakr *Allah be pleased with him* when he was returning from a journey. They said to him, 'Your companion Muhammad has just claimed that he is a Prophet.' Thus, Abu Bakr *Allah be pleased with him* replied, 'If he has said so, then it is true.' Based on what events did Abu Bakr use to decide this? Did he hear the Prophet speaking miraculous words? Did he hear the Prophet reciting Quran? No, he did not; rather, when Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* claimed prophethood, Abu Bakr *Allah be pleased with him* believed him immediately, for he had tested Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* on numerous occasions in the past and had always found him to be honest. He had tested Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* on numerous occasions in the past and had always found him to be trustworthy. Thus, it is utterly inconceivable that Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would be honest with his fellow men, but dishonest with Allah *the Exalted*. We also have the incident involving Khadija Bint Khuwaylid *Allah be pleased with her* whom Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* told (a day at the beginning of

revelation) that he is not completely certain if it was revelation or mere delusion. Therefore, Khadija *Allah be pleased with her* explained to him that the virtues he has heretofore exhibited in his life preclude the possibility of being disappointed by Allah or deluded by an evil jinn. She said, 'You keep good relations with your kin, you carry the load of those who are weak and you care for the oppressed, and Allah will never disgrace you.'<sup>(1)</sup> With these words, Khadija *Allah be pleased with her* was the first religious scholar and jurisprudent practising deduction in Islam.

When Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Do people deem it strange' (*Yunus*: 2), this expresses how surprising it is that they were surprised; the Quran itself speaks against the strangeness that disbelievers found in the matter. Since the Quran has spoken against disbelievers' astonishment; it is only logical that they were not surprised, for one is surprised by something because it manifests an extraordinary degree of 'goodness'. It is the same as if one were to behold a beautiful product, and he says, 'What a beautiful product this is!' Then, one wonders to himself, 'Who is behind the unbelievable beauty of this product?' One says this because the product manifests such a degree of beauty that it is hard to imagine who could have made it. For example: we find those who say, 'How beautiful the sky is'; such a person is expressing his sense of awe and wonder at such a thing since it surpasses the ability of his imagination to conceive it. One can also stand in awe at something negative, something so repulsive that our minds can hardly wrap themselves around it. This is why the Quran says: 'How can you refuse to acknowledge Allah.' (*al-Baqara*: 28) This is the same as saying, 'Tell us how you can embrace disbelief? It is an anomaly that is truly contrary to the primordial nature.' Thus, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'Do people deem it strange that we should have inspired a man from their own midst [with this our message] ....' (*Yunus*: 2) Therefore, we wonder how you are surprised that this Messenger is from amongst yourselves: '...Your suffering distresses him. He is deeply concerned for you and full of kindness and mercy towards the believers.' (*at-Tawba*: 128)

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(1) *This is a Hadith concerning the beginning of revelation; it is narrated on the authority of 'Ai'sha Allah be pleased with her narrated by Al-Bukhari in his (Sahih) (pages 3, 6 and elsewhere in his work) and by Muslim in his (Sahih) (160).*

Is this not the case with all such ‘pioneers’? Why are you then surprised? Your astonishment at this matter proves that your perception and understanding is incapable of passing sound judgment on anything whatsoever. The coming of the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* should hardly have been received with a sense of surprise; it is we, in fact, who are surprised by your reaction. Furthermore, when you are astonished at the astonishment of another one, you thereby annul the original sense of astonishment: ‘Do people deem it strange that we should have inspired ....’ (*Yunus*: 2) This means that Allah’s revelation to one of your own has taken you by surprise, but this should not be surprising to you, for it is quite natural and logical.

What is revelation? We have previously pointed out that revelation is the disclosure of hidden knowledge by hidden means. There is a kind of disclosure by clear and unambiguous means. For example, when you tell your son, ‘O, my son, listen to so-and-so and act in such-and-such manner.’ This type of disclosure is obvious. On the other hand, the ‘secretive disclosure’ is, for instance, when you are receiving guests, and your servant forgets to serve them properly. You signal to your servant, without the guest knowing about it, that he hurriedly brings out drinks or pastries. This way, your signal to your servant is a secret knowledge or disclosure made in a hidden manner.

In fact, the True Lord *the Most High* inspires even inanimate objects; He *Glorified is He* says: ‘When the earth quakes with her [last] mighty quaking, and [when] the earth yields up her burdens, and man cries out, "What has happened to it?" On that Day will it recount all its tidings, as your Sustainer will have inspired it to do?’ (*az-Zalzala*: 1-5) This means that Allah *the Almighty* had secretly signalled to the earth, and it, in turn, understood His message in a manner to which we are not privy. Allah *Glorified is He* also inspires animals, for He says: ‘and [consider how] your Sustainer has inspired the bee....’ (*an-Nahl*: 68) You cannot say, ‘I have heard Allah speaking to the bees’ since this kind of revelation or inspiration is done secretly or in an unobvious manner, and Allah *Glorified is He* is more knowledgeable as to how He communicated his revelation. As for bees, they understood Him, and you have no concern in this matter. So do not ask how this revelation takes place. ‘And [consider how] your Lord has inspired the bee: "Prepare for yourself dwellings in mountains

and in trees, and in what [men] may build [for you by way of hives].’ (*an-Nahl*: 68) What this means is that bees understood their Lord’s message thanks to certain instincts with which He has endowed them.

Allah *Glorified is He* also inspires the angels, for He says: ‘Lo! Your Lord inspired the angels ....’ (*al-Anfal*: 12) The True Lord *the Most High* also inspires human beings who are not prophets; just as he inspired the mother of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*: ‘And so, [when he was born,] We inspired [thus] the mother of Musa (Moses): "Suckle him [for a time], and then, when you fear for him, cast him into the river...."' (*al-Qasas*: 7)

Of course, Allah *the Exalted* has inspired all of the prophets. Thus: Allah *Glorified is He* inspires inanimate objects, animals, the angels, the most virtuous of His servants, the prophets, and the messengers. The revelation or the Divine Inspiration, being a form of covert communication, requires a Revealer; this is Allah *Glorified is He*. However, it also requires a receiver of revelation which can be the following: the earth, the bees, the angels, or certain human beings who are supremely virtuous but are not prophets; and it can also be the prophets and the messengers themselves. This inspiration, however, can come from sources other than Allah; for He *the Almighty* says: ‘And thus it is that against every prophet we have set up as enemies the evil forces from among humans as well as from among invisible beings that whisper unto one another glittering half-truths meant to delude the mind....’ (*al-An‘am*: 112) Thus, devils communicate with each other covertly.

The True Lord *the Most High* says: ‘Behold, We have inspired you [O, Prophet]....’ (*an-Nisa*: 163) In this verse, the recipient of the revelation is Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Furthermore, the revelation is addressed specifically to Muhammad; so do not say, 'I did not hear what was revealed to Muhammad' or 'I did not know how the Divine Inspiration descended upon him<sup>(1)</sup> for the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* had

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(1) *It is narrated on the authority of ‘Ai’sha Allah be pleased with her that Al-Harith Ibn Hisham asked the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him: O Messenger of Allah, how does the divine inspiration come to you? The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him said: {Sometimes it is like the ringing of a bell, this form of inspiration is the hardest of them all to bear; but this state subsides after I have grasped what is being inspired. Other times the Angel comes in the form of a man and talks to me and I grasp what he says.} Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his book (Sahih) (2) and by Muslim (2333)*

come to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and had asked him to convey to people at large what had been revealed to him.' If you were capable of hearing the archangel deliver the revelation to you, then what need is there for a messenger?

The tremendous weight of the revelation requires the recipient of the revelation to be endowed with a special strength. We have previously shown how, when a human being transfers electrical power from a high-voltage source to a smaller, more delicate device, that he does not transfer that power all at once; otherwise, the smaller device would be incapable of bearing it. This is why we make use of a transformer that can support the high-voltage energy of the source and transfer that power to the smaller device according to its capacity. This is why we invest in such electric transformers, so as to transfer electric power from a powerful source to low-capacity devices. An example of the latter would be the small light bulb that emits a gentle light during the night so that we do not bump into our furniture if we happen to wake up; this is what is known as a nightlight. Thus, the function of the electric transformer is to receive power from a high-voltage source and to transfer it in smaller doses to a smaller electric device.

Allah's Will was not to inspire the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* directly, for he is a human being who is not capable of receiving Direct Revelation from Him; this is why there is a need for an intermediate agent who can withstand the revelation from the highest source and who also has the ability to interact with human beings. It is this quality that the archangel is endowed with. Despite this, the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* was still overcome with fatigue after he first communicated with the Archangel; sweat was pouring from the Prophet Muhammad's forehead, and as soon as the archangel had left. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was shivering and calling upon them, 'Cover me up...cover me up.' The companions used to say that when Divine Revelation descended upon Prophet Muhammad when he was seated, sometimes his knee was resting on the thigh of one of theirs, whereupon that companion would feel an immense weight on his thigh as a result of the pressure exerted on it by the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*. Another example is when the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* happened to be

riding his she-camel, and the revelation descended upon him during that time, the she-camel would slump to the ground. Thus, descending of the revelation was a tiring process for the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*. However, after this fatigue eased, the sweetness of the revelation remained in his soul, and so he would look forward to the next revelation. The True Lord *the Most High* wanted to make the Prophet yearn to receive the next revelation. Therefore, once He suspended the revelation for a period of time, and the Prophet's yearning for revelation reached a peak. This was as if he had 'recharged' himself, physically and mentally, for the next episode of Divine Inspiration and for the fatigue which incurs on the body. Allah *the Exalted* knows the best of examples. Consider how much effort is required of you to make a trip to see a loved one, especially if it is raining, and the ground is muddy and filled with thorns. However, despite all of this, you complete the journey without ever mourning the pain and fatigue it causes to you. Allah *Glorified is He* wanted His Messenger Muhammad to look forward to the episodes of Divine Inspiration in spite of the physical stress that they caused, for these episodes are the meeting of the archangel with a human being. Also, this meeting is characterised by two things: either the archangel assumes a human form (in these circumstances only minimal effort is required from the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and because, in this case, the process of 'transformation' occurred at a high level for the angel, whereas the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* remained as he had been. For instance, Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* once came to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* while he was in the company of some of the companions, and the archangel asked the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* 'What is faith?' 'What is Islam?' 'What is *Ihsan* (virtue)?' Then the interrogator took his leave, whereupon the companions asked the Prophet about the identity of this mysterious man. He *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'That was Jibril (Gabriel) who came to teach you issues (the imperative ones) regarding your religion.'<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) *It is narrated on the authority of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab Allah be pleased with him. This Hadith has been published by Al-Bukhari in his (Sahih) (50) and by Muslim in his (Sahih) (8).*

This is the first form of Divine Revelation in which transformation was on the side of the sending medium, which means that the archangel assumed a human form, causing no hardship to the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*.

The second form of revelation, however, tended to cause Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* hardship, for the archangel maintained his natural appearance, and Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had to undergo some kind of a chemical transformation which required such effort on his part that at the end of it he would call upon them, 'Cover me up.' However, the True Lord *the Most High* had Mercy on His Prophet Muhammad, so he suspended the flow of revelation for a period of time. This prompted the disbelievers to say, 'Muhammad's Lord has forsaken him.' This is utter stupidity on their part since by uttering such a statement they are admitting that Muhammad is guided by a Lord. Since they admitted this fact, their continual disbelief is the height of arrogance and stupidity. However, in an attempt to ascribe their own shortcomings to Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* they said, 'Allah had forsaken Muhammad.'

It was the True Lord's Will that He suspended the coming of revelation to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* during this period so as to expose the disbelievers to themselves and to others, to expose their intentions and to confirm their lack of discernment and foresight, along with their total lack of sound judgment; thus, when they had admitted that Muhammad is guided by a Lord, they should have returned to their right minds and admitted monotheism and the prophethood of Muhammad, rather, they made it a basis for accusing Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of a lack of sanity.

If we were to judge them based on their way of thinking given the universe that they were living in and the physical laws that they live by, they would be forced to realise that any 'event' requires the two coordinates of time and space, for every speech requires the two coordinates of time and space. Likewise, if there is no event, then there is neither time nor space.

This is why I always say to those who ask, 'Where was Allah during this time?' I say that you derive the sense of 'when' from the notion of time and the sense of 'where' from the notion of space; this is only valid if you are speaking about an event that occurs in time and space. However, Allah is not

an 'event', and thus He is not determined by either of two variables of time and space. Time itself is dependent upon Him, and, likewise, space itself is dependent upon Him. Also, when you are speaking of 'events', these only concern human beings, for it is they who dwell in space, and it is they who undergo the passage of time. The time during which any event occurs is called *zarf zaman* (the circumstance governing time), and the place where the event occurs is called *zarf makan* (the circumstance governing space); the latter is a circumstance that is spatially fixed, whereas the temporal circumstance is a state. After a while, this 'state' becomes a past event, while what was in the future becomes present, and then becomes past. Thus, we learn that at any given moment, there is a process occurring whereby the future is becoming the present, and the present is quickly becoming the past. The cycle of day and night is the clearest example of a temporal condition undergoing change, for the night falls and is followed by the day, for Allah *the Exalted* has made the day lightened so as to facilitate movement, action and work; He has made the night dark so as to induce stillness and repose, for if you do not rest during the night, you will have no capacity for work in the morning. Thus, the night is the complement, rather than the opposite, of the day. Therefore, Allah *the Almighty* had willed for revelation to take place in a similar fashion, for the first time revelation descended upon the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* it was extremely taxing; then, the revelation subsided for a while so that the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* could rest and recover his strength so as to receive revelation anew.

When the disbelievers said, 'Muhammad's Lord has forsaken him', Allah *Glorified is He* answered them with these verses: 'Consider the bright morning hours, and the night when it grows still and dark. Your Sustainer has not forsaken you, nor does He scorn you.' (*ad-Duha*: 1-3) The 'the bright morning hours' (*Ad-Duha* in Arabic) or the forenoon period of the day, as we have said, is the time for activity and work. So, when the night comes, it appears as if it is opposed to the day, but this is not the case; rather, the night complements and completes the day. Thus, the momentary suspension of revelation actually helped the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* recuperate his energy. When the True Lord *Glorified is He* swears by the early morning hours and by the night, this is a testament to the manifested phenomena of the



cosmos which all human beings witness, be they believers or disbelievers! Allah *the Exalted* swears by the early morning hours that He has not forsaken His Prophet Muhammad. In fact, Allah had wished for this period of inactivity to be an opportunity for him, Muhammad, to recuperate his strength, so that he might re-double his efforts to spread the Message of Revelation. This way, the True Lord *the Most High* is caring for him even as he goes about his mission. This is the ultimate response to those who say that Muhammad's Lord has abandoned him; it is a confirmation that Allah *Glorified is He* has willed a period of rest from revelation and that this period of rest and repose would be akin to the stillness of the night, so that the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* might rest after the intense period during the morning hours in which he received the revelation.

Also, after the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* recuperated his strengths, revelation descended upon him once again; this is why the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'for, indeed, the life to come will be better for thee than this earlier part [of your life]! And, indeed, in time will your Sustainer grant you [what your heart desires], and you shall be well-pleased.' (*ad-Duha*: 4-5)

Immediately following this chapter, Allah *the Almighty* says in chapter '*ash-Sharh*: 'Have we not opened up your heart and lifted from you the burden that had weighed so heavily on your back? And [have We not] raised thee high in dignity?'' (*ash-Sharh*: 1-4)

Thus, the True Lord *the Most High* explains how this cycle of momentary suspension of the revelation and then its resumption is a complementary process. It is only foolish people who assume that there is contradiction in the matter; they set the following pairs: light and darkness; day and night, as if they were opposites. In reality these pairs are complementary.

Similarly, you find people who try to spark animosity between men and women; they did not understand that a male is the natural complement of a female and that a female is the natural complement to a male. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'Do people deem it strange that we should have inspired a man from their own midst [with this our message], "Warn all mankind, and give unto those who have attained to faith the glad tidings....' (*Yunus*: 2)

Now the word 'warn/warning' (*al-indhar*), as we know, is the act of informing someone of something they still are in a position to avoid. Concerning the word

'glad tidings' (*al-bishara*), it is the act of informing someone of a good thing that is coming soon and that one should hold on to it. For instance, you would warn someone who neglects his studies that he might fail. By warning him, you are implicitly imploring him to work harder, whereas when it comes to someone who is a hard worker, you inform him that his efforts could bring about success and a brighter future.

Therefore, to warn someone is to urge them to stay away from what will cause them harm. On the other hand, to bring good tidings is to insist that someone keep up his good work so as to earn desirable results. All matters connected with events revolve around what is negative and what is positive.

One might ask why Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the warning before He mentions the good tidings. We would say that the word *al-indhar* (warning) is a term that concerns people in a general sense; it cautions them against acts that would lead them to hellfire. However, the good tidings concern only those who believe. Or, both the warning and the good tidings concern believers, but the True Lord *the Most High* has willed that believers will always be the recipients of good tidings. On the other hand, the warning also applies to them in the sense that it is necessary for purging souls from their flaws, and this process has to take place before a soul becomes 'perfected' or 'whole'.

It is normal that you do away with all those things that inflict harm on yourself. Then, you concentrate on those things that benefit yourself. Truly, one must abandon what is evil before seeking what is good.

We find that Allah *the Exalted* specifies that warning is addressed to people at large: all descendants of Adam *peace be upon him* or the whole of humanity beginning with Adam and ending with the end of time. Some orientalist have used the word *An-Nas* (people) as a means of entering into debate and trying to cause doubt about the Quran. They say that the Quran contains redundant repetition. One of the most important chapters which these orientalist took as an example is the chapter of *an-Nas* where Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of men, the Sovereign of men, the God of men, from the evil of the whispering, elusive tempter who whispers in the hearts of men from all [temptation to evil by] invisible forces as well as men."' (*an-Nas*: 1-6)

This group of orientalist thought that the word *An-Nas* means the same thing in each of the verses where it is mentioned, but they did not possess the gift of language; they did not realise that the word *An-Nas* carries different meanings dependent on the context of the verse in which it falls, for the True Lord *the Most High* has wished for every word in the Quran to convey its precise meaning and that every meaning in the Quran makes use of its precise word. Another example of the word *An-Nas* is when Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Do they, perchance, envy other people for what Allah has granted them out of His bounty?...’ (*an-Nisa*: 54). Are all people subjected to envy? If that were, the case, then who is the envier? Thus, when Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘do they, perchance, envy other people....’ (*an-Nisa*: 54) This means that there exists envious people and that there exists others who are the objects of this envy. The word *An-Nas* only has a general, all-inclusive meaning when it comes to a general ruling.

The example is when the True Lord *the Most High* says: ‘Behold, the first Temple ever set up for mankind....’ (*Al-Imran*: 96) These words uttered by Allah *the Almighty* solve a general problem for us, for the *Ka’ba* (the Sacred House of Allah) is the sacred sanctuary for all people, from the time of Adam *peace be upon him* and he is the father of all human beings. Thus, it is necessary that the *Ka’ba* had been built before Adam exists, and the one who constructed it is not a member of the human family, for the one who built it did so under orders of the True Lord *Glorified is He*; thus, let no one say that it is Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* who founded the holy sanctuary that is the *Ka’ba* since the function of Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* was to raise the foundations of the *Ka’ba*. If we were to say that it is Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* who was the one who built the *Ka’ba*, how can this be compatible with what Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘And when Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismail (Ishmael) were raising the foundations of the Temple....’ (*al-Baqara*: 127)

From this verse we can understand that Ismail (Ishmael) *peace be upon him* had participated with his father in the raising of the foundations. Therefore, he must have been able-bodied enough to participate in the construction work with his father. We also understand from this verse that the process of raising the foundations of the *Ka’ba* did not occur at a time when Ismail (Ishmael)

*peace be upon him* was still a baby since the True Lord *the Most High* quotes Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* as saying: 'O, our Sustainer! Behold, I have settled some of my offspring in a valley in which there is no arable land, close to Your sanctified Temple ...' (*Ibrahim*: 37), and this means that the Ka'ba had existed before that time.

This statement of ours is our response to those religious scholars who maintain that Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* was the first to build the Ka'ba. We would furthermore ask them the rhetorical questions: 'What about the human beings who lived before the time of Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him*? Were they not also human beings?' So, how could these people be deprived of a Holy Sanctuary prior to the coming of Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him*? Thus, Allah *the Exalted* has decreed that there exist a Holy Sanctuary for all descendants of Adam *peace be upon him* and this Holy Sanctuary had been consecrated by non-human agents on behalf of Allah *the Almighty*. Thus, the word *An-Nas* has a wide, all-inclusive connotation when it comes to a general ruling, but in other instances, it is more particular a term, such as in the following: 'Do they, perchance, envy other people for what Allah has granted them out of His bounty?... ' (*an-Nisa*': 54).

As for the chapter of *an-Nas* where some orientalists claim there is unnecessary repetition, this is not the case. What is sure is that this chapter exposes their ignorance of the language, along with their inability to grasp the eloquence of these passages. When, in this chapter, we consider the word *An-Nas* carefully, we see that Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of men' (*an-Nas*: 1). This verse declares Allah's Lordship over all of creation, for He is the Lord Who created and granted all of the 'qualities' into every being. Moreover, do not think that you can escape His dominion, for He *the Most High* says: 'the Sovereign of men' (*an-Nas*: 2), which means that He has absolute ownership over all of creation, and although He has given his creation the power to exercise their free will when it comes to certain things, He prevented them from using their free will when it comes to other things. Also, Allah *Glorified is He* does not say, '*malik an-nas*' (Owner), for this would be that His creation is forced to have faith and do not have the power to do otherwise. However, Allah *the Almighty* has given them free will when it comes to matters

of faith and its obligations that accompany it; in other aspects of our existence, however, they do not have a choice. Let me say this to anyone who has rejected faith and has rebelled against Allah, 'You have mutinied against your Lord. You disbelieve in Him, and you deny His Divinity, but why did you not be logically consistent with yourself? Why did you not rebel against any and everything, such as illness, for instance? Why did you not say to illness, "No, I refuse to become sick." No one can escape the fate that Allah has willed for him. A person will suffer from events in the measure that Allah has willed.' Thus, every human being is completely owned by Allah *the Exalted*. Thus, we see the difference between this last verse and the first verse in which Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of men.' (*an-Nas*: 1) The word *An-Nas* in the first verse refers to human beings as they stand vis-à-vis their Lord, whereas in the second verse 'the Sovereign of men' (*an-Nas*: 2), the term refers to human beings as they stand vis-à-vis their Ultimate Owner, for no one can counteract the power that Allah has over him, for we all return unto Him. The word *An-Nas* occurs again in the third verse: 'the God of men' (*an-Nas*: 3) in order to emphasise that Allah *the Almighty* is the One Lord Who is rightly worshiped, and it is He Who has the power to protect you against the evil described in the fourth verse: 'from the evil of the whispering, elusive tempter' (*an-Nas*: 4) and the fifth verse 'who whispers in the hearts of men' (*an-Nas*: 5); this is the devil's character, described as *al-wiswas*. It is the one who whispers in your ear and embellishes evil acts. He is also described as *al-khanas* (the withdrawing) since he withdraws as soon as he hears you say: 'I take refuge from Allah from the accursed devil.' It is he who whispers evil thoughts into people's hearts. Thus, we see that the word *An-Nas* is used to denote 'those who are subject to Allah's Lordship', 'those who are subject to Allah's Ownership', 'those who are subject to Allah's Divinity' and 'those who are subject to evil whisperings'. The latter can come from both jinn and human beings. Thus, there is no redundancy here. The word *An-Nas* is used to express multiple meanings according to the case. Take an example from our own lives. Suppose that there is a distinguished professor who is appointed by his university to become a scout for brilliant students, the president of the student newspaper, the student-trip coordinator, and the person responsible for grading the students'

papers. Thus, the word 'student' carries different connotations in the various places it is mentioned.

In the verse which we are currently studying, Allah *the Most High* says: '...Warn all mankind, and give unto those who have attained to faith the glad tidings that in their Lord's sight they surpass all others in that they are completely sincere....' (*Yunus*: 2) These words are addressed to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* who is the seal of the prophets. Thus, those who are to be warned in this case are all of the people. What is it that is meant by the words: '... that in their Lord's sight they surpass all others in that they are completely sincere...' (*Yunus*: 2)? The word *al-qadam* (literally the foot), as we know, is the organ that we use to move around, just as the hand is an organ that is used for giving and receiving. For example, you could say that someone has given you a hand, meaning that they have helped you, or you could say that I cannot forget the many offerings that you've given me (with your hands) when a friend offers you some gift. The same is true for the feet, as they might have used their feet to walk to you, but they have offered you the gift using their hands. Thus, every organ plays a role in our capacity for movement, in our ability to do work. The feet walk towards things, the hand serves to give and receive, and the ear serves for hearing and the eye for seeing. Thus, the expression '...completely sincere...' (*Yunus*: 2) refers to the good deeds that believers have performed since they listen attentively to Allah's Doctrine, and performed the obligations which this Doctrine requires, in a manner consistent with Allah's wishes. It is, therefore, your obligation, O, Muhammad, to bring them the glad tidings that they are destined for paradise; they are guaranteed a place in paradise since they do what is good and virtuous in this life on earth. However, could there be such a thing as we could call *qadam kadhib* (advancing falsehood)? Yes, this is what hoboos do when they distort the histories of people, describing them in ways that are untrue. Thus, we come to discriminate between *qadam sidq* (advancing sincerity) and *qadam kadhib*. The former, then, consists of good works and virtuous actions which make possible the glad tidings, for they have been sincere in their actions and have honoured Allah's Path, along with given each promise its due. The virtue of sincerity (*sidq*), as we know, is one which

a believer can never forgo since to forgo sincerity is tantamount to forgoing faith itself. When the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* was asked, 'Can a believer be a coward?' He said, 'Yes.' He was asked, 'Can a believer be a miser?' He said: 'Yes.' Finally, he was asked, 'Can a believer be insincere?' The Prophet said, 'No.'<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus, sincerity is the most essential of all good characteristics and actions, and it is around the virtue of sincerity that all other beneficial actions in the universe revolve. When a merchant is honest in pricing his merchandise, when a worker is honest in his work, when a journalist is honest in reporting a story, and when every member of the society applies the principle of honesty and sincerity, the society can then become 'whole'. Corruption in this world stems from dishonesty and insincerity, and this dishonesty stifles the rhythm of life. This is why this term *As-sidq* (sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness) is mentioned in various places in the Quran. Allah *Glorified is He* says, for instance: 'And [thereafter], indeed, we assigned unto the Children of Israel a most goodly abode....' (*Yunus*: 93)

When they said: '...O Musa (Moses), indeed we cannot endure but one kind of food....' (*al-Baqara*: 61) Allah *the Almighty* brought them to a place which satisfied their need for food; thus Allah *Glorified is He* did not deceive them. The True Lord *the Most High* mentions the word *As-sidq* a second time when He says [by the words of Ibrahim (Abraham)]: 'and grant me the power to convey the truth unto those who will come after me' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 84) which means that You, my Lord, make the people who come after me speak well of me, so that they may not distort my history with lies and attribute falsehood to me.

In addition, regarding human beings, Allah *Glorified is He* has said: 'Now [among the best of the deeds which] we have enjoined upon man [is] goodness towards his parents. In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth; and her bearing him and his utter dependence on her took thirty months. And so, when he attains to full maturity and reaches forty years, he [that is righteous] prays: 'O my Lord! Inspire me so that I may

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(1) *The Hadith has been narrated by Imam Malik in his book (Mu'watta') (990); it is narrated on the authority of Safwan ibn Slim.*

forever be grateful for those blessings of Yours with which You have graced me and my parents, and that I may do what is right [in a manner] that will meet with Your goodly acceptance; and grant me righteousness in my offspring [as well]. Verily, unto You have I turned in repentance: for, verily, I am of those who have surrendered themselves unto You!" (al-Ahqaf: 15) Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'It is [such as] these from whom We shall accept the best that they ever did, and bad deeds We shall overlook: [they will find themselves] among those who are destined for Paradise, in fulfilment of the true promise which they were given [in this world].' (al-Ahqaf: 16)

Why does the True Lord *Glorified is He* describe the 'promise' (*Al-wa'd*) as being 'sincere'? The reason He does is that there are some who make insincere promises, such as making promises on things that one does not have, to make promises on things which you know you would be unable to deliver or to make promises which you know circumstances will not allow you to honour. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* tells us: 'and never say about anything, "Behold, I shall do this tomorrow," without [adding], "if Allah so wills."....' (al-Kahf: 23-24) Thus, you must begin every promise with a reference to Allah's Will because if you make a promise, you might not have the power to fulfil it. For example, you might promise a person that you will meet him somewhere to discuss some matter or another. However, permit me to ask if you have any guarantees that you will live to see tomorrow. This is the first factor that might be compromised. Also, permit me to ask if you have any guarantees that they will live until tomorrow. This is the second factor that might be compromised. Then, do you have any guarantees that the reason for your meeting with them will remain the same? Furthermore, supposing all of these factors are assured, do you have any guarantees that you will not change your mind regarding the issue which you are getting to discuss together? Therefore, do not take a risk of making a promise whose various factors you have no control over and be sure to entrust all actions to be in Whose hands all of these factors rest by saying, '... "if Allah so wills."....' (al-Kahf: 24)

Thus, a 'sincere' promise (*wa'd as-sidq*) is that it is made by He Who is absolutely capable of honouring it, and all of the factors, no matter what they are, remain under His control, for He is ever-watchful of these factors because



He is ever-Present. Furthermore, His opinion never changes; for He is not subject to ‘change’ in the same way that ‘events’ are subject to change. In His hands rest all things and He is Omnipotent. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘[Hence, too,] behold, the Allah-conscious will find themselves in [a paradise of] gardens and running waters, in a seat of truth, in the presence of a Sovereign Who determines all things...’ (*al-Qamar*: 54-55). Thus, the True Lord *the Most High* has promised His devout servants that they will occupy an esteemed status in His eyes, and He is the Omnipotent Lord of all dominions. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘and say [in your prayer]: "... Cause me to enter [upon whatever I may do] in a manner true and sincere and cause me to leave [it] in a manner true and sincere. ..."' (*al-Isra*’: 80). What this verse means is to allow me to enter this country in sincere fashion, in a manner consistent with my objectives which I will not be ashamed to announce. Thus, let me not say one thing to people while concealing a secret agenda and also allow me to leave this country in a sincere fashion. Thus, the word *As-sidq* is used in all of these various contexts, and the result is that we come to cherish the fundamental value that is ‘sincerity’ due to life’s issues with all of its gifts and blessings. Furthermore, all that people have come to expect in the way of happiness hinge on the virtue of ‘sincerity’.

In the verse which we are currently examining, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘...and give unto those who have attained to faith the glad tidings that in their Lord’s sight that they surpass all others by being completely sincere...’ (*Yunus*: 2), which means that they have earned credit with their Lord and they shall be duly rewarded, for they have abided by the principles of this Doctrine. As for the situation of disbelievers, it is different; that is why Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...they who deny the truth say, "Behold, he is clearly but a spellbinder!"' (*Yunus*: 2)

Why does Allah *Glorified is He* mention the fate of the disbelievers, even though the main concern of this verse is ‘warning’ and ‘bringing about glad tidings’? Our answer is the following: when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* communicated Allah’s Doctrine on behalf of his Lord, the believers accepted the message, but the disbelievers reacted differently with some of them accusing Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of being a sorcerer. The True Lord *the Most High* mentions this fact because it is relevant to

the context of the verse. To be certain of this, the Quran at times omits certain data, but the attentive listener will be aware of these anyway; this eliminates redundancy in the Quran. Consider, for instance, the story of Bilqis. We find the hoopoe bird telling Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him*: '...I have encompassed [with my knowledge] something that you have never yet encompassed [with yours]....' (*al-A'raf*: 22) This is the hoopoe bird speaking, a creature of lesser status than Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him*. It tells Sulaiman (Solomon): I have come to know what you have not known yet; it is as if this verse has been revealed so as to teach us how to deal respectfully with all creatures, even though they are 'lower' than us, for Allah *the Exalted* can inspire lesser creatures with knowledge which we do not have. After all, was it not crows that taught us how to dispose of the corpses? 'Thereupon, Allah sent forth a crow that scratched the earth....' (*al-Ma'ida*: 31) So Allah says that Cain said, '..."Oh, woe is me! Am I then not able to do what this crow did and hide the corpse of my brother?" – and was thereupon smitten with remorse.' (*al-Ma'ida*: 31)

Thus, man has learned from a lesser creature than himself; he has learnt from a creature whom Allah has put at man's service. Witness how Allah *the Almighty* shows us that when a lesser creature learns of some news, he cannot but inform a higher creature. Thus, the higher creature can absorb the new information and take appropriate action. The hoopoe bird told Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him*: 'But the hoopoe stayed not long and said, "I have encompassed [in knowledge] that which you have not encompassed, and I have come to you from Sheba with certain news' (*an-Naml*: 22). At this point, Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* made a decision and ordered the hoopoe bird to execute it: 'Go with this my letter and convey it to them, and thereafter withdraw from them and see what [answer] they return.' (*an-Naml*: 28)

The story continues from then on, and Allah *Glorified is He* says: '[When the Queen had read Sulaiman's (Solomon's) letter,] she said, "O, you nobles! A truly distinguished letter has been conveyed unto me.' (*an-Naml*: 29)

Thus, the hoopoe bird took the book and delivered it to *Bilqis*, and when she had read it, she summoned her assembly and told them about it. Thus, the Quran omits certain details, which, if they had been included, would have made for unnecessary repetition. Rather, the story is narrated in such a way

because the True Lord *Glorified is He* wants to show us that the delivery of the book took place quickly for there is nothing separating the issuing of the order and its execution; the two are fused together.

Thus, when the True Lord *the Most High* says: ‘... [Only] they who deny the truth say, "Behold, he is clearly but a spellbinder!"’ (*Yunus*: 2), this fact is fused to the general point of the rest of the verse; in other words, the disbelievers only made such an accusation after Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had informed them of what Allah *the Exalted* had told him: bring glad tidings and warn people. So, when he did so, their accusation, that he is a sorcerer, soon followed, hence, we see how the mention of the disbelievers fits in with the wider context of the verse, for they only brought forth this accusation after Prophet Muhammad had conveyed the warnings and the glad tidings.

Therefore, the Quran sometimes leaves certain details out of the main text, and it allows the listener’s imagination to fill in the unspoken details. Another example of this narrative style can be seen later in the same story of Sheba. The following events occurred: the hoopoe bird received orders from Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* then, it delivered the book to the Queen of Sheba, next, she read it and gathered her assembly to solicit their advice as to how to deal with Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him*. After the following events occurred, the Quran described the council that she held with her people; then, Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* learnt about her intention of coming to him with her people. At this point, our Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* asked those around him: "...O, you nobles! Which of you can bring me her throne before she and her followers come unto me and willing surrender to Allah?"’ (*an-Naml*: 38) Thus, Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* had learnt that they were on their way to see him and that they were coming to submit themselves to him; and so he wanted to transport her throne from her kingdom to his before she arrived. Since they were already on their way, the one who would be in charge of transporting her throne must have superhuman powers; this is why no human volunteered for this mission; those who volunteered were jinns with extraordinary powers along with being intelligent, for there are some jinns who are intelligent, whereas other jinns are not. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Said a bold one of the invisible

beings [subject to Sulaiman (Solomon)], "I shall bring it to you before you rise from your council-seat—for, behold, I am powerful enough to do it, [and] worthy of trust!" (*an-Naml*: 39)

However, Sulaiman's (Solomon's) meeting with his people could last for an hour, or two or even three. Likewise, Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* wanted to expedite the shipment of Bilqis's throne. This is why he ignored this first offer and lent his ears to the offer made by the one who had the knowledge of the Book: 'Answered he who was illumined by revelation, "[Nay,] as for me—I shall bring it to you before the twinkling of your eye ceases!"...' (*an-Naml*: 40).

Did this then not require that Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* give the order and say to that person, 'Go and fetch the throne'? Yes, all of this certainly took place, but the Quran recounts the story in an abbreviated manner such that immediately after this offer, news of the throne's arrival is mentioned, and the story remains focused on the events occurring at Sulaiman's (Solomon's) court: '...And when he saw it truly before him...' (*an-Naml*: 40).

Therefore, all of the obvious details are deliberately omitted, and in this case, these details would consist of the events that occurred between the time when the person with knowledge of the book made his offer and the delivery of the Bilqis's throne. Thus, in the verse that we are currently studying, the Quran omits certain details. When Prophet Muhammad conveyed the warnings to disbelievers, then, they said, '..."Behold, he is clearly but a spellbinder!"' (*Yunus*: 2)

The disbelievers had hurled such slander against Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* more than once; sometimes they describe the Quran as 'sorcery'; other times they accuse Muhammad of being a sorcerer. Now what is the meaning of the word *sahir* (sorcerer, magician)? A sorcerer is someone who fabricates things, along with being someone who makes up nonsense and tricks you into thinking that it is the truth. This is why we must differentiate between sorcery and the miracle performed by Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*; it should not be said that the miracle of Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* which involved his staff was the same kind of magic which Pharaoh's sorcerers performed; it was not magic since the True Lord *the Most High* actually transformed the 'being' of the staff into a snake, whereas the magic tricks which Pharaoh's people were capable of did not

involve altering the nature of things; they merely set up optical illusions to give the appearance of a transformation.

Now, magic requires a magician, it requires an audience and it also requires the magic act itself. As for the magician, since it is he who performs the magic act, he himself will, therefore, not be seduced by it. Regarding magic, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...they cast a spell upon the people’s eyes...’ (*al-A’raf*: 116) which means that they bewitched the eye that perceives the magic trick even though the magic trick did not succeed in transforming the nature of the object. Thus, they had bewitched the audience’s sight without altering the reality of the object; Prophet Musa’s (Moses’) *peace be upon him* miracle was totally different. His miracle did not consist of tricking the human vision; rather, it actually transformed the nature of the object. The Quran demonstrates the truth of the matter by drawing on practical experience. When Allah *Glorified is He* selected Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* and told him: “Now, what is this in your right hand, O, Musa (Moses)” He answered, “It is my staff. I lean on it, and with it I beat down leaves for my sheep, and [many] other uses have I for it.” (*Ta Ha*: 17-18) When the True Lord *the Most High* ordered Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* to cast his staff, Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* witnessed it as it instantly transformed into a live snake: ‘Said He, “Throw it down, O, Musa (Moses)!” So, he threw it – and lo! it was a snake, moving rapidly. ’ (*Ta Ha*: 19-20) So, when Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* saw that his staff had transformed into a live snake, slithering across the earth, he fled in terror. However, Allah *the Exalted* wanted to calm his fears and prepare him for his eventual encounter with Pharaoh’s magicians. So, the True Lord *Glorified is He* told him: ‘Said He, “Take hold of it, and fear not. We shall restore it to its former state.”’ (*Ta Ha*: 21) Thus, Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was not bewitched; rather, it was an actual transformation of his staff into a snake that had taken place. When he reacted with fear, Allah *Glorified is He* reassured and ordered him to pick up the staff, for, with Allah’s permission, it would revert back to its original form. In order to further prove that an actual transformation of Musa’s (Moses’) staff had taken place, consider the magicians whom Pharaoh had summoned from all corners of his kingdom; they all stood there face-to-face with Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* and challenged him: ‘Said [the

sorcerers]: "O, Musa (Moses)! Either you throw [your staff first], or we shall be the first to throw." (Ta Ha: 65) and Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* accepted their challenge. The Quran describes the situation: 'He answered: "Nay, you throw [first]." And lo! By virtue of their sorcery, their [magic] ropes and staffs seemed to him to be moving rapidly' (Ta Ha: 66).

Now the words *yukhayal ilayh* (seemed to him) mean that the ropes and the staffs did not undergo a genuine transformation such that they became snakes. As soon as Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* cast his staff, it was transformed into an actual snake which then devoured all of the contraptions which the magicians had created, and this is what prompted them to declare their faith and prostrate themselves in submission, for they had witnessed the true, undeniably real transformation of his staff into a snake. Thus, the magician always perceives the reality of the object, but he succeeds in distorting the vision of his audience; thus, for the audience, the object appears to have been transformed into something else. This is why nobody said that: Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* learnt magic from someone and that it was Musa's (Moses') teacher that defeated them in the contest. No, they realised that the matter transcended human capacity, for the nature of staff itself had been transformed. Thus, they said: '..."We have come to believe in the Lord of Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron)!"' (Ta Ha: 70) They did not say, 'We submit to Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*.'

Thus, magic is an illusion in the eyes of the magician's audience. I say this to demonstrate the foolishness of the unbelievers of Quraysh. They accused Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of being a magician who was casting spells over people: causing a son to disobey his father and prompting slaves to rebel against their masters. If Prophet Muhammad was a magician, why had he not put a spell on those people who were making this accusation? The existence of those people who actually made such accusations proves that believing in the way of Islam and believing in Prophet Muhammad have nothing whatsoever to do with magic.

After that, Allah *Glorified is He* says in response to their astonishment that Allah sent revelation to His Prophet Mohammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and in response to the false accusation that Prophet Muhammad performed sorcery:

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ  
عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يَدِيرُ الْأَمْرَ مَا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ  
اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

**Your Lord is God who created the heavens and earth in six Days, then established Himself on the Throne, governing everything; there is no one that can intercede with Him, unless He has first given permission: this is God your Lord so worship Him. How can you not take heed? [3] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 3)**

Allah draws them to contemplate a more serious issue, They should turn their attention to something else rather than Allah revealing a book to a human; they should contemplate the creation of the heavens and the earth, and how they were created, Since Allah has created the heavens and the earth and established humans on this universe, where everything was prepared with the utmost care and attention to detail they should give more attention to this fact before anything else

We have previously given the example of a man who was on board a plane. The plane ran out of fuel and crashed into the desert, however this person was destined to survive. He looked around and found that there was no water or food nor any signs of life around him. He then fell asleep, but when he woke up from his slumber, he found a sumptuous banquet of the finest food and drinks. Will he not wonder, before satisfying his hunger and his thirst, about who had prepared and brought him all this food and all these drinks?

Since the universe was prepared for man, is it not necessary that you think about who has prepared it for you. Is it not necessary that you think about who has created all this, which surpasses your capacity to create? Is it not necessary to think about who has put all this at your service? Allah *Glorified is He* has informed you that it is He Who has created the heavens, the earth, the sun, and the stars. When this information reaches you, it can be either true, whereby you should obey the Orders of the Creator, or false. However, if it is false, you are encountered with the begging question, ‘Who created all of this?’ If there is other deity who has created the universe and you heard such a claim, however such a creator did not do anything in order to prove the truth of this claim; so he will not deserve to be a god at all.

However, since no one else besides Allah has made such a claim, He (Allah) is therefore the Creator. That is because when someone makes a claim and nobody stands up to oppose that claim, the person who made the claim is correct, as long as no one voices an opposing claim.

We previously gave another example when we supposed that a group of your friends came to visit you and then left. You noticed that someone had left his wallet behind, but you do not know whose wallet it is. When you asked your servant to inform those who had just visited you, every one of them said he had not lost his wallet except one who said yes, the wallet was his. As a result, the owner of the wallet is identified until someone can prove otherwise. The same principle is at work here. When Allah *Glorified is He* informs us that He has created the heavens, the earth, the sun, moon, and the stars, and that it is He Who has supplied human beings with their earthly sustenance, we must believe that He is the Creator, since no one else has made such a claim.

And if Allah *Glorified is He* has created this universe and has put it at your service; why do you not give Him the freedom to choose a Prophet from among your own? What is odd regarding that?

Allah *Glorified is He* exposes their stance when He quotes them saying: 'Why is this Quran not revealed to some great man of the two (chief) cities' (*az-Zukhruf*: 31).

Clearly, they had admitted that there was nothing false or fabricated about the Quran; however, they were disappointed in the fact that it was revealed to the orphaned son of Abu Taleb. Allah *Glorified is He* further exposes their twisted logic when He quotes them as saying: 'Oh Allah, if this is indeed the Truth from You, rain down on us a shower of stones from the skies' (*al-Anfal*: 32). They did not say, 'Oh Allah, if it is the Truth from You, then guides us'.

As such, their hostility directed at the Prophet was a malicious, irrational hostility because when they owned anything precious and dear to their hearts, they could not find a more trustworthy guardian for it than Muhammad. Why have you ignored the fact that they used to trust Muhammad with precious objects? If you do not think he is truthful, then why did you trust him with your valuables? Is his name not Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah who emigrated and left 'Ali



ibn Abu Taleb *Allah be pleased with him* in charge of returning all the valuables to their respective owners? As such, Muhammad is not unworthy of carrying the Message and safekeeping the trust, and the Quran is not subpar. This fact is evident through your words and through your actions, and you have admitted this much yourselves. Here, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Truly your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods [of time]' (*Yunus*: 3).

Allah says elsewhere in the Quran: 'Certainly the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of the men, but most people do not know' (*Ghafir*: 57).

As He is the One Who has made such a marvellous creation, other works, which are less amazing, must be accepted from Him. And such works are also the product of His Wisdom. Let us judge things according to the logic that you disbelievers have put forth. Allah quotes you as saying: 'Why is this Quran not revealed to some great man of the two (chief) cities' (*az-Zukhruf*: 31). Therefore, there is no doubt in your mind about the Quran; rather, you have an issue with the fact that it was revealed to Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and you wish that it had been revealed to someone else more acceptable to you. Your attitude towards this matter is completely illogical because you want to intervene in Allah's Will, enter into the fold of His Mercy and have the Quran revealed to an agent of your choice, not His choice. Clearly, what you want to do is to control the Mercy of Allah *the Most High* and force Him to allocate a Messenger of your choice. However, you forget that in this world you are not the ones who allocate the blessings among creatures. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Will they distribute the Mercy of your Lord?' (*az-Zukhruf*: 32). But if you want to be in charge of distributing the Mercy of Allah, you should know that Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'We distribute among them their livelihood in the life of this world' (*az-Zukhruf*: 32). If this simple matter, which is the allocation of sustenance for life, has been taken care of by Allah *Glorified is He*; how can you wish to have a say in the highest of matters, which is the Mercy of Allah *the Most High* in sending a Messenger?

Allah *Glorified is He* mentions in the verse that we are currently studying the word '*Rabb*' (Lord) in the phrase: 'Truly your Lord is Allah'. When we hear the word '*rabb*', the mind conjures up the idea of creation and sustenance.

That is why in our use of this word, we say so-and-so a person is '*rabb*' of such-a-such a family, meaning that he is the head of this household who is responsible for sustaining it. The word '*rabb*' in its most absolute sense denotes 'the Lord', for He is the Creator who created from nothing. Describing Him like this necessitates that He is Lord of all of His creation: believers and unbelievers, and the obedient and disobedient. As long as Allah is the Lord of all creation, He also provides for all of them as it is He who has summoned this world into existence and it is He Who bestows every creature with the sustenance that has been destined for him. It is He who instituted the laws of the cosmos and those means that determine whether a creature will receive sustenance or not. When a human plants and takes good care of the land, Allah orders the earth to provide sustenance to this creature. For every creature that employs the means needed to attain what he wants, Allah *Glorified is He* makes these means successful for him.

For this reason, I always say to those who see the unbelievers enjoying an advanced material civilization and who wonder why they are so advanced in worldly matters, whereas we are so underdeveloped that the unbelievers have taken full advantage of the worldly sustenance of Allah, whereas you have not taken full advantage of what the Lord has given you. It is necessary that you Muslims take full advantage of the Lord's material blessings so that the unbelievers do not beat you to them and so you do not become relegated to the role of spectator. It is in fact your obligation to outrun them to capitalize on the worldly blessings of Allah. However, the spiritual blessings of Allah *Glorified is He* which leads a man to admit that Allah is the One Who deserves to be worshipped alone and the One Whose Commandments of 'Do's' and 'Don'ts' should be obeyed, are not enjoyed by any except those who believe in Him.

That is, Allah is the Lord of all but He is only worshiped by those who believe in Him. Therefore, there is a difference between the Blessings of Allah represented in terms of following the Doctrine defined by the commandments of 'Do's' and 'Don'ts', and the Blessings of Allah represented in terms of material sustenance that is allocated to all people alike, both the believer and the unbeliever and the obedient and the disobedient. Again, when an unbeliever takes full advantage of his worldly blessings and works hard, he reaps the rewards. This is because Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Whoever desires the gain of the Hereafter, We will

give him more of that gain; and whoever desires the gain of this world, We give him of it, and in the Hereafter he has no portion' (*ash-Shura*: 20). But, the duty of the believers is to take full advantage of the worldly blessings allocated to them; that they may reap the rewards and be more prosperous than the unbelievers. That is because when an unbeliever surpasses you in worldly affluence and influence, he might exploit this advantage and try to impose on you that which is incompatible with your faith.

In this verse Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Truly your Lord is Allah' (*Yunus*: 3), meaning that He is the Lord Who establishes the Doctrine, and therefore it is essential that you heed His Doctrine.

Then Allah says: 'Who [Allah] created the heavens and the earth in six periods [of time]'. The words '*sitat ayam*' ('six periods'; literally 'six days') occur in the Quran whenever the time taken for the creation of the heavens and the earth is mentioned. But there is one verse where this creation is mentioned in detail and where it appears, from the language used in the verse that the creation of the heavens and the earth lasted eight days. This verse is in the chapter of *Fussilat*. Allah says: 'Say, "What! Do you indeed disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two periods [of time], and do you set up equals with Him? He is the Lord of [all] the Worlds". And He made on it mountains above its surface and He blessed therein and made therein its foods in four periods [of time]: alike for [all] who ask. Then He directed Himself to the heaven and it was a vapor. He said to it and to the earth, "Come both [of you], willingly or unwillingly". They both said, "We come willingly". So He completed them as seven heavens in two periods [of time], and revealed in every heaven its own natural and spiritual order; and we adorned the lower heaven with brilliant stars and [made it] to guard [and be a protection against the devils]; that is the decree of the Mighty, the All Knowing' (*Fussilat*: 9-12).

Here, the total number of days or periods of time amounts to eight. However, this is a superficial understanding of the matter. That is because all the verses that mention the creation in general terms state that it was completed in six periods of time. You should realize that all verses of the Quran which state things in general terms are understood according to other verses on the same topic which explain things in detail, except if numbers are involved. When

numbers are mentioned, the verses which explain things in detail are understood by referring to other verses which are general. So, Allah created the earth in two days, and placed great mountains upon its surface and blessed it, however, the second creation that follows is a continuation of the first one. That is, the first two days are included in the four days, while the rest of creation took two more days to complete, making six the total number of days.

In this way, one period of time completes another larger period of time. Similarly, you find that a day on planet Venus is longer than its year. A year on Venus is equal to two hundred and twenty-five earth-days, while a day on Venus is equal to two hundred and forty-four earth-days. Consequently, a day on the planet Venus is longer than a year. The key to this fact is that the rotation of Venus around the sun is faster than the rotation of the earth around the sun, and that Venus revolves around itself very slowly, but it revolves around the sun very quickly. As such, every creature has its own cycle.

What is a day? From our perspective, a day is one rotation of the earth around itself, and this rotation causes days and nights. However, we find that the Quran uses the word '*yawm*' (day) and distinguishes it from the phenomenon of night-time. Allah says narrating a story of an old nation whom He destroyed: 'Travel through them, secure by night and by day' (*Saba*: 18). Allah *Glorified is He* refers to the day as a time of movement and action; whereas the night is reserved for darkness and repose. However, in terms of astronomy, a day includes both day-time and night-time. The Quran also shows us that there is a difference between a day in the life of this world and a day in the Hereafter. A day in this worldly life begins from dawn and ends with dawn the following day, however a day in the sight of Allah is a thousand years of our days. Allah says: 'Truly a day in the sight of your Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning' (*al-Hajj*: 47) and He also says: 'The angels and the Spirit (Angel Gabriel) ascend to Him in a day whose measure is (like) fifty thousand years' (*al-Ma'arij*: 4).

Thus, there are many different types of time-scales which differ from one to another regarding the unit of measurement and according to the planet involved. The various time-scales which Allah *Glorified is He* mentions in the Quran only reveal how they are different; that is, there is no contradiction in them at all.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says in the verse we are studying: 'He established Himself above the Throne'. The religious scholars have paid much attention to the word '*istawa*' (He established/settled Himself). They scoured the entire Quran to count how many times it was mentioned. They found that it occurred in twelve chapters, namely *al-Baqara*, *al-A'raf*, *Yunus*, *ar-Ra'd*, *Ta-Ha*, *al-Furqan*, *al-Qasas*, *as-Sajda*, *Fussilat*, *al-Fath*, *an-Najm* and *al-Hadid*. The first chapter which describes Allah being established on the Throne is the chapter of *al-A'raf*. Allah says: 'Truly your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods [of time], and then established Himself above the Throne; He throws the veil of night over the day, which it pursues incessantly; and [He created] the sun and the moon and the stars, [all] made subservient by His Command; surely, His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds' (*al-A'raf*: 54).

Since Allah is the Creator, do not set yourself up in opposition against His Will and do not oppose His Decision to send whom He wills as a Messenger. And it is no wonder that He has sent a Prophet from among us. If it was someone else who created the universe and thereby says, although he will be lying, that he has the right to give orders to his creation, the situation could be completely different. However, it is Allah Who has created the universe and it is He Who has sent Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. The second verse is the verse which we are currently studying where Allah says: 'Truly your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods. Then He established Himself above the Throne' (*Yunus*: 3). It means that He became the One Who is constantly in charge of all things in His creation.

After that is the verse in the chapter of *ar-Ra'd*, where Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Allah is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars that you can see, then He established Himself above the Throne. He made the sun and the moon subservient [to you]; each one pursues its course to an appointed time. He regulates all affairs, explaining the signs in detail that you may be certain of the meeting with your Lord' (*ar-Ra'd*: 2).

As for the attributes which are used to characterize human beings but with which Allah *Glorified is He* describes Himself, it is important to note that these Attributes are not understood according to human's attributes. They do not

manifest themselves to their fullest potential in human beings, for humans are created beings whose existence is contingent on other people and things. However, Allah's existence is a necessity and is not contingent on anything else. For this reason, these Attributes should be envisaged in terms of: 'There is nothing whatever like Him' (*ash-Shura*: 11).

To give an example, Allah *Glorified is He* knows that you are reading exegesis right now and He knows the place where you are reading and the people around you also know that. However, is the knowledge of Allah equivalent to the sum of your knowledge and the knowledge of the people around you? No, it is not. His knowledge is of an eternal and unchanging nature, which is a knowledge that has existed before your existence and the existence of those around you. When you know something and Allah knows it, Divine Knowledge is of a totally different order than that of human knowledge. Allah's knowledge is suitable for Allah, and your knowledge is suitable for you. The Divine Attributes are Absolute, but the attributes of humans are relative. That is because Allah's Existence is a necessity which is not contingent on anything and which transcends time; however, your life is a mere event with an existence bounded by the moment of your birth and the moment of your death.

Allah is Rich and you may also be rich, however, your wealth cannot possibly be compared to that of Allah's. Similarly, you have an existence and Allah *Glorified is He* has an Existence; however, your existence cannot be compared to the Existence of Allah. The Essence of Allah is unlike our own, His Attributes are also unlike our own, His Actions are unlike our own and His establishment above the Throne is also unlike our own establishment or settling. We must conceive all His Attributes in the context of: 'There is nothing whatever like Him' (*ash-Shura*: 11).

That is because what is likely to impair the meaning of this verse is to understand the word '*istawa*' (established) as the act of sitting. Rather, we should conceive the notion of '*al-istiwa*' as denoting domination, as Allah *Glorified is He* dominates everything. This term also denotes the meaning of mastery. Allah *Glorified is He* speaking of Musa, says: 'And when he attained maturity and *istawa*' (became firmly established as was full grown)' (*al-Qasas*: 14).

Here, the word '*istawa*' indicates full maturity. A young man, before reaching puberty, lacks a maturity in his nervous system and his reproductive system, but when he attains puberty, these various bodily organs reach their maturity, hence the term '*istawa*' is used to denote being capable of reproduction and having reached manhood. Similarly, the term is used with fruits. Allah says: 'And it (the fruit) has *istawat* (stood firm/become established) on its own stem' (*al-Fath*: 29). That means the fruit has matured to the point where it is able to reproduce, thereby ensuring the survival of its species.

When the great flood subsided, the ark of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* came to rest, with the believers and Nuh on board. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And the ark rested [and became settled] on Mount Judi' (*Hud*: 44), meaning that the ark came to rest on a mountain and the matter was resolved.

Thus, using the term '*istawa*' regarding Allah must be in a manner that is consistent with His Essence and His Attributes—attributes which might be present in human beings but are only relative compared to the Absolute Attributes of Allah. This is because He *Glorified is He* says: 'There is nothing whatever like Him' (*ash-Shura*: 11).

Similarly, the Divine Act cannot be equated to the human act. That is why we have said previously while discussing Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey (*Isra*) to the Sacred House in Jerusalem that when the unbelievers denied this journey of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* they asked the Prophet, 'Are you claiming that you traveled to the Holy House in the span of a single night, while we prod our camels for a month before we arrive there?' In reality, these refuting comments show that they understood that Prophet Muhammad said the Night Journey had actually taken place. However, some of our contemporaries, who claim to be enlightened, ask why we did not just say that the Prophet underwent the Night Journey in spirit. We say in response to this that the unbelievers of Quraysh themselves, who were contemporaries of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not say this, but they understood that Prophet Muhammad said he actually underwent the journey in body. That is why they said that they used to prod their camels for a month before arriving there. They did not say that he probably had a vision of the Sacred House in his dreams because nobody

denies a vision or a dream. Clearly, their rejection proves that they understood and will continue to understand until the Day of Judgment that a miraculous journey was meant.

I wish to say to those who claim that Prophet Muhammad underwent this journey in spirit that you should realize that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, '*Usriya bi* (I was transported)'. Thus, the act is attributed to Allah *Glorified is He* and therefore do not frame it in human terms; rather, conceive it in terms of the Divine Laws. The timing of the Night Journey is a matter that is also attributed to Allah and not to Muhammad. Allah says: 'Glory be to Him [Allah] Who made His slave go on a night journey from the Sacred Mosque to the remote mosque' (*al-Isra'*: 1).

So long as Allah *Glorified is He* has said *Subhana* (Glory be to Him), this means that Allah transcends the natural laws which human beings are familiar with. We have given an example of this when we referred to a father who takes his newborn son up to the summit of Mount Everest. The question that arises is not about whether the infant scales the mountain or not because the act of climbing the mountain is attributed to the father. The summit was reached thanks to the strength of the father, and not his son. In the same way, the speed of the Night Journey and the power that it took for the journey to be completed were all of the work of Allah *Glorified is He* and not Prophet Muhammad. In the human realm, the amount of time needed for traveling distances varies. Someone who is riding on a horse-drawn carriage might cross the distance between Cairo and Alexandria in a few days. Someone driving a car might reach Alexandria in a couple of hours, while someone traveling in an airplane might make the journey in half an hour. Thus, the more powerful the locomotion, the less time needed. What do we think about Allah, the All-Powerful? Will time be a factor in this case? Of course, it will not.

To continue, Allah *Glorified is He* said to Prophet Nuh (Noah *peace be upon him*): 'And when you are firmly settled/established, you and those with you, in the ark' (*al-Mu'minun*: 28), meaning that after you and those who have attained to faith have climbed on board and when you are confident that they will all be saved, then the ark, by the Order of Allah, shall run its course. Consequently, when Allah *Glorified is He* describes Himself that He established himself on



the Throne, it means that all matters were fulfilled and everything became stable. We, thereby, learn that anything related to Allah *Glorified is He* must be conceived in the following terms: 'There is nothing whatever like Him' (*ash-Shura*: 11). Whenever any one of His Attributes are mentioned, this is only to bring their meaning closer to human understanding and not to describe the whole reality of the Attribute, since there is nothing like Him. Consequently, Allah being established on the Throne has an action that is framed in Divine, not human, terms.

When the poet by the name of Abu Tamam wanted to praise al-Mu'tasim, the Abbasid Caliph, he mentioned those attributes which had made some Arabs famous in one poem. He praised him by saying he is like Hatim to denote the height of generosity. He compared him to 'Antarah to denote the height of courage, and compared him to Al-Ahnaf ibn Qays to denote the height of wisdom. And in this way he gathered all the qualities in the person of the Caliph. The poet said:

‘ Amr’s bravery with Hatim’s generosity,  
And Ahnaf’s patience with Iyas’ intelligence.

But one of the poet’s enviers said that al-Mu’tasim was far above all those whom the poet had ascribed to the Caliph. All of these qualities with which the poet described him were petty. Another poet composed lines criticizing the poet and said, ‘The extoller likens in bravery and generosity that which, if one sees it, will turn out to be the lowliest of servants. In his army are fifty thousand ‘Antarahs, and in his stores are a million Hatims’.

When the first poet heard these lines, he composed a new poem based on the same rhyme as his first poem, saying:

Censure me not for comparing him to his lessers,  
Such aberrant examples of valour and bounty;  
For Allah used a lesser thing to symbolise His Light:  
A niche, wherein a lamp is shining.

Clearly, there is a big difference between the representation of something and the reality of the same thing. For when Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'Allah is

the Light of the heavens and the earth; a likeness of His light is as a niche in which is a lamp' (*an-Nur*: 35), this is a metaphor for the benefit of human beings. Allah *Glorified is He* merely wishes to give us an idea of the reality being described; this is because He is speaking of something which we have never seen. That is why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for example, describes paradise by saying that it contains that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard about and no human imagination can ever conceive. When you use your eyesight to see, human vision has its limits, and when you hear, you are listening to the opinions of others. And what can never come to mind is the ultimate reality of the Hereafter. In his description of Paradise, Prophet Muhammad uses language that soars beyond the limits of what the eye can see, what the ear can hear, and what the mind is able to conceive. That is because Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* knew that language expresses meanings and that meanings exist first in this physical world before they are named. Therefore, these realities of the physical world can be used to describe realities that do not pertain to realms with which we are familiar.

For this reason, we must take into consideration the different levels of reality when we want to understand the phrase: 'He established Himself above the Throne' (*Yunus*: 3) understanding it in relation to Allah. It does not mean, for instance, that Allah *Glorified is He* came to rest in any particular location in space; for Allah transcends space. His Essence is unlike any other essence, His Actions are unlike any other action and His Attributes are unlike any other attribute.

After that, Allah says: 'He regulates and governs [all] affairs' (*Yunus*: 3) which means that Allah arranges the realm of existence in a wise manner, putting everything in its proper place. Allah *Glorified is He* is characterized by the Attribute of Knowledge, the Attribute of Will and the Attribute of Capableness. It is His Attribute of Knowledge which wisely puts everything in its proper place, while it is His Attribute of Will which allows potentiality to become actuality. And it is His Attribute of Capableness which makes manifest the Divine Intention and the Divine Objectives. That is, there is Knowledge, Will and Capableness which manifest the Divine Intention according to Divine Knowledge. It is only logical that Allah *Glorified is He* governs all things. It is He who has created the heavens and it is He who has

created the earth. All things return to Him and are dependent upon Him. No new creation can come into existence unless He gives the order, 'Be'. It is He who has created the heavens and the earth and created mankind, and put the heavens and the earth at mankind's service. Allah must, therefore, regulate for men their material and moral needs.

As for man's material needs, these have been supplied to him through the creation of the heavens, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the water and the air as well as those things that sprout from the earth and which provides sustenance for man's life. Allah has created all these elements before He created mankind and man was created after these in order to act as the vicegerent of Allah *Glorified is He* on earth. Clearly, man was created and placed in the midst of a pre-existing universe. Consequently, Allah *Glorified is He* had to supply mankind with moral values for man to effectively perform the role of vicegerent. Since it is Allah Who created moral values, do not be amazed that He *Glorified is He* sent a Messenger who does not enjoy a privileged rank as some other men do among their communities, and do not wonder why He chose to send Muhammad specifically. Allah's selection and sending of a Messenger is all part of His Governance and Planning of all things, because Allah says: 'Allah knows best where to place His Message' (*al-An'am*: 124).

That is, the phrase that says: 'He [Allah] regulates and governs [all] affairs' came so as to negate once more their astonishment that Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* could be the bearer of the Message. Allah says: 'Is it a matter of wonderment for men that We have sent our revelation to a man [Muhammad] from among themselves' (*Yunus*: 2). The reason behind this is that Allah *Glorified is He* is our Lord and the Creator, and as such, no one can argue with Allah *Glorified is He* about that which He has created. It is Allah who has created mankind and the universe, and because of this He has to arrange any interaction between mankind and the universe. That is why He chose a Messenger who is worthy of carrying to mankind this valuable Doctrine based on the commandment 'Do's' and 'Don'ts'. But Allah *Glorified is He* left certain areas of life free for man to exercise his choice, where Allah *Glorified is He* does not specifically command us by either 'Do's' or 'Don'ts'. These areas constitute permissible acts. If you were to compile all the actions and events

that are possible in this world, you will find them far more numerous than those actions connected to both 'Do's' and 'Don'ts'. Since it is Allah Who has willed all this and has left many things permissible to you, leave all systems of values to Allah, because the physical universe has been created by Him with utmost precision and in a highly organized way. The sun, for instance, cannot refuse to rise, shine or heat us, nor can the moon refuse to reflect its light upon us. Similarly, the clouds cannot refuse to rain down water upon us profusely, nor can the earth refuse to nurture plant seeds and provide food for us. Everything that falls within the natural laws of the cosmos has been made perfect and completely void of flaws.

If you were to look at anything else, you will see that it contains flaws. Things that human beings do not interfere in are always in a perfect order. Things only deteriorate when humans become involved; however, this does not mean that all human work suffers from defects, rather, only those works which are divorced from Allah's Way for mankind. If we were to select alternatives which are in alignment with Allah's Way for mankind, all matters will become rectified exactly as the natural laws all around us have been perfected. Therefore, when you see corruption, promptly blame yourselves because everything that you do not have a hand in works perfectly. If you want your actions to work perfectly, abide by the Doctrine of Allah in all that you do and avoid corruption by staying away from the alternatives which are in conflict with the Will of Allah.

That is why I always say that when you detect any blemish, and a community suffers because of it, know that the Laws of Allah *Glorified is He* have been trespassed. If you find a backward community, know that they have encroached on the Laws of Allah. Likewise, when you find a community suffering from serious social disorders, know that they do not abide by the Doctrine of Allah. It is wrong to think that worshipping Allah is limited to simply going to the mosque, observing the fast, paying the poor-due on time or performing the Hajj pilgrimage. All these are the fundamentals of Islam which prompt Allah's slaves to live according to the dictates of Allah's Doctrine. Prayer is the reaffirmation of our allegiance to Allah five times a day, and Fasting continues for the entire month of Ramadan. Zakat is taken

out of our surplus wealth and the Hajj pilgrimage is our detachment from our wealth, family, and progeny.

All these activities serve to give us more energy; so when you are fully recharged spiritually, channel this energy into some other area of work. Take Prayer as an example. You require energy in order to get up, sit down, survive physically, and have strength to move. And you need all this energy just to pray. You require food, but you cannot feed yourself unless you have a job which allows you to buy food, vegetables from the merchant, meat, fruit and bread. You need a supplier of these commodities, those who produce food products require scientists who study the soil, the seeds, and the climate, and all of these things have to be organized properly to produce foods. Those who plant require tools to plough the earth, and this requires the existence of raw metal, which also requires the existence of others who will melt the iron ore and extract the elements that are suitable for making ploughing tools.

All these things are required when you rise to pray, and what is necessary for the fulfilment of obligatory rites becomes, in turn, obligatory. As such, you find that all the activities that facilitate your religious duties are considered obligatory. To clarify this point, look at the obligation of covering the 'awrah (the nakedness) of the body while praying. That is why you buy cloth so that a tailor can make clothes for you. As a result, all the activities of producing and tailoring clothes are obligatory. These works also include planting cottonseeds or flaxseed, and the construction of factories that make fabric and spinning wheels. As such, all these activities which enable you to perform your religious rites are themselves obligatory, just as covering one's body is obligatory in the Islamic law. As a result, our understanding of religious worship broadens to encompass any action that upholds what is good or makes what is good even better. The example, which I always give, is the human need to drink water, perform ritual purification, and clean our food, and so on and so forth. Ancient man used to drink from wells. He has progressed to the point where water networks distributed clean water to many different locations. All of these works make what is good even better because you take the rainwater which filled the river and pulled the water up into water towers for storage. You discovered the principles of hydrology and employed these to bring

purified water to all those who need it. You make that which is good even better through rational thought and the application of scientific principles which benefit human beings. And this is a religious activity as long as the intention is ultimately for Allah.

Look at market day in any village. You will find people bringing cattle which they are looking to sell and others are coming with fruit and other foods. There are some who are coming with clothes and others with household appliances. You also find people coming to the market empty handed. However, after the marketplace is over, you find that everyone has left with what he needed and not what he came to sell. Allah *Glorified is He* caused some humans to think about what they need to sell at the marketplace and caused others to buy it. When you look at a particular village, you will find one of its members wants to sell his plot of earth and his house to move somewhere else. Consequently, you can begin to see how the Divine Economy works among people. It spreads people over a large area depending on where each one of them wants to live. Such is the Divine Arrangement; an arrangement in the best way possible.

You might find, for instance, that a child writes with his left hand unlike his peers. You might hit him because of it, but then he becomes unable to write with either his left or his right hand. When a doctor tells you that your child was gifted with beautiful writing with his left hand you will be amazed, and then you find that he truly is talented at writing beautiful script with his left hand. I always tell those who complain about their children writing or eating with the left hand that this matter is related to the nervous system of a man. There are some whom Allah *Glorified is He* has created to work with their right hand and others were born to work with their left hand. And there are some whom Allah *Glorified is He* has created to work with both their hands, such as 'Umar Allah *be pleased with him* who was ambidextrous, that is, he was proficient at working with both his hands.

We must respect things that Allah has allotted to each of His creatures. He *Glorified is He* creates what He wishes—not according to preconceived moulds, but according to any mould He wishes. Every creature has a specific function. Moreover, as Allah *Glorified is He* has perfected the creation of everything in

which you have no say or control, know that He has revealed the Doctrine to improve that in which you do have control, so as to make your lives more orderly, and all this is part and parcel of the Divine Order.

On considering what the word '*amr*' (order) means, you will find that it denotes everything which has come into being. But, why does Allah avoid using the word '*shay*' (thing) and use the word '*amr*' instead? That is because nothing comes into existence on its own unless the order 'Be' is uttered. Allah says: 'His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it, "Be", and it is' (*Ya Sin*: 82). In addition to this, Allah *Glorified is He* arranges those corporeal matters in which humans play no part. To sum up, if a man wants to rectify and perfect his life, he should abide by the Doctrine which Allah *Glorified is He* has revealed, which is encapsulated in the commandments of 'Do's' and 'Don'ts'. As for the things that are permissible, they are many and man is free to engage in any of them.

If someone were to ask why he should follow the Doctrine or the Path of Allah, I say that Allah *Glorified is He* wished to create man and endow him with two natures: One of them has a compulsory nature and the other is based on freewill. That is, humans are compelled when it comes to many things, but when it comes to other things they have a choice. You are compelled, for example, to breathe. In fact, you breathe automatically without even being conscious of it. You breathe when you are awake and when you are asleep. If breathing were something in which you had a choice, you will need someone to manage your breathing when you are asleep. Clearly, it is a Mercy from Allah that you are compelled in such matters as breathing and the beating of your heart. You are also forced in matters such as the digestion of food, the expansion, and contraction of the stomach and the secretion of the digestive juices. However, you have a choice in other matters such as purchasing merchandise from a particular merchant or from someone else. You are also free to choose between the different types of food that you like.

There are many permissible things in life. You have freedom in so many areas of life. The number of things which Allah *Glorified is He* has labelled under the command of 'Do's' and 'Don'ts' are limited. Their purpose is to protect you and protect the society. They also serve to protect the universe in

which you live and breathe. You can exercise your freedom of choice in the domain of the permissible in any way you like, and this will not negatively affect the universe. Allah *Glorified is He* wills that you be compelled in certain matters so as not to corrupt the universe. You are free to eat any of the foods which are allowed, and there is nothing preventing human beings from picking and choosing the foods which they like as long as they are permissible to eat.

But all humans are different. As such, Allah wishes to protect human beings and the universe because He knows that human desires are contradictory. He says: 'And should the Truth follow their low desires, surely the heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, will have been ruined' (*al-Mu'minun*: 71). That is why we can see that the Governance of Allah in those things over which we have no influence is perfect. Everything that functions without human interference follows a precise order. Allah *Glorified is He* wishes that the natural laws of the universe function with such accuracy that both the believer and unbeliever are amazed by them. Allah governs His Dominion with infinite precision. Even scientists who do not adhere to the Doctrine of Allah have been able to predict the exact dates of complete and partial solar and lunar eclipses. They have been able to achieve this with unbelievable accuracy because they had based their calculation upon the raw data available to them from the natural world.

Since you Muslims are different from the unbelievers by virtue of your faith in Allah, then abide by His Doctrine in your daily lives to perfect them, just as the laws and functioning of the universe have been perfected by Allah's Laws. And that is why Allah proclaimed: 'He [Allah] regulates and governs [all] affairs' (*Yunus*: 3).

Allah *Glorified is He* adds: 'There is no intercessor (who can plead with Him) except after His Permission [has been given]' (*Yunus*: 3). Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the issue of intercession after having mentioned the issue of Divine Governance. This is because those unbelievers who were amazed at the fact Allah sent Muhammad as a Messenger used to worship that which neither harms nor benefits them. They used to say that those idols will intercede with Allah *Glorified is He* on their behalf. Allah says about them: 'They worship, besides Allah, what cannot hurt them or profit them. And they say, "These are



our intercessors with Allah”” (*Yunus*: 18). That is why Allah *Glorified is He* explains the issue of intercession. A man does not need an intercessor with the One Who owns all things unless he commits a sin or shirks his duties in a way or another. This verse clearly shows how they worship that which will not harm them if they ceased to worship it, and will not reward them if they worshipped it. They decided that these idols will intercede on their behalf. The word ‘*ash-shafa’ah*’ (intercession) is derived from the word ‘*ash-shaf*’ (to add, to attach, to supplement, to couple with); and its antonym is ‘*al-watr*’, which is an odd number.

A person from among those non-believers finds himself in an awkward position vis-à-vis the god that he worships. He is unable to face his god because he (the person) is incomplete. That is, rather than facing his god alone, he brings along someone else to intercede for him. For this reason, the word ‘*ash-shaf*’ has the meaning of seeking the help of another. Thereby, there is a shift from singularity to duality.

Regarding those idols, the unbelievers during the time of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to say they (the idols) were their intercessors with Allah. For this reason He *Glorified is He* says in the verse which we are examining: ‘There is no intercessor except after His Permission [has been given]’ (*Yunus*: 3).

Intercession requires an intercessor, the one the intercessor intercedes with, one who is interceded for and a particular issue around which the intercession revolves. As for the one on whose behalf this intercession is performed, it is obviously a person who has fallen short of certain objectives. Those unbelievers said regarding the idols that they (the idols) were their intercessors with Allah, and that is an admission on their part that they have failed in some form or other. They also asserted that the one with whom the intercessor intercedes is Allah, while the issue around which the intercession revolves is either a plea for a milder punishment or an elimination of the punishment altogether.

Therefore, the issue around which the intercession revolves is the same as the intercession the Muslims believe in and so is the One with Whom the intercessor intercedes. As for the intercessor itself and the one on whose behalf this intercession is taking place, these two are different from that of the

believers. To explain more, you will not ask a random person in the street, for example, to intercede on your behalf to the governor or to the minister if you need any service from them; instead, you will find someone whom you know is dear to them and who enjoys their admiration and respect. This is because it is his status that will enable him to speak to the governor or to the minister on the people's behalf.

Since this is the case with intercession between one human being and another, what about intercession with Allah *Glorified is He*? It is for this reason that Allah declares, in many verses of the Quran, that the intercessor must be approved by Him. Allah says: 'No intercessor (can plead with Him) except after His Permission [has been given]' (*Yunus*: 3) and in the chapter of *al- Baqara*, Allah says: 'Who is he who can intercede in His Presence except after His Permission [has been given]' (*al-Baqara*: 255) and in another verse Allah says: 'On that Day no intercession will avail anyone except for those to whom the Most Merciful has given permission and has accepted his word' (*Ta Ha*: 109). Clearly, the intercessor must enjoy the approval of Allah.

Regarding those whom the intercessor intercedes for, Allah *Glorified is He* stipulates: 'And they offer no intercession except for those with whom He is well-pleased' (*al-Anbiya*': 28). In this way, Allah shows us what the different elements of intercession are. They are the intercessor, the one on whose behalf the intercession is performed, the one who the intercessor intercedes with, i.e. Allah, as well as a particular issue which requires intercession, which in this case, as is well known, is sins.

One might wonder why a person requires intercession on his behalf when Allah *Glorified is He* is already pleased with him. I reply that we should keep in mind that a human encounters numerous activities throughout the course of his life, and he also has shortcomings and weaknesses. These shortcomings might be numerous or they might be few. For this reason, when he succumbs to any of his weaknesses and commits a sin, he must do more good deeds to earn a maximum number of rewards. The principle at work here is: 'Good deeds remove evil deeds' (*Hud*: 114). When a servant increases the number of his good deeds, Allah *Glorified is He* forgives him for his past sins. Every man has to know that when he violates any of the Laws of Allah, he will not

elude punishment. He, thereby, must increase the number of his good deeds, beg for Allah's Forgiveness, and pray that his good deeds annul his bad deeds. None shall elude the Infinite Grasp of Allah.

Suppose that a man suffers from a weakness and as a result he commits a sin, however, he also has a strength which enables him to easily obey one of the Laws of Allah *Glorified is He*. This person should know that Allah loves him for his strength and that Allah might forgive him regarding the sin that he committed. Allah *Glorified is He* might allow an intercessor, who enjoys His Approval, to intercede with Allah on behalf of this person.

Why does Allah allow this? Allah *Glorified is He* has willed that things be this way not to deprive the world of the good deeds which this person is easily capable of doing. One Hadith of Prophet Muhammad narrates the story of a man who came across a dog dying of thirst near a well. The man could not find any container to lower into the well and draw water, so he climbed down into the well himself and used his shoe to carry the water. He climbed back up and gave water to the dog. Of course, this man did not do this to show off in front of the dog, rather, he did this because of the mercy he had for the animal: a creature created by Allah *Glorified is He*. That is why Allah forgave this man all of his sins. As such, we understand that Allah *Glorified is He* forgives and annuls past sins.

Allah *Glorified is He* has granted the honour of intercession to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as a privilege and an honour to him. Allah also honours others by permitting them to exercise this function as well. That is to let the believer realize that Prophet Muhammad can intercede on his behalf, that a believer can intercede on behalf of his brother, and that a father can intercede on behalf of his son. As a result, the believer strives to cultivate his relationships with these people in order to earn their intercession. A believer, thereby, strives to follow the *Sunnah* (way) of Prophet Muhammad properly, strives to treat his fellow believers in a good way, and strives to treat their parents better. In this way, the whole society will enjoy the honour such intercession brings by encouraging the performance of good works and the purification of intentions.

When you see a man excelling in his religion, you must respect him, for his excellence in his religion might benefit you indirectly. That is why we find that Allah says in the Opening chapter of the Quran: 'You do we worship and You do we beseech for help' (*al-Fatiha*: 5). Allah could have revealed this verse using 'I worship and I beseech' instead of 'we worship and we beseech'; however, He wished to reveal it in this form in the Opening chapter in order to accept this pledge from all who utter it—and thereby accept good deeds from His slaves in order for the shortcomings of others to be overlooked. That is why I always say, 'If you see a person who is steeped in worship, do not ridicule him or make fun of him; for his earnest obedience and his intense religious activity may benefit you in some way or another'.

When you receive an order from Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and find it too difficult to do, remember that he might be your retreat who will intercede on your behalf concerning the matters which you found difficult to carry out.

Allah *Glorified is He* must be pleased with those who have been interceded for because they performed good deeds well, even though they may have committed some sins. A man once had a vision of 'Umar Allah *be pleased with him* and he asked him, 'How has Allah treated you?'. 'Umar responded that Allah *Glorified is He* has forgiven him. The man asked what good deed made Allah forgiven Him. 'Umar answered that he once saw a boy being cruel to a bird, so he purchased this bird from him in order not to rob the bird the boy owned and set it free. One of the people who were listening to this person objected, asking, 'Did 'Umar not perform more good deeds to earn forgiveness from Allah than just this one instance of freeing this bird?' Someone clarified the point to him and observed that this instance of freeing the bird served to erase his sins; however his other good works served to raise his spiritual status.

To continue from here, there are two verses in the Quran which are worded similarly. In the first verse, Allah says: 'And be on your guard against a day when one soul shall not avail another in the least, neither shall intercession be accepted for/from it, nor shall any compensation be taken from/for it' (*al-Baqara*: 48), while the second reads: 'And be on your guard against a day when no soul shall avail another in the least, neither shall any compensation

be accepted from/for it, nor shall intercession profit it' (*al-Baqara*: 123). Those who have referred to these two verses in order to undermine the Quran are strangers to the Arabic language. They do not possess any innate aptitude for the language that enables them to grasp the gist of these kinds of expressions. Were they endowed with such a faculty, they will have known that these two verses have a two-fold implication. This is because there is the soul that has earned sufficient reward, which is the one that intercedes, and another soul which is interceded for as it earned somewhat less rewards. The pronoun in the phrases: 'neither shall [intercession/compensation] be accepted from/for it' and 'nor shall any compensation be taken for/from it', and 'nor shall intercession profit it' can be attributed to either the soul that intercedes or to the soul that is interceded for. When one of us, for example, owes a debt to someone else and is unable to pay it back or offer any compensation, he seeks the intercession of someone who is a friend of the creditor. When this friend goes to the creditor and asks whether he accepts his intercession or not, and if the creditor said that he will not accept his intercession, the intercessor may say that he will pay the amount owed to him by so-and-so (as a compensation). Clearly, we find ourselves in front of two types of people, i.e. one that intercedes and another that is interceded for him. The pronoun can be rightly attributed to any of these.

After having given us an idea of how Allah created the universe, informing us that He accepts intercession on behalf of whom He wills and that He gives certain individuals the right to intercede with Him, Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the verse saying: 'Such is Allah, your Lord, therefore worship Him; Then will you not remember?' (*Yunus*: 3) Allah *Glorified is He* has created the universe and all things have been settled and arranged by Him. He created humans in order to inhabit this universe. We know that He has testified that there is no God save Himself; and when Allah *Glorified is He* testifies for Himself, this means that He is confident that His Will in the universe shall be done.

When Allah says: 'Such is', He refers to all that had preceded, including the creation of the heavens and the earth, His Establishment on the Throne and His Governing of all things. No one intercedes with Him except after He gives Permission to them. Such is Allah *Glorified is He* your Lord, and as He is

your Lord, you must worship Him. That is because He is the One Who has created out of nothing, provided for those who have nothing, and is endowed with all the Attributes of Absolute Perfection.

Our worship does not benefit Him in any way. Allah is too great to receive any benefit. Consequently, if you were to worship Him, you will not increase His Dominion, and if you were not to worship Him, you will not diminish His Dominion in any measure. However, the benefits of religious worship affect the believer because by practicing religious worship you are thereby abiding by a Doctrine that will gradually eliminate your profane caprices, and reorient every single one of your desires towards one aim. In this way, your soul will not suffer from any contradictions and internal inconsistencies; rather, all of the world will become an integrated whole.

As such, religious worship makes the desires of all creatures have one single aim, and none of us resents submitting to this one aim as it does not entail one human being submitting to another; rather, it is the submission of a creature before its Creator. In this way, all those areas in which you can exercise your freewill will become in a good state and in order, just as those areas in which you cannot exercise your freewill have been put in order.

Moreover, religious worship is not limited to only the five Daily Prayers. These five Daily Prayers, however, constitute the foundations over which the structure of Islam is built. All of Islam can be summarised by the prescriptions and proscriptions of Allah. That is why, when we examine the processes and sequence of things, we find that the pillars of Islam depend upon all of life's activities. That which makes it possible for us to perform our obligatory religious rites becomes itself obligatory.

Allah *Glorified is He* says at the end of the verse: '...will you not then remember?' (*Yunus*: 3) One's mind, or one's brain, whatever we may call it, is the seat of numerous faculties, such as the faculty of imagination, the faculty of memory and data storage as well as many other faculties among which is this faculty of 'remembering' that is referred to in the verse. Remembrance involves what you were previously acquainted with, but then something new occurred in your life and caused you to forget it. When you forget something that is of concern to one of your friends, your friends says to you, 'O my brother, remember

such-and-such a matter'. He does not bring up anything that you were previously ignorant of; rather, he tries to revive the memory of something with which you were familiar, but which you subsequently forgot.

When man impartially contemplates the cosmos, he must arrive at the conclusion that behind this universe there is a deity. This is not a premise which we borrow only from the philosophers, but also from the common man of the street, or even from a simple goat herder. There is a story<sup>(1)</sup> in common folklore that tells of a shepherd who was walking in the desert when he came across camel droppings on the road. He said, 'If these droppings point to the existence of camels, and these footprints suggest that the animal was walking in the area, does this universe not point to the existence of the All-Subtle, the All-Aware?!'

To give an example from our daily lives, consider the electric washing machine, which itself is not something absolutely necessary in our lives given that our ancestors used to wash their clothes manually—it is a luxury item, not an indispensable item. We find that people know who devised this machine, and who channelled its electrical current to it, and who programmed its wash cycles. Similarly for the electric light bulb which breaks down after a certain number of hours; we find students studying who invented it and when it was invented. So, can we forget the One Who has created the sun which illuminates our entire universe?!

In fact, in our time, even the unbelieving scientist supplies us with evidence that supports our faith; for every invention is patented for no one to steal it and claim it as his own. How about the sun that illuminates and produces warmth, or the moon that marks the months, or the stars that show people the way—and there is nothing in Allah's universe that stands in need of spare parts—should we not admit that this is His creation. This is because here He tells us who the Creator is and informs us He has dominion over what He has created, i.e. His Creation is 'patented'. For this reason He has revealed the Quran to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for him to inform us that He *Glorified is He* is indeed the One Who has created everything;

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(1) The story of the shepherd with the traces of camels he found on the road

and He has allowed the unbelievers to continue to exist in order to challenge those who question this issue of creation. The Lord *Glorified is He* has ascribed all that which He has created to Himself, and not one of the unbelievers has ever been able to deny this.

We will not take our clues—regarding the existence of Allah—from the philosophers who reach their results according to the proofs they have which depend on the outward appearance of things. Rather, we will take our evidence from the word ‘*al-kufr*’ (disbelief) itself. *Al-kufr* means *al-satr* (covering up). Can something that does not exist be ‘covered up’? Therefore, *kufr* (disbelief) in Allah is proof of the existence of Allah. Since disbelief means ‘covering up’, it is not the normal situation, but the result of *ghaflah* (negligence and heedlessness). And *Ghaflah* is due to the requisites of faith that confine the actions of a person. This is because man may forget that the restrictions of Allah’s Message do not apply solely to him; rather, they apply to all people. Thus, when Allah forbids theft, He does not forbid it for only one person; rather, He forbids it for everyone. Hence, He has obliged everybody else to comply with these restrictions and has forbidden them from stealing your property as well.

When Allah orders you to lower your gaze (on seeing what is illegal to look at) and to refrain from prying into the private lives of others, He is, by the same token, protecting your private life from the prying eyes of others. Thus, faith offers its benefits to all human beings. Since this is the way things are, we find that Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘O people, remember...’ (*Fatir*: 3).

When a man sits down quietly by himself, free from being driven by his vain desires, he will naturally be guided to believing that this universe did not come into existence by chance. The name of the Creator of the universe cannot be known to man through his rational thought because every man’s conceptions vary. You find that when the philosophers asserted the necessity for a Creator of the universe, they did not tell us the Creator’s Name. In fact, some of them made the mistake of supposing that the Creator of the universe simply created the universe and its laws, and then let the universe run on its own. They forgot that the Creator does not impart His authority on the universe only once. That is why the Prophets *peace be upon them* were supported



by miracles which momentarily turn the natural laws upside down. This reminds us that Allah is the Creator and that He takes charge of and is Ever Watchful over His creation. Thus, it is not a case of the natural laws working independently of their Creator; rather, Allah *Glorified is He* willed to show us that the universe is not acting by itself.

We know that the electronic equipment which human beings integrate into certain tools sometimes ‘crash’. An electronic mind does not have absolute power or control over all the data that is stored in it; it cannot refuse to give any data you ask for.

As for the human mind, it has complete control over the information stored inside of it. Furthermore, it has the ability of concealing whatever information it wishes; that is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Do not mix Truth with falsehood, or hide the Truth when you know it’ (*al-Baqara*: 42). Since man is told not to conceal the Truth, this means that man indeed has the power to conceal it. The vitality of a natural flower—for instance—lies in the fact that it eventually wilts; unlike an artificial flower which remains forever still and lifeless.

When the Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘....will you not use your minds’ (*al-Mu'minun*: 80), and also says: ‘...will you not then remember’ (*as-Sajda*: 4), He is urging man to remember, to reflect and to consider. If the Quran were to trick man, it will not have asked him to remember, to think, to contemplate, and to consider.

This is an example to explain, although Allah is beyond any comparison. Suppose that you went to a store that sells wool to try and purchase a piece of good quality fabric; you see the vendor cutting off a piece of the fabric and holding it in his hands to demonstrate how strong it is. Then he takes a thread from the wool and burns it in front of you for you to become certain of the purity and fineness of the wool. This vendor was trying to explain to you secret tricks of the trade in the wool industry because he was confident of the quality of his product.

If this is what happens between human beings; then what about when the Creator of the universe exposes the secrets of the universe to His creation and calls them through His Message to remember, reason, think, meditate and

consider. The Lord *Glorified is He* wants us to use our minds in this way because He knows very well that by doing this we will fulfil the purpose for which the Lord *Glorified is He* has created us.

Beware! Do not think that Allah has created the universe for you and keeps creating things for you, and then revealed the Doctrine to help you in your lives in this world and in the Hereafter, but after that He withdrew. No, He is always in charge of your lives. No slumber seizes Him, nor does He sleep, and nothing eludes Him; and none is capable of robbing Him of anything.

In a Qudsi Hadith Allah says, ‘O My slaves, if you think that I do not see you, then there is a flaw in your Faith. And if you believe that I do see you, then why do you treat me as though I am the least significant one of those who can see you’.

In our daily lives we know that a no one can easily approach a powerful person if the latter is attentive and is aware of what you are doing. Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا إِنَّهُ يَبْدُوُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ لِيَجْزِيَ  
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْقِسْطِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ  
حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٤﴾

**It is to Him you shall all return — that is a true promise from God. It was He who created [you] in the first place, and He will do so again, so that He may justly reward those who believe and do good deeds. But the disbelievers will have a drink of scalding water, and agonizing torment because they persistently disbelieved [4] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 4)**

When Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘To Him you shall return, all together...’ (*Yunus*: 4), this is an announcement to all of creation that He *Glorified is He* is Aware of all things; for He has revealed religious duties which are either obeyed or disobeyed. Those who choose to obey will be delighted by Allah’s words: ‘To Him you shall return, all together...’ (*Yunus*: 4), and those who choose to disobey will grieve; for they will receive the punishment prepared for transgressors upon their return to Allah.

We find that, at times, the Quran states: ‘They will be made to return (*‘yurja’un’*— passive form)’ and at other times it states: ‘They will return (*‘yarji’un’*—active form)’. Whosoever is virtuous and does good deeds will be delighted by the idea of returning to Allah; and whomsoever disobeys and disbelieves grieves and dreads the idea of returning to Allah—but he shall be made to return, despite his reluctance. The Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘On that Day, they will be thrust into the Fire of Hell with violence’ (*at-Tur*: 13). And when He *Glorified is He* says, in the verse that we are currently examining: ‘To Him you shall return, all together...’ (*Yunus*: 4), this ‘return’ or ‘place of return’ is named in the same verse as: ‘...Allah’s promise, in truth...’ (*Yunus*: 4). One might say, ‘But *‘al-wa’d*’ (a promise) is that which denotes a promise of good things to come; if the ‘return’ refers to those who are obedient, then this is indeed a blessed tidings. However, the disobedient will not consider the “return” to bring any good. As such, why did Allah *Glorified is He* not say that the return for the disobedient is (in fact) a threat?’

The answer is that Allah *Glorified is He* is hereby notifying man to what awaits him in the future and exhorting him while He (Allah) has still given him the freedom to choose. And it is presumed they will choose to do good. Consequently, the whole phrase can be read as a goodly promise (*wa’d*). Furthermore, the use of this particular form where the prepositional phrase ‘to Him’ precedes that which it usually follows in normal speech, i.e. ‘you shall return’, indicates that there is only One to Whom we all will return; for we all will return to Him. This is like Allah’s saying: ‘You alone we worship...’ (*al-Fatiha*: 5).

Hence, the obedient slave feels joyful about Allah’s reward for him; but as for the disobedient, he must reform himself before he returns to Allah. I will give this example to explain more: you urge your students to study hard all year long; and those who actually study look forward to the day of the exam because they know that they will do well in the test. However, those who do not study hard might be moved to change his ways and start studying seriously to avoid failure. To remind someone of future consequences is a form of warning; it causes the person to realize the gravity of the situation and it deters him from being heedless. For this reason, reminding a person is a form of promise, and not a threat.

The Lord *Glorified is He* also describes His promise as being: ‘Allah’s promise, in truth’ (*Yunus*: 4). One might ask, ‘Are not all of Allah’s promises true?’ The answer is, ‘Yes, every promise issuing from Allah is true; but by describing His promise here as being a promise in truth, the Lord wishes to emphasize that ‘the Truth’ is enduring; and if at times it appears to you as if falsehood is firmly in control, then know that falsehood cannot endure because it is ephemeral and lacks real authority’.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘He sends water from the sky that fills riverbeds to overflowing, each according to its measure. The stream carries on its surface a growing layer of froth, like the froth that appears when people melt metals in the fire to make ornaments and tools. In this way Allah, illustrates Truth and falsehood—the froth disappears, but what is of benefit to man stays behind—this is how Allah sets forth parables’ (*ar-Ra’d*: 17). When rain falls, we find that every valley absorbs as much of the water as it needs. When rain falls and the water accumulates, we see straw and other useless particles rising to the surface; as when rain falls it cleanses the area where it falls. That is why the lighter particles and other useless things float on the surface of the water. Likewise, falsehood floats on the surface; however, it is useless and does not disturb the Truth in the least as the Truth is stable and is beneficial to the earth and the people. The floating of falsehood on the surface alerts the hosts of the Truth. Falsehood is akin to the pain which signals the coming of an illness. The most dangerous of all illnesses is that which does not produce any preliminary pain because it becomes exacerbated to the point when it becomes difficult to be cured or even impossible.

Consequently, falsehood is like a pain which alerts the hosts of the Truth. That is why you notice that when Islam is provoked by outside enemies, fervent ardour spreads among all Muslims, resulting in activity on their part, cooperation and the forgetting of all grudges—all for the sake of defending Islam.

In some virus-related illnesses, the doctors actually give their patients small doses of the microbes or the viruses of a certain disease to stimulate the body’s immune system. In such a way, falsehood is a soldier in the hosts of the Truth, just as pain is a soldier in the army of good health.

If Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘To Him you shall return, all together...’ (*Yunus*: 4), this promise must necessarily be ‘the truth’; for Allah *Glorified is He* possesses what He promises to give. He is also too great to lie or deceive anyone, as He says: ‘And whose word can be truer than Allah’s’ (*an-Nisa*: 122). This is because He is more powerful than anything and anyone He has created, and because His powers never fail him as He owns the entire universe.

The word ‘*ar-ruju*’ (return)—mentioned when Allah says: ‘To Him you shall return, all together...’ (*Yunus*: 4)—denotes the concept of returning to the same place from which one originally came. Consequently, it implies an initial existence which one then leaves but returns to later. Therefore, if you were in a place and then you travelled to another area, and later returned to the original place, this would be called ‘*ar-ruju*’. The word ‘*ar-ruju*’ (return) is used in this verse to signify that we are all going to die, as the Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘All that is on earth will perish; and there will remain the Face of your Lord, full of Majesty and Honor’ (*ar-Rahman*: 26-27).

The Quran quotes the disbelievers as having said: ‘When we have died and have become dust, [we will return to life]? That is a distant return’ (*Qaf*: 3). They are, thereby, qualifying as improbable the notion of the resurrection. In addition, Allah relates that they said: ‘What? When we have disappeared into the earth, shall we really be created anew?’ (*as-Sajda*: 10) This indicates that they asked, ‘Will there be a resurrection after death, burial, decomposition of the body and it turning into elements that mix with the elements of the earth?’ In the current verse, when Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘To Him you shall return, all together...’ (*Yunus*: 4), He refers to our coming into existence on the occasion of our birth into the life of this world, leaving the life of this world on the occasion of our death, and finally being resurrected.

The disbelievers had an issue with this particular notion, and they deemed it to be improbable. This is why Allah wanted to make this issue clear for us, for it is an essential element of our adherence to His Message. It is as if Allah is telling us, ‘Beware, do not think that you have taken advantage of your life and lived it to its fullest, and that there is nothing after that. Do you think this will be the case? No; there will be a resurrection and there will be a reckoning’. That is why Allah says: ‘To Him you shall return, all together...’ (*Yunus*: 4).

If one were to ask, 'How can this be?' The Lord *Glorified is He* has the answer: 'Surely, He begins the creation in the first instance, and then will bring it back again...' (*Yunus*: 4). That is, will He, Who is capable of creating something out of nothing, be incapable of resurrecting those who have previously existed? It is Allah *Glorified is He* Who indeed relates what the angel said: 'This is what your Lord has said, "It is easy for me: I created you, though you were nothing before"' (*Maryam*: 9).

Consequently, if Allah wills to give you existence anew, do not ask how this will happen because the atoms of your bodies are still there and the Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'Were We then worn out by the first creation? No, but some people are (still) lost in doubt about (the possibility of) a new creation!' (*Qaf*: 15) In this way, Allah *Glorified is He* uses the original act of creation as evidence of His Capacity to effect a second creation; if you are surprised at the prospect of being brought to life a second time, consider the first act of creation, for He has created you out of nothing. Will He then be incapable of bringing you back from something (your remains)? 'Were we then worn out by the first creation?' (*Qaf*: 15)

There was uproar among the philosophers about this matter, but the Lord *Glorified is He* offers proofs from the universe itself; He says: 'You sometimes see the earth lifeless...' (*al-Hajj*: 5), meaning: a barren, lifeless earth. '...yet when we send down water it stirs and swells, and produces every kind of joyous growth' (*al-Hajj*: 5). Do not be surprised by the fact that, from death, life can re-emerge once more. You are constantly witnessing this fact. The life that you see in front of you is nothing but a cycle because when Allah created the universe, He created all its elements and no new elements are added to these.

Take water as an example of one of these elements; from the time when the Lord *Glorified is He* first created water there has been neither an increase nor a decrease in the amount of water in existence, and every human being and animal drinks from this water. No matter how much water a person consumes during his lifetime, the total amount of water remains constant. For this person gets rid of the water he consumes through sweat and other methods; all excess water leaves his body, and all that remains accounts for his weight.

In this way, all the water which you take in is eventually returned back to the environment through life's biological processes. After that the water evaporates, and this process of evaporation results in the distillation of water. So, if you wish to distil water you will heat the water until it reaches its boiling point. At this stage the water turns into vapour, and then you condense this vapour for the water to revert to its liquid state once again.

Thus, water has its cycles. We use water to irrigate our crops and our crops absorb the moisture and become a luscious green colour, with the extra moisture leaving the plants through the process of transpiration. Later, the plants dry up after all the water has evaporated into the atmosphere. These complex processes take place without anybody ever noticing them.

In order for you to buy water that has been distilled at a pharmacy, you pay a lot of money because preparing this water needs a flame, a vessel and all kinds of tubes, and it also needs additional water in order to condense the steam. However, this process occurs in our world millions of times, over and over again, without anyone really noticing it. After the water evaporates, it forms clouds, and then the rain falls—this is actually distilled water. That is why three fourths of the earth's surface is covered in water—so as to be at the service of the remaining quarter, the dry land because Allah wants the surface of the water to be expansive, and it is this expanse that helps the processes of distillation, evaporation and condensation of water.

Suppose that you filled a vessel with water, placed it in one of the rooms of your house, and left it in that room for a month. When you return to the vessel after a month, you will find that the water level has dropped by half a centimetre, more or less; but if you were to take the same vessel and pour the water all over the surface of the room, you will find that the floor will dry up in a matter of hours. As a result we see that the larger the surface area the easier the water evaporates.

The original amount of water that Allah created at the beginning of time is the same. It has neither increased nor decreased; it undergoes the cycle that the Lord *Glorified is He* intended for it to undergo. Consequently, we can see that things tend to return to their original state once more. This happens in all aspects of life. The Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'By those [winds] that scatter far

and wide, and those that are heavily laden, and those that flow with ease, and those that distribute [rain] as ordained. Truly, what you are promised is true' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 1-5). In this verse Allah *Glorified is He* swears by the winds that carry the clouds; and every cloud dispenses its rain at a place precisely ordained by Allah. He *Glorified is He* also calls our attention to the cycle of the water, which is one of the foundations of biological life. And Allah swears by these phenomena in nature that His promise will most certainly be fulfilled.

Consider the flower; you see that it is soft and fresh. This is because it contains a lot of moisture. It also has a beautiful colour and pleasant scent; but if we picked this flower, its petals will fall and it will dry up, because all of its moisture will evaporate. That is, all of the water which the flower had in its store is returned to its original environment. Moreover, the flower's scent will remain in its petals until the latter shrivel up and decompose completely, and the flower's beautiful colour will also remain until the flower dies. After that, a new flower will sprout up and replace it.

Hence, the life of every living being in this world of change is governed by this water cycle; and if water has a cycle, is it really that improbable that the elements which make up your body also have a similar cycle? Imagine that a person was alive and then died. After the soul leaves the body, the body decomposes and all the water that it used to contain evaporates. The physical substances of the body merge with the elements of the earth and turn into earth. But will the Lord be incapable of resuscitating the scattered remnants of this human being? Of course, He will not. Life is thus the perpetual movement of elements in their different cycles; since the original act of creation, no new elements have been added to the equation, nor have any of them been removed.

Read the Quran attentively and you will find that Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'We know very well what the earth takes away of them: with Us is a book recording' (*Qaf*: 4). That is, the Lord *Glorified is He* tells us that all of the elements are present in the universe; their amounts might vary from one creature to another, but their sum total is fixed. Science has discovered that living beings are made up of sixteen elements, and the total amount of each element is fixed, but if they happen to discover additional elements, the total amount of each of these additional elements will also be fixed.



The scientists assert that these sixteen elements are: Oxygen, Carbon, Hydrogen, Nitrogen, Magnesium, Potassium, Sodium, and others. All of these elements return to their original state after the living creatures die and their bodies decompose. As such, we see the truth in the Lord's words: 'We know very well what the earth takes away of them: with Us is a book recording' (*Qaf*: 4).

Some philosophers have tried to articulate a second objection. They said, 'Suppose a human being died, and the elements of his physical body disintegrated and dissolved back into the earth. Are these elements not recycled back into other living creatures; like a tree that produces fruit, which is then eaten by a human being and becomes part of his body? Thus, the one who dies and whose elements go into the composition of a fruit, for example, these elements will later become a part of another human being's body; as such, how will Allah resuscitate every human being anew?' The answer is, 'You are aware of certain data, but are ignorant of other data. Look at the phenomenon of obesity and slimness that you see in human beings every day. Obesity means that a certain amount of matter is found in larger quantities in an obese person than in another person who is thin. An obese person might undergo certain changes that could render him thin, and vice versa. Now, does this alter this person as an individual? Of course not; this is why we see that there is a difference between the essential character of a person and the elements that make up his physical corporeality'.

The Lord *Glorified is He* has informed us that no physical quantity is ever removed from the universe; the total amount being equal to the sum of the amounts in all the objects in the universe. In other words, the physical elements found in the universe are available in quantities sufficient enough to make up all living creatures. Allah *Glorified is He* distributes these elements among living beings according to their need. If you were to add up all of these elements, you will find that the aggregate quantity is fixed, regardless of the infinite ways that these elements combine to make up living organisms.

For example, you find a person who weighs one-hundred kilos; but after this person falls sick and his weight drops to seventy kilos. What this means is that the missing thirty kilos of physical matter returned to the earth. Every human body has an optimum weight which it reaches at a certain age; this

optimum weight is the benchmark which can either be exceeded or not met, depending on dietary factors and health conditions. You will notice that a child excretes less than what he takes in terms of food—this is for him to grow. If a child were to excrete the same quantity that he takes in, he will not grow. A child continues to grow until he reaches his fixed, optimum weight, at which point he begins to excrete more or less the same quantities that he takes in. After that, old age sets in and his weight begins to diminish, and this is a sign that he is excreting more than he is taking in; consequently, he begins to grow thinner.

Suppose that an ingenious doctor was able to identify the illness that was responsible for one of his patient's emaciation. The doctor administered medication that enabled the patient to recover his health as well as regain the weight he had lost, and the patient's diet becomes better in quantity and quality during convalescence. Now, will there be a change in this patient himself as an individual during these changes (so he will become a different person)? Of course, there will not be a change because the physical substance that he lost as a result of his illness returned to the earth, but he then just replaced the weight he lost by eating a healthy diet during recovery.

Therefore, do not say that 'something has been removed or diminished'; for Allah has a book in which all matters concerning the universe are written. He brings forth certain elements into existence, and with the command of His, 'Be', they arrange themselves such that they become a human being or become any other creature, fulfilling His Will.

We have spoken about chemistry in order to understand this point according to logic and also our Belief, especially since we believe that Allah has set a Way of life for us—but the commandments of this Message may be either obeyed or disobeyed. Those who obey—his freedom becomes determined by that which is contained in the commandments; and for he who does not obey Allah and abandons himself to ruin—he is the loser. This is because logically it is obvious that one who embraces the Doctrine and abides by its principles, and curbs his vain desires—such a person cannot be equated with one who wastes his life away frivolously. Logically, the mind cannot but arrive at the conclusion that there will be a resurrection and a reckoning, whereby those

who abide by Allah's Message will receive goodly rewards and those who stray from His Message will be punished.

Since Allah exists, and His Word has been brought to us via Messengers; and since the directives 'Do' and 'Do not do' have been made available to us; and since there are those who obey the directives and there are those who do not—there certainly will be a resurrection after this life where those who have done good deeds shall be recompensed and those who have been guilty of wrongdoing shall be punished. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'To Him you shall return, all together—Allah's promise, in truth. Surely, He begins the creation in the first instance, and then will bring it back again so that He may reward with justice those who believe and do good deeds...' (*Yunus*: 4).

The purpose of such a statement is to reassure those who steadfastly cling and act according to the Message that there will be a resurrection, and there will be a reckoning because the dutiful believer must receive a goodly reward, and the insubordinate, wicked person—whose tyranny caused sufferings to everyone—must receive his punishment. Clearly, there has to be a resurrection, a bringing back to life so that Allah can mete out justice for everyone according to their actions. The word '*al-qist*'—as we have previously explained—means 'justice'. The root of the word is composed of the letter '*qaf*', '*sin*', and '*ta*'; sometime we pronounce it as '*qist*', and at other times we pronounce it as '*qast*'. In the former case, the word means 'justice'; in the latter case it means 'injustice'. This is why the Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'But those who deviate [from the right Path] (*al-qasitun*) will be fuel for Hellfire' (*al-Jinn*: 15). The word '*al-qasitun*' (those who deviate) refers to those who abuse the rights of others.

Allah also says: '...but if you do judge between them, judge justly: Allah loves the just (*al-muqsiteen*)' (*al-Ma'ida*: 42). In this verse, the word '*al-muqsiteen*' means those who deal fairly and equitably with people.

As such, we have these two words '*qist*' and '*qast*'; there is also '*al-qasat*' (being bow-legged) which is the curvature of the legs. The word '*qist*' is used here in the sense of justice, but the person with this quality is called '*qasit*', and this word is used to refer to the injustice and its removal. It is taken from the word '*al-qast*', not from '*al-qist*'. You also have '*Al-Muqsit*' (the

Equitable), which is one of the Divine Names. But Allah does not use this name in the sense of justice; meaning, that He in Himself has been Just since the very beginning. Rather, He willed to describe himself as '*Al-Muqsit*' because it is He Who removes injustice and thereby restores justice.

In the verse which we are currently examining, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...so that He may reward with justice those who believe and do good deeds' (*Yunus*: 4), meaning: a just reward from Him, or you could also say He *Glorified is He* recompenses them, for they had justly abided by the Message. This is because the Quran, as we know, lays down judgments and clarifies different doctrinal issues, issues dealing with free will, and issues dealing with manners. And such people have applied the doctrine correctly and in a just manner; for none of them disbelieved in Allah. The Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'Attributing partners to Him is a terrible wrong' (*Luqman*: 13).

By virtue of their fairness and their equity in doctrinal matters and because they did not commit the greatest of all sins and wrongdoings, which is setting up associates with Allah—and thereby they did not wrong themselves, nor did any one of them succumb to transient temptations of the moment—Allah saved them from eternal misery. They also did not wrong other people. For all the virtuous deeds that they performed, Allah will certainly reward them because of their fairness and their equity.

It might be said, 'A fair recompense involves neither increase nor decrease; but if the recompense is from Allah, then according to the religious law the reward for one good deed is multiplied by ten, and Allah *Glorified is He* increases it further for whomsoever He wills. Such is Allah's Justice according to the religious law. Or it could be that the reward is given neither without any extra increase nor with any decrease'. However, Allah's Gift is not specified exactly in this particular verse. That is why there arose disagreements among the theologians regarding Allah's Words: 'That man will only have what [deed] he has earned' (*an-Najm*: 39). Some of them have said, 'If man is rewarded only for what he has striven to do, then how can he be credited with a good deed which receives a ten-fold reward? In the same vein, what about the prayers offered at a person's funeral? Does the recently deceased person benefit from our supplications that he be forgiven? If a man is only rewarded

according to his actions, then the deceased will not benefit from the funeral prayers; so, why has Allah charged us with performing the funeral prayer as a *fard kifayah* (legal obligations that must be discharged by enough members in the Muslim community to make the remaining Muslims free from the responsibility before Allah), and not a *fard ayn* (legal obligations that must be performed by each individual Muslim)?<sup>(1)</sup>

We say that the letter '*lam*' that appears in Allah's words: 'That man' in: 'That man will only have what [deed] he has earned' (*an-Najm*: 39) refers to *al-Mulk* (possession), indicating a right. This verse refers to giving a right to a person, but it does not necessarily preclude an increment. One could also say it this way, 'Do we offer funerary prayers for everyone who dies? We offer funerary prayers for only believers who pass away. Believing is a good deed he performed during his lifetime and he is rewarded for the funeral prayers that we offer at his funeral (because he is a believer); in other words, he is rewarded for this good deed of his'.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'But the disbelievers will have a drink of scalding (*hameem*) water, and agonizing torment because they persistently disbelieved' (*Yunus*: 4). Consequently, we know that an agonizing torment will be given to them because of their disbelief, just as rewards are given as a recompense for believing and doing good deeds.

To sum up, in this case (for believers) *al-qist* (justice) refers to an Attribute of Allah, that is His Justice. It also refers to their justice; for they had justly and rightly recognized Allah's Divinity. As for the disbelievers, justice is applied to them because Allah makes them taste a scalding drink—as a punishment for their disbelief. It is in this manner that the principle of justice is applied in their case.

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(1) *Fard al-kifa* (communal obligation) means that if the act is performed by some Muslims, other Muslims do not need to perform it; but if no one performs the act, everyone is deemed to have sinned. As for *fard al-ayn* (individual obligation), it is an individual obligatory rite for all members of an Islamic community. This includes the daily prayers, for example; if there are no exonerating excuses, and the conditions for which it is obligatory are realized, then it is obligatory for every Muslim.

The word '*hamim*' is composed of the root letters '*ha*', '*mim*' and another '*mim*'; all the words that are derived from this root denote heat and warmth. The Lord *Glorified is He* says in another verse: 'If they call for relief, they will be relieved with water like molten metal, scalding their faces. What a terrible drink! What a painful resting place' (*al-Kahf*: 29). The phrase '*kal-muhl*' (like molten metal) means that it is boiling, and when the element is something other than water, this means that its boiling temperature is higher than the boiling temperature of water; copper for instance has a higher boiling point than the boiling point of water, and so does iron, gold and other elements. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Truly, the tree of Zaqqum will be food for the sinners: [hot] as molten copper. It boils in their insides like the boiling of scalding (*al-hameem*) water' (*ad-Dukhan*: 43-46).

As we just said, the boiling point temperature of copper is higher than that of water; and all the words derived from this root connote heat. If we look at the words '*hammam*' (bathroom) and '*istaham*' (took a shower), they refer to when water is put on the body. This can take three forms: the first is wiping, the second is ritual purification, and the third is taking a shower. '*Al-Mas'h*' (wiping) is to dampen something with water without the water dripping from the body, '*al-ghusl*' (ritual purification) refers to pouring water over the body to the extent that it falls off it, and '*istihmam*' (taking a shower) also implies the pouring of water over a body. '*Al-ghusl*' is for ritual purification, but '*al-istihmam*' is for cleaning. If you break wind, urinate or defecate, you get up and perform ablution, i.e. ritual purification. Allah says: '...wash your face...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 6) until the end of the description of ablution.

This is an order from Allah for us to perform the purifying ablution. It can be done with dust when water is unavailable; in this case the act is called '*at-tayamum*' (dry ablution). If the situation calls for cleansing, then bathing is needed because the pores in people's skin can exude secretions that can be quite oily, and when these come into contact with dirt they are likely to become clogged. These clogged pores are caused by the secretions from the human body and pure dust the skin is exposed to, but they do not cause a man to be in a state of ritual impurity. For this reason, when you perform a ritual

bath it is sufficient to just pour water over your body, even if particles of dust still remain on your body. This dust does not preclude you having bodily ritual purity. But when a person takes a shower, hot water is used; and this causes all the impurities to be washed off the body and also cleanses the pores of the skin. Out of these pores come particles of dirt as well as thin threads of dead skin cells.

That is, there is a difference between *al-ghusl*—which is ritual purification—and *al-istihmam*—which is for general cleanliness. The latter term is related to the word ‘*al-hammam*’—which is the place one takes a shower. To sum up, the root verb consisting of the letters ‘*ha*’, ‘*mim*’ and ‘*mim*’ connotes heat and warmth. Here the Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘But the disbelievers will have a drink (*sharab*) of scalding (*hameem*) water...’ (*Yunus*: 4). But the word ‘*sharab*’ (drink) denotes ‘quenching’, which makes us wonder why Allah uses this term in this context? It is because using this word (*sharab*) makes the punishment worse, for a human being longs to drink in order to quench his thirst; but if he is then given scalding liquid to drink, this liquid brings about even more pain and suffering. Similarly, Allah says elsewhere: ‘If they call for relief, they will be relieved with water like molten metal, scalding their faces. What a terrible drink (*sharab*)...’ (*al-Kahf*: 29). Hopes are raised upon reading the beginning of the verse: ‘If they call for relief, they will be relieved with water...’ (*al-Kahf*: 29). Here, they are hoping for succour; but the relief that reaches them is the kind that they deserve for all their sinful ways: ‘They will be relieved with water like molten metal, scalding their faces. What a terrible drink...’ (*al-Kahf*: 29). Thus, Allah’s words ‘...But the disbelievers will have a drink of scalding water and an agonizing torment because they persistently disbelieved’ (*Yunus*: 4) mean, ‘This is due to their disbelief’. And we know that they disbelieved in matters of great doctrinal importance.

After that Allah *Glorified is He* says:

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ  
وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥﴾

**It is He who made the sun a shining radiance and the moon a light, determining phases for it so that you might know the number of years and how to calculate time. God did not create all these without a true purpose; He explains His signs to those who understand [5] (The Quran, Yunus: 5)**

After the Lord *Glorified is He* makes clear how He has created the heavens and the earth, created the whole universe, and subjected them for mankind—after this He describes the ‘signs’ in the universe, which are also bounties that He has created for our benefit. They are the factors on which depends the continuation of life, for the sun is that which brings everything in our world to fruition; it provides every creature with the heat and light that it needs. The sun also causes water to evaporate—as we have previously pointed out—for the water to come back down to earth as fresh water, distilled and purified. With this water human beings and animals quench their thirst and the crops are irrigated.

The sun is the centre around which a number of planets revolve. One revolution by the earth around the sun constitutes a year, and one revolution of the earth around itself constitutes a day. Here the Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘It is He who made the sun a shining radiance (*diya’a*) and the moon a light (*an-Nur*)...’ (Yunus: 5); and if you were to consider the superficial meaning of the terms ‘sun’ and ‘moon’, you will say, ‘The sun gives us light, as does the moon’; however, a deeper understanding requires you to differentiate between the two for the sun radiates light, whereas the moon reflects soft light. The difference is that the light emitted by the sun is accompanied by heat and warmth, whereas the light of the moon glows softer and more gently. That is why the moonlight has been characterized as ‘*halim*’ (forbearing, lenient), for you did not need to seek shelter from its heat; as for the sun, you need an umbrella to protect yourself from the heat of its rays.

Thus, the word ‘*an-nur*’ (light) denotes a light that is devoid of heat; in fact, heat is only generated if the light is coming from a light source. As for the moon, its light is not innate to it; rather, it merely reflects the light rays emitted by the sun. It is like a mirror which reflects any light that comes its way. The moon



shines but it is not the source of the light, whereas the sun produces its own light. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘It is He who made the sun a shining radiance (*diya’a*) and the moon a light (*an-Nur*)...’ (*Yunus*: 5).

As for the word ‘*diya’a*’ (a shining radiance), it can be considered as being singular—like ‘*sam*’ (to fast) ‘*siyama*’ (fasting) or ‘*qam*’ (to stand up) ‘*qiyama*’ (standing up) and similarly ‘*da*’ (to shine) ‘*diya’a*’ (shining); or it can also be considered as being plural—as in ‘*hawd*’ (basin) and ‘*hiyad*’ (basins) or ‘*rawd*’ (garden) and ‘*riyad*’ (gardens), and similarly, the plural of ‘*daw’a*’ (light) is ‘*diya’a*’ (lights). Therefore, the word ‘*diya’a*’ (a shining radiance) can be considered as being plural and singular. If this is the case, there must be a reason why the Most Eloquent cites this word in such a way that it allows for these multiple meanings. Before we discovered the secrets of sunlight, and before we subjected sunlight to our analyses, we simply used to say, ‘It is sunlight’. But after we analysed sunlight, we found the colours of the rainbow to be seven in number; it includes red light, green light, yellow light, and so on and so forth.

Thus, the word ‘*diya’a*’ (a shining radiance) refers to the plethora of colours that are contained in sunlight. If you consider ‘*diya’a*’ as the plural of ‘*daw’a*’—this brings out the connotation of the sunlight’s various colours; and if you consider ‘*diya’a*’ to be similar to ‘*qiyama*’ or ‘*siyam*’—this refers to the general meaning of the word ‘shining radiance’. That is why the Quran uses words which were suitable for the minds at the time it was revealed so as to avoid referring to phenomena whose scientific explanation they did not know. Had the Quran explicitly stated these facts, one of the contemporaries will have said, ‘The sun looks red when it sets, but looks yellow at midday’; this person did not realize that the redness of the sun that he perceived at sunset is due to the length of the red light waves. These red waves are only visible at sunset when the sun is at its furthest point from the earth, and only red light reaches us at that stage; the other colours are dispersed throughout the universe and do not reach us.

To conclude, the word ‘*diya’a*’ (a shining radiance) can be considered as being either plural, like ‘*sawt*’ whose plural is ‘*siyat*’, ‘*hawd*’ and its plural ‘*hiyad*’, or ‘*rawd*’ and its plural ‘*riyad*’, or as being singular. This latter serves the general meaning, whereas the former implies a more detailed analysis. This is

why Allah *Glorified is He* says in another verse: '*Exalted is He* who made constellations in the skies; and placed therein a radiant lamp (*as-siraj*) and a moon giving light' (*al-Furqan*: 61). '*As-siraj*' (radiant lamp) is that which emits light and radiates heat; and it is an appropriate description for the sun.

In the verse we are discussing here, the Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'It is He, who made the sun a shining radiance and the moon a light, determining phases for it (*qaddarahu*)...' (*Yunus*: 5); the word '*qaddarahu*' (determining phases for it) seems, at first look, to be related to the moon, but in reality the sun has its phases as well. Allah *Glorified is He* says '*qaddarahu*' because there is something called (the act of) 'rendering' or 'making' (referred to in the verse by the word '*ja'al*' (made)); thus, He has rendered the sun 'radiant', and has rendered the moon 'a light' (i.e. reflective).

As a result, the act of rendering concerns two things; Allah renders the sun to be radiant and He renders the moon to be a light. This '(act of) rendering' itself Allah renders in order for us to determine time; clearly, it is valid for both the sun and the moon—so that we might know the number of years and calculate time.

As for our religious rites, we are required to determine the beginning of the month of *Ramadan* in order to perform the religious rite of fasting; we also need to determine the months of the Hajj Pilgrimage. A woman, for example, also needs to determine the months of *idda* (the waiting period for a recently divorced woman or a recent widow). All of these calculations depend on the moon, for the latter is a sign clearly visible to all; the moon starts out small in the sky, swells into a full moon, and then gets smaller once again. 'We have determined phases for the moon until finally it becomes like an old date-stalk (*al-'urjun*)' (*Ya Sin*: 39). The word '*al-'urjun*' (date-stalk) in this verse is what we call '*as-subata*' which carries the '*shamarikh*' (date-palm panicles) of unripe dates. In the past, they used to make brooms out of these; these brooms were used to sweep the floors of houses in the countryside and in the mountains. In this simile, Allah alludes to the environment in which the ancient Arab used to live. In the beginning of every month, we can all perceive the new moon which heralds the commencement of the new month; in this manner, human beings learned to calculate the months based on the

mansions of the moon. Regarding the entire year, the Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘Allah decrees that there are twelve months—ordained in Allah's Book on the Day when He created the heavens and earth...’ (*at-Tawba*: 36).

In this case, the year is estimated at twelve lunar months. As for the day, it is determined by the sun; that is why the sun also enters into the calculations involving the phases of time. We see that the Lord *Glorified is He* willed to make ‘the rendering’ applicable to two issues; ‘the rendering’ of the sun, and ‘the rendering’ of the moon, as He confirms in this verse: ‘Determining phases for it so that you might know the number of years and how to calculate time. Allah did not create all these except in truth [and for a genuine purpose]’ (*Yunus*: 5).

The truth—as we have previously explained—is that which is ‘fixed’, permanent and unchanging. When we contemplate the paths traversed by the heavenly bodies, the path of the sun and the moon across the sky—we do not find any inconsistencies. Instead, we find that the observatories run by the unbelievers can predict the exact moment when the moon comes in between the earth and the sun, or when the earth will come in between the moon and the sun. This brings about the phenomena known as the solar eclipse and the lunar eclipse. These phenomena can be predicted with great accuracy. ‘The sun cannot overtake the moon, nor can the night precede the day: each float in [its own] orbit’ (*Ya Sin*: 40).

This sagacious statement corroborates one of the beliefs held by the Arabs but refuted by others. The Arabs used to think that the night preceded the day; in fact, the first night of Ramadan indicates the commencement of the month of fasting. And since they had determined that the night precedes the day, it follows that the day does not precede the night. When it comes to this widely agreed upon issue which was well known by the Arabs—that the day does not precede the night—the Quran does not say anything. However, the Quran denies the statement that the night precedes the day. The audience (the Arabs), therefore, were clearly of the opinion that the night precedes the day; and Allah corrects their conceptions by asserting that neither does the night precede the day, nor does the day precede the night.

That is why, in the Quran, Allah *Glorified is He* offers only a brief overview of natural phenomena because if He had presented a scientific explanation, the Arabs will have given the lie to the Quran. If the Quran were to plainly

state that the earth is spherical, people would have rejected this explanation the moment it was revealed. In fact, there are still some who deny this reality at the end of the twentieth century. That is why the Lord *Glorified is He* does not disclose all of the secrets of the natural world; rather, He merely alludes to them in a manner lucid enough to be accepted by the simple Arab.

The night does not precede the day, and the day does not precede the night—but how is this possible? We say, ‘Did Allah first create the sun facing the surface of the earth, and then the sun disappeared and gave way to the night?’ This will be correct if the earth were flat, however, the Lord *Glorified is He* created the earth as a sphere; and this signifies that Allah *Glorified is He* created the sun and the earth in such a way that both day and night occur simultaneously. This is only possible if the earth is spherical, where half of its surface is oriented towards the sun and is experiencing daytime, and the other half that is facing away from the sun is experiencing nighttime. At the same time, the earth is spinning, such that daytime comes to the portion that was experiencing nighttime, and nighttime comes to the portion that was experiencing daytime. As such, in the Holy Quran, the Lord speaks about the natural phenomena—which human minds then discovered long after the Quran had been revealed—and treats these matters wisely and accurately; for example, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘It is He who made the night and day follow each other (*khilfa*)...’ (*al-Furqan*: 62). The justification follows: ‘...so anyone who wishes may be mindful or show gratitude’ (*al-Furqan*: 62). That is, the night succeeds the day as the word ‘*khilfa*’ (follow each other) means that which succeeds or replaces something else. Let us take an example from our daily lives to explain this. Consider the patrols and the changing of the guards: we find that someone guards a certain location for a period of six hours, then when his shift is over, he passes the function on to a second guard. Clearly, one guard succeeds the other; but, who was the guard that worked the very first shift—before his replacement succeeded him? It is the same thing with night and day; the Lord *Glorified is He* states that night and day succeed each other. This means that, in the beginning, they were both present; and because the earth revolves around itself, daytime came to the land where the sun was rising, and nighttime came to the land where the sun was setting. From then on, they constantly succeeded one another. In this way, Allah *Glorified is He* elaborates

His ‘signs’ in nature for us; for this reason He *Glorified is He* says: ‘He explains His signs to those who have knowledge’ (*Yunus*: 5).

Next, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦﴾

**In the succession of night and day, and in what God created  
in the heavens and earth, there truly are signs for those who  
are aware of Him [6] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 6)**

By emphasizing the distinction between night and day, Allah *Glorified is He* confirms that they both were present in the beginning. To this He also adds: ‘...and in [all] that which Allah created in the heavens and earth...’ (*Yunus*: 6); for He *Glorified is He* created the universe and all the elements that serve as sustenance for life—food, water, air and so forth—then He subjected the entire universe to serve His vicegerent, that is, mankind.

If you look at these life-sustaining elements, you will find that they satisfy the most basic of needs, such as the need to breathe air, and the need to drink water and eat food; these are the most important elements that human beings require to ensure the continuation of life. Human beings can tolerate lack of food more than they can tolerate lack of water. They can also tolerate lack of water more than they can tolerate lack of air. In fact, a human being cannot even endure lack of air for as much time as it takes to inhale and exhale. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* has allowed the state of affairs to occur whereby the food destined for one group of people sometimes rests in the hands of another group of people because the human body can tolerate a dearth of food for up to a month, during which time the body draws on its internal fat reserves. The machines invented by human beings cannot resort to such measures; a car cannot traverse a distance of one meter without fuel, but the human body can tolerate a similar situation—in the hope that those who control the food supply decide to show some generosity or until the famished find a way to acquire sustenance. As for water, the Lord *Glorified is He* has willed that this resource be harder to monopolize by any one person or group of people because man’s need for water is more urgent than his need for food. And as

for breathing air (*nafas*), Allah *Glorified is He* has made it impossible for any one person to control the air because air is one of the basic necessities of life. Hence, the words '*an-nafs*' and '*nafs*' (soul) as well as '*nafas*' (breathing) are derived from this phrase referring to the breathing of air.

If you consider air, you will find that it is a factor that helps in maintaining everything in existence, from the firmness of the earth to the stability of the buildings resting upon its surface, and from the steadiness of towers to the fixedness of the mountains—all of this is thanks to air. This is because it is the air currents surrounding the sides of things which make them stable; if there were any air vacuums anywhere near these man-made and natural structures, they will immediately crumble. For this reason, air is what maintains equilibrium in the universe. That is why we have said, 'If you were to survey the expressions of the Quran, you will find that when Allah *Glorified is He* speaks of managing the winds, He is speaking with the precision of a Creator and with the accuracy of an infinitely Wise deity; for He sends forth the winds laden with mercy. The Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'We send the winds to fertilize...' (*al-Hijr*: 22)

But if wind in the singular is mentioned, then this implies a punishment; Allah *Glorified is He* says, for example: 'Ad was destroyed by a furious wind.' (*al-Haqqa*: 6) Similarly, He says: 'When they saw a cloud approaching their valley, they said, 'this cloud will give us rain!' 'No, indeed, it is what you wanted to hasten: a storm-wind bearing a painful punishment which will destroy everything by its Lord's Command...' (*al-Ahqaf*: 24-25).

When winds (plural) come from all directions, they balance each other as well as all living creatures (they meet); as for 'the wind' (in the singular), it comes from one specific direction resulting in it destroying all that lies in its path. Here, the Lord *Glorified is He* says: '...and in [all] that which Allah created in the heavens and earth...' (*Yunus*: 6) meaning that Allah combines the rest of creation in this single reference—and this is after mentioning the sun and the moon as two distinct 'signs'. In this way, He mentions the heavens and the earth and all the 'signs' that they contain, including thunder, lightning, clouds, stars and other elements of the created universe. All of this is contained in the expression: '...and in [all] that which Allah created in the heavens and earth' (*Yunus*: 6) because if Allah was to elaborate, He will have to detail a plethora of

‘signs’ and bounties. It is Allah, indeed, who says: ‘If you tried to count Allah’s favors, you could never calculate them’ (*Ibrahim*: 34).

The Quran was not meant to be an encyclopaedia of everything in the universe; rather, it is a Book that holds a Doctrine. It is indeed remarkable that Allah uses the conditional particle ‘*in*’ (if) which expresses doubt in His Saying: ‘And if (*in*) you count one Blessing of Allah, never will you be able to understand it [all]’ (*Ibrahim*: 34) because no matter how much knowledge a person may acquire, it remains impossible for him to fully conceive or enumerate the unlimited blessings that Allah has placed in the universe. Normally, to start the act of counting means that a full enumeration is theoretically feasible; however, in this case, a full enumeration of Allah’s Blessings in the universe is impossible. That is the reason why the particle ‘*in*’ is used, instead of the particle ‘*idha*’ (meaning ‘if’ and denoting high probability) because the former indicates doubt.

What is even more remarkable is that the act of ‘enumeration’ involves repetition; and, in the context at hand, Allah does not merely say: ‘And if you count the Blessings of Allah....’ Rather, He uses the singular ‘*ni‘ma*’ (Blessing). Indeed, if you examine a single Blessing, you will find that in reality it contains thousands of Blessings that cannot be counted. The Lord concludes the verse by saying: ‘...in [all] that which Allah created in the heavens and earth, there truly are signs (*ayat*) for those who fear Him and guard themselves [from doing evil]’ (*Yunus*: 6). The Arabic word sign (‘*aya*’, plural: ‘*ayat*’) can have one of three meanings: it can either refer to the verses of the Quran, to a miraculous sign or wonder that supports the veracity of a Messenger of Allah, or to the wondrous, awe-inspiring ‘signs’—clearly perceivable in the universe—which speak of the Greatness of Allah *the Glorious and Exalted*.

Allah has created these ‘signs’ to turn your attention to the Maker of these ‘signs’. Orienting our gaze toward the Maker of these signs is necessary if humans want to be harmoniously integrated with the surrounding universe that has been created for their sake. After this, nothing can disturb this harmony. Suppose that a human leads an easy, relaxing life on earth, but then he faces a miserable, difficult Afterlife; what benefit has he derived from this? Thus, anything that is ephemeral in nature cannot be considered a permanent

blessing. A blessing should give you lasting enjoyment, with a certainty that it will never abandon you nor will you abandon it. No matter how long a human being lives, eventually any worldly gifts will expire and leave the person, or the person will expire and leave them behind.

The Lord *Glorified is He* looks after those who are willing to develop the virtue of Allah-consciousness so that they may attain the eternal blessings and delights which neither expire nor are left behind. They must contemplate the signs in the universe. By contemplating the signs of the universe carefully, people achieve two objectives. The first is that they benefit from what Allah has created, and the second is that they realize that Allah has created this world as means to an end, as a bridge and a passageway to something greater. Allah has created this life to be lived by employing means, but after life on earth, He wants to bring mankind into an eternal life in His Company, where ends are not reached by means but are given directly from Allah, the Maker of all means and causes. Those who are consciously aware of Allah are those who pay attention to Allah's Signs and Messages. Whereas those who live unconscious of Allah pay no regard to the signs they see in the universe. Such people allow things to pass them by in life without taking any notice of them. As Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* says: 'And how many signs in the heavens and the earth do they pass by? Yet they give no heed to them' (*Yusuf*: 105). They fail to open their eyes to the visible signs in the universe which the Lord has placed before them — signs that speak of the Glory and the Greatness of Allah. Therefore, they have a lukewarm attitude towards the life of the Hereafter, and are careless about guarding against the punishment of the next world.

Then Allah says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَأَنَّنُوا  
بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ ﴿٧﴾

**Those who do not expect to meet Us and are pleased with the life of this world, contenting themselves with it and paying no heed to Our signs [7] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 7)**

The Arabic word '*raja*' (hope) means to want something which is desirable and possible to obtain. On the other hand, the Arabic word '*tamanni*' (wish) is



to want something which is desirable but impossible to obtain. However, one can still express such a wish, no matter how distant and improbable it may be. As a poet once said:

If only youth would return for but one day

That I may tell it what old age has done

The poet is saying that youth is something that is loved and highly desirable. But will youth ever return? Of course not, Thus '*tamanni*' refers to hoping for something that is highly desirable but unlikely or impossible to occur. As another poet said:

How I wish that the shining stars would draw near me, that I could arrange them

Into necklaces of honour, for I am not content presenting you [with just] my words

This is also impossible. As for '*raja*'', it means to want something which is highly desirable and is likely or at least possible to happen. Here, in this context, Allah says: 'Verily, those who do not hope (*raja*') to meet Us...' (*Yunus*: 7) which presents the question: why do they not hope to meet their Lord? It is because those who hope to meet their Lord have prepared themselves for this meeting. They have consecrated their lives to doing good works and therefore they are destined to reap their reward once they meet Allah. As for the one who has not acted in a way that entitles him to rewards, and who has acted in a way deserving of punishment—how can such a person hope to meet his Lord? Indeed, he will not be looking forward to this meeting.

For instance, a person who dies a martyr and so sacrifices his own soul, which is the dearest thing to him, such a person does this only because he is absolutely certain that, for having sacrificed himself by dying for Allah's Cause, he will receive a reward that will be infinitely better than what he left behind in his worldly life.

Hence, a person who wishes to meet His Lord is he who prepares himself for this meeting. He accomplishes this by obeying Allah's Commands and avoiding His Prohibitions. Any human lives through manifold events in his life. These events, measured by the correct and true criteria, fall into one of

two categories: good deeds or sins. Everyone is aware of the good deeds which he has performed, as well as of any sins he has committed. Nobody can fool himself. Yet, as long as one is still alive, false hope may cause a person to deceive himself and think he has done nothing but good deeds in this life.

But when a person experiences his last moments before death, all of the pages of his life will run before his eyes. If his life was good, the signs of joy can be seen on his face. And if his life was bad, the signs of bitterness can be seen on his face. That is why we often hear the expression, 'so-and-so's end was abominable, and so-and-so's end was joyful'. There is much truth in this expression; for after the soul has been pulled out of the body, the body remains in the state that it assumed when the soul was departing the body. If the face was smiling and rejoicing, this means that the deceased caught a glimpse of the good that is in store for him.

In the final moments before death, a person can no longer lie to himself. When a person falls sick, he merely rests and hopes that his health will be restored. However, at the moment of death, a person's past life flashes quickly before his eyes and all his actions are shown to him. If the person has led a virtuous life, he rejoices and becomes serene because he looks forward to the reward that awaits him. It is the same thing with a hard-working student when they tell him that someone has come with his final grades; the student rushes confidently towards the person to hear his grades. But if the student is not hard working, he does not answer the call and prefers to shy away from the bearer of the bad news.

Similarly, those who look forward to their meeting with Allah have made extensive preparations for this meeting. They await their reward from Allah. As for those who do not work towards a happy Afterlife, they are afraid and reluctant to meet their Lord; '...but are pleased and satisfied with the life of the present world' (*Yunus*: 7). It is as though they had satisfied themselves with the pleasures of their life on earth and failed to look ahead to the Hereafter. The name by which Allah calls the life of this world should urge us to adopt a detached attitude towards it—He calls it '*al-hayat ad-dunya*' (literally 'the lower life'). Indeed, there cannot be a more denigrating description of the worldly life than this; and the opposite of '*al-hayat ad-dunya*' (the lower earthly life) is '*al-hayat al-'ulya*' (the higher heavenly life).

A human may wonder about the age of the earth and say that the earth has been around for tens or hundreds of millions of years, yet he may not realize that as far as he is concerned; the life of the world is restricted to the span of his own life. Thus, as far as you are concerned, this world is the duration of your own life on earth, and not the real age of the earth itself from the day of its creation until the Day of Judgment. What benefit will you get from the earth when your life has already come to an end? The age of this world for every human being is his own life-span. The duration of human life-span is merely conjecture and is uncertain. A human could die while still in his mother's womb or he could die while still one month old. On the other hand, he could live to see a hundred. But anyone who is content and satisfies himself with something that is so uncertain must be short-sighted indeed. Therefore, listen to the Quran when it says: '...Are you pleased with the life of this world rather than the Hereafter? But little is the enjoyment of the life of this world compared with the Hereafter' (*at-Tawba*: 38).

Even if you measure the age of the earth, beginning from its creation right up until the Day of Judgment, you will see that it is also ephemeral. Since this is the nature of this worldly life, and since all that it offers is a few fleeting pleasures, then the one who feels secure in this world and is satisfied with its transient pleasures is evidently heedless. That is why the Lord ends the verse by saying: '...those who are heedless of Our Signs (*Ayat*)' (*Yunus*: 7). This stands in contrast to what Allah says about those who recognize the value of working for the Hereafter. Concerning them, the Lord says: 'In [all] that which Allah created in the heavens and earth, there truly are signs (*ayat*) for those who fear Him and guard themselves [from doing evil]' (*Yunus*: 6).

The Arabic word '*ghaflah*' (negligence and heedlessness) denotes that one is unaware of the meaning of something. So long as a person understands meanings, there will always be vigilance and forgetfulness will be kept at bay. Accordingly, '*ghaflah*' denotes that one is unaware of the meaning of something and '*yaqaza*' (wakefulness) is when a meaning remains fixed in the mind and heart.

As we know, the centre of one's consciousness captures any information that is received by the human mind, just as cameras capture images. Take care not to think that a human being learns a piece of information by having it

repeated over and over again. All minds capture any piece of information at first sight. Essentially, a person differs from another in his/her capacity to receive the piece of information with a clear, receptive state of mind because the centre of one's consciousness, or of one's perception can only capture a single piece of information at a time. Then this information lodges in the back of the mind, allowing a new piece of information to be captured and stored in its turn. Now, if you are exposed to a piece of information, but the centre of your consciousness is busy with something else, the information fails to register. That is why you sometimes have to read a sentence over and over again until the incoming piece of information coincides with a moment of clarity and receptivity at the centre of your consciousness. For example, consider the student who is trying to memorize a poem. If his mind was ready to receive the poem, he will memorize it after the first reading.


The human mind is like a photocopying machine. That is why the Lord *the Exalted* says: 'Allah has not put for any man two hearts inside his body...' (*al-'Ahzab*: 4); if you want to receive some piece of information, be sure to clear your mind of all other things that preoccupy you in order for the new piece of information to find a receptive centre of consciousness and as a result become instilled therein.

A successful teacher is the one who manages to capture the attention of all his students; and as long as all the attention is focused on him, every word that he utters will be absorbed by his students. There is a sharp contrast between such a successful teacher and a poor teacher whose teaching style is mundane and whose rhetoric is weak and fails to attract the students. The successful teacher not only captivates the interest of his students, but he also often interrupts his presentation to ask the students what he has just told the class. As a result, the students pay close attention to him, because every one of them expects to be asked about the last piece of information that has been said. A successful student is the one who reads his lessons with the aim that he will discuss and analyse their content, and he concentrates well while reading. As for a weak student, he reads his lessons without much attentiveness or presence of mind.

Another example is a farmer who sleeps on the edge of a watering well. He does not fall into the well because even during his sleep, he remains aware of the risk that if he rolls to one side, he will fall into the well. The same thing

applies to two brothers who sleep together on the same bed. Each gets up in the morning while being aware of the physical presence of the other. But if he were to sleep on a separate bed, he will wake up to find his head in one place and his feet in another. This process is known as the retention of information and alertness, even while one is asleep. A person can be described as being ‘*yaqizh*’ (vigilant); it expresses the state of being aware. Semantically, it is opposite to the word ‘*na'im*’ (asleep). To be ‘vigilant’ is to maintain a state of consciousness and awareness.


Thus, heedlessness refers to a person being totally unaware of the meaning of something, or the blurring of this meaning. Those who pass by signs but are heedless of them will not derive the slightest benefit from such signs. In the Hereafter, they will finally confront the outcome of their heedlessness. Regarding such people, Allah says:


 أُولَٰئِكَ مَا لَهُمْ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

**Shall have the Fire for their home because of what they used to do [8] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 8)**

Usually, when you say: ‘I went to my abode’, you are referring to a place in which you seek protection from the outside world. Here the Lord says: ‘Their abode will be the Fire...’ (*Yunus*: 8). If hellfire will be their ‘shelter’ and their ‘resting place’, this means that what lies beyond hellfire will cause them even more suffering. They will seek shelter in the hellfire: ‘...because of what they used to earn’ (*Yunus*: 8), that is, because of the sins and bad deeds they committed.

After this, the Lord says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ  
 بِإِيمَانِهِمْ تَجْرَىٰ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ
 

**But as for those who believe and do good deeds, their Lord will guide them because of their faith. Streams will flow at their feet in the Gardens of Bliss [9] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 9)**

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* is speaking about the opposite group—those who believed. He informs us that: ‘Their Lord will guide them because of their Faith’ (*Yunus*: 9).

As we have previously stated, the word '*hidaya*' (guidance) means to be guided to goodness, which is contained in the Doctrine which the Lord has sent us in which He made clear the different paths that lie before the believer and the unbeliever. Those who respond to Allah with belief obtain additional guidance from Allah in the form of making the obligations of obedience easy for them. Allah, by His Grace, also increases the believer's state of guidance even more. That is why Allah says: 'And seek help through patience and Prayer, and indeed, it is extremely difficult except for the humbly submissive (to Allah)' (*al-Baqara*: 45). Thus the believer loves to take on the hardships of worship. As a result, the Lord *the Exalted* makes these duties easy for His slave and allows him to savour the sweetness of worship. This way, the difficulties of obedience are alleviated, and Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* constantly helps His slave as well.

Allah says: 'Verily, those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, their Lord will guide them because of their Faith...' (*Yunus*: 9).

Since they have believed, Allah provides them with the principles that serve them well in their life on earth and also benefit them in their Afterlife. Another way of interpreting this verse is that the guidance does not pertain to life on earth; rather, it pertains to the Hereafter. That is, since they have believed, they have thereby accepted the Laws of Allah, have acted upon them, and performed righteous works. For this reason, the Lord *the Exalted* guides them to the road that leads to paradise. That is why the Lord says: 'On the Day when you (Prophet Muhammad) see the believers, both men and women, with their light running forward ahead of them and to their right...' (*al-Hadid*: 12).

Allah *Glorified is He* also says: 'On a Day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet [Muhammad] or those who have believed with him. Their light will run forward ahead of them and to their right...' (*at-Tahrim*: 8). That is, their 'light' glows in front of them. As for the hypocrites, Allah relates that they will say to those who have believed: 'Wait for us! Let us borrow some of your light!' The same verse states that they will be told: 'Go back and look for a light' (*al-Hadid*: 13). That is, this is no longer the time to ask for light. The time to ask for light was in the worldly life, by following Allah's Doctrine and performing good deeds. Thus, the Lord *the Exalted* bestows light upon light on the believers in the Hereafter.

The verse we are discussing refers to guidance in this world as well as guidance in the next. And then the Lord *Glorified is He* describes the state of the believers in the Hereafter, saying: ‘...under them will flow rivers in Gardens of bliss (Paradise)’ (*Yunus*: 9).

As we have previously said, paradise lies on the banks of rivers. It derives its greenery from water. Wherever you see running water, you will most certainly find greenery. Paradise does not refer to just the dwellings, as is evident in Allah’s Words: ‘...good, peaceful homes in Gardens of lasting bliss’ (*at-Tawba*: 72). Also, in another place the Lord says: ‘...Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise)’ (*at-Tawba*: 100).

And in another place He says: ‘...Gardens from beneath which rivers run’ (*al-Baqara*: 25). Allah gives us numerous descriptions of the water there, which shall never run out. Water in paradise is self-emanating and will never cease to flow.

Then the True Lord says:

دَعَوْنَهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ وَءَاخِرُ  
دَعْوَانَهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

**Their prayer in them will be, ‘Glory be to You, God!’ their greeting, ‘Peace,’ and the last part of their prayer, ‘Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds’ [10] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 10)**

The Arabic word ‘*da‘wahum*’ means ‘their invocations’. Here, a question presents itself, ‘Is the Hereafter a place of duties and responsibilities, where one must continue to worship Allah and keep fulfilling religious obligations?’ No, the worship in paradise takes the form of pleasure. Every time the dwellers of paradise experience something in it, they will say, ‘We have tasted this before’. Then, after eating the fruits of paradise, they will realize that although these fruits bear some resemblance to the fruits of the earth, they are not the same as them. The Quran says: ‘Whenever they are given sustenance from the fruits of these Gardens, they will say, “We have been given this before” because they were provided with something that resembles them’ (*al-Baqara*: 25).

Or they will exclaim: ‘Glory be to You, O Allah!’ (*Yunus*: 10) in recognition and gratitude to Allah, It is true that whenever you see something beautiful that arouses your admiration, it prompts you to say, ‘Glory be to You, O Allah!’ And after receiving some blessing and you say, ‘Glory be to You, O Allah!’ you are surprised by things you did not expect. Their extreme beauty make you exclaim, ‘All praise be to Allah’. That is, you receive the blessings by saying, ‘Glory be to You, O Allah!’ and after receiving the blessings, your invocation closes with the words, ‘All praise be to Allah’. That is why the Lord says: ‘...and their invocation will close with, “Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds”’ (*Yunus*: 10). Indeed, what gives life its meaning—what gives it a taste and imparts to it a sense of security and stability—is when a person is at peace (*salam*). The meaning of peace is the feeling of tranquillity, satisfaction, and contentment, without agitations or disturbances of any kind. This can only be achieved when there is no clashing between the faculties of the soul, which brings peace within oneself, peace with one’s family—this is the second level of peace—peace with one’s society, and peace with the whole world. All this is called peace. In other words, there are no disturbances coming from oneself, one’s family, one’s community, or the world at large; the wider the circle of peace, the greater the feeling of tranquillity.

Allah says: ‘Their greeting therein will be, “Peace”...’ (*Yunus*: 10), and ‘peace’ occurs several times in the Quran. The Lord says: ‘The people of Paradise that day will be occupied enjoying themselves—they and their spouses—seated on couches in the shade. There they have fruit and whatever they ask for. (It will be said to them): “Peace”, a Word from the Merciful Lord’ (*Ya Sin*: 55-58).

This is the ‘peace’ that is truly meaningful; it is peace bestowed by Allah Himself. Allah has not just said, ‘You shall have peace that shall fill you with tranquillity and make your soul contented’; rather, Allah greets you with the word, ‘Peace’. Imagine the happiness of hearing the Lord *the Exalted* address you directly. There is great a difference between Allah instilling peace in your soul, and the peaceful, rejuvenating effect that His direct Salutation of Peace has on you. This is the reason why Allah says: ““Peace”, a Word from the Merciful Lord...” (*Ya Sin*: 58). This is a greeting of peace from Allah. Next in



honour is the greeting of peace from the angels: ‘...and angels shall enter unto them from every gate (saying), “Peace be upon you...”’ (*ar-Ra’d*: 23-24).

Therefore, in the saying of the Lord: ‘Their greeting therein will be, “Peace”...’ (*Yunus*: 10), we find that the word peace stands for contentment and tranquility in paradise. One of the foremost feelings that everyone loves to have inside themselves is peace, even though everyone may be against you. However, when you calm your emotions and ask yourself, ‘What have I done for certain people to be against me?’ And when you answer yourself, ‘I have not done anything but good’; this means that you feel peace inside of you. And when others welcome and appreciate your actions, life runs smoothly, and all contradictions and all grudges disappear. This is why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* once said, ‘A man from the people of Paradise will now come towards you’.<sup>(1)</sup> Then a man entered, well known by most of the Companions. After the man left, one of the Companions got up and approached him to find out what was the special thing he used to do. He asked the man, ‘What is it that you do that makes Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* give you the glad tidings of entering Paradise?’ The Companion found the behaviour of the man to be righteous, and his lifestyle conformed to the Sunnah, but there were no any noticeable extra deeds. Therefore, the Companion asked him why the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had given him the glad tidings of Paradise? The man replied, ‘By Allah, I pray as you pray. I fast as you fast. I pay the poor-due as you pay it. However, when I go to bed at night, my heart holds no grudges against anyone’.

This is inner peace. Once a person achieves this state, the world can no longer harm him, even if the entire world rises against him. After this state, a person’s peace with Allah is guaranteed. Any person who is at peace with himself, with his environment and with his community—such a person receives peace from Allah *the Exalted*. Regarding those who will face a grave predicament on the Day of Judgment, the Quran says: ‘and when that Day comes, no soul will speak except by His Permission; some of them will be

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(1) Narrated on the authority of Anas ibn Malik

wretched and some happy' (*Hud*: 105). The wretched ones shall be in great difficulties in the hellfire. As for the happy ones, they shall be in paradise. But what about those who are neither among the wretched nor among the happy, namely, the people of *al-A`raf* (the Heights)? On the Day of Resurrection people will fall into one of three categories. Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* says: 'The one whose good deeds are heavy on the scales will have a pleasant life, but the one whose good deeds are light will have the Bottomless Pit for his home' (*al-Qari`ah*: 6-9). The Lord *the Exalted* does not tell us about those whose scales—one measuring good deeds and the other measuring bad deeds—balance each other; He says in a Qudsi Hadith: 'Verily, My Mercy prevails over My Wrath'.<sup>(1)</sup>

Allah gives us a description of His Mercy (towards those in Paradise) when He says: 'The people of Paradise will cry out to the people of the Fire, "We have found what our Lord promised us to be true. Have you found what your Lord promised you to be true?" They will answer, "Yes". And a voice will proclaim from their midst, "Allah's Curse (hangs) over the evildoers"' (*al-A`raf*: 44).

After that comes the mention of the people of *al-A`raf*; Allah *the Exalted* says concerning them: 'A barrier divides the two groups, with men on its heights recognizing each group by their marks' (*al-A`raf*: 46). The people of *al-A`raf* will recognize the believers by their characteristic marks and the disbelievers by their characteristic marks. They will be sitting waiting on the Heights (between Paradise and Hell). They will look at the people of Paradise and say: "'Peace be upon you!"—not having entered it themselves, but longing (to enter it)' (*al-A`raf*: 46).

After that the Lord presents to us another vivid picture, saying: 'The people of the Fire will call to the people of Paradise, "Give us some water, or any of the sustenance Allah has granted you!" And they will reply, "Allah has forbidden both to the disbelievers"' (*al-A`raf*: 50). From this we can see that the people of *al-A`raf* are happy to witness Allah showering His Gifts upon the people of paradise; and they too yearn for Allah's Forgiveness.

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(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (Book of Authentic Hadiths) (3194) and by Muslim in his *Sahih* (2751)

In our own lives, we hear stories from prison guards who say that, before the death sentence is pronounced on a prisoner, the latter tends to lose weight. But after the sentence is issued, the prisoner gains weight. This is because the matter has finally been settled for him. In the Hereafter, such category of people who will be busy wondering where they will be placed, whether paradise or hell, will not forget to say to the believers: ‘Peace be upon you...’ (*al-A’raf*: 46). And their invocation will close with: ‘Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds!’

In the chapter we are discussing, the Lord *the Exalted* says regarding the people of paradise: ‘...their greeting therein will be, “Peace”. And their invocation will close with, “Praise to Allah, Lord of the Worlds!”’ (*Yunus*: 10) The part that says: ‘Their invocation will close with’ could mean their last words. For one of them could say, ‘I used to praise our Lord for such-and-such a thing and for such-and-such a thing. But the last praise is really the ultimate praise’. They used to praise Allah for the blessings of this world which are transient, but then, in the Hereafter, they will praise Him for the blessings that are eternal. Such praise for blessings that are eternal is the ultimate praise.

Then the True Lord says:

وَلَوْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ الشَّرَّ اسْتَعَجَّلَ لَهُم بِالْخَيْرِ لَقَضَىٰ إِلَيْهِمْ أَجْلَهُمْ  
فَنَذَرُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١١﴾

**If God were to hasten on for people the harm [they have earned] as they wish to hasten on the good, their time would already be up. But We leave those who do not expect to meet Us to wander blindly in their excesses [11] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 11)**

This glorious verse speaks about a doctrinal issue that is likely a central concern when supplicating Allah. It is how sometimes, despite copious supplications, some people may feel that Allah does not answer them, and they become sad and confused about why Allah did not grant them their requests. Some of them may even fall into despair. To anyone who thinks this way, I say, ‘No; the case is that you supplicate, and at times you supplicate for good things and at other times you supplicate for bad things. Now if Allah *the Exalted* were to answer all your supplications in the way you wish, He will grant you your evil

requests as well as your good requests. And if Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* were to hasten for you the evil you ask for as Allah hastens for you the good, you will have been devastated and your life will have quickly come to an end’.

The Quran relates the words of taunt that some disbelievers of Quraysh said, invoking Allah: ‘O Allah, if this really is the Truth from You, then rain stones on us from the heavens, or send us some other painful punishment’ (*al-Anfal*: 32). Had the Lord *the Exalted* answered such a supplication, it will have been disastrous for those who had uttered it. Clearly, it is in your best interest that Allah does not answer your supplication when you invoke evil upon yourself or upon someone or something. You have to understand that Allah *the Most High* responds wisely. He *the Most High* is far above acting as an employee of His creation. Anyone who supplicates for something shall have an answer from Allah *Glorified is He*. However, it is Allah Who decides the manner and the time of the answer. If the matter were otherwise, Divinity will become reallocated from Allah to the slaves.

The Lord *the Exalted* protects His slaves by closely monitoring what they supplicate for. You may think that the outcomes of your supplication will surely be good for you, but the Lord’s Overseeing Knowledge that has embraced all things since pre-eternity tells you, ‘No’. If answered, this supplication will not result in any good. Rather, expect that goodness comes to you by not having your supplication answered, as Allah says in the Quran: ‘You may dislike something although it is good for you, or like something although it is bad for you; Allah knows and you do not’ (*al-Baqara*: 216). Thus, your own knowledge is not the ultimate judge of what is good and what is bad; therefore, leave it to *the Most High* Lord—Who is your Trustworthy Guardian—to either answer or not answer your supplication. For although you might be under the impression that what you are praying for is good, nevertheless, Allah’s Absolute Knowledge is the ultimate judge of what is good and what is evil. When Allah withholds something from you, this very withholding (unanswered supplication) could be a gift in itself. That is why the Lord says: ‘And man supplicates for evil as he supplicates for good; man is ever hasty’ (*al-Isra*’: 11).

You might persistently beseech Allah to grant you a particular request, which, if granted, might result in bad consequences for you. Almighty Allah

knows what is good for you. Sometimes He grants the requests of some of His slaves which they have very desperately asked for only to discover latter that what they asked for was not good at all. And sometimes Allah grants you something which you thought was bad for you, but then you discover that it contains much good. Clearly, the Lord, in His Wisdom, rectifies that which human beings freely choose for themselves.

The Quran narrates how the disbelievers tried to taunt Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* by saying: ‘O Allah, if this really is the Truth from You, then rain stones on us from the heavens, or send us some other painful punishment’ (*al-Anfal*: 32). These words were uttered by Al-‘As ibn Wa’il As-Sahmi, Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira, al-Aswad ibn ‘Abd Al-Muttalib, and Al-Aswad ibn ‘Abd Yahud. These men reached the point when they started to make wild accusations. The first wild accusation was that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was a magician, but all the while they failed to recognize the absurdity of such an accusation. This is because if Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had the power of magic, then why did he not also put a spell on these disbelievers for them to become believers? The second wild accusation was that they labelled the Quran as poetry or that it had the character of poetry or rhymed prose. This is not true about the Quran. Had such an accusation been made by any other group of people, perhaps they could be excused to some degree, given that they were not well versed in the Arabic language. However, these people belonged to a community that had a gift for language and were expert in the art of eloquent speech. In fact, they used to set up regular gatherings for poetry and oratory competitions. And these people made a third wild accusation when, even though they acknowledged the grandeur of the Quran, they tried to defame the honourable status of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying: ‘Why was this Quran not sent down to a distinguished man from either of the two cities?’<sup>(1)</sup> (*az-Zukhruf*: 31)

Whenever the Lord speaks with regards to a specific incident that occurred during the time of Prophet Muhammad and involved the disbelievers at the time, He does not simply treat the matter as an isolated event. Rather, He

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(1) The two cities referred to here are Mecca and At-Ta’if.

addresses the universal significance of such events for all times until the Day of Resurrection. The specific circumstantial factors of the event are merely causal because Allah is interested in the broader principles that are involved, which are applicable to all times and all places. If this was not the case, these events will only be relevant to the specific persons that were involved, and the judgments that were made on the matter will only apply to a few select people, who were Prophet Mohammad's contemporaries. In essence, the Quran is a revelation to all mankind, and its principles shall continue to resonate throughout the ages. Any matter that was presented to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* must have been for a specific reason; however, the moral implications of the incident transcend the specifics of the event.

Thus, starting from a particular incident in which certain people said certain things, Allah *the Exalted* brings out the broader implications that will retain their relevance until the Final Hour. These people uttered the following supplication against themselves: 'O Allah, if this really is the Truth from You, then rain stones on us from the heavens, or send us some other painful punishment' (*al-Anfal*: 32).

Similarly, the people of `Ad said to Hud *peace be upon him*: 'You have come to us that we should worship Allah Alone and forsake that which our fathers used to worship. So bring us that wherewith you have threatened us if you are of the truthful' (*al-A'raf*: 70). That is, these people invoked evil upon themselves.

Allah uses this incident to illustrate a principle of supplications, whether it is for good or bad. A human, on account of various circumstances affecting him directly or indirectly, can become distressed. Helpless feelings regarding some kind of personal physical affliction, such as an illness or a handicap that is no longer bearable, can make one say, 'O Lord, relieve me of this suffering'. In saying this, he is asking for death. If Allah *the Exalted* were to answer his supplication, this person's life will immediately end. But Allah is *the Almighty* the Wise. He does not take orders from any of His creation nor is He rushed because of the impatience of those who expect immediate answers. Just as Allah defers His Answer to your supplications when you ask for something good, He also defers the granting of your request when you ask for something bad; and this is a Mercy from Allah *the Exalted*.

Consequently, if you say, ‘I supplicate Allah for good things, but Allah does not respond to my pleas’, consider the alternative situation, that is, when you invoke misfortune upon yourself and Allah does not answer you. It also happens that a father sometimes gets fed up with all those around him and says, ‘Please Allah, end my life and take me away from them’. Suppose that Allah were to grant him his wish; what will happen? We might also find someone who says, ‘O Lord, strike me blind so that I may never lay eyes on them again’; or a mother might supplicate against herself or her children, and so on.

All of you wish that Allah will answer your every supplication; but if He were to answer your supplications for harm, injury or misfortune, your lives will end horribly. An example is this mother who utters contradictory supplications, where she says to her son, for instance, ‘O Allah, water me with his fire’. She is asking to be watered with fire, even though watering pertains to plants, and fire pertains to heat. Therefore, at times a person may get annoyed at himself or those around him, and as a result he prays that something bad should happen to him. When a person makes such supplications, one needs to be aware that the Lord is far above granting a request that contradicts His Divine Wisdom. ‘And were Allah to hasten for mankind the evil (they invoke for themselves and for their children etc., while in a state of anger) as He hastens for them the good (they invoke), they will have been ruined...’ (*Yunus*: 11). To sum up, just as you wish that Allah defers your supplications for something bad, resign yourselves to His Decision when He defers your supplications for something good, The good that you perceive in the matters of life is not as Allah perceives and knows; for He is the All-Aware and All Knowing. You might supplicate for something which you think is good, but Allah knows that it is actually harmful. For such a reason, it is in your interest that He does not answer your supplication. And just as you respect His Decision not to answer your supplication for something bad—directed either at yourself or at someone you love—then respect His Decision not to answer your supplication concerning something which you think is good, whether it be for you or for someone you love. For Allah can never be ‘rushed’ merely on account of His slave’s short-sighted urgency. He is your Creator, and He knows what is best for you. He is the One Who says: ‘Man is a creature of haste...’ (*al-Anbiya*: 37).

He also says: 'I will soon show you My signs, so do not ask Me to hasten them' (*al-Anbiya'*: 37).

Moreover, if the Lord were to answer the supplication of those who invoked Him: 'O Allah, if this really is the Truth from You, then rain stones on us from the heavens, or send us some other painful punishment...' (*al-Anfal*: 32), this will have spelled their end. They will have been annihilated in the manner which they had determined; then their final destination will be the torment of Hellfire. But the Lord willed that they should live for those who will choose belief might become believers.

As for those who choose disbelief, they must face the consequences of their tyranny. Because one does not choose to be simply a disbeliever; rather, one oversteps the limits and asks those who have attained to faith to renounce their belief. This constitutes a transgression of the limits, which causes the disbelievers to wander blindly through their unjust course. They become overwhelmed by events and circumstances. Eventually, it is proved, both to them and to those who come after them, that disbelief is powerless. It can never withstand the Power of the Truth.

There are many examples of this in our lives—although Allah is beyond comparison. For instance, a person could gain dominion over his enemy and hit him, yet he refrains from killing him. Then more assaults come from this enemy, and so he hits him again. Then further assaults ensue, but he only hits his enemy and never kills him, to keep him under perpetual humiliation. The strong does not kill his foe. He instead just hurts him for his foe not to raise his head again.

Allah *the Exalted* says: 'So We leave those who do not believe that they will meet Us in their transgressions, wandering blindly, stumbling to and fro' (*Yunus*: 11). That is, the Lord abandons the followers of falsehood to their own ways, letting them gather more and more sins for them to reap the woeful consequences of their enmity towards Islam and consequently dare not raise their heads. Because the followers of Islam will respond to their assaults two-fold. The proponents of falsehood will most certainly despair and realize that they cannot in any way be victorious over the armies of the Truth. No matter what strategies they adopt in their attempts to get the better of Islam, you will find that the Lord *the Exalted* always grants victory to the Muslims.



We can find an example of this in the biography of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* when the Lord *the Exalted* ordered him to emigrate from Mecca to Medina. The disbelievers had sent the strongest young men from the different tribes to completely besiege Prophet Mohammad's house, but the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* still managed to escape unperceived. Before leaving, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Let these faces be disgraced'. The Lord willed this for them to realize that they were incapable of defeating Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* whether through direct confrontation or through cunning and planning.

After that, Allah *the Exalted* says:

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنْبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَائِمًا فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ  
كَأَن لَّمْ يَدْعُنَا إِلَى ضُرِّ مَسَّهُ كَذَلِكَ زِينٌ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

**When trouble befalls man he cries out to Us, whether lying on his side, sitting, or standing, but as soon as We relieve him of his trouble he goes on his way as if he had never cried out to Us to remove his trouble. In this way the deeds of such heedless people are made attractive to them [12] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 12)**

Here Allah *the Exalted* describes the state of the humans who do not attach themselves permanently to Allah and do not commit themselves to His Doctrine. They are those who turn to Allah in times of crisis, but after the crisis is over, they quickly lose their faith and forget about their religious obligations. Our lives are full of this type of people.

For example, in my village there used to be a barber-surgeon who used to tend to people's physical health until one day one of the young men from the village graduated from medical school. The barber-surgeon began to disparage him. But one day the farmers noticed that the barber-surgeon had left his work early while carrying a large cloth in his arms. They wanted to know what was inside the cloth. They found out that the barber-surgeon's son was sick, and the barber-surgeon was taking him to see the doctor. That is, in the end he could not deceive himself, although he tried to dissuade the other villagers from going to the doctor by spreading malicious rumours about him.

The same is true for man's relationship with Allah. He might be able to deceive others when his life is running smoothly and everything is going well, but he cannot forget about Allah when he is going through difficult times. When the person experiences trying times and stands bereft of all means of support, his only succour are the words, 'O Lord'. In moments of hardships, you will find that even the most prolific sinners or the most intransigent rebels turn to Allah. This is what the Lord is saying here: 'When trouble befalls a man he cries out to Us, whether lying on his side...' (*Yunus*: 12).

An example of this can be seen in the lives of those disbelievers who supplicated against themselves when they taunted Prophet Muhammad. Even if we suppose that their wish to end to their own lives was genuine, why should they supplicate to Allah when they have openly professed their disbelief in Him? It is a blatant lie. It is possible that when a person is passing through hard times, he supplicates against himself. As the poet Al-Mutanabbi said:

It is a sufficient affliction that you regard death as a healer

And enough for death that it becomes your utmost desire

The lines mean that it is miserable enough for a person to reach the point where death becomes a desire.

In the Quran, we find that the Lord gives numerous descriptions of the human in difficult times. Sometimes we find a glorious verse providing insight into one perspective of the troubles a human experiences, and then we find another verse exploring a different perspective, and a third verse presenting further depictions of the human. Allah *the Exalted* says: 'When some affliction touches a man he prays to his Lord and turns to Him, but once he has been granted a favour from Allah, he forgets the One he had been praying to before...' (*az-Zumar*: 8).

In the verse which we are currently examining, the Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'When trouble befalls a man, he cries out to us...' (*Yunus*: 12). And in another place, Allah says: 'whatever good things you (people) possess come from Allah, and when hardship touches you, it is to Him alone you cry out for help. Yet when He has relieved you of your hardship, behold, some of you attribute partners to your Lord' (*an-Nahl*: 53-54).

That is, at times Allah mentions affliction in the individual life, and at other times in the collective life. At times He mentions different types of affliction in the singular, and at other times He mentions different types of affliction in the plural. At times He mentions the affliction that occurs on land, and at other times He mentions the affliction that occurs at sea, such as His Saying: ‘When distress touches you at sea, those you pray to besides Him [Allah] desert you...’ (*al-Isra’*: 67).

Accordingly, these glorious verses cover the various states that a human being might experience. When a person lives through a calamity from which no relief can be expected, either from oneself or from one’s surroundings, he then seeks his Lord as his sole refuge. It is regretful that such a person is a disbeliever in Allah.

The noble verse which we are currently discussing gives as an array of different depictions. The Lord *the Exalted* says: ‘When trouble befalls a man he cries out to Us, whether lying on his side...’ (*Yunus*: 12), that is, reclining on his side, and also: ‘...sitting or standing...’ (*Yunus*: 12). Hence, the noble verse speaks of the different postures that humans can assume in this world. The verse also runs parallel with the stages of human development. A small infant, for instance, cannot roll over by itself; rather, the baby requires the help of his parents to roll him into the proper sleeping position. After he grows more, he becomes able to roll over on its own, and soon he acquires the power to execute the second movement which is to sit upright. Soon after this, he begins to stand up, and then to walk.

The verse at hand gives us an accurate account of three of these movements: ‘When trouble befalls a man he cries out to Us, whether lying on his side, sitting or standing...’ (*Yunus*: 12). Note that walking is not mentioned here; for the person who is able to walk is not rendered motionless by the force of the calamity. However, the other positions mentioned—standing, sitting or resting on one’s side—usually imply some sort of distressful hardship.

These are the stages of gradual physical decline in the life of human beings. A person lives his childhood, then comes the vitality of youth, and after that weakness creeps in and his hair begins to grey. And although he is able to stand up, he is unable to walk as energetically as he used to in his

youth. This is followed by old age when he spends most of his time sitting, unable to stand up. And as he progresses into extreme old age, he will be able to neither walk, stand up or sit; he remains lying on his side, and may depend on his family to roll him over from time to time. Clearly, the gradual deterioration of a thing always proceeds in a manner inverse to the way the thing first developed. As a human being goes through the stages of development—from lying on his side, to sitting, to standing up and finally to walking—his inevitable decline proceeds in an inverse manner; because the process of demolition is the inverse of the process of construction.

From this particular description—where Allah reveals to His creatures some of the secrets of creation—we can deduce the truth of Allah Statements regarding the process of creation, because we have not witnessed the process of creation ourselves; Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘I did not call them to witness the creation of the heavens and earth, nor their own creation; I do not take as My supporters those who lead others astray’ (*al-Kahf*: 51).

The Lord has not allowed anyone to witness the manner in which the heavens and the earth were created, nor has He allowed anyone to witness the manner in which the human was created. Therefore, when it comes to these matters, we should not look for answers outside of the Quran. For instance, we should not give any credence to these theories that posit that the earth was once part of the sun and that over time it broke away from the sun and its temperature cooled. All these are merely un-established hypotheses. Allah clearly says: ‘I did not call them to witness the creation of the heavens and earth, nor their own creation...’ (*al-Kahf*: 51).

This verse shows that as long as the human mind is detached from the Doctrine of heaven, it cannot possibly arrive at the knowledge of the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor that of humankind. If someone tells you that you have been created in a manner that contradicts what is in the Quran, you should say, ‘This is a lie’. And if someone tells you that the heavens and the earth were created in a manner contrary to what is in the Quran, you should respond, ‘This is a lie’ because Allah alone is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and the Creator of humankind. There were no agents or spectators. Since no one has witnessed anything himself, no one can tell you about it.

The Lord *the Exalted* says: 'I do not take as My supporters those who lead others astray' (*al-Kahf*: 51).

These people who are referred to as 'leading others astray' are those who tell you false hypotheses about the evolution of apes into human beings or the earth being once part of the sun and then it broke off from it. The authors of such conjectures are what the Lord has called '*mudilin*' (those who lead astray). Had Allah *the Exalted* not revealed to us such a Quranic verse, and then these people came to us and claimed that human beings evolved from monkeys, we could have said, 'The Quran has not dealt with such claims', and we might have believed them. But Allah has provided us with immunity against this kind of misguided thinking.

The act of creation is a mystery to us. Our only source of knowledge about it comes from what our Creator *the Most High* has taught us. No one was with Allah to witness His Creative Act and recount it to us. Life, which was incepted by the Creative Act, becomes undone by death. Death is something which we all witness. And we know that the process of demolition is the inverse of the process of construction. For instance, if we built a twenty-storey building and then wanted to destroy it for some reason or other, we start by destroying the twentieth floor, and we will continue destroying the building floor by floor, starting from the top. What was built first is the last to be destroyed. For the destruction of an object always proceeds in a manner inverse to the way the object was built.

Since death is the destruction of life, once the soul departs the body and before burial, the corpse stiffens, and then it turns into a decomposing carcass. After that, all the water contained in the dead body evaporates, and the body decays back into the elements of the earth. These are the stages of death.

Allah has informed us about how creation took place. He has told us how He created man from dust mixed with water until it became clay. When the clay became sticky and adhesive, the Lord shaped it into a human being and breathed into him the soul <sup>(1)</sup>. That is, the last step in the creation of man was

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(1) Allah says in this regard: 'Then He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him the soul (created by Allah for that person), and He gave you hearing, sight and hearts. Little is the thanks you give!' (*as-Sajda*: 9)

the entry of the soul into the body. And for this reason, the first step in the process of death is the departure of the soul from the body.

Here in this noble verse, Allah *the Exalted* describes man as lying on his side, standing or in a seated position, but He does not mention 'walking'. This is because one who walks is one who is not afflicted by any serious illness. If affliction does befall him, it comes from outside himself or from someone else. The opposite of '*durr*' (affliction) is '*naḥ*' ('benefit', 'well-being' or 'boon') A beneficial item is that which preserves the goodness of a object, keeping it in its original, natural, enjoyable and comfortable state, whether internally or externally.

When your body is in a state of uprightness, you are in full control of your faculties, and all your organs are healthy and sound; you do not suffer from affliction. However, if weakness or disease arises in any part of your body, the difficulties will begin. That is why it is said that general good health means that you are not aware of the different parts of your body. You become conscious of your eye, for example, when it hurts you. You become conscious of your ear when it aches. You use your teeth to chew food, and you do this inadvertently. The day you become conscious of your teeth is the day when you start having cavity problems. Thus, a person does not appreciate that he is in good health until he becomes conscious of one of his body parts and he starts complaining, 'O my eye!' or 'O my ear!'

We say that if one feels pain in his eye, this pain has arisen due to a specific problem. The same statement applies to any other organ of the body. A person who does not suffer from pain or discomfort in any part of his body will consequently be unaware of them, since they are functioning normally. As to external wellbeing, it is achieved when those around you provide you with joy and peace of mind, without any trouble. This is how their benefit becomes apparent to you.

Every human being harbours a sense of ego, which the Lord refers to when He says: 'Nay! Verily, man does transgress all bounds because he considers himself self-sufficient' (*al- 'Alaq*: 6-7).

Man only shows humility when he suffers some harm or difficulty. Man becomes arrogant only after every manner of blessing is bestowed upon him—both outside and inside. But when a man's blessings begin to diminish,

his arrogance is immediately driven away. He who used to strut in front of people, showing off his strength, may one day want to stand up to walk a few steps but will be unable to do so. Man only thinks himself to be self-sufficient regarding that which is basic in him, never towards that with which he has been endowed. That is why he should not be conceited; because the Endower—the *Most High*—can strip him of these gifts. He might strip you of your good health, and we have seen many a healthy person fall sick, many a rich person fall into poverty, and many a powerful person lose their power.

Clearly, there is no need for arrogance because it is Allah who has given you everything. There is nothing whatsoever in you that you have given to yourself. That is why one must get rid of all arrogance since everything that you have has been conferred to you by the Bestower the *Most High*. He can strip you of that which He has given you. To be sure, when man is stripped of Allah's Blessings, He begins to pay attention. There is, therefore, no need for anyone to be conceited. To act or think as such means one cheaply surrenders oneself to perdition.

For example, you may have a quarrel with a doctor who happens to be the only one in your area. Some will doubtless try to reconcile the two of you, but you refuse. But one day you fall sick, and you seek his help; for Allah has given him sound knowledge in the field of medicine. For this reason, you should not be conceited or arrogant towards anyone.

However, human beings will always be human beings, and human nature is what it is. That is why the Lord the *Exalted* says: 'When trouble befalls a man he cries out to Us' (*Yunus*: 12).

When trouble befalls a disbeliever, he falls into a pit of disgrace. On the contrary, the believer is always supported by his Lord, and if trouble befalls him, he always supplicates Allah *Glorified is He*; the believer never forgets Him. That is why Allah shows His Mercy to him. The disbeliever, in contrast, supplicates Allah *Glorified is He* only in times of distress, but why did the disbeliever not believe when Allah *Glorified is He* sends His Messengers and calls him to have Faith?

The forgetfulness of man was built into his primordial nature. This is because man, by nature, likes to benefit from his surroundings; but if this is

not possible, he tries to benefit himself in any way possible. But when he cannot help even himself, he realises and remembers that his only means of refuge is to believe in the One Who has created him. Look at how the Quran expresses this idea: 'When distress seizes you at sea, those you call to besides Him [Allah] desert you' (*al-Isra'*: 67). Thus, whosoever worships anything other than Allah *Glorified is He* will be deserted by such a deity; for the latter stands incapable of offering salvation to its worshippers. That is why the polytheist inevitably returns to Allah *Glorified is He* as there is no one who can help but Him (Allah) and He is the only One Who delivers man from impending danger. Being the Creator, He is the Most Merciful towards His creation and His Mercy saves the human being, even if he is a disbeliever. All of this is completely logical; for we have attested to the Oneness of Allah *Glorified is He* when we were in the pre-eternal world of the unseen — when Allah *Glorified is He* made us take the original vow. He has said to us: 'Am I not your Lord?' and we replied: 'Yes, we bear witness [to this]' (*al-A'raf*: 172). This is the *Fitrah* (instinctual) faith which existed before the coming of forgetfulness and blind imitation. For this reason, when all of the false deities disperse and forsake the disbeliever, he thinks again and as a result calls Allah *Glorified is He* and even implores others to supplicate Allah *Glorified is He* for him. A man might call for someone to comfort him when he is sick, but he does not find any of his children or family members near him. However, as soon as he calls Allah *Glorified is He*, he is touched by His Mercy. But sometimes you find that when Allah *Glorified is He* answers a man's supplications, the man reverts back to his previous state of foolishness and conceit; he utters the words of Qarun: 'This wealth was given to me on account of the knowledge I possess...' (*al-Qasas*: 78). This person says, 'I took my precautions and I put everything in a good order'. Consequently, Allah seizes him with all His Might and Power. When harm befalls any one of you, you will not find anything in the external environment or within yourselves that can replace your Creator; and at a moment of impending danger you cannot lie to yourselves for at that moment, the only one you turn to is Allah *Glorified is He*. At that time, you recall the time of the 'original vow' and therefore you return to Him.

Here, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'When trouble befalls man he cries out to Us, whether lying on his side, sitting, or standing...' (*Yunus*: 12).



And when Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...but as soon as we relieve him of his trouble’ (*Yunus*: 12), He portrays ‘trouble’ as if it is ‘covering’ and ‘enfolding’ the person to the extent that no one can save him from it. This is because ‘*al-kashf*’ (relief) is the lifting of the cover that enfolds the entire human being. As such, Allah *Glorified is He* describes how ‘trouble’ can overwhelm the entire body, using words that help us to understand this state more. Similarly, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘So Allah afflicts it with the garment of famine and fear, for what its people had done’ (*an-Nahl*: 112). It is as if hunger and fear enfolds the entire village to the extent that it is not only the stomachs that are hungry but also every organ in the body is suffering from hunger and fear. And in the verse we are discussing, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘But as soon as We relieve him of his trouble he goes on his way as if he had never cried out to Us to remove his trouble....’ (*Yunus*: 12) The word *marr* (goes on his way) means that someone comes to a stop; when someone says, ‘So-and-so stopped by (*marr*) me’, this means that he has stopped to talk with me. We can understand from Allah's Words that the person who was afflicted by trouble paused to supplicate Allah *Glorified is He* and seek His Help—when trouble had overwhelmed him and he had no one else to turn to but Allah *Glorified is He*. However, prior to this incident, he used to take the blessings given to him by Allah *Glorified is He* while not caring at all about believing in Him. And after the harm passes and he abandons his temporary Faith: ‘...he goes on his way as if he had never cried out to us to remove his trouble’ (*Yunus*: 12). It is as if he forgot how humbled he once stood before Allah *Glorified is He*. As such, he passes from a stage of humility and submission, fervently supplicating Allah *Glorified is He* to a stage of arrogance; he fails to pause and give thanks to the One Who has delivered him from harm—this is the ultimate act of treachery.

Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the verse by saying: ‘In this way the deeds of transgressors are made attractive to them’ (*Yunus*: 12). A second issue is clear here; although the incident that occurred was particular to a specific time and place, Allah *Glorified is He* has made the principle involved applicable to the entire universe, in general. In ancient times, this is what happened to the transgressors. And the one who encouraged them to forget Allah's Favour was either the devil or Allah Himself by making these people's vices become

worse; Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'In their hearts is a disease, to which Allah adds more diseases' (*al-Baqara*: 10). And He says: 'But as soon as We relieve him of his trouble he goes on his way as if he had never cried out to Us to remove his trouble' (*Yunus*: 12). This is how the transgressors acted in the past and what happened to them, and the same will happen to them in the future. Every human action is composed of 'words' and 'deeds'. And an action is anything that happens by the use of a human's limbs. Even if words are different from deeds, the two make up what are called 'actions'.

After Allah *Glorified is He* presents this principle in both a general sense and for this particular incident, and illustrates how it is in conformity with the whole universe, He explains why it is necessary that the disbelievers pay attention to the Message of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. In addition, He warns the disbelievers, 'Do We hand a Messenger over to his enemies—or do We grant every Messenger victory over his enemies? Past events have confirmed that We have always taken every sinner to task for his sins; therefore, be careful not to be one of the sinners'.

Next, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونََ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ  
بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

**Before you people, We destroyed whole generations when  
they did evil – their messengers brought them clear signs but  
they refused to believe. This is how We repay the guilty [13]  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 13)**

Therefore, do not be lured into thinking that you can remain in a state of enmity towards Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*; you will not be able to be victorious over him in any way as Allah *Glorified is He* will perfect His Light and your fate shall be no different from the fate of previous disbelievers. The Arabic word '*al-qurun*' (generations) is the plural of the word '*qarn*' (generation), which itself is related to the term '*muqarana*' (gathering). And every group of people who share something in common are called '*qarn*'. The word '*al-qarn*' can also mean 'a century'; and the group of

people who live through a particular one hundred-year period together are also called '*qarn*'. '*Al-qarn*' can also mean a group of people who share something in common — no matter what age they lived in. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'We have destroyed whole generations (*al-qurun*) before you when they did evil—their Messengers brought them clear signs but they refused to believe...' (*Yunus*: 13). If Allah *Glorified is He* had postponed His punishment, will they have believed? No, because Allah *Glorified is He* has known all things since pre-eternity and He knows the true state of everything— that which man has no control over as well as that over which he can exercise freewill.

Let us give an example from our own lives and experiences—although Allah *Glorified is He* is beyond comparison. When a person wants to build a house, the nature of this prospective house will depend on the builder's means; a poor person, for instance, will ask for two humble rooms to be built, and for this reason the contractor designs a house with only two rooms. If the person is of average means, he turns to an architect to design a house that is consistent with his means. And if the man is wealthy, he will turn to an architect to build a house for him that suits his means and accords with his tastes. But before the construction can commence, the architect draws up a blueprint for the house; this blueprint illustrates all the details of the house, down to the colour of the windows, the doors, and the rooms.

Before the earth was created, Allah *Glorified is He* had already predetermined how it will look; this was an absolutely perfect calculation which Allah performed. And when the world was created, it took on the exact form that the Creator had predestined for it; thus, even if someone chooses to disbelieve, Allah *Glorified is He* has known about him since pre-eternity. In fact, even concerning matters in which human beings can exercise their freewill, Allah *Glorified is He* has already recorded them in His Book of Decrees. Allah knows about the matters that He has predestined which man is coerced to do and over which he has no freewill. For matters which involve freewill, Allah *Glorified is He* has given His creatures the freedom of choice; but He knows in advance what choices they will make. Thus, all was designed according to His Knowledge. Do not think that Allah *Glorified is He* has designed things this way in order to coerce you; no, as He merely knows in advance what you will

choose with your own freewill. This is how Allah *Glorified is He* has known—since pre-eternity—who will be unjust towards himself; He also knew that the previous generations which He destroyed will not have believed.

‘We have destroyed whole generations before you when they did evil [and wrong] (*zhalamu*)...’ (*Yunus*: 13). The word ‘*zhulm*’, which the word ‘*zhalamu*’ (they did evil) and ‘*yazhlimoon*’ (they wrong) comes from, means to strip someone of his right and hand over this right to someone else. Human beings might wrong (*yazhlimoon*) each other when it comes to the rights which the Creator has endowed them with; but the ultimate act of injustice (*zhulm*) is when a man abuses the Lord’s Right to be the only One Who is worshipped and hands over this right to some other false deity. This is the epitome of injustice. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Attributing partners to Him is a terrible wrong [injustice] (*zhulm*)’ (*Luqman*: 13). These people had committed injustice with regards to the principal Doctrine of Belief. This verse can also refer to them committing injustice towards themselves—as Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘It is they who wrong themselves (*yazhlimoon*)’ (*Yunus*: 44).

Such people who are mentioned in this verse are simultaneously committers of injustice and victims of injustice because human beings possess numerous resources, one of which is the Faith that is innate to man’s primordial substance and another is that which makes them seek their own immediate gratification. When the latter tendency prevails over the former, our self-reproaching soul takes action to return things to their proper state. As for the soul which incites a person to commit evil, for its part, it only asks for carnal desires to be satisfied. This is because it is a soul that incites man to commit evil. But when the soul finds peace and submits itself to Allah’s Commandments, it is then considered a peaceful soul. To commit injustice towards oneself means to pursue one’s carnal desires; he gives instant gratification to himself. However, this ultimately leads to his misery later on; and this is why we can consider such behaviour to be an injustice towards oneself.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘We have destroyed whole generations before you when they did evil—their Messengers brought them clear signs...’ (*Yunus*: 13). Allah *Glorified is He* has not left them alone, rather He has sent them Messengers backed up by miracles so that they might provide them with

insight. Nevertheless, Allah *Glorified is He* knows that they will not believe; that is why He says: ‘...but they refused to believe’ (*Yunus*: 13) meaning that even if He had let them live, they will not have believed. It is He who has created them and He has known—since pre-eternity—that they will not choose Faith. Allah *Glorified is He* is the One Who knows absolutely everything. But although He knows what will happen, He does not force this to occur as He still gives people a chance to choose. If He had forced things to happen as He knows will occur by not giving choices, there will be no need for man to have freewill. For example—although Allah *Glorified is He* is beyond comparison—let us say you are at home and you and your wife decide to take a trip. If your children are young, you will tell them before you close the door, ‘there is food for you in the fridge: there is meat, fish, cheese, and olives’. And after you and your wife leave the house you turn to her and say, ‘Our children are only going to eat cheese and olives because they will find that eating these items is easier’. If there had been nothing but cheese in the fridge, you will not have said these words; in such a case, the children will have no other choice. However, since there is still freedom of choice in the matter, you have the ability to predict what your children will do based on their past behaviour. And upon your return, you find that your children have acted in the way you predicted, even though you had given them a choice.

A similar example in the Quran is when Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘May the hands of Abu Lahab be ruined! May he be ruined too! Neither his wealth nor his gains will help him. He will burn in the Flaming Fire’ (*al-Masad*: 1-3). In these verses, Allah's Decision that Abu Lahab<sup>(1)</sup> will die as a disbeliever is stated. This Decision is announced, and it is repeated when we recite this chapter in our Prayers; we also memorize it. Abu Lahab is Prophet Muhammad's uncle, but he was a disbeliever—one of many disbelievers. But many disbelievers eventually embraced the Faith. Did ‘Umar not enter Islam? Did ‘Ikrima ibn Abu Jahl not enter Islam? Did ‘Amr ibn Al-‘As not enter Islam? Did Khalid ibn Al-Walid not enter Islam? They all entered Islam. But what prevented Abu Lahab from entering Islam like the others? He did not enter Islam and Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was

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(1) Abu Lahab is one of Prophet Muhammad's uncles.

informed by his Lord that his uncle will not embrace the Faith. In addition, it will have been impossible for Abu Lahab to announce his faith simply as an act of trickery to undermine the Quran; for Allah *Glorified is He* has known since pre-eternity how Abu Lahab will behave. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'We have destroyed whole generations before you when they did evil—their Messengers brought them clear signs but they refused to believe. This is how we repay the guilty [sinners]' (*Yunus*: 13).

When Allah *Glorified is He* uses the word '*kadhalik*' (this is how), it means that the same punishment that had befallen the previous generations, which had been destroyed centuries ago, will befall the guilty sinners by He Who determines everything. This means that the same rule that has been applied in the universe will always be applied, and matters related to Faith which have existed since the time the very first Messenger was sent will always continue to exist until the world comes to an end.

Afterward, the Lord *Glorified is He* says:

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

**Later We made you their successors in the land, to see how you would behave [14] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 14)**

The word '*khala'if*' (successors) is the plural of the word '*khalifa*' which means he who succeeds someone else. One of the very first descriptions that Allah *Glorified is He* gives of human beings is mentioned in the proclamation which He issued to the angels in which He says: "When your Lord told the angels, "I am putting a successor on earth"...' (*al-Baqara*: 30). Allah *Glorified is He* is Omnipotent, All-Hearing, All Knowing, and He possesses all the Attributes of Absolute Perfection. As for you, you might possess power, and you might use your power as leverage against other people, but you cannot hand over your power to anyone but yourself; you will not, for instance, be able to endow a weak person with your power. The most you can do is to help him with your power. That is, for example, if he is unable to carry a heavy load, you carry it for him, and if he is unable to walk, you take him by the hand. However, you can never give him a piece of your innate power. Therefore, he

will remain weak and you will remain strong. This is the case throughout the created universe: you will find one who is rich and another who is poor; the rich person can give a part of his wealth to the poor person, and the knowledgeable person can give some of his knowledge to the ignorant person, but he cannot bestow upon him the ability to acquire knowledge.

As for Allah, He is the Only One Who can grant His creatures limited, temporal power from His Own Absolute Power. He has also bestowed upon them gifts that are a result of His Omnipotence by creating the heavenly bodies—creations which human beings have no power over; such as the sun, the moon, the stars, the winds and the rain. Allah *Glorified is He* has given human beings some of His Own Power for them to affect the world around them. As such, man is able to perform certain actions insofar as the power bestowed upon him permits. This is how Allah *Glorified is He* has given man some of His Power for man to be able to work and exert effort; how Allah has given him some of His Wealth for the rich to give some to the poor; how Allah has given him some of His knowledge for the knowledgeable to give some of his knowledge to the ignorant; and how Allah has given him some of His patience for man to be patient with those who harm him. Creatures cannot impart their qualities to others; however, they can benefit others by using such qualities. In the end, one will remain powerful, and another will remain weak. As for the One, the Unique, He alone is capable of endowing a weak person with some of His Power; as indeed He does. However, is the whole universe like this?

The universe can be divided into two categories: the first category in the universe includes that which Allah *Glorified is He* has bestowed on man but about which man has no say. Allah *Glorified is He* has established this part of the universe with His Power and set it up such that it is devoid of flaws; this includes, for example: the solar systems, the sky, the sun, the moon and the wind, and so on and so forth. These do not suffer from any defect or flaw. This category of the universe never degenerates or becomes corrupted unless human beings interfere with it.

The other category in the universe includes that which Allah *Glorified is He* has reserved for human beings for them to organise it with the power endowed to them by Allah *Glorified is He*. You will never find corruption in

any of Allah's universe unless human beings have had a hand in it. On the contrary, those things in which human beings did not have a hand in, you will find that they function correctly; that is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'The sun and the moon follow their [precisely] calculated courses' (*ar-Rahman*: 5).

The astronomical observatory posts can determine the position of the earth relative to the sun and the moon, and also the position of the moon relative to the earth and the sun, with a precision that matches the expression which Allah *Glorified is He* uses: '...[precisely] calculated courses' (*ar-Rahman*: 5), as man is not involved in these matters. When it comes to matters in which we do have a choice, we must act according to Allah's Commands for our actions to become perfect and in line with the perfect movements of the heavenly bodies over which we do not have any power.

Therefore, that which brings about corruption in the universe is human intervention in his surrounding environment in a way that is contrary to Allah's Commands; it comes about as a result of man's action upon external elements and their reaction on him. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: '[He is] the Lord of Mercy [Who] has taught the Quran. He has created man and taught him intelligible speech. The sun and the moon follow their [precisely] calculated courses' (*ar-Rahman*: 1-5) meaning that this universe has been created with utmost precision, and you can determine your times and make your calculations based on this precision. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'The sun and the moon follow their [precisely] calculated courses. The plants and the trees submit to His Designs. And the sky He has raised high and He has set the balance [of justice] in order that you may not transgress the balance (by being unjust). Therefore, weigh with justice and do not fall short in the balance' (*ar-Rahman*: 5-9). That is, in order for the worldly matters to submit to you in your actions in the world, just as the natural world submits to you, you should weigh all things equitably. Do not judge matters unjustly; for corruption in the universe is brought about when you abuse those gifts which Allah *Glorified is He* has bestowed upon you—gifts such as power, knowledge, industriousness—and you use these in a way that does not accord with Allah's Commands. Therefore, approach every activity in your lives with His Commands of 'Do' and 'Do not do'. As such, the life on this earth will



be harmonious and work properly just as everything in outer space is harmonious and works properly?

In the verse we are discussing, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Later we made you their successors [being vicegerents] in the land...’ (*Yunus*: 14). Indeed, man is Allah’s vicegerent on earth; for instance, human beings plough the land and irrigate it for the plants to grow. When human beings pursue the means Allah has given on earth, they reap the benefits of their resourcefulness. However, the flaw of man is his conceit; as soon the means start responding to his actions, he begins to think that he reaped the benefits due to his intrinsic powerful, and not due to the means that Allah *Glorified is He* has given him. Allah *Glorified is He* bestows the basic sustenance of life on both the believer and the disbeliever. This bestowal is due to Him being the Lord of everything, for it is He Who has brought man into existence. However, Allah *Glorified is He* has distinguished the believer as He does not only give him the basic sustenance of life, but has also given him His Message and directives in the form of commands and prohibitions involving ‘Do’ and ‘Do not do’. If any man makes full use of these two gifts from Allah *Glorified is He*, he benefits from the reward both in this life and in the life to come, but if he makes use of only the second of the two gifts—that is, if he abides by the directives: ‘Do’ and ‘Do not do’—then he reaps his reward in the Hereafter, but not in this world. And he who wishes to reap the rewards of both this world as well as the Hereafter, then he should take full advantage of Allah’s Bestowal as a result of His Lordship by pursuing the means, and he should also take advantage of Allah’s Bestowal as a result of His Divinity by following His Commands. However, the flaw of Allah’s vicegerent on earth is his assumption that he has control over certain things; as a result he becomes arrogant and supposes that his mastery over the world is intrinsic in himself. We say to him, ‘If you think that you have mastery over the world, then try to preserve your own soul, and try to maintain your health and your wealth. You will not be able to do this. If you rebel against Allah’s Commands by being a disbeliever, for instance, why did you not try to rebel against illness or death?!’

Hence, you are compelled by Allah *the Most High* whether it pleases you or not; and you must accept the fate that is handed to you—for it to discipline

you and control you until, one day, you start to arrange matters in which you have a freedom of choice in accordance with Allah's Commands. If Allah's vicegerent on earth thinks that he has domination over the world, he must learn from all that is around him in the universe. For instance, you might hire a lawyer and put him in charge of your contracts and legal matters; but this lawyer might make important decisions in your name without ever consulting with you or briefing you on what actions he has taken. In such a case, you take the necessary steps to revoke the authority you had invested in him, resulting in the lawyer then realizing that taking action without authorization is unacceptable. If this is the case among human beings, what about the Vicegerency that Allah *Glorified is He* has invested in human beings?

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Later we made you their successors in the land...' (*Yunus*: 14). That is, if you, as a generation of human beings, have succeeded previous generations that have been destroyed, you must therefore take their fate as a lesson and admonition for you—that Allah's Decree always prevails. You must also not give the Prophets such a difficult time and embrace their Message, or, at least, not actively oppose them if it happens that you have personally declined to abide by the Doctrine which they bring from Allah *Glorified is He*. Let them declare the Word of Allah *Glorified is He* to build a community of the faithful that carry out their activities in this world as Allah wants; as for yourselves, you are free to believe or not to believe.

'Let him who wishes [to believe in it] believe, and let him who wishes [to reject it] reject it...' (*al-Kahf*: 29). The proof of this is that when Islam was expanding into many new lands, the local populations were always given the freedom to choose between embracing Islam or holding onto their original religion. Islam spread into numerous countries, either by calling people to it or by direct military conquest; but never was the Islamic faith forced onto the conquered people. From those who decided to cling to their religion, Muslims extracted a *jizya* tax (from non-Muslims living in a Muslim state) in return for protection. Had Islam spread by the sword, no one will have been allowed to cling to their religion; indeed, Islam did not force anyone to convert and it even defended the right of religious freedom by the sword. But because those who did not enter Islam found themselves living in a society whose general welfare was being

attended to by the state ruled by Islam, and given the fact that the Muslim was obliged to pay the prescribed alms to the public treasury—then it was only fair that non-Muslim citizens who benefit from the services provided by the Muslim society, should pay a tax in return for those services.

If a human being realizes that he is a vicegerent and keeps this in mind, he will always remember that the Power of the One Who invested this authority in him is equally capable of rescinding his vicegerency. As such, heed the call with submission and help Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in his mission to spread the Faith. Firstly, you should believe in him, but if you did not, then leave him alone so that he can continue to call people to the Faith; do not openly resist him and do not turn people away from him, for Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Later We made you their successors in the land, to see how you will behave’ (*Yunus*: 14).

When the verse contains an order and Allah *Glorified is He* indicates the reason for this order by using the expression: ‘...to find out...’ (*al-Ma‘ida*: 94), or ‘...to see...’ (*Yunus*: 14), we should remember that Allah *Glorified is He* is Omniscient, All Knowing; He knows about all things even before they existed, and He has known what choices people will make anytime. It is He, indeed, Who says: ‘We sent Our Messengers with clear signs, and sent with them the Scripture and the Balance [of right and wrong], so that people may uphold justice: We also sent down iron, with its mighty strength and many uses for mankind, so that Allah may mark out those who will help Him and His Messengers, though they cannot see Him. Truly, Allah is Powerful, Almighty’ (*al-Hadid*: 25).

Allah *Glorified is He* knew about all things in pre-eternity. And if He says: ‘...to find out...’ (*al-Ma‘ida*: 94), this does not mean that there is new knowledge He used to be ignorant of—something He knows about only after it happens. This is not the case. Rather, this verse means that Allah *Glorified is He* knows the things that you, mankind, will witness when they take place. In this way, no one can say, ‘Why does Allah judge us based on His Knowledge which He has known since pre-eternity?’ Rather, Allah *Glorified is He* submits the slave to a test which will determine the criteria by which a believer may enter Paradise, and by which the disobedient will be judged and punished.

Thus, the human being comes to learn that this is the True Lord's Will so that every servant becomes aware of the 'knowledge of actuality', not the knowledge of the expectations. Accordingly, the use of the verbs 'to know' and 'to see/observe' in the Quran emphasise the knowledge of actuality, such that the servant cannot deny that something has happened. Allah's Words: 'That Allah knows who it is that will support Him (His religion) and His Messengers in the unseen.' (*al-Hadid: 25*)

This verse describes the tools which bring about the Divine Judgment: Messengers who brought with them the proofs and the clear, irrefutable knowledge. Allah *the Almighty* created iron to conquer. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'and We brought forth iron wherein is mighty power (in matters of war), as well as many benefits for mankind.' (*al-Hadid: 25*)

He associated it with the coming of Allah's messengers; Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'That Allah knows who it is that will support Him (His religion).' (*al-Hadid: 25*) Support can only come about with power, and power is derived from iron which retains its metallic proprieties until the Day of Judgment. It is an element that is known to bring strength, a mineral so strong that they have not been able to invent one stronger.

Allah's Knowledge of our actions is prior to their occurrence, and we cannot deny it, for if He *the Most High* were to disclose some piece of news without the reality of these pieces of news being witnessed, they would in all likelihood be denied. This is precisely why Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'that Allah know who it is that will support Him (His religion) and His Messengers in the unseen.' There is a beautiful sort of precautionary tone in these words. It would also appear that, from Allah's Words that He is asking you support Him; however, be careful not to conclude that Allah *Glorified is He* is weak, God forbid. He is the Powerful *the Almighty*. He says: 'Fight them; Allah will punish them by your hands.' (*at-Tawba: 14*) Allah *Glorified is He* wants to see the enemies of religion lying in front of you disgraced and humiliated, for He is certainly capable over them. Therefore, when the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'Then We made you successors in the land after them so that We may observe how you will do' (*Yunus: 14*), this means that Allah already knows what you would do, not that he will learn of what you would do.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا أَتُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِشُرَّاءٍ غَيْرِ هَٰذَا أَوْ بَدِّلَهُ قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِنْ تَلْقَائِي نَفْسِي ۚ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾

**When Our clear revelations are recited to them, those who do not expect to meet with Us say, ‘Bring [us] a different Quran, or change it.’ [Prophet], say, ‘It is not for me to change it of my own accord; I only follow what is revealed to me, for I fear the torment of an awesome Day, if I were to disobey my Lord’ [15] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 15)**

We know that there are three kinds of signs. One is universal signs which are awe-inspiring and we see around us in the universe. Allah *the Exalted* calls cosmic phenomena ‘signs’. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Now among His signs are the night and the day, as well as the sun and the moon.’ (*Fussilat*: 37) Allah *the Almighty* also says: ‘And among His signs is that He creates for you mates out of your own kind’ (*ar-Rum*: 21). All these are examples of the ‘cosmic signs’. Then, secondly there are other ‘signs’ that function to lend credibility and authenticity to messengers *peace be upon them* as they go about conveying Allah’s Word. These types of ‘signs’ are also known as the miracles, for they defy all the natural laws of the universe. Everything has a particular nature, and when something behaves in a way contrary to its nature, this ought to draw our attention. The Quran, for instance, speaks about how Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* was seized by his enemies and thrown into the fire. The True Lord *the Most High* delivered him from the fire’s heat, and he was able to walk away from it unharmed. In this case, the purpose was not to save Ibrahim (Abraham) from the fire; if the only purpose of the Divine intervention was to deliver Ibrahim (Abraham) from the fire, other things would have taken place. Allah *Glorified is He* could have prevented Ibrahim’s (Abraham’s) enemies from catching him in the first place, but the fact is that they did catch him, and they lit up a fire and threw him in it. If Allah wanted it, He could have put the fire out with a little rain, but that is not what

happened; Allah *the Almighty* let them carry on with their malice. This is due to that He is the One Who causes fire to burn, since He ordered it: 'O fire, be coolness and safety upon Ibrahim (Abraham).' (*al-Anbiya*: 69)

The disappointment of Ibrahim's (Abraham's) would-be murderers becomes apparent. Thus, the word 'signs' applies to the 'cosmic signs', the miracles and the verses of the Quran; furthermore, since the verses of the Quran come from Allah, and the miracles come from Allah, and the universe is also Allah's work—can there really exist 'signs' that contradict one another? No, there cannot because He Who has created the universe sent forth the messengers with their miracles and revealed the Quran is the One Allah. Were it otherwise, there would indeed be contradiction and inconsistency among all the signs. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much contradictions.' (*an-Nisa*: 82) In addition, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And when Our Clear Verses are recited unto them.' (*Yunus*: 15)

Then the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'those who hope not for their meeting with Us, say...' (*Yunus*: 15). We know that 'hope' expresses something possible, within one's reach. A father, for example, hopes that his son is admitted into medical or engineering school. On the contrary, there is wishing that expresses hope in something impossible. 'Those who hope not for their meeting with Us' refers to disbelievers who believe neither in Allah nor in their resurrection, for they assert: 'There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time.' (*al-Jathiya*: 24) These disbelievers have also said: 'When we have died and become dust and bones, are we indeed to be resurrected?' (*al-Mu'minun*: 82)

If a man does not believe in the resurrection, this means that he does not believe in his eventual meeting with Allah *the Exalted* for one who believes in the resurrection believes in his meeting with Him and furthermore prepares himself for this meeting by acts of worship and virtuous works. Disbelievers, however, who deny the resurrection, will be surprised to meet Allah Whom they denied. It will be an unpleasant surprise indeed. This is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* said: 'But those who disbelieved - their deeds are like a mirage in a lowland which a thirsty one thinks is water until when he comes to it, he finds it is nothing.' (*an-Nur*: 39)

*Mirage* happens when a person is walking through a dry, barren desert and thinks that he sees water from afar. He keeps walking towards this perceived water, but he can never close the distance. This perception is connected with the refraction of light, which can result in the illusion of water where there is none: ‘when he comes to it, he finds it is nothing but finds Allah before Him.’ (*an-Nur*: 39) Thus, he is startled to find Allah *Glorified is He* Whose existence he has always denied, for he is one from those who do not wish to meet Allah *the Almighty*. It is about whom the following verse speaks: ‘And they say, "When we are lost within the earth, will we indeed be [recreated] in a new creation?" Rather, they are, in [the matter of] the meeting with their Lord, disbelievers.’ (*as-Sajda*: 10)

The universe around us establishes the concept of resurrection. Everything that we see goes through a cycle; the beautiful, blooming flower wilts after it loses its moisture, and all of its former colour fades, and then it turns to dust. When you smell this flower, it means that the perfume which reaches your nostrils is evaporating along with the moisture that is also leaving the flower in the form of water vapour. Thereafter, the flower withers and decomposes. The flower exemplifies this cycle of life. If you were to look at any element of life such as water, you will find that the quantity of water available when Allah *the Exalted* first created the heavens and the earth is still the same as it was: no more, no less. We have explained this concept previously. Everything that you benefit from as a human being has a cycle, and one cycle gives way to another cycle. You are the benefactor of the products of these cycles—be they cycles of growth or cycles of decomposition.

Those who do not believe in Allah, resurrection, nor reward or punishment, do not pay attention to the universe in which they live, for to contemplate the cosmos and to reflect on its processes must lead them to see that their own lives are as cycles which are bound to restart anew. Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘As we began the first creation, we will repeat it.’ (*al-Anbiya*: 104)

Regarding those who do not wish to meet Allah, the Quran quotes them as saying: ‘Bring us a Quran other than this or change it.’ They are hereby asking for something other than the Quran. However, note that it is Allah Who is the speaker. Therefore, do not think that the two speeches are equivalent! There are two requests: asking for a Quran different from the one that was revealed

and in the second instance, they wish to replace one verse with another. To be exact, they wanted to remove the verses that are derisive of their idols in addition to the verses that promise them a dreaded fate. Allah *Glorified is He* answers these demands by specifically addressing the second of these; He *Glorified is He* says: ‘Say, [O, Muhammad], "It is not for me to change it on my own accord."' Thus, the True Lord *the Most High* does not answer their other demand: ‘Bring us a Quran other than this.’

The answer to these requests could have been, ‘It is not for me to come up with a new Quran or to alter the current one.’ However, Allah *the Almighty* answers only the second of the two requests—namely ‘change this one,’ since bringing up a new Quran amounts to changing the current version in its entirety. To merely change certain parts of the Quran would, in theory, be the easier of the two requests. Thus, the first and easiest of the two requests is denied so as to indicate that the more difficult request is thereby denied. The True Lord *Glorified is He* ordered His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*: ‘Say, [O, Muhammad], "It is not for me to change it on my own accord."' This means that the possibility of altering the Quran is conceivable provided that it is not the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* who would be capable of doing so. Only Allah *Glorified is He* could order the Quran to be altered, but the idea of coming up with an entirely new Quran is dismissed. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘And when we substitute a verse in place of a verse—and Allah is most knowing of what He sends down.’ (*an-Nahl*: 101)

This is exactly what the current verse reiterates. In this verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘Say, [O, Muhammad], "It is not for me to change it on my own accord. I only follow what is revealed to me."' The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* does not fabricate the Quran from himself, rather, it is revealed to him.

The True Lord *the Most High* finishes the verse by saying: ‘Indeed, I fear, if I should disobey my Lord, the punishment of a tremendous Day.’ This means that if the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* were to invent things of his own accord, this would amount to a grave disobedience of Allah *the Almighty*. We also know that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was not known as a poet, nor was he a writer or a preacher. After he began receiving revelation from Allah, all of a sudden we see this great outpour of the Quran



whose language is of the most eloquent kind. The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* began receiving revelation when he was forty years old, and there exists no human genius whose manifestation is delayed until such a late stage in a man's life. It would have been impossible for the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* to consciously suppress his genius until this late stage in his life, for there was no guarantee- especially in those days—that a man would live past the age of forty. Allah *the Exalted* provides us with the definite proof which affirms the fact that the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* was only uttering that which was being revealed to him. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'I only follow what is revealed to me. Indeed, I fear, if I should disobey my Lord, the punishment of a tremendous Day.' Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* commands His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* to answer disbelievers:

قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرَاكُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ  
لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِّن قَبْلِهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

**Say, 'If God had so willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you. I lived a whole lifetime among you before it came to me. How can you not use your reason?' [16] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 16)**

In this verse, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is telling those who were clamouring for the Quran to be altered or altogether replaced, that he lived his whole life in their company, and never has he possessed the gift of eloquence or the gift of poetry or any literary skills whatsoever. A man who does have these talents certainly does not conceal them for forty years of his life. You also know that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* never studied under a teacher. In fact, he was accused of such when disbelievers said, 'It is but a human being that teaches (all) this to him!' (*an-Nahl*: 103)

The True Lord *Glorified is He* decisively debunked their argument when, in the Quran, He said: 'The tongue of the one they refer to is foreign, and this Qur'an is [in] a clear Arabic language.' (*an-Nahl*: 103)

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* never had travelled outside of the Arabian Peninsula, nor did he ever read anyone's manuscripts.

So, where did this Quran come from? It came from Allah *Glorified is He*. Disbelievers must realise this fact. There is no reason for them to accuse Muhammad of having fabricated it since they know from first-hand experience that he is neither an orator nor a poet. All which the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* came forth with—starting from the moment when Allah charged him with spreading the Message—comes from Allah *the Almighty*. Of course, a person cannot deny beautiful qualities if others have attributed these to him. It is customary that a poet, for example, steals a poem from another poet, or that a writer plagiarises a saying from another writer. However, the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* has explicitly stated that he is did not author the Quran with its beautiful and perfect qualities. He is but a Prophet. They should have taken cognisance of this matter in its principles and in all its ramifications. They should not have let their imaginations run wild, such that they become entrenched in their attitude of denial and antagonism.

The matter is quite simple. The True Lord *the Most High* tells His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*: ‘Say, "If Allah had willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you, for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"’ Thus, the premise Allah *Glorified is He* wants disbelievers to realise is that He has sent forth a Prophet who is one of their own: ‘When He sent amongst them a Messenger from themselves’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 164).

These words mean that the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* is a human being, not an angel. Furthermore, he is ‘from themselves’, which means either that he is Arab, not from a non-Arab ethnicity or that he hails from the same tribe whose people deny the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him*. Thus, the Prophet’s life is well known to them. At no point in his life did he leave them to go live somewhere else, such that they might accuse him of being sent forth by someone else or such that they might accuse him of having acquired knowledge from somewhere else. He did not learn from any of their teachers or from any teachers in other lands, nor did he ever read a book. Hence, if this is the case, they must ask themselves, ‘Where did this wisdom come from all of a sudden?’ They know fully well that genius does not manifest itself in a person when he is forty years old. Rather, the first

glimmerings of genius first appear towards the end of the second decade of a person's life and the early years of the third decade. How was the Prophet's supposed genius repressed up this point, where all of a sudden he begins uttering this eloquent speech, which they stand incapable of reproducing, even though they are a people long known for being articulate and eloquent?

They should have said, 'We were not aware that he knew any of this.' If he solves this riddle for them and explains that this Quran is not his own, they should obviously believe him, for He is attributing this Quran to His Creator, His Lord *Glorified is He*. What proves that they are internally inconsistent in their argument is that when he tells them that the Quran is conveyed to him from Allah, they deny him. They say, 'It is your own invention.' Then, when he goes through times when he receives less revelation than usual, they say, 'His Lord has abandoned him.' Why are they convinced that he has a Lord Who reveals verses to him one moment but then abandons him the next? Thus, they have denied the possibility of revelation when the latter was received, but they have admitted the possibility of a Creator when no revelation was forthcoming. They should have paid attention. They should have re-examined their thinking process before pronouncing judgment on such things. The True Lord *the Most High* brings up this issue numerous times in the Quran. He says, for example: 'And you were not with them when they cast their pens as to which of them should be responsible for Maryam (Mary). Nor were you with them when they disputed.' (*Al-Imran*: 44) Allah *Glorified is He* also says: 'and you, [O, Muhammad], were not on the western side [of the mount] when we revealed to Musa (Moses) the command, and you were not among the witnesses [to that].' (*al-Qasas*: 44) Allah *Glorified is He* further says: 'And you were not a resident among the people of Madyan.' (*al-Qasas*: 45)

Finally, He says: 'And you did not recite before it any scripture, nor did you inscribe one with your right hand. Otherwise the falsifiers would have had [cause for] doubt.' (*al-Ankabut*: 48) Where then did this eloquence come from? They should have taken these data into account. Had they done so, they would have reached the proper conclusion that the Prophet is truly receiving revelation from Allah. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the verse which we are currently examining by saying: 'Then will you not reason.'

When the True Lord commands you to use your intellect, therein lies the certainty that were you to do so, you would draw the correct conclusions. Allah *Glorified is He* is far above tricking His servants; to trick another human being is to cause him to become intellectually negligent. However, encouraging a human being to use his mind means that the questioner is confident that the truth is on his side and that this truth can be reached through the sound application of the intellect. When Allah *Glorified is He* says at the end of the verse: 'Then will you not reason', this indicates that the root of their error lies in the fact that they did not use their intellect, for if they had used their intellect to analyse the facts—which they freely recognised as being true—they would have understood that what the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* was saying was true, and they would have become believers. They should have asked him directly, 'Where did you get this from?' So long as he has told them, 'This has come from Allah', they should have therefore believed him. Thus, the function of reason is to control the other faculties of the body, for every organ of the body tends to go about its natural function. The function of the eye is to register visual stimuli, but one's reason instructs it: 'there is no need to witness such a thing, for it is a sight that will harm you.' The ears like to hear all that is being said, but one's reason instructs it: 'Do not listen to such-and-such a thing, for it will harm you.' Reason controls the rest of the organs. The True Lord *the Most High* willed that human beings be distinguished with intellect and wisdom so as to establish just principles in the workings of the soul. Therefore, take note of the sensible data which you believe, witness and come to accept. Consider this information carefully and realise that the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* has come forth with a revelation from Allah *the Exalted*. Then, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ  
 كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ

**Who could be more wicked than someone who invents  
 lies against God or denies His revelations? The guilty  
 will never prosper [17] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 17)**

The Quran hereby explains, in the words of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as if he is saying 'Shall I be untrue to Allah? If, up to this

point, I have never lied in my dealings with you, would I lie in my dealings with Allah?! He who had not lied in his early life certainly cannot become a compulsive liar as an adult, and if I have never lied to you, will I then lie to Allah? If you are happy to accuse me of such, I, on the other hand, cannot unjustly accuse myself of lying. Thus, it is you that are the deniers since you reject the idea that this Quran has been revealed to me by Allah. If I had said that it is I who had authored this Quran, would it be logical for you to deny me since it becomes a false honour. However, I attribute this Quran to someone else. I attribute it to He who is far above you and me.'

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And who could be more unjust.' (*Yunus*: 17) It means that none can be more unjust than he who deals in falsehood with Allah *Glorified is He*. The reason why a liar lies is to confuse and mislead his counterpart. Would anyone lie to someone who is aware of the truth of all matters? No one is capable of such a thing. He who lies to his fellow man does them an injustice, and the ultimate injustice is in lying to Allah *Glorified is He*. As for fabrication, it represents an intentional subversion of the truth. It is permissible for a person to put forth a statement that is in accord with his own knowledge, even if this statement is false. At the moment when this statement was conveyed, the person was convinced that it was true, but it would later be shown that it was untrue. This can be called 'misinformation', but it is unintentional. As for *fabrication*, this is a case of intentional deception.

When the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'And who could be more unjust who invents a lie about Allah or denies His signs? Indeed, the criminals will not succeed' (*Yunus*: 17), the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* explains to them in essence, 'If you say that I claim this revelation is from Allah, whereas it is not true, then this would mean that it is a lie of my own invention. Thus, what is the position of those who deny Allah's verses? These lies are your own, for if you deny me and not only make a false claim that I attribute this is to Allah but also deny the verses and claim it is my invention—when it is actually revealed from Allah— then it is you who are guilty of the sin.' A lie can either come from a speaker or come from a listener, just as the True Lord describes the proper conduct of Prophets when He says: 'And indeed, we or you are either upon guidance or in clear error.' (*Saba*': 24)

There is no way of summing up the situation more proper than this. The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* shows that his point of view and their point of view are diametrically opposed, and only one of the two can be true. However, who is it that determines which of the two views are true and which is false? It is the True Lord *Glorified is He* Allah. He *the Most High* tells us What His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* says: 'or in clear error'. Herein lies a call for them to examine the matter with their intellect so as to realise which of the two views is 'rightly guided' and which is 'clear error'. This represents an elevation of the argument to a higher level on the Prophet's part. Allah *the Exalted* also says: 'Say, "You will not be asked about what we committed, and we will not be asked about what you do."' (*Saba'*: 25) Everyone shall be held to account individually for his actions. Hence, I will not have to answer for a crime you committed, and you shall not have to answer for a crime I have committed. He relates the possibility of crime to himself for he does not say, 'You shall not be held to account for our crimes, nor shall we be held to account for your crimes.' This is indeed the nobler stance to adopt in this argument. He chose words that do not infuriate but appease the opponent. This is the wiser option, otherwise the opponent would be incited to even greater stubbornness, and the argument would go on to no avail. In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And who could be more unjust who invents a lie about Allah.'

If any injustice was committed on my part, then Allah will hold me to account for it, and if injustice is committed on your part, then know that the True Lord *Glorified is He* says 'the criminals will not succeed.' (*Yunus*: 17) Allah *the Almighty* does not specify exactly who the criminal is as this is left to the reader to discern. Just as you would tell someone with whom you have a disagreement, 'I shall explain the matter for you and you judge for yourself.' Once you have presented the matter, he cannot but arrive at the desired conclusion. If this were not the case, you would not have presented the matter to him. Then, the True Lord *Glorified is He* continues and says:

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ  
هَؤُلَاءِ شَفَعُونَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أَتُنَبِّئُونَ اللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا  
فِي الْأَرْضِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

**They worship alongside God things that can neither harm  
nor benefit them, and say, ‘These are our intercessors  
with God.’ Say, ‘Do you think you can tell God about  
something He knows not to exist in the heavens or earth?  
Glory be to Him! He is far above the partner-gods they  
associate with Him! [18] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 18)**

The word *worship* requires the existence of a worshipper as well as the existence of a ‘worshipped’. It also requires that the act of ‘worship’ be defined. The worshipper must be of a lower rank than the worshipped, and the act of worship must consist of adhering to what is prescribed and avoiding all that has been proscribed. This is the true meaning of the concept of ‘worship’. This is the way to move closer to Allah *the Exalted*. In order that the act of worship is put in its correct place, the worshipper must happily accept that the entity of the worshipped is superior in judgment than himself. However, if both the worshipper and the worshipped are equal in status, then any judgment issued by the worshipped is not absolute but merely one ‘view’ among others—it is as if one were to solicit a friend for a ‘second opinion’.

Thus, we see that there is one who issues the command and one who obeys the command. Were the two parties considered equal in statue, the one who obeys the command would be in need of some persuasion. However, if past experiences have determined that the giver of the command is superior than the recipient of the command — such as a teacher-student relationship or a doctor-patient relationship, for example — then in this case the recipient of the command will obey the issuer of the command because there is an underlying consensus that the issuer of the command knows what he is talking about. It is the same thing when discussing a believer’s relationship with Allah, for faith implies that a person believes in the existence of an Omnipotent God Who is endowed with all the qualities of Absolute Perfection. Therefore, if this is what one believes, then a human being obeys

what Allah commands him to do so as to earn Allah's good graces, love, and reward. If a person does not obey, he will bring upon himself Allah's wrath and punishment. Thus, if you obey Allah's commands and stay away from all that He has forbidden, you reap goodly reward from Him, but if you disobey His orders, you will be punished. It is obvious now that the deity you worship must be endowed with power greater than yours. This deity must be capable of recompensing and punishing. Such an Omnipotent Being is Allah *Glorified is He*. As for the idols they worshipped, what commandments did they issue? These idols never ordered them to do anything which makes them inappropriate objects of worship since the act of worship requires that there be commandments issued and proscriptions defined. These idols, however, had never issued any commandments, nor had they laid down any prohibitions. In fact, it was disbelievers themselves who put forth various prescriptions and proscriptions. This is totally inappropriate, for it is the worshipped deity that is required to delineate what is prescribed and what is prohibited.

Thus, worshipping idols is absolute foolishness. Idols neither punish the transgressors nor reward the faithful. They are not capable of issuing prescriptions or proscriptions. Those who put themselves in such a situation forget that they each have the power either to benefit the idol or to harm it. Anyone of them could create an idol, for instance, and anyone of them could fix it if it breaks or if he breaks it intentionally by throwing it on the ground. In short, this is a case where the worshipper has the power to either help or harm the worshipped object—and it is the epitome of intellectual failure.

This kind of worship represents a form of foolishness. If the matter were to be presented to the intellect, the latter—assuming it is functioning normally—would reject it outright.

When you try to engage with these people and show them that these idols are incapable of either helping or harming, you will find that some will keep insisting that: 'These are our intercessors with Allah!' (*Yunus*: 18) This is in itself an admission on their part that it is Allah Who truly has the power to help or to harm. If they chose to attach themselves to one who will act as an intercessor with Allah, should they not have at least selected an intercessor who enjoys a privileged status in the eyes of Allah *the Almighty* and who is



loved by Him? Furthermore, how can they say that they will seek intercession with Allah Who is explicit in His prohibition of all false deities and Who forbids all forms of idol worship? Can any true intercession take place without the consent of the One Whose Mercy is sought? It is for these reasons that the True Lord *Glorified is He* commands His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* with the following: ‘Do you inform Allah of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth?’

Therefore, where did you get this idea of the idols interceding before Allah on your behalf? There is absolutely no basis for such an idea. Never has Allah *Glorified is He* told you about the possibility of interceding idols, and nowhere in the Quran is there any mention of this which thereby means this is a fabrication and deliberate deception on your part, for it is He *the Most High* Who has created the heavens and the earth. He is aware of everything in the universe. This matter of idol-intercession has no basis in reality. It is in fact completely made up, fabricated. In this verse, when Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Do you inform Allah?’ is very much similar to another verse where the True Lord *the Most High* says: ‘Say: "Will you inform Allah about your religion?"’ (*al-Hujurat*: 16) This is a direct response to those who have maintained, and who continue to maintain, that what these current times require new legal decrees that are consistent with them. The fact is the more corrupted and degenerate the age becomes, the more they clamour for the alteration of religious laws. Since it is they who are acting as the lawgivers, it is as if they wish to teach their Creator how true religion should be. These are but ignorant musings which are disrespectful of the Power and Wisdom of the Creator of the universe who perfected His creation and instituted order therein. Also, when Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Say, "Do you inform Allah of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth?" Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him.’ It is to show that He *the Most High* transcends their petty claims, for He is the Creator of all things, Creator of both the human domain and the realm of the exclusively Divine Dominion, and He is Aware of all things. This idea of idols being intercessors has no basis in reality. It is a complete fabrication, and furthermore, Allah is aware of this matter. The True Lord *Glorified is He* is far above the possibility of there being anything in His Dominion—if it truly exists—that escapes His Knowledge.

Allah *the Exalted* is also far above any associates that are falsely set up in His place, for the function of the associate is to assist the one with whom he is associated. We see, for instance, when someone has enough capital, he invests his money in some trade. However, if he does not have enough money to invest on his own, he will seek an associate with whom to join forces. The truth of the matter is that Allah is Powerful, Omnipotent and does not need any help in the management of His creation. Given this understanding, where do these false associates fit in? The True Lord *the Most High* says: 'Say, [O, Muhammad], "If there had been with Him [other] gods, as they say, then they [each] would have sought to the Owner of the Throne a way."' (*al-Isra'*: 42)

This wise verse alerts disbelievers to the fact that even if these associates have the power to act, they will not be able to do anything save with the permission of the Lord of the Throne—Allah *Glorified is He*. When they mistakenly believed that every planet influences a sphere of the universe, that the stars influence a sphere of the universe and that the astrological signs exert their influence—they forgot that eventually all things hinge on the consent of the King of kings. How misguided are the people who entertain such ideas? There are also the philosophers who posit that there are things in the universe which human beings cannot possibly create, along with things which man cannot possibly claim to have created, for human beings encountered this world after it had already been created.

Man encountered the sun, the moon, the stars, and the earth after they had already been in existence. Obviously, there must exist a power—superior to human beings—that created all of these phenomena. These creatures require the existence of a Higher Being responsible for bringing them into the realm of existence. There are no factories which can produce the sun, the moon, or the earth. So far, no one has come forth and claimed that he has created these phenomena. However, the philosophers who have come to accept the existence of a Creator have not given Him a name, nor have they been able to decipher His doctrine; the True Lord's Power is absolute, and He has no need for associates. If we were to contemplate on a mere fraction of the effects of Allah's Power, we could look at the traces that this Power has left human beings, specifically, how this is apparent in the creation of the electric light

bulb? We know that there are no seeds that are planted in the ground which grow into light bulb bearing trees. The creation of the electric light bulb required the efforts of scientists who have studied the science of power through various equations.

These scientists were able to conceive the possibility of creating the electric light bulb. They worked hard to expel all air from inside the glass bulb where the illuminated wire was to be placed. The creation of one light bulb requires the efforts of scientists and the industriousness of the factories—all of this in order to bring light, temporarily, to a single room. Also, if this is the case, what about the sun which illuminates the entire cosmos? If the slightest of things requires massive amounts of theoretical and practical knowledge, research and the development of industrial technology, what about that sun that illuminates half of the globe for twelve hours every day, which no one can turn off and which requires no maintenance on man's part. If you are looking for the Creator Who is behind all of this, the only possible answer is Allah *the Exalted*. In all your ingenuity, in all your industry, you can never forget about Allah; true intelligence is the mark of he who perceives—in his own inventions and creations—evidence of Allah as the ultimate Creator. If the True Lord *Glorified is He* has created the sun—among other things—and if the sun were to set, and everyone were to turn off their light bulbs, it is the sun that is the ultimate light bulb that guides us all. If this were the act of only one of Allah's creations, then what about every single other blessing which He has given His creatures? The light of the sun represents the sensible gift which protects us from bumping blindly into things, such that they do not hurt us and we did not break them. Similarly, the True Lord *the Most High* illuminates for us the ultimate meanings and the deepest of truths.

Beware of saying that so-and-so a philosopher has come up with X philosophical position—so embrace it blindly. Let your intellect examine this philosopher's position in the light of the truths which the True Lord *Glorified is He* articulates in the Quran. Then, if this particular philosophy is put into practical use and becomes evident that runs philosophically parallel with the Quran—then in this case say, 'The True Lord *the Most High* has guided so-and-so, a philosopher, to the discovery of one of the Quran's secrets, for the True

Lord *Glorified is He* wants us to hold up all things to the scrutiny of our intellect.' He wishes that we examine everything thoroughly and that we arrive at the truth through the process of intellection—thus to draw closer to Allah and not—Allah forbid—to stray further away from Him. If Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him', it is due to that seeking an associate amounts to seeking help and one asks only for the help of a peer or the help of a higher power. On the other hand, Allah *the Almighty* does not have a peer, nor does there exist any power that is higher than He. In the next verse Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلَّا أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوا وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ  
سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

**All people were originally one single community, but later they differed. If it had not been for a word from your Lord, the preordained judgement would already have been passed between them regarding their differences [19] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 19)**

There is another verse in the Quran that is very much similar to this one, even though the wording might be slightly different. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says in the chapter of *al-Baqara*: 'Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets.' (*al-Baqara*: 213) Those who read the Quran in a superficial manner without delving deeply into its meanings might not notice other verses that are similar to it in their general meaning. The meanings of these verses are harmonious with one another, with no contradiction in the meanings of Quranic verses. This is why we find that there are modern thinkers who say that all of mankind was once engulfed in heathenism, and it was only afterwards that the intellect progressed to the point where it began a quest for more powerful beings to worship. Men found mountains to be the tallest, the highest and most resilient beings, so they began worshipping them. Others believed the sun is the most powerful of all beings, so they began worshipping it, while others worshipped the moon and the stars, whereas other communities considered trees to be deities. Every group turned to one element or other of the natural order and deified it by virtue of its perceived power.

The people who hold this kind of view supposed that man was steered toward the necessity of religion through the mind. They think that the mind continued to evolve until it arrived at the doctrine of Unity. Our response to those who hold this view is that your position cuts creation off from the Creator. It is as if Allah—Who has given form to His creation and Who has extended material sustenance to His creatures—would at the same time deprive His creatures of moral sustenance for their lives. Such a notion is unacceptable and inconceivable, for how can Allah *the Almighty* secure for His created beings material sustenance, while withholding from them the moral sustenance and the principles which guard against barbarism along with all forms of corruption and degeneracy? Consider, for instance, the True Lord's Words: 'Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warner and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed. And none differed over the Scripture except those who were given it - after the clear proofs came to them - out of jealous animosity among themselves. And Allah guided those who believed to the truth concerning that over which they had differed, by His permission. And Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path.' (*al-Baqara*: 213) This is the reason why some might have assumed that all of mankind was once seeped in disbelief and that when Prophets came forth, people began to hold divergent views since some of them chose to embrace the faith that was tendered to them, while others rejected it and remained entrenched in their various forms of paganism. However, if those who are of this opinion were to analyse the matter correctly, they would realise that what is meant by the verse which we are currently examining is that all of mankind was once but a single community, but they came to hold divergent views, making the way for Allah to send His Prophets to heal the rifts which had grown between people and to reunite them once again in the name of the original covenant of faith—they all announced in a single voice.

The heart of the matter is that mankind was united upon faith, not in heathenism. Whomsoever takes the above mentioned verse of the chapter of *al-Baqara* as evidence of mankind's original heathenism, we would advise him to read the verse in its entirety, whereby he will find that the True Lord

*the Most High* says: 'Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed.' We see that the divergence of views of which the verse in the chapter of *al-Baqara* addresses occurs at the end, whereas it occurs in the verse at hand in the beginning. This shows that mankind was a single community united by a singular faith. In the eyes of the Creator, there is no community of people which is worth more than another. Allah's justice is such that He cannot leave a community of people remain lost in their heathenism, while He sends forth Prophets to guide another community. All people are equal in His eyes.

As long as Allah *the Exalted* has created human beings, He, therefore, must also furnish them with a doctrine based on this, as such when we read the Words of the True Lord *Glorified is He*: 'Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at *Mecca* - blessed and a guidance for the worlds.' (*Al-Imran*: 96) We find the answer to those who say that Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* was the first to have built the *Ka'ba* since it is inconceivable that Allah *Glorified is He* had not had a holy sanctuary established from the time of Adam to Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon them* to which people can perform pilgrimage. The True Lord established the *Ka'ba*, so that mankind could perform pilgrimage there from the time when Adam was created until the Day of Judgment. The original builder of the *Ka'ba* was not human. It was rather the Creator of men who laid the foundations. All what Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* had done was simply to raise the foundations of the Kaaba.

He rebuilt the *Ka'ba* in height after its location and its length and width dimension had been identified as the True Lord says: 'and [mention, O, Muhammad], when We designated for Ibrahim (Abraham) the site of the House.' (*al-Hajj*: 26)

It is true what Allah *the Almighty* says about the *Ka'ba* having existed for the benefit of men since before Adam was created. It will remain standing for the benefit of mankind until the Day of Judgment. We see how the True Lord *the Most High* created His servants and provided a doctrine for them. We also

see how, in the beginning, all of mankind was united on one faith; however, heathenism and disbelief crept in from two sides: forgetfulness along with the habit of imitating one's forefathers. The proof of this is that when Allah *Glorified is He* speaks of the Original Covenant. He says: 'And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam—from their loins—their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware." Or [lest] you say, "It was only that our fathers associated [others in worship] with Allah before, and we were but descendants after them. Then would you destroy us for what the falsifiers have done?"' (*al-A'raf*: 172-173)

Thus, straying from faith is a result of two things, the first of which is forgetfulness. It is to know something at one point, but you fail to keep that knowledge at the forefront of your consciousness since your mind registers information and soaks it up the first time around unless your mind is unfocused during that time. Therefore, if you are clear-headed and lucid-minded at that time, paying attention to the data that is coming through to you, your mind will record this information thoroughly the first time around—but it is important that the mind be clear of all distraction at the moment when this new information is registered. This is why we find differences among people when it comes to retaining information. One person retains a piece of information while his mind is free of any other irrelevant information; thus, the newly received data is embedded into his consciousness, whereas another person has to keep reading the piece of information over and over again until his consciousness becomes free of all distractions. Only then does the data stick in his mind, and when a new piece of information comes along, the old piece of information is relegated to the back of the mind until it is summoned later.

For example, if a student wanted to retain all of the information he is reading, he must clear his mind of that which preoccupies him so that he can concentrate on what he is studying. If he sits down to study but his mind is preoccupied, he will be forced to re-read the material more than once, until the information he is reading coincides with a section of his consciousness that is not so dispersed; only then will the information be retained. For instance, a student could wake up on the morning of the exam day and might

hear from his fellow colleagues that the questions of the test will focus on such-and-such a section of the syllabus. The student will open his book and reads the material from that section once. This information sticks in his mind, and when he sits down to take the exam, he finds that the question is about the very same section which he had read before coming in to the class. Thus, his answer to the question is accurate.

This is why the smart student is the one who studies using the technique known as concomitant. It means that he reads over the lesson and then closes the book. He then asks himself, 'What new information was on that page that I just read?' He tries to recall this and identify the new terms that were mentioned on the page and the new concepts that either reinforces what he already knew or corrects any misconceptions he might have had. The student 'familiarises' himself with the new information through concentration and diligence. Similarly, an outstanding teacher is one who explains the lesson once and then pauses to quiz his students; this commands their full attention, so that they desist from thinking about anything that is unrelated to the lesson. An outstanding teacher is one who makes his lesson interesting to the students—just as a fascinating story would elicit their fascination, so that the pieces of information given in the lesson are not just dry facts. Thus, minds remain in a state of concentration, not forgetfulness. Forgetfulness overcomes a person when it comes to religious matters since the egoistical desires inside the human soul usually clash with the prescriptive or proscriptive directives of religion, which consequentially drives a person to become forgetful of some of the prescriptions here, and some proscriptions there, until his heart becomes covered over by that rust which the True Lord *Glorified is He* talks about when He says: 'No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning.' (*al-Mutaffifin*: 14)

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* explains the issue further in a Hadith: 'Trustworthiness descended into the innermost root of the man's heart. Then, the Quran was revealed, and they learnt from the Quran and they learnt from the *Sunnah*.' Then, the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* tells us about the removal of trustworthiness. He *peace and blessings be upon him* says: 'A man would sleep and trustworthiness is taken away from his heart,



leaving the impression of a faint mark.' This means like a blister by fire. This process goes on until the heart is covered over by a thick layer of rust. Thus, forgetfulness creeps into the human soul; a man becomes forgetful of one thing, and soon he forgets about something else, and so on and so forth.

However, he who does not succumb to forgetfulness remains aware of the religious directives. He duly applies them and tastes their sweetness. For instance, a Muslim whom Allah made welcome prayer openly, he feels miserable if he misses it. This is why the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* is narrated to have said, 'Temptations will be presented to a man's heart as a reed mat is woven stick by stick. Any heart which becomes impregnated by them will have a black mark put on it, but any heart which rejects them will have a white mark put on it. The result is that there will be different types of hearts. One is white like a white stone which will not be harmed by any turmoil or temptation, for as long as the heavens and the earth endure. The other is black, dust-colour, like a vessel which has been upset; it will be incapable of either recognising the good or rejecting the evil except that what is consistent with its desires.'<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus, forgetfulness is the first door which the devil uses to gain access to a man's soul; then a man begins to distance himself from Allah's judgments. When a father becomes forgetful, his children start imitating him, and soon they are overcome by forgetfulness themselves. Thus, a forgetful person is a terrible example for his posterity. This is why the True Lord *the Most High* says regarding sons and daughters who continue to emulate the forgetful lifestyles of their parents: 'No, we shall follow that which we found our forefathers doing.'<sup>(al-Baqara: 170)</sup>

This excuse that one is only emulating one's forefathers is a false one because if we trace the roots of faith back to their origin with Adam, who is the father of all human beings, we will find that Adam had obeyed Allah's every order. So, if they were to follow their claim of following their forefathers, this would mean that they cannot stray from the primordial faith, otherwise they

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(1) *Related by Muslim in his (Sahih) (144) and by Ahmad in his (Masnad) (5/386, 405); narrated on the authority of Hudhayfa ibn Al-Yaman*

would have to be considered one of those who lie and are heedful of the forgetfulness that crept into the primordial faith, by means of blind following. It is the True Lord's Will that every word in Quran possesses a meaning that is precise and purposefully formulated. In fact, Allah *the Almighty* quotes disbelievers as saying: 'indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are, in their footsteps, following.' (*az-Zukhruf*: 23) Notice that He does not say *guided*; rather, He says *following* since the latter refers to who takes one's forefather as models of behaviour, whereas the former refers to who thinks one's forefather is on the right path. Therefore, the one who follows is necessarily tolerating whether or not the religion of his forefathers was true. He is happy to emulate them. Now emulating one's forefathers can fall into one of two categories: pure imitation that has no relation with either true or false guidance and emulation with the certainty that the behaviour being emulated is true to Allah's Decree.

There has been controversy over whether Adam *peace be upon him* was a Messenger or only a Prophet. There have been some who said that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* was the first Messenger. We would ask, 'Is it logical for Allah to have left all the human beings who came before Nuh (Noah) without a Messenger?' Allah *Glorified is He* Himself says: 'And there was no nation but that there had passed within it a warner.' (*Fatir*: 24) Now what caused these commentators to say what they did—namely, that Nuh (Noah) was the first Messenger—is their superficial reading of the text. They assumed that a Messenger is only sent forth if there is a community to receive his message, and since Adam was the first human being, then how could Adam be a Messenger and to whom was his message addressed? What these commentators failed to realise was that Adam *peace be upon him* was a Messenger and a model for his children. The True Lord *the Most High* tells Adam: 'And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance- there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.' (*al-Baqara*: 38) Allah *Glorified is He* also told Adam: 'And if there should come to you guidance from Me-then whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray [in the world] nor suffer [in the Hereafter].' (*Ta Ha*: 123)

Since Allah *the Exalted* has brought up the issue of 'guidance', He is, by the same token, speaking of the Doctrine. It is the tenets of this Doctrine that

Adam held himself to, and his children followed his example. These commentators also forgot to examine the verses in which the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'And recite to them the story of Adam's two sons, in truth, when they both offered a sacrifice [to Allah].' (*al-Ma'ida*: 27) In addition, Adam's two sons sought 'closeness' with Allah *the Almighty*. Therefore, they understood that Allah existed. When Cain told his brother: 'I will surely kill you.' (*al-Ma'ida*: 27), this was after Allah *the Exalted* had accepted the sacrifices his brother, Abel, offered; however, Allah did not accept Cain's attempts to ingratiate himself to his Lord. So, Abel said: 'Indeed, Allah only accepts from the righteous.' (*al-Ma'ida*: 27) Abel also said: 'If you should raise your hand against me to kill me, I shall not raise my hand against you to kill you. Indeed, I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds.' (*al-Ma'ida*: 28) Thus, if Adam was not a Messenger, then who taught his sons that there is a God who rewards and punishes?

In the verse which we are currently examining, the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'And if not for a word that preceded from your Lord, it would have been judged between them [immediately] concerning that over which they differ' (*Yunus*: 19). This verse indicates that, before having sent forth Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* Allah used to punish those who denied any Message conveyed by any Messenger sent by Him. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'So each We seized for his sin, and among them were those upon whom We sent a storm of stones, and among them were those who were seized by the blast [from the sky], and among them were those whom We caused the earth to swallow, and among them were those whom We drowned. And Allah would not have wronged them, but it was they who were wronging themselves.' (*al-'Ankabut*: 40)

Such was the fate of most people who deny their messenger—except for Muhammad's community, regarding which Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'But Allah would not punish them while you, [O, Muhammad], are among them, and Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness.' (*al-Anfal*: 33) This means that Allah *Glorified is He* has deferred the reward and punishment of Muhammad's community until the Day of Judgment. This is the gist of this last verse that Allah *the Almighty* will not hold the members of Muhammad's

community to account for their sins in this life; rather, He will postpone this until the Day of Judgment. On that day, Allah *Glorified is He* will settle the accounts of those who followed Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and those who resisted him. Naturally, the True Lord *Glorified is He* will be on the side of Prophet Muhammad whom He had sent forth, not on the side of those who opposed him. Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَيَقُولُونَ لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا الْغَيْبُ  
لِلَّهِ فَأَنْتَظِرُونَ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

**They say, ‘Why has no miraculous sign been sent down to him from his Lord?’ Say [Prophet], ‘Only God knows the unseen, so wait – I too am waiting’ [20] (The Quran, *Yunus: 20*)**

Now a ‘sign’—as we have come to know—is either that which is marvellous and awe-inspiring, such as a cosmic sign, a miracle, or a verse of the Quran containing judgments. Why did they not believe in the verses of the Quran — which are in fact a miracle from their point of view? The answer is that believing in the Quran is part and parcel of believing in the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*. Also, they were confused since they thought that the ‘signs’ are the cosmic ones that can be seen and felt. They did not know that the signs of the previous messengers had come to match the time periods of their messages and their status among their own communities.

All of the messengers *peace be upon them* who preceded Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had been sent to a particular community, defined by time and space. This is why the ‘signs’ which they had brought with them were of the miraculous, tangible variety. Every one of these signs corresponded in one sense or another to the special temperament of the community which witnessed them. As for Muhammad’s Message, it concerns peoples of all places and all times. Had Allah *Glorified is He* given Muhammad a sign of the phenomenal order—that is a miracle limited by its time and space—then only those who witnessed it would believe it, and it would come as mere news to everyone else. For example, we, as Muslims, would not believe that Musa (Moses) parted the red sea with his staff, except that the Quran tells us so. Now, every

event of the phenomenal order happens once, and those who witness it directly believe in it, and those who did not witness it, when they are told about it, can either deny it or believe it. We, as Muslims, have believed it because it is the True Lord *Glorified is He*; Himself Who has informed us about it in the Quran. It is our faith in the informer that has led us to believe the miracles of the Messengers who preceded Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

Some might wonder about the reasons for not endowing Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* with physical miracles. It was Allah's Will that He sent forth the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* armed with a miracle that will pass the test of time and endure throughout the ages, until the Day of Judgment. We are speaking, of course, of the miracle of the Quran. The early biographies of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* speak of water flowing between his fingers. If you read about it and decide not to believe, then you should know that this miracle has not targeted you. This miracle targeted the Prophet's contemporaries. Its objective was to put in order the faith of the Prophet's contemporaries. The early biographies of the Prophet also mention the fistful of food from which ate a great number of men. Those who wish to believe these accounts, let them believe, and those who wish not to believe these accounts, they should know that these accounts were not meant for them, they are only relevant to the contemporaries of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*. This does not exclude the possibility of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* being granted physical miracles—just like other Messengers—which we must believe insofar as the narrators of these accounts are credible.

In this verse, the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'and they say, "Why is a sign not sent down to him from his Lord?"' It is as if they refuse to admit the existence of the Quran, and instead, they ask to see a physical miracle. This is why we find Allah *Glorified is He* saying in another part of the Quran: 'Why was he not given like that which was given to Musa (Moses)?' (*al-Qasas*: 48) This is further proof that they asked to see a physical miracle, for they had known about the physical miracles of the Messengers who preceded the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*. However, this saying of theirs meant that they still clung to their disbelief even as they had witnessed the Prophet

*peace and blessings be upon him* in all of his states. To be sure, these physical miracles did take place; those who witnessed them believed in them, and their faith was strengthened. Those who demanded that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* perform a physical miracle—akin to the one Musa (Moses) performed—forgot that Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* had been sent to a specific community: the children of Israel. Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* on the other hand, was sent forth for the benefit of all of humanity. This is why his miracle had to be one that could keep on giving. It also had to contain the Doctrine that could be applied to all times and places. The effect of the physical miracles is bound by the constraints of its time and place. These disbelievers were known to have been very specific in their demands for physical miracles. For instance, some of the miracles they asked for include the following: 'And they say, "We will not believe you until you break open for us from the ground a spring. Or [until] you have a garden of palm trees and grapes and make rivers gush forth within them in force [and abundance]. Or you make the heaven fall upon us in fragments as you have claimed or you bring Allah and the angels before [us]."' (*al-Isra'*: 90-93) Thus, they had demanded to see miracles which they themselves had suggested. However, miracles never come according to the suggestions of the intended audience; they depend on the particular gift of the Prophet and his relationship with Allah *the Exalted*.

One might ask: 'Why did the True Lord not bring forth the physical miracles which they asked for?' The answer is that the True Lord *the Most High* has said: 'And nothing has prevented Us from sending signs except that the former peoples denied them.' (*al-Isra'*: 59) Their demand for miracles is empty for Allah *Glorified is He* had brought forth miracles in the past, but these were rejected by the people of ancient times. They had proposed their own miracles and the True Lord *the Most High* states them as saying: 'why is a sign not sent down to him from his Lord?' This is an admission on their part that Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is in contact with a Lord and that he is delivering a Message on His Lord's behalf. Therefore, how can they keep deny the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*?! We know that they had previously said: 'Muhammad's Lord has abandoned him.' This was when the flow of revelation from heaven was momentarily suspended. However, Allah

*Glorified is He* answered them: 'Your Lord has not taken leave of you, [O, Muhammad], nor has He detested [you].' (*ad-Duha*: 3) They had contradicted themselves in the sense that when the revelation was forthcoming, they denied the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and rejected the idea that he was being divinely inspired by his Lord. Then when revelation was momentarily suspended, they admitted that he had a Lord. This kind of contradiction regarding the question of Allah's existence leads to a muddled judgment. Therefore, this is a sign that a person is under the heavy influence of his own desires.

Then, in response to their demand for a physical miracle, the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'So say, "The unseen is only for Allah [to administer]."' Allah *the Exalted* teaches His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* a response which he can give when all else fails. For it is possible that Allah *the Almighty* brings forth a physical miracle. It is also possible for Him not to bring it forth. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* cannot command his Lord to do anything, for Allah *Glorified is He* is the only One concerned with any matter having to do with the unseen. If He so wills, He can make a scene from the world of the unseen manifest itself in the physical world; likewise, if He so wills, He can maintain the world of the unseen in a state of absolute mystery. All you can do is to wait. The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* announced he himself is among those who wait: 'so wait. Indeed, I am with you among those who wait.'

Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ مَّسَّتْهُمْ إِذَا لَهُم مَّكْرٌ فِي  
ءَايَاتِنَا قُلِ اللَّهُ أَسْرَعُ مَكْرًا إِنَّ رُسُلَنَا يَكْتُبُونَ مَا تَمْكُرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

**No sooner do We let people taste some mercy after some hardship has afflicted them, than they begin to scheme against Our revelations. Say, 'God schemes even faster.' Our messengers record all your scheming [21] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 21)**

When the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* came to his wit's end because of the disbelievers of the Quraysh, he supplicated the True Lord *Glorified is He* to guide them to the straight path by unleashing upon them the

same plagues that befell Egypt and which Yusuf (Joseph) *peace be upon him* was able to see through. The True Lord *the Most High* unleashed a severe drought upon the Quraysh followed by Mercy. Normally, they should have turned to Allah and believed in the Message of His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* especially after they had learnt that what befell them in the way of drought was due to the Prophet's supplication against them, 'O, Allah! Let them suffer from years of drought similar to the drought inflicted during the lifetime of Yusuf (Joseph).'<sup>(1)</sup> After seven years of drought and hardship ended, Allah *the Almighty* showed them His Mercy in the form of heavy, life-giving rain. Unfortunately, they did not realise their obligation to thank Allah and to have faith in Him and His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*. Instead, they kept looking for other reasons to justify the rain. Some of them said, 'these rains have fallen because of such-and-such a storm and because the winds began to blow in such-and-such a direction.' They put forth all these theories without taking note of the fact that the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* had stopped praying that Allah *the Exalted* would punish them. They are like those who would analyse the reasons for victory in battle and determine that it comes down to how well fund an army is, how many men it has and how well equipped it is. No one is denying the importance of making the necessary preparations for war; however, the result—whether one wins or loses—always remains in the hands of Allah *Glorified is He*; this fact is more important than any other consideration. The believers who prepared themselves for battle and entered the battlefield found that Allah's miracles always brought them victory since the True Lord always grants victory to those who fight for the glory of His Name.

As for those who say that the causes of military victory are limited to preparation, they fail to realise that the soldiers who went to war after undergoing intense training know that training alone is not enough to forge the fighting spirit of the soldier. Rather, a zeal for the fight, martyrdom in battle and entering Paradise are the best motivation. In case of victory of non-Muslims over Muslims, which is against the norm, should be absolutely certain that Allah *the Almighty* decided this end result. Also, he who maintains that military

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(1) Narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra may Allah be pleased with him.



victory depends on how advanced a civilisation is, he will find his answer coming from the combatants themselves: civilisation without faith merely results in material progress—and this is unsubstantial and cannot bring about victory. Victory cannot be achieved by material wealth alone. Allah *the Exalted* has commanded us to prepare ourselves materially for battle; however, victory depends on our faith more than it does on our material wealth.

This is why we find that those who waged our victorious war on the tenth of Ramadan, 1393 Hijri (October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1973), knew that Allah *the Almighty* would help them in battle after they had prepared themselves to the best of their ability. None of the soldiers believed that material preparations alone were sufficient for victory; it is necessary, however, if one only combines both faith and skill in arms, then one can achieve victory; this is why the combatants themselves do not believe that material factors alone can account for victory—this is the strongest counter-argument to those who deny or play down the role of faith in military engagements. Hence, we find that those who achieve victory by virtue of the value of faith serve the cause of faith since to deny faith is to lessen the value of the materialist perspective. It is that Allah grants victory to His religion so as to strengthen the faith of His soldiers and so as to diminish the value and the status of those who belittle the role of faith. An example of this in the history of Islam is when Jews used to implore Allah *the Exalted* for victory over the people of the 'Aws and Khazraj tribes of Medina and that a Prophet was going to appear. They—meaning Jews—would follow him, and would kill the Arab tribes of 'Aws and Khazraj to the last woman and child.

When the time commenced for the appearance of Muhammad Ibn 'Abdullah in Mecca, the tribes of 'Aws and Khazraj were among the first to believe in him, They said, 'This is the Prophet whom Jews used to threaten us with. Let us pledge our allegiance to him before they do. It was the threats uttered by Jews which pushed the 'Aws and the Khazraj tribes to embrace the faith. Allah *the Exalted* can make His religion victorious through the agency of the profligate, even as the profligate thinks that it is he who is plotting against the religion. Similarly, when they were shown mercy after years of drought, they looked to explain away the rain by positing scientific, materialistic explanations. They did not think of the higher causes connected with faith.

This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says in this verse which we are currently examining: 'And when We give the people a taste of mercy after adversity has touched them, at once they conspire against Our verses. Say, "Allah is swifter in strategy." Indeed, our Messengers record that which you conspire.'

*Conspire* is deceitful double-talk which refuses to acknowledge Allah's Mercy. It is the claim that the rain were caused by such-and-such a storm, or that they were precipitated by such-and-such a constellation. The True Lord *the Most High* says: 'they conspire against Our verses.' *Conspire* denotes furtive deceit. In this context, more specifically, it means an attempt to explain away such phenomena in order to dismiss the fact of Allah's creation of the awesome forces of nature. However, even science and its scientific laws are a gift from Allah *the Almighty*. Only the True Lord *Glorified is He* is capable of suspending the natural laws and violating the laws of physics as we know them, for He is the Lord of all these laws. Therefore, attribute all events to Him so that we may not stray into the same misguided ignorance that some philosophers have—those who think that Allah *the Almighty* created the universe and the natural laws, so that He could then retire and let the universe function according to these natural laws alone. We would say that if the True Lord has created the natural laws and left them to manage the universe alone, then nothing could ever violate those laws. However, the miracles of the Prophets—for example—did just that. They momentarily annulled the physical laws. Furthermore, Allah *the Exalted* has retained the right to control the natural laws as He pleases. It is true that, in the beginning, He created these laws and has allowed them to function as they were designed; nevertheless, He remains watchful over them, suspending them whenever He wants, re-establishing them whenever He wants, and directing them any way He wants. One might be able to trick one's peers, but will not be able to trick the One Who is higher than you. Thus, if disbelievers deceive, then Allah is quicker to deceive and more cunning. The True Lord *the Most High* says: 'Allah is swifter in strategy.' This kind of statement is known as *mushakalat at-ta'bir*.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) (*Al-mushakalah*): a style of rhetoric often used in the Quran. It consists of mentioning or referring to one thing by using the name or description of something else because the two occur together.

What this means is that you must consider the doer and the action in this sentence as a special case; you cannot derive a Name of Allah from this verse. Be careful not to say, for example, that Allah *Glorified is He* is the 'Deceiver' since conspiring is the furtive, deceitful methods that you would use against your peers; rather, you cannot attempt such a thing against He Who is aware of everything that goes on inside of your soul. One, however, cannot do that to Allah *the Exalted* because of one's lack of awareness.

Look at any group of people who are conspiring! You will find that they will often be caught because of informers who report them to the authorities and the security forces. The artful machinations of human beings can be unmasked at any moment if one of them were to tell the others. In fact, there are some people who do not conspire, but who can identify and expose a group of conspirators with one glance. The most advanced piece of modern equipment can now listen in on people's conversations and record them. This sort of sly artifice is used among human beings, but what if Allah *the Almighty* were to plot furtively against someone? There is no one who could inform us of His plot, and there is no one who could alert us to His spying! Allah's guile, therefore, is infinitely more effective than any human trickery.

Human trickery can be exposed by a traitor; it can be brought to light through spying. However, could anyone expose Allah's guile? Of course not, this sentence 'Allah is swifter in strategy' shows you that there are two parties vying with each other. Furthermore, when you say: 'This person is faster than that person', it means that both of them are competing with each other to try and reach the same goal. However, one is faster than the other and will reach the goal before the other one does. In addition, human ruse is an event that happens in time and space. Allah, nevertheless, exists pre-temporally. He is aware of all things even before they happen. He puts everything in order before it happens. This is why He would be faster to deceive you should you decide to be deceitful towards Him.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'And when We give the people a taste of mercy after adversity has touched them, at once they conspire against Our verses.' When the True Lord *the Most High* sent down the rain as a Mercy from Him, they did not pause to savour Allah's Mercy which came in the form of life-giving water after years of terrible drought. They rather suddenly hatched

their deceitful plans and so Allah says: "Allah is swifter in strategy." Indeed, Our Messengers record that which you conspire.'

You see the ways in which the deceitful plans of human beings can be foiled. An informer alerts the authorities to a conspirator's plot or spying, or it can be through one of Allah's agents—the angels who record everything those human beings do. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '[It will be said], "Read your record. Sufficient is yourself against you this Day as accountant" ...' (*al-Isra'*: 14).

The True Lord *the Most High* relates all the events of the past since He wanted to give the Quraysh a chance to make amends for their vehement opposition to the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*. They justified this opposition of theirs by saying that they were merely following the ways of their forefathers, but this argument is erroneous. In reality, their ancestors were believers; their going astray was an accidental matter, and the idols which they worshipped were imposed upon them from the Romans. The practice of idolatry was imported to Arabia by a person who used to roam throughout the lands of the Romans whose name was 'Amr ibn Luhay. If they were to revert to a state of faith after their stubborn intransigence, then this would be the rightly guided path of their forefathers, true as they were to the primordial and unalienable disposition of the human soul and faithful as they were to the original pact between mankind and the Lord.

Then the True Lord *the Most High* says:

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِمْ بِرِيحٍ طَبَئَةٍ  
وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَاءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ  
بِهِمْ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ لَئِنْ أَنْجَيْتَنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

**It is He who enables you to travel on land and sea until, when you are sailing on ships and rejoicing in the favouring wind, a storm arrives: waves come at those on board from all sides and they feel there is no escape. Then they pray to God, professing sincere devotion to Him, 'If You save us from this we shall be truly thankful' [22] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 22)**

This noble verse represents another stage in Allah's account of those who opposed the Message of Islam. Allah *the Exalted* began with showing them

Mercy when He postponed answering the supplications they had made against themselves. Had Allah answered their prayers when they said: 'O, Allah , if this should be the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the sky or bring us a painful punishment' (*al-Anfal*: 32), that would have been the end of them. It is a Mercy from Allah *Glorified is He* that He did not answer their prayers. Now, if it is a Mercy from Allah *the Almighty* that He has deferred answering their self-destructive supplications, then they should know that it is also a Mercy from Him if He does not answer their imploring since they might be supplicating for something bad, whilst thinking that it is good. Afterwards, Allah shows them how false and insincere were their self-destructive supplications—for as soon as harm befell them, they turned to Allah and begged Him on their sides, sitting down and standing up. If they had genuinely desired for harm to befall them, they would have accepted their painful ordeal until Allah *Glorified is He* decided otherwise. Then Allah *the Exalted* brings up another issue. If Allah touches them with harm, they should take heed—so that they might acknowledge His Mercy when He delivers them from their ordeal. However, they carry on as if they had never asked for His help when they were afflicted by harm. Therefore, in the verse which we are currently studying, the True Lord paints another picture for us which is enabling us to travel over land and sea. He says: 'It is He Who enables you to travel on land and sea'

It would seem as if this verse which we are currently studying attributes the 'enabling' to Allah *the Exalted*, while some other verse attributes the 'enabling' to the human soul. We would say to those who claim that there is contradiction therein that any action eventually traces back to Allah's Will. For example, when we say, 'So-and-so succeeded', is it really the person who succeeded? Or was it someone else who allowed him to succeed? It was the one who administered and graded the test who allowed him to succeed; they graded his test based on his answers, and his answers are indicators of the efforts he expended in memorisation. When considered in a direct manner, all actions can be attributed to their doer. However, if you were to trace their causes back through time, you would find that all actions have to be attributed to Allah.

For example, if you asked, 'Who made this chair?' You would answer, 'The carpenter.' Furthermore, if you were to ask the carpenter, 'Where did the wood come from?' He would tell you, 'From the merchant.' Thus, the

merchant would tell you that he imported it from heavily forested lands, and so on and so forth. Thus, if you want to trace back every action in this world of existence, you will most certainly end up with Allah *Glorified is He*.

Also, when the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'And when Musa (Moses) had completed the term and was traveling with his family' (*al-Qasas*: 29), we understand from this verse that Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was made to lead his family forth. This act of 'enabling' was, in all its aspects, from Allah *the Almighty*.

Another example: when the True Lord *the Most High* says in the Quran: 'And that it is He Who makes [one] laugh and weep.' (*an-Najm*: 43) for it is He Who has created 'laughter', and it is He Who has created 'crying'. We find some who ask how can Allah *Glorified is He* say that it is He Who has created 'laughter' and 'crying' even though He says in the Quran: 'Let them, then, laugh a little – for they will weep a lot in return' (*at-Tawba*: 82)? We would reply that if you look at who acts out the 'laughter', we will find that it is human beings who laugh, and if you investigated who it is that created the 'instinct' of laughter in human beings; you would find that it is Allah *Glorified is He*. The instinct of laughter is one and the same across the spectrum of existence. It is the same with crying. There is not a laughter that is 'Arab' or a laughter that is 'English'; nor is there a cry that is 'French' or a cry that is 'Russian'. Therefore, it is Allah *Glorified is He* Who has created both 'laughter' and 'crying'. The True Lord's Words are accurate: 'And that it is He Who makes [one] laugh and weep.' (*an-Najm*: 43) However, the 'laugher' and the 'crier' are the ones that become subject of such descriptions.

The True Lord *the Most High* also says: 'and you threw not, [O, Muhammad], when you threw, but it was Allah Who threw.' (*al-Anfal*: 17) It was Allah's Will to enable His Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to throw the pebbles; however, the act of directing each of these pebbles such that they strike their targets in the opposing army, this is a matter of Allah's Will.

Thus, when the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'It is He Who enables you to travel on land and sea,' this does not contradict the fact that it is they who are performing the act of 'travelling'. If you were to formulate a definition of 'travel' on land and at sea, you would find that travel denotes the movement of the traveller from point A to point B. Furthermore, it is the traveller who,

with his mind, determines the final destination of the journey—as he travels over land or through sea on his feet in a car or in a boat. Now this mind was created by Allah, and so were the earth and the sea. All of these are the creations of Allah *Glorified is He*. When you move your feet in order to walk, you do not know how you started your walk, nor do you know how many muscles are involved in your act of walking. It is Allah *Glorified is He* Who has enabled your mind to harness the energies of your body and to manage them in harmony so as to perform the act of walking. Thus, the origin of everything is to be found with Allah *the Almighty*. The statement in this verse concerns travelling on land and sea. These two means of travelling are different. For example, when man travels over dry land, the path he is following might come to an abrupt end, and he could seek the help of a passer-by or wait for a passer-by to appear. As for travelling by sea, a person is not likely to find anyone around to rescue him. Thus, travelling by sea is a riskier affair than travelling by land. This is why we find that Allah *the Exalted* says in this verse which we are currently examining, regarding travelling by sea: 'when you are in ships and they sail with them by a good wind and they rejoice therein, there comes a storm wind and the waves come upon them from everywhere, and they assume that they are surrounded, supplicating to Allah, sincere to Him in religion, "If You should save us from this, we will surely be among the thankful."'

We see that in this verse there is no further talk about travelling by land since the True Lord *Glorified is He* has spoken about how He has delivered the traveller by sea from impending danger. This implicitly speaks to His coming to the aid of those who travel by land. Now, if the stronger of the two arguments is put forth, it necessarily incorporates in an implicit manner the lesser argument. An example of this is when Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And we have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment.' (*al-Ahqaf*: 15)

Immediately after this verse, the emphasis is put on one's obligation to one's mother, and nothing regarding one's obligation towards one's father is mentioned. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship and his gestation and weaning [period] is thirty months.' (*al-Ahqaf*: 15) Allah *the Exalted* revealed these verses because the mother is weaker and frailer, and so He wants to make a son feel for his

mother. His father, however, is a man who is capable of toiling in the world. Also, a father's gift to his son is clearly recognisable by the son, whereas the sacrifices made by the mother when she was pregnant with him were not felt by the child, or when he was an infant. By the time a son becomes conscious of the sacrifices others make for him, he will see that it is his father who goes out into the world and brings back the necessities of life, supplying him with food and clothes. In the eyes of the child, the role of the mother seems negligible, a thing of the past. Thus, what is required is an emphasis upon one's obligations to one's mother since the efforts she expended during the period of pregnancy and weaning were not felt by the child. Similarly, in the verse which we are now looking at, the True Lord *the Most High* puts the emphasis on the dangers of sea travelling rather than by land: 'It is He Who enables you to travel on land and sea until when you are in ships and they sail with them by a good wind.'

Allah *Glorified is He* describes the wind as being pleasant. It is in the nature of the Quranic style that, when the 'wind' is mentioned as singular, it usually refers to some kind of 'punishment' or 'suffering'. Allah *Glorified is He* says, for instance: 'And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, "This is a cloud bringing us rain!" Rather, it is that for which you were impatient: a wind, within it a painful punishment, destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings. Thus do we recompense the criminal people?' (*al-Ahqaf*: 24-25)

'Winds' is mentioned as plural; it is usually something 'merciful' and pleasant, as Allah says: 'and We let loose the winds to fertilise [plants]' (*al-Hijr*: 22). Allah *Glorified is He* also says: 'And it is He Who sends the winds as good tidings before His Mercy until, when they have carried heavy rain clouds, We drive them to a dead land, and We send down rain therein and bring forth thereby [some] of all the fruits. Thus, will we bring forth the dead; perhaps you may be reminded.' (*al-A'raf*: 57)

The 'winds' mentioned in this last verse is plural. Now when 'wind' occurs as singular, it foretells something bad, and when 'wind' occurs as plural, it heralds something good. You yourself can observe it in the whole universe. Observation will show you that there are stages to the phenomena of



wind: a gentle wind passes through almost imperceptibly, like a soft breeze, and sometimes the wind comes to complete standstill such that there is not even a breeze. However, we still breathe the hot, still air when the weather gets hot. Then the wind will pick up a little bit, becoming stronger until it turns into full-blown tornado. Air, as we know, is one of the fundamental elements which sustain living beings. It also supports all inanimate objects. If air is a necessary element in human breathing, it is also essential for the stability of large buildings such as skyscrapers—these are only held in place thanks to the air that surrounds their every side. If an air vacuum were to form anywhere near one of these buildings, these structures would collapse. Thus, air is the element which creates balance in the universe. This is why the Holy Quran speaks about the phenomenon of wind and explains its function. In this verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'until when you are in ships and they sail with them by a good wind'; this would seem as if Allah *Glorified is He* is speaking about sail boats which are pushed along by the winds in their sails. Now if industrial technology has advanced beyond the sails which draw upon wind power and invented ways by which to harness the power of steam, and then electricity—when the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'a good wind', this encompasses all the stages of technological progress. To be sure, the word 'wind' is used in the Holy Quran to denote all kinds of power, whether it is wind power or a mechanism that draws upon any other kind of power. Windows are also compatible with all manner of seaborne locomotion. When Allah *the Exalted* says: 'when you are in ships and they sail with them by a good wind and they rejoice therein', this verse posits three events: their existence on board the ships, the ships' moving along with favourable winds and their delight for this fact. These three things are all included under the dependant sentence. Then, comes the second part of the conditional phrase, and it also contains three elements: the first is 'there comes a storm wind', the second is 'and the waves come upon them from everywhere' and the third is 'and they assume that they are surrounded'. The storm wind is destructive and drowning. 'And the waves come upon them from everywhere'/ the waves come from below, and the wind comes from above. The wind pushes the waves up on to the sea vessel. We know that every day they measure the height of the waves depending on the strength of the prevailing winds. When

the winds are light, the surface of the ocean appears rippled, and when there is no wind, you will not find a single ripple or wave on the surface of the water; the water will be completely still.

However, as they were travelling upon the water, they were pummelled with hurricane-force winds, and the waves become increasingly violent. All of this leads them to believe that they have been overwhelmed and surrounded by death with no way out. They could not find any means of escape. Now, when the time comes and they feel themselves to be 'surrounded', they refuse to resign themselves to their fate. Nor do they maintain their arrogant attitude, rather, they turn to Allah and supplicate to Him—the same Allah Whom they had rejected. However, at a time of danger, no one can deceive himself and continue to believe that there is no God. This is why we find that our Ja'far as-Sadiq was asked, 'Is there a proof of the existence of the Maker, Most-High?' He replied, 'What do you do for a living?' The man said, 'I am a merchant. I transport my wares over the seas.' Ja'far then asked the man, 'Did anything memorable ever happen to you, while you were at sea?' The man said, 'Yes, indeed.' Ja'far probed him further, 'What is it?' The man said, 'I was transporting my merchandise on my vessel when all of a sudden I was assailed by tempestuous winds and fierce waves. My boat sank, and I clung to some wood debris.' Ja'far asked, 'Were you not moved at that moment to ask for the aid of some higher power?' The man replied, 'Yes.' Whereupon Ja'far said, 'That is the Maker, Most-High.' Similarly, these disbelievers who rejected Allah now turned to Him when they were pummelled by tempestuous winds, and battered by large waves. At that moment, they thought that they were 'surrounded'. Allah *Glorified is He* describes such a state of theirs: 'supplicating to Allah, sincere to Him in religion, "If you should save us from this, we will surely be among the thankful." ' This means that, not only did they implore Him, but they implored him with fervour. They ardently proclaimed His Oneness and swore that besides Him there is no associate worthy of worship, for they knew, at that moment, that such 'associates' could be of no benefit to them. Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* describes the rest of their supplication: 'if you should save us from this, we will surely be among the thankful.' Did they honour their promise? No, they did not because Allah *Glorified is He* thereafter says:

فَلَمَّا أَنْجَاهُمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا بِغَيْرِكُمْ عَلَى  
 أَنْفُسِكُمْ مَتَنَعِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَتُنذِرُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

**Yet no sooner does He save them than, back on land, they behave outrageously against all that is right. People! Your outrageous behaviour only works against yourselves. Take your little enjoyment in this present life; in the end you will return to Us and We shall confront you with everything you have done [23]**  
**(The Quran, *Yunus*: 23)**

Now after the True Lord delivered them, the word that comes immediately after is 'at once', which shows that they had not even waited until they regained their composure. They had not even let some time pass after they had uttered their supplication, to see what results it would yield. They immediately returned to their evil ways: 'When He saves them, at once they commit injustice upon the earth without right' (*Yunus*: 23).

Now the word 'injustice' means to overstep the limits. It is essentially to be corrupt and perverse. If one digs a hole in the middle of a perfectly paved road, then this is injustice. If you throw rubbish down a well from which people drink, then this is injustice. If you ruin anything that was functioning properly, or if you degrade the value of something, this is injustice. Injustice is the highest form of wrongdoing, for Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Musa (Moses), but he committed grave injustice towards them.' (*al-Qasas*: 76)

The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* described injustice as represented in corrupting and degrading something that is useful in his saying, 'The fastest acts of good deed to receive a reward are kindness and safeguarding family relations, while the fastest acts of evil to receive a punishment are injustice and the severance of one's family ties.'<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Related by Ibn Majah in his (*Sunnan*) (4212) and by Ibn 'Uday in *al-Kamel* (4/70) Dar Al-Fikr edition; also published by ad-Dahabi in (*Mizan al-I'tidal*) (3831); narrated on the authority of 'Ai'sha may Allah be pleased with her

Indeed, the True Lord does not defer the punishment—for injustice and the severance of family ties—until the Day of Judgment. He delivers His punishment for these sins in this world. This restores balance in the society. If you see someone who is unjust but enjoys an easy, pleasurable life but then dies without any punishment—and if everyone witnesses his injustice but they are helpless to punish him in this world —this will only feed his tyranny and cause it to grow.

This is why you see that Allah *Glorified is He* punishes this type of wrongdoer in this life, so that his terrible fate can be witnessed by all. Also, when people see this, they improve their conduct. If they are unjust, they desist from their unjust ways. This is how social balance is restored. Otherwise, if Allah *the Almighty* were to defer the punishment to the Hereafter, society would suffer on the hands of those who do not believe in the Hereafter and who are proficient in their injustice and unrighteousness. This is why people will witness their suffering in this world, and in the next world there will be a place reserved for them in Hell. The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* warns, 'Do not commit injustice! Do not be a wrongdoer.'<sup>(1)</sup>

A wrongdoer creates an imbalance in the general equilibrium of society. One who commits injustice is one who wrongly usurps the rights of others. He enjoys the fruits of someone else's labour; he turns into a person who specialises in extracting tributes from people and who is too lazy to take up any other work than this. You can see this happening in the poorest neighbourhoods, where some forcibly appropriate the rights of others. They have turned into bullies who are hired by some to harm others. Such bullies have become experts at earning a living without ever having to expend any effort at honest work.

Injustice, then, is the work of those who spoil the productive rhythm of life. As for those who are affected by such unjust tyrants, they tend to put less effort into their honest work. Furthermore, when people put less effort

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(1) *Related by Al-Hakim in his (Mustadrak) (2/338); narrated on the authority of Abu Bakr... Al-Hakim adds: this strength of this Hadith line of transmission is (Sahih), even though Muslim and Al-Bukhari did not relate it. Adh-Dhahabi concurred.*

into honest work, the productive rhythm of life is dampened, and the general welfare of humanity declines; even the welfare of the unjust witness decline as well. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'They commit injustice upon the earth without right.' One might ask if there is such a thing as 'injustice without right'. I would say that there is since injustice is to violate and corrupt that which is good. When you see someone corrupting that which is good, you ask him, 'Why are you doing this?' He might tell you that his intention is to 'reform' or to promote the public good. He will describe the variety of reasons why he is infringing the way he is; this is 'injustice with a right'. As for those who are unjust without any noble reason or religiously sanctioned motive, this is the epitome of injustice.

Would not an example of 'injustice with a right' be when the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* seized the lands of Bani Qurayzha, burned their crops and cut down their trees and destroyed their homes? Is that not an outrageous violation of the public good?

The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* did this in response to an even more outrageous offense. It is clear now that there can be such a thing as 'injustice with a right' and 'injustice without a right'. This is why Allah's recompense for a sin is a sin. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Thus, if anyone commits aggression against you, commit aggression against him.' (*al-Baqara*: 194). The True Lord calls it an 'aggression' even though it really is not an aggression. It is rather a response to an aggression.

Allah *the Exalted* defines the issue as one which endures forever once it is perpetrated. He says: 'O, mankind, your injustice is only against yourselves, [being merely] the enjoyment of worldly life.' In this verse, it is as if Allah *Glorified is He* is addressing the unjust aggressor, 'O, you who covet the rights of others, know that what you gain from usurping these rights is a little comfort in this work, but ultimately, you shall be eternally damned in Hellfire.' Now if you compare the time that one enjoys the fruits of unrighteous exploitation with the eternity of the punishment, you will find that the enjoyment derived from injustice pales in comparison to the suffering that you will have to endure as a punishment. Thus, do not take the life of the

physical earth as your reference. The True Lord *the Most High* might allow the earth itself to have a life spanning twenty million years; however, your life on this earth is limited to a period much shorter than that figure.

Thus, take care of yourselves and protect yourselves against punishment and torture in the Hereafter and realise that the enjoyment of this world is very little, especially if this enjoyment is accompanied by injustice towards you. Everyone will eventually suffer the consequences of their injustice. The enjoyment and pleasure which you might get as a result of this injustice is confined to your limited life in this world. You must know that every person lives on this earth for a given age as an individual, not the whole age of humanity. Hence, The True Lord *Glorified is He* says in another verse: 'Say to them, "Little is the enjoyment in this world"...' (*an-Nisa'*: 77).

In this verse, the True Lord *the Most High* stresses this fact: '...your injustice is only against yourselves...' (*Yunus*: 23). Allah *Glorified is He* may punish a wrongdoer by letting him see before his death the persons whom he has wronged in a very good condition. So, I always say, 'If wrongdoers learnt about the great compensation awaiting their victims, they would not commit acts of oppression against them.' While wrongdoers supposedly enjoy being transgressors which is considered a little worldly enjoyment, we find the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: '...Then to Us is your return...' (*Yunus*: 23) When we return to Allah *Glorified is He* there will be no injustice; no one will wrong others or be wronged by them. Everyone will get the requital for their deeds from Allah *the Almighty* either with rewards or punishments since the True Lord *the Most High* says: '...Then to Us is your return, and We will inform you of what you used to do.' (*Yunus*: 23).

The news about the requital is announced before the occurrence of deeds so that all people know well that every act will be met with a reward or a punishment. Moreover, the fact that the news concerning the requital comes before the actions represents censure of those who wrong themselves by oppressing others.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا  
يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّى إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَا  
أَنَّهُمْ قَدِرُوا عَلَىهَا أُنْزِلْنَا لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن  
لَمْ تَغْنَبِ بِالْأَمْسِ كَذَلِكَ نَفْصِلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

**The life of this world is like this: rain that We send down from the sky is absorbed by the plants of the earth, from which humans and animals eat. But when the earth has taken on its finest appearance, and adorns itself, and its people think they have power over it, then the fate We commanded comes to it, by night or by day, and We reduce it to stubble, as if it had not flourished just the day before. This is the way We explain the revelations for those who reflect [24] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 24)**

The water that comes down from the sky is the one suitable for irrigating and drinking since the water that exists on the earth represents storehouses for sustaining life. It is often salty like that of the oceans and seas since the True Lord *the Most High* wants to protect it from being rotted and decayed. Then, the process of water desalination takes place due to the sun rays which cause the water to evaporate and gather to form clouds that turn into fresh distilled water falling from the sky to be used for drinking and irrigating. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘...is like this: rain that We send down from the sky is absorbed by the plants of the earth...’ (*Yunus*: 24).

The Arabic word *al-ikhtilat*, which means absorption in this verse, refers to the combination of two or more elements in such a way that they can be separated later on. For instance, if you put some seeds of beans together with some seeds of lupin, you can then separate them from each other. There is another kind of putting things together in the form of mixture just like when you squeeze a lemon and mix it with some water and sugar; this causes the particles of the lemon and the sugar to dissolve into the water.

In this verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘...is like this: rain that We send down from the sky is absorbed by the plants of the earth...’ (*Yunus*: 24). It might be understood from this verse that water and plants become mixed with one another. Actually, plants—as we know—are living beings that are

made out of water as Allah *the Almighty* says : '...that We made every living thing from water?...' (*al-Anbiya*': 30).

In this regard, we must pay attention to the difference between the Arabic letter *Ba* ' when denoting 'mixing' and the same letter when referring to 'causality' as in this verse in which *Ba* ' is translated as 'by' to suit the rendering into English in this instance. Thus, the meaning of this part of the verse reads as follows: plants grow profusely out of the earth thanks to the water sent from the sky. After rainfall, you notice that water covers the surface of the earth; then after a few days or weeks, you see the earth filled with plants that have branches and leaves, becoming closely intertwined. The more they get intertwined, the stronger is the proof that a given piece of land is fertile and well irrigated; this is the result of the interaction between water and soil.

On the other hand, when land is not fertile, you find that plants are few and distant from each other; you find one plant here and another there. This is evident when the people of the Egyptian country grow corn, for instance, at a certain time; they say that 'the corn is going bankrupt' which means that every strand of corn stands isolated from the others since the land is arid. Thus, land fertility is essential for the life and growth of plants; water is necessary for dissolving food elements that nourish plants and make their roots grow.

If you one day visit agriculture-related scientific centres in Tokyo or California, you will find that they grow plants on thin strings and irrigate them with water that contains essential food components required for their growth. The people in such cities have found that all plants take from the earth the elements necessary for life at a rate not exceeding five percent of their weight, whereas they take from air ninety five percent of their weight. Thus, the rain that falls from the sky through the air is what dissolves the elements of the earth, so that they can be absorbed by plants.

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* sets forth a simile for us; a simile is an expression that describes something by comparing it with something else. Here, the thing that we bring to clarify the original thing must be well known. So, we cannot liken an unknown thing to another unknown thing; rather, we shed light on an unknown thing by making reference to something that is already known. For instance, when a friend of yours asks you if you know a



certain person, you answer that you do not know that person. Then, your friend tells you that the person in question looks like another person whom you know well. Thus, you know the unknown person by making reference to another person who is quite known to you.

Some of those who attack the Quran have argued this way by saying, 'When there is something that is unknown and we wish to shed some light on it, should we not do so by referring to something that is known?' Then, why does Allah *Glorified is He* say concerning the tree of *Zaqqum* 'This tree grows in the heart of the blazing Fire, and its fruits are like devils' heads' (*as-Saffat*: 64-65).

How can Allah *Glorified is He* tell the believers that the emerging fruits of the tree of *Zaqqum*, which is one in the Fire unknown to us, resemble the heads of devils? Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* compares one unknown thing with another unknown thing. The people who have made this claim have overlooked the fact that it is Allah *the Almighty* is speaking. The True Lord *the Most High* intends to describe *Zaqqum* with a horrible thing which is known to us, the devil. The True Lord *Glorified is He* does not want to restrict this conception of horribleness so as not to limit this simile to a certain picture. You may see a certain thing as terrible, while another person may see it in a different way. Allah *Glorified is He* wants to make *Zaqqum* fruits horrible; so He chooses the one thing which we all agree that it is horrid, the heads of devils. Every man can imagine the terrible and disgusting image of the devil from his own perspective. The Greatness of Allah *the Almighty* lies here in the fact that He leaves the image of the devil more or less ambiguous.

Let us go back to the simile which we are now examining in this verse: the life of this world is compared to the rainwater which the True Lord *Glorified is He* sends down from the sky and which causes the plants of the earth to grow so abundantly that their branches and leaves intertwine with one another. Every one of us lives a part of this worldly life, along with playing a part in this long film; none of us has witnessed its beginning and some of us might not live to witness its end. So, the True Lord *Glorified is He* states a simile which includes things known to us all, namely, crops that are watered by rain. Allah *Glorified is He* intends to depict the picture of this earthly life through talking about something known to all of us; thus, we realise and

witness both past and coming events—everything in existence is given its share of growth and prosperity, then all things come to an end. Such is life in this world. Once again, let us recall what the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘...is like this: rain that We send down from the sky is absorbed by the plants of the earth, from which humans and animals eat. However, when the earth has taken on its finest appearance, adorns itself and its people think they have power over it, then the fate We commanded comes to it, by night or by day...’ (*Yunus*: 24).

The Arabic word *Az-zukhruf* translated as 'finest appearance' refers to something that is beautiful and attractive that pleases the soul when gazed upon. The world adorns itself with a variety of colours arranged in a wonderful manner, then all of that is ruined; this is what we witness in our own lives. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* gives us a brief description of the world from its beginning to its end by depicting a familiar picture which can be seen by all of us, so that none may be seduced by the beauty and tempting adornment of this worldly life.

In this regard, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘Let man consider the food he eats! We pour down abundant water and cause the soil to split open. We make grain grow, vines, fresh vegetation, olive trees, date palms, luscious gardens, fruits and fodder, all for you and your livestock to enjoy. When the Deafening Blast comes—the Day when man will flee from his own brother, his mother, his father, his wife, his children; each of them will be absorbed in concerns of their own on that Day.’ (*Abasa*: 24-37).

Thus, the world with all of its visible beauty is destined to wilt; all the wonderful colours that you see are bound to wither. Even if this world becomes more and more beautiful, it is destined to pass away. Therefore, take care not to be an aggressor. Though you might get some worldly enjoyment through aggression, you will lose everything afterwards as the whole world is destined to come to an end, just as a garden whose flowers grow and flourish due to rainwater, and then all of this ultimately withers away. In this context, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'We have tried them as We tried the owners of a certain garden, who swore that they would harvest its fruits in the morning and made no allowance [for the Will of Allah]. A disaster from your Lord

struck the garden as they slept and by morning it was stripped bare, a desolate land.' (*al-Qalam*: 17-20). Thus, this is the nature and description of this worldly life.

In this verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: '... But when the earth has taken on its finest appearance, adorns itself ...' (*Yunus*: 24). The earth adorns itself by its Lord's Command. Allah *Glorified is He* attributes perceptions to beings that we would never think of as having minds and wills of their own. Does the True Lord *the Most High*, not say concerning the story of the 'virtuous servant, Khidr': 'And so they travelled on. Then, when they came to a town and asked the inhabitants for food but were refused hospitality, they saw a wall there that was on the point of falling down ...' (*al-Kahf*: 77)? Does the wall have the will to fall down? If we look closely at this point, we will find that Allah *Glorified is He* has given every created being in existence a life a will and a power that suit it well. The True Lord *Glorified is He* has given us a multitude of examples in this regard; wherever there is something which our minds strain to comprehend; Allah *Glorified is He* sheds light on it through Divine expositions. An example of this is the hoopoe's knowledge of monotheism (*Tawhid*) in the story of Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* and how it informed Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* of the news about the Queen of Sheba whose people worshipped the sun, not Allah *the Almighty*. It is as though the hoopoe intuitively recognised that it is Allah *Glorified is He* Who is truly worthy of worship; he says in the Quran: 'Should they not worship Allah Who brings forth what is hidden in the heavens and earth...' (*an-Naml*: 25).

Who can think that the hoopoe—which is a mere bird—could have possessed such a great insight concerning doctrines? Allah *Glorified is He* wants to show us that this bird does not have any whims which could corrupt its doctrinal beliefs and that it is our (humans) whims, which corrupt doctrines. The one whom Allah *Glorified is He* has given the freedom of choice is the one who abuses this grace so long as he does not safeguard this freedom with faith and does not make his choices in the light of Allah's Guidance. We can clearly see that all the created beings other than man can never bring about corruption, for they are guided by their instincts. You can hardly see an animal, for instance,

stuff itself over its capacity, while we find that some people satiate their appetite to the point of gluttony. Similarly, we cannot find a donkey attempting to jump over a stream of water that it knows it is too wide; we rather note that the donkey backs away from the water. Meanwhile, you may find a person rolling up his sleeves to jump over a pond, only to fall into it.

Thus, our whims take control of our instincts and rush us into danger unless we protect ourselves with Allah's Guidance. Concerning the example of the hoopoe, we have a form of the clearest and purest understanding of *Tawhid* which is similar to that of the most pious mystics, so to speak. The bird's remark hits the target: 'Should they not worship Allah Who brings forth what is hidden in the heavens and earth...' (*an-Naml*: 25). The Arabic word *khab* translated in this verse as 'what is hidden', represents the sustenance of the hoopoe—this bird does not eat from anything which lies visibly on the surface of the earth; rather, he strikes the ground with his beak, digging it up to find the food it needs. The True Lord *Glorified is He* gives us another example—that of the ant that says in the Quran: '...“Ants! Go into your homes, in case Sulaiman [Solomon] and his soldiers unwittingly crush you”' (*an-Naml*: 18). Look at the fairness of this ant. It does not say that Sulaiman (Solomon) and his soldiers will oppressively crush its fellow ants; rather, it says: 'unwittingly' because they are too small to be seen by the marching army. Thus, every being in existence has its particular life; the problem is that we want to see the life of the other beings in the same way we look at the life of the supreme creature—man. We must realise that plants have their own life; and so do animals, inanimate objects and other beings in this universe.

We have previously pointed out that Allah *Glorified is He* says : '...so that those who were to perish might perish after seeing a clear proof and so that those who were to live might live after seeing a clear proof...' (*al-Anfal*: 42). Perishing is the opposite of life, just as life is the opposite of death, and perishing is more or less equal to death. The True Lord *the Most High* describes what will happen on the Day of Judgment by saying: '...Everything is bound to perish, save His [eternal] Self...' (*al-Qasas*: 88). So, all inanimate objects are destined to perish after having a special kind of inner life that we know nothing about. The problem, as we have just said, is that man tends to identify the life of these lower beings in the same manner he identifies his.

Notice how the Quran is most accurate when we recite: ‘...But when the earth has taken on its finest appearance, adorns itself and its people think they have power over it, then the fate We commanded comes to it, by night or by day...’ (*Yunus*: 24). This verse had been revealed centuries before science made progress and confirmed that the earth is rather spherical and that it revolves around itself; also, the night and day are alternate in a continuous cycle. The True Lord *Glorified is He* also says: ‘Do the people of these towns feel secure that Our Punishment will not come upon them by night, while they are asleep? Do the people of these towns feel secure that Our Punishment will not come upon them by day, while they are at play?’ (*al-A’raf*: 97-98). Thus, Allah’s Commands are carried out at the very moment He wills; it does not matter whether it is morning or night. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...and We reduce it to stubble, as if it had not flourished just the day before...’ (*Yunus*: 24). It is as if it had never existed.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* concludes the verse by saying: ‘...This is the way We explain the Revelations for those who reflect.’ (*Yunus*: 24). So, if the life in this world is like the life of plants which grow, multiply and flourish, must we not realise the fact that all beautiful things are destined to pass away? We must not be seduced by the pleasures and delights of this world. We must also be careful not to do wrong on the earth since aggression is a passing enjoyment confined to this mortal worldly life. There are many instances in the Quran that feature such explanation of the verses which is made to those who ‘reflect’, ‘take heed’, ‘use their intellect’ or ‘contemplate’. All of these processes are aimed at reaching a single conclusion through a number of different steps. ‘Reflection’ depends on bringing out premises to draw conclusions. ‘Taking heed’ means not forgetting or ignoring important matters. ‘Using intellect’ refers to using one’s faculty of thinking whose instrument is the mind. ‘Contemplation’ is concerned with digging deeper into the hidden aspects of things, not restricting to the outer ones. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Will they not contemplate this Quran...?’ (*an-Nisa*: 82). The verse encourages us to use our insight to look into the beginnings and the ends of all events to realise that all things are destined to return to Allah *Glorified is He*. A wise person is the one who prepares himself for the meeting with Allah *the Almighty*; he endures hardships in this mortal world, only to feel secure in the eternal

Hereafter. If we compare this world to the Hereafter, we will find that the latter is much more profitable. An individual cannot determine his age in this life; he does not know whether he will live on this earth for a year, for ten years, for seventy years or for a hundred years. No matter how long this world as a whole endures, it will ultimately come to an end. You enjoy the pleasures of life according to your potential and conception as a human, while the Life to come is endless and everything related to man there is absolutely certain. The blessings and pleasures of the Next Life are matchless as they are bestowed by Allah *Glorified is He*. Thus, if you compare this life with the Hereafter, the latter will have the upper hand. In this regard, the True Lord, and *the Most High*, says: ‘...the true life is in the Hereafter, if only they knew’ (*al-’Ankabut*: 64). Allah’s Words ‘the true life’ underscore that such a life has no end. Therefore, adhere to the Guidance of Allah *Glorified is He* to lead you to the Home of Peace and security. Search for a safe exit from this insecure and ever-changing world and respond to the One Who calls upon you to join the Home of Peace. Here, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

**But God invites [everyone] to the Home of Peace, and guides whoever He will to a straight path [25] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 25)**

The ‘Home of Peace’ refers to the Hereafter in contrast with the life of this world which is full of hardships and suffering—this world which adorns itself to seem beautiful, but it ultimately falls into ruin. So, Allah *Glorified is He* calls on us to seek another abode, the Home of Peace. Man may enjoy a share of the delights of this life: power, wealth, and good health. However, this is always accompanied by two permanent worries: the first is that a person may worry about losing these blessings during his life and the second is that he may worry about losing them when he dies. On the other hand, man will enjoy everlasting pleasures in the Hereafter; this is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘But Allah invites [everyone] to the Home of Peace...’ (*Yunus*: 25).

In the Afterlife, no one will cause harm to others; you will not find someone seize another’s money as happens in this worldly life. While we live in this life according to the laws that Allah *Glorified is He* has created, we will

be in the Hereafter in the company of Him *Glorified is He*. Everything occurs to your mind will be instantly brought before you. Now, while good people's conditions and resources are different in this world, they live in the Hereafter in the shade of Allah's Bounty without any suffering or troubles on their part since the Home of Peace is the Home of Allah *Glorified is He* and Allah Himself *the Almighty* is Peace. Imagine, for example, that your boss invites you for lunch; he prepares for you what he can do as an important man to make you feel at home. Allah has the highest image. Now imagine that you are received by your Creator *Glorified is He*. What will He prepare for you as being a follower of His Path and Guidance? Indeed, He *Glorified is He* says: 'The people of Paradise today are happily occupied—they and their spouses—seated on couches in the shade. There they have fruit and whatever they ask for. "Peace", a word from the Lord of Mercy.' (*Ya Sin*: 55-58). This 'Peace' is not from human beings since there are some people who pretend to be at peace with you but, in actuality, harbour a grudge against you. However, others might faithfully bring you peace at first, and then become unable to do that due to changing life circumstances. However, when peace comes from Allah *Glorified is He* it comes from the Most Powerful Lord Who can do anything, needs nothing from His creation and never changes. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... the angels will go in to them from every gate, "Peace be with you"...' (*ar-Ra'd*: 23-24).

When the angels utter these peaceful words, they derive their peace from Allah's Genuine Peace. Likewise, when the People of the Heights in the Hereafter (*A'raf*) who are not admitted into Paradise, see the People of Paradise and the People of the Fire, they pass their greetings of peace to the People of Paradise alone. Thus, the People of Paradise dwell in an all-comprehensive peace that encompasses them and makes them feel secure. This is due to it being Allah *the Almighty* Who calls upon believers to come to this Home of peace; no one can force Him to terminate this everlasting flow of it.

The Call of Allah *Glorified is He* is His Religion that He entrusted His Messengers to convey to humanity to control the movement on the earth in the light of Faith, so that people can live according to the Divine Way of Life. Thus, our world becomes a paradise. What brings unhappiness to people is

that some of them ignore a part or parts of Allah's Religion. If you find that a society suffers from whatever form of misery, be certain that some parts of Allah's Religion have been overlooked.

If all people were to follow Allah's Path, there would not be a single flaw in the universe; it is the ignorance of human beings which creates flaws in it. If you come upon some poor people who have nothing to eat, then know well that some people have disrupted Allah's Religion—either from among the poor themselves because of the laziness of some, or from among the rich who have given up their responsibility towards the poor as decreed by Allah *Glorified is He*. Thus, Allah's Divine Way of Life becomes disrupted. On the other hand, if Allah's Religion were to dominate our life, it would surely be like a paradise.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: '... and guides whomever He wills to a straight path.' (*Yunus*: 25). We may know that there are two types of guidance and one is that which guides all people to the Straight Path. When people believe in this Path, Allah *Glorified is He* facilitates their journey in this life. Thus, believers amongst them move from the stage of being generally guided to the stage of being particularly assisted. On the Day of Judgment, Allah *Glorified is He* grants believers light to lead them to paradise: '... their Lord will guide them because of their faith...' (*Yunus*: 9). Thus, whoever adheres to the Divine Way of Life after having been convinced through proofs, the True Lord *Glorified is He* grants him light ahead of him: '...With their lights streaming out ahead of them and to their right...' (*at-Tahrim*: 8).

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... and guides whomever He wills...' (*Yunus*: 25) because everything in this universe is tied to His Will. Laws do not control Him, but He controls everything. While Allah *Glorified is He* has shown us that He guides whom He wishes, He has also shown us that He makes whom He wishes go astray for He *Glorified is He* says: '... Allah does not guide those who refuse to acknowledge the Truth..' (*at-Tawba*: 37). Allah *Glorified is He* also says: '... Allah does not guide those who break away.' (*at-Tawba*: 24).

Thus, the True Lord *the Most High* has shown us those whom He guides to Paradise and those whom He does not. Let nobody ask: for what are the disbelievers and the disobedient guilty? This is due to the True Lord *Glorified is He* Who has



made His Religion clear; whosoever abides by it, Allah *the Almighty* bestows on him an illuminating light ahead of him to show him the way to Paradise.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ وَلَا يَرْهَقُ وُجُوهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ  
وَلَا ذِلَّةٌ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

**Those who did well will have the best reward and more besides. Neither darkness nor shame will cover their faces: these are the companions in Paradise, and there they will remain [26] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 26)**

The Arabic word *al-husna*, translated in this verse as ‘the best reward’, is similar in form to *imra’h fudhla* ‘one of the best women’ and *imra’h kubra* ‘one of the greatest women’. In Arabic, these words ending in *a* are called superlative adjectives, aimed to give nouns special significance. What Allah *Glorified is He* means when He says: ‘Those who did well will have the best reward...’ (*Yunus*: 26) is that these people excelled when doing good deeds. As we know, a Muslim person receives the reward of ten good deeds when he does only one good deed. Let us go on reciting the verse: ‘Those who did well will have the best reward and more besides...’ (*Yunus*: 26). What is meant by ‘more besides’ in this verse? This is extra compensation. It is a special bonus for good deeds starting with a reward for a single good deed which is equivalent to the completion of ten good deeds as a minimum, and may reach as far as the equivalent of seven hundred good deeds. Regarding sins, they are treated as single sins without any multiplication. After all, nothing can restrict Allah’s Bounty and Grace; the True Lord *the Most High* bestows His endless Grace upon whom he chooses. This is why we should not regard Allah’s Justice and His Grace on the same footing: His Justice applies to wrongdoers, while His infinite Bounty and Generosity belong to those who do well. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘Say [Prophet Muhammad], “In Allah’s Grace and Mercy let them rejoice.”’ (*Yunus*: 58).

Some of the most pious mystics have said that the ‘more besides’ refers to the reward ranging between ten times and seven hundred times, whereas Grace refers to that which goes far beyond the seven-hundred maximum.

Thus, there are several levels of rewarding: there is the equivalent of ten, the equivalent of seven hundred, *al-husna* 'the best reward' and 'more besides'. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'When the People of Paradise enter the Gardens, Allah *Glorified is He* will say, "Do you wish that I give you anything more?" They would say, "Have You not brightened our faces? Have You not made us enter Paradise and saved us from the Fire?" The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* said, "Allah will lift the veil, and of things given to them nothing will be dearer to them than the sight of their Lord *the Almighty* and the Glorious.'"

Then, Allah *Glorified is He*: '... Neither darkness [nor dust] nor shame will cover their faces...' (Yunus: 26). This means that their faces are not covered in darkness (or dust); Allah *Glorified is He* says elsewhere in the Quran: 'On that Day there will be radiant faces, looking towards their Lord' (The Quran, 75: 22-23). He the *Almighty* also says: 'but some faces will be dust stained and covered in darkness.' ('Abasa: 40-41).

The Arabic expression *tarhuquha* means that 'it is covered in'. The Arabic word *qatarah* means 'darkness' or 'dust', and the latter is related to the word *al-qitar*, which is the smell of burnt fat that fills the air when meat is roasted; this smell may be appetising and mouth-watering. However, when a face is covered in this *qitar*, a layer of black ash is formed. The True Lord *the Most High* says: '... Neither darkness [nor dust] nor shame will cover their faces...' (Yunus: 26) for they fear Allah *Glorified is He* and cherish His Divine Way of Life.

Elsewhere, Allah *Glorified is He* also says: 'On the Day when some faces brighten and others darken' (*Al-Imran*: 106). Thus, the point is not the colour of the skin because you can find a person whose skin colour is black but who is so pious that light illuminates his face and his features are marked by an aura of magnificence. Similarly, there are some people whose faces are white, but as a result of their disobedience of Allah's commands, their faces have become completely devoid of spiritual light.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: '... These are the companions in Paradise, and there they will remain.' (Yunus: 26). This means that they have become firmly connected to Paradise as if they are two close friends who never leave each other. Another meaning is that they are the owners of paradise.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَالَّذِينَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا وَتَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ مَّا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ كَأَنَّمَا  
 أُغْشِيَتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ قِطْعًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مُظْلِمًا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

**As for those who did evil, each evil deed will be requited by  
 its equal and humiliation will cover them – no one will  
 protect them against God – as though their faces were  
 covered with veils cut from the darkness of the night. These  
 are the inmates of the Fire, and there they shall remain [27]  
 (The Quran, *Yunus*: 27)**

Since Allah *Glorified is He* has spoken about those whom He has summoned to the Home of Peace and rewarded them with Paradise for their good deeds, He now speaks about the other side; the gathering of these two parties makes the issue clearer to the mind. The True Lord *the Most High* says in another verse: 'Let them, then, laugh a little – for they will weep a lot.' (*at-Tawba*: 82).

Another example of the comparison of two extremes can be seen when Allah *the Almighty* says: 'The good will live in bliss, and the wicked will burn in the Fire.' (*al-Infitar*: 13-14). Thus, when two opposites are mentioned, the issue becomes well understood. Since Allah *Glorified is He* has spoken about the call to the Home of Peace—where those who respond to the call are rewarded with abiding eternally in Paradise, along with never fearing darkness of faces or shame—Allah *Glorified is He* also mentions their opposites, underscoring the grievous consequences of ignoring the call to the Home of Peace; He also mentions the happy end of those who accept the call. The believers must therefore take joy in this offer, for they will not be among the people of the Fire. Meanwhile, some of the disbelievers, if not all of them, must wake up from their oblivion so as to avoid the fire and turn to Faith. In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'As for those who did evil...' (*Yunus*: 27).

We may know that the Arabic word *al-kasb* is related to pure nature and harmonises with doing good deeds since the obedience of Allah through the performance of religious rites is consistent with upright human nature. No one is ashamed to pray, give to the poor, fast or perform *Hajj* (pilgrimage), while

many people are ashamed to be recognised as liars, usurers or consumers of alcohol. When a man commits a sin, he experiences contradictory reactions. For example, a person who steals his father's money while he is asleep walks on his tiptoes and is careful not to hit anything in the dark, which could make a sound and expose him. It is the same thing with the one who gazes at others' girls and women. These examples suggest that committing sins is accompanied by unnatural reactions; there is some sort of trouble or uneasiness when sinning. The worst thing that man can do is to continue following the path of sins until it becomes second nature to him, and he becomes accustomed to committing such acts. In other words, he becomes a professional in this regard; it is no longer a matter of occasional sinful acts, but a regular process that is made without having any feeling of guilt. A libertine might even attain a level of stable immorality; he may tell others about his sins and his transgressions in a proud tone by saying, for instance, that he stayed up late last night in a mind-blowing party and that he did such-and-such. He recalls that wild party with such a sense of satisfaction that he has committed sins and vices. It is a mercy from Allah *Glorified is He* that He punishes sinners for the sins they commit in an equal way. Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... each evil deed will be requited by its equal ...' (*Yunus: 27*).

The True Lord's Mercy can also be seen when He bestows special status upon those who do not commit sins; such people become amongst those whom Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... Neither darkness [nor dust] nor shame will cover their faces...' (*Yunus: 26*). Meanwhile, the True Lord *the Most High* says about those who do not follow the Straight Path: '... no one will protect them against Allah...' (*Yunus: 27*). This means that no one will stand up for them and intercede with Allah *the Almighty* on their behalf; no one will beg Allah *Glorified is He* by saying, 'O, Lord, please do not punish them.' This part of the verse could also mean that Allah *Glorified is He* will not forgive them afterwards.

Their woeful state does not stop at this point; moreover, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: '... as though their faces were covered with veils cut from the darkness of the night...' (*Yunus: 27*). It is as if portions of dark night have covered their faces. Their ultimate fate is to reside in the Fire forever: '...These are the inmates of the Fire, and there they shall remain.' (*Yunus: 27*).

This is the state of those who reject the Signs of Allah *Glorified is He* lie about His Messengers, turn down Allah's Call to the Home of Peace, follow their whims and associate partners with Allah *Glorified is He*. It is the True Lord's Will that such transgressions are manifested in their entirety in this world so that the whole universe will stand as a witness in the Hereafter and be aware of what will happen to sinners as a result of what they have done on the earth in this worldly life.

Afterwards, Allah True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ  
وَشُرَكَاءُكُمْ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَقَالَ شُرَكَائُهُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ إِلَّا نَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

**On the Day We gather them all together, We shall say to those who associate partners with God, 'Stay in your place, you and your partner-gods.' Then We shall separate them, and their partner-gods will say, 'It was not us you worshipped [28] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 28)**

The Arabic word *al-hashr* translated in this verse as gathering means taking people who are dispersed over a wide area and bringing them together in one place. These different places will drive the disbelievers therein to be gathered at that one place where Allah *Glorified is He* wants them to be.

The more people draw closer to this designated location, the more crowded and tightly packed it becomes. This is just as you move from outer circles to inner circles until you reach the centre. Now, there is no doubt that the more you get near to the centre, the smaller, and tighter the circles become: this is the idea of *al-hashr*. Thus, we will be tightly packed together; however, it is supposedly understood that we are going to suffer much as a result of this stifling atmosphere so that people will pay no heed to such a situation since they will be fully busy with the horrors of that woeful day—the Day of Judgment.

The Words of the True Lord *the Most High*: 'On the Day We gather them all together...' (*Yunus*: 28) refer to the assured rounding up of all those who have not responded to Allah's Divine Way of Life and His Call to the Home

of Peace, those who have lied about their messengers and those who have associated partners with Allah *Glorified is He*. All will be gathered and confronted with their crimes; it will truly be a scene of shame and scandals that are exposed on this horrible day. The polytheists who worshipped false idols will be brought to task and punished for their acts, whether those idols commanded their followers to worship them or they were unaware of the whole process. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘... We shall say to those who associate partners with Allah, “Stay in your place, you and your partners (whom you had worshipped).”’ (*Yunus*: 28).

Thus, people who worshipped angels finally get to meet those angels, and people who worshipped a prophet will meet him in person; the same thing applies to those who worshipped idols, the sun, the moon, jinns or human/jinn devils. Indeed, there are many false deities that may be worshipped; each of these false idols will have its own judgement and come face-to-face with his/its worshippers in a public confrontation on the Day of Resurrection. Among those worshippers, we find those who used to worship and be fascinated by a false deity, such as an angel or a messenger who was basically sent to guide them to the worship of the One God, Allah *Glorified is He*. Also included are those who worshipped objects which could not have been conscious of their worshippers like idols, the sun, the moon, or trees. Meanwhile, you can find the worshipped deities, who are aware of their worshippers and who actively call upon people to worship them, among the devils of the human world and the devils of the jinn world, in addition to Iblis (Satan) himself.

Regarding angels, Allah will bring them in front of their worshippers and ask them, 'Have you ever enticed these people into worshipping you?' The angels will reply, 'Glory is to You, our Lord.' Thus, they will disown their worshippers as the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘When those who have been followed disown their followers...’ (*al-Baqara*: 166). Now the angels know nothing about those who take them as deities. If we turn our focus to human beings, especially messengers *peace be upon them*, we find that the most famous example is that of ‘Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary) *peace be upon him*. He is addressed by the True Lord *Glorified is He*: ‘... did you say to people, “Take me and my mother as two gods alongside Allah?”’ (*al-Ma‘ida*: 116). ‘Isa (Jesus)

*peace be upon him* is quoted by the Quran as saying: ‘May You be Exalted! I would never say what I had no right to say— if I had said such a thing You will know it...’ (*al-Baqara*: 116). Therefore, he was not aware that he had been worshipped by his people; indeed, he never asked them to worship him.

Similarly, the idols have no knowledge about those who have made them gods. On the other hand, Iblis (Satan) is fully aware of his worshippers. Let us have a look at his story. After he had disobeyed the command of Allah, he turned to Adam *peace be upon him* and tempted him into committing sins. Adam *peace be upon him* then repented of his sins and Allah *Glorified is He* accepted his repentance, while He did not forgive Iblis for he had disobeyed His Command concerning bowing down before Adam. Indeed, Iblis was arrogant and considered himself to be of a higher class. Regarding Adam *peace be upon him* he did not refuse to comply with Allah’s Commands. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘We created you, We gave you shape, and then We said to the angels, “Bow down before Adam”, and they did, but not Iblis. He was not one of those who bowed down. Allah said, “What prevented you from bowing down as I commanded you?” He said, “I am better than him. You created me from fire and him from clay.”’ (*al-A’raf*: 11-12).

We can deduce the following conclusion out of this verse: those who cannot bear submitting themselves to Allah’s Divine Way of Life have to admit that Allah’s Divine Way of Life and Laws are the Truth, and they are too weak to follow His Path. By so doing, they safeguard themselves against the great sin of rejecting Allah’s Commands; they can also repent with the intention of never falling into such a sin again.

Thus, Iblis (Satan) wages a comprehensive war against all human beings; he has sworn— by Allah’s Might—that he will mislead all the sons of Adam, except those whom Allah *Glorified is He* has chosen for dutiful worship. Iblis knows well that he does not have power to tempt people of this kind. Thus, it is Allah’s Might that makes Iblis—and all his followers from among the jinns—to either seduce or not seduce the Creation of Allah *Glorified is He*. Devils are rebellious jinns, for we know that the jinn is a species opposite to that of the human beings. Some of the jinns are obedient and virtuous, while others are disobedient (*shayatin*); these latter serve Iblis by tempting human

beings. They exert influence upon humans by targeting their weaknesses: money, beauty, power or whatever, enticing them to use immoral methods that go against Allah's Divine Way of Life to reach their goals. Every human has a weakness or more which the devil exploits to get hold of his soul. Meanwhile, Iblis and his progeny may also recruit some to seduce and corrupt others. Hence, there are three categories of beings who seek to derail human beings from Allah's Path and the Call of the Truth: Iblis, disobedient jinns (devils) and human beings who cooperate with Iblis to tempt their brothers into committing sins—these are the human devils who act in a way that contradicts the Messengers' Divine Way of Life.

Now, this raises two questions: 'Will there be a dialogue—on the Day of Judgment—between angels and their worshippers from amongst the human beings?' and 'Will there also be a dialogue between idols and those who worshipped them without the former being aware of such worshipping?' Also, another question is raised: 'Will there finally be a dialogue between 'Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* and those who took him as a god without his consent?' One of the most pious mystics, so to speak, puts these words into the mouths of the idols by saying:

They worshipped us while we are more worshipful of Allah

Than those who pray before dawn for forgiveness

In this regard, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'There is not a single thing that does not celebrate His praise' (*al-Isra'*: 44).

The mystic continues:

They considered our silence as evidence against us

But we became the fuel of the Fire they are going to be thrown into

In this context, the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'then beware of the Fire prepared for the disbelievers, whose fuel is men and stones' (*al-Baqara*: 24).

The pious man continues to say:

They levelled false accusations due to their ignorance

Just as they did with son of Maryam (Mary) and his disciples



Then, what will Allah *Glorified is He* do with the two parties? We may say also in a poetic pattern:

Those who exceed limits will get their punishment

While the blameless party will be saved by the Mercy of the Forgiver

Thus, we have learnt the destiny of those who worship false deities or associate partners with Allah *Glorified is He*; these people are included in Allah's Words: 'On the Day We gather them all together' (*Yunus*: 28).

Hence, those who worship idols or planets, those who associate partners with Allah *Glorified is He* and the devils from among the *jinn*s and the human beings, will be assembled on the Day of Resurrection. Let everyone in this world remember that all matters will be disclosed, and all idolaters will be exposed during this great assembly. There will be a confrontation between those who worshipped false deities and the false deities themselves—whether these be angels, messengers, planets or idols of stone, for none of them were aware of the fact that they had been worshipped. All will respond to the Command of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'We shall say to those who associate partners with Allah, "Stay in your place"...' (*Yunus*: 28).

When you hear the command *makanak* in Arabic, its translation is 'in your place'; however, the exact meaning is 'stay in your place'. It is not used for greeting, rather, it indicates threatening and menacing. Such an order is not in one's interest when issued. Again, we learn that angels, messengers, planets, and stones have no knowledge about the people who worship them. So, the people to whom this order applies are the polytheists who think that they can evade the Day of Reckoning. However, when they hear the command: '..."Stay in your place, you and your partners (whom you had worshipped)."...' (*Yunus*: 28); does this mean that they will come together with angels, messengers, planets and stones in a single procession? No, it does not; this is due to those slaves adhering to falsehood, whilst the True Lord *Glorified is He* intends to distinguish between the Truth and falsehood. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Then We shall separate them, and their partners (those whom they had worshipped besides Allah) will say, "It was not us you worshipped."' (*Yunus*: 28). This means that Allah *Glorified is He* puts the

group of idolaters on one side and those who were worshipped without their knowledge on the other. This latter side will announce this fact: ‘...“It was not us you worshipped.”’ (*Yunus*: 28). This means that we did not know that you had worshipped us.

Consider the shameful situation that the idolaters will find themselves in; each of them worshipped his respective false deity, while this deity was neither mindful nor aware of such worshipping. Now remember that the whole point of worshipping is the adherence of the worshippers to the commands of the worshipped God. This rule applies to angels and Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* just as it applies to planets and stones since the True Lord *Glorified is He* Who makes man’s organs speak on the Day of Judgment—to bear witness against their owners—is capable of making stones speak. In this context, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘On the Day when Allah’s enemies are gathered up for the Fire and driven onward, their ears, eyes, and skins will, when they reach it, testify against them for their misdeeds. They will say to their skins, “Why did you testify against us?” and their skins will reply, “Allah, Who gave speech to everything, has given us speech”...’ (*Fussilat*: 19-21). On the Day of Judgment, we will see stone idols damn those who worshipped them, exactly as the skin disowns the sins of its disobedient owner, for the True Lord *Glorified is He* says in another verse: ‘On the Day when their own tongues, hands and feet will testify against them about what they have done.’ (*an-Nur*: 24) However, do not allow yourself to dwell on how an idol will speak, for you have believed, as a matter of faith, that your body parts—including hands, feet and skin—will be capable of speech on the Day of Judgment. Be certain that they all will speak in the Hereafter by the commands of Allah *Glorified is He*. You believe in the Hereafter, so do not look at the events of that Day according to the laws of this world since everything changes in the Afterlife. Have you not been told by Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* that you will eat in paradise as you want without producing excreta. This is illogical as far as the laws of this world are concerned; however, we take this for granted as a matter of creed. When the True Lord *Glorified is He* informs us of things that will happen in paradise, we must not think of them through our finite reason

and imperfect worldly knowledge in order not to reach a complete deadlock. A faithful and truthful heart sees the events and scenes of the Day of Judgment and the Hereafter as pertaining to the world of the unseen where the laws and criteria are quite different.

We should know that man lives in a world that lies between the heaven and the earth; this world has its own earth and heaven, while the Hereafter has its own earth and heaven. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘One Day—when the earth is turned into another earth, the heaven into another heaven...’ (*Ibrahim*: 48). Thus, everything changes on the Day of Judgment. If you are told that idols will speak—denouncing that they had been worshipped as partners with Allah—and if you are told that angels will bear witness against those who had worshipped them in lieu of Allah *Glorified is He* do not be astonished.

Allah *Glorified is He* says in the following verse:

﴿٢٩﴾ فَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا يَبْنَا وَيُنْكَمُ إِن كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغْفِيلِينَ

**God is witness enough between us and you – we had no idea  
that you worshipped us’ [29] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 29)**

Thus, the created beings that were worshipped instead of Allah will proclaim their disapproval and astonishment of having been deified. The hoopoe<sup>(1)</sup> of Sulaiman (Solomon) announced with amazement that it saw certain human beings worship deities other than Allah. It said, as Allah tells in the Quran: ‘Should they not worship God, who brings forth what is hidden in the heavens and earth...’ (*an-Naml*: 25). The hoopoe was amazed that other deities were worshipped instead of Allah *the Almighty* Who knew all that was hidden in the heavens and earth. If the hoopoe was aware of this truth, then it is logical for other created beings to show disapproval of disbelief, whether they be Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* the angels, stone idols, trees or planets. Allah *the Exalted* will pose the following question to the angels:

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(1) Allah tells us the story of Prophet Sulaiman’s hoopoe in the Quran: ‘I found a woman ruling over the people, who has been given a share of everything— she has a magnificent throne— [but] I found that she and her people worshipped the sun instead of Allah. Satan has made their deeds seem alluring to them, and diverted them from the right path: they cannot find the right path.’ (*an-Naml*: 23-24)

‘... "Was it you these people worshipped?"' (*Saba'*: 40), and the angels will reply: ‘... "May You be exalted? You are our supporter against them! Really, they worshipped the jinn..."' (*Saba'*: 41).

Allah *the Most High* gives us numerous examples of this attitude throughout the Holy Quran. By this frequent mention of examples, Allah means to remind us of the truth and prevent us from immersing into heedlessness. For instance, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘On the Day He gathers everyone together [saying], “Company of jinns (Devils)! You have seduced a great many humans,”...’ (*al-An‘am*: 128). Allah *the Exalted* mentions those who take jinns as allies: ‘...adherents among mankind will say, “Lord, we have profited from one another, but now we have reached the appointed time you decreed for us.” He will say, “Your home is the Fire, and there you shall remain”– unless Allah wills otherwise. [Prophet], your Lord is All-Wise, All Knowing.’ (*al-An‘am*: 128)

One might ask how jinns succeed in luring so many human beings. The answer is that Allah *the Almighty* has given *jinns* a nature different from that of human beings and faculties unlike human faculties. He *the Most High* says, in reference to Satan: ‘...He and his forces can see you from where you cannot see them...’ (*al-A‘raf*: 27). Allah *the Exalted* has given jinns powers greater than that which He has given human beings; He has given them the capability of passing through physical barriers, for example. This is natural, for *jinns* have been created from fire, whereas human beings have been created from earth. There is a difference between the fundamental natures of the two elements. That which comes out of earth (or clay) is static, immobile, and opaque, whereas that which comes out of fire is radiant with light and heat. For instance, if you are sitting in a room outside of which a fire is burning, the walls will conduct some of the heat of the fire to the room except if the barrier is insulated from heat. An apple, which is made out of earth, has no such an effect that can reach you inside the room. Thus, fire has special properties, and earth, or clay, has its. The properties of something made of earth are such that the object will not reach you unless you physically transport it to where you are sitting.

We are reminded of these scientific facts in the story of Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him*. When he learnt that the Queen of Sheba was on her way to his palace to announce her conversion to Allah’s religion, Prophet

Sulaiman (Solomon) wanted her throne to be brought to him before she arrived, so he asked those in his assembly: ‘...Which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?’ (*an-Naml*: 38) This means that there were various kinds of beings present in his assembly, and every one of these species possessed different powers. Carrying the throne from Yemen to the court of Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon) would require time and strength. Were they all equal in their powers, Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* would not have said: ‘...Which of you can bring me...’ (*an-Naml*: 38). The first to come forth and offer to carry out Prophet Sulaiman’s order was not just any ordinary jinn, but a powerful and crafty one; some jinns are weak and dim-witted, while others are intelligent and skilful. They are all jinns; all belong to one kind, but they are different in powers. One of the jinns was the first to speak: “I will bring it to you before you can even rise from your place’ (*an-Naml*: 39). However, Sulaiman’s assembly could go on for another hour or even several hours, for he was preoccupied throughout the day with resolving disputes and cases brought before him. The jinn who spoke these words knew that he had powers that surpassed those of human beings. As for any human beings who were present at Sulaiman’s assembly, none of them spoke, for the task was beyond their means or capabilities. The jinn who spoke next was one who had knowledge of the Book. He said: ‘...I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye...’ (*an-Naml*: 40). The task was accomplished instantly, and the Quran’s depiction of the event is expressive of such extraordinary swiftness: ‘When Sulaiman (Solomon) saw it set before him, he said, “This is a favour from my Lord...”’ (*an-Naml*: 40).

Thus, jinns have the power to do certain things which human beings cannot.<sup>(1)</sup> This jinni did not owe his ability and agility to his constitution; rather, it was by the Creator’s Will that he was able to perform such extraordinary things. To remind jinns that it is only by His Will that they

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(1) Jinns have powers far exceeding those of human beings since they are created from fire. However, humankind can be spiritually stronger if they follow the guidance of Allah and ponder the secrets of His Revelation. Two jinns that offered to bring the throne of the Queen of Sheba to Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon), but the one who had knowledge of the Book was stronger and abler. Nevertheless, this pertains to spiritual power, but as to physical powers, humankind are created from clay, and clay is not like fire.

possess such powers Allah *the Almighty* puts them at the service of human beings who have far less powers. This is why some people try to exploit the powers of jinns so as to gain power over their fellow human beings. However, Allah *the Almighty* has willed that those who engage in these types of activities must suffer from it.<sup>(1)</sup> Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And they followed what the *Shayateen* (devils) chanted of sorcery in the reign of Sulaiman, and Sulaiman was not a disbeliever, but the *Shayateen* disbelieved. They taught men sorcery and that was sent down to the two angels at Babylon, Harut and Marut, yet these two taught no man until they had said, "Surely, we are only a trial, therefore do not be a disbeliever"...' (*al-Baqara*: 102). Thus, the jinns' teaching people about the ways of magic is a proof that their powers surpass the powers of human beings.

However, when the angels Harut and Marut<sup>(2)</sup> taught magic to human beings, they first warned them not to exploit their knowledge to oppress their fellow human beings and that it was all a test to them to be taught such powers. If you are knowledgeable in the ways of magic, you should use it in a defensive manner to protect yourself against harm, not in order to harm others. Furthermore, a human being is likely to be influenced by whims and desires; you might easily acquire the knowledge of magic, but will you prove yourself to be a responsible practitioner, or will you be tempted to use it to harm others?

Suppose that a person entrusted you with a thousand dollars. Will you honour your trusteeship? Or will you deny that person his right when he asks for his money back? Would you use this money if you were to go through some hard financial circumstances? This is why a wise person would refuse to be entrusted with money, fearing his whims and desires would make him betray a trust.

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(1) Allah says: 'Men have sought refuge with the jinn in the past, but they only misguided them further' (*al-Jinn*: 6). They only increased them in humiliation and weakness. Ibn Kathir said in his exegesis, 'A man would set out with his family and settle in a valley. Then he would say, "I seek refuge with the jinn who rules this valley from harm or damage to myself, my money, my offspring and my cattle!"'

(2) Harut and Marut are two angels that were sent down to earth. It is said they were displeased with the way human beings passed Judgements on one another, so they ruled justly between people. They also taught human beings about the ways of magic. They vowed not to teach magic to anyone unless they proclaimed upfront: '... "Surely we are only a trial, therefore do not be a disbeliever."...' (*al-Baqara*: 102).

It is no wonder one should fear being entrusted with something precious. The heavens and earth were afraid of bearing the trust, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘We offered the Trust<sup>(1)</sup> to the heavens, the earth and the mountains, yet they refused to undertake it and were afraid of it; mankind undertook it– they have always been inept and foolish.’ (*al-’Ahzab*: 72) When you deposit a trust with someone, the only guarantee is his honesty. It does not mean that you have to have witnesses or documents proving that you have entrusted that thing with him. The only guarantee is the word and honour of the trustee, so he may keep the trust until you restore it, or he may deny having been entrusted with it.

The heavens, the earth and the mountains said to Allah they are not up to such a responsibility; they did not wish to be given free will to obey or disobey Him and asked Him instead to make them submissive to Him without their choice in order to avoid such a heavy responsibility. Allah *the Exalted* has elevated and honoured mankind above all other created beings by virtue of their reason and their ability to make a choice when faced with different options. This is why they accepted to carry the trust. However, when the time came to show how far they would honour that trust, they found themselves less trustworthy than they had initially thought after having accepted the heavy responsibility.

Some perhaps learn magic with the intention of only repulsing any harm that might come their way. Let them think of this advice, though: you cannot guarantee that you will stick to your original intentions; as a human being, you are likely to be controlled by your whims and desires. Someone may enrage you, and you may well use your knowledge of magic to harm him, which means you will only bring suffering upon yourself in the first place.

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(1) Scholars have differed concerning the interpretation of *al-amanah* (the trust). However, the majority of scholars have agreed that it is worshipping Allah by the creatures’ free will. Ibn ‘Abbas said, ‘It means worship; Allah has offered the trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains, but they were afraid of bearing it, so Allah offered it to Adam; He said to him, ‘I have offered the trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains, but they could not bear it, so will you accept to bear it?’ Adam replied, ‘What responsibility will it entail?’ Allah said, ‘If you do good, you will be rewarded and if you do wrong, you will be punished.’ Thus, Adam accepted to bear the trust. [See: *Exegesis of ibn Kathir*, 3/522.]

Thus, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...“Company of jinns! You have seduced a great many humans”...’ (*al-An‘am*: 128). The jinns have given to many a human being the weapon which they can use against their fellow humans. Allah *the Exalted* says about them: ‘...“Lord, we have profited from one another ...”’ (*al-An‘am*: 128). Human beings profit from jinns by virtue of the power that they can gain over other human beings. Meanwhile, jinns profit from human beings by leading them astray, for this is the vow Satan has made: ‘...“I swear by Your Might! I will tempt all.”’ (*Sad*: 82)

In the end, however, this mutual profit does not really give either of the two parties any additional powers than those they already have. This is why you will find that all those who work in the domain of magic and the exploitation of jinns suffer from it. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Men have sought refuge with jinns in the past, but they only misguided them further.’ (*al-Jinn*: 6)

Those who engage in the business of bewitchment and the calling forth of jinns can only make money by means of those who know nothing about magic. If knowledge of magic really gave a person special advantages or powers over other human beings, they would not resort to exploiting those who are ignorant of the ways of magic to make money. Rather, they would — by those special powers — find other resources to earn their livelihood. Moreover, they have to pay dearly for their works. If you ever see one of these people, you find his face dust-stained and his children blind, crippled or suffering from any given disability. This is due to such a person trying to gain an advantage over others through the services of jinns. However, with this advantage comes great suffering. Therefore, let every human being show respect for his Creator and content himself with the natural ability He has willed for him. Let no one try to unfairly gain an advantage over others and, in doing so, bring suffering upon him. Someone would hire a bully or a thug to strike terror in the hearts of others. They may gain a transient benefit from this bargain, but then the strong thug might turn against his master. Thus, every person must respect the powers with which Allah, the All-Powerful has endowed him. Otherwise, one will only bring suffering to himself, as Allah, says: ‘...adherents amongst mankind will say, “Lord, we have profited from one another, but now we have reached the appointed time you decreed for us.” He will say, “Your home is the



Fire, and there you shall remain”—unless Allah wills otherwise. [Prophet], your Lord is All-Wise, All Knowing.’ (*al-An‘am*: 128)

Therefore, we see that the destiny of those who exploit the powers of jinns is Hellfire, and so is the destiny of the jinns who tempt human beings into sin. Another issue follows this, which Allah *the Exalted* mentions in the Quran: ‘on that Day, friends will become each other’s enemies — not so the righteous.’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 67)

‘Friends’ mean people united by common bonds of affection and companionship and involved in the affairs of each other’s lives. Friends are two kinds, and one of these kinds is those who are bound to each other by their love for Allah. They go to the mosque together, remind one another of Allah, earn their living by lawful means, and recite the Quran, etc. If one of them commits a sin, he will find a friend who offers him sincere advice and assistance to repent to Allah *the Almighty*. They commit themselves to the tenets of Islam. In their relationship, they represent the description Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* gave in the Hadith, ‘Two persons who love each other out of their love for Allah, so they meet for His sake and depart for His sake...’<sup>(1)</sup> This is a type of friendship. The other type of friendship includes people who tempt one another into committing sinful acts. They would drink alcohol, engage in gambling, and transgress against Allah’s Law. When the Day of Judgment comes, they will be given their due recompense, for it will be ‘...a Day when there will be no bargaining and no friendship...’ (*al-Baqara*: 254). The only real friendship (or companionship) is the friendship that is based upon love for Allah *the Almighty* and devotion to Him. Such are the friends who will rejoice at each other’s company when they meet again in the Hereafter, for they used to help each other in doing the

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(1) *On the authority of Abu Hurayra, Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, ‘There are seven whom Allah will shade in His Shade on the Day when there is no shade except His Shade: a just ruler; a youth who grew up in the worship of Allah, a man whose heart is attached to the mosques, two people who love each other for Allah’s sake, meeting for that and parting upon that; a man who is called by a woman of beauty and position (for illegal intercourse), but he says, ‘I fear Allah’, a man who gives money to charity and hides it, such that his left hand does not know what his right hand gives in charity; and a man who remembers Allah in private so his eyes shed tears.’*

good and avoiding evil. As for those who used to get together in this world to commit sinful acts, each will curse the other. On the Day of Judgment, they will argue against each other as Allah *the Most High* foretells the situation in the Quran: ‘...the weak will say to the power-seekers, “We were your followers. Can you protect us from any of Allah’s punishment?”...’ (*Ibrahim*: 21). The other party will respond: ‘...“If Allah had guided us, we would have guided you. It makes no difference now whether we rage or endure with patience. There is no escape”...’ (*Ibrahim*: 21). Then, Satan will make his confession, as Allah *Glorified is He* foretells in the Quran: ‘When everything has been decided, Satan will say, “Allah gave you a true promise. I too made promises but they were false ones. I had no power over you except to call you, and you responded to my call, so do not blame me. Blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor can you help me ...”’ (*Ibrahim*: 22).

This dialogue depicts the scene on the Day of Judgement. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Like Satan, who says to man, “Do not believe!”, but when man disbelieves, says, “I disown you. I fear Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.”’ (*al-Hashr*: 16) All those are glimpses of the scenes of the Day of Judgment; they come to mind as we study the verse: ‘So sufficient is Allah as a witness between us and you that we indeed knew nothing of your worship of us’ (*Yunus*: 29). The idols, the angels, the Messengers, and every created being that was falsely worshipped will also speak and disown their worshippers. Thus will the idolaters be exposed and disgraced. Then, they will make their way to their final abode: Hellfire. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Gather together those who were unjust and their associates and what they used to worship.’ (*as-Saffat*: 22) The Arabic word used in the original text of the verse and translated as 'associates' also literally means 'spouses'. This draws attention to the fact that spouses can be more dangerous to each other than enemies can be to each, and more influential in tempting one to do wrong. A husband or wife, being a constant companion, can truly drag one into sinning and cause him to stray from the Straight Path.<sup>(1)</sup> After ordering them to be gathered together, Allah *the Most High* will command: ‘And halt them for questioning.’ (*as-Saffat*: 24)

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(1) Allah says: ‘Believers, even among your spouses and your children you have some enemies— beware of them...’ (*at-Taghabun*: 14).

They were companions to each other in the life of this world — the world where one can choose because he has free will. However, on Judgment Day, they find themselves in the world of 'compulsion' where they no longer have the freedom of choice; this is why Allah *the Most High* says: ‘And halt them for questioning: “Why do you not support each other now?” No indeed! They will be in complete submission on that Day—and they will turn on one another accusingly. They will say, “You came to us from a position of power.”’ (*as-Saffat*: 24-28) In the life of this world, they had power by which they compelled the weak to follow them. That power is not necessarily one of coercion or subjugation; the verse refers to any kind of power, even if it is only the power of temptation. The disbelievers will thus be exposed, and it will be the first kind of torment they will have in the Hereafter. Their punishment will start with their disowning and cursing one another even though they were companions and friends in the life of this world. True are the Words of Allah: ‘On that Day, friends will become each other’s enemies — not so the righteous.’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 67)<sup>(1)</sup>

This shows us the importance of choosing one’s friends well in the life of this world. One should not choose a friend who drags him into sinning. One should choose a friend who helps him commit himself to the Ordinance of Allah. Allah *Glorified is He* describes one of the scenes of the Day of Judgment by saying: ‘The disbelievers will say, “Our Lord, show us those jinn and men who misled us”<sup>(2)</sup> and we shall trample them underfoot, so that they may be among the lowest of the low.’’ (*Fussilat*: 29) Such will be the state of those who strayed from the Straight Path; they will claim they were misled by others and will ask for permission to punish with their own hands those who led them astray! However, those they falsely held as deities — whether angels, Messengers, or even stone

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- (1) *On the authority of Abu Hurayra, Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, ‘If two people love each other out of their love for Allah, one of whom is in the east and the other in the west, Allah will gather them together on the Day of /resurrection. He will say, “This is your brother you have loved for My sake.”’ [Cited by Ibn Kathir in his exegesis (4/134), narrated by Al-Hafez ibn ‘Asakir]*
  - (2) *‘Ali ibn Abu Taleb Allah be pleased with him said that “those jinn and men who misled us” is meant to refer to Iblis (Satan) who was the first to disobey Allah and defy His order and Cane, the son of Adam who was the first to commit sin on earth. [Exegesis of Ibn Kathir (4/98)]*

idols — will disown them as Allah foretells in the verse we are currently examining: “So sufficient is Allah as a witness between us and you that we indeed knew nothing of your worship of us.” (*Yunus*: 29)

Allah *Glorified is He* says in the following verse:

هٰنَالِكَ تَبْلَوْنَ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا أَسْلَفَتْ وَرُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمْ  
الْحَقِّ وَصَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

**Every soul will realize<sup>(1)</sup>, then and there, what it did in the past.  
They will be returned to God, their rightful Lord, and their  
invented [gods] will desert them [30] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 30)**

The Arabic word *hunalik* (translated in this verse as 'then and there') is an adverb of time and place. Every action is associated with a particular time and place, yet sometimes this adverb is used to refer to place only or time only. We find it used in the story of Prophet Zachariah *peace be upon him*; Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘*Hunalika* (at that time), Zakaryya (Zechariah) invoked his Lord...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 38). In this verse, it is used as an adverb of time. It refers to the time when Maryam (Mary) gave to her guardian, Prophet Zachariah, an answer to his question, which called his attention to a fundamental truth about faith. Allah *the Exalted* has willed that she would be the one to teach him. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...Whenever Zakaryya (Zechariah) visited her in the sanctuary, he found her provided with food...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 37). Prophet Zakaryya (Zechariah) *peace be upon him* used to provide her with what she needed, but he was surprised when he found that she had provisions which he did not give here. This made him ask: ‘...“Maryam (Mary), how is it you have these provisions?”...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 37).

This observation expressed Zachariah’s attentiveness as a guardian. His question to her was intended to get an explanation regarding the provisions

(1) The Arabic word used in the original text of the verse and rendered here as “realise” has been interpreted in many ways. Some say it means: to be recompensed for what it did in the life of this world. Others say it means: to know the truth of what they did, whether it was good or bad. Some say it means: each soul will follow their deeds, good or bad, until they reach their final abodes, and some interpreted it as: each will read their deeds from their records. [*Exegesis of Al-Qurtubi* (4/3261) and *Ibn Kathir* (2/416)]

she received from other than him. This attitude is quite essential for economic security of the whole society. When every guardian asks those under his charge, 'Where did you such-and-such', this would guarantee that no one would steal, embezzle or usurp the rights of others since he knows he will be questioned. This is sure to provide protection from corruption. Ponder the reply of Maryam when Prophet Zakaryya (Zechariah) *peace be upon him* asked her that question. She said: '... "It is from Allah. Allah provides limitlessly for whomever He wills"'<sup>(1)</sup> (*Al-'Imran*: 37). Zakaryya (Zechariah) found with her fruits that were out of season, so his surprise stemmed from two reasons. First, he did not bring her these fruits, and second it was unusual that such fruits were available at that time. For instance, he perhaps found that she had grapes even though it was not the season for grapes, or he found that she had oranges<sup>(2)</sup> even though it was not the season for oranges. It was natural to any alert guardian to ask such a question to her under his charge, and her answer to him expressed a fundamental fact about faith: "... Allah provides limitlessly for whomever He wills'" (*Al-'Imran*: 37). In light of this fact, there is no room for logical calculations of human beings. However, was Prophet Zakaryya (Zechariah) heedless of the fact that Allah *the Almighty* showers His blessings on whomever He wills beyond all reckoning? The answer is that he was not heedless of this fundamental fact; it just was not at the focus of his thoughts at

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- (1) Some provisions are limited and some are limitless. The former is dependent on the diligence of each person. It is the provision Allah grants to His servant, out of His Justice, in proportion to his effort and struggle. As for the limitless provision, Allah grants it to those who give themselves over to Him, who act in light of the verse: 'Say, "My prayers and sacrifice, my life and death, are all for Allah, Lord of all the Worlds"' (*al-An'am*: 162). Allah has provided limitlessly for Maryam (Mary), and such is a favour He bestows on whoever He chooses of His servants: 'The life of this world is made to seem glamorous to the disbelievers, and they laugh at those who believe. But those who are mindful of Allah will be above them on the Day of Resurrection: Allah provides immeasurably for whoever He pleases' (*al-Baqara*: 212). One of the eminent scholars said: Whoever follows a middle course with Allah will receive his reward in proportion to his deeds and whoever devotes himself completely to Him will be rewarded limitlessly for his devotion.
- (2) *In their interpretation of the verse: '... Whenever Zakaryya (Zechariah) visited her in the sanctuary, he found her provided with food...' (Al-'Imran: 37), Mujahid, 'Ikrima and other exegetes have said it means he found her provided with summer fruits during winter and winter fruits during summer. That was evidence for the special bestowals Allah grants to His devout servants. [Exegesis of Ibn Kathir: 1/360]*

that particular moment, so the words of Maryam (Mary) served to remind him of that fact. Hence, he realised that his old age and infertility of his wife would not prevent their having a child since Allah *the Almighty* showers His blessings on whomever He wills beyond all reckoning. Allah *Glorified is He* describes the inner thoughts of Prophet Zakaryya (Zechariah) *peace be upon him*: “at that time, Zakaryya (Zechariah) invoked his Lord’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 38). The adverb *hunalika* can also mean 'there and then'; it can be an adverb of time as well as place in this verse, too. The answer thus came to him from Allah *the Most High*: ‘...“It is easy for Me. I created you, though you were nothing before.”’ (*Maryam*: 9)

Allah *the Exalted* brings up this issue so as to prevent anyone from questioning the chastity of Maryam (Mary). She would be put to an exceptional situation, so Allah put the following words in her mouth: ‘...“...Allah provides limitlessly for whomever He wills.”’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 37) His blessings are beyond all reckoning since they are independent of time, causes, and the knowledge of people. The wife of ‘Imran realised this, so she prayed to Allah and He accepted her prayers: ‘But when she gave birth, she said, “My Lord! I have given birth to a girl”— Allah knew best what she had given birth to. The male is not like the female—I name her Maryam (Mary) and I commend her and her offspring to Your protection from the rejected Satan.” Her Lord graciously accepted her, made her grow in goodness, and entrusted her to the charge of Zakaryya (Zechariah)...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 36-37).

Hearing that fundamental fact from Maryam (Mary), Zakaryya (Zechariah) prayed to Allah to grant him a child despite all the logical causes that could prevent it. Later, Allah *the Almighty* proves further to Maryam (Mary) that He grants whatever He wills to whomever He wills, so He sends her the news that she would bear a child by the name of ‘Isa, son of Maryam (Mary) *peace be upon them*. Allah *the Exalted* braced her for the exceptional event of her bearing a child without ever being touched by a man; she knew that the laws of biology were such that there could be no procreation without sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. However, it was Allah’s Will that she had a child without going through this process. Allah *Glorified is He* made Maryam (Mary) herself herald the unexpected event by declaring this fundamental fact: “... Allah provides limitlessly for whomever He wills.”’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 37) When she

wondered: ‘...“My Lord, how can I have a son when no man has touched me?”...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 47) Allah *the Exalted* had already told her that the promised child would bear her name, so he would have no father since no man would touch her: ‘The angels said, “Maryam (Mary), Allah gives you news of a Word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, ‘Isa, son of Maryam (Mary)...”’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 45). From this, He knew that her spiritual awareness would lead her to understand that the lineage of that child would be traced back through his mother and that there would be no father in his family lineage. This was meant to make her realise that her child would not be conceived as a result of marriage, either then or at some later times. The news of the child could have no explanation except that she had herself declared before: ‘Allah provides limitlessly for whomever He wills’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 37).

In the verse we are currently reflecting on, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘every soul will realise, then and there, what it did in the past...’ (*Yunus*: 30). On the Day of Judgment, every soul will be informed of what it has done and will see the outcomes of its deeds. The righteous and the sinful will be duly recompensed. Allah *the Almighty* then says: ‘...They will be returned to Allah, their rightful Lord...’ (*Yunus*: 30). The word ‘return’ denotes moving to a condition in which one had formerly been. Since disbelievers had in their lives sought lords other than Allah, on the Day of Judgment, they will be forced to return to their True Lord. The word ‘return’ means they belonged to Allah *the Most High* in the beginning, not to their false gods, and even though they strayed from Him, they still belong to Him in the end. Allah *Glorified is He* says about Prophet Musa (Moses): ‘and thus we returned or restored him to his mother...’ (*al-Qasas*: 13). It means that he was with his mother, then he left her, then he returned to her once again, so he belonged to her in the beginning and in the end. So, will disbelievers return to Allah on the Day of Judgment, as Allah says: ‘They will be returned to Allah, their rightful Lord<sup>(1)</sup>...’ (*Yunus*: 30).

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(1) Allah says in this verse: ‘They will be returned to Allah, their rightful *Mawlahum*...’ (*Yunus*: 30) He says in another verse: ‘... the disbelievers have no *mawla*’ (*Muhammad*: 11). The Arabic word *mawla* has several correlated connotations. In the first verse, it means “Lord”, the One Who provides for them, while in the second verse it means “protector”, so Allah provides for those who disbelieve in Him, but He would not protect them. He is their *mawla* (Lord Who provides for them) but He would not be their *mawla* (Protector).

Every person is born with a sound disposition that is submissive solely to Allah. Then, his parents direct him towards becoming a Magian or an adherent of any other religion where associates are worshipped besides Allah.<sup>(1)</sup> When a person becomes an adherent of a polytheistic religion, he becomes at the service of a false god, a lord and a lawmaker other than the True God and Rightful Lord. 'Every soul will realise, then and there, what it did in the past...' (*Yunus*: 30). Every soul will see the outcomes of what it has done. Disbelievers will generally face the embarrassment of having worshipped false deities instead of Allah, and each will be exposed because of his own individual sins as well.

Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the verse by saying: '...their invented [gods] will desert them.' (*Yunus*: 30) The false gods they worshipped will not know where they are, nor will they realise that they are in danger, so they will not save them from punishment. If these deities they were wont to worship instead of Allah true gods, they would know that their worshippers are in trouble and would save them. However, they were only a flagrant lie invented by the disbelievers, so '...their invented [gods] will desert them.' (*Yunus*: 30)

Thus, does Allah *the Exalted* foretell what will happen in the Afterlife? Having shed light on the severe punishment that is prepared for stubborn disbelievers in the Hereafter, there is hope that they, upon knowing this, might turn back to the Divine Way of Guidance. Furthermore, it is a warning intended to remind them of the absolute necessity of returning to the worship of the True Lord *Glorified is He*. After this, Allah *the Almighty* invites them to ponder the fact that will certainly re-establish faith in their hearts. He *the Most High* says:

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(1) *On the authority of Abu Hurayra, Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, 'Every person is born with a disposition in which faith in Allah is naturally ingrained. Then his parents turn him into a Jew, Christian, or a Magian. This is like a livestock animal that is born perfectly sound; then, life would strike its body with imperfection.' Then he recited: "This is the natural disposition Allah instilled in mankind– there is no altering Allah's creation– and this is the right religion..." (ar-Rum: 30).' [Cited by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (4775) and Muslim (2658)]*



قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَمِيتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَمِيتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُدِيرُ الْأَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا نُنْقِزُكَ

Say [Prophet], ‘Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Who controls hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living, and who governs every- thing?’ They are sure to say, ‘God.’ Then say, ‘So why do you not take heed of Him? [31] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 31)

Allah *the Exalted* commands Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to ask disbelievers this question. Such a question can only be given by one who is confident that his addressee cannot possibly find any answer except the one the questioner already expects. Suppose someone was complaining that his father was neglectful of him, so you asked him, ‘Who has brought you these clothes? Who provides for you and educates you?’ The son would answer, ‘My father.’ You would only ask him that if you were certain that he would inevitably give the answer that you expected from him. If you knew he would give you a different answer, it would sound as if you were asking his opinion on the matter, not teaching him a lesson by eliciting the answer you wanted.

The verse begins with a command to Prophet Muhammad: ‘Say [Prophet]...’ (*Yunus*: 31). This is quite frequent in the Quran; Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Say, "He is the One God"...'’ (*al-Ikhlās*: 1). Suppose a father asked his son to deliver a certain message to his uncle. He would transmit the father’s message without prefixing it with the command, ‘Say’. However, when Allah addresses His creation, it is His Will that His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* should communicate this message to us just as it has been revealed to him. Thus, when Allah *the Exalted* sent him a verse beginning with: ‘Say...’, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was so honest and trustworthy that he communicated the message of Allah without ignoring or failing to deliver even a single word. Since the revelation came from Allah, His Messenger dutifully complied with His commands, so he would not withhold even a single word. He would not deprive the ears of Allah’s creation from a single word revealed by Him.

Thus, Allah *the Almighty* commands to pose this question to disbelievers: ‘...“Who provides for you from the sky and the earth" (*Yunus*: 31). Provision

is all that one derives benefit from. It consists of the basic necessities that sustain life as well as luxuries. Basic provision is mainly the rain that falls from the sky and the plants that grow because of it from the earth.<sup>(1)</sup> Therefore, Allah *the Most High* poses a question that already contains its own answer. He does not command Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to give them the right answer that they may know the truth. Rather, He allows them to answer the questions themselves.

Allah poses another question: '...Who controls hearing and sight?...' (*Yunus*: 31). The faculties of hearing and seeing are the two primary ways of perception. The process of keeping information<sup>(2)</sup> is performed through various ways. Smells are detected by the nose. Smoothness is felt by the skin. We use the tongue for tasting; we use it for speaking too, along with the other organs of speech. Sounds are caught by the ears. The world becomes visible thanks to the eyes. All these senses, together with others, make up one's perception. Chief among these is the intellectual faculty. A little child may see fire as a beautiful and eye-catching spectacle. However, as soon he tries to touch it, it burns him, so he learns to never touch fire again. After experiencing the power of the fire with his senses, the fire's capacity to burn was saved in his mind and became firmly rooted in it. This is how our various senses work. They form the concrete basis for perception and the basis on which the intellectual faculties grasp abstract notions. Thus, the instruments of knowledge for living beings consist of the senses, and these senses provide the mind with information which becomes implanted in it. This information becomes so firmly settled in the consciousness so they turn into beliefs. Therefore, the different stages of perception are the following: recognition through the senses, intellectual analysis and reflection, which all lead to the crystallisation of beliefs.

Allah *the Almighty* describes to us the stages where perception takes place in the human soul so that a human being can gradually acquire knowledge;

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(1) This is the provision Allah Almighty mentions in His words: 'Let man consider the food he eats! We pour down abundant water and cause the soil to split open. We make grain grow, and vines, fresh vegetation, olive trees, date palms, luscious gardens, fruits, and fodder: all for you and your livestock to enjoy' (*Abasa*: 24-32).

(2) Perception leads to realization on which basis one makes his choices. One's choices direct his thoughts and reflections, and sound reflections must lead to Allah, the Creator of all things.

He says: ‘And Allah has brought you forth from your mothers’ wombs knowing nothing—but He has endowed you with hearing, sight and minds, so that you might have cause to be grateful.’ (*an-Nahl*: 78) A newborn has not yet been given the power to utilise his senses. Soon, however, Allah bestows upon him the ability to use the senses for perception.

In the verse we are examining, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions only the primary senses: hearing and sight. Our perception of the world and reception of Allah’s Guidance depend mainly on these two faculties. They are the most important when it comes to conveying the Divine Message, for it is through the eyes that we behold the signs of creation and miracles of the Prophets, and it is through hearing that we receive the Ordinance of Allah as conveyed by His Messengers. ‘Ali ibn Abu Taleb *Allah be pleased with him* directed our attention to these wonders when he said, ‘How full of wonders the creation of the human being is! He sees with a bulk of fat, speaks with a piece of flesh, hears through a bone, and breathes through a hole.’<sup>(1)</sup> Sound waves strike the ear bone, causing it to vibrate. We see through the fatty membranes of the eye, and we utter words using the tongue. Some have also added, ‘He smells through a cartilage, feels by means of the skin and thinks with dough-like material.’ When a human being is born, his brain is like a piece of dough used for soaking up and storing information from the surrounding environment. Such information later serves as the basis for feelings and spirituality.

When modern science speaks about the functions of the senses, it gives a summary definition of the five major ones. This means that there are other senses which have yet to be discovered. There is, for example, the faculty we use to distinguish the thickness of a material by placing it between two fingers. There is also the faculty that enables us to distinguish between different weights; thanks to this faculty, we can recognise the amount of effort it takes for us to lift one object compared to that it takes to lift another.

It is established that when things supposed to be similar are made different, there must be a reason for their difference. Both hearing and eyesight are senses used for perception. In the verse, the Arabic word used for the former (*sam*’

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(1) Cited by Ash-Sharif Ar-Radi in his book *Nahj Al-Balaghah* (4/4), Al-A’lami Publications, Beirut

meaning 'hearing') is in the singular form, whereas that used for the latter (*absar* meaning 'eyesight') is in the plural. Why is that? Why does Allah *the Almighty* not mention the two senses in the singular form? Every word of Allah is put right in place; every word is chosen for a purpose and cannot be replaced by another. The ears capture all the surrounding sounds even though they originate from various sources. As for the eyes, they focus on one single direction at a time. If you want to see what the view is like on your right side, you shift your eyes to the right, and if you want to see what is behind you, you change your position. The ears, unlike the eyes, capture sounds from all directions without requiring you to consciously direct it to do that. Also, when it comes to the sense of hearing, you do not have a choice; you cannot prevent your ears from hearing something. As for the sense of sight, you have more control over it because either you can look in a different direction or you can close your eyes to stop seeing something. Allah *the Exalted* mentions the sense of hearing first since it is the first means of perception that starts functioning after birth. As for the eyes, it takes three to ten days after birth before they are able to function.

So, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...Who controls hearing and sight?...' (*Yunus*: 31). Allah is the One Who possesses both blessings. He is their Creator. He is Capable of preserving them for us just as He is also Capable of causing them to stop. Allah *the Almighty* gives us an example of this in the Quran when He says about the people of the cave: 'We sealed their ears [with sleep] in the cave for years' (*al-Kahf*: 11). He suspended their sense of hearing when he sealed their ears, so they fell into a deep sleep that lasted three centuries and nine years. How did this happen? Under normal conditions, a human being can sleep a day and night together. This is why when Allah *the Exalted* brought them back from sleep, they asked one another: '...One of them asked, "How long have you remained thus?" [The others] answered, "We have remained thus a day, or part of a day."' (*al-Kahf*: 19) However, their physical appearance clearly told otherwise: their hair had grown extremely long, and its black colour had changed into pale grey. They looked much too old that Allah *the Most High* says about their description: '...If you had seen them, you would have turned and run away, filled with fear of them' (*al-Kahf*: 18).

It is worth noting that Allah says in the verse we are examining: ‘...Who controls hearing and sight?’ (*Yunus*: 31) In another verse from the chapter of *as-Sajda*, He *the Most High* says: ‘...He endows you with hearing and sight....’ (*as-Sajda*: 9) There is a difference between ‘creating’, ‘endowing’ and ‘controlling’. We know what the act of creating means, and we believe Allah possesses everything. This is a fundamental fact of faith. As for the act of endowing, it consists of making that which has been created perform its proper function. We, humans, create things and make them function, like creating pots from clay or clothes from cloth. Allah’s creation is different, for it is He Who creates the matter then from it creates all things. So, He is the One Who creates, possesses, and endows us with blessings. Reflecting upon another verse, Allah *the Almighty* directs our attention to this fact. All the things that are useful to Adam *peace be upon him* and his progeny have been created by Him and are possessed by Him, and He is the One who grants them to us. Consider the human body and all its faculties, including hearing and sight. We are endowed with these faculties so we may benefit from them. Still, Allah is the One Who possesses these faculties; He can preserve them in their proper state, take them away, or cause them to stop functioning as a result of illness or the like. <sup>(1)</sup> He manages them however He wills: the beating of the heart, the feelings of love or hate and all of the unconscious biological functions performed for our benefit—all of these fall within Allah’s Dominion. For example, Allah *the Exalted* has given every animal a skin which we can tan and make into leather. Only the skins of two kinds are exempted from this: the skins of human beings and the skins of pigs. It is forbidden to use the skin of a human being because of the dignity Allah *the Exalted* has bestowed upon us, and we are also forbidden from using the skins of pigs due to their impurity.

So, Allah is the Creator, Controller, and Giver of all things. He has granted us life and He is the One Who possesses and governs it. This is why whoever

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(1) Allah says: ‘The lightning almost snatches away their sight: whenever it flashes on them they walk on and when darkness falls around them they stand still. If Allah so willed, He could take away their hearing and sight: Allah has power over everything’ (*al-Baqara*: 20).

commits suicide is barred from Paradise.<sup>(1)</sup> Only the Giver of life can take it away. We, human beings, are not owners of our lives. There is no excuse for anyone who receives this message. Whoever receives it and does not ponder it will meet Allah one day and will have to bear their destiny. It is He Who has bestowed blessings on His creatures, and it is He Who owns all things.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living...' (*Yunus*: 31). We know that every being in existence has a life that suits it, for Allah *the Most High* says: '...Everything is bound to perish save His [eternal] self...' (*al-Qasas*: 88). Since there will come a time when everything perishes, this means that everything has a life. Human life seems to consist of perception and movement. A human being consumes vegetables, bread, fruits, and other nutrients. Both the male and female receive the same food, yet the male body produces sperm, whereas the female body produces ova, and the combination of these two produces a new human being. Similarly, chicks hatch from fertilised eggs; an unfertilised egg will not produce a chick, for it is lifeless, and no embryo can be formed in it. There is a difference between the potential for life and life itself. A date pit has to be planted in the soil, and the right conditions have to be present, so it may grow into a date palm.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...and who governs everything?...' (*Yunus*: 31) 'Governing' means correct management. It is putting things in place so they would properly perform their functions. Now think about who manages the beating of your heart? Who manages the movement of your bowels? Who orders your body to extract and absorb useful nutrients and discard wastes? No one would dare claim that he manages his heartbeats or breathing mechanism. It is the Creator Who does. Therefore, do not be concerned about those bodily functions which you do not consciously control, for He

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(1) *On the authority of Abu Hurayra, Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, 'Whoever kills himself with an iron tool will have it in his hand and will stab his belly with it in Hellfire, there to continue in that state eternally. Whoever kills himself with poison will keep taking in that poison in Hellfire, there to continue in that state eternally. Whoever kills himself by falling off a mountain will keep falling in the depths of Hellfire, there to continue in that state eternally.'* [Cited by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (5778) and Muslim (109); this is Muslim's version.]

who has created them in you is Ever Watchful over them. No slumber or sleep overtakes Him, nor does He ever fail to manage all that.

Allah *the Almighty* has commanded Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to pose these questions, and yet He knows they would have no answer that He has not already specified and foretold: ‘...They are sure to say, “Allah.”...’ (*Yunus*: 31) Thus, should we not then use our ears and an eye to contemplate the Power of Allah, the One Who has bestowed upon all of us these blessings out of His Bounty? Should we not ponder the signs of His creation, from the sense of hearing to the sense of sight, from the giving of life, to the causing of death and resurrection from it, along with the managing of everything? Should we not then expect that the One Who has created us wants us to perform a certain mission to make the universe prosperous? Allah is our Creator, so He has sent down to us His guidance and ordinance. How then can some people turn to worship other deities besides Allah, the sun, the moon, angels, Prophets, or idols? How can this be even though worship means obeying Divine Ordinance? Can there really be a deity with no doctrine to reveal to worshippers? Likewise, have the sun worshippers ever received commands from the sun? No, they have not! Does it give any advantages or rewards to its worshippers? No, it is the same for those who worship false deities and those who do not. This is enough to invalidate any false deity worshipped instead of Allah. This is why Allah *the Almighty* concludes the verse by saying: ‘...So why do you not take heed of Him?’ (*Yunus*: 31) Since Allah is the Creator of all things and He has revealed His religion to be acted upon, should we not be mindful of Him? Should we not seek to avoid the manifestations of His Attributes of Majesty and hope for the manifestations of His Attributes of Beauty?<sup>(1)</sup> You must heed the message of the Messengers *peace be upon them* and abide by the commands of the One who has sent them.

Since every human being who is given the questions posed in this verse must certainly acknowledge that the answer points to Allah, then let everyone

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(1) Allah has Attributes of Beauty manifested in His Mercy and Forgiveness and the Good Pleasure He bestows on His servants. As for the Attributes of Majesty, they manifest themselves in His Power over all things, His Might, Control, and Loftiness. One should obey Allah to attain the effects of His Attributes of Beauty and avoid those of His Attributes of Majesty so Allah may make him of His devout servants.

obey the Creator and seek protection from His punishment. What is strange is that everyone admits that Allah is the Creator; He *the Most High* says: 'If you [Prophet] ask them who created them they are sure to say, "Allah"...' (*az-Zukhruf*: 87). He also says: 'If you ask them who created the heavens and earth, they are sure to say, "Allah"...' (*Luqman*: 25). So long as it is Allah Who has created all things, bestows His blessings on all creatures, and governs all existence, how then can you turn your backs on Him and worship anything else?

Allah *Glorified is He* says in the following verse:

﴿ ٣٢ ﴾ فَذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ الْحَقُّ فَمَاذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلَالُ فَأَنَّى تُصْرَفُونَ

**That is God, your Lord, the Truth. Apart from the Truth,  
what is there except error? So how is it that you are  
dissuaded?'**<sup>(1)</sup> [32] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 32)

'That is Allah' is a reference to what has previously been mentioned, His control of hearing and sight, His Power to breathe life into that which is dead and take away life from that which is living, along with the management and organisation of everything in the universe.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'That is Allah, your Lord, the Truth...' (*Yunus*: 32). The truth always has one side. The truth is one and unequivocal.<sup>(2)</sup> Falsehoods are many, and anything but the truth is falsehood. This is why Allah *the Almighty* says: '...Apart from the Truth, what is there except error?...' (*Yunus*: 32). Thus, whoever ascribes divinity to other than Allah has abandoned the Truth. It means he is in error. The Arabic word *dalal* used in the original text of the verse denotes 'error', 'misguidance' or 'delusion'. It means taking the wrong

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(1) *It means: how is it that your minds are dissuaded from the One Who provides for all creatures and who causes life and death and worship instead of Him false deities who have no power over anything?* [Exegesis of *al-Qurtubi* 4/3267]

(2) The Truth is one, not from the perspective of human intellect, but due to the nature of truth. The truth is constant and unchanging. The truth about everything is unequivocal despite the attempts of orators or those who believe falsehood to be truth and truth to be falsehood. Truth is not subject to the peculiarities of human intellect that seek to contradict the truth and propagate falsehoods.



way that, therefore, does not lead to the goal. Whoever takes other than the Way of Allah has therefore strayed into error. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the verse with emphasis that the only two options before a person are ‘Truth’ and ‘error’. He says: ‘...So how is it that you are dissuaded?’ (*Yunus*: 32) Allah is One, Eternal and Unchanging. Those who worship angels, planets, stars, Messengers or idols are led by their whims and desires into error.

Let us recite and ponder the following Words of Allah:

كَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كِمَّتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

**In this way, your Lord’s word about those who defy  
[the Truth] has been proved – they do not believe [33]  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 33)**

This verse, like the previous one, deals with the concept of the Oneness of Allah. Disbelievers have misunderstood this concept and fallen into error. They deserve punishment, for they ascribe divinity to a false deity. This speech was addressed to the contemporaries of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. However, some of those contemporaries embraced faith in Allah, so the suffering is reserved only for those who rejected faith. These words are addressed to those whom Allah has already known will not attain to faith. It is also addressed to those who are wont to sin and who will never repent from their disbelief and insistence on straying from the Truth by worshipping deities other than Allah *the Exalted and Almighty*. Allah’s Omnipotent Knowledge encompasses all things; Allah already knows who will believe in Him and who will not: ‘as for those who disbelieve, it makes no difference whether you warn them or not. They will not believe’ (*al-Baqara*: 6).<sup>(1)</sup> Allah knows who will believe, who will disbelieve and who will persist in disbelief.

(1) The verse alludes to hypocrites, and these live among two communities: the community of the believers about whom Allah says: ‘Such people are following their Lord’s guidance and it is they who will prosper’ (*al-Baqara*: 5). The other community is that of the disbelievers about whom Allah says: ‘But the deeds of those who disbelieve are like a mirage in a desert: the thirsty person thinks there will be water but, when he gets there, he finds only Allah, who pays him his account in full—Allah is swift in reckoning’ (*an-Nur*:39). Hypocrites are more dangerous than disbelievers. The latter is a well-known enemy, but the former deceives the believers into thinking they belong to them.

The latter will be punished; Allah *the Exalted* has already known, with His Omnipotent Knowledge, that even if they were given a second chance, they would not embrace faith.

Then, Allah *the Exalted* mentions a point one can use to debate disbelievers based on their own logical premises. Inside every disbelieving soul, there exists a primordial disposition for doing the good and calling others to it. This tendency exists even among disbelieving nations; every nation seeks to do good in different ways depending on their ethics and principles. People of different ranks, judges, doctors or scientists, would encourage others to do what they believe to be good deeds. A child acquires his beliefs, habits, and attitudes from his parents; his background is formed by their education. He would get away from fire or electricity since the directions given to him regarding their dangers become firmly ingrained in his psyche. Through the instructions of others, he learns how to deal with such hazardous elements such that no harm would touch him. A stranger would find someone to guide him to a destination he is seeking and the one-way and two-way roads; he would find someone to caution him against the dangerous bends on the road. A volunteer would organise traffic near schools and encourage people to slow their cars down for children. Such people are not necessarily believers. They do not do that for the sake of Allah, but the tendency to do good is a natural instinct all people are created with. If one human being is keen to direct another towards doing good, is not Allah ever Keener on guiding His servants to what is right? It is He Who has created human beings, and it is He Who has created everything that sustains them on this earth. This is why He *the Most High* says:

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَبْدُوُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ قُلِ اللَّهُ  
يَبْدُوُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

**Ask them, ‘Can any of your partner-gods originate creation, then bring it back to life again in the end?’ Say, ‘It is God that originates creation, and then brings it back to life, so how can you be misled?’ [34] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 34)**

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* asks Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to ask them, ‘Can any of your partner-gods (Allah's so-called

partners) originate creation, then bring it back to life again?' (*Yunus*: 34) Posing this question to them means that its answer is inevitably in accordance with Allah's Will. If someone says, 'How can Allah *Glorified is He* trust them to deliver the proper answer? Is it not possible that they might attribute all of these actions to a deity other than Him?' We reply that the question posed to them is asked only when the questioner knows that there can be only one valid answer; thus, the questioned will only be able to answer by saying, 'Verily the One Who does all of this is Allah *Glorified is He*.' He will not be able to say, 'Verily, it is the idols who do all of this' since they know that they made the idols with their own hands and that these idols have no power to perform such actions. Thus, the answer is already known beforehand: verily, Allah *the Almighty* solely is capable of these things; and this demonstrates that falsehood is a mere cacophony of clashing voices and that the truth is pure light. In fact, the truth will always have the power to expose and undermine falsehood. Therefore, once you utter a word of truth regarding a matter, you will find that the truth successfully undermined the argument of the one who is in error. The latter will need a long time to come up with a response to what you said; he will even be dazed and surprised, and his argument will be undercut. This is why Allah *the Exalted* does not say what He previously said: '... they are sure to say, "Allah..."' (*Yunus*: 31) Rather, He says: '...Say, "It is Allah Who originates creation, and then brings it back to life ..."' (*Yunus*: 34). So, He expresses the answer in this way because when they had been asked this question, they were dazzled by the truth which left them speechless; they stood incapable of saying anything whatsoever. An example of this—and to Allah *Glorified is He* belongs the finest of examples—is when we find a prosecutor tightening the noose around the neck of the accused by asking him a variety of questions; then, at one point, he asks him a question that is so precise that the accused becomes astounded, for there is only one possible answer to that question, which he cannot refuse to answer. Thereby, the accused answers the question and admits his guilt.

Now man—as a being created by Allah *Glorified is He*—has in front of him the possibility of either being a believer or being a disbeliever; at this point, it is man's free will which involves. As for the rest of his organs, they believe in, worship, and praise Allah *the Almighty*. Therefore, the tongue, for instance,

which might utter a blasphemy, in reality, believes in, exalts, praises, and thanks Allah *Glorified is He*. However, it is man's free will which—by Allah's leave—is unique among the human faculties in that it can choose disbelief; so the tongue—Allah forbid—utters the words of disbelief. Similarly, a person's hand will comply with his orders to steal, or a person's feet will comply with his orders to go to the place where alcohol is consumed. However, are these faculties pleased with such actions? No, they are not pleased, but they are subject to the will of a human being.

Also, when the question is asked, 'Who originates creation and then brings it back to life?' The tongue, by virtue of the pure condition in which it was first created, wants to speak, but it does not have the 'will' to do so. Thus, Allah *the Most High* commands Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to answer on behalf of the 'believing' faculties. Accordingly, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... Say [Prophet], "It is Allah Who originates creation, and then brings it back to life..."' (*Yunus*: 34). The formulation hereby emphasises this fact, and it suffices that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* conveys this statement on behalf of his Lord. This speech earns the honour of whom it comes from.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... Say, "It is Allah Who originates creation, and then brings it back to life, so how can you be misled?"' (*Yunus*: 34) Now the word *al-Ifk* refers to the intentional lying and deliberate defamation. There is a difference between intentional lying and unintentional lying. Unintentional lying is when a person transmits a statement he heard to the best of his knowledge and according to the way he understood and believed it. This is a kind of lying since it does not concur with the truth, but a person will immediately retract his statement if he knows the truth. As for *al-Iftira'*, it refers to the intentional lying, which means a person is aware of the truth, but he still distorts it. For this reason, some religious scholars have differed regarding this issue. Some have said that there is such a thing as honesty, and there is such a thing as lying. However, other religious scholars have said that there is a grey area between honesty and lying. Take the example of a son rushing to his father, after he had heard from some people that a fire broke out in the house of so-and-so. The son tells his father, 'There is a fire in the house of so-and-so', and so the father goes to assess the situation. If he discovers that there is indeed a fire, then his son is saying the truth, but if there is no

fire, then the news about the fire is false. However, a reporter only transmitted what he had heard from others. Thus, there is a difference between the verity of the report and the truthfulness of a reporter. Sometimes the report is true, and the reporter is truthful. Sometimes the news is true, but the reporter is untruthful. Furthermore, sometimes the reporter is truthful, but the report is not. There are thus four possibilities. Those who say that there are different degrees between truth and lying hold that truth requires that reality conforms to the report. As for lying, it occurs when reality does not concur with the report. Thus, we must differentiate between the truthfulness of the report itself and the truthfulness of a reporter; for a reporter reports what he knows to the best of his knowledge. As for the truthfulness of a report, this occurs when the content of the report conforms to the reality of the situation. So when Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘... so how can you be misled?’ (*Yunus*: 34), this means, in essence, how can you distort and reverse the truth, or you are well aware of the truth yet you intentionally distort it. We all know the following Words of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘It is He Who brought down the ruined cities (*Al-Mu'tafikah*)’ (*an-Najm*: 53). The name *al-Mu'tafikah* refers to those cities that were upturned so violently that their tops became their bottoms. Similarly, the liar ‘upturns’ and distorts the truth.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ أَفَمَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى  
الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُتَّبَعَ أَمْ لَا يَهْدِي إِلَّا أَنْ يَهْدِيَ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

**Say, ‘Can any of your partner-gods show the way to the Truth?’ Say, ‘God shows the way to the Truth. Is someone who shows the way to the Truth more worthy to be followed, or someone who cannot find the way unless he himself is shown? What is the matter with you? How do you judge?’ [35] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 35)**

This is command for Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to ask them yet a new question that has an answer dictated by reality which emphasises that guidance can lead only to the truth, as every being is created for a purpose, and nothing is created in vain.

With our own limited capabilities we are able to invent a microphone, the television, and a refrigerator, along with making beds and so forth; all of these have a purpose, and each of them has its own specific procedures for maintenance. The creator is the one who determines what the purpose of this and that. He sets up the procedural steps for maintaining an object so that it might continue to perform its function. Thus, the purpose of an object exists before the existence of the object itself; so it comes into existence according to its purpose that was determined beforehand.

The spiritual disease that afflicts the world today is that people know that Allah *the Almighty* has created them, but they come up with their own laws for regulating the life of human beings. This is a testament to the stupidity and the ignorance of those who do such things. They should have left the question of regulating the life of human beings to the laws that were established by the Creator of them.

For Allah *the Exalted* has determined the purpose of creating human beings, and He has laid down laws for the regulation of their lives. The evil that exists today is the result of an ignorance of what the ultimate purpose of human beings is. It is also the result of straying away from the Way of Allah, which human beings must follow. So, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Say, "Can any of your partner-gods (Allah's so-called partners) show the way to the truth?"' (*Yunus: 35*)

In other words: do any of these 'partner-gods' guide man to his purpose? Has the sun, for instance, ever stated such a purpose? Have the angels ever stated such a purpose? Have the trees or the stones or the Messengers—which they have worshipped—stated anything that is contrary to the Will of Allah *Glorified is He*? These are false deities that know neither the ultimate purpose of their worshippers nor how to guide them to the path leading to that purpose. This is why the decisive statement is made: 'Say, "Allah shows the way to the truth."' (*Yunus: 35*)

Allah *the Almighty* has guided you, O, man, to the truth in your every movement, as long as this movement is in harmony with the Doctrine which Allah *Glorified is He* has revealed completely to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* from the prime testimony that 'There is no god but Allah'

down to the instruction of removing harmful objects from a way; this comprehensive Doctrine encompasses every aspect of man's life. The answer to the question is provided by Allah *the Almighty* Who puts the words in the mouth of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for they stood dazzled by the question and, in their stuttering, no one among them could offer a counterargument. The purpose of the creation of man and other created beings is summarised in Allah's Words: 'I have created jinns and mankind only to worship Me.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 56)

Now worship is not restricted merely to the five pillars of Islam; rather, it includes building the universe as the living structure of Islam. The One Who has determined purpose of the creation is the Creator *Glorified is He* and it is He Who has determined the path to reach it. When we want to reach a destination in the desert, for example, we first have to determine the location of our destination, and then we choose the best route to reach it. So, if the straight path to our destination is filled with obstacles and mountains, then we will be forced to deviate from this route in order to reach our destination. Thus, this curved route is the straight path because it helps us avoid all of the obstacles. For example, the rain that falls on the hills of Ethiopia, these have chosen for themselves the easiest possible course, and the result was the Nile River. Unlike the sewers or the Suez Canal, the Nile River is no work of man. Rather, it is the result of large quantities of water falling as rain and then choosing the easiest possible course—and this caused the river to flow between the obstacles, sand dunes and boulders. This is why we find that anything in which man is not involved might turn and swerve so as to find a way out. However, human-made objects cannot do this.

Therefore, every created being must have a purpose, which is why we find our master Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* saying: 'It is He Who has created me. It is He Who guides me.' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 78) Thus, the One Who creates determines the purpose because He knows it before He sets out to create. There is a remarkable precision in the words which the Quran quotes our master Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* as saying, for he does not say, 'The One created me will guide me.' Rather, he says: 'It is He Who has created me. It is He Who guides me.' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 78) Thus, this is an

indication that this issue will be contested, and after the creation of man, some human beings will come forth and, in order to protect their own interests, will establish another path which will completely contradict the original purpose; it is this path that leads to error.

As for Allah *the Almighty* He has revealed the Quran wherein is the true guidance, for the Creator is the One Who codifies and sets down laws. This is why the Quran mentions and quotes our master Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* as saying: 'He Who gives me food and drink.' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 79) These words of our master Ibrahim *peace be upon him* show that he had reached the realisation that the One Who bestows sustenance upon parents and has the Power to bestow sustenance—including food and drink—is Allah *Glorified is He*. The Quran also quotes our master Ibrahim *peace be upon him* as saying: 'He Who will make me die and then give me life again.' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 81). Thus, the power to bring about death and the power to bring about life both pertain to Allah *the Exalted*; so no one should question about the One Who owns the power to bring about death and life. As for the curing of the sick, Ibrahim *peace be upon him* says: 'He Who cures me when I am ill.' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 80). Thus, you might go to a doctor thinking that it is he who has the power to heal you; in fact, the doctor can only treat the symptoms, for it is Allah *the Almighty* Who truly has the Power to heal.

Thus, we realise that the words of our master Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him*: 'It is He Who has created me. It is He Who guides me' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 78) are quite logical since the creator of something is the one who guides it to its ultimate purpose. Thus, the purpose of something always precedes its actual creation; then, the thing is shown the way that leads it to its purpose. Thus, if it is caused to deviate from that way that leads to its purpose, then there is no good in that thing whatsoever. In the Quran, you find our master Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* quoted as saying: 'He replied, "Our Lord is He Who has given everything its form, then has given it guidance."' (*Ta Ha*: 50)

As long as it is Allah *the Exalted* Who creates, then it is He Who guides His creation along the path that leads to their ultimate purpose; the Quran also says: '[Prophet], glorify the name of your Lord *the Most High*, Who has created [all things] in due proportion, Who determined their destinies and guided



them.’ (*al-A‘la*: 1-3) Thus, it becomes clear to us that so long as there is a purpose, and there must exist a path that leads us to it, and our Creator must indeed lead us along that path. Likewise, in the verse that we are currently reflecting on, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Say, “Allah shows the way to the truth.”’ (*Yunus*: 35) since it is He Who has created. Therefore, it makes sense that the following question arises: ‘Is someone who shows the way to the truth more worthy to be followed, or someone who cannot find the way unless he himself is shown?’ (*Yunus*: 35) The reason why there is the letter *lam* (to) in Allah's Words: ‘... shows the way to the truth...’ (*Yunus*: 35) is due to it being a case of looking ‘toward’ the true purpose. Furthermore, the reason why there is the letter *‘Ila* in His Words: ‘... to the Truth...’ (*Yunus*: 35) is to attract our attention to the fact that reaching this purpose requires the existence of a path; thus, Allah *the Most High* wants to combine the two meanings in a single verse.

Now we know that this verse was revealed regarding those who set up associates with Allah *Glorified is He* for they actually admit His Existence, but they associate false deities with Him. Allah *the Almighty* has singled Himself out in His Divinity because of His Lordship over the created cosmos, for He has created out of nothing, and He has bestowed sustenance where there was naught. Also, He has created for us the means of acquiring knowledge and has managed all things in the universe for us; He has brought out the living from the dead, and the dead from the living. Furthermore, He has guided all to the truth. Where, then, are these associates which they had set up with Him? Have any one of these false deities—or even all of them combined—ever created a single one of these aforementioned things? This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Say, “Can any of your partner-gods (Allah's so-called partners) show the way to the truth?”’ (*Yunus*: 35) Thus, the One Who guides is the same One Who has created, and those who set up false associates have admitted that Allah *Glorified is He* is the Creator in their testament, as when He says: ‘If you [Prophet] ask them who created them they are sure to say, “Allah.”’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 87) Thus, those who set up false associates with Allah *the Almighty* have committed the gravest of sins; these false associates consist of either the angels or the Prophets and the Messengers who were wrongfully

idolised by certain people. In addition, there are some who adopted other intermediaries from the 'higher' beings such as the sun, the moon and the stars, and some people have taken up other 'lower' intermediaries such as trees or stones. Do any of these false deities lead to the truth? Also, what is the doctrine that they set forth, and how have these false deities communicated this 'doctrine' to you? All of these people realise that none of these false deities have the power to guide to the truth; rather, they themselves are guided by Allah *Glorified is He*; so from whence did you get the idea that the angels will guide you? Also, how could some people have idolised their Messenger and mistook him for a deity? From whence did this Messenger derive his doctrine in the first place? There is no created being that can guide to the truth unless Allah *Glorified is He* guides it before that to the truth. Likewise, if these things—which are set up as associates—have no power to guide, no doctrine to offer, no mind, no reason (like the sun, the moon and other 'high' elements, and also like trees and stones when it comes to the 'lower' elements), then what have these things said? Indeed, these things did not utter a single word. Thus, your act of setting up associates with Allah *the Exalted*—even if these associates be angels—can never be right. Verily, it is Allah *Glorified is He* Who chooses which of the angels will convey His Message on His behalf. Also, it is He Who selects the Messengers *peace be upon them*: 'Is someone who shows the way to the truth more worthy to be followed, or someone who cannot find the way (*Yahedi*) unless he himself is shown?' (*Yunus*: 35) The words *Yahedi* (find the way) is pronounced in this way instead of *Yahtadi* as there is a 'softening' of certain words in the Arabic language so as to produce a more correct, pleasant sounding effect. Now we know that the word *Yahdi* means: 'to find the way', and its root is *Yahtadi*. However, the word *Yahtadi* includes the letters *h*, *t*, *d* and *i*; and the closeness between the areas where these sounds are produced causes the meaning to become clouded and the pronunciation to become heavy; so, the Arabic language proceeds to switch around certain letters and assimilate others. Thus, the effect is that it reaches our ears in the way that Allah *Glorified is He* has revealed it—easy to pronounce and beautiful in meaning, for the Quran which is the Words of Allah *Glorified is He* coming down from heaven, had the effect of taming the

Arabic language such that its sound and its meaning have become ‘eternalised’. Thus, if you are on the path of guidance, then know that the guidance comes from Allah *the Almighty*.

Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the noble verse by saying: ‘What is the matter with you? How do you judge?’ (*Yunus*: 35) What this means is what has tampered with your minds such that you have arrived at such conclusion: that you take up associates who can offer no doctrine nor offer a doctrine they bring it forth on behalf of Allah *Glorified is He*. Whenever you hear the word *kayf* (how), know that its purpose is to find an explanation for a strange act which—in the mind of the sane—should never have happened. It is as if you say, ‘How could you strike your father?’ or ‘How could you curse your mother?’ These are matters which our primordial nature instinctively shuns and our temperament and our religion abhor. Thus, when Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘... How do you judge?’ (*Yunus*: 35), it is as if He is saying that this is a strange and abnormal act which should never have happened, for Allah *Glorified is He* Alone is God; He is unchangeable and His purpose and path never change. It is He Alone Who has determined our purpose and the path leading to this purpose. He says: ‘But Allah invites [everyone] to the Home of Peace...’ (*Yunus*: 25).

The Doctrine of Allah *Glorified is He* is the path that leads away from the ever-changing flux of the life of this world to the Home of Peace, for the whole world consists of nothing but a process of change. One day you might have strength, and the next day you might become weak; one day you might be in good health, and the next day you become sick; you might be rich, and then become poor; you might enjoy the power of sight today and lose it tomorrow, or you might have an excellent ear now but turn deaf later. Thus, it is a world that is ever changing. Suppose that a person enjoyed all of the blessings of the worldly life including good health, safety, security, wealth, etc., we will find that he carries a sense of anxiety, and the source of this is two-fold: the first source of his anxiety is his fear of losing of these worldly blessings, while the other source is his fear that he will die and leave these blessings behind; this is what we witness in our lives. Thus, because of the ever-changing nature of the worldly life, no real security can be found therein. For this reason, we should

understand that all of the gifts with which a created being is blessed are but blessings bestowed from the Creator *Glorified is He*. Were these gifts ‘innate’, you would be able to hold to them. However, the truth is that they are gifts from Allah *the Almighty* and every gift that is bestowed can be taken back.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَمَا يَنْبَغُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ  
شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

**Most of them follow nothing but assumptions, but assumptions can be of no value at all against the Truth: God is well aware of what they do [36] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 36)**

Allah's Words, ‘Most of them follow nothing but conjecture...’ (*Yunus*: 36), imply that some of them used to follow certainty since the opposite of ‘conjecture’ is certainty. Verily, the relationship that exists between things binds together between the subject and its attribute or between that which is judged and the judgment. This is a relationship which we have previously spoken of and about which we are hereby reminding once again. There are things which you can affirm with certainty, and there are things which you are unable to affirm with any degree of certainty. That which you can affirm with certainty and offer its evidence is the knowledge of certainty. On the contrary, that which you cannot provide its proof is not knowledge of certainty; it is merely imitation; such as when a child utters the verse: ‘Say, "He is Allah the One."’ (*al-Ikhlās*: 1). This is true, but the child is not capable of providing its evidence.

Someone may say something with certainty, but it is not true; this is an example of ignorance. Knowledge refers to matters which have been determined to be true; they are ‘real’ and are substantiated by real proof. Ignorance, on the other hand, is when something has been determined to be true; however, there is no real proof to support it. Now ‘conjecture’ results from the parity of two statements—one positive and the other negative, such that one cannot affirm anyone of them; if one of the two statements were to outweigh the other, the issue becomes outweighed, and an outweighed issue is one that is either ‘conjecture’, ‘doubt’ or ‘illusion’. Thus, ‘conjecture’ is when one statement outweighs the other, and ‘doubt’ is when the two statements are equal.

Allah's Words, 'Most of them follow nothing but conjecture...' (*Yunus*: 36), shows us that those who used to oppose Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did so either out of sheer spite—even though they were aware of the truth of what he was conveying. Or they adopted an intransigent attitude out of ignorance, as in Allah's saying: 'But they are denying what they cannot comprehend...' (*Yunus*: 39). Were any of them to look carefully at the Message communicated to him on Allah's behalf and were he to consider all of the supporting arguments, he would announce his faith. However, there were some who looked at the evidence and, nevertheless, remained stubbornly entrenched in their opposition; and those who followed 'conjecture' followed that which is of no value against the truth. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* shows them that He is aware of the secrets of their souls, and He knows whether their refusal to embrace the faith is the result of stubbornness or the result of an intellectual inability to grasp the concept of faith; so, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Allah is well aware of what they do.' (*Yunus*: 36) Thus, He eternally knows that some of them, in the deep recesses of their souls, are certain about the true value of faith, but they deny it outwardly, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'We know well that what they say grieves you [Prophet]. It is not you they disbelieve. The evildoers reject Allah's revelation.' (*Yunus*: 36) Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* is Omniscient, and it does not escape His Omniscience that they denied what they failed to comprehend and that some of them did not realise the value of faith, along with those who did gain such a realisation and denied it as a matter of intransigence and arrogance. He says: 'They denied them, in their wickedness and their pride, even though their souls acknowledged them as true...' (*an-Naml*: 14).

وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ أَنْ يُفْتَرَىٰ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي  
بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

**Nor could this Quran have been devised by anyone other than God. It is a confirmation of what was revealed before it and an explanation of the Scripture – let there be no doubt about it – it is from the Lord of the Worlds [37] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 37)**

When you listen to the Quran with all that it contains of secrets of numbers and its divulging of the secrets of the unseen which are subject

neither to the logic of time nor to the logic of space, the primordial nature naturally arrives at the certainty that the Quran was not contrived; rather, the Author Who revealed it must be Omniscient and Aware since the Quran was revealed in conformity with the rest of the previous Books. In other words, its content is always on full display for people to see; it faces them, and it is a Book that corroborates the previously revealed Books, before they were distorted, like the Torah, the Gospel and the Psalms. These are the Books that are revelations in time that preceded that of the Quran, but the latter conforms perfectly to all of them. In other words, these other sacred Books, before being distorted, and the Quran mutually confirm each other. These sacred Books gave the glad tidings of the coming of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as a Messenger. Likewise, the Quran tells us of how 'Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* announced the coming of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: '... and bringing good news of a Messenger to follow me whose name will be Ahmad...' (*as-Saff*: 6).

So, when Ahmed/ Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did come and the Quran was revealed to him, he confirmed the Gospel in that statement. All of the essential creeds that the Quran mentioned have been revealed previously through the other sacred Books; Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'We have sent revelation to you [Prophet] as We did to Nuh (Noah) and the prophets after him, to Ibrahim (Abraham), *Ismail* (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Ya'qub (Jacob), and the tribes, to 'Isa (Jesus), Ayyub (Job), Yunus (Jonah), Harun (Aaron), and Sulaiman (Solomon)— to Dawud (David) We gave the book [of Psalms].' (*an-Nisa*': 163) He also says: 'In matters of faith, He has laid down for you [people] the same commandment that He gave Nuh (Noah), which We have revealed to you [Muhammad] and which We enjoined on Ibrahim (Abraham) and Musa (Moses) and 'Isa (Jesus), "Uphold the faith and do not divide into factions within it."' (*ash-Shura*: 13) Thus, there are certain essential creeds which have been expounded by all the heavenly Books. Furthermore, there are also certain events which these sacred Books tell, and Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* told us, through the Quran, about these events; so from where could he have come up with all these sound doctrines and information contained in the ancient sacred Books while he was not from the people of the Book, nor was he taught by any of them?

Thus, when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* mentions that which has been previously said in the sacred Books before the Quran, these Books corroborate his Message, for these events had happened, and this is a confirmation of the truth of what he says. Furthermore, his contemporaries have confirmed that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* never sat down with a teacher or read a book. His history and his biography are well known to them because he is one of them, and he was never known to have engaged in high-level discourse, nor was he ever known to have addressed his people before the Message was revealed to him, nor did he ever compose or recite poetry. Also, when this splendid revelation descended upon him from heaven, he was just as surprised as you were; so from whence did he get this revelation? You claim that he invented it himself; however, he attributes this lofty Book to its real Author, and he declares that he is but a Messenger; and so he says that which Allah *Glorified is He* commands him to say: ‘Say, "If Allah had willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you, for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"’ (*Yunus*: 16) The Holy Quran orders Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to ask them the following question: have they ever detect a trace of such eloquence previously in his words? Let us look at the verses which state that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was not present when some events had taken place, such as when Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘This is an account of things beyond your knowledge that We reveal to you [Muhammad]. You were not present amongst them when they cast lots to see which of them should take charge of Maryam (Mary)...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 44). This is one of the stories that have been confirmed. Allah *the Exalted* also says: ‘You [Muhammad] were not present on the western side of the mountain when We gave Our command to Musa (Moses). You were not there.’ (*al-Qasas*: 44) The revelation to Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* as well as the place where that revelation was sent down are confirmed stories. In addition, Allah *the Most High* says: ‘We have brought into being many generations who lived long lives; you did not live among the people of Midyan or recite Our Revelation to them. We have always sent messengers to people.’ (*al-Qasas*: 45) In many of these verses, it is as Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is asking his contemporaries: how could I have

been given news of events that happened in another time and place? It must, therefore, be that Allah has informed me of such events, which, moreover, are corroborated in the ancient sacred Books. Thereafter, the Holy Quran brings forth that which confirms the truth of earlier revelations: ‘... Jibril (Gabriel) who by Allah's leave brought down the Quran to your heart confirming previous scriptures.’ (*al-Baqara*: 97) This means that it is a Book which contains the truth of all future events, for the Quran penetrated the veils and the barriers of the past and future. Now we know that events pertaining to the unseen happened because of two reasons; one of which is when it speaks of something concerning a time that has long past, for it is speaking of the past which Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was not a part of, nor was he one of those who could research and gain more knowledge about that particular era.

The Holy Quran also penetrated the veil of the present—the time in which the Quran was revealed; this ‘present’ might be veiled by the particularity ‘in space’. I often give the following example—and to Allah belongs the loftiest of examples—some accident might happen in Alexandria at the same time that you are present in Cairo, and you are not aware of this accident because the condition of ‘space’ veils you from this event; this ‘veil of place’ is relevant to the present events. As for the future events, they are veiled from us by both the veil of time and the veil of space. Thus, when the Quran informs us of an event which Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not witness, and he neither learnt nor read about it. Therefore, the Quran penetrates the veil that separates us from the past. Likewise, if the Quran informs us of an event occurring in the present but in a place far away from where Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is receiving the revelation, this, therefore, is a penetrating of the veil of space; for instance, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘... and say inwardly, "Why does Allah not punish us for what we say?"’ (*al-Mujadala*: 8) When the hypocrites and the disbelievers heard the words of this noble verse, they did not deny their inner thoughts—which the Quran speaks of. Thus, the Quran pierced the veil of ‘space’ within their very selves. Thus, the news of the unseen that is related to us in the Quran pierces either the veil of past events or the veil of present events, or it splits asunder the veil of time and space of the future. Now we know that while the Quran was being revealed, the Muslims were weak, being unable to



defend themselves, and nobody could protect anybody else. Meanwhile, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* headed towards At-Ta'f to invite its people to Islam in the hopes of gaining their protection; however, he was met with cynical, even physical, opposition, and he advised some of his companions to emigrate to Abyssinia. And in the midst of all of these crises, the following words of the Quran were revealed: 'Their forces will be routed, and they will turn tail and flee.' (*al-Mujadala*: 8) Even 'Umar ibn al-Khattab *Allah be pleased with him* wondered: 'What are these forces that will be defeated? We cannot even defend ourselves.' Then, when the battle of Badr took place, 'Umar witnessed the defeat of the Quraysh warriors and their routing. Thus, he came to see, with an eye of certainty, that which the revelation had spoken about earlier. Thus, everyone came to realise with certainty that the Holy Quran had not been made up; so how can Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* be accused of contriving the Quran?

Likewise, if this Quran is merely made up, why did you not try to come up with something like it while there are many poets, men of eloquence and public speakers amongst you? Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* never claimed that he was a man of eloquence, a public speaker, or a poet. Also, the Quran did not ask them to bring someone who has nothing to do with eloquence—such as Muhammad—to come up with the like of the Quran. Rather, the Quran asks them to rally the finest poets and see if they can say a single verse comparable to the verses of the Quran. Moreover, if you were to say that what Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has brought us is sorcery and that he is a sorcerer who mesmerised the poor and the weak and convinced them to embrace Islam, then why did he not mesmerise you as well? The fact that you have not been mesmerised yourselves is proof that your claim of sorcery is baseless.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... It is an explanation of the Scripture—let there be no doubt about it. It is from the Lord of the Worlds.' (*Yunus*: 37), for the Quran has expounded every virtuous principle that will endure until the Day of Judgment, As for the sacred Books that were revealed prior to the Quran, they contained the principles that were appropriate to the time and place of their respective revelations. It is also a Book about its verity there is no doubt. It exposes disbelievers and makes plain their spiritual confusion and their

lying, for they had acknowledged the greatness of the Quran when they said: 'Why was this Quran not sent down to a distinguished man from either of the two cities?' (*az-Zukhruf*: 31) Thus, they realised that the Quran contained neither flaws nor imperfections, and even disbelievers have no doubt about it.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* responses to their claims that the Quran was a human fabrication when He says:

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنِ  
 اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

**Or do they say, 'He has devised it'? Say, 'Then produce a sura like it, and call on anyone you can beside God if you are telling the truth' [38] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 38)**

The previous verse mentions the reason why they will not able to live up to this challenge, for it states that the previously revealed Books confirm its revelation. In fact, the earlier revelations give mutual credibility to each other. Thus, disbelievers have already lost the challenge, even before the Quran had been revealed. Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... Say, "Then produce a chapter like it ..."' (*Yunus*: 38). Allah *Glorified is He* has challenged them at one time to produce the like of the Quran: 'Say, "Even if all mankind and jinns came together to produce something like this Quran, they could not produce anything like it, however much they helped each other.'" (*al-Isra*': 88), and they were unable to do so. Then the degree of the challenge was lowered, and they were asked to come up with '...ten invented chapters like it...' (*Hud*: 13). Still they were unable to come up with ten chapters; so they were asked to come up with one chapter that comes somewhat close to the style of the Quran, but they could not '...then produce a single chapter like it...' (*al-Baqara*: 23). Therefore, how can they still claim that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had fabricated the Quran since he was not acquainted with the art of linguistic eloquence?!

The Quran calls upon you to rally all of the poets and all of the men of eloquence so as to compose even one verse that is comparable to the Quran; there is, however, one condition that the Quran stresses when it says: '... and call on anyone you can beside Allah...' (*Yunus*: 38) as Allah *the Exalted* solely

has the Power to reveal the Quran; this is why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* told them that they may call upon the help of false gods so that disbelievers and die-hard cynics cannot say, ‘We will call upon the Help of Allah.’ For this reason, the Quran spells out this one exception: ‘... and call on anyone you can beside Allah if you are truthful.’ (*Yunus*: 38) Of course, disbelievers are not truthful about their claims that the Quran was made up. When Allah *the Almighty* sends forth a Messenger into some community—so as to instruct them about His Doctrine—His Will is that people amend their lifestyles so as to conform to their role as Allah’s vicegerents on the earth; this is why the Messenger that is sent forth is always a human being from amongst them because if the Messenger were an angel, for instance, he would be an unfitting role model for human beings. Rather, the Messenger must himself belong to the human species. Allah *the Most High* never sends forth any Messenger but that he is armed with clear, unmistakable proofs that he is indeed a Messenger conveying a Message on Allah’s behalf. Furthermore, this clear proof must be analogous with the particular skills of the community in question. The Messenger cannot bring them a miracle that involves some domain of life with which they are not familiar, lest they may claim, ‘Were we familiar with such art, we could have produced something just as miraculous as that which you bring us.’ Now the Quran was revealed in order to confirm their inability to come up with anything comparable to it even though the domain of words—eloquence and poetry and public speaking—are their specialty. The Quran was Prophet Muhammad’s miracle amidst a people of eloquence who used to hold poetry festivals and who hung up the name of the winner of the contests on the walls of the *Ka’ba* as a reputation and recognition of his brilliance. Thus, they were a people deeply knowledgeable about the art of eloquent speech, and the miracle which Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* brought forth was one that was based on language—the same art which they were adept at. The Quran challenged them, and every challenge requires that the adversary be given the chance to muster all his strength to meet that challenge, but if he loses the challenge, he must admit his defeat. Allah *Glorified is He* has challenged all Arabs with the Quran: ‘Say, “Even if all mankind and jinns came together to produce something like this Quran, they could not produce anything like it, however

much they helped each other.' (*al-Isra'*: 88) They were not able to come up with anything comparable, and so the Quran gradually reduced the difficulty of the challenge; it asked them to come up with what is lesser than that: just ten comparable chapters, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... produce ten invented chapters like it...' (*Hud*: 13). Then, it challenged them to come up with only one chapter like the Quran. Upon close inspection, we find that the manner in which it puts forth this last challenge—that is, to come up with one chapter that is similar to the Quran—has two kinds; in one instance, the Quran says: '... a chapter like it (*suratin min mithlihi*)...' (*Yunus*: 38), and in another instance, it says: '...then produce a single chapter like it (...*suratin mithlihi*....)' (*al-Baqara*: 23). Each of the two kinds are eloquent in its respective position, as the latter verse challenges them to produce a chapter that is comparable in quality and style to one of the chapters of the Quran. As for Allah's Saying: '... a chapter like it (*suratin min mithlihi*)...' (*Yunus*: 38), it means that one should try to produce a chapter such as those uttered by Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* considering that he had never sat with a teacher, never had learnt to read and never was known to be capable of speaking in an eminently eloquent manner at any point in his life up until he received the Divine Message. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Say, "If Allah had willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you, for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"' (*Yunus*: 16) Therefore, '... a chapter like it...' (*Yunus*: 38) means to try to make a person, who is an illiterate like Prophet Muhammad, meet that challenge.

However, why does the Quran pose this kind of a challenge? It does so due to the reason that they had said the following about the Quran: 'It is just ancient fables, which he has had written down. They are dictated to him morning and evening.' (*al-Furqan*: 5) In fact, out of their extreme ignorance, they accused him of having studied under a man living in Mecca, and so the Quran pointed out to them that this man—whom they claimed to be Prophet Muhammad's teacher—was a non-Arab, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... but the language of the person they allude to is foreign, while this revelation is in clear Arabic.' (*an-Nahl*: 103)

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* categorises these disbelievers by saying:

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ كَذَّابٌ  
 الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

**But they are denying what they cannot comprehend – its prophecy has yet to be fulfilled for them. In the same way, those before them refused to believe – see what was the end of those evildoers! [39] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 39)**

This is the category of people who ‘are denying what they cannot comprehend...’ (*Yunus*: 39), and they were surprised when they were informed about what they did not know; generally speaking, people are always hostile to that which they had been ignorant of. Thus, they denied the Message of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* before they even had the chance of contemplating the beauty of the Quranic language and its lofty ideals. However, if they had the chance to inspect the beautiful style of the Quran, they would incline towards Faith. ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab *Allah be pleased with him* is a prime example of this, for he was a disbeliever when he heard that his sister and her husband had entered Islam. Then, he went to her house to confront her; he hit her so badly that he shed her blood and a blow to one’s sister that leads to her bleeding can only but make one’s heart soften. This is what happened with ‘Umar; so when his anger subsided, he approached the Quran with an open spirit, free of all obstinacy. Thereupon, he went to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and entered Islam. Before that time, he was amongst those who ‘... are denying what they cannot comprehend—its prophecy has yet to be fulfilled for them...’ (*Yunus*: 39). They were completely ignorant of Prophet Muhammad's Message, and as soon as they had heard about it, they immediately accused him of being a liar—Allah forbid!

Therefore, read Allah's saying: ‘Some of these people listen to you [Prophet], but once they leave your presence, they sneer at those who have been given knowledge by saying, "What was that he just said?"’ (*Muhammad*: 16) This is evidence that they did not understand the content of the Quran that had been revealed to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*; so there comes Allah's response: ‘Say, "It is guidance and healing for those who have faith, but the ears of disbelievers are heavy; they are blind to it.’’ (*Fussilat*: 44)

Thus, the Quran is guidance to those who open up their hearts to faith; as for those whose hearts filled with hatred for the Quran and for Islam in general, their view can never be set aright. If any of these people wishes to arrive at a sound judgment, then let him wipe out what goes against the Quran from his heart; then let him put the two views for or against the Quran side by side. Truly, his heart will be convinced by the side that has the stronger argument, and this would be Islam. Therefore, he whose heart has been filled with false doctrine cannot be guided.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'But they are denying what they cannot comprehend—its prophecy has yet to be fulfilled for them.' (*Yunus*: 39) The word *ta'wil* connotes 'returning to something', and this shows us that there are issues in the Holy Quran that have not been explained yet; these issues will be explained by events as they happen. The Quran might refer to an issue that has to do with the unseen, then the time comes and events come to pass and affirm this issue. At that point, we shall realise that this issue's interpretation has come. These people had denied the verses of the Quran before their *ta'wil* (interpretation) had come to pass. The reason for the delay of Allah's explanation of the issue is that the *ta'wil* (interpretation) of this issue had not yet come since the time of the issue occurs later. For example, consider 'Ammar ibn Yasir, a companion of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* when the battle occurred between Mu'awiya ibn Abu Sufyan and 'Ali Allah *be pleased with them* and 'Ammar fought in the camp of 'Ali and was killed. At this point, the companions realised the interpretation of one of the Prophet Muhammad's Hadiths, in which he had said, 'May Allah be merciful to 'Ammar. He will be killed by the rebellious group.'<sup>(1)</sup> This is how the interpretation of the Prophet's Hadith came about when the actual events took place; this was one of the reasons why some of the companion abandoned their ranks in Mu'awiya's army.

Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... its prophecy has yet to be fulfilled for them...' (*Yunus*: 39) which means that the interpretation has not yet been made apparent for them. One of the particles of negation is the word *lam* (did not), we can say, for example, 'So-and-so (*Lam*) did not come.' We can also

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(1) [Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

say, 'So-and-so has not (*lamma*) come yet.' The negation in the first example has no bearing on the present state of affairs; it is a statement referring only to the past. As for negation using the word *lamma*, it is extended to the present times; so-and-so still might show up in the future because the word *lamma* gives the meaning of negation with the expectation that the negated action will happen in the future.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'The desert Arabs say, "We have faith." [Prophet] Tell them, "You do not have faith. What you should say instead is, 'We have submitted.'"' (*al-Hujurat*: 14). These desert Arabs said, 'We have faith', even though they had seen the Muslims and had emulated them outwardly and hypocritically; however, true faith had not yet entered their hearts at that point. Thus, when they heard Allah's Words: '... for faith has not yet entered your hearts' (*al-Hujurat*: 14), they said, 'Praise be to Allah' since this means that eventually 'faith' would enter their hearts, Allah *the Almighty* also says, 'Did you think you would enter the Garden without Allah first proving which of you would struggle for His Cause and remain steadfast?' (*Al-Imran*: 142) When they heard this they said, 'Thus, we are now certain that Allah *Glorified is He* will come to recognise us among those who struggle in His Cause and as people of patience.' Therefore, we know that the particle *lamma* means that which is negated is nevertheless expected to occur in the future. Furthermore, *ta'wil*, as we know, is the returning to something. In the Quran, there are numerous pieces of news which, at the time of their revelation, were not likely to happen. However, when they actually happened—and human beings had nothing to do with this—this means that the one who uttered this speech received it from the One Who is Capable of making events happen. Consider, for example, the prediction that the Byzantine Empire would be victorious over the Persians, even though the Byzantines had been defeated at the time. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'The Byzantines have been defeated in a nearby land. They will reverse their defeat with a victory in a few years' time—Allah is in command, first and last. On that day, the believers will rejoice at Allah's help...' (*ar-Rum*: 2-5). This prophecy was revealed and the Muslims awaited the fulfilment of this prophecy, and it occurred exactly as the Quran had predicted. Sometimes the prophecy is fulfilled in the Hereafter, and then they will know the consequences of their denial at a later point of time.

Allah *Glorified is He* also says: 'We have brought people a Scripture —We have explained it on the basis of true knowledge — as guidance and mercy for those who believe. What are they waiting for but the fulfilment of its [final prophecy]?...' (*al-A'raf*: 52, 53) They await the prophecies contained in the Quran, and they await to see whether their own prophecies will come true; if the prophecies contained in the Quran materialise in this life, the people of the Quran will be victorious, and if the prophecies of the Quran materialise in the Hereafter, Allah *Glorified is He* says concerning that: 'On the Day it is fulfilled, those who had ignored it will say, "Our Lord's Messenger spoke the truth. Is there anyone to intercede for us now? Or can we be sent back to behave differently from the way we behaved before?"...' (*al-A'raf*: 53) This is the fulfilment of the prophecy which some had previously rejected. Thus, the fulfilment of the prophecies concerns whoever is left from amongst the disbelievers so that they might see that which the Quran had predicted occurs exactly as the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had said while he had no control over the course of events. It is as if Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was taking a risk by prophesising about that which might not be fulfilled, and then the believers would abandon him. However, he uttered only that which he was sure and confident would happen, as it was a prophecy coming from the Omniscient and Aware. The other possibility is that the final materialisation of the prophecy will be in the Hereafter. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'But they are denying what they cannot comprehend—its prophecy has yet to be fulfilled for them...' (*Yunus*: 39).

Allah *Glorified is He* directs Prophet Muhammad's attention to the fact that what is happening with him has already happened with Messengers before him; so in the same verse, He says: 'In the same way, those before them refused to believe. See what was the end of those evildoers' (*Yunus*: 39). That is, witness the procession of Messengers, one after the other, beginning with the very first message from heaven—was there ever a Messenger whom heaven sent forth only to let him succumb to his disbelieving adversaries? No, this was not the case since victory was always granted to the Messengers of the True Lord *the Exalted* as the following words of His *Glorified is He* confirm: '[For] Allah has thus ordained: "I shall most certainly prevail, I and My prophets!"...' (*al-Mujadala*: 21). We know what happened to the unrighteous;



Allah drowned some of them, others were swallowed up by the earth and some were obliterated by the 'shout'. Therefore, the *ta'wil* (explanation) is clear regarding all of the Messengers that preceded the Message of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*; if the unrighteous people of the past received the punishment that corresponds to the message of their respective Messenger, then the unrighteous people who deny the Message of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* shall receive the punishment that corresponds to his *peace and blessings be upon him* overall Message. When the True Lord *the Most High* says: '... See what the end of those evildoers was!' (*Yunus*: 39), we must realise the meaning of the word *Azh-zhulm* (injustice, unfairness, inequity, oppression). It consists of transposing the rights of one who deserves to one who is undeserving. Now there are different levels of rights; there are some rights that are supreme, some that are intermediary and some that are 'lower' and not as significant. When it comes to the 'supreme' rights, if you transpose God's Divinity *the Almighty* unto that which is undeserving of this Divinity—this is the height of injustice. Also Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... behold, such [a false] ascribing of divinity is indeed an awesome wrong!' (*Luqman*: 13) If one were to do so, he is taking 'Divinity' away from Allah *Glorified is He* and attributing it to that which is other than He; now if only we could say that this 'other' enjoyed some sort of status with Allah *the Exalted* such that it could act as a mediator, but the truth of the matter is that it does not, However, the unrighteous person will claim that it does, but this is purely arbitrary and has no basis in reality. The unrighteous person sets up false associates in lieu of Allah, but this is injustice of the highest order and these associates never approved of their being deified. Imagine if Allah *Glorified is He* were to say: 'There is no deity but I.' either this is true, or there are indeed other deities. If someone were to deem this statement to be untrue—Allah forbid—then the other deity should speak for himself; it should not let someone else speak on its behalf. Otherwise, one is forced to conclude that such a deity is deaf and clueless. However, there are no other deities that have come forth and announced their divinity; thus, the sole Divinity of the True Lord *Glorified is He* is confirmed. The True Lord *the Most High* has stated to us, 'There is no deity but I. I am the Creator, and I am the Sustainer.' There is no other being that has come forth and claimed these roles. Therefore, the

True Lord in the statement ‘There is no deity but Allah’ is confirmed. The next level of unrighteousness or injustice concerns legal matters. If someone were to make usury ‘lawful’ (*halal*), then this would be a great injustice indeed. However, if a judge orders a borrower to repay his debt, then this is justice. The judge who is unrighteous (or unjust) in his rulings is one who strips the deserving of their rights and hands these rights over to those who are undeserving. Thus, there are different levels of ‘injustice’ depending on the issue wherein the injustice is committed. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِۦ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهِۦ وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

**Some of them believe in it, and some do not: your  
Lord knows best those who cause corruption [40]  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 40)**

In this verse, the speech concerns those who denied. How can Allah split the deniers—who by definition do not believe—into two groups: a group that believes and a group that does not believe? We know that belief and faith involves the work of the heart, not the work of the senses. We do not have the ability to see what is in other peoples’ hearts. However, the True Lord *the Exalted* knows who amongst these deniers is hiding his faith in his heart.

Thus, some of these people who, outwardly, deny with their tongues, inwardly, their hearts harbour a secret faith. Then there are some whose statements of denial conform to their hearts’ lack of faith. Of those who have said that this Quran is a fabrication, some of them nevertheless believe that Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is a Messenger sent by Allah. Inwardly, they believe in the message conveyed to them on Allah’s behalf; however, out of their sheer spite, arrogance, and jealousy, they say that they do not believe. There is another category of people who, indeed, do not believe and openly proclaim their disbelief. Thus, the criterion is not the faith that emanates from the heart and is proclaimed by the tongue. The criterion is the faith that is secretly harboured in the heart but which is not expressed. Such faith has not yet developed to the point where it can be proclaimed by the tongue. The reason why some people keep their faith confined in their hearts—an untold secret—is due to their jealousy, their

hate, and their inability to control their souls and make them conform to the demands of faith. When the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* asked Arabs to declare, 'There is no deity but Allah', a testament which, if they believed in sincerely, would guarantee that they would become politically dominant over the whole world, some of them refused to utter the statement; since they understood that this formula was not merely an empty statement, they realised the full implication and significance of it. They understood that the principle that 'there is no deity but Allah' means equality between human beings. Furthermore, they would loathe losing their eminent position and their dominance over other tribes. What this also indicates is that Allah *the Almighty* wished to incept the religion of Islam in Mecca, where the community openly makes its opinion known. This is why we find that 'hypocrisy' began only in Medina, whereas in Mecca, the society there was well homogeneous and well integrated. When the latter proclaimed their disbelief, they did not have to suffer from a loss of material possessions. However, it was the hypocrites of Medina and other places that suffered from the loss of their material possessions. Some of them used to play sides, saying one thing but believing something else. This is why the True Lord *the Most High* consoles His gracious Messenger; Allah comforts him and explains that he should not be sad for those who reject him since he is in fact loved and revered by them. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Well do we know that what such people say grieves you indeed. Yet, behold, it is not you to whom they lie to...' (*al-An'am*: 33); this means that you are, O, Muhammad, far above such lies. Allah's Words: '... but Allah's messages do these evildoers deny.' (*al-An'am*: 33) means that Allah *Glorified is He* exonerates His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* from the sins of some of his people for the True Lord *Glorified is He* knows that His Messenger is known to be honest and trustworthy amongst his people. Even while they fought him, some of them still deposited their possessions with him as trusts. Those who believed in His Message did not proclaim their faith, as well as those who did not believe—the fate of both groups is in the hands of Allah *Glorified is He*; their Creator shall be the Judge of their case and the settler of their accounts since He *the Most High* knows more than anyone else those amongst them who denied the Message out of spite and those amongst them who denied the Message as a

way of disavowing their association with the new religion. Allah *the Exalted* is the One Who punishes and causes suffering, and every one of those people shall receive his due reward according to the degree of perversion; this is why the True Lord *the Most High* concludes the verse by saying: '... and you Lord is fully aware as to who are the spreaders of corruption.' (*Yunus*: 40)

Now the perverse—or the corrupt—person is he who causes that which is good to become rotten since the world has been created in a state of unspoiled perfection before the coming of human beings. The work of Allah *Glorified is He* was only affected by corruption as a result of the influence of human beings. By default, Allah's creation performs its function properly and in an efficient manner. Likewise you, O, human being, if you wish that all things would be set right in your universe, then look at that higher cosmos in which you have no influence; you will find that everything within that cosmos is set right. In the words of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'And the skies has He raised high and has devised [for all things] a measure, so that you [too, O, men,] might never transgress the measure [of what is right]. Weigh, therefore, [your deeds] with equity and cut not the measure short!' (*ar-Rahman*: 7-9), this means to take charge of your responsibilities and be conscientious thereof and to perfect that which is in within your jurisdiction just as Allah *Glorified is He* has perfected that which is outside of your jurisdiction. What is asked of man—therefore—is that, if he cannot ameliorate that which is good, he should at least allow that which is good to remain so. Thus, so that he might not join the ranks of those who bring about corruption.

Thereafter, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ أَنْتُمْ بَرِيءُونَ  
مِمَّا أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

**If they do not believe you, [Prophet], say, 'I act for myself, and you for yourselves. You are not responsible for my actions nor am I responsible for yours' [41] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 41)**

This verse brings comfort to the heart of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* for Allah *Glorified is He* does not say: 'when they give thee the lie'

(*idha kadhabuk*), rather, He says: '... if they give you a lie ...' (*Yunus*: 41), and the True Lord *the Most High* wishes to mention the issue of their denial as one that is 'in doubt'. Also, He follows this up by telling His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*: '...say, "To me [shall be accounted] my doings, and to you, your doings..."' (*Yunus*: 41) which means to inform them of the following: 'I do not wish to hold you responsible for my own actions; rather, I wish for the best and hope that you perform good deeds. If you do not do good deeds, then this, in turn, will not have an effect on the reward I shall receive for my work.' Thus, it becomes clear to us that the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* is not to be rewarded according to the number of his followers, but depending on whether he conveys the Message in the manner that Allah *Glorified is He* had wished for it to be conveyed. The True Lord *the Exalted* has wished that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* transmit good to his community; if they remain entrenched in their evil ways, this evil will not affect him because he had faithfully conveyed the Doctrine to them and will receive a goodly reward from Allah, for Muhammad holds himself to the tenets of the credo he is conveying, and the evil of those who do not follow him shall come back to hurt them. Likewise, those who refuse to answer the call always think that the caller will benefit. The message from Allah is delivered and applied by the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* as a doctrine and a code of conduct. Also, for this he shall be rewarded. There is no room for confusion in such matters '..."To me [shall be accounted] my doings, and to you, your doings ..."' (*Yunus*: 41). Then, Allah *the Almighty* puts the following words in the mouth of His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him*: '... you are not accountable for what I am doing, and I am not accountable for whatever you do.'" (*Yunus*: 41) The word *bari* ' (not accountable or innocent from) means that sin is involved here; these words of the True Lord *the Most High* indicate that there is a sort of rivalry taking place with the enemies. Allah *Glorified is He* wishes to educate His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* and the believers in the ways of civilised discourse; He says: '... And, behold, either we [who believe in Him] or you [who deny His oneness] are on the right path, or have clearly gone astray!'" (*Saba*': 24), which means that either we—the Prophet and his followers—or you—the disbelievers—are on the right path, while the other is on the side of error. The Prophet *peace and*

*blessings be upon him* is certain that it is he who is on the right path and that disbelievers are on the side of error; however, he still acknowledges their position, as a courtesy and out of His sense of fairness. This is why His Lord *Glorified is He* teaches him to say: 'Say: "Neither shall you be called to account for whatever we may have become guilty of..."' (*Saba'*: 25). In other words, he is telling them that suppose that I commit a sin; you are not going to be held responsible for it. The Prophet's courteousness was such that the True Lord *the Most High* decreed for him to say, "... nor shall we be called to account for whatever you are doing." (*Saba'*: 25) Then, Allah does not say: 'We will not be responsible for your crimes.' Similarly, the True Lord *Glorified is He* has willed that, in this verse which we are currently studying, the Prophet would say: '... you are not accountable for what I am doing, and I am not accountable for whatever you do.'" (*Yunus*: 41)

Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

**Some of them do listen to you: but can you make  
the deaf hear if they will not use their minds? [42]  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 42)**

Now the word *min* (amongst) might refer to that which is singular and male, and it also might refer to that which is singular and female. It might also refer to that which is dual, and it might refer to that which is plural. Sometimes the sentence is more precise such as when Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And there are amongst them such as [seem to] listen to you ...' (*al-An'am*: 25); other times, it is the general meaning that is more important: 'and there are amongst them such as [pretend to] listen to you ...' (*Yunus*: 42).

The word *min* can be used in both instances. Now the act of listening, as we know, is when the ear registers sounds; if the sound is jarring and unintelligible like the sounds of animals or the sound of sticks, then these sounds as useful to the body as the tone of some concussion or shudder. Or sounds can have an intelligible meaning such as the sounds of the various languages which people use to speak with one another in various countries. If you were to speak English in a country where people speak English, they

would understand you and you would understand them. This is what 'intelligibility' means in the context of language; it means that the speaker and the listener are on the same 'linguistic' page. Now the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* was an Arab who spoke in an Arabic tongue to an Arab audience who understood him; so if the language itself was not the communication barrier, then what was? The communication barrier in this case is the fact that the ear rejects everything that it receives from someone who is perceived as an enemy. Hearing, as we know, depends on the willingness of the listener to understand the ideas of the speaker. If a listener lacks the willingness to understand that which is being spoken to him, then the speech falls upon deaf ears. Thus, on a listener's side, there must be a willingness to understand what the speaker is telling him. A saying goes as follows. 'This ear is made of clay, and the other is made of dough.' Or as a joke goes as follows: 'A person approached his friend and whispered into his ear, 'I want to tell you a secret.' The friend became attentive and listened eagerly for this secret, whereupon the man said, 'I want to borrow a hundred dollars.' The friend said, 'It's as though I have not heard this secret.' Thus, speech is not just sounds that reach the ear; rather, there must be willingness and attentiveness on the part of the listener. Furthermore, they, it must be said, do not have such a positive predisposition. This is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: '... but can you cause the deaf to hear ...' (*Yunus*: 42); in other words, it is as if their hearing faculty is inoperative. An example of this is when a teacher is explaining a day's lesson to students; amongst the students there are some who are paying attention, eager to hear more. This is why they end up understanding the lesson; however, for those who were not in a state of attentiveness, it is as if they had not heard anything from their teacher. Disbelievers have surpassed the state of deafness, for even the deaf can understand the gist of a message from hand signals or just by reading the language of the eyes; however, these people neither hear the words nor understand them: '... but can you cause the deaf to hear even though they will not use their reason?' (*Yunus*: 42)

Thereafter, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ تَهْدِي الْعُمْى وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَبْصُرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

**Some of them look at you: but can you guide the blind  
if they will not see? [43] (The Quran, Yunus: 43)**

The act of seeing also requires attentiveness. Sometimes a person approaches that which he wishes to see, and sometimes he is not in a state of full attentiveness since his heart is not in synch with the information being registered by the eyes.

A person was asked,<sup>(1)</sup> 'You say, that whoever sees so-and-so, the virtuous will be guided by Allah.' The listener responded to him and asked, 'How can you say this?!' The man said, 'Abu Jahl has beheld a person more virtuous than he, and he still remained a disbeliever.' The listener said, 'Abu Jahl did not see Muhammad, the prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* but rather what Abu Jahl saw was the orphaned son of Abu Taleb.' Thus, the man explained that Abu Jahl did not see Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as a Messenger, for if he had beheld him *peace and blessings be upon him* in such a light, Abu Jahl would have been overcome by the serenity of faith, the grandeur of reverence and the majesty of piety. We might find a virtuous man with dark black skin, and his virtue beams forth as an aura of light all around him; he has a powerful, captivating presence due to his piety. Furthermore, if Abu Jahl had seen Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as a prophet, his state would have changed. Witness Fadalāh as he tells the story<sup>(2)</sup> of the time when he tried to assassinate the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* as the latter was circumambulating the Ka'ba during the 'Year of Victory'. When he approached him, the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'What were you thinking to yourself?' He said, 'Nothing. I was just invoking Allah.' So, the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* laughed and then said, 'Ask Allah for forgiveness.' Then, he put his hand on the chest of Fadalāh. When Fadalāh heard this, and he saw Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying these

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(1) The story of the man who said: "He who sees a righteous man shall be guided by God" someone told him that Abu Jahl saw the Prophet and was not guided so he replied: "he did not see him, but he saw the orphan of Abu Taleb.

(2) The story of Fadalāh with the Prophet *peace be upon him* in the year of the conquest of Mecca.



words, he said, 'There was nothing in the world I hated more than his face, but when I approached him I was overcome by love, and then there was nothing in the whole world that I loved more than his face.'<sup>(1)</sup> This is an example of what 'hearing' really is and what 'seeing' really is; both of these—seeing and hearing—are the most noble of all the faculties since hearing enables us to hear the Word of Allah. Before a man can sit down and read, he first needs to 'hear'.

The concept of 'blindness' that is implied in the words of the True Lord *the Most High*: '... but can you show the right way to the blind even though they cannot see?' [*Yunus*: 43] has to do with blindness of the heart.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

**God does not wrong people at all – it is they who wrong themselves [44] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 44)**

The word *Allah* is the proper name for He Who is the One Whom everyone needs, He Who is endowed with all of the qualities which we have come to know from His ninety-nine Divine Names. In fact, the Attributes of Allah are infinite; the attributes that are described by the ninety-nine Divine Names are not enough to describe all of His Attributes *Glorified is He*—for His Attributes are infinite. This is why the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* used to utter this supplication, 'I beseech You and call upon You with every Name which You have named Yourself, with every Name which You have taught Your servants and with any Name which You have claimed as Your Own in Your Knowledge of the unseen.'<sup>(2)</sup> Also, if one were to ask, 'Why does Allah claim for Himself—and to the exclusion of all others—certain Names in the world of the unseen?' The answer is because in this way Allah *Glorified is He* will have more Names which we can come to know in the hereafter; this is why we find that the True Lord *the Most High* shall reveal to

(1) Cited by Ibn Hisham in his (*Sira Nabawiyya*) (4/4170): {I swear by God, the moment he lifted his hand from my chest there was no creature of Allah that was dearer to me than him}

(2) Narrated by Ahmad in his (*Musnad*) (1/391,452) and by Al-Hakim in his (*Mustadrak*) (1/509), A Hadith narrated on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud

and inspire His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* with some of His Praises and Glorifications which He had not revealed to anyone before him. These are amongst the gifts that flow endlessly from the Supreme Name of the One Whom everyone needs. These are Attributes that emanate from the Supreme Name of the One Whom everyone needs. The ninety-nine Divine Names that we know suffice us insofar as our lives here on the earth; however, in the hereafter we shall become aware of other Divine Attributes. It is the Name Allah which encompasses all of these other Names—the Names we know of and those which we do not. When a human being sets out to do any kind of work, a host of attributes are required. He needs to have the physical ability, knowledge, wisdom, subtlety, and mercy, along with many other attributes. So, if you were to say, 'In the name of the Omnipotent', this means that you are in need of power. On the other hand, if you were to say, 'In the name of the Capable', this means that you are in need of capacity. Likewise, if you were to say, 'In the name of the Clement', this means that you are in need of clemency. Also, if you were to say, 'In the name of the Wise', this means that you are in need of wisdom. Lastly, if you were to say, 'In the name of Allah ', this Name will suffice you because it encompasses all of these aforementioned Attributes and more; this is why the inception of all manner of activities should begin with *Bism Allah* (with the name of Allah). Thus, if you are in need of power, you will find it; and if you are in need of wealth, you will find it; and if you are in need of ample sustenance, you will find it. Allah *Glorified is He* has included all of these Attributes of 'Completeness/ Perfection' in the formula: *Bism Allah*. Furthermore, when you begin your work with this formula, you are thereby acknowledging that all the power and the agency that you possess have been bestowed upon you by Allah. Also, the things that respond to the power which you exert upon them do as such in the Name of Allah. All things are put at your service in His Name. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Are they, then, not aware that it is for them that we have created, amongst all the things which Our hands have wrought, the domestic animals of which they are [now] masters? And that We have subjected them to men's will, so that some of them they may use for riding and of some they may eat ' (*Ya Sin*: 71-72). Had Allah *the Exalted* not subjugated the animals and the inanimate objects and put them at our service such that they respond to the power that we exert upon

them, we could never ‘own’ these things. To be sure, Allah *Glorified is He* has not subjugated certain things, so that we might realise that we cannot ourselves bring them under our control, neither through our knowledge nor through the power that we possess. Indeed, it is the True Lord *the Most High* Who is solely capable of subjugating things. In rural areas, you see a child as he herds camels; he orders them to kneel, and they kneel; and he orders them to stand up, and they stand up. However, if we saw a snake, most of us would flee; only those who are experienced and know how to kill a snake will stand their ground. A small, tiny little mosquito could try to bite you at night, and you would not know how to kill it since it is one of those creatures that Allah has not subjected for you. Similar is the case of fruit from a tree: if you pick it before it is ripe, it will not be tasty. However, if you pick it when it is ripe, you will enjoy its sweet taste. Then you take the fruit’s seed and you plant it again, and thus you ensure the continued survival of the species. In fact, when a piece of fruit is ripe, it will fall to the ground as if it is asking to be eaten by someone. It is the same thing with a human being when he reaches puberty; that is, he becomes capable of procreation. At that point, Allah *the Exalted* charges him with the duties and responsibilities of faith; if Allah were to charge him with these duties at a younger age, he might not be able to carry the burden, especially when the problems of adolescence set in. This is why the True Lord *the Most High* wished to create from naught and to train a person gradually until he becomes fully grown. Then, when a person reaches puberty, the obligation is clearly defined. These become effective when the mind and the body attain maturity, otherwise spiritual illness or insanity could result. There is none stronger or more powerful than Allah *the Almighty* that may force you to go against His wishes; this is why it is the True Lord’s Will that religious duties and cognitive maturity should coincide. As for a person who suffers from mental insanity—Allah *Glorified is He* has not charged him with religious duties. Religious duties are also not applicable to one who has no freedom since the essence of religious duty lies in the freedom to choose between alternatives. Such is the ultimate spirit of justice that pervades Divine legislation.

When you consider your religious duties, do not focus on those which religion takes away because, in reality, it does not curb your freedom; rather, it ensures the freedom of others. At the same time, others are forced to respect

your freedom. If you are forbidden to steal from others, Allah *the Almighty* has protected you by making it forbidden for others to steal from you.

Thus, the apparent restrictions on your liberty end up benefiting you. Imagine if you were given a free hand to take all you wanted from other people. What would happen if people were then given a free hand to take all they wanted from you? When your religious obligations forbid you to peer into the private lives of others, others, at the same time, are forbidden from peering into your private life. Thus, when you are commanded to give alms, you are indeed losing some of your wealth, and this money of yours which Allah has blessed you with is going to the poor. So do not just focus on that which is taken away from you, consider also that which could be given to you if you are destined to go through financial difficulties. In addition, when it comes to wealth that you feel is being stripped from you; Allah intends to reward you many times over for that sacrifice. Furthermore, consider the rhythm of life, along with those things which Allah *the Most High* has made forbidden for you, as well as those things which He has made permissible for you. In the end, you will find that the things that have been made permissible for you far outnumber those things which have been made forbidden. Therefore, overall, the religious obligations end up benefiting you. All of this aside, do any of your actions—involving religious duty—benefit the True Lord *Glorified is He*? No. Do your actions give Him any new attributes that were not there before? The answer is no, for Allah *the Exalted* has created us with all of His Attributes of ‘Completeness/Perfection’. There is nothing that we can do that could increase or diminish the essence of His Self.

Thus, it is in your best interest that you perform your religious obligations since you ultimately benefit from them. Consider, for example, a farmer in his field. A farmer tills the earth, transports the fertiliser plants the seeds and irrigates his crops—all of which is quite tiring. However, after it is done, a farmer can sit back and enjoy the fruits of his labour. Therefore, when you carry out the True Lord’s directives, you will enjoy similar returns. In your own life, you will note that a lazy farmer suffers a severe crisis at harvest time. Imagine what will happen on the Day of Judgment. A farmer who withdraws a certain amount of grain from his storehouse in order to plant is, in reality, not reducing his overall stockpile because after the season is over

he shall reap fifteen times that which he showed. Thus, a person who carries out his religious duties reaps all the benefit. This is why I always say to consider what you get out of Allah's Doctrine, not what you give up. Thus, you see, there is no injustice, for we are, after all, the created beings of Allah, and have you ever seen a creator tarnish his own creation? Thus, the Supreme Creator does not wrong His creation nor does He ever tarnish it. Rather, He improves it, along with making it even more beautiful and splendid; this is why the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'Verily, Allah does not do the least wrong unto men, but it is men who wrong themselves.' (*Yunus*: 44), which means that people are the ones who harm themselves; such injustice always involves a repudiation of the Truth, and this is the ultimate injustice. Injustice also means that a man goes after immediate gratification, only to suffer punishment later, and thus depriving himself of everlasting felicity. Also, by committing an injustice to himself, he thereby loses the capacity to measure his life on earth, for no matter how long one's life is, human life will always be relatively short. If something is finite, it is by definition short and ephemeral. When Allah *Glorified is He* addresses mankind, He sets up signs that shall endure until the Day of Judgment. They all take part in these signs; they are the cosmic signs, and then Allah gave each Messenger a sign and a special miracle. He revealed a Doctrine comprising the basic directives of 'dos' and 'don'ts' and through the verses of His Book, He showed what is needed to be done as well as what is needed to be avoided; other than that, He left everything else permissible for you. The example that I always give is the following: the one of a student who fails at the end of the year. This student was not wronged by the school because there were others who did succeed. This is why it would not be proper to say it is the school that failed so-and-so. Rather, the proper thing to say is so-and-so is responsible for his own failure, and his classmate is responsible for his own success. All the school does is simply announcing the results.

Injustice can also involve begrudging the blessings of others, where the unjust seeks to strip the victim of his righteous possessions. Thus, the True Lord *the Most High* can never begrudge the blessings of His own servants since He is far above that; moreover, there is nothing that His servants possess which He would ever covet, for it is He, after all, who bestowed these

blessings upon them. This is why it is not possible that any injustice should come from Him, and if there is any perceived injustice, it only comes from human beings themselves.

Thereafter, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُهُمْ كَأَن لَّمْ يَلْبَسُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّنَ النَّهَارِ يَتَعَارَفُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ  
 قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

**On the Day He gathers them together, it will be as if they have stayed [in the world] no longer than a single hour, and they will recognize one another. Those who denied the meeting with God will be the losers, for they did not follow the right guidance [45] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 45)**

This world which man lusts for, and in which he seeks his fortune, might make him forget about the Hereafter. Furthermore, when the Day of Judgment comes, you will feel as if you dwelled in this world for only an hour. The 'hour' is also when all people shall be gathered together on the Day of Judgment; however, an hour in this world is a period of time, and we know that the day is composed of twenty-four hours. The word *As-sa'a* is also the one which designates the clock that hangs on the wall or the watch that people wear on their wrists—both devices are used to tell time. Now, the rate at which time passes is standard—it is measured by the hour, by the minute and by the second—from the time of Adam *peace be upon him* and continuing through the ages of all those who would come after him. However, time varies from one place to another. The time in Cairo, for example, is two in the afternoon, while in New York it is seven in the morning; in another country the time is three in the morning. The exact time of day will never be the same for all human beings around the world—except on the Day of Judgment. This is why Allah *the Exalted* says: '... And when the Last Hour dawns, those who had been lost in sin will swear that they had not tarried [on earth] longer than an hour ...' (*ar-Rum*: 55). Therefore, they will be surprised to find out that their long and prosperous lives went by so quickly that it is as if an hour only had passed. Thus, they will discover how short their time on the earth was. That is not all, for they will realise that, since they did not take advantage of it, that

time becomes wasted time and of no real value. The True Lord *the Most High* says: 'Remain, then, [O, believer,] patient in adversity, just as all of the prophets, endowed with firmness of heart, bore themselves with patience. And do not ask for a speedy doom of those [who still deny the truth], on the Day when they see [the fulfilment of] what they were promised, [it will seem to them] as though they had dwelt [on the earth] no longer than one hour of [an earthly] day! [This is our] message. Will, then, any being [really] destroyed save iniquitous folk?' (*al-Ahqaf*: 35) What this means is that while they are preoccupied with their trivial pleasures, distractions and pursuits, their time on earth passes them by, and they did not apply to their lives on earth the serious attitude that it deserves; therefore, it passes them by quickly as if it were only an hour. This is why Allah *the Exalted* hereby says: 'and on the Day when He shall gather them [unto Himself, it will seem to them] as if they had not tarried [on the earth] longer than an hour of a day ...' (*Yunus*: 45). Now the people who shall be assembled on that Day fall into one of two categories: the first category of people is those who used to be each other's companions in good works, and the second category of people is those who used to be each other's accomplices in sin. Those whose relationship, in this world, revolved around good works shall rejoice in each other's company, whereas those whose relationship, in their lives on earth, revolves around sin shall shun their former partners and be hostile towards them. Indeed, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'On that Day, friends will be foes unto one another – [all] save the God-conscious.' (*az-Zukhruf*: 67). Regarding those who used to be each other's partners in crime, Allah *the Almighty* also says: '[On that Day] it will come to pass that those who had been [falsely] adored shall disown their followers ...' (*al-Baqara*: 166); they shall get to know one another, but their acquaintance with one another will not last long, and it will soon turn to hostility. None of them wishes to be friendly with the one who was the cause of his sorry fate. Their acquaintance with one another shall be marked by violence. The True Lord *the Most High* says: '... [And] lost indeed will be they who [in their lifetime] considered it a lie that they were destined to meet Allah...' (*Yunus*: 45) When you hear the word *khasar* (lost) being used, know that the issue in question has to do with a commercial transaction of some kind. *Al-khusara* means that a merchant loses either a portion or

the totality of his capital and holdings. The stages of any commercial transaction—as we know—consist of either an increase in the merchant's capital, or a breaking-even, when the merchant neither gains nor loses; in the latter case, the merchant still feels as though his time and efforts have been wasted. This is all part of and related to commercial transactions.

We find Allah *Glorified is He* describing the religious act in this world in the following verses: 'O, you who have attained to faith! Shall I point out to you a bargain that will save you from grievous suffering [in this world and in the life to come]? You are to believe in Allah and His Messenger and to strive hard in Allah's cause with your possessions and your lives. This is for your own good – if you but knew it!' (*as-Saff*: 10-11) Allah *the Exalted* also says: '[It is] they who [truly] follow Allah's revelation, are constant in prayer and spend on others, secretly and openly, out of what we provide for them as sustenance – it is they who may look forward to a bargain that can never fail,' (*Fatir*: 29). A successful trade requires that you only enter into a commercial agreement when you are certain that your returns shall outweigh your investment. This is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says regarding losing transactions: '[for] it is they who have taken error in exchange for guidance; neither has their bargain brought them gain, nor have they found guidance [elsewhere].' (*al-Baqara*: 16) He also says: 'Yet [it does happen that] when people become aware of [an occasion for] worldly gain or a passing delight, they rush headlong towards it and leave you standing [and preaching]...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11). It is the True Lord's Will that the word *tijara* would have such a clear and lucid meaning, capable of expressing a variety of situations since the word *tijara* really refers to the sum of all actions that are conducted in the life of human societies. Thus, one person works in his field of expertise, so as to benefit himself and also to benefit others, while another person works in another field thereby benefiting himself as well as others.

Thus, a human being comes to benefit from his own work and the work of others. In fact, a person benefits from the combined work of other people more than he benefits from his own work. Furthermore, it is in the interest of every human being to perfect the work which he performs. This way he does not have to worry because the work of other people—which he will also end



up benefiting from—will be perfected in its turn. Trade (*tijara*) is also the link that unites producer with consumer. This is why, when Allah *Glorified is He* wanted us to respond to the call of the Friday Prayer, He said; 'O, you who have attained to faith! When the call to prayer is sounded on the day of congregation, hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave all worldly commerce. This is for your own good, if you but knew it.' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9) Note that Allah *Glorified is He* does not say to desist from both agricultural and industrial activities, nor does He say desist from teaching. Rather, of all the activities of life, He chose to cite that of buying and selling since it involves trade, and trade sums up all of the other activities of life. The merchant is the middleman between the producer and the consumer, and every commercial transaction requires buying and selling. When buying, the merchant pays a certain price, and when selling, the merchant receives a certain price. Therefore, the goal of all work is to make a profit. This is why a merchant prefers to sell rather than to buy. When you buy something, you feel a sense of reluctance to do so, but you know that you are in need of the purchased item. However, when you sell something, you feel highly satisfied. Thus, due to buying involving taking, and selling involving giving, the giving always has a pleasurable effect upon the soul since you reap the fruits of the transaction immediately.

If you happen to be a farmer, you know that you have to prepare the soil by ploughing it; you need to plant the seeds, water and prune them. Then you sit back and watch the plants grow and come to fruition. If you happen to be a craftsman, you know that you have to spend a lot of time perfecting your particular craft, but when you sell your wares, the reaping of profits is a much quicker affair. So, when Allah *the Exalted* uses the example of trade in this verse, it is as if He is emphasising the selling aspect of trade more than the buying aspect. Thus, you must consider your religious obligations as a kind of commercial transaction, where your returns ultimately exceed your investment, with you making a handsome profit. If you neglect certain aspects of your religious obligations, your 'losses' will be proportional to that which you neglected. In fact, you will end up losing more than that which you neglected. In any commercial transaction, you can always make up for the losses you might have incurred. Likewise, even if your losses persist, their effect can only last as long as your time on earth. You can still make a profit after that,

and even if you did not, the only thing you will lose is the effort you put into it. Since life in this world is limited, the losses incurred on this planet are also limited. However, any losses incurred in the time that is limitless—eternity—are heavy losses indeed since the Hereafter is not marked by change and becoming such as is the case with the life of this world. In the Hereafter, you will either be in Paradise, where you will enjoy everlasting felicity—and this is the ultimate ‘profit’—or in hell, which is the ultimate ‘loss’. To incur an ultimate loss, such as this, happens when people deny, not just the blessings of Allah, but also deny their meeting with Him. Allah’s *Words* ‘... [and] lost indeed will be they who [in their lifetime] considered it a lie that they were destined to meet Allah and [thus]...’ (*Yunus*: 45) mean that He was not on their minds; however, when the Day of Judgment comes, these people shall find themselves face to face with Him. This is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘But as for those who are bent on denying the truth, their [good] deeds are like a mirage in the desert, which the thirsty supposes to be water ...’ (*an-Nur*: 39).

A mirage, as we know, is that which a traveller sees in the desert. It consists of reflection of light. He thinks that he is beholding water, but if he makes his way towards it, he will find no water. It is thus that Allah *the Almighty* compares the work of a disbeliever to the one who walks in the vastness of the desert and sees a mirage. He thinks that it is water, but it is only a mirage. Once he starts getting closer to the mirage, the following verse of Allah *the Exalted* starts to apply to his situation: ‘...until, when he approaches it, he finds that it was nothing. Instead, he finds [that] Allah with him...’ (*an-Nur*: 39); this means that he is startled and taken aback by the Presence of Allah *Glorified is He* and He thereby settles his account. This is why the one who is a disbeliever and at the same time works towards humanitarian ends shall receive his reward from those whom he helped, but his work will not amount to anything in the Hereafter. You will find that such a person is honoured by others, effigies are built in his honour, and he is granted prizes. It is this kind of person that the Messenger’s Hadith refers to: ‘You have done such-and-such an action so that your deeds might be circulated among people; and indeed word of your deed has spread.’<sup>(1)</sup> Furthermore, in this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says of those who deny their

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(1) Narrated by Muslim in his (*Sahih*) (1905) and by an-Nasa’i in his *Sunnan* (6/23); ed. Dar Al-Kutub Al-‘Ilmya – Beirut

meeting with their Lord: '... and [thus] failed to find the right way.' (*Yunus*: 45); what this means is that they did not actively tread on that Path which their Creator *Glorified is He* had put before them—that Path and that Doctrine wherein are enshrined the laws that protect Allah's Creation. Allah *the Almighty* has created man for a purpose, and it is through this Doctrine that Allah *Glorified is He* and protects human beings— as individuals and communities— in order that human beings may carry out their function successfully. The Path of Guidance is that Path which, if a human being follows faithfully, will enable him to carry out the function that has been assigned to him, for the True Lord *the Most High* has created man as His vicegerent on earth. The man who does not believe in Allah *Glorified is He* Who decreed the Doctrine and Who does not put this Doctrine into effective practice is headed towards certain ruin, or in other words, a state of ruin that is all-encompassing. Then, the True Lord *the Most High* says:

وَأَمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعْدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَقَّعُكَ فَإِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ  
 اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

**Whether We let you [Prophet] see some of the  
 punishment We have threatened them with, or cause  
 you to die [first], they will return to Us: God is witness  
 to what they do [46] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 46)**

The word, which the True Lord *the Most High* uses is *wa-imma* (and whether), which is composed of *in* and *ma*; both are subject to linguistic elision. In this case, Allah *Glorified is He* is promising those who lie to His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* that He will make them suffer, will punish them and will expose and humiliate them. In other words, O, Muhammad, either you shall witness them suffer such punishment and humiliation in this life, or we shall bring your life to an end before these events come to pass. However, you shall witness all of this in the Hereafter when you will see them mired in everlasting ignominy which they shall be condemned to on the Day of Judgment. This is a consolation for the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*.

As for the Words of Allah *the Almighty* 'And whether We show you ...' (*Yunus*: 46), they mean that We shall show you that which We have promised

them in the way of humiliation in this life. Furthermore, if you do not see it in this life on earth, you shall surely witness their humiliation in the Hereafter, where all is due to return unto Allah *Glorified is He* since He shall afflict them with things that go beyond the usual sense of humiliation which human beings sometimes feel; they will experience such emotions as deep heartbreak and angst, especially when they behold the believers emerging as victorious. As far as that which is 'to be seen' is concerned, it is the issue at hand. What all this is referring to is the humiliation, the defeat, the sorrow, the destruction, the loss of wealth, the capture of women and children and a number of other catastrophes which will befall them while you look on; when your soul returns to Allah, then shall you see them suffer through that which He had promised them. Furthermore, you will not need anyone to testify against them since Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... is witness to all that they do.' (*Yunus*: 46) Furthermore, He is the Supreme Witness such that no other witness is shall be needed: '... and none can bear witness [thereto] as Allah does.' (*an-Nisa*': 79)

Allah *Glorified is He* continues and says:

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

**Every community is sent a messenger, and when their messenger comes, they will be judged justly; they will not be wronged [47] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 47)**

Now, the True Lord *the Most High* does not act unjustly towards anyone; He does not punish a people until they deny the Messenger whom He has sent to them. Indeed, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... for there never was any community but a warner has [lived and] passed away in its midst.' (*Fatir*: 24). Allah *the Almighty* has also says: 'And so it is that your Lord would never destroy a community for its wrongdoing so long as its people are still unaware [of the meaning of right and wrong]' (*al-An'am*: 131). There is thus no inculcation nor the passing of any punishment unless there is a clear mandate which identifies such-and-such an action as a crime, and heaven carries this out by sending forth Messengers; thus, nobody can complain that he did not receive a criterion or a principle by which to judge his own actions. The True Lord *the Most High* is hereby making it clear that for every community there is

a Messenger who is responsible for conveying to them all aspects of the Doctrine. Now, Allah *Glorified is He* has created the entire cosmos, and all of the created beings therein were united since the time of Adam *peace be upon him* but then circumstances caused human beings to become more and more dispersed throughout the earth. Encounters between different communities became rare, as the means of transportation were primitive, and there grew to be as many spiritual diseases within human collectives as there were environments. However, with the coming of improved means of transportation, contact between various human communities became more frequent such that today, any event that takes place in the East can be seen live on the television in the West. However, this also spells the coming together of all the various spiritual diseases; thus, there is a need for a Final Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him*. During earlier times, the spiritual diseases were isolated cases, each community suffering from its own form of spiritual decay far away from other communities. During those times, the need was for one Messenger for every human collective so that the Messenger could address the specific malady of his community. However, in this age when physical distances between peoples have been abolished, the Messenger that is to be sent forth must be capable of curing all of spiritual maladies.

This is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'Now every community has had a prophet; and only after their prophet has appeared [and delivered his message] is judgment passed on them, in all equity; never are they wronged.' (*Yunus*: 47). History has confirmed this recurring pattern. For every Messenger that is sent forth, some believe in him and others reject him. Those who believed in him were ultimately victorious, and those who rejected him were ultimately defeated. The Words of this verse: 'Now every community has had a prophet ...' (*Yunus*: 47) could also be taken in the general sense, that is, that every community shall be referred to on the Day of Judgment by the name of its particular Messenger: O, community of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*; O, community of Musa (Moses); O, community of 'Isa (Jesus)... etc. The True Lord *the Most High* says elsewhere: 'How, then, [will the sinners fare on Judgment Day,] when we shall bring forward witnesses from within every community, and bring you [O, Prophet] as witness against them? Those who were bent on denying the truth and paid no heed to the Prophet will on that

Day wish that the earth would swallow them, but they shall not [be able to] conceal from Allah anything that has happened.' (*an-Nisa'*: 41-42)<sup>(2)</sup> Thus, Allah *the Exalted* is hereby explaining that for every community there is a Messenger who brought a message on Allah's behalf. Some believed, while others refused to do so. Furthermore, since such positions as 'belief' and 'disbelief' were taken up by people, there must therefore be a process of judging believers and disbelievers. This is why Allah *the Almighty* says: '... and only after their prophet has appeared [and delivered his message] is judgment passed on them, in all equity; never are they wronged.' (*Yunus*: 47)

Therefore, so long as it is a question of 'judgment', a believer cannot help but look upon a disbeliever as a rival; similarly, a disbeliever cannot help but see a believer as a rival. Thus, the matter becomes one where judgment needs to be passed; this is why the True Lord *the Most High* says: '... is judgment passed on them, in all equity; never are they wronged.' (*Yunus*: 47) which means that a fair judgment shall be pronounced in their case, for believers, Allah *the Exalted* has to take into account their good deeds. As for the disbelievers, they have no good deeds in their name because they had disbelieved in the True Lord *Glorified is He* so he throws them in hellfire. Moreover, they had been warned by the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* that the day would come when they would be questioned about their actions. They deemed this prospect to be improbable and said: 'Why after we have died and become mere dust and bones, shall we then be raised from the dead? And perhaps also our forebears of old?' (*as-Saffat*: 16-17) They were incredulous at the idea of resurrection; they rejected it. However, they shall most certainly experience the resurrection and realise that it was true. Allah *the Almighty* wishes to explain this issue in terms of faith, and so He says: 'Were We then weary with the first Creation?... ' (*Qaf*: 15). So, when you die and your bodies disintegrate into the earth, would Allah *Glorified is He* be incapable of breathing life into you once again? No, this is not the case, for verily He *the Most High* says: 'Well do we know how the earth consumes their bodies, for with us is a record unfailing.' (*Qaf*: 4) and this means that He is capable of commanding the disparate elements of every human body to come together. Such a task is hardly difficult for Allah Who has given all of them life in the first place.

Now they had denied, ruled out, and ridiculed the coming of the Day of Judgment and the Resurrection. So derisive was their mockery that they called for the coming of this Day to be expedited. This is a mark of their ignorance. Every one of them ought to have fled from the terror of that awesome Day. This is why the True Lord *the Most High* continues to quote them as saying:

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

**They ask, ‘When will this promise be fulfilled, if what you say is true?’ [48] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 48)**

Such denials and disparaging comments represent the attitude of polytheists, heretics, and sceptics everywhere and throughout the ages. In recent times, this is what the communists claimed when they undertook their seditious revolution where they slaughtered the entire upper class of society under the pretext of stopping the injustices being committed towards the poor. If they had only believed in the concept of reward and punishment and who determines this, it would have been better. Should the unjust pronounce a judgment upon someone else who is unjust? The result can only be the destruction of one oppressor by another, and this is in fact what happened; so where are the communists now? Why did they not realise that there is a Creator to this universe—One Who has punished offenders in the past and Who will punish the offenders of the future. They did not pay attention to this fact because they were materialists who took base ‘matter’ as their god. They said that Allah (God) does not exist, and the only thing that is real in this life is ‘matter’; where are they now? Furthermore, if you have gained political sovereignty over your contemporaries and if you have claimed that you have established justice among them, then what about those who had come before? And those who came later?

Thus, they did not take note of the fact that Allah *Glorified is He* does not allow an unjust person to die until He has taken His revenge. Nor did they take cognisance of the fact that behind this world there is another world where the virtuous are rewarded for their good works and the sinners are punished for the sins. Logic says that these people should have believed in the existence of a Just God and that there must come a Day of reckoning when every man

shall be rewarded for his actions. However, they ridiculed this idea or concept just as the disbelievers before them had ridiculed it. Allah *Glorified is He* has quoted them as saying: 'and yet, they [who deny the truth] are wont to ask, "When is that promise [of resurrection and judgment] to be fulfilled, [Answer this, O you who believe in it,] if you are men of truth?"' (Yunus: 48) However, Allah's promise is true, and it is imminent; Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is a Messenger from Allah, who conveys the message on His behalf, for there is no part of the message which the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* has exclusive ownership over. This is why the True Lord says:

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ  
إِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

**Say [Prophet], 'I cannot control any harm or benefit that comes to me, except as God wills. There is an appointed term for every community, and when it is reached they can neither delay nor hasten it, even for a moment' [49] (The Quran, Yunus: 49)**

The Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* hereby acquits himself of all forms of craftiness and luxury, along with proclaiming that which the True Lord *the Most High* has ordered him to proclaim, for he *peace and blessings be upon him* has the power to bring about neither good nor harm since good and harm lie in the hands of His Creator *Glorified is He*; He is your Creator, and everything depends on His Will. This verse has come as a reply to their question which Allah *Glorified is He* had mentioned in the previous verse: 'and yet, they [who deny the truth] are wont to ask, "When is that promise [of resurrection and judgment] to be fulfilled, [Answer this, O you who believe in it,] if you are men of truth?"' (Yunus: 48) They ridiculed this promise and asked scornfully when this punishment was going to come; it is as if they had, in a sarcastic fashion, expressed their eagerness for the coming of the suffering, and this is indicated by the True Lord's Words: 'Now every community has had a prophet; and only after their prophet has appeared [and delivered his message] is judgment passed on them, in all equity; never are they wronged.' (Yunus: 47) This verse does not refer to the Day of Judgment; rather, its purpose was to describe the state of those who rejected the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*



while those who would continue to say: '..."When is that promise [of resurrection and judgment] to be fulfilled, [Answer this, O, you who believe in it,] if you are men of truth?"' (*Yunus*: 48) This means that they uttered these words before the coming of the Day of Judgment, and this verse asserts that for every community a Messenger was sent to—this idea is supported by numerous other verses such as the following: '... Moreover, we would never chastise [any community for the wrong they may do] until we have sent an apostle [to them].'*' (al-Isra': 15)* Also, the True Lord's Words *the Most High*: 'And so it is that your Lord would never destroy a community for its wrongdoing so long as its people are still unaware [of the meaning of right and wrong]' (*al-An'am*: 131). Furthermore, this is proven by Allah's Words: 'for [thus it is:] had We destroyed them by means of a chastisement before this [Book was revealed], they would indeed [be justified to] say [on Judgment Day]. "O, our Lord! If only you had sent a prophet to us..."' (*Ta Ha*: 134). All of this supports the principle that any messenger who was sent to the people brought Allah's commandments. Some people have believed in him, while others have rejected him. Allah's ruling was to vanquish the disbelievers while granting the victory to those who believed.

If disbelievers mockingly express their eagerness to meet their punishment, then they shall see it. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* ordered Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in the verse: 'Say [O, Prophet]: "It is not within my power to avert harm from, or bring benefit to, myself, '*(Yunus*: 49). This verse means that if disbelievers are asking Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to bring punishment or reward, he is merely the Messenger of Allah. As a human messenger, he does not possess the power to bring about harm or benefit to himself, let alone bringing harm or benefit for others. All of this is in the hands of Allah *Glorified is He*. For every community, there is a set term when disbelievers shall be punished and the final Divine decision shall be implemented.

The following Words of Allah *Glorified is He*: '... except as Allah may please. For all people a term has been set.'*(Yunus*: 49) indicate that Allah's Will is decisive. His decision is the final word. It also indicates that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and people do not possess the power to bring about harm or benefit for themselves because human beings

have been created in a state of 'compulsion' in certain matters, while having the freedom of choice in other matters.

This 'free will' applies to all religious matters, as Allah *the Almighty* says: '... let, then, him who wills believe in it and let him who wills reject it,' (*al-Kahf*: 29). Therefore, you are free to either obey or disobey. All of this is well within your rights. When a person leads a life of obedience, he is thereby creating benefit for himself. However, if a person lives a life of sin, he is creating harm for himself. Thus, there is the possibility of either harm or benefit in matters of free will.

An example of this is a person who tries to commit suicide by hanging himself. He is bringing harm unto himself, but he might be rescued by his relatives, if Allah *the Exalted* wills.

Thus, when it comes to matters of free will, man has the ability, by Allah's leave, to bring about either harm or benefit to himself. Allah *Glorified is He* told us that there is a term limit for every community. Thus, you do not determine these term limits by yourselves. The term limits of extermination or punishment are determined by Allah *the Exalted*. Human beings are always in a hurry, but Allah *Glorified is He* does not operate according to the hasty tendencies of His servants. Matters only pass according to the timeline willed by Allah. He does not act according to the will of His own creation, for He is the Creator *the Most High*. It is Allah *Glorified is He* Who says: 'I shall make clear to you (the truth of) my messages. Do not, then, ask Me to hasten (them)!' (*al-Anbiya*': 37) He also says: 'As it is man who (often) prays for things that are bad as if he were praying for things that are good, for man is prone to be hasty (in his judgments),' (*al-Isra*': 11). Therefore, Allah *the Most High* postpones His Will as a Mercy for His creation, but when the term limit arrives, there is no possibility of postponing or expediting its date. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* said: When the end of their term approaches, they can neither delay it by a single moment, nor hasten it.' (*Yunus*: 49) When the end of their term approaches, they cannot delay it by a single moment.

They will also not be able to hasten their term as they please, Allah says:

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُهُ بَيِّنَاتًا أَوْ نَهَارًا مَاذَا يَسْتَعْجِلُ مِنْهُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

**Say, 'Think: if His punishment were to come to you, during the night or day, what part of it would the guilty wish to hasten? [50] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 50)**

This is an adequate answer to their demand that the day of suffering be hastened. 'When this day arrives, we shall see what your reaction will be.' By calling for the suffering to be expedited, they are thereby demonstrating their own idiocy when they questioned the suffering in the first place. When Allah says: 'Say [O, Prophet to them], "Have you ever considered (how you would feel),"' (*Yunus*: 50), the meaning is, 'Ask them, if they know, what will happen to them.'

It is the Will of Allah *Glorified is He* that the time of suffering be obscured, for He says: '... if His chastisement were to befall you by night or by day?' (*Yunus*: 50) The word *al-bayt* (home) refers to night since night is the time when people rest in their homes. On the other hand, the word *nahar* (day) is the time wherein things are exposed and human activity is heightened.

Allah *the Almighty* wished to make the day of punishment and its time vague. If punishment comes by night, human beings are usually unconscious and sleeping. If it comes by day, human beings will be busy and engaged in the rhythms of life. Allah *Glorified is He* says in another verse: 'Can, then, the people of any community ever feel secure that Our punishment will not come upon them by night, while they are asleep?' (*al-A'raf*: 97). Allah *Glorified is He* also says: 'Or do the people of the villages feel secure that Our punishment will not come upon them in broad daylight, while they are engaged in (worldly) play?' (*al-A'raf*: 98) Furthermore, if you were to look at the reality of this world, you would find that when an event occurs on earth, it happens during the night of one hemisphere and the day of the other hemisphere.

If the suffering comes suddenly and disbelievers tried to quickly proclaim their faith, this sudden 'faith' will bring them no benefit. Allah *Glorified is He* says regarding those who adopt this hastened position when the torment arrives: '[But Allah said:] "Now (you believe)? You had been rebelling (against us) before this (time) and were amongst those who spread corruption.' (*Yunus*: 91) If the

suffering were to befall disbelievers at any moment, they would not be able to dismiss the punishment by uttering their belief in the last second. It would not benefit them to proclaim their faith later than the designated term. Allah *the Almighty* would not accept such a declaration, and they will experience the suffering of this world, in addition to the suffering of the Hereafter. Furthermore, this mocking call they requested, that the punishment be hastened for them, will only increase their final suffering twofold. There will be a punishment in this world in addition to the extended suffering they were promised in the Hereafter, Then Allah says:

أَتُمِّدَ إِذَا مَا وَقَعَ أَمْنُكُمْ بِهِ ۖ وَالْأَنّٰ وَقد كُنْمْ بِهِ ۖ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

**Will you believe in it, when it actually happens?’ It will be said, ‘Now [you believe], when [before] you sought to hasten it?’ [51] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 51)**

This statement conveys the following, 'Will you only believe when the suffering befalls you?' Your declaration of faith at that moment will not benefit you. In addition, you shall not earn any credit by undergoing the suffering for which you are destined. Thus, your call for the punishment to be hastened will not benefit you in any way since the proclamation of faith (after seeing the punishment) is of no avail.

We can see an example of this in the story of Pharaoh, who only exclaimed while drowning: 'I have come to believe that there is no deity except Him Whom the Children of Israel believe in,' (*Yunus*: 90). Allah *Glorified is He* then says:

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

**It will be said to the evildoers, ‘Taste lasting punishment. Why should you be rewarded for anything but what you did?’ [52] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 52)**

In this verse, we are informed of the suffering that shall befall those who disbelieved on the Day of Judgment. Through their disbelief, they have wronged themselves in this world, and they shall be made to suffer in the

Hereafter. Moreover, their suffering is described as '...eternal suffering!' (*Yunus*: 52) Their punishment will never end.

Allah *Glorified is He* concluded the verse by saying: '...Are you being (appropriately) rewarded for what you were earning (in falsehood)?' (*Yunus*: 52) This verse means that Allah *the Almighty* has not wronged them, for He had revealed the message of faith to them through a human messenger who was armed with a miracle. The messenger brought to them a clear set of guided commandments. Allah *Glorified is He* offered them the possibility of salvation over a long period of time, but they did not benefit from the Divine offer by believing in the message.

Therefore, eternal suffering awaits them. Allah *the Exalted* specifically mentioned this eternal suffering because the suffering on the earth is limited. Even if it is filled with disgrace and ignominy, earthly suffering is finite and relatively trivial when compared to the perpetuity of suffering in the Hereafter. Allah *Glorified is He* referred to this eternal suffering as the sole result of their earning. Usually, a person's earning is that profit that he makes over and above his original investment. For instance, an investor who starts out with a capital worth of ten dollars might 'earn' an additional five dollars. Does a sinner actually 'earn' any profit above and beyond the original investment? Indeed, a sinner earns more than he invested since he declares lawful the activities which Allah *Glorified is He* had forbidden. Thus, he broadens the sphere of legality for himself while reducing the sphere of things that are illegal. He is under the false illusion that he 'earns' profit since he allows his ego to dictate the terms of legality. This means that he considers only the immediate satisfaction that can be derived from pleasures, while failing to consider the consequences of surrendering to such pleasures.

Thereafter, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ أَحَقُّ هُوَ قُلْ إِي وَرَبِّي إِنَّهُ لَحَقٌّ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

**They ask you [Prophet], 'Is it true?' Say, 'Yes, by my Lord, it is true, and you cannot escape it' [53] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 53)**

These are the same people who had previously said: 'When will that promise (of resurrection and judgment) be fulfilled?' (*Yunus*: 48) They have

started once again with their endless questioning. The Arabic word *yastanbi'unaka* means, 'They are asking you for news.' However, *An-naba'* is an article of news about a great and momentous event. Thus, they wondered about the Day of Judgement, asking Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* if it is, indeed, true.

There are multiple elements in this particular verse that could have an influence on the meaning of the word *al-haqq* (the truth). The word *huwa* (this) could refer to the roots of the religion, namely the Quran, the Prophetic mission and the religious law. In this sense, the verse verified that the Quran, the religious law, the Prophetic mission of Prophet Muhammad and the Resurrection are all true. This also means that the eventual suffering of disbelievers and the eventual victory of believers is also true.

Therefore, when disbelievers asked: 'Is all of this (*huwa*) the truth (*Al-haqq*)' (*Yunus*: 53), their question refers to more than just one concept. It is as if they had asked, 'Is this Quran which you have brought forth true? Also, is the prophetic mission which you claim true? Are the laws (which you claim) that Allah has brought down to the earth as clear directives to regulate the lives of men true? Are the Day of Judgment and the resurrection true? Is the suffering in this world true?' Thus, the word *huwa* in the verse is indeed an all-encompassing word that can be associated with more than one question. Then comes Allah's response: 'Say [O, Muhammad], "Indeed ('*Ey*), by (Allah) my Lord, it is most certainly true,'" (*Yunus*: 53).

Someone may ask you, 'Is a man called Zayd present?' As a response, you might say, 'Yes, he is present.' You do not generally reply to him, 'By Allah *Glorified is He* Zayd is present!' There is no need for you to emphasise your answer, for the questioner is not denying Zayd's presence. In the same manner, there is no reason for the verse to emphasise its answer by invoking Allah's name, except that disbelievers' question was asked in a disavowing tone. Thus, you can deduce that they asked the question in a disbelieving tone. This is why the answer that is given begins with the expression, 'Indeed, which is used in Arabic as the starting clause of an oath.

There are different Arabic expressions that can be used to answer a question. Each expression corresponds to a particular context. For instance,

the expression *bala* (surely or indeed) appears in the response to a question that is posed in the negative mode, such as in the following verse: 'He (Allah) said, "Am I not your Lord" to which they answered, "Surely, indeed,"' (*al-A'raf*: 172). Thus, the expression 'Indeed (‘*Ey*)' means, 'Yes, I swear by my Lord that it is indeed true.' As we mentioned, you would never resort to an oath (of this kind) unless your questioner exhibits a sense of disbelief.

In Arabic, there are other expressions generally used for additional emphasis, like the expression, *inna*, which can be translated as, 'most certainly'. We find an example of this in the following Words of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'And set forth unto them a parable – (the story of how) the people of the township (behaved) when (Our) message-bearers came to them. Lo! We sent to them two (prophets), and they disbelieved in both. So, we strengthened (the two messengers) with a third messenger, and thereupon, they (the messengers) said, "Behold, we have been sent to you (by Allah)!"' (*Ya Sin*: 13-14)

What was the response of the people to whom the three messengers were sent? '(The others) answered, 'You are nothing but mortal men like ourselves. Moreover, the Most Gracious has never bestowed anything (of revelation). You are only lying!'" (*Ya Sin*: 15) When the disbelievers' denial of the three messengers was obstinate, the messengers told them: 'Our Lord knows that we have 'most certainly' (*inna*) been sent to you,' (*Ya Sin*: 16). The expression, 'most certainly' (*inna*) was duly appropriate to the adamant denial of disbelievers in this Quranic story.

Therefore, the level of emphasis in the response to a question should be proportionate to the level of denial in the questioner's words. If there are no disavowing tones in the question, there is no need for any emphasis in the response. If a question is charged with slight disavowing undertones, then its response will contain a single point of emphasis. If a question is charged with moderate disavowing undertones, then its response should contain two points of emphasis. However, if a question is charged with heavily disavowing undertones, then its response should have three points of emphasis.

In the verse we are examining now, Allah *the Almighty* instructed Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to respond to their query by saying: 'Indeed (‘*Ey*), by my Lord, it is most certainly true, and you cannot elude (the

final reckoning)!' (*Yunus: 53*) The Messenger swore by his Lord's name, for it is Allah *Glorified is He* Who has charged him with his mission, then he insists the following: '... is most certainly true,' (*Yunus: 53*) since their question was charged with incredulous and derisive undertones. If they still do not believe in his message, then they shall be made to suffer because there is no means for them to elude Allah *Glorified is He* and He is capable of bringing them to justice if they tried to escape. They will not elude Him by seeking the intercession of a third party, nor will they elude reckoning by working out a deal with Him *the Most High*.

Then, at the end of the verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... and you cannot elude (the final reckoning)!' (*Yunus: 53*) In this verse, Allah *the Exalted* wants to shed some light on this issue since some disbelievers assume that they can elude His judgment. It is indeed possible that Allah *Glorified is He* accept the intercession of those who are worthy, and He can also accept ransom, but this will not be accepted from disbelievers. This is why an explanation follows in the next verse.

Allah *Glorified is He* says in the next verse:

وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَافْتَدَتْ بِهِ ۖ وَأَسْرُوا النَّدَامَةَ لِمَا  
رَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ ۖ وَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

**Every soul that has done evil, if it possessed all that is on the earth, would gladly offer it as ransom. When they see the punishment, they will repent in secret, but they will be judged with justice and will not be wronged [54] (The Quran, *Yunus: 54*)**

When the prospect of suffering is imminent, man wishes to escape from it, even if he has to pay a ransom that guards him from the torment. Look at how a sinner will be willing to put up everything which he owns to guard himself, even if he owns the heavens and the earth.

However, no one will have the ownership of the heavens and the earth besides Allah *Glorified is He*. Thus, there is no realistic chance that this sort of ransom could ever be possible. Even if a ransom is possible, it will not be an adequate redemption for their sins. The disbelieving and iniquitous person on



earth has usurped the rights and assets that others have acquired through lawful means. Thus, this unjust person will stand guilty of seizing the fruit of other people's labour. If such behaviour were made morally acceptable, many people would seek to take the rewards of other people's efforts. This injustice would distort the movement of life. If Allah *the Exalted* does not forbid this injustice in this world before the Hereafter, iniquity would run rampant. This will cause unemployment to become widespread and will undermine the scales of justice. The entire economy of life breaks down. Therefore, Allah made this injustice a grave and irreparable sin on the Day of Judgement.

Suppose that an unjust person managed to seize ownership of everything in the world and sought to buy himself out of suffering on the Day of Judgment. To his surprise, he will realise that these seized possessions will not be enough to buy him salvation. This is indeed the greatest of losses.

This phenomenon exists in the world of man. A misguided person may accept bribes, commit embezzlement, or steal other people's assets. When the law seizes everything he had taken unjustly, he may wish to renounce his illegal merchandise in return for his freedom. Generally, just societies do not allow this bargain to occur. Even if this bargain is allowed in this world, it will not happen in the Hereafter.

Allah *Glorified is He* says in chapter *al-Baqara*: 'And remain conscious of (the coming of) a Day when no human being shall in the least avail another, nor shall intercession be accepted from any of them, nor ransom taken from them, and none shall be saved (except by Allah's Will),' (*al-Baqara*: 48). Allah *Glorified is He* also says in another verse: 'And remain conscious of (the coming of) a Day when no human being shall in the least avail another, nor shall ransom be accepted from any of them, nor shall intercession be of any use to them, and none shall be aided.' (*al-Baqara*: 123). Some sceptics have said that the two verses are similar to each other, but they did not take note of the fact that each verse has a different sequence in mentioning the ransom-giving and the intercession. These two verses exhibit a sublime level of eloquence. Anyone who reads the beginning of each verse, while recognising the true eloquence of the Arabic language, will realise that the ending of each verse appropriately corresponds to its beginning

He who reads the Words of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'and remain conscious of (the coming of) a Day when no human being shall in the least avail another,' (*al-Baqara*: 48) will realise that there are two souls we need to take into account. The first soul is the one that seeks to intercede, and the second soul is the one on whose behalf the intercession is made. The intercession is not accepted from the first soul who seeks to intercede, nor is any ransom accepted for the disbelieving and the unjust people. In the second verse, neither intercession nor ransom is accepted from the soul on whose behalf the intercession is made, for it tries, at first, to offer a ransom, then when that does not work it brings forth an intercessor. Thus, in each of the two verses, the unique wording of the verse is appropriately placed according to the particular context.

In the following verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'and all human beings that have been doing evil would surely, if they possessed all that is on the earth, offer it as ransom (on Judgment Day),' (*Yunus*: 54). As we mentioned earlier, even if we rhetorically suppose that a single soul could indeed own all of that is on this earth, it would still be impossible for that soul to offer a ransom in exchange for its salvation. Allah *the Almighty* describes the result of this when He says: '... and when they see the suffering (that awaits them), they will be unable to express their remorse,' (*Yunus*: 54) and this means that they will hide the despair that befalls their souls so that there will not be any verbal or physical symptoms of distress. They will hide their worries inside their hearts because when they see the suffering that awaits them, they will be utterly astounded and stunned. It is as if their hearts will come to a standstill, while they are unable to even scream. All they can do is hold their pains within themselves, incapable of expressing their pains in a physical manner.

Nowadays we are taught that physical and verbal expressions are some of the ways in which the mind is able to vent its emotional stresses. When a person is unable to express his feelings in such a manner, he will suffer even more. Thus, disbelievers will suppress their feelings of remorse when they behold the horrid and frightening suffering. Although these words refer to the unjust people and despite their worldly blunders, Allah *Glorified is He* said about their judgment: 'But judgment will be passed on them in all equity, and they will not be wronged,' (*Yunus*: 54) so, despite their disbelief and injustice, they shall be dealt with fairly by Allah *the Exalted*.

Now imagine that someone who does not believe in Allah *the Almighty* wrongs some other disbeliever, would Allah's ruling be indifferent on this injustice? No, it would not, because the rights of one of Allah's created beings has been violated, even if the victim is a disbeliever. Allah *Glorified is He* will inflict a compensatory punishment on the transgressing disbeliever for committing an iniquity towards one of Allah's created beings, even though the oppressed person is also a disbeliever.

This is why Allah *Glorified is He* passes judgment on them in all fairness, by decreasing the amount of suffering for the one who was wronged and increasing the suffering of the wrongdoer. This is the meaning of Allah's Words: 'But judgment will be passed on them in all equity,' (*Yunus*: 54) since it is the matter of an unbiased judgment to be passed between all parties.

This judgment will thus render a just ruling between all of Allah's created beings when one of them wrongs the other. Allah *the Almighty* is the Lord and the Creator of all things. According to the principle of Lordship, whereby Allah *Glorified is He* has bestowed all His blessings upon believers and disbelievers, by granting sunlight, water, air and all manners of sustenance to all of them equally, He will judge them justly as well. Therefore, if a case of injustice arises, whether it is between two individuals of the same faith or between two individuals who have no faith, Allah *the Most High* will render an equitable judgment.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* said:

أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ أَلَا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

**It is to God that everything in the heavens and the earth truly belongs: God's promise is true, but most people do not realize it [55] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 55)**

The Arabic word *aala* (verily) is a grammatical article that serves to introduce a warning. Its function is to alert the listener that the following matter is of utmost importance. Whereas a speaker is fully aware of the gravity of the matter he is presenting, a listener is in a position of learning and revelation from ignorance. Occasionally, a speaker might express a matter verbally to a distracted

listener, who may then miss some of the speaker's words. Allah *the Almighty* wants listeners to be attentive to the entire verse, and so the verse features the Arabic article *alaa* (verily) in order to bring attention to the imminent forthcoming information.

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'O, verily, to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth,' (*Yunus*: 55). Thus, Allah *the Exalted* wanted the article of importance (*alaa*) to precede all the following concepts of this verse. These concepts state that He has total sovereignty over everything and that it is He Who created the universe. He also created man as a master in the universe and placed the universe in the service of mankind. In addition, Allah *the Most High* instituted the law of cause and effect, whereby every action produces an effect. Thus, every person who acts in the physical realm, whether they are believers or disbelievers, shall be rewarded by the fruits of their labour.

Now, a person might derive benefits from his efforts in the physical world, but he is forgetful or lacks faith in his Lord. He may think that he achieved these benefits solely due to his own ability, and thus, he becomes infatuated with a sense of power over the physical world. He may even declare what Qarun (Korah) had claimed: 'This (wealth) has been given to me only by virtue of the knowledge that I possess!' (*al-Qasas*: 78)

Therefore, a person who forgets that Allah *Glorified is He* is the Creator of all the natural laws and only puts his faith in the immediate causes will receive punishment in this world or in the hereafter. It is as though Allah *the Almighty* was warning them to discard their ignorance and pay attention to this important matter: 'O, verily, to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth!' (*Yunus*: 55)

Therefore, human beings should beware of being conceited with a false sense of power. They should avoid misusing that power which resulted from Divine physical law of cause and effect. Certainly, they should never use this natural law to achieve ends that are not in line with what Allah has willed for them. It is Allah *the Exalted* Who has bestowed blessings upon them and ordained their fate. The real reason why our actions produce effects is because of the blessing and decrees of Allah *the Almighty*.

The constantly changing events of the universe testify to this fact. For instance, the intellectual capacity with which you make plans could be struck by a bout of madness. Your organs that include the hands, feet, tongue, eyes, or ears can become afflicted with disease. You would be paralysed and incapable without His Will. Anything that is susceptible to change is not part of your innate essence. All the abilities that you possess have been bestowed upon you by the Originator of all causes.

Thus, beware of only relying on the outward physical causes, while forgetting the Originator of all causes. Allah *Glorified is He* is the real possessor of everything which you own and of the faculties which you utilise. When He wills so, He can deprive you of these blessings. Therefore, take heed and beware of assuming that the physical forces are the ultimate causes. Sometimes, Allah *the Exalted* does not allow these causes to render their usual effects. Consider, for instance, a farmer who plants cottonseeds, ploughs the earth, and irrigates the land regularly. An infestation of insects may then ruin the entire crop. Thus, all possessions are ultimately owned by Allah *the Almighty*.

Know that there is a concept of 'property' and a concept of 'ownership'. Ownership is to have sovereignty over the one who has property and is the ultimate form of control. Consider the verse in which Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'Say, "O, Allah, Lord of all dominion! You grant dominion unto whom You will, and You take away dominion from whom You will,"' (*Al-Imran*: 26). Thus, in this world, all dominion and sovereignty belongs to Allah *Glorified is He*.

The term *alaa* came in the beginning of the verse which we are currently examining, so as to alert the heedless to the Truth. A misguided person, for whom the law of cause and effect has produced results, may become conceited with a false sense of power. Thus, sometimes, Allah *the Almighty* suspends the natural law of cause and effect, as this helps human beings to remain conscious of the Originator of all causes.

Allah *the Exalted* then said in the same verse: 'Oh, verily, Allah's promise (*wa'd*) always comes true,' (*Yunus*: 55). If the promise mentioned refers to something that is essentially good, its purpose is to give glad tidings. However, if the promise refers to something which is evil, its purpose is to warn of an impending torment. The Arabic word *wa'd* (promise) can either

denote a promise of good or a threat of forthcoming torment. On the other hand, the word *wa'eed* (threat) always denotes that which is tormenting. The word *wa'd* implies that an occurrence will be brought about by the one who can make such an occurrence come to pass. The execution of a promise requires multiple elements: the first is the active subject, the second is the object that is acted upon, the third is the timing, the fourth is the position in space, and the fifth is law of causality.

Power and ability are required for this promise to be brought about. If you promise someone, 'I shall come to see you tomorrow at such-and-such place in order to speak to you about a certain subject', let us see which elements of this promise you have control over. You cannot guarantee to be alive for that time period to fulfil your promise, nor does your listener have any control over the time he shall die. Similarly, the designated location might be destroyed by a catastrophe, and as far as the subject you intend to discuss is concerned, you might decide, suddenly, prior to the meeting, that you do not need to discuss the matter anymore.

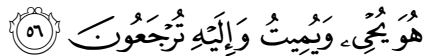
If you suppose that all of these variables regarding the promise go as planned, which of the variables do you, or anyone else, really have control over? You have no control over any of the variables. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* instructed His creation to use proper wording when making promises over that which they do not own or control. Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'and never say about anything, "Behold, I shall do this tomorrow," without (adding) "Only if Allah so wills,"' (*al-Kahf*: 23-24).

Thus, when you mention Allah's Will, and later something comes up which prevents you from carrying out what you promised, you will not be considered a liar. Therefore, our Lord taught us how to guard our sayings from falsehood. He wanted us to speak within the limits of our power, and indeed, none of the variables of any particular event are within our control.

On the other hand, when Allah *the Exalted* makes a promise, there is nothing that can prevent what He had promised from being fulfilled. He is far above the possibility of breaking His promise since all of the variables of any event are subject to His Will. It is impossible for any of these variables to disobey Him, and thus, His promise is true and assured.

You are at the mercy of the changing circumstances to which Allah *Glorified is He* subjects you. Suppose that you wanted to construct a house, and you gave the architect the specific characteristics which you would like to see in the final render. However, the architect was unable to buy some of the materials which you had specified. In this case, your plans are not technically feasible or executable from the architect's point of view.

However, the case is different with *the Almighty Creator Glorified is He*. It is Allah Who owns all things. When He informs us of a promise, it will most assuredly be executed. However, disbelievers deny this. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'But most of them know it not!' (*Yunus*: 55) They do not recognise this truth, as they had previously said: 'When is that promise (of resurrection and judgment) to be fulfilled?' (*Yunus*: 48) The verse could also be referring to people's lack of control over any of the variables that are involved in the fulfilment of a promise. Only when the human will coincides with the Divine Will shall human plans come to pass, then Allah says:



**It is He who gives life and takes it, and you will  
all be returned to Him [56] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 56)**

Now, we know that the rhythms of life as well as its properties and ownership are elements of the science of biology. Allah *the Almighty* is the Living Power because He owns the original source of life. He is also capable of rendering created beings' deaths when He takes back all that comes forth from life. Allah *the Exalted* brings about death as He is the Owner of all things, just as He is also the Creator of the physical causes of nature. There is neither a promise that He will not keep nor a threat that He will not execute. We are born into this world by His leave, and we die by His leave. Indeed, we shall not elude Him *Glorified is He*. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* said: '... and to Him you all must return' (*Yunus*: 56).

Any person, who does not thankfully acknowledge Allah's order to bring him into life, must face the frightening prospect of returning to Allah *the Most High*.

Allah *Glorified is He* says in the following verse:

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِمَا  
 فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

**People, a teaching from your Lord has come to you, a healing for what is in [your] hearts, and guidance and mercy for the believers [57] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 57)**

These Words are addressed to all of mankind. When Allah *the Almighty* spoke to the believers who are faithful to His commandments, He used the expression: 'O, you who have believed!' (*al-Baqara*: 104) Sometimes, Allah *the Exalted* addressed all of mankind asking them to adhere to the fundamentals of faith, such as when Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'O, mankind! Be conscious of your Lord,' (*an-Nisa*: 1). However, when Allah *the Most High* spoke to believers, He charged them with duties. For example, Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'O, you who have believed, fasting is ordained for you,' (*al-Baqara*: 183). We find another example in the Words of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'O, you who have believed, just retribution is ordained for you in the (capital) punishment for murder,' (*al-Baqara*: 178). Therefore, the Words which Allah *Glorified is He* addresses believers always concern the religious law which believers are required to follow. On the other hand, when it comes to basic creed and the fundamental belief in Allah *the Most High* His speech is addressed to humanity as a whole.

Allah *Glorified is He* says in this verse: 'O, mankind! There has now come unto you an admonition,' (*Yunus*: 57). In this verse the 'admonition' is materialised, as if it were possible for the admonition to 'arrive' from a particular place. In reality, an admonition consists of words only, but Allah *the Almighty* employed this literary device to characterise the 'admonition' with the power of movement and the capacity to exhort men to faith, along with strengthening their convictions. Admonition and advice are the acts of exhorting a person, by means of poignant rhetoric, to do the good and to stay away from what is evil. When a person is an outstanding preacher and advisor, this means that his words are persuasive and his style is moving and eloquent. A recipient of advice will usually be weaker than the one who is giving it. The recipient's soul is usually heavy and resistant to such advice, unless the preacher is a



skilled orator who can stir his audience by the beauty of his words and the sincerity of his style. In such a situation, the recipient of advice might convince himself, 'The advisor has seen me in a lowly state and wishes to raise me up to his level.' He may then allow himself to be persuaded.

Let us remember the wise saying: 'Words of guidance and advice weigh heavily upon a listener. Therefore, when giving advice, do not adopt an argumentative tone, nor set the bar too high, instead make your point in a subtle and refined manner.' Only when this is implemented will a listener lend you his ear, when you employ eloquent, persuasive and non-abrasive statements which he finds convincing. At this point, you will succeed in conveying your message to the very core of his consciousness.

In Arabic, 'words of advice' (*maw'idha*) are different from 'words of wisdom' (*wasiya*). The Arabic word *wasiya* is used to define several meanings. It could mean the phrases of wisdom that are usually given as summarised recapitulations of fundamental truths. It is also used to mean the will that is written by a person falling sick, with his children gathering around him at his deathbed. This is due to that when a person proceeds to write his will, he entreats his successors to remember the matters which are more important in life.

Allah *Glorified is He* said in this verse we are examining: 'There has now come unto you an admonition from your Lord,' (*Yunus*: 57). Now, one can either accept an admonition or reject it, and since this admonition is coming '... from your Lord,' (*Yunus*: 57), one must be attentive and exhibit presence of mind. It is worth noting that Allah *the Almighty* said that the admonition is coming from our Lord, and not from our God. This is because the word 'God' (*Ilah*) indicates that His obligatory orders are to His servants, whereas the word 'Lord' (*Rab*) speaks of Allah *Glorified is He* as the caretaker and the educator of mankind Who guarantees their sustenance even if they disbelieve in Him. Thus, this admonition comes from our Lord, Allah. It is part of His Divine education to His creation. We know that the various aspects of Lordship fall into one of two categories. The first category consists of the sustenance of life which Allah *the Exalted* bestows upon us in terms of nourishment and material bounty. This sustenance is destined for both believers and disbelievers. The other category consists of the values which uphold the healthy functioning of

human activity, and these are primarily directed to believers. Thus, this admonition is Divine education which comes from our Lord since He is our Caretaker. It is He Who has created us from nothing, and it is He Who has extended sustenance to us when our creation was in a state of need. He also benevolently directed these blessings to all of His creation.

Appropriate advice and admonition should come from one who expects nothing from you in return. Allah *Glorified is He* is sublime above any needs from His creation. He shall not gain anything from our servitude as our powers are pale in comparison to His Power.

This admonition concerns conscientious, rightly guided people, whose actions are only performed after they are processed in their minds. These righteous people then choose between various alternatives, whereas the actions performed by insane people have neither rhyme nor reason. They do not think their actions through since their consciousness is disturbed and lacks the capacity for choosing between alternatives.

However, why does a conscientious person sometimes make wrong choices? It is a man's whims and desires which can compromise the ability of a conscientious person to make the right choice. The root of whims and desires lies in the ego and the proud heart. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says in the verse which we are currently examining: 'O, mankind! There has now come unto you an admonition from your Lord, a cure for all (the ill) that may be in men's hearts' (*Yunus: 57*). This means that Allah *Glorified is He* has sent down a cure that will free your hearts from the shackles which affect your judgment, and that which heals your hearts from spitefulness, jealousy and deceit. It cleanses your inner minds. This mind must be healed and restored to good health because the righteous actions of the physical body can only emanate from an inner core that is pure, cleansed, and sound. In that way, every action undertaken by man shall be sound. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... a cure for all (the ill) that may be in men's hearts and a means of guidance and grace unto all who believe (in Him),' (*Yunus: 57*).

The Arabic word *Ash-shifa'* (cure) is mentioned first to illustrate that true guidance on the straight path requires a heart to be cleaned from whims and desires as a preliminary condition. Truly, it is only then does guidance become

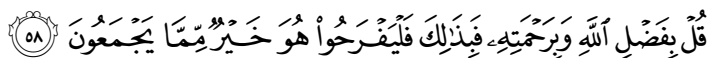
effective in directing man towards the straight path. What is the difference between 'cure' and 'mercy' of the hearts? 'Cure' refers to cleaning that ails a heart. As for 'mercy', it refers to following Divine guidance so that a heart does not fall ill once again. Look at the Words that Allah *Glorified is He* says in this verse; 'We reveal through this Quran all that gives cure (to the spirit) and is a mercy unto those who believe (in Us),' (*al-Isra*: 82). Thus, we can see that the effects of advice include healing, guidance and mercy. Not only does advice cure the outward symptoms of illness, but it also targets its very roots. Thus, we should start by purifying our hearts. This is why a skilled doctor does not merely cure external symptoms of an illness; rather, he investigates the underlying causes of these symptoms. His inexperienced, hasty colleague will treat the external symptoms without treating the underlying causes.

In the Noble Quran, we come across the story of Prophet Ayyub (Job) *peace be upon him* being subjected to trials in his health. Allah *Glorified is He* told Prophet Ayyub: 'Strike (the ground) with your foot. Here is cool water to wash with and to drink!' (*Sad*: 42) When he struck with his foot a particular place on the ground, cold water ran forth. Prophet Ayyub was instructed to wash his body with it, so that the external diseases of his body would be removed. He was also instructed to drink from it so that it would heal the roots of the illness.

Thus, in Allah's Words, advice took on the characteristics of a tangible cure for it has come from our Lord to heal the hearts, wherefrom all human actions emanate. Then, a heart will be restored to sound health as well as achieving moral rectitude and freeing itself of taint. This advice will also become the light which guides men on the path that leads to the correct objective. It becomes a mercy, for if a man takes it to heart, no harm shall touch him. Finally, it leads to good deeds that are acceptable in the Eyes of Allah *the Almighty*.

However, even if you are granted these four blessings as a result of your acceptance of this advice (healing, guidance, mercy and virtuous words), do not be content with that alone. Above all these blessings are Allah's Grace, and that is mentioned in the next verse.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**Say [Prophet], ‘In God’s grace and mercy let them rejoice: these are better than all they accumulate’ [58] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 58)**

There are no believers, no matter how much they strive to abide by religious laws set down by Allah, who can only hope to ever repay the blessings that Allah *the Almighty* granted prior to His commandments. Let us, therefore, reflect on this saying of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. He said to his companions, 'None of you shall enter Paradise by virtue of his good works.' They said, 'Not even you, O, Messenger of Allah?' He (Prophet Muhammad) said, 'not even me, except if Allah *Glorified is He* bestows His Mercy upon me.'<sup>(1)</sup> Thus, the obedience of a servant may benefit him in his life on earth, but he can never hope, through his obedience, to fully repay Allah *Glorified is He* for all the bounties and the blessings that He has bestowed upon him. For example, an average servant of Allah *Glorified is He* is not required to fulfil his religious duties until he has reached the age of puberty. If he were to consider the blessings bestowed upon him by Allah *the Most High* until the age of puberty, he would only be able to list a few of these blessings. Consider then, the innumerable blessings that we enjoy over the course of our entire lives.

When Allah *the Exalted* judges us in the Hereafter, the ruling is not only based on His Justice, but He treats us with His Benevolence. Therefore, avoid any feelings of contentment and pride with the alms you gave in charity or the number of prayers you performed. Your diligent execution of Allah’s directives must not be a source of conceit and self-satisfaction. Remember the words of the proverb: ‘It maybe that sins which bring about humility and modesty are better than acts of obedience that bring about pride and arrogance.’

Thereafter, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

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(1) *There is unanimous agreement regarding the soundness of this Hadith’s chain of transmission. It has been narrated by Al-Bukhari in his (Sahih) (6463) and by Muslim in his (Sahih) (2816); narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra*

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِنْهُ حَرَامًا  
وَحَلَالًا قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَذِنَ لَكُمْ أَمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَفْتَرُونَ

**Say, ‘Think about the provision God has sent down for you,  
some of which you have made unlawful and some lawful.’  
Say, ‘Has God given you permission [to do this], or are you  
inventing lies about God?’ [59] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 59)**

If a human being in his life on earth can enjoy property and ownership, it is all due to the sustenance which Allah *Glorified is He* has bestowed upon us. It is His Grace that makes our life possible in the first place, just as the conjugal life between males and females enables the continuation of the human species.

However, the sustenance which enables us to live as biological organisms must be divinely allowed. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* has specified all the actions that are not lawful, in order that believers take care not to partake in them. Thus, you should abide to what Allah *the Almighty* has specified in this matter. You must not declare as unlawful something that Allah *the Exalted* has declared to be lawful, as He has granted you these foods that enable you to remain alive and which provide energy for your daily life. Therefore, treat your body in the same way that you treat a machine that you build. An energy-producing fuel is required for a machine to fulfil its function. Similarly, Allah *the Most High* has provided you with certain foods that are beneficial to you, by providing you with the necessary energy to perform life’s actions.

Allah *Glorified is He* has also made unlawful those things that are harmful to you. Some people ask, 'Why did Allah create these foods if they are harmful for me?' You have to realise that there is a difference between direct sustenance and indirect sustenance. Direct sustenance gives you immediate benefit, like edible, lawful food. On the other hand, an example of indirect sustenance is fire. You are not able to ingest it directly, but you use it to prepare your food. Thus, there are things that have been created to assist you in producing the items that are of use to you.

For example, Allah *the Exalted* has made lawful the meat you obtain from lambs, goats, camels, and cows. However, He has made it illegal for you to eat pork. Some people ask, 'Why did Allah create pigs?' He has created them

for purposes other than feeding us. For instance, pigs help gather up waste and ingest it. This is a form of indirect sustenance. Therefore, let it carry out the purpose for which Allah *Glorified is He* created it.

Some people have made unlawful for themselves things which Allah *the Almighty* has made lawful. In that way, they are confining themselves in a way that Allah *the Almighty* has not obliged them with.

Other people seem to think that, by making lawful that which Allah has made unlawful, they are increasing their well-being. To this, Allah *Glorified is He* ordered Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to say: 'Say, 'Have you ever considered all the means of sustenance which Allah has bestowed upon you (from above),' (*Yunus*: 59). If all the sustenance they draw benefit from, directly or indirectly, was bestowed by Allah *Glorified is He* how do they fabricate pronouncements as to what is lawful and what is unlawful, contrary to Divine Commandments?

The Arabic word *anzala* [bestowed upon you (from above)] denotes that all of the sustenance has originated from Allah *the Almighty*. All that you see around you is sustenance from which you draw direct and indirect benefits. The currency, for example, with which most merchandise is purchased, cannot itself be ingested, but it can be used to purchase food. The word *anzala* means to bring an item into being. As long as everything in this universe has been brought into being by the Will of He Who transcends all creation, then everything in existence serves your well-being either directly or through intermediaries.

Do not perceive the word *anzala* in the material sense that these blessings have descended from a higher ground, rather, think of it in the metaphorical sense. Rain, for example, falls from the clouds above in the material sense. The rainwater mixes with the soil so that plants can draw nourishment from it. Thus, Allah's sustenance is present in both rain descending from the sky and the nutrients rising from the earth. Both have been predestined by the Creator Who is *the Most High*.

Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'Indeed, we did send forth Our prophets with all evidence of (this) truth; through them We bestowed revelation from above, and (thus gave you) a balance (wherewith to weigh right and wrong),

so that men might behave with equity. We bestowed (upon you) from above, iron, in which there is awesome power as well as (a source of) benefits for man,' (*al-Hadid*: 25).

Indeed, Allah *the Exalted* has conveyed His commandments to the messengers *peace be upon them* so that the lives of man might be rectified. He has also brought down iron which is a mineral that we extract from mountains and deep ores beneath the earth's surface. Thus, the word *anzalna* in this verse could denote the process of showering the iron into the earth, by Him Who is greater than you are, for your benefit, O, human being. Since Allah *the Exalted* Who has bestowed His sustenance from above, had specified what is lawful and what is unlawful to eat and use, why, then, do you seek to interfere in these matters of jurisprudence? Why is it that you declare the lawful to be unlawful, or declare illegal items to be legal? Why did you not leave these decisions to the Creator? Allah *Glorified is He* is surely more knowledgeable about what is best for you.

'Ask (them O, Muhammad), "has Allah given you permission (to do this)?"' (*Yunus*: 59) In other words, has Allah *the Exalted* given you permission to render illegal that which is legal and to render legal that which is illegal? Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Or do you, perchance, claim your own guesswork is a ruling by Allah?' (*Yunus*: 59) Why do you wilfully fabricate lies about Allah's rulings? Allah *the Almighty* has set up these two categories to show us the hideousness of their fabrications.

In the overall message of this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* is referring to other verses, wherein certain items are described as lawful or unlawful. We have previously reflected on such verses, such as Allah's Words: 'It is not of Allah's ordaining that *al-bahira*, *As-sa'iba*, *al-waseela* and *al-ham* (certain kinds of camels) should be marked out by superstition and set aside from the use of man; yet those who are bent on denying the truth attribute their own lying inventions to Allah. And most of them never use their reason' (*al-Ma'ida*: 103).

*Al-bahira*, as we have noted before, is the she-camel that had given birth to five baby camels, the last of which is male. The Arabs used to cleave the ear (of this she-camel) and announce that it had performed her duty in life. Then, they would leave it to graze freely, unbound by ownership to any

particular individual. No one would ride the camel, place burdens upon it, milk it, or shear its wool. Then, the idolaters would slaughter it for the idols which they used to worship. They called it *al-bahira* because they used to cleave its ear as a sign that it had done its duty. *As-sa'iba* (the freely roaming) is the camel which is left to graze freely. Tying up the camels would imply that they are owned. When one of the pagans recovered from an illness or had a desire for a particular wish, they would donate one of their camels to the servants of the idols. The camel would thus become known as *As-sa'iba*. This camel would, similarly, not be ridden, milked, charged to carry any loads, or obstructed from roaming freely. *Al-waseela* (the connected one) is the female camel calf that is born alongside a twin male calf. On this occasion, (the people of that time) would claim that it is connected to its brother. They would therefore not slaughter the male camel for the sake of its sister. *Al-ham* is a male camel that has earned protection for itself after having conceived ten calves. Thereafter, it was not to be ridden or loaded with any burdens and was left to an idol caretaker.

These types of camels are legal to consume by Divine religious law, but the common people of that time made them illegal for themselves, leaving them to be consumed freely by idol caretakers! It was thus a mercy for them that the Quran did not make these types of camels unlawful for feeding.

There are also the following Words of Allah *Glorified is He*: '(His followers would have it that, in certain cases, any of these) four kinds of cattle of either sex (is unlawful to man): either of the two sexes of sheep and of goats. Ask (them), "Is it the two males that He has forbidden, or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females may contain? Tell me what you know in this respect, if what you say is true." And (likewise they declare as unlawful) either of the two sexes of camels and of bovine cattle. Ask (them), "Is it the two males that He has forbidden, or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females may contain? Is it, perchance, that you (yourselves) were witnesses when Allah enjoined (all) this upon you?" And who could be wicked than he who, without any (real) knowledge, attributes his own lying inventions to Allah, and thus leads people astray? Behold, Allah does not grace (such) evildoing folk with His guidance.' (*al-An'am*: 143-144)



Thus, they had made illegal some of that which Allah *the Exalted* has made legal. The Quran said about their false rulings: 'And out of whatever He (Allah) has created of the fruits of the field and the cattle, they (the disbelievers) assign unto Allah a portion, saying, "This belongs to Allah" – or so they (falsely) claim – "and this is for those beings who, we are convinced, have a share in Allah's Divinity." But that which is assigned to the beings associated in their minds with Allah does not bring (them) closer to Allah – whereas that which is assigned to Allah brings (them but) closer to those beings to whom they ascribe a share in His divinity. Bad, indeed, is their judgment!' (*al-An'am*: 136)

Allah *the Almighty* has summarised all of this in His Words: 'Say, "Have you ever considered all the means of sustenance which Allah has bestowed upon you (from above), and which you, thereupon, divide into 'forbidden' and 'lawful'?" Ask, "Has Allah given you permission (to do this) – or do you, perchance, claim your own guesswork is a ruling by Allah?"' (*Yunus*: 59) Thus, they interfered with the proscription of certain legal items, while consuming certain unlawful items as lawful. In so doing they committed an ill-advised infringement, because Allah *the Most High* is their Creator and the Creator of their sustenance. Their statements amount to intentional falsehoods about Allah's rulings.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَمَا ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنْ يَكُنْ اللَّهُ  
لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

**What will those people who invent lies about Him think on the Day of Resurrection? God is bountiful towards people, but most of them do not give thanks [60] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 60)**

This verse explains that everything is reckoned. Those who calumniate and invent falsehoods about Allah shall find a terrible requital on the Day of Judgment. Allah *Glorified is He* is not susceptible to forgetfulness. If they thought that there was no such thing as the Hereafter or the final reckoning, then they are sorely mistaken. Were they to behold the suffering and punishment that Allah *the Almighty* has in store for them on the Day of Judgment, they

would not have done what they had done. However, they thought that Allah *the Exalted* was oblivious of their actions, and that their actions shall be of no consequences as if there was no recording or overseer who takes note of them.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* reminds us that He is full of bounty to the people, but most of them are not grateful (*Yunus*: 60). This means that Allah is truly magnanimous towards His creation including us. He bestows manifold gifts. So, why do you deprive yourselves of these gifts? If you thank Allah for His Generosity, He will increase His bounty. However, you neglect to exhibit gratitude. Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُوا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْآنٍ وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُودًا إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٦١﴾

**In whatever matter you [Prophet] may be engaged and whatever part of the Quran you are reciting, whatever work you [people] are doing, We witness you when you are engaged in it. Not even the weight of a speck of dust in the earth or sky escapes your Lord, nor anything lesser or greater: it is all written in a clear record [61] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 61)**

The speech in this verse is directed to Prophet Muhammad, *peace and blessings be upon Him*. It means 'whatever affair you might be engaged in O, Muhammad'. The word *Ash-sha'n* refers to a great, eminent state that occurs to a matter. In our daily lives, we ask one another about our affairs and current state. At this point the addressed person states that important matter that has occurred or what he has done, while overlooking the more trivial matters of the day. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* describes Himself saying that 'every moment He is in a state [of glory].' (*ar-Rahman*: 29) This requires us not to think that Allah *the Almighty* has created the perennial laws and rules of creation and ordered it to function on its own. On the contrary, He brings about a matter every day. Thus, when one of the scholars was asked what was the state of Allah *the Exalted* at a given moment since it was true that the pen has dried up, he answered, 'They are tasks which He lets continue and not tasks which He

begins every day anew.' This means that He has drawn out plans for everything and has set a particular time at which it will manifest. He is All Sustaining; in other words, this means that He is eminently capable of looking after your affairs. This is why Allah *the Exalted* reassures us that since He has created the night for us to sleep and rest, He is the One Who is All Sustaining, Whom no slumber nor any sleep ever overtakes Him and Who is the guard over us.

Thus, the discourse in the verse which we are currently examining is addressed to the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon Him*. However, the affairs of the Prophet of Allah that had him preoccupied were not food and drinks; rather, it was conveying the message that contains the doctrine of 'dos' and 'don'ts' that were important to him. Allah uses the Arabic word *min* (of this) to indicate the reason of the recitation, which is meant to immortalise a particular affair.

Similarly, on another occasion Allah *Glorified is He* uses the word *min* referring to a reason. Allah *the Exalted* says: 'Because of their wrongs they were drowned.' (*Nuh*: 25) This means they were drowned because of their sins.

In the verse which we are examining, we understand that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was preoccupied with given matters and the verses of the Quran were recited for the sake of these matters. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was in the midst of a momentous affair, which was the delivering of the message. He, thereby, recited the Quran as a way to sublimate this affair.

One thing that is involved in this duty of the Prophet concerns the authority with which he has been delegated. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'whatever the Prophet gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back.' (*al-Hashr*: 7) An example of this is the specification of the proper way of praying and the number of units of prayer that to be performed for every prayer in addition to allocating the amount of alms-giving. These are matters which the Quran has not specified in detail; instead they are laid out in the Prophet's sayings. Therefore, there is a delegation of power from Allah *the Almighty* to the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* so that His doctrine be conveyed thoroughly through the Divine writ, along with His delegating the Prophet to legislate.

Thus, the affair of the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* was either conveying the message of Allah through the Divine writ or applying the Divine writ through prophetic sayings and the example that he has left us in his *Sunnah*. The textual evidence regarding any religious ruling is contained in the Quran, and if these rulings are not provided from Allah in the Quran, it suffices that they are provided by the Messenger of Allah as per the power of legislation with which He has delegated to him. Thus, we can answer the hypocrites who say when they hear the traditions of the Prophet that the Divine writ of Allah shall be the judge. Their goal is to invalidate oral, observed and approved traditions of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*.

Then Allah *the Almighty* switches the discourse from singular to plural mode. He *the Most High* says: 'nor do you do any work but We are witnesses over you.' (*Yunus*: 61). At this juncture, the verse shifts to address the audience who listens to the Quran and to whom the doctrine is addressed. Every action is witnessed by Allah *the Almighty*. The term 'work' includes the totality of events that emanate from human beings. Every single event that emanates from man, even if it consists of a subtle intention, is called work. The work of the heart, after all, is the intention. However, if the work emanates from the tongue it is called speech, and if it emanates from any of the other organs, it is called action. Therefore, work falls into one of two categories: speech and action. The work of the tongue has been designated as speech because the records documenting the religious directives are all oral.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* speaks about undertaking these actions. He speaks about the vigour and enthusiasm with which you set about the work. It indicates a pious eagerness to respond to the directives as soon as these are communicated by the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*. Approaching work that is mandated by the religious directives with such eagerness, alacrity, and willingness, as well as performing it with such sincerity, are all connotations contained in the Words of Allah *Glorified is He* 'when you enter into it.' (*Yunus*: 61) As water eagerly pours to the ground from an overflowing vessel, you proceed to do the work mandated by the religious directives swiftly and in a surging and overflowing manner. Allah *Glorified is He* says 'so when you hasten on from Arafat.' (*al-Baqara*: 198), which means you have set about

leaving in a hurry because you have performed one phase of the ritual of pilgrimage, you have drawn energy from it and are carrying over to the next phase of the ritual of pilgrimage.

Therefore, Allah witnesses the actions of every one of you, so what about intentions and secret thoughts? Allah *Glorified is He* informs us that everything is known by Him and will be reckoned no matter how small or imperceptible. He, the Most High, says: 'there does not lie concealed from Allah the weight of an atom in the earth or in the heaven nor anything less than that nor greater, but it is in a clear book (*Yunus*: 61). This means that everything about you and everything about creation is known to Allah, along with being recorded in a clear decree. Nobody can secrete the subtlest intention of the heart, nor even the subtlest internal thoughts. The word *ya'zub* means to escape and disappear.

Allah *Glorified is He* is informing us that He will never fail to reward the slightest good work or the slightest intention, no matter how small they might be. For Arabs, there existed no object that could be used to denote extreme lightness of weight save the word *Adh-dharra* (an atom's weight). It refers to a very small minuscule ant. Then, the word was designated for the fine particles of dust floating in space. You can see these fine particles when you sit in a dark room, and a ray of light is allowed to penetrate into the room. You can see this light as it passes through the hole as if it were an arrow, composed of these small moving particles of dust that exist in the air. These are the particles which you would not be able to see if you were in regular light or regular darkness; however, the contrast between light and dark reveals them.

You might not perceive things due to either its infinite smallness or largeness because your intellect cannot encompass it. When applied sciences became more advanced, the microscope was invented and enabled very small objects to be magnified thousands, and even millions, of times. If you were to put your own skin under the lens of a microscope, you would see crevices as deep as wells, which you never saw or felt before because they are so fine and small that your eye cannot perceive them. In addition to crevices, you would see folds, highs, and lows, no matter how soft the same skin feels not under a microscope.

Similarly, you are unable to perceive infinitely large objects. You perceive large objects smaller than its real size due to some distance separating you from

it. The farther it is, the smaller it becomes. For example, when you see a tall man from afar, he would appear to you as though he was a small child, yet, the closer you get to him the taller he would become in your eyes. Thus, great size, great distance, nor extreme minuteness can prevent the knowledge of Allah from knowing anything.

Allah *Glorified is He* addressed Arabs by that which was the smallest thing they knew, namely *Adh-dharra*, which is a very small ant. If you were to step on an ant on sandy ground, it would not die as it would be pushed into the crevices of the sand and would find its way out to the surface once again. Allah *the Almighty* has explained this issue when He narrated the story of Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* in the valley of the ants. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'One ant said, "O, ants, enter your houses, so that Sulaiman (Solomon) and his hosts may not crush you while they do not know' (*an-Naml*: 18). They cannot see them because of their incredible small sizes. Thus, Allah *the Exalted* gives us a clear account of every living community on earth and reminds us that amongst them are soldiers who stand vigilant guard like the ant that had warned its community of the coming of Sulaiman (Solomon) and his troops since they would not be able to see the small ants.

Therefore, *Adh-dharra* can refer either to small ants or to small dust specks. Allah *the Almighty* coins a similitude regarding the all-encompassing nature of His knowledge such that not even the slightest particles elude His awareness. The word *ya'zub* means to disappear. One could say, for instance, that the water in this is well is '*azib*, which means that it originates from deep underground and its extraction requires an extensive pulley system. A man who is far away from his family can also be called '*azab*.

When Allah *Glorified is He* says that nothing escapes or eludes Him, not even the smallest nor the largest of things, He wants to reassure us that man's every passing thought is beheld and known to Him, and it is He Who will judge us and reward us for them. A man might be able to get away with his actions from the law, but he will not be able to conceal his actions from the law of heaven.

Regarding the issue of an atom and all that which is generally minuscule, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'so, he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it.' (*az-Zalzala*: 7-8)

This pertains to that which is equivalent in weight to an atom, whereas if it is smaller than an atom, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions in the verse which we are currently examining, that that anything less than that or greater is in a clear book. At the time of the revelation of the Holy Quran, nobody knew that there existed that which was smaller than an atom. Nobody knew that there existed that which was smaller than an atom even up until the First World War. Scientists used to believe that an atom was that which cannot be further divided because it is the smallest thing that an eye could ever perceive. However, Allah struck a simile in the Quran with that which was even smaller than the atom.

After the First World War, science made a great progress, and Germany invented a machine for smashing the atom. It was said that such a machine could pulverise a single particle, which was impossible to be physically subdivided any further. This machine was composed of two cylinders like one used to press sugar cane. The space between the two cylinders could barely be seen. When Germany smashed that which was known as a single particle, it broke into even smaller pieces.

Allah *Glorified is He* has defined an atom as the scale of measurement of all minuscule particles. Thus, when Germany invented that machine, religious people were afraid that others would say that Allah has not spoken of that which is smaller than an atom, However, they turned to the verse which we are now studying and read the words of Allah that anything less than an atom or greater than it is in a clear book.

The expression *ma ya'zub* means that there is nothing that can elude or escape. The term '*an rabbik*' means from His knowledge, while '*min mithqal dharra*' means an atom's weight. We said before that some people say that the particle *min* could be superfluous. We say, for example, *ma ja'ani min rajul* (I have seen no man); the word *min* is considered a superfluous preposition, whilst *rajul* (man) is a nominative subject marked with an explicit *damma*, which not apparent due to the letter *lam* at the end of the word *rajul* that has a *kasra* on it due to the governing action of the preposition *min*. However, in the Words of Allah *Glorified is He* there are no superfluous letters. The word *min* in the verse denotes a start from the weight of an atom.

Allah *Glorified is He* says in another verse 'And those who disbelieve say, "The hour shall not come upon us." Say, "Yea! By my Lord, the Knower of

the unseen, it shall certainly come upon you. Not the weight of an atom becomes absent from Him in the heavens or in the earth.' (*Saba'*: 3)

The words *wa rabbi* (by my Lord) indicates an oath, and the letter *waw* is a preposition. There is no mention here of the testament. However, there is mention of the unseen. In the verse which we are currently examining, there is no mention of the unseen. The term '*alim ash-shahada* means that He witnesses all that can be witnessed, even that which humans believe cannot be encompassed due its greatness or due to Allah being of the unseen, so therefore, He only sees the unseen. Allah, however, sees not only the unseen but also that which can be seen.

Allah *Glorified is He* has mentioned the expression weight of atom three times. One time occurs when He *the Most High* says: 'so, he who has done an atom's weight.' (*az-Zalzala*: 7) The second time is in the verse we are examining (*Yunus*: 61), where He mentions the word *min* to show that there is nothing that eludes His knowledge beginning from the weight of an atom. Allah *Glorified is He* says in yet another verse: 'it shall certainly come upon you. Not the weight of an atom becomes absent from Him in the heavens or in the earth.' (*Saba'*: 3) In this verse, the heavens are mentioned first, while in the verse which we are currently examining, the earth is mentioned first. Allah speaks about His Knowledge of the unseen in both verses. In the former verse, He mentions only, without using *min* that indicates the beginning, the weight of an atom and cites heaven first using the plural mode. However, it is the latter verse where He mentions that which is smaller than an atom and cites the earth.

All of this is part of the miracles of the style of the Quran which some orientalists wanted to criticise. All of their criticisms were the result of their inability to grasp the eloquent locution of the Quranic style. If we were to respond to this issue, we will find that Allah *the Almighty* has cited the earth first in the verse which we are now examining because He is speaking about its inhabitants and the things that they do, likewise he cites the heavens. Heavens, which is the sky which is seen by the inhabitants of earth, is meant in this verse.

In this aforementioned verse, Allah *the Almighty* discusses the topic of the Hour whose timing is known to Him *the Almighty* only; in other words, He *Glorified is He* did not tell any creature whatsoever about this timing.



This is why, in this instance, it is the heavens that are mentioned first because the knowledge of the final hour lies with Allah and shall only occur by His Leave.

Thus, every expression conveys its message, not through the overall meaning, but through the subtlety of its parts. Allah *the Exalted* has spoken in the verse that we are currently examining and in a verse from the chapter of *Saba'* about science, atoms, the heavens and the earth with words placed either in the beginning or in the end depending on their appropriate context.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'but it is in a clear book.' We must pay attention to the fact that the exceptive mode in this sentence does not cancel out that which preceded it. Everything is recorded in that clear book. In this world, we find that if a man owes a debt to another man, he safeguards the written documents wherein is recorded what others owe him and what he owes others. What about Allah? Does He keep a written record of our actions and our intentions as evidence for Him or for us? In spite of the fact that Allah knows everything pre-eternity, He also takes an explicit record of these actions and intentions in order to make us realise what we did. Thus, when he who has done wrong is punished, the evidence against him will be available. Allah *Glorified is He* says afterwards:

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

**But for those who are on God's side there is no fear,  
nor shall they grieve [62] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 62)**

This verse occurs after Allah *Glorified is He* describes Himself as One Who knows the unseen. He made it clear that nothing eludes His knowledge. He wants to teach us that He can bestow special graces upon some of His created beings who perform spiritual practices. When Allah *the Almighty* grants you a special gift, be aware not to think that it is from you, rather, it is from Allah Who knows the unseen and from Whom nothing on earth or in the heaven can elude. Accordingly, it should not be said that so-and-so has glimpsed the unseen because he is close to Allah. We have to say that he has been given knowledge of the unseen. The reason behind this is that the unseen is hidden

from people, and that which is hidden from you but not from someone else is not unseen in the absolute sense. For example, a man who has been robbed of something does not know the location of the thing that was stolen from him; the robber, however, knows as does the one who offered the robber shelter and helped him hide the stolen goods, in addition to jinns who happened to be present at the crime scene. Thus, the location of the stolen goods is not unseen in the absolute sense.

The secrets of the universe which were temporarily unseen, like the gravity of the earth, the positive and negative poles of electricity and the manner which winds stimulate the clouds to produce rain were all unseen at a particular time. Allah *Glorified is He* specified a time when each would be discovered, and such things became widely known. Allah *the Almighty* has willed that so that man might work and discover the secrets of the universe. A researcher could be working on one thing and stumbles on a completely different discovery because Allah has allowed that unseen thing to be discovered, even if the inhabitants of the earth were not searching for it. The person who discovered penicillin, for instance, observed green material around organic matter, and then began researching that phenomenon, thus discovering penicillin. Archimedes who discovered the law of floatation that helped making ships and submarines travel discovered it by accident.

Thus, there are unseen elements which might become witnessed, either through the initiatives made by men or by a coincidence while doing another research. For example, the age of steam power all started when a man saw a covered pot with water boiling inside. The lid of the pot kept rising periodically to get rid of some of the steam. The man took note of the fact that the steam could be transformed into power, which could be used to pull wheel-based carriages, and thus, the age of steam power was born. Therefore, the birth date of certain secrets of the universe was due to some notes taken of a phenomenon by a servant whom Allah wanted to contemplate and discover one of the secrets of the universe. Most of the secrets of the universe have been discovered by chance so that we might come to understand that the instances when Allah has allowed something to be discovered, without any effort on the part of created beings, are more frequent than the instances when discoveries were

made thanks to the efforts of created beings. This is why the manner in which the Quran speaks about the different types of unseen is a very precise so that we might come to understand that there are some unseen things which are hidden from all of creation and for which no amount of effort on our part could reveal since Allah *the Exalted* has not willed a date of birth for them and has kept their knowledge solely to Himself. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases.' (*al-Baqara*: 255) This is the unseen which Allah reveals to them, either due to effort or by chance. He has attributed the Will to Himself, and He has attributed the act of attaining some of that knowledge to human beings, which means that some of the unseen can be unlocked through scientific innovation. In regards to the other category of the unseen that none knows but Him and that which only revealed to the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* manifests itself as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'The Knower of the unseen! Thus, He does not reveal His secrets to any, except to him whom He chooses as a messenger, for surely He makes a guard march before him and after him.' (*al-Jinn*: 26-27)

Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* imparts some of His esoteric knowledge to His select few from His creation. The Holy Quran itself contains much unseen knowledge, which Allah *Glorified is He* imparted to His Prophet and that which came to pass exactly as it had been predicted in the Quran. So, Allah bestows special gifts upon some of His created beings like Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as the above-mentioned verse (*al-Jinn*: 27) indicates. This knowledge, however, is not to be enclosed to the Prophet because he was a model and an example: 'Verily, you have in the Prophet of Allah an excellent model, for him who hopes to meet Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah much.' (*al-'Ahzab*: 21) He who emulates the actions of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and takes him as a model, Allah *the Almighty* shall bestow him a gift that other people can see; likewise, come to know that he who takes the Prophet as a model, Allah shall bestow illuminating gifts. However, these gifts are not of a functioning nature, per se, nor are they a source of knowledge of the unseen; rather, they are amongst the graces bestowed by Allah *the Almighty*. The Quranic way of referring to the unseen is

precise. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'and with Him are the keys of the unseen treasures, none knows them but He.' (*al-An'am*: 59) This verse means that Allah *the Most High* has not given the keys of the unseen to anyone, while those who are close to Him are the only ones to receive gifts from Him. The key to the knowledge of the unseen, however, is solely with Allah.

When we contemplate the verse which we are examining, we find that Allah uses the word *waliyy*. To take someone as your *waliyy* means to be close to him so that he is the first refuge you seek when you are in need of help from another person, along with implying that this person is the one whom you seek his aid at times of need. He who gets close to a scholar will receive some knowledge. He who gets close to a strong person will receive some strength, and he who gets close to a rich person will receive money (if needed) from him, even if it is in the form of a loan. Thus, the *waliyy* is the intimate, the grantor of victory, the helper, the protector, and the supporter. The term has been used to describe Allah *Glorified is He*: 'Have they taken for themselves protectors other than Him? But it is Allah Who is the real Protector, and He gives life to the dead, and He has power over all things.' (*ash-Shura*: 9) This is because Allah *Glorified is He* is close to all of His creation, unlike the created beings who either get closer or distance themselves from one another depending on their means. He is the absolute Protector Whom nearness to some created beings does not prevent Him from being close to other created beings. His work on one thing does not preclude Him from working simultaneously on another thing. He is the Protector, the True: 'In such a case protection comes only from Allah, the True. He is best in rewarding and the best in respect of the final outcome.' (*al-Kahf*: 44) Thus, he who is in need of true guardianship, let him seek it from Allah for He grants protection to those who are steadfast in His Doctrine: 'Allah is the Friend of those who believe; He brings them out of all kinds of darkness into light.' (*al-Baqara*: 257) Allah draws near to His faithful servants just as the believers draw near to Him.

When we look at the verse being explained, we find that the absolute guardianship rests with Allah even if it is in relation to someone else. Sometimes it is attached to believers, who draw near to Allah, and at other times, it is attached to Allah *Glorified is He* Who draws near to believers. Allah

*the Exalted* is not bound by laws. Thus, by virtue of His absolute Power, He perceives a virtuous attribute in a person and ennoble this person, then; as a result, this person becomes a loyal servant. You might hear people say that so-and-so has been made impervious to sin which means that this person used to be a sinner. However, Allah *the Almighty* came to appreciate some virtuous attribute of his and guided him from then on. To clarify this is, the man who gave water to a dog is a good example. The man, in fact, went out of his way to give water to the dog. He filled his shoe with well water to quench the dog's thirst; thereby Allah forgave this man's previous sins. This man did not give water to the dog in order to show off; rather, the man did so because he felt sympathy for the living creature. Things are not, however, always fixed to a systematic or mechanical way in terms of Allah by virtue of His absolute Power; He considers every situation independently as He considers the varieties of men. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colours; most surely there are signs in this for the learned.' (*ar-Rum*: 22)

Allah *the Most High* does not create the entire creation from a singular mould, instead, he creates the tall and the short, the fat and the thin, the blond and the dark, and this is corollary of His absolute Power. By His Mercy, He has brought the faithful from among His servants closer first, then, by virtue of His nearness to them: 'Allah is the Friend of those who believe; He brings them out of all kinds of darkness into light.' (*al-Baqara*: 257) Thus, he who follows the Path gleans the light, and when Allah learns about a servant's steadfast effort on the Path, He brings the servant even closer to Himself and bestows special graces upon him, which others around him might perceive and to which they might look up.

Allah *the Almighty* wants from a believer to show respect towards His creation. If one learns of a sin committed by another person, one must keep the sin secret since Allah *the Exalted* loves secrecy and loves those who keep certain things secrets. One could hate a person because of his indulgence in a given sin and, thereby, hates all his good deeds. Allah *Glorified is He* does not want to forbid you from being the recipient of the good deeds of that sinful person, thus Allah conceals a given sin from you so that you might benefit

from some of this person's good deeds. Allah *the Exalted* commands you not look down upon such a sinner since he might be endowed with a virtue, and He ennoble such person first and then this servant comes to obey Allah.

Allah *Glorified is He* says in the Qudsi Hadith: 'O, son of Adam, I love you, thus by virtue of My Right over you, love me as well.' He also says in another Divine Hadith: 'I am as My slave thinks of Me, and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me to himself, I remember him to Myself, and if he remembers Me in a gathering, I remember him in a gathering better than that.' These words put the responsibility of drawing closer to Allah in the hands of a created being. Allah *Glorified is He* adds: 'If he seeks to draw nearer to Me by a hand span, I draw nearer to him by a forearm's length, and if he comes to Me by a forearm's length, I draw nearer to him by an arm's length. Likewise, if he comes to Me walking, I come to him quickly.' Whosoever wishes that Allah *the Almighty* comes to him swiftly may travel to Him at pace. Thus, faith in Allah *Glorified is He* is the key to closeness to Him.

Whosoever is amongst those who exhibit steadfastness to the Doctrine, Allah will cause him to draw ever nearer. Therefore, there are those who arrive at the realm of Munificence of Allah *the Almighty* through obeying Him *Glorified is He* first and then knocking on His Door until it is opened for them.

However, there are those whose path takes them through Munificence first and obedience second. For example, and to Allah belongs the highest similitude, you as a human being might meet someone who came to your door in need of a charity, whereupon you gave to him. However, there are also people whom you may be charitable to of your own accord. When you give charity to such person, he becomes deferential towards you as a matter of gratitude. Imagine, then, how Allah, gives to His servants!

Thus, there are those who become obedient to Allah due to the Munificence virtue of Allah. Still there are some who arrive at the realm of His Munificence through their obedience towards Allah. When a person draws near unto Allah *the Exalted* He draws near unto that servant. The servant, then, enters into the intimate company of Allah that affects him profoundly.

Abu al-'Ala' al-Ma'rri once said to his beloved that she was his beloved, but he did not want to become a lover to someone who did not return his love.

This means that he seeks refuge in Allah from the prospect of being a lover of someone who refuses to acknowledge his affections. However, the love of Allah *the Most High* differs from the love of human beings. He does not treat His beloved in the same manner. When you love Allah, He draws you closer and closer to Himself, and this is what is known as the condition of being elected. Thus, if Allah bestows certain graces on some of His elected servants, the latter must exhibit deferential behaviour vis-à-vis Allah. None should therefore be boastful of the blessings which Allah *the Exalted* has bestowed upon him. Boasting about bestowed graces is tantamount to giving them up. Allah *Glorified is He* withdraws such graces from the person who boasts and brags about them. Thus, whosoever boasts of the graces bestowed upon him enjoys, in reality, no graces at all. Allah wishes for His servant to be near. It is He Who has taken the initiative, demonstrating clearly in the verse that He is the Guardian of the believers, and this is why He shall take them out of the deep darkness and into the light: 'Allah is the Friend of those who believe; He brings them out of all kinds of darkness into light.' (*al-Baqara*: 257) We know that Allah often mentions concrete images so as to elucidate abstract ideas. This is due to human beings being habituated with perceiving sensory reality first, and it is the most effective means of conveying a desired message. Thus, when Allah *Glorified is He* strikes a simile of the twin concepts of disbelief and faith, He describes disbelief using the image of darkness and describes faith using the image of light. Allah intends to render the message clearly and more easily understandable by doing so.

Does it not also make sense to avoid the perils of metaphorical darkness since we naturally try to avoid the perils of sensory darkness? Sensory darkness can obscure our vision of things so that we might stumble into a fragile object thus destroying it or else we might stumble into a sturdier object that could hurt us. Therefore, obscured vision causes accidents. However, when light dawns, it has the effect of revealing the outlines of objects, and making us go forth confidently on an illuminated path. Suppose that you were in a dark place and there was some object standing in another lit-up area. You can see that which stands in the lit-up area while you are in the dark area. The pre-Islamic scientists did not have the correct explication for such a phenomenon. They used to think that vision occurred as a result of a ray of light cast from the eye

of the beholder onto the beheld object. This was until the Muslim scientist al-Hasan Ibn al-Haytham arrived at the scene and discovered the laws of light refraction. He demonstrated the error of previous scientists in the field of optics and pointed out that it was the beheld object which emits a ray of light in the direction of the beholder. If the beheld object happens to be in a dark place, it will not be seen by anyone. If there really did exist a ray of light emitted by the beholder, the latter would be able to see objects in total darkness.

Thus, the first kind of Guardianship of Allah to believers is His bringing them out of darkness and into light. Figurative darkness is a much graver matter than physical darkness, and figurative light is stronger than physical one. For on a material plane, it is possible to successfully navigate a perilous or labyrinthine landscape. However, on the immaterial plane of values, such a feat is a lot more arduous. This is why a poet has said that battle wounds would eventually scar although such is not the case of the injurious word.

Allah *Glorified is He* says in the verse which we are currently examining: 'Now surely the friends of Allah-- they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.' (*Yunus*: 62) As we have previously explained, the word '*ala*' is a rhetoric used to draw the attention of the audience so as to be sure that it retains every word. Allah *the Almighty* says that they shall have no fear from others nor shall they grieve. This is due to fear coming as a result of the anticipation of some harm which has not occurred yet; however, it could happen in the future.

In our daily lives, we find that a father hold hands with his son in a crowded place out of fear. However, you might also find one of those who are close to Allah in a state of serene resignation when his son is in an accident or dying. This is because he understands the wisdom of the actions of Allah, and so should you. Thus, fear arises in relation to the future of some anticipated event. As for sorrow, it is a feeling that arises as a result of some event in the past. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'So that you may not grieve for what has escaped you' (*al-Hadid*: 23).

It is futile to despair over what has happened as it is impossible to change the past. For those who are close to Allah *Glorified is He*; no fear shall visit them, as they are always aware of Allah's hidden wisdom. However, those who are unaware of it might feel sympathy for them because they do not



know what the reality of what is happening to them. Sorrow is one of the feelings of the heart which Allah *the Almighty* does not want a believer to dwell upon unduly. Upon losing his son, the Prophet *Peace and blessings be upon Him* said, 'The eye weeps and the heart grieves, but we say only what our Lord is pleased with, and we are grieved for you, Ibrahim.'

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* specifies the requirements for man's closeness to Him and says:

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

**For those who believe and are conscious of God  
[against evil] [63] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 63)**

Now faith is that primary creed upon which all action is subsequently built. Faith requires obeying the Doctrine of Allah, including its commandments, its proscriptions, and its prescriptions. Fearing of Allah, as we have come to know, is the attitude of fearing the attributes of Allah's Majesty. It is also the attitude of fearing Hellfire. The Prophet of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* has listed related attributes that result from attitude of fearing Allah. This is due to these attributes being considered as stages. He described the pious saying, 'They are people who love one another for the spirit of Allah (i.e. the Quran), without having any mutual kinship and giving property to one. I swear by Allah, their faces will glow and they will be (sitting) in (pulpits of) light.'

'Umar *Allah be pleased with him* was asked about the pious people, and he said, 'The looking at one of them causes you to draw closer to Allah.' It is as though he were commenting upon the Words of Allah: 'their marks are in their faces because of the effect of prostration.' (*al-Fath*: 29) When you see a pious person, you become happy and rejoice in his presence. You only become aware of the source of this happy feeling when someone tells you that particular person is pious. This happiness prompts you to emulate him because the very sight of him reminds you of the attributes of reverence, submissiveness, serenity, gentleness of appearance and gaiety of complexion.

Such a person looks at the universe and perceives in it no fault. Rather, he finds that everything is in its proper place, and he does not perceive any evil

in existence. Even when he does come across evil, he would say that evil serves to make the good even clearer, and if error and all its concomitant pains were not there, man would not long for the truth. It is thus that error itself comes to fight alongside the legions of truth. The existence of evil pushes people towards good. This is why it is said, 'Be beautiful in the practice of your faith, and you will see beauty in the universe.' The reason for this is because when you contemplate the universe while acknowledging the might of Allah over it, He, thereby, bestows upon you the highest of gifts. The closer you draw to Allah, the more He draws closer to you and grants you even more wisdom and knowledge of the universal secrets.

Take the virtuous servant whom Allah taught sciences from his bounty, for example. This virtuous servant went on to teach Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. The latter considered why the virtuous servant damaged a perfectly good ship, without knowing that there was a tyrannical ruler who seized all passing ships; he was angry and spoke to the virtuous servant wondering why he damaged a perfectly good ship, whereupon the virtuous servant explained that the tyrannical ruler would not seize a ship if it were damaged and that this particular ship was owned by poor people.

Then, the virtuous servant killed a youth. This was a crime in the estimation of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. What Musa (Moses) did not know is that this youth would have wronged his parents, and thus Allah *the Almighty* ordered the virtuous servant to kill the youth before he reached maturity so as not to tyrannise his parents. Thus, the youth would enter paradise like all the other children who die at a young age. It is said that those who die before reaching the age of puberty do not have a specific spot reserved for them in Paradise. However, they are allowed to roam wherever they wish like a young infant who enters a castle and is unable to stay in one spot, rather, he moves to and fro. Therefore, such children can go and see our Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* Abu Bakr or any of the blessed companions.

In addition, when Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* entered the village with the virtuous servant, they both asked to be fed. The inhabitants of the village refused even though asking for food is one of the most humble forms of solicitation. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of the village refused to feed them.

This was a sign of ignobility, worthy of reproach. However, the virtuous servant redressed a particular wall in that village that was teetering on the verge of collapse.

Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was not aware of that which the virtuous servant informed him later, namely, that a righteous man had bequeathed a treasure for his sons under the wall before his death. This man had built the wall in such a way that it would crumble at the same time that his sons would reach puberty. When the wall would fall, his sons would be able to find the treasure which their father had left for them, and by that time the inhabitants of the village would not dare usurp it.

These are the blessings which Allah *the Almighty* bestows upon His virtuous servants. He has placed such servants as signposts erected to guide people or as lighthouses which guide ships in the darkness.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ لَا يَبْدِيلُ  
لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٦٤﴾

**For them there is good news in this life and in the Hereafter  
– there is no changing the promises of God – that is truly the  
supreme triumph [64] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 64)**

The word *al-bushra* (good news) and other words are derived from the term *al-bashra* which means skin. This is because every reaction within the human psyche is reflected in the skin. If you come to a person with happy news, you will see this happiness reflected in his complexion. If you come to a person with bad news, you will see distress reflected on his skin. Thus, the skin is the first to react to events, be they happy or painful. When it is said *bushra*, this denotes news which if heard by a listener causes his skin to produce a happy glow because they are words of good tidings. When the Prophet of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* was asked about good tidings, he said, 'It was the pure vision of a believer which he either sees or which is shown to him.' He further added, 'It represents one part from forty-six parts of prophethood.'

The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* received revelation through visions for a period of six months. He, likewise, received revelation in a state of wakefulness for a period of twenty-three years. Therefore, if you compare the period of six months to the period of twenty-three years, you will find that six months represents one of forty-six parts. A vision is not the same as a dream because a vision is not the product of your conscious mental activity during daytime. Thus, a vision is not influenced by Satan. The popular aphorism goes as follows, 'The starving person dreams of the bread market.' Therefore, if what a person sees during his sleep can be directly related to that which preoccupies him during the day, then that is considered a dream and not a vision. Furthermore, if what a person sees during his sleep involves that which runs counter to Allah's Doctrine, then that is the direct influence of Satan. Thus, there is a difference between visions, dreams, and confused dreams. *Al-bushra*, thereby, refers to a clear vision or it is that which is glimpsed in those who are close to Allah and which causes people to turn to them. You might find one whom Allah *Glorified is He* loves in heaven, whereby He tells Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* 'Verily, I love so-and-so. You should also love him', and then Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* begins to love him. Then he (Jibril) makes an announcement in heaven saying that Allah loves so-and-so, and you should also love him. Therefore, the inhabitants of Heaven also being to love him and then affinity is conferred upon him, upon the earth.

When you see that a man has gained the approval of heaven, then all the people come to agree that the presence of such a man, who is loved by heaven, is a good omen. This is what is known as *al-bushra*. It can also come about at the moment when the angel of death *peace be upon him* visits a person and greets him. Such a person comes to understand that death is in the nature of things, as per the Words of Allah *Glorified is He* 'Those whom the angels cause to die in a good state by saying, "Peace be on you. Enter the garden for what you did.'" (*an-Nahl*: 32)

It can be at the moment when the face lightens up as a person takes his book of deeds by his right hand. This is a glad tiding in this world and the next. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah', then continue in the right way. The angels descend upon them by saying, "Fear

not, nor be grieved and receive good news of the garden which you were promised. We are your guardians in this world's life and in the Hereafter, and you shall have therein what your souls desire and you shall have therein what you ask for' (*Fussilat*: 30-31) Thus, those who are close to Allah *the Exalted* receive the gifts of Allah via the angels and are distinguished from their fellow created beings. The reason for this is that they most likely imposed upon themselves supererogatory acts of obedience that go above and beyond the basic obligation. Obligations are the bare minimum of the religious directives. Such people might feel that performing the basic religious obligations does not befit his love of Allah; thus, he increases the quantity of such mandated religious rites. Instead of praying only the five obligatory daily prayers, he prays ten other supererogatory prayers or he fasts another month or two in addition to the month of Ramadan. He might fast on Monday and Thursday of every week.

This indicates that he finds the basic religious obligations to be too little compared to his immense of Allah and that He deserves more. What this means is that this servant has entered into the station of love with Allah *the Almighty* whereby He bestows upon him all that he wishes. Such a person becomes so full of what he wants due to the satisfaction of Allah on his part. He becomes the beneficiary of that which is mentioned in the following Divine Hadith where Allah says, 'I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshipper of mine. Furthermore, the most beloved thing with which My slave comes nearer to Me is what I have enjoined upon him, and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing *Nawafil* (prayer or doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory) till I love him. When I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his leg with which he walks. If he asks (something) from Me, I give him, and if he asks My Protection (refuge), I protect him.'

Allah concludes the verse we are examining by saying that His Words do not change, and this is what the great attainment is. As long as Allah said that, you will not find someone who is capable of altering His Words. In addition, all of creation shall be subjugated to Him on the Day of Judgment, and whomever Allah has permitted worldly ownership of something shall own nothing on

that Day. All shall hear the Words of Allah, 'to whom belongs the kingdom this day? To Allah, the One, the Subduer [of all]' (*Ghafir*: 16).

Since Allah *Glorified is He* has promised glad tidings in this world and in the Hereafter, nothing can reverse the decree of Allah in the matter. There is nothing that can refuse the judgment of Allah. Promises of glad tidings in this world and the next are, most assuredly, a great victory. Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَا يَحْزُنُكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦٥﴾

**Do not let their words grieve you [Prophet]. Power  
belongs entirely to God; He hears all and knows all [65]  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 65)**

This verse comes after Allah had shown us what the objections of disbelievers were, their persecution to the Prophet of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* along with their disavowal of his message and all that they had said in that regard. Much of what they had said had saddened the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* which is why Allah *the Almighty* asks him not to react dejectedly to what they had said. They had accused him of being a sorcerer, a liar, a fabricator, and a madman. However, Allah *the Almighty* has abrogated all that they had said. If Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was a sorcerer, why did he not put a spell over his naysayers as well? Can the hypnotised subject have a will vis-à-vis of the hypnotiser?!

Thus, what they claimed that the Prophet cast a spell on the disbelievers' slaves and children has been refuted. They also claimed that he was demented. However, the comportment of the Prophet evinced not the least sign of dementia. Allah refuted such accusations by saying: 'Noon. I swear by the pen and what the angels write, By the grace of your Lord you are not mad. And most surely you shall have a reward never to be cut off. And most surely you conform [yourself] to sublime morality.' (*al-Qalam*: 1-4)

Indeed, a madman could never exhibit such excellent comportment as did the Prophet. When they accused him that he had fabricated the Quran, Allah *the Most High* challenged them to come up with a chapter worth of text similar to it. They failed to do so even though they had a natural gift for poetry,

literary arts, and eloquent speech. Allah *Glorified is He* orders the Prophet to 'let not their speech grieve you (him)' because their sayings do not stand a chance of interfering with the message. This is because all Might and Glory belong solely to Allah *the Exalted*. The word *Al'izza* means might and predominance. It is said, for instance, that such-and-such a thing is '*aziz*', which mean that there is nothing like it. Allah *Glorified is He* is the Absolutely Powerful, and there is no god, but He. He cannot be vanquished or subjugated. On reading this verse from the Quran, you will notice a small letter *M* on top of the word *qawluhum*. This means that one must make a mandatory pause.

One might ask, 'How can it be mandatory to pause at this juncture when the Holy Quran is built upon the principle of *wasl* (connectedness). The last letter of every chapter has a *tanwin* (punctuation), and there is nothing in the Quran which obligates the reader to stop?' My answer to this question is that when the scholars noticed how most people do not have a deep grasp of the Arabic language, they instituted such mandatory pauses so that the reader, who has but little knowledge of the Arabic language, can understand how to read such verses. Imagine, for instance, a person who does not possess linguistic acumen; relating both phrases together, he would thus mistakenly understand that, Allah forbid, the Might of Allah is a cause for the Prophet's sadness. This is why scholars have instituted a mandatory pause at this particular juncture so that we might read carefully and understand correctly.

This is why we must read 'and let not their speech grieve you' and then pause before going on to read 'surely, Might is wholly Allah's.' Thus we come to understand the meaning of the order not to grieve, which is because their sayings shall not in the least interfere with your destined, imminent victory over them. Allah *the Almighty* wishes to reassure His Prophet regarding the very issue of mission and that his mission is merely to convey the message and that he is not obligated to force them to believe or agree to his doctrine.

The Lord *the Most High* inspires His Prophet not to be grieved by their denial of the Divine Message and their calumnies against it. Their calumnies are groundless and have no evidence to substantiate. In respect of those deniers, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'In their wickedness and self-exaltation, they rejected them, although their minds were convinced of their truth' (*an-Naml*: 14). Their calumnies shall not

hinder the way of your message; Allah sees to it that the light of the Divine Message shines to its fullest extent. No one is more powerful than Allah *the Exalted*. No one can overcome Allah—He *the Most High* is the Predominant, the Protector from Whom no one can escape or take refuge. His Might may clearly manifest in overcoming all obstacles and subduing all enemies or in the possession of wisdom. Everyone from Allah's creation may enjoy might in a certain domain or the other. However, only Allah *the Almighty* enjoys the Absolute Might in all domains; His Might encompasses all things entirely.

Why did the Lord *the Most High* not use the rhetorical restrictive style in this verse, e.g. 'Might is wholly Allah's? The restrictive style restricts a specific attribute to a specific person and precludes others from sharing it, e.g. 'So-and-so is owned by Zayd alone.' In Arabic, mentioning the possessed object first 'so-and-so' indicates that no one else possesses such a thing. However, when we say, 'So-and-so has such-and-such', it means that many others have similar possessions or qualities. Here, the Lord *the Most High* says, 'surely, Might is wholly Allah's' (*Yunus*: 65). It is a case of emphasis; the quality of might is restricted solely to Allah *the Almighty* through the affirmed predicate. Simply, no one challenges this fact; it does not need to use the restrictive verbal style 'only'. It is Allah *Glorified is He*—the Creator of the Creation—who says that none can gainsay this fact. If there were—Allah forbid—any challenge to it, the verse would be false. This has not happened, nor will it ever happen when it comes to the Divine verses. He is the Creator of the universe, who reveals its signs. It is impossible that there could be any dissonance between the universe and Allah's Word, as He *the Most High* is the Creator of the universe.

It so happened that some claimed might and glory for themselves by saying, 'Indeed, when we return to the City, we—the ones most worthy of honour—will surely drive out from it those most contemptible ones!' (*al-Munafiqun*: 8) The crux of their saying was to claim might and glory for themselves and attribute lowliness and disgrace to believers. Therefore, might and glory have been claimed, so why has the restrictive style not been used? In response, Allah *Glorified is He* simply says: 'However, all Might [Honour] belongs to Allah and [thus] to His Messenger and those who believe [in Allah]' (*al-Munafiqun*: 8). Thus, Glory and Might belong to Allah alone.



However, Allah *the Exalted* wishes His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* and believers to share that honour. In this instance, the Words of the Lord *the Most High* 'surely, Might is wholly Allah's' (*Yunus*: 65) declare that all forms of might and glory belong to Allah. If it is the might and glory of wisdom and control, then He is the All-Wise and the Controller. Likewise, if it is the might and glory of clemency, He is the Clement. However, when it comes to the Might of anger and retribution, He is *the Almighty* and All-Compelling. Eventually, all forms of might and glory belong solely to Allah *the Most High* 'He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing' (*Yunus*: 65).

Might implies dominance and ability to destroy; Allah *the Most High* 'hears' those who are worthy of destruction. When it comes to speech, He concludes the verse with 'All Hearing', and since He knows their actions, He concludes it with 'All Knowing'. He 'hears' everything said and 'knows' everything done. Finally, all forms of Might belong solely to Allah: 'And let not their speech grieve you; surely, Might is wholly Allah's. He is the All Hearing' (*Yunus*: 65). The Lord *the Most High* wills to prove this universal fact by means of the cosmic signs, for there is nothing in existence or in the universe that stands against Allah's Way. In this verse, observe that the Law of 'Might is wholly Allah's' (*Yunus*: 65) firmly affirms that to Allah belongs everything in the heavens and the earth.

أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ  
مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

**indeed, all who are in the heavens and on the earth belong to Him. Those who call upon others beside God are not really following partner-gods; they are only following assumptions and telling lies [66] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 66)**

The entire creation is under His Dominion. When Allah *the Exalted* explains a given thing through its opposite, He will mention the principle and the overall framework: 'Unto Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth' (*al-Baqara*: 284). For example, when Pharaoh's legions pursued Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* and his people, Musa's (Moses') people cried out: 'Behold, we shall certainly be overtaken [and defeated]!' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 61)

They said as such when they saw the sea in front of them. The Lord *the Most High* willed to show them that the sea will not hinder His Will, nor elude the Divine Power. Simply, unto Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth, including the sea. The sea was split asunder, and each part appeared as if it were an immense mount. Nothing can escape His Dominion. Allah *the Almighty* then shows the opposite sense; the sea remains parted until Pharaoh's legions entered into it, then the All Powerful tells Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*: 'Leave the sea becalmed [between you and Pharaoh's men]. Verily, they are a host destined to be drowned!' (*ad-Dukhan*: 24) Allah *the Exalted* orders the sea to resume its natural state, whereby He drowns Pharaoh's legions and saved Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* and his followers. Thus, the thing—by Allah's Leave—may lead to salvation or to destruction; unto Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth, and nothing can ever stand up to His Might and Glory.

Again, when Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* told his son, 'O, my son! Embark with us' (*Hud*: 42), but his son replied, 'I shall betake myself to a mountain that will protect me from the waters' (*Hud*: 43). Now, the idea is correct—the mountain rises above the level of the waters. However, Nuh's (Noah's) son forgot that Allah had other means; namely, the waves. He was destined to be drowned. It is true that Nuh's (Noah's) son thought that the ark may come to rest on Mount al-Judey, and all those who boarded it would be saved as would those who sought refuge in high mountains. However, he did not think of the waves that stood between him and the mountain. Eventually, he met his doom. To sum up, every living being is subject to the Divine Orders. Since all Might and Glory belong to Allah, then unto Him belongs everything in the heavens and the earth, and no one can challenge the Lord's Power. The entire creation may be used by the Lord as a means for destruction and for salvation.

The word *ala* ('Oh,') is a rhetorical device that has the purpose of alerting listeners so as not to be taken by surprise. Then, they do not miss the wisdom of the forthcoming words and focus their mental powers on perceiving the content of these words. The Lord *the Most High* says, 'Oh, verily, unto Allah belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on earth' (*Yunus*: 66). It may be said that many unreasonable beings do exist. When Allah *the Almighty* says 'whoever', does it mean the reasonable beings only? In response, is there

anything in the universe that fails to perceive Allah? Of course there is not! Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘On that Day will she [the earth] recount all her tidings, as Your Lord will have inspired her to do’ (*az-Zalzala*: 4-5). All living beings—mankind and other kingdoms in the universe—perceive and know the signs and existence of Allah. Note that He at times uses the following phrasing, ‘It is unto Him that whatever is in the heavens and on earth surrenders itself, willingly or unwillingly’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 83). Other times, Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘Verily, unto Allah belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on earth’ (*Yunus*: 66). Such is the case of the verse in question.

For example, the angels do exist in the heavens and in the earth as the executors of orders. The phrase ‘unto Allah belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on earth’ refers to them. Allah *the Most High* also has other living beings in the heavens alone—the enraptured angels on high; they do not exist on earth. Similarly, Allah *the Exalted* has other hosts on the earth alone. Observe that the following verse, ‘Unto Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth’ (*al-Baqara*: 284) fits the angels who are the executors of orders. For the enraptured angels in the heavens and those on the earth, who are unconnected with the heavens, the following verse is most appropriate, ‘Oh, verily, unto Allah belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on earth’ (*Yunus*: 66).

Since everything in the universe lies under the Dominion of Allah *the Almighty* nothing therefore can escape His Will or His Divine Plan. In caves, for example, He can lock all means to salvation and can equally create all means to salvation. He *the Most High* will render blind anyone who approaches the cave. Nothing takes place without the Will of Allah *the Exalted*. The Divine Might and Glory remains His, and none can ever defile them. The Lord *the Most High* says, ‘Hence, what is it that they follow—those who invoke, beside Allah, beings to whom they ascribe a share in His Divinity’ (*Yunus*: 66). This verse is phrased as if there are partners to Him in Divinity, even though in truth there are none who share His Divinity. They follow nothing. The evidence is found in the heart of the matter, for they worship objects other than Allah *the Most High*. In essence, worship is to follow the command and refrain from the proscriptions. The idols, which they worshipped, had neither commands nor proscriptions. They had no doctrine to bring forth. They do not have any deities.

In reality, there is no partner who has the least share in Divinity. If there did exist partners who share in His Divinity, they would have revealed their message and/or issued commands and proscription. He who says, 'worship me' is effectively indicating a manner of worship. Show me one of these deities, which you worship and claim they have messages! But you cannot do so. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Say: "If there were—as some people assert—[other] deities side-by-side with Him, surely [even] they would have to strive to find a way unto Him who is enthroned on His Almightyness"' (*al-Isra'*: 42). In other words, if we suppose that other deities with a form of power do exist, e.g. the shining sun, the reflecting moon, the falling rains, the obeying angels, then they will search for the One Unique Lord to receive power which you have thought is inherently their own, from Him. Evidently, the Lord *the Most High* says: 'Nor has there ever been any deity side-by-side with Him. Had there been any, each deity would surely have stood apart [from the others] in whatever it had created and they would surely have [tried to] overcome one another! Limitless in His glory is Allah, [far] above anything that men may devise by way of definition' (*al-Mu'minun*: 91).

Had it been true, there would have been various spheres of influences controlled by each different deity. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'those [saintly beings] whom they invoke are themselves striving to obtain their Lord's favour' (*al-Isra'*: 57). They said that they worshipped the angels, but they did not know that the angels themselves worship Allah *the Most High*. As there are no partners, who share Divinity, to worship, so they just follow mere conjectures. Allah *Glorified is He* delivers the following Words: 'They follow but the conjectures [of others] and themselves do nothing but guess' (*Yunus*: 66). We find that those, who endeavoured to find contraries in the Quran and undermine it, said that this verse has an example of antinomy as follows:

The beginning of the verse denies any partners to Allah, 'Hence, what is it that they follow—those who invoke, beside Allah, beings to whom they ascribe a share in His Divinity' (*Yunus*: 66). The concluding part of the verse states that they follow conjecture and guesswork. Thus, the beginning of the verse denies that they follow anything whereas the conclusion of the verse asserts that they do.

Really, this objection reflects the ignorance of those who claimed it. For Allah *the Exalted* rejects the existence of these deities whom the idolaters claim to have a share in Allah's Dominion; He owns all that are in the heavens and all that are on the earth. However, He asserts that they follow mere *zann* (conjectures) and *khars* (guesswork). As previously explained, the *zann* designates a most likely judgment. The degree of certainty as regards to a judgment's verity is either likely or unlikely on equal footing. When a certain idea is balanced evenly between likelihood and unlikelihood, it is a case of 'doubt'. If you incline towards likelihood, it becomes a conjecture, or else, it designates, if improbability is more likely, illusion. To sum it up, *zann* is an opinion or judgment based on inconclusive evidence, whereas *khars* (guesswork) refers to a groundless statement.

In this case, the Lord *the Most High* says; 'They follow but the conjectures [of others] and themselves do nothing but guess' (*Yunus*: 66). The Quranic statements express a wide range of possibilities. In this verse, Allah *the Exalted* asserts that they follow nothing but their opinions and falsehoods. The disbelievers, as known, have two categories: some who have the knowledge of reality, but they alter it into a lie and falsehood, and others who do not have knowledge of reality, but they lend their ear to those who think they know. Thus, there is a follower and a leader. The latter knows that the words he speaks are mere prattle to distort and sully the truth. As for the follower, he believes that he follows the words of conscientiously trustworthy people and takes their words to heart. Thus, the follower just follows mere opinions. As for leaders, they create baseless assertions, lies, and fabrications. Allah *Glorified is He* hereby tells us: 'There are among them unlettered people who have no real knowledge of the Book, [following] only wishful beliefs and depending on nothing but conjecture' (*al-Baqara*: 78).

The unlettered, or followers, therefore, believes in that which is said to them; they are illiterate and what is said to them seems probable. However, if they had a moment of reflection, they would conclude that such words are not probable. Regarding what is said about the following, or sometimes leaders, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Woe, then, unto those who write down the Book, with their own hands, and then say, "This is from Allah", in order to acquire a trifling gain thereby' (*al-Baqara*: 79). The verse refers to the baselessly created

statements, lies, fabrications, and falsehoods. If disbelievers are illiterate, they can be considered the folk of opinion and, then, fall under the present judgment, 'They follow but the conjectures [of others]' (*Yunus*: 66), whereas if they are of the elite class of leaders, the following Words of the Lord *the Most High* fit them, 'and themselves do nothing but guess' (*Yunus*: 66).

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ  
مُبْصِرًا ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

**It is He who made the night so that you can rest in it and the daylight so that you can see – there truly are signs in this for those who hear [67] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 67)**

In the wake of explaining the meaning of faith and faithful believers and discussing the disbelievers' possible slanders against the Prophet and his Message, the Lord presently wishes to steer the discussion towards His signs of the universe to prove faith by reference to the facts of the cosmos. We are required to believe in the Prophet who communicates the Divine Message for our benefits. If anyone asks for evidence in support of this fact, let him contemplate the signs of the universe brought forth for man's benefits before the religious responsibilities are even imposed; do they work in human favour or not? Since the universal signs—created in order to serve mankind—benefit them throughout their life, why does man not thank the One Who bestows such blessings upon them? Indeed, Allah *the Almighty* graces mankind with many bounties even before the age of maturity, when man shall immediately perform the religious duties. Allah *the Most High* does not expect a person to pay forth the religious duties until after He has bestowed upon that person a flood of beneficial blessings, which man freely admits and to which reality undoubtedly witnesses.

When you reach the age of maturity and the religious duties become incumbent upon you, compare your duties to your blessings. If you believe that the universal signs have benefited you over your life until the moment when you are charged with the Divine Commands and proscriptions, then take it in good faith that what is now being asked of you is true and beneficial. Just as He has benefited you with that series of initial blessings, the Lord shall continue to bestow upon on you beneficial blessings. Just follow religious

commands. Let all your actions in life be informed by the light of religious commands to win happiness. We know that it is in the nature of man to rest and ready himself for work, and then he tires and rests again. This is why we find that religious duties given to us in accordance with this same pattern. The Lord *the Most High* allows you rest until you reach the age of maturity—this was a time when you received the blessings of Allah *the Almighty* enjoying them until you reached the age of maturity. During this time, you had free choices and could follow your desires. Then came the Divine Commands ‘you shall’ and ‘you shall not’ by which you must abide to set your affairs right. While your religious duties are bound to exact a certain measure of effort on your part, there is nevertheless a resting period. In your daily life, there is a time for rest and a time for work. The time of rest helps you approach your work with vigour, whereas work tires you and makes you look forward to resting afterwards. Thus, work requires a time for rest, and rest requires being followed by work. The Lord *the Most High* mentions the time period called ‘day’ and shows that He has separated man's life into two periods: One preceding maturation when a person is not obligated to perform religious duties; The other follows maturation when a person has to perform the religious duties. Allah *the Exalted* divides the ‘day’ into a period of rest and a period of work. He *the Most High* says, ‘It is He Who has made the night for you, so that you might have rest therein, and the day, to make [you] see’ (*Yunus*: 67). Just as Allah *the Almighty* has created the day with two distinct periods for rest and work, He has legislated the religious duties for the order of life to be maintained. Man, a divinely trusted steward residing on earth necessarily requires action. His action must submit to the commands and prohibitions. Any action left without a direct command and prohibition is permissible, so one may or may not do it. Acts and proscriptions require actions. Do not think that a proscription requires no action; while acting in a certain way you receive the order to desist. You may think that suspension requires no action since it strips you of the capacity to carry out an action. However, you forget that there is an internal action involved. It is related to the motives urging you to carry out your desires to that which is not in line with Allah's Law. Thus, you are forced to stifle those urges and rein them in since Allah has ordered you to do so.

Since there exists such a thing as work/action, there consequently also exists such a thing as fatigue. This is why Allah *the Almighty* has given us the right to rest. The same goes true for the human life. Allah does not make religious duties incumbent upon a person until they reach the age of maturity. He leaves them free of—and unaccountable for—religious duties, at the beginning of their life. However, in this early period of life Allah *the Exalted* does not free a person entirely from duties as man is left to the simple discipline of parents, who may tell him 'do not lie' and may reward/punish him properly for good and bad deeds, respectively. However, man is not accountable for the commands and proscriptions. The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* elucidates this matter for us when he says, 'Order your children to pray at the age of seven and punish them for neglecting prayers at the age of ten.'<sup>(1)</sup> Thus, a father shall command his son to pray and may punish him for neglecting prayers or rewarding if he wishes to endear prayers to his heart. When a father charges his son with the duty of prayer, his son obeys. Simply, a father takes care of his son's needs and looks after his best interests. His son knows that the father will only charge him with those obligations, which are ultimately in his best interest out of his love to his son. As such, the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* instructed those in charge of children to guide them, as children will be willing to obey them. Once a person is mature, the commands and prohibitions come from Allah, and so are the rewards and punishments. Pre-maturity commands or proscriptions only intend to rear and habituate children to become accustomed to the Divine commands and prohibitions.

If the lifestyle following the Divine example requires action as per the commands and proscriptions, human beings must also require a period of rest and pause. This is why Allah *the Exalted* divides the 'day' into 'night' and 'daytime'. Beware, therefore, of using any of these periods for wrong purposes, to maintain the natural order of life. However, circumstances may force you to do so, for there are those who stay up at night keeping watch. Others may stay up working in bakeries or preparing breakfast for others. There is a

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(1) *Ahmad, Musnad, 2:187; Abu Dawud, Sunnan, (Hadith: 490) on the authority of 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr Ibn al-'As.*



certain measure of providential allowance. The Lord *the Most High* says, ‘Among His wonders is your sleep, at night or in daytime, as well as your [ability to go about in] quest of some of His bounties’ (*ar-Rum*: 23) for He knows since pre-eternity that there are certain bounties to be sought at night and whosoever works by night certainly rests by day. If the aforementioned verse has a general application, we will say to he who sleeps by day, ‘Do not do it. It is not the time for peace and rest.’ However, Allah *the Almighty* wishes to put in place a measure of providential allowance, so that those who work by night might also rest. Presently, Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘It is He Who has made the night for you, so that you might have rest therein’ (*Yunus*: 67). It is known that there is a difference between the acts of ‘creating’, ‘making’, and ‘owning’. For example, Allah *the Most High* creates time and makes it into night and daytime. Thus, ‘making’ is the act of charging a created thing with a specific task. You, for instance, find the maker of pottery taking clay so as to create a pitcher out of it. The maker of pottery first creates the clay by mixing water with soil and kneading them together into a paste. Then he takes the clay and makes a pitcher, a flowerpot, or a flower vase out of it. Therefore, he effectively transforms an existing element into something functioning. Likewise, time belongs to Allah *Glorified is He*; He divides it into night and daytime. In the same way, He creates man and makes his organs: eyes, ears, brains, lungs, etc. All parts are created out of that which the Lord *the Most High* created. In other words, He dedicates portions of the original created matter to perform various functions in the service of the creature.

In our own lives—and Allah knows best—we find a person who spins threads out of cotton, another who weaves a fabric out of the threads and a third who tailors the texture into garments, pairs of pants, shirts or quilts. Thus, the act of ‘making’ is to shape a created thing so that it performs a specific function. Consequently, the act of ‘creation’ results in ‘ownership’; he who creates a certain amount of clay owns it, while he who makes a pitcher out of clay owns it. We find that the acts of ‘creating’ and ‘making’ can bring about a form of ‘ownership’. However, ownership withdrawn after ‘creation’ and ‘making’ results in you benefiting from things while not necessarily owning them; that is we find the following words of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘Who is it that has full power over [your] hearing and sight?’ (*Yunus*: 31) Allah *the Exalted*

creates beasts of burden for us; He makes them subservient to us, giving us ownership over them. If the Lord *the Most High* says, 'ownership', His ownership never ends for anyone, 'created' or 'made'; rather, the object in question eternally belongs to Allah.

In other words, when living beings use and control their organs, these organs are in reality not 'owned' by the living beings; rather, it is the Creator *the Most High* Who owns them. Allah *Glorified is He* mentions night and daytime by saying: 'It is He Who has made the night for you, so that you might have rest therein, and the day, to make [you] see' (*Yunus*: 67). The gist of these words can be summarised as follows:

He has made the night for you to rest therein and the day for work. Allah *the Exalted* wishes to use that miraculous Quranic style, so He says, 'And the day, to make [you] see' (*Yunus*: 67). Is it the day that sees or is it we that see? Evidently, the day has no capacity to see; rather, it is the faculty of sight that is clear during daytime. In earlier times, people had not yet attained the scientific discoveries we currently have. They believed that light emanated from eyes towards the beheld object, making it visible. Then, the Arab Muslim scientist Al-Hasan Ibn al-Haytham used the scientific methods to prove that light is actually reflected off the beheld object and then perceived by the eyes. The evidence to this fact is that you can perceive an object if it is standing in the light, even when you stand in darkness. However, if it is the other way around, you cannot see it. Thus, the Quranic miraculous fact preceded the science of optics. The Quran hereby explains that it is the light of the day which when it is reflected off objects in existence, enables eyes to perceive the seen objects.

To summarise, it is during daytime that we can better see as it brings forth the light that reflects off objects, which is necessary for human eyes to see. Notice that when the Quran broaches the issue of night and daytime, it says, 'Now among His signs are the night and the daytime' (*Fussilat*: 37). And in another verse is mentioned: 'We have established the night and the daytime as two symbols, and thereupon we have effaced the symbol of night and set up [in its place] the light-giving symbol of daytime' (*al-Isra'*: 12).

As Al-Hasan Ibn Al-Haytham pointed out, the daytime (light) facilitates sight even if appearances suggest that during the day people can see. The

Lord *the Most High* gives us a live example from the experience of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*; He *the Exalted* tells Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* "Now, what is this in your right hand, O, Musa (Moses)?" He answered, "It is my staff. I lean on it, and with it I beat down leaves for my sheep, and many other uses have I for it." Said He, "Throw it down, O, Musa (Moses)!" So he threw it – and lo! it was a snake, moving rapidly' (*Ta Ha*: 17-20). The Lord willed that Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* might acquire experiential knowledge of what shall happen to his staff when he faces Pharaoh and sorcerers. When Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* sees his staff, for the first time, transforming into a snake, he would be—Allah knows—frightened; so Allah *the Almighty* reassures him with His Words, 'Take hold of it and fear not. We shall restore it to its former state' (*Ta Ha*: 21). The first time it became a snake as a preparatory experience for Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* to free him from worries or fears when he would actually use it. The intention or purpose was to instil Musa (Moses) with firm confidence, as he prepared to deliver a miraculous feat to Pharaoh. Allah *Glorified is He* told Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* 'Now place your hand into your bosom' (*an-Naml*: 12). Now, the word *al-jayb* refers to the collar area. Let no one think that *al-jayb* refers to the pocket where one keeps money. During earlier times, the pocket was located inside one's garments, like the pockets of vests worn by farmers. Therefore, the pocket where we put our money is called *al-jayb* since the hand only can reach the pocket through that aperture. Allah *Glorified is He* tells Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* 'Now place your hand into your bosom. It will come forth [shining] white without blemish' (*an-Naml*: 12). The Lord *the Most High* also informs him, '[You shall go] with nine [of My] messages unto Pharaoh and his people. Verily, they are people depraved! But when our light-giving messages came unto them, they said, "This is clearly [but] spellbinding deception!"' (*an-Naml*: 12-13) Signs help mankind see; they are 'light-giving' signs.

Likewise, Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* says, '[Whereas] it is He Who has made the night for you, so that you might have rest therein, and the day, to make [you] see' (*Yunus*: 67). He did not say: 'so that you might work therein'; rather, He cites that which ensures safety during work operations. He *the Most High* says, 'to make [you] see' (*Yunus*: 67). The light reflects off objects and ensures human beings' safety as they go about their work. However,

some contemporaries abuse the blessing of electricity and stay up late at night. When night comes, they stay up until morning in front of the television, videocassette, or other means of entertainment. Then, they sleep during the day and forget that night was made for us to rest in and that day was made for work. It has been proved that light affects the human body. Indeed, the light affects living beings. The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* anticipated such a discovery long before its time; He said, 'Turn off your lamps when you retire [sleep] for rest at night.'<sup>(1)</sup>

This way the body would not be affected by light rays, which bring about chemical reactions within the body. This is why I have advised to enjoy the benefits of civilisation using the basic rules for creating it; we shall allow farmers to go to their fields and workers to head to factories. Staying up late at night is harmful. If a man claims that he has become civilised, he must respect the value of work, which leads to the building of civilisations. The machine a person stays up at night watching is a product of hard work by those who abide by the basic principles of progress and civilisation. This includes a respect for the value of hard work during the day as well as for the value of entertainment when it is allotted an appropriately specific period. We tend to abuse the fruits of civilisation. An example of this is the time that a wife saves by owning a fridge, which helps her save cooked food for three days storing food in it. She also uses the electric washing machine to do the laundry in a mere hour. However, the time saved is wasted in front of the television. She neglects other duties, e.g. educating children. Likewise, some may misuse the products of modern technology. Such misuse is indeed a form of backwardness. It is only when we make rational use of the fruits of modern civilisation that we are truly civilised. For example, I tell car drivers, 'Do not drive so fast if you are driving on a dirt road, otherwise, you will kick up clouds of dust which could then enter into people's lungs causing allergic reactions. Beware of neglecting the regular maintenance of your car, or else, your engine will quickly fall into disrepair and produce harmful exhaust to human health and environment.'

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(1) *Al-Bukhari, Saheeh, (5624) and Ahmad, Musnad, (3/388) on the authority of Jabir Ibn 'Abdullah. The wording is that of Al-Bukhari.*

One should not travel on dirt roads or use a poorly maintained vehicle; otherwise one may cause respiratory illnesses for other people and negatively affect the crops and pollute the atmosphere. Nor must we misuse modern technology for the purposes of spying on others. Rather, we must elevate ourselves to the civilised heights by respecting the principles of civilisation; whoever utilises the products of civilisation without applying these principles remains primitive, despite the sophisticated machines he uses. The machine, in fact, becomes more sophisticated than he is. Thus, when we use things in their proper function, we thereby afford ourselves as well as others a measure of comfort. This is why we have stated in our commentary on the Words of the Lord, ‘Consider the sun and its radiant brightness and the moon as it reflects the sun!’ (*al-Layl*: 1-2) If someone perceives a contradiction between the veiling of night (concealing the visible world) and the light of daytime (revealing the visible world), it is in reality no contradiction. Rather, it is a case of complete integration.

The movement of the day only follows the rest of the night. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘Consider the creation of the male and the female!’ (*al-Layl*: 3) The creation of male and female is an act of integration, not contradiction. Allah *the Exalted* is the creator of night and day as well as males and females. The Lord *the Most High* says, ‘Verily, [O, mankind,] you aim at most divergent ends!’ (*al-Layl*: 4) In other words, human actions lead to their goals. There are various actions at night and daytime for males or females. If we jumble our actions and tinker with the order of life, then life becomes disrupted, and we suffer from bitter experiences until matters become so entangled that we start looking for solutions. We have called women to work part-time, so they can dedicate some time for the household or take care of their home on a full-time basis when their sufficient enough income is guaranteed or if the husband earns enough to support the family. However, nobody pays attention to solutions until problems become so difficult. To further illustrate, some people say that nighttime in advanced countries never ends; people stay up until morning. Now, when I hear claims like this, I say that this is not in the interest of those people. The night must be for rest and the day for productive work. The problem occurs when the function of one thing is transposed onto

the function of another, be it in time or human beings. Read the following Quranic Words: 'Verily, [O, mankind,] you aim at most divergent ends!' (*al-Layl*: 4) For every single entity in this universe has a function; every single entity goes about this function through means that differ from the means used by others. Thus, the Lord *the Most High* concludes the verse in question by saying, 'In this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who [are willing to] listen' (*Yunus*: 67). He did not say, 'in this, behold, there are messages for people who are able to see!' Why is that? In response, observe that when Allah *the Almighty* speaks about a given time, He points out the function of this time. He says in the beginning and in the middle of the verse, 'It is He Who has made the night for you, so that you might have rest therein, and the day, to make [you] see' (*Yunus*: 67).

The point in the verse is the calmness of night, not the action of daytime. During the night, the eye is not performing its function; rather, it is the sense of hearing that is performing its function. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Say: "Have you ever considered [this]: If Allah had willed that there should always be night about you, without break, until the Day of Resurrection—is there any deity other than Allah that could bring you light? Will you not, then, listen [to the truth]?"' (*al-Qasas*: 71) In other words, no one can move or travel in darkness if night were perpetual, nor could anyone see anything clearly. The Lord *the Most High* says, 'Say: "Have you ever considered [this]: If Allah had willed that there should always be daylight about you, without break, until the Day of Resurrection – is there any deity other than Allah that could bring you [the darkness of] night, wherein you might rest? Will you not, then, see [the truth]?"' (*al-Qasas*: 72) Thus, in the verse that places emphasis on the night Allah *the Exalted* mentions the sense of hearing. Then, in the verse where the emphasis is on the day, He mentions the sense of sight. After Allah *the Almighty* spoke about the domain of work in daytime and rest at night, He continues by speaking about the source from which work and rest come forth. It is necessary to abide by the orders of the One Lord to have your actions be in harmony. Just as you work in daytime and rest at night, your actions must follow the orders of the One God; namely Allah *the Exalted* Whom you worship to the exclusion of all partners. Anyone who tells you otherwise is disrupting the

rhythm of life. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Lo! Each deity would surely have stood apart [from the others] in whatever it had created' (*al-Mu'minun*: 91).

Allah says:

قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَنَهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي  
الْاَرْضِ اِنْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِّنْ سُلٰطٰنٍ بِهٰذَا اَتَقُولُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾

**They say, 'God has children!' May He be exalted! He is the Self-Sufficient One; everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. You have no authority to say this. How dare you say things about God without any knowledge? [68] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 68)**

The same verse rebuts their claims. For example, when you say, 'So-and-so has taken possession of a house', it means that so-and-so has an independent identity that ontologically precedes the taking possession of that house. It is by virtue of this independent identity that the person is even able to take possession of the house. If it is said, 'Allah has taken unto Himself a son' (*Yunus*: 68), such is an admission of the Divine Perfection and Independent Identity, which ontologically precedes taking a son. Now, they also have held conflicting opinions about the son. Some said that the angels are the daughters of Allah, but Allah *the Almighty* has refuted their claim. Others, namely Jews, said that Ezra *peace be upon him* is the son of Allah, but Allah *the Almighty* also refuted their claim. A group of Christians said that Jesus, the Messiah<sup>(1)</sup> *peace be upon him* is the son of Allah, but the Lord *the Most High* has refuted their claim as well.<sup>(2)</sup> Furthermore, what motive would Allah have for taking unto Himself a son? Did His Power run out such that He stands in need of a son for help?! Is it possible for the Lord to be weak—Allah forbid—such that He needs to draw on the power of a son?! Take the example of an old man who faces a young man, and the young man annoys him. It may be said to the

(1) Allah *the Most High* says: 'While the Christians say, "The Messiah is Allah's son."...' (*at-Tawba*: 30).

(2) Allah *the Most High* says: 'Such are the sayings which they utter with their mouths, following in spirit assertions made in earlier times by people who denied the truth! [They deserve the imprecation:] "May Allah destroy them!" How perverted are their minds!' (*at-Tawba*: 30)

youth, 'Be careful! This old man has a son, who is stronger than you.' This may be said to deter the young man. The old man might say, 'My sons are stronger than you.' This is the case of an old man backed up by his sons. Allah *the Exalted* pays no attention to all these claims. Only the order of life must be maintained without conflict. This is why the One Who makes orders must be the One, Unique Lord, Who is the source of all orders. There should be no contradiction among the given orders. If orders come from various sources, the rhythm of life would fall into conflict, dissipating energy and causing its spoil. Therefore, the source of orders must be the Only Lord to Whose Will all submit. He is far above everything in identity, transcendence and attributes. Transcendent, moreover, are His actions, for no other action resembles His. To absolutely ensure this fact, there must be only one God. However, some people set up associates with Allah in Divinity, while others attribute to Him a son. In response, we say that His statement, 'Allah has taken unto Himself a son' (*Yunus*: 68) nullifies itself. The act of taking a son implies that 'Divinity' has an ontologically independent existence. By virtue of this Divinity, a son was taken. Some idolaters said that the angels are the daughters of Allah. In response, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Why for yourselves [you would choose only] male offspring, whereas to Him [you assign] female. That, lo and behold, is an unfair division!' (*an-Najm*: 21-22) Perfection belongs to Allah *the Exalted* in its entirety; He is inherently Perfect. He *the Most High* says in the middle of the verse: 'Limitless is He in His Glory! Self-sufficient is He' (*Yunus*: 68).

*Subhanahu*, i.e. infinite/limitless in His Glory and Transcendence. *Wa huwa al-ghani*, i.e. He stands in no need of anyone; you rely on your children but He is the Eternal, the Everlasting. He is in no need of sons as human beings do. The life of children is finite; that is why they like to have children as the poet sings: After I expire, I live on through my son!

It is said that a childless person has no further memory. Since man will surely die, he wishes to live further through his son. This is why when an Arab man has a son, he feels overjoyed and happy. Only the ignorant person feels sad when his wife gives birth to a daughter, for—they think—the daughter will not pass on the family name to her progeny, whereas sons and grandsons carry on the name of grandfathers, who feel their legacy is ensured



through two generations. In conclusion, taking a son is an act that is done either as a means of support or a means of self-defense. Allah *the Almighty* is far above the need for support just as He is far above the need for self-defence. Indeed, for self-defence one would look to someone who is stronger than one is, but no one is stronger than Allah *the Most High*. Nor does He *the Exalted* stand in need of support; He is the First and the Last.

The idea of attributing a son to the Creator is indefinitely false from all perspectives. In respect of this idea, Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘Limitless is He in His Glory’ (*Yunus*: 68). Such a statement abrogates all preceding probabilities. It is followed with His Words: ‘Self-sufficient is He’ (*Yunus*: 68); He neither needs a son nor anything else. His Words ‘Limitless is He in His Glory!’ (*Yunus*: 68) tell of His transcendence—the Transcendent Being Who has no partners in Divinity or Acts. Sometime, the same attribute is used to describe Allah as well as His living beings. Thus, beware of thinking that their attribute is similar. If you come across a self-sufficient man, for example, know that the sufficiency of human beings is outward. However, the Divine Sufficiency is inherent. You are living, and Allah *the Almighty* is the Living. However, your life is not akin to His. His life is not preceded by the state of non-existence, whereas your life follows a state of non-existence. His life is not followed by non-existence, whereas your life will be followed by non-existence. Allah does exist, and you also exist. However, His Existence is inherent, independent, and eternal, whereas your existence is dependent and temporal. If the Lord *the Most High* says that He t has a hand ‘the hand of Allah is over their hands’ (*al-Fath*: 10), Allah’s hand is not like your own. His identity is not like yours, and His Attributes are not like yours. He is the All-Capable, Most-High. Hence, when Allah *the Exalted* manifests Himself to His creation, He does so through a form of manifestation entirely different from anything that a servant can imagine. Human beings form different imageries; if the image through which Allah *the Most High* manifests himself is grasped, this would mean that there exists a human mind capable of grasping it. Whatever comes to your mind, Allah *the Almighty* is far above that. What comes to your mind is possible to grasp since it is a necessary mental process. Allah, however, never succumbs to those who are subservient to Him.

When you have a maths or geometry problem, for example, you give it to one who can solve. If one gives a geometry problem from a university-level curriculum to a primary school student, his mind is incapable of tackling it. Therefore, if a person apprehends something about Allah, which He has not already declared, it would imply that Allah yields to the will of those who are subservient to Him. However, Allah *the Exalted* is far above such a prospect; He is the All-Capable, the Most-High, Who never succumbs to those who are subservient to Him. This is why the Lord *the Most High* instructs us to utter the following expression, as a means of asserting His Transcendence: 'Limitless is He in His Glory!' (*Yunus*: 68). Such transcendence necessarily applies to everything that comes to human mind with respect to the Lord. The Divine Glory or Absolute Transcendence is an Attribute of Allah; it proceeds before anything else and will continue after creating the universe. Thus, all living beings celebrate Divine Glories. From the moment living beings appeared they began glorifications and have not ceased it.

The proclamation of Divine Glory is a continuously ceaseless act reaffirmed by the arguments in the 'Transcendence' chapters of the Quran. The Lord *the Most High* says, 'Limitless in His Glory is He Who transported His servant by night from the Inviolable House of Worship [at Mecca] to the Remote House of Worship [at Jerusalem] – the environs of which we had blessed' (*al-Isra*': 1).

Never think that Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* travelled to Jerusalem following his own will. Rather, it was the Lord Who transported him. Do not think that physical distance, space, or time can impede the Absolute Divine Will. The act is attributed to Allah *the Almighty* and we cannot judge an act attributed to Allah against the yardstick of time or space, or according to the law of relativity; Allah *the Exalted* enjoys Absolute Power. You are a human being, a mere accident limited in time and space. For example, if you walk from Cairo to Alexandria on foot, you would travel the distance in a matter of weeks. However, if you use a riding animal, you might arrive in Alexandria in days. If you ride a car, you will travel the distance in two hours. Finally, if you ride a rocket, you cover the distance in minutes. In other words, the more powerful the means of transport, the less time it takes to reach a certain destination.

This is a brief summary of the law of motion. If the One Who transported the Prophet is Allah *the Most High* the source of all power, consequently it is not possible to compare it with the will of any other power, nor is it possible to measure the matter in terms of near or distant places or time-scales familiar to you. Never think that Allah's act of transporting is anything similar to your act; the act draws its strength from the actor. Since the actor is Allah *the Exalted* nobody can circumscribe His Actions within a timescale. Allah *the Almighty* begins the chapter of *al-Isra'* with the the Glorification of Allah. The opening verses speak of the Prophet's account on his journey from Mecca to Jerusalem. He confirmed the truth about the heavenly ascension and that the natural laws had been suspended for him. The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* has spoken to us about that which we know, so that we might believe him regarding those matters which we do not, so that we might measure what we do not know against that which we do.

As such, we are convinced of the Prophet's sincerity when he speaks of that which we do not know. Therefore, the word *subhanah* serves to glorify Allah. It pertains to Allah, since the pre-eternal time before the creation of the universe. Allah Himself witnesses that He is the One God, and so do then the angels. All living beings then continue the celebration and glorifications of Allah *the Most High*. You find that the chapters of the Holy Quran celebrating the Divine Glorification in affirmation of the Divine Transcendence, and the glorification of His Name preceded the creation of the universe. Then, all living beings were created to glorify Him.

In the chapter of *al-Hadid*, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'All that is in the heavens and on earth extols Allah's limitless glory' (*al-Hadid*: 1) and also in the chapter of *al-Hashr*, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'All that is in the heavens and all that is on earth extol Allah's limitless glory' (*al-Hashr*: 1). Did the living beings of the universe extol Allah's Glory once and then cease? No, they do not. Allah *the Most High* says, 'All that is in the heavens and all that is on earth extols the limitlss Glory of Allah, the Sovereign Supreme, the Holy.' (*al-Jumu'a*: 1)

In the chapter of *al-Taghabun*, Allah *the Exalted* says, 'All that is in the heavens and all that is on earth extols Allah's Limitless Glory. His is all

dominion and to Him all praise is due, and He has the power to will anything.' (*at-Taghabun*: 1)

Thus, limitless Glory belongs to Allah *Glorified is He* since pre-eternity, and after He had created them, all living beings, and all of existence has extolled and continues to extol His Glory. This includes the heavens and the earth and all the sentient and non-sentient beings that exist therein—all except you, O, human being. Extol, therefore, the Name of your Lord Most High. In the verse that we are currently examining, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '[And yet] they assert, "Allah has taken unto Himself a son!" Limitless is He in His Glory! Self-sufficient is He...' (*Yunus*: 68). Proclaiming Allah's infinite Glory and His Absolute Transcendence is asserted by the negation of wrongfully ascribing a son unto Him, in Allah's own Words: '... Self-sufficient is He ...' (*Yunus*: 68). To take unto Him son implies a need for assistance, reliance, defence, or carrying on the family name—all of these do not apply in respect to Allah *Glorified is He* Who is *the Most High*. It is Allah *the Exalted* Who says in another verse: 'And they say, "Allah has taken to himself a son." Glory be to Him; rather, whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His; all are obedient to Him.' (*al-Baqara*: 116) Now 'obedience' came in the Arabic form as *Qunut* which means to resolve oneself for the worship of Allah *the Almighty* to submit to His Will and to obey Him. In the verse which we are presently studying, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... No evidence whatever has you for this [assertion]! Would you ascribe unto Allah something which you cannot know?' (*Yunus*: 68) This means you have no evidence which proves that Allah *the Exalted* has taken unto Himself a son. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the verse by saying: '... Would you ascribe unto Allah something which you cannot know?' (*Yunus*: 68) It means that you have not received any statement from Allah *the Almighty* to this effect, for there can be no statements made about Allah except by Him Himself. Nor is anyone in a position to make a statement about His Lord, for it is He Who makes statements about Himself. Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

قُلْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

**Say [Prophet], 'Those who invent lies about God will not prosper' [69] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 69)**

When Allah *the Exalted* speaks about faith, its (spiritual) fruits, and its denouement, He mentions success as an end result of such faith. Allah *Glorified is He* also says: "He will indeed be successful who purifies it," (*ash-Shams*: 9).

He *Glorified is He* likewise says: 'Successful indeed are the believers' (*al-Mu'minun*: 1). He also says: '...these it is that are the successful.' (*al-A'raf*: 157) All of these uses of the term are related to the word *al-falah* which is closely related to the physical (origins) of the life of a living organism. The elements that account for the existence of a living organism are the following: air, water and food.

Breathing draws upon the air that surrounds the earth. Water comes down from the sky or is sought from the (wells) deep in the earth where the rainfall has percolated. Food comes from the earth and (every resource) that originates from the earth is obtained through agriculture. This is why I say that agriculture (or farming) is at the core for the continuation of life. When a man farms land by ploughing, planting it with seeds, and then irrigating it, the seeds eventually germinate into plants which produce fruit. When one says, *aflah*, this means that his labor has produced a good harvest. Allah *the Exalted* wished to describe a good spiritual harvest with the word *al-falah*. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has explained that the life of this world is the seedbed for the world of the Afterlife. Thus, if you want to reap fruit, then expend physical effort.

Beware of thinking that by taking something away from you in this world, religion is diminishing your net worth. Rather, it is religion that is increasing your net worth.

The example which I always give—and to Allah belongs the utmost example of perfection—is a farmer who plants a plot of land with wheat. Basically, he needs to take a certain amount of wheat from his reserves so as to use as seeds in the earth. Now if his wife were stubborn-minded and did not know the basic principles of agriculture, she might tell him, 'How can you take the wheat and leave your family with less wheat to survive on?' This woman does not know that although he gave up a certain amount of stored grain, this

amount shall be returned to him ten or fifteen fold. Similarly, what Allah *the Almighty* demands of you here on earth might seem like a loss; however, He *the Most High* shall bestow upon you the fruits of the Afterlife many times over. Thus, the word *fallh* is related to *falah*, which means working on the land, ploughing and planting upon it so as to reap a harvest. Just as the harvest which you reap is in proportion to the work and toil that you put in, the same applies to your reward in the Afterlife and your work in this life. Take the example of a farmer who ploughs land and who carries fertiliser on the back of a camel then rises early in the morning for irrigating. You will find this farmer in a cheerful and happy state on harvest day. His state of mind will differ remarkably so from a farmer who neglected his land, who spent his time at the café and who stayed up late at night watching television. When harvest day is due, much to his chagrin, his produce will be poor due to his not tending to it properly.

The Words of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'Say, "Those who forge a lie against Allah shall not be successful."' (*Yumus*: 69) This means that those who attribute falsehoods to Allah *the Almighty* or make statements about Him which He has not Himself declared are the ones who shall never attain success. I have previously explained that everything that is related to Allah *Glorified is He* cannot be known except through Him. Yet what drives them to spin such falsehoods anyway? Every action in life must be motivated by that which is beneficial. The idea of what is beneficial and what its consequences are differs from one person to the other. The lazy student, who roams through the streets, refusing to study flunks, and he sets himself up to be unsuccessful in his future career. As for the diligent student, he is the one who achieves a respectable status in society. The first student was shortsighted and did not realise the great extent of the benefits (of studying hard); rather, his view of what was beneficial was confined to short-term pleasures at the expense of the greater good in the future.

Now what caused these people to peddle lies about Allah *the Exalted* is the collapse of the sense of self, for every self has presence and status; once the status collapses, a man feels as if he is a worthless member of society. The example I have previously given was that of a village quack who used to tend to everyone's medical needs. Then one of the young men of the village graduated from medical school and opened up a clinic. If the village quack were wise enough, he would go to the doctor and seek a position as a nurse in

his clinic. However, if his pride were to get the better of him, he will contend stubbornly (against the village's new healthcare provider); however, he will be unable to argue against the doctor's knowledge concerning medical science. Similarly, the groups of disbelievers and the leaders of misguidance were surprised at the coming of a messenger from Allah.. They thought that a messenger would be intent on consolidating political sovereignty for himself, even though every one of Allah's messengers always attributed power and sovereignty to the true owner—Allah *the Most High*. When they were stripped of their authority—by virtue of which they enjoyed status, notability, grandeur, and greatness—they became agitated and tried to escalate resistance against Prophet Muhammad so as to preserve their assumed temporal authority.

One example of such a scenario is the coming of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to Medina. At the time, there were some who were trying to nominate 'Abdullah ibn Ubai to be a king. This is why this man resisted Islam, and then when he could no longer continue resisting, he converted to Islam (disingenuously) and remained hostile to the religion inwardly. However, if he had become a good Muslim and gotten close to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* he would have achieved an even higher status than that which he had previously aiming for. Thus, the leaders of misguidance and the chiefs of disbelievers are the types of people who feel sorry for themselves and fear the loss of temporal power, for when a messenger comes upon the scene, one of his objectives is to establish social equality. This is why there are those who, fearing the loss of temporal power, take a rebellious stand against the message. This is also why, regarding the reasons for their fabrication of lies, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

مَتَّعْ فِي الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ نَذِقُهُمُ الْعَذَابَ  
الشَّدِيدَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

**They may have a little enjoyment in this world, but then they will return to Us. Then We shall make them taste severe punishment for persisting in blasphemy [70] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 70)**

It was thus painful for the leaders of disbelief and the chiefs of misguidance to see their power taken away from them by a new messenger

who summoned the people to Allah *the Exalted*. Furthermore, they were afraid that this new messenger who summoned people to Allah *Glorified is He* would strip them all of their authority, claiming it not for himself but rather turning it over to the will of his Lord. Were the messenger who summoned people to Allah, is *the Exalted* to usurp temporal power for himself, we would say that it is a case of one ego overriding another. However, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* insisted that he return everything—even his personal matters—to Allah *the Almighty*. Allah *Glorified is He* lays bare the negligible gains which these people defended, describing them as: 'It is only a provision in this world ...' (*Yunus*: 70); every one of them loved to convince himself of the fanciful idea that such transient gains were truly of value. The word *Ad-dunya* must encapsulate the reality of an object to which it refers, namely 'the world' or 'the life of this world'. All names, as we know, are words that designate objects. When you say, 'So-and-so is tall', you are thereby attributing the quality of tallness to him. When you say *Ad-dunya*, this word comes from *Ad-dunuw* or *Ad-dana'a* which means being either at the lowest point or rather lowly in rank.

Take into consideration *Ad-dunuw* or being in the lowest point near ground. What this really means is to be on the way that leads to a summit, and then this is an acceptable point of view since the first stage in one's journey to a summit must begin with the lowest point (*Ad-dunuw*). Then, by remaining steadfast to the doctrine of Allah, you gradually climb higher towards the Hereafter. Thus, concerning he who describes the life of this world as being completely synonymous with *Ad-dana'a*, meaning general lowliness, we say that this is not that case, entirely; rather, it is in one sense, but on the condition that it is considered to be a path leading upward. Whosoever considers this world to be lowly is he whose status is indeed lowly. However, whosoever takes it as a path leading upward is such a person who has indeed achieved victory by following Allah's Methodology. Therefore, the world is not synonymous with *Ad-dana'a*, for the immediate purview of religion is not the Hereafter; rather, its concern is the course of life in this world. In this world, religious doctrine commands you through the directives of 'Do' and 'Do not do'. It is in the Hereafter that one's rewards are reaped. Thus, the reward for correct action is not the immediate concern of religion. You can still make



good use of your life in this world if you take it as the seedbed of the Hereafter. Be aware not to live your life based on the idea that the world is millions of years old; whether the life of the earth is long or short is of no importance to you as a living being. What matters to you is the length of your own journey on earth. How long you will live is unknown. In fact, how long the world itself shall survive is unknown. There are those who die at the age of six months, and there are those who die at the age of a hundred. Each enjoys the world in proportion to the time he spends in it, but all returns to Allah; *Glorified is He*, in the end. Those people who went astray and made up lies about Allah *the Almighty* will not go unpunished by Him; for like all of His creation, they shall return to Him. These people who are wont to lead themselves and others astray did not pay attention to the consequences of their actions, nor did they pay attention to the One Who oversees the consequences, nor did they prepare themselves properly. However, he who takes the consequences of his actions into account and who leads a virtuous life in this world will have his ultimate destiny to be the happy reward of paradise. He who does not take the consequences of his actions into account and who makes up lies about Allah *the Exalted* will have his ultimate destiny to be suffering, as per the Words of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'It is only a provision in this world, then to Us shall be their return; then, We shall make them taste severe punishment because they disbelieved.' (*Yunus*: 70). Now the degree of suffering depends on the one who is dispensing it. If the one who is dispensing suffering is weak, the suffering will be light. If the one who is dispensing suffering is of average strength, the suffering will be of medium intensity. However, if the one who is dispensing suffering is strong, then the suffering will inevitably be severe. It is Allah; *Glorified is He*, Who says: '...Verily, His punishing grasp is grievous, severe!' (*Hud*: 102) Thus, after Allah *the Almighty* spoke about the principle of Divine transcendence—which precludes the need for Allah *Glorified is He* to take unto Himself a son, for He is, after all, the One Free of Need, to Whom belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth—and after He *the Exalted* explained the need for us to take the doctrine from a single source, namely the Messengers who transmit (the doctrine) on His behalf—(after all of this) He now wishes to speak to us about the succession of messages (from heaven). When the address that is spoken is purely theoretical and ungrounded in any

concrete reality, its abstract nature can undermine the argument, whereas if the words that are spoken are grounded in a concrete reality, such that the latter complements and supports the theoretical aspects, this then becomes the evidence that proves the truth of the theoretical aspect. This is why, for example, when seeking to bolster an argument concerning some social matter, we try offer a supposition concerning a real life scenario. What this means is that we try to describe an event that has not happened in reality, but which we assume is real (for the sake of the argument). This allows us to elucidate our abstract idea by means of a hypothetical scenario. In the Quran, Allah *Glorified is He* narrates the stories of the succession of various messengers down the centuries. The purpose of this is to tell the disbelievers that they will not be able to stand in the way of this message; they should witness the historical record and the events that occurred involving the messengers and their people. These messengers were supported by believers and were at the same time resisted by stubborn, ever so intransigent, disbelievers. If previous disbelievers had been victorious over their messengers, then disbelievers (of Prophet Muhammad's time) could rightfully hope that they will also be victorious over the Messenger of Allah. These words must be directed at people who are aware of some of the events that occurred in the context of the succession of messengers throughout history. This knowledge, however, may have faded since such events occurred in a distant past. Allah *Glorified is He* hereby, says:

وَأَتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ نُوحٍ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ يَنْقُومِ إِن كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَقَامِي  
وَتَذِكْرِي بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ فَأَجْمِعُوا أَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ  
لَا يَكُنْ أَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقْضُوا إِلَيَّ وَلَا تُنظِرُونِ ﴿٧١﴾

**Tell them the story of Noah. He said to his people, ‘My people, if my presence among you and my reminding you of God’s signs is too much for you, then I put my trust in God. Agree on your course of action, you and your partner-gods – do not be hesitant or secretive about it – then carry out your decision on me and give me no respite [71] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 71)**

One might ask why Allah mentions the story of Prophet Nuh (Noah) and not the story of Adam *peace be upon him* or Enoch *peace be upon him* who were

the two messengers who preceded Prophet Nuh (Noah). This is what has given rise to the suspicion that *Adam* was not a messenger; for some people think that a messenger is one who, by necessity, brings forth a message to an established community of human beings. These people do not realise, however, that a messenger is one who, in the first instance, is sent to guide himself. If *Adam peace be upon him* was the first created being, then he was sent forth to guide himself, and thereafter to convey (the message) to his children who would come after him. Allah *the Exalted* had given *Adam peace be upon him* an experience in paradise whereby there was a prescription and also a proscription, namely: 'And We said, "O, Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers."' (*al-Baqara*: 35) He also warned him of Satan (Iblis), but then *Adam peace be upon him* fell prey to the temptation of Iblis (Satan), and Allah *Glorified is He* sent him down to earth and gave him distinction and forgave him. *Adam* was armed with the experience that he had gained in heaven. Thus, if he transgressed the command of his Lord, punishment would befall him. Allah *Glorified is He* warned him of succumbing to the influence of Satan (Iblis) so as not to deviate from the state of obedience to Allah *the Almighty*. Thus, Allah *the Most High* had given him the doctrine and ordered him to undertake his mission on earth—beginning with himself and thereafter conveying it to those who would follow him. Just as Allah *Glorified is He* taught *Adam peace be upon him* the names of all things, so did *Adam peace be upon him* teach his children; thus, they learned how to speak. Just as *Adam peace be upon him* transmitted to them the names of all things, he also transmitted to them the doctrine. Allah *Glorified is He* has taught *Adam* the names of all things, so that he might populate the earth. He taught him the doctrine that he might do virtuous works in the world, and in the Hereafter, he would receive pleasurable rewards. Read the Words of Allah *Glorified is He*: '... And Adam disobeyed his Lord and erred.' (*Ta Ha*: 121)

These are followed by the words of Allah *Glorified is He* 'and then his Lord chose him and turned to him in forgiveness and guided [him] ...' (*Ta Ha*: 122). Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... there shall, nonetheless, most certainly come unto you guidance from me ...' (*al-Baqara*: 38). The word *al-huda* in this instance refers to the doctrine that was given to *Adam peace be*

upon him from above. The message is nothing other than the transmission of the doctrine and guidance from Allah *the Almighty* to His creation. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* says the following Words: '...Moreover, We would never chastise [any community for the wrong they may do] ere we have sent a prophet [to them].' (*al-Isra'*: 15) Thus, the predecessors of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* are those to whom Adam *peace be upon him* had conveyed (the message). The proof lies in the story of Adam's two sons; in the words of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'and convey unto them, setting forth the truth, the story of the two sons of Adam – how each offered a sacrifice...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 27). They both had offered sacrifices to Allah *the Exalted*.

Thus, the message of Allah's Divinity had reached Adam's sons, as per the Words of Allah *Glorified is He*: '... how each offered a sacrifice, and it was accepted from one of them whereas it was not accepted from the other? [And Cain] said, 'I will surely slay you!' [Abel] replied, "Behold, Allah accepts only from those who are conscious of Him.'" (*al-Ma'ida*: 27) Thus, they had established the existence of Allah *Glorified is He* while they also came to know (the existence) of proscription. In one of the two verses, he says: 'If you should raise your hand against me to kill me - I shall not raise my hand against you to kill you. Indeed, I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds.' (*al-Ma'ida*: 28) Therefore, those who followed after Adam *peace be upon him* knew of the One, Unique God, and also knew of the doctrine. Thus, to those who say that Adam *peace be upon him* was not a messenger, we would say to them to understand Allah's Words correctly. What they should have said is that they do not understand this issue. They should have asked the knowledgeable people, so that they might understand from them that Adam *peace be upon him* was indeed a messenger, that he had sons named Cain and Abel and that they were both conversant in matters of faith. As to the question of why Allah *the Exalted* mentions the story of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* we should note that Adam *peace be upon him* was the first human being, and that he had transmitted to his sons the doctrine that had been conveyed to him. Furthermore, he had taught them that which was beneficial. Then time passed and forgetfulness set in, whereby Idris (Enoch) *peace be upon him* came forth, and forgetfulness set in once again after he was gone. Thus, it was until the coming of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*. In this instance Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* narrates the story of Prophet

Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* He says: 'And convey unto them the story of Nuh (Noah) – when he said unto his people ...' (*Yunus*: 71).

The Arabic word *An-naba'* means conveying a piece of news that refers to an important piece of one that grabs one's attention, for it concerns a matter that is clearly manifest. Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* says: 'About what do they [most often] ask one another? About the awesome tiding [of resurrection], on which they [so utterly] disagree.' (*an-Naba'*: 1-3) Thus, *An-naba'* refers to a piece of news that is important and that grabs one's attention. Therefore, we read about the story of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* who addresses his people, even as he had declared, himself to be a messenger delivering a doctrine. The word *qawm* is used to refer to men only. This is explained in the Quran when Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...O, you who believe, let not a people ridicule (another) people. Perhaps they may be better than them. Nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers." ...' (*al-Hujurat*: 11) Thus, the Arabic word *qawm* refers to men, whereas women's role ought to be more discreet. Work and action in this world is the purview of men. We have explained this matter in our discussion of Allah's address to Adam *peace be upon him* regarding Satan (Iblis). Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'So We said, "O, Adam, indeed this is an enemy to you and to your wife. Then let him not remove you from Paradise so you would suffer."' (*Ta Ha*: 117) Since these words are addressed to Adam *peace be upon him* Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'so you would suffer' (*Ta Ha*: 117). In this verse, Allah *the Exalted* addressed Adam only, this indicates that the woman has no business in the work that takes place outside of the household and which requires hardship. Thus, the woman stays at home to rear the children and to maintain the household for the man. Her task is to imbue the household with love, care and peace. As for the act of getting up and working in the outside world, that is the man's task. Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...Then let him not remove you from Paradise so you would suffer ...' (*Ta Ha*: 117). Thus, the man's job is to exert effort, so he is required to go out into the world and not to stay behind at home. Then,

Allah *Glorified is He* quotes Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* as saying: '...' And recite to them the news of Nuh (Noah), when he said to his people, "O, my people, if my residence and my reminding of the signs of Allah has become burdensome upon you - then I have relied upon Allah. ..." (*Yunus*: 71). In this instance, Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* uses terms of endearment which imply that he is one of them and that they are dear to him. This also means that he has no right to cheat or delude them, for they are his family. These words are echoed by the words spoken by elected officials when they are addressing the members of the community which elected him: 'O, my people, my family, my voters'. These are all terms of endearment. These words are also similar to the words Luqman *peace be upon him* told his son: '...And [mention, O, Muhammad], when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him, "O, my dear son, do not associate [anything] with Allah. Indeed, association [with him] is great injustice!"' (*Luqman*: 13)

He also says: '[And Luqman said:] "O, my dear son, indeed if wrong should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Indeed, Allah is Subtle and Acquainted."' (*Luqman*: 16) Also, He says that Luqman said: '... "O, my son, establish prayer"' (*Luqman*: 17).

When proclaiming something to be great means that, in reality, the object in question is arduous and difficult for a person to tackle. Allah *the Almighty* says, for instance: '.... Grave is the word that comes out of their mouths; they speak not except a lie.' (*al-Kahf*: 5) It means that the saying that came out of their mouths was a difficult, arduous matter. What they said was: 'And to warn those who say, "Allah has taken a son"' (*al-Kahf*: 4). For a believer, such an assertion is grave indeed because it is a problematic matter which cannot be accepted. There is no believer who is capable of accepting the claim made by one of Allah's created beings that He *the Exalted* has taken unto Himself a son. Sometimes the 'gravity' of a matter can be of a different kind such as when Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... Difficult for those who associate others with Allah is that to which you invite them. Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back [to Him] ...' (*ash-Shura*: 13). This means that your calls to them that there is but One, Unique God and that

all Kingship belongs to Him *Glorified and Exalted is He* are claims of yours that have grown oppressive, unbearable, and onerous from the point of view of disbelievers. Similarly, if a word is contrary to faith, it then becomes oppressive from the point of view of believers. If a word calls disbelievers to faith, it then becomes oppressive and arduous from their point of view. In this instance, Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* is quoted as saying: '... , "O, my people, if my residence and my reminding of the signs of Allah has become burdensome upon you - then I have relied upon Allah"' (*Yunus*: 71). Now we know that Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* lived with his people for nine hundred and fifty years. In other words, he lived a long life amongst his people. Moreover, his condemnation of disbelievers had made his presence among them oppressive. It might also be that the Words, '... O, my people, if my residence and my reminding of the signs of Allah has become burdensome upon you ...' (*Yunus*: 71) mean that he demanded from them that which they could not tolerate since Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* wanted them to desist from their old practices of idol worship, and this might have been too difficult for them. Thus, the principle of worshipping a single deity proved to be a hard task for them.

Furthermore, Prophet Nuh (Noah) exerted much effort to preach to them while standing, while the crowd to whom he was preaching to was sitting. Prophet 'Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* used to speak to his disciples from a standing position. Thus, this standing position is the sign that the effort that is required to exhort people to the right path falls squarely on the shoulders of Prophet 'Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him*; in the meantime, his disciples listened to him while comfortably seated. Therefore, the Words of Allah *Glorified is He* '... O, my people, if my residence and my reminding of the signs of Allah have become burdensome upon you ...' (*Yunus*: 71) can be paraphrased as if that which I exhort you to is too difficult for you.

We can rightly interpret this expression in the connection with the long period of time during which this preaching took place — nine hundred and fifty years. Or, the expression could also be understood to mean that we have become two separate groups since the doctrine which I exhort you to is not to your liking, and I would have preferred that we remain united as a single entity.

When 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab *Allah be pleased with him* realised that the task of governing the Islamic state required a leader must name a successor, some told him, 'Why did not you nominate 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar as the person to govern us (after you)?' Ibn al-Khattab said, 'It is enough for the family of Khattab to have but one man who is questioned with regards to the (leadership of the) Ummah of Muhammad.' 'Umar also added, 'I know that you have become weary of my rule, for I am harsh with you.' Thus, Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* felt that he and his people had parted ways: he had taken the side of Allah *Glorified is He* by exhorting people to worship Him, while they took the side of the idols which they had worshipped in a habituated way. This is why Allah *the Exalted* quotes Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* as saying: '... then I have relied upon Allah ...' (*Yunus: 71*). You, thereby, limit the depository of your trust solely to Allah *Glorified is He*. Thus did Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* do likewise? He faced his people, armed with nothing but his complete trust in He Who had sent him. He tried to guide his people, but they did not comply (with his calls). He said to them: 'So resolve upon your plan and [call upon] your associates. Then let not your plan be obscure to you. Then carry it out upon me and do not give me respite. ...'" (*Yunus: 71*). He asks them to consolidate all of the various opinions into one. In other words, it is as he said, 'O, people, decides on a single opinion, for you will not, however, be able to harm me.' To consolidate the various opinions of all the generations which Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* had tried to guide requires a great deal of effort since every twenty years a new generation with new ideas comes forth.

Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* preached to each new generation of his people, that is, over the course of nine hundred and fifty years. How many generations, then, did Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* spend reforming? Indeed, the number of generations was large, and still Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* was only able to win over a small number of believers who would accompany him in the lone ark. With them there were also animals, but not Nuh's (Noah) son who joined the disbelieving folk. Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* called out to him to join him on the ark and become a believer, but he refused, electing to remain on the side of disbelief, despite the destruction that awaited the disbelievers. He thought that he would be able to find refuge in a mountain



that would keep him safe from the flood. However, Prophet Nuh's (Noah) son did not take into account another one of Allah's agents, one that would prevent him from reaching the mountain, namely, the waves. Thus, the words of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*: '... then I have relied upon Allah ...' (*Yunus*: 71) reveal a deep, underlying faith. There exists no living being of Allah's that can get the better of Him, for all of Allah's, created beings—whether inanimate, vegetal or animal—complied with Allah's order that Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* should be victorious; thus, none of Allah's created beings would ever disobey. Such was Prophet Nuh's (Noah) reliance on Allah *Glorified is He* and such was his deep, underlying faith (in Him). This much can be gleaned from the Words: "To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is within them. And He is over all things competent" (*al-Ma'ida*: 120). Also, He says: "To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth ..." (*al-Baqara*: 284). Nothing will ever stray outside His Dominion.

What is truly remarkable is that, when Allah *Glorified is He* uttered the word 'Be!' (thus creating the universe), the only created being to have remained outside of Allah's Will was man, endowed as he is with free will. Of course, man is not inherently independent from Allah *Glorified is He*; however, Allah *the Almighty* endowed him with free will. If He did not endow man with free will, the latter would simply be unable to stand on his two feet, and all human beings would be Allah's agents (without any possibility of rebellion). Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* said, 'so resolve upon your plan and [call upon] your associates. Then let not your plan be obscure to you. Then carry it out upon me and do not give me respite ...' (*Yunus*: 71). When a person is faced with a difficult issue, he feels at loss before a variety of options. One tries to evaluate the pros and cons of each option so as to make the best choice. When a person can corral his various options into one, this indicates that the person is set on one option and has resolved himself to carry through with it.

However, if a group of people are contemplating an issue, every one of them will have a different opinion. If after negotiating the matter amongst themselves, they would decide on one position, in other words, to come to an agreement regarding a particular issue, which is dependent upon the temperament of the group. If they are a group of good people, they will disapprove of that

which is evil. If they are a group of bad people, they will endorse that which is evil. One example of this is the story of Prophet Ya'qub's (Jacob's) sons, when they begrudged their brother Yusuf's (Joseph's) eminent status. Allah *Glorified is He* quotes them as saying: '[Said one of them:] "Slay Yusuf (Joseph) or else drive him away to some [faraway] land, so that your father's regard may be for you alone ..."' (*Yusuf*: 9). This means that the objective of their suggested plot—to kill Yusuf (Joseph) *peace be upon him*—was so that Ya'qub's affection would be directed solely towards them. They followed up their suggestion of killing Yusuf (Joseph) *peace be upon him* with plans of repentance. They told one another: '... and after this is done, you will be [free to repent and to live once again as] righteous people!'" (*Yusuf*: 9) They thought that by repenting, their act of murder would be accepted. Now, at first, some of them would not stand for such evil as was inherent in their conspiracy. After all, they were of Prophetic lineage; indeed, they were of the Asbat who were supposed to eschew evil rather than promote it. One of them, therefore, said for them not to kill him; rather, 'drive him away to some [faraway] land' (*Yusuf*: 9). This means that he mitigated the matter from the level of murder to exile. This was indeed the first step that this (morally superior group) took towards mitigating the sin since they were clearly choosing a lesser evil from a greater one, which was a plain indication that good was still ingrained into them. They would also decline the second sin, which was to exile Yusuf (Joseph), fearing that he might be eaten by wild beasts. Then came the suggestion: 'if you must do something – cast him into the dark depths of this well, [whence] some caravan may pick him up' (*Yusuf*: 10). Then they came to an agreement, and evil was eschewed once again when they realised the possibility of deliverance.

Thus, when morally superior people (those who clearly have some moral conscious) contemplate an evil course of action, they invariably eschew evil. Take the example of a good man who saw his son being beaten up by another boy. In the heat of the moment, he envisages shooting his son's assailant with a rifle, but then he rejects this idea, thinking that he ought to content himself with hitting (the boy) severely with a stick. Then he backs down from this idea, thinking that he ought to give (the boy) two good slaps on the face. Then he backs down from the idea and contemplates chiding the boy. Finally, he

backs down from that idea and contents himself with complaining to his father. Thus, this is how evil thoughts are eschewed by morally excellent people. However, if the father, herein, is of a villain, he would begin with the idea of complaining to the parents of his son's assailant. Then he will reject the idea, upping the degree of sin to the prospect of slapping the child himself. Not satisfied with this idea, he would contemplate giving him a severe beating. This idea would also fail to quench his anger, and so he would finally say to himself, 'I am going to shoot him.' Thus, with sinful people, the degree of sin rises ever higher. In this case, Allah *Glorified is He* states Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* as saying: '... "So resolve upon your plan and [call upon] your associates. ..."' (*Yunus*: 71) This means for them to get together amongst themselves and come to an agreement upon a single course of action, then once they do so, they should execute it faithfully—with help from their allies. He is thereby advising them even though they are his enemies. What he should have done is to sow discord amongst them. However, so firm is he in his trust of his Lord that he knows that, whatever they may do, they will not get the better of him, nor will they be victorious in their attempt to suppress his message—except if they kill themselves. To put it in vernacular terms, they should 'mount the highest of their horses' which means that he is intimidating them. No one would ever dare say such a thing unless he is strengthened by an unshakable trust in Allah *Glorified is He*. Not content to stop there, he continues to say: '... "Then let not your plan be obscure to you. Then carry it out upon me and do not give me respite."' (*Yunus*: 71) What Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* told them was for them not to bother exchanging furtive whispers amongst themselves, rather, have them do as they wish, without trying to conceal their actions. What they have to do is to get together and agree upon a single course of action, both they and their partners upon which they rely and whom they worship or their fellow disbelievers. Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* did not seek to kindle any tribal tensions amongst them, so as to play them against each other, for he was completely reliant upon Allah *the Almighty*. That is why Allah quotes him as saying: '...Then carry it out upon me and do not give me respite ' (*Yunus*: 71). This means that he is encouraging them to settle on a single course of action with their partners—either the idols which they worship or their fellow

disbelievers—and to resolve themselves to carry out whatever it is that they (eventually) agree upon. A judgment might be pronounced upon a person, but no action ever be taken. However, his words '...Then carry it out upon me ...' (*Yunus*: 71) means to pronounce a judgment on the matter and proceed to carry out whatever judgment you have pronounced. Then, he said, '... do not give me respite!' (*Yunus*: 71) which means for them not to give Prophet Nuh (Noah) any pity as they go forth to carry out the plans that they have devised against him.

Anyone who contemplates this verse will note the attitude that greatly challenges therein, for, in the first order, he is asking that they get together—along with their partners—so as to come to an agreement upon a single course of action. Then, he asks that their plans to be fully disclosed and that they should execute whatever plans they had come up with without delay. Can there be any fiercer defiance in the face of a foe than this? They, for their part, were indeed stubborn, intransigent foes. Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* had, for nine hundred and fifty years showed them lenience and kindness. He was patient with them during all of this time; therefore, decisive action was now called for. This is why his defiant attitude was as intense as it was. He called for them to decide upon a course of action with their partners. Thereafter, he encourages them to execute their plans against him without delay. Such was his challenge to them—a challenge which he kept upping until it was agreed to carry out the judgment. The Arab temperament, for instance, can forgive, forbear and pardon regarding a matter which has nothing to do with Allah's Doctrine—a matter which, in fact, concerns a worldly dispute. One finds an Arab poet speaking of Bani Dhuhl. Although this tribe persecuted the poet's people to a great extent, his people forgave them. The poet said:

We forgave Bani Dhuhl,  
 We said: they are our brothers  
 O that they would become  
 the people they used to be  
 When they professed evil ways,  
 They showed their true selves  
 There remains naught but enmity,

We have disdained them as they have us  
 We have paced to and fro,  
 Like a lion, livid  
 Such vituperation, butchery  
 And wounds gaping like  
 and stabbing like  
 The mouth of a brim-full vessel  
 In wickedness there is salvation  
 if kindness is to no avail  
 To the ignorant, tolerance is seen  
 as an invitation to subjugation

Thus, the contention between Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* and his people called for a hard stance. For in this lied the only hope that their wickedness would abate, that their arrogance would diminish and that they would proclaim their faith in Allah *Glorified is He*. However, they did not renounce their old, deviant faith. This is why, quoting Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* Allah *Glorified is He* later says:

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَمَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا  
 عَلَى اللَّهِ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾

**But if you turn away, I have asked no reward from  
 you; my reward is with God alone, and I am  
 commanded to be one of those who devote themselves  
 to Him' [72] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 72)**

This means that if they rejected his message—to worship the True God—let it then be known that he did not call upon them to worship him, a fellow human being; rather, he called upon them to worship the One Who is above both them and him. He was not seeking to usurp temporal authority by which he might rule over them, nor was he seeking high rank, for all high rank belongs to Allah *the Exalted*.

Now Allah *Glorified is He* does not need high rank from you because He *the Most High* is innately High Ranked. The objective of Prophet Nuh's (Noah) message from Allah was to hold their arrogance in check; its goal was that they lead their lives in the light of the True Methodology, so that their lives might be imbued with virtue—this was all in their interest. 'And if you turn away [from my advice] then no payment have I asked of you. My reward is only from Allah, and I have been commanded to be of the Muslims.' (*Yunus*: 72). Was Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* hereby helping his enemies? One sympathises with his enemy if he senses an impending danger. However, Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* was not afraid of them because he solely relies upon Allah *the Exalted*. Rather, what Prophet Nuh (Noah) was doing was pointing out their strong points, even though he knew that their power was limited and that their wickedness would remain without efficacy no matter how evil it were to become. Perhaps they harbour no wickedness whatsoever. The point is there any benefit that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* would reap? Was there any benefit of which Nuh (Noah) would be deprived? No, there would not be, since he was hereby announcing that he would be accepting no reward for his proselytizing efforts. Therefore, they could not hurt him, nor could they benefit him in any way, nor does he want any reward from them. Basically, Prophet Nuh's faith in Allah who had sent him forth was strong. He was not asking them for any reward, a recompense that is reward given in exchange for a service. Such earmarked values are usually used in commutative contracts that are based on the principal of reciprocity; in such cases, these values stand either for material goods—such as produce or commodities—or they represent the cost of a service. Consider the example of when a person wishes to buy a room in a house, he goes to the man who owns the house and asks to purchase a number of shares corresponding to the value of the room.

Another person wants to rent a room and so he goes to see the owner of the house; he offers to pay him the value of renting a room in the house. In other words, he will pay him a sum that is equivalent to the value of using the room. Recompense is paid forth only if it is in exchange for an urgent benefit (or need). Now Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* should have asked them for compensation, for he was engaged in guiding them to the truth; this would

have been an objective assessment of the value of that essential service that he had been providing them with. However, he declared that he was seeking no compensation, as if to say that his efforts should be rewarded with compensation, since it was they who were ultimately benefitting. Thus, under normal circumstances, he should have exacted payment for his services.

Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* however, declined any compensation from them, for he was seeking the greater compensation (from above). If he had taken compensation from them, it would, by necessity, be in proportion with their means. However, compensation from Allah *Glorified is He* is in proportion with Allah's means. There is an infinite difference between man, a created being whose capacity to remunerate is limited, and Allah whose capacity to remunerate is unlimited. In this instance, he says: "and if you turn away [from my advice] ..." (*Yunus*: 72). This turning away, or shunning of his message, neither harms nor benefits him; they do not possess the capacity to harm nor benefit him, for he would not be accepting any compensation from them. It is worth noting that all the messengers who have succeeded one another through the millennia have addressed their people thus: "...No reward whatever do I ask of you for this [message] ..." (*Sad*: 86). The only exceptions to be found are in the stories of both Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* and Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. Regarding the story of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And convey unto them the story of Ibrahim (Abraham). [How it was] When he asked his father and his people, "What is it that you worship?" They answered, "We worship idols, and we remain ever devoted to them." He said, "Do [you really think that] they hear you when you invoke them, or benefit you or do you harm?" They exclaimed, "But we found our forefathers doing the same!"' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 69-74). In this instance, Allah *the Almighty* does not mention anything about not asking for compensation. Furthermore, in the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'He answered, "O, my Sustainer! Behold, I fear that they will give me the lie, and then my breast will be straightened and my tongue will not be free. Send, then, [this Your command] to Harun (Aaron). Moreover, they keep a grave charge [pending] against me, and I fear that they will slay me." He said, "Not so, indeed! Go forth, then, both of you, with our messages. Verily, we shall be

with you, listening [to your call]! And go, both of you, unto Pharaoh and say, 'Behold, we bear a message from the Sustainer of all the worlds. Let the Children of Israel go with us!'" (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 12-17) In this verse, we also do not find Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* speaking about the fact that he was not asking for compensation. However, in the story of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* we find the following Words of Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He: "And if you turn away (from my advice) then no payment have I asked of you. My reward is only from Allah, and I have been commanded to be of the Muslims' (*Yunus*: 72). The same situation can be found in the story of Prophet Hud (Eber) *peace be upon him* whereupon Allah Glorified is He says: '[And the tribe of] 'Ad lied to [one of Allah's] message-bearers when their brother Hud (Eber) said unto them, "Will you not be conscious of Allah? Behold, I am a prophet [sent by Him] to you, [and therefore] worthy of your trust. Be, then, conscious of Allah and pay heed unto me! And no reward whatever do I ask of you for it. My reward rests with none but the Sustainer of all the worlds.'" (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 123-127) A similar situation can also be found in the story of the tribe of Thamud, whereby Allah Glorified is He says: '(And the tribe of] Thamud gave the lie to [one of Allah's] message-bearers. When their brother Saleh (Shelah) said unto them, "Will you not be conscious of Allah? Behold, I am a prophet [sent by Him] to you, [and therefore] worthy of your trust. Be, then, conscious of Allah, and pay heed unto me! And no reward whatever do I ask of you for it. My reward rests with none but the Sustainer of all the worlds.'" (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 141-145) Basically, the same wording was put in the mouth of Prophet Lut (Lot) *peace be upon him* when Allah Glorified and Exalted is He says: '[And] the people of Lut (Lot) lied to [one of Allah's] message-bearers. When their brother Lut (Lot) said unto them, "Will you not be conscious of Allah? Behold, I am a prophet [sent by Him] to you, [and therefore] worthy of your trust. Be, then, conscious of Allah and pay heed unto me! And no reward whatever do I ask of you for it. My reward rests with none but the Sustainer of all the worlds.'" (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 160-164) The same wording was put in the mouth of Prophet Shu'aib (Jethro) *peace be upon him* when Allah Glorified is He says: '[And] the dwellers of the wooded dales [of Midyan] lied to [one of Allah's] message-bearers/ Ehen their brother Shu'aib said unto them, "Will you not be conscious of Allah? Behold, I am a



prophet [sent by Him] to you, [and therefore] worthy of your trust. Be, then, conscious of Allah and pay heed unto me! And no reward whatever do I ask of you for it. My reward rests with none but the Sustainer of all the worlds.” (ash-Shu'ara': 176-180) Thus, most of the messengers down the ages have touched upon the issue of compensation: 'And no reward whatever do I ask of you for it ...' (ash-Shu'ara': 164). It is as though the messengers *peace be upon them* were telling human beings that they had been sent to give the message and that if they were to think about it, the truth of the matter is that they (the messengers) deserve to be compensated for the service they were rendering to them. However, messengers do not want any compensation from others; rather, they shall take their reward from the Lord of the worlds, for the value of the service which messengers perform for others cannot be appraised by any mere human. The only one who can appraise its value is the Giver of the Methodology; the One Who has revealed the doctrine to His Messengers. In the Holy Quran, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is quoted as saying: '... Say [O, Prophet], "No reward do I ask of you for this [message] other than [that you should] love your fellow-men..." (ash-Shura: 23). Regarding the issue of compensation and why it was not brought with up Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* is that we know that the first person that Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* proselytized was his uncle.<sup>(1)</sup> Now the uncle was fortunate to have been responsible for Ibrahim's (Abraham's) upbringing. The uncle, therefore, had the same rights over Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* as would a father. Similarly, we notice that Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* had proselytized the pharaoh. Now the latter is the one responsible for Musa's (Moses') upbringing, and his wife<sup>(2)</sup> wanted Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* to be their dear son. To be sure, the pharaoh later reminded Musa (Moses) of this fact by saying: '... [Pharaoh] said, "Did we not raise you amongst us as a child, and you remained among us for years of your life?"' (ash-Shu'ara': 18) Whereas in the case of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* and his mission, the Quranic narrative describes the way in which he put the matter to his people: 'If you turn away (rejecting my message), neither

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(1) *Azar*

(2) *Asiya*

sorrow nor angst shall overcome me, for neither can you harm me, nor can you profit me. It was not you who asked me to come to you with true guidance—that I might earn a reward from you—rather, it was Allah Who sent me, and it is He Who shall give me my reward.'

Allah *Glorified is He* has ordered Prophet Nuh (Noah) to be amongst those who have sincerely surrendered themselves to Him. Take an example from daily life of when a person sends a worker over to his friend's house to fix something. This worker will be compensated by the one who sent him, not by the one he was sent to. This is merely in the nature of things.

Then, Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* says:

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَنَبَّيْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِّ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ خَلَائِفَ  
وَأَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ

**But they rejected him. We saved him and those with him on the Ark and let them survive; and We drowned those who denied Our revelations – see what was the end of those who were forewarned! [73] (The Quran, Yunus: 73)**

It is as though this catastrophe—brought about by Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* as a result of their hostility to the true faith—could have easily engulfed Prophet Nuh (Noah) and his companions. To say, 'I saved you from such-and-such (a catastrophe)' means that you were close to succumbing to that from which I saved you. In effect, this was the case with the flood. Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* says: 'And so We caused the gates of heaven to open with water pouring down in torrents and caused the earth to burst forth with springs' (*al-Qamar*: 11-12). Under normal circumstances, one would expect the earth to absorb the rainwater. In fact, what happened was that water not only came falling from the sky but also gushed forth from the earth. This is why Allah *the Almighty* says: 'and caused the earth to burst forth with springs, so that the waters met for a purpose pre-ordained' (*al-Qamar*: 12). What this means is that such an event was pre-ordained, so that nobody should ever say that it was naturally occurring phenomenon. No, it is a pre-preordained event. Also, the ark built by Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* was in place and

ready to be launched, for Allah *the Exalted* had ordered him to build it as we can conclude Allah's Words in the chapter of *Hud*: 'And construct the ship under Our observation and Our inspiration and do not address Me concerning those who have wronged. Indeed, they are [to be] drowned ...' (*Hud*: 37). In the next verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: "And [so Nuh (Noah)] set himself to building the ark, and every time the great ones of his people passed by him, they scoffed at him. [Thereupon] he said, "If you are scoffing at us – behold, we are scoffing at you [and your ignorance], just as you are scoffing at us." (*Hud*: 38) Then, Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* boards the ark and joining him are those who had attained to faith in Allah; there was pair of every species of bird and animal which they carried on board with them, a male and a female. The Words of Allah *Glorified is He* are '... And so We saved him and all who stood by him ...' (*Yunus*: 73). It has been revealed that those who boarded the ark were the conscientious human beings. How can we, therefore, understand the issue of animals and birds boarding the ark?

The answer is the following: the (*raison d'être*) of these animals and birds is to serve human beings, and so they must have been present on board the ark. After all, they are subservient creatures that proclaim Allah's Glory and worship Him. Therefore, how can they possess knowledge that surpasses that of thoughtful beings, some of whom have disbelieved? Furthermore, are there not certain subservient creatures such as the raven which taught Cain how to bury his brother's <sup>(1)</sup> corpse?! Even as a bird, it knew that which a human being did not! Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Allah sent a raven to scratch up the ground and show him how to cover his brother's corpse...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 31).

In the verse which we are presently examining, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And yet they lied to him! And so We saved him and all who stood by him, in the ark and made them inherit [the earth], the while we caused those who belied our messages to drown. Behold, then, what happened in the end to those people who had been warned [in vain]!' (*Yunus*: 73) The word *al-Fulk* (the ark) is one of those words that can be used for both singular and plural modes. In Allah's Words '...We saved him...' (*Yunus*: 73), we know that the action is attributed to Allah *the Almighty*. When He speaks of any of His

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(1) *Abel*

actions, He does so in a manner similar to the following: 'We have sent down the Quran Ourselves, and We Ourselves will guard it.' (*al-Hijr*: 9) However, when He speaks about Himself, He utilises a word that emphasises His Oneness; He uses the personal pronoun as in His saying: 'I am God...' (*Ta Ha*: 14).

In the verse we are examining, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And yet they lied to him! And so We saved him and all who stood by him, in the ark...' (*Yunus*: 73). The word *anja* (saved) is a transitive verb. The word *najja*, indicates that there is a dire need for salvation and also that the act of saving recurs.

Allah's Words '... made them inherit [the earth]...' (*Yunus*: 73) give the following meaning: that *al-Khalifa* is the one who succeeds someone came before him. The term *al-Khalifa* sometimes designates that which is of higher rank. This is the case in this verse, where virtuous men succeeded those who were also virtuous men. Thus, after Allah *the Exalted* had saved the believers in the ark, He drowned the rest. Therefore, the virtuous men on board of the ark later begot virtuous men who succeeded them. Sometimes the term *al-Khalifa* denotes that which is lower in rank, such as in Allah's following Words: 'But there came after them generations who neglected prayer and were driven by their own desires...' (*Maryam*: 59). In this example, the word *khalifa* denotes a lower status. There exists a criterion established by Allah *Glorified is He* to assess the successor (*Khalifa*); this criterion can be found in His following Words: 'Later We made you their successors in the land, to see how you would behave.' (*Yunus*: 14) Since man is free to choose between belief and disbelief, he will, therefore, be ranked based on his choices. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Allah has made a promise to those amongst you who believe and do good deeds: He will make them successors to the land, as He did those who came before them; He will empower the religion He has chosen for them; He will grant them security to replace their fear...' (*an-Nur*: 55). Thus, there are two possibilities when it comes to *al-Khalifa* (The successor): either a virtuous *Khelifa* succeeding a virtuous one; or a corrupt *kahlifa* succeeding a corrupt one. In this instance, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... made them inherit [the earth], the while we caused those who belied our messages to drown...' (*Yunus*: 73). Now these signs are those that induce contemplation and lead human beings to embrace faith in the Creative Power—these represent the totality of the cosmic signs, for everything in the universe offers evidence that

the universe was created by design and for a purpose. As proof of this, the things in the universe are wisely organised and intricately structured. If you wanted to verify the degree of the universe's precise creation, look at the things in which man intervenes, and that which he does not. You will find that everything in which man intervenes is characterised by an extraordinary level of integrity. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'The sun cannot overtake the moon, nor can the night outrun the day; each floats in [its own] orbit.' (*Ya Sin*: 40)

As for those things in which man intervenes, they might become corrupted as a consequence of the choices which we make. Thus, we have seen how the cosmic signs point to the existence of the Creator *the Most High*. These signs are the object of intellectual reflection by means of which the existence of Allah *Glorified is He* is verified. The Arabic word '*Ayat* (signs) can also denote the miraculous phenomenon that the messengers *peace be upon them* have performed in order to convince people of their truthfulness regarding the messages they conveyed on behalf of Allah *the Almighty*. Moreover, there are the '*Ayat* (verses) of the Holy Quran about which Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'It is He who has sent this Scripture down to you [Prophet]. Some of its verses are definite in meaning—these are the cornerstone of the Scripture....' (*Al-Imran*: 7) These are the verses which contain the Doctrine.

When Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... the while we caused those who belied our messages to drown...' (*Yunus*: 73), He informs us that He has drowned those who rejected the cosmic signs and failed to pay heed to the splendour of His creation and to the wisdom behind the creation of these cosmic signs and their flawless arrangement. They had also rejected the miraculous signs as well as the directive verses which were conveyed by their messengers.

Allah *Glorified is He* concludes this verse with His Words: '... Behold, then, what happened in the end to those people who had been warned [in vain]!' (*Yunus*: 73). These Words are addressed to those who can reflect, the foremost among whom is our master Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* who is the Quran's primary addressee. When you utter the word *undhur* (see), you thereby draw attention to a sensational object. If you turn your gaze toward this object, the light rays reflected off the object will reach you, and it thereby outlines the dimensions of the object in question. This, in effect,

enables you to see the object. The object referred to in this verse is about past events which had occurred once, and they lived on as stories. Thus, if someone were to inform you of these stories, your faith in them would be in proportion to the trust that you have in the narrator. Thus, whosoever witnessed the staff of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*—as it devoured the ropes thrown down by the sorcerers—thereby believed in it. Similarly, anyone who witnessed the fire's inability to burn Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* thereby believed in it. Likewise, whosoever saw 'Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* as he healed the blind and the lepers, along with bringing the dead back to life by Allah's Leave—thereby believed in what he saw. As for those who did not witness these miracles first-hand, their belief in them goes only as far as the trust they have in the informer. Therefore, as Allah *the Almighty* informs us about these miracles in the Holy Quran, our belief in these miracles is inevitable because we have complete trust in the probity of he who communicates on Allah's behalf. We understand that the prophetic messages which proceeded that of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* were destined for a specific time and place. However, the objective of Islam is to set the order of all people beginning from the moment when Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* received revelation until the Day of Judgment. This is why the Quran consists of a collection of verses which are destined to remain relevant until Day of Judgment. This is the reason why the Quran represents a perennial intellectual miracle, thanks to which anyone who calls to Islam on behalf of Prophet Muhammad can say: Muhammad is a Messenger from Allah *Glorified is He* and the Quran is his miracle.

So, when Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... Behold, then, what happened in the end to those people who had been warned [in vain]!' (*Yunus*: 73), this is similar to His Saying to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'Do you [Prophet] not see how your Lord dealt with the army of the elephant?' (*al-Fil*: 1) The coming of the army of the elephant occurred in the very same year in which Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was born. Naturally, he did not witness the event himself. However, those who were alive at the time of this incident did witness it. Now this fact should pay our attention to the different levels of perception; for your eyes might perceive something,

your ears might hear an account; however, it is possible that your senses deceive you. However, the account coming from Allah (*Glorified is He*), even if you are currently unable to either see or hear it, consider it as being a source of knowledge even more trustworthy than your sense of vision.

One might ask, ‘why does Allah *Glorified is He* not say: "Do you not know?" instead of His saying: "Do you [Prophet] not see?"’ The answer is that Allah *the Most High* wishes to inform us that we should accept such accounts of the unseen events that we obtain from Him as being more truthful than those accounts of events which we witness with our own eyes. Thus, the Words: ‘...Behold, then, what happened in the end to those people who had been warned [in vain]!’ (*Yunus*: 73) can be rephrased as the following: realise the matter as though you could see it in front of you since you have such faith in Allah *Glorified is He* that it is as though you could see Him. The person who is communicating the account on behalf of Allah *Glorified is He* is the Messenger—in whose message you believe, No doubt should ever infiltrate your mind regarding any of the accounts coming from Allah *Glorified is He* and Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as doubt can never affect the truthful Messenger.

One might ask, ‘Why does Allah *Glorified is He* not say: "See what happened in the end to the disbelievers" instead of saying "... Behold, then, what happened in the end to those people who had been warned [in vain]!"’ In this case, we would say that Allah *the Exalted* has demonstrated how He will never punish before giving due warning. Thus, He has first given warning, and He has not seized the people while they were ignorant about this warning. The word ‘see’, as we know, is addressed to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and any words addressed to him include his Ummah (followers of Islam). The purpose of this account is to provide a measure of reassurance to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. If your people, O, Muhammad, behave like the people of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* rest assured that their fate shall also be the same as the people of Nuh (Noah). Herein lies a warning and a threat for the adversaries of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رَسُولًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاءُوهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا  
لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا بِهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ كَذَلِكَ نَطْبَعُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

**Then, after him, We sent messengers to their peoples bringing them clear signs. But they would not believe in anything they had already rejected: in this way We seal the hearts of those who are full of hostility [74] (The Quran, Yunus: 74)**

The word *ba'atha* (to send) in this verse is worth discussing since the act of 'sending forth' pertains to that which once existed then came to an end, whereby Allah *Glorified is He* sent it forth once again. The Words '...We sent...' (Yunus: 74) draw our attention to the fact that when Allah *the Almighty* has created the universe, He has given the Doctrine to Adam *peace be upon him* and the latter thereafter conveyed it to his children. Every distortion or alteration of the Doctrine on the part of human beings amounts to a destruction of the Doctrine. When Allah *Glorified is He* sends forth a messenger, He does not thereby create a new Doctrine, rather, He resends forth that which had already existed, so as to remind human being about his pure, primordial nature. This is the difference between the connotations of the words *al-ba'th* and *al-I'rsal* (to send). In effect, the word *al-ba'th* gives you the feeling that something had already existed and then came to an end, and afterwards it was sent forth once again. This aspect of the word is akin to *al-ba'th* of the Day of Resurrection: human beings used to live out their lives; they will continue to reproduce themselves as the cycle of life and death continues until the Day of Resurrection (*Al-ba'th*). On that Day, all created beings will die and then be resurrected for the Reckoning.

It would not be conceivable that Allah *the Almighty* creates human beings, gives them vicegerency on earth, and then leaves them without a Doctrine. Now since forgetfulness had set in amongst human beings after the initial revelation of the Doctrine to Adam *peace be upon him* the Doctrine has been sent forth once again through the messengers who communicate it on behalf of Allah *the Exalted*.

Thus, after Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* Allah *Glorified is He* has sent forth messengers. In this instance, He says: 'Then, after him, We sent messengers...'



(*Yunus*: 74). What this means is that messengers came after Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*. His issue, therefore, implies the inception of a series of prophetic missions, as it has been said that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* was a messenger sent for all of humanity, like Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. However, Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* was not a messenger who was sent forth for all of humanity. Rather, it was his embarking upon the ark that made him into a messenger for all of humanity, as the inhabitants of the earth back in those days were few. Allah *Glorified is He* punished the disbelievers for their sins while rescuing the believers from the flood. There were two kinds of people: believers and disbelievers. The believers had boarded the ark, while Allah *the Almighty* caused the disbelievers to drown. Thus, Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* became a universal messenger with respect to those who survived. They were, in effect, the recipients of a message that was specific to a particular time and place.

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Then, after him, We sent messengers to their people...’ (*Yunus*: 74). Has Allah *Glorified is He* narrated the accounts of all the messengers *peace be upon them*? No, He has not, for He has said: ‘We have sent other messengers before you— some We have mentioned to you and some We have not...’ (*Ghafir*: 78). Allah *the Almighty* mentions only the accounts of foremost of the messengers *peace be upon them* for He says: ‘We has sent him to a hundred thousand people or more.’ (*as-Saffat*: 147) Therefore, there might be no mention made of those messengers whom Allah *Glorified is He* has sent forth to a people numbering less than a hundred thousand. We also know that a messenger would come to an isolated community; for the communities of world at that time were isolated from one another. A thousand years ago, for instance, we did not know of the existence of the American continent. In fact, we did not gain any definitive knowledge about all the continents until the aerial survey techniques of the modern age. There might be regions in the world which we know only through aerial photographs and not experientially.

We know that Adam’s progeny dwelled on earth and spread out later. The reason for this was that the sustenance—on which Adam’s progeny subsisted initially—became too little after the population began to grow. Therefore, as their livelihoods in that spot on earth began shrinking, some of

them spread out to settle in the rest of the world. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Anyone who migrates for Allah's Cause will find many a refuge and great plenty in the earth...' (*an-Nisa'*: 100). Thus, some of Adam's offspring moved to areas of abundant rainfall since emigration of this kind always looks towards places where water is plentiful, as water is the source of life. Historians who study ancient civilisations have observed that some civilisations were born on the banks of rivers and streams. The Bedouin people, on the other hand, would disperse throughout the desert; they are similar to the Arabs in this respect. Originally, they used to live around the dam of Ma'reb. After the dam collapsed, flooding the earth, people were afraid of the flood, for the two enemies against which man is powerless are fire and water. When the people saw the rising waters, they headed into the desert. There, they would dig wells and extract enough water to satisfy their needs for they knew that they were no match for the power of water. Therefore, the isolated Arab tribes came to be. Such was also the case elsewhere in the world. This is why each community suffered a different spiritual disease, so Allah *the Exalted* has sent forth for each community a warner. He says: '... Every community has been sent a warner.' (*Fatir*: 24) Allah *the Most High* tells us the stories of some of these warners, but there are others whose stories He has not told. Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... We have sent other messengers before you— some We have mentioned to you and some We have not — and no messenger could bring about a sign except with Allah's permission...' (*Ghafir*: 78).

Allah *Glorified is He* hereby says: 'Then, after him, We sent messengers to their peoples bringing them clear signs...' (*Yunus*: 74). Is this a reference to the messengers whom Allah *Glorified is He* has not explicitly spoken of? No, this is not since He later sent forth Hud (Eber) *peace be upon him* to the tribe of 'Ad, Saleh (Shelah) *peace be upon him* to the people of Thamud, and Shu'aib (Jethro) *peace be upon him* to, the people of Midyan. However, Allah *Glorified is He* does not mention of these messengers here. Rather, following the story of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* Allah *Glorified is He* narrates the story of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. It would seem that Allah's intention is to speak to us of the most significant messages.

Since Allah *Glorified is He* sent forth a messenger to their communities, then every community has been sent a messenger, and every messenger has

been sent forth to his people. In the aforementioned verse, both the word *qawm* (community) and *rusul* (messengers) are in the plural form. When two plurals are combined, one must break every element down to the singular form. For example, we might say: 'All of you get into your cars'. This sentence is addressed to a plurality, and the implication is that every individual should get into his car. Every messenger came to his people bearing evidence of the truth. In other words, they came with clear signs which testify to their authenticity as messengers sent by Allah *the Almighty*.

Then, in the same verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Then, after him, We sent messengers to their peoples bringing them clear signs. But they would not believe in anything they already rejected. In this way, We seal the hearts of those who are full of hostility.' (*Yunus*: 74) That is to say that even if all the people were to attain to faith, the continuous procession of messengers would have stopped. Not all people continued to hold firm to their faith, and as time progressed, forgetfulness set in, thus Allah *Glorified is He* sealed the hearts of the transgressors. The word *At-Tab'*, as we know, denotes the act of 'sealing'. This means that nothing can ever come out of the sealed heart, nor can anything ever come into it; so long as some people cherish disbelief, Allah *the Almighty* has therefore sealed their hearts such that no faith can ever enter into them, nor disbelief can ever exit. The act of 'sealing' is attributed to Allah *Glorified is He*. There are some people who, in their desire to point out inconsistencies in Allah's Doctrine, say that their disbelief was caused by Allah's sealing of their hearts. Our response would be the following: notice that Allah *the Exalted* illustrates that He seals the hearts of the transgressors. Thus, they initially committed the act of transgression. In other words, they have taken no heed of the signs of Allah *Glorified is He* and disbelieved in Doctrine that has been revealed to them. Therefore, it is they who, through their transgression and their rejection of the Doctrine, have caused Allah's sealing of their hearts. Such an act of sealing their hearts was due to their clinging to that which they loved and that to which they had grown accustomed. Allah *Glorified is He* says in a Sacred Hadith: 'I am so self-sufficient that I am in no need of having an associate.'<sup>(1)</sup> Allah *the Almighty* knows the best of examples,

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(1) [narrated by Muslim]

but for instance, you would say to one who is deeply indulged in his vice: 'Since you love such a vice so much, then go ahead and wallow in it to your heart's content.' Those whose hearts have been sealed by Allah *the Almighty* are similar to those before them who denied the message and were transgressors, Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِم مُّوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ  
يَاٰئِنَّا فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

**After them We sent Moses and Aaron with Our signs to Pharaoh and his leading supporters, but they acted arrogantly they were wicked people [75] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 75)**

Both Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them* were messengers. Their prophetic mission took some stages. Originally, Allah *Glorified is He* told Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*: 'I have chosen you, so listen to what is being revealed.' (*Ta Ha*: 13) Allah *Glorified is He* also told him: 'Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, for he has exceeded all bounds.' (*Ta Ha*: 43) Then Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* asked his Lord to allow him to bring along his brother so that the latter could strengthen him, whereby Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'Musa (Moses), your request is granted.' (*Ta Ha*: 36) Furthermore, Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* wished that his words would be understood so he addressed the following supplication to his Lord *Glorified is He*: 'Untie my tongue, so that they may understand my words.' (*Ta Ha*: 27, 28) Later, Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon him* was sent forth with a message along with Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Go to Pharaoh, for he has truly become a tyrant.' (*Ta Ha*: 24)

Therefore, it all began with the message of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. Then, at Musa's (Moses') request, Allah *the Most High* paired Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them* with Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. The proof of this is that all of the miracles—which (by Allah's leave) occurred in the course of that message—were carried out by Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. Thus, if Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* is a messenger, and if he is then joined by Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them* this necessarily means that the latter, in turn,

became a messenger. This is what the Quran expresses in the following verse: ‘... We are your Lord’s Messengers...’ (*Ta Ha*: 47). In other words, they are both messengers from Allah *the Exalted*.

In another verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Go, both of you, to Pharaoh and say, "We bring a Message from the Lord of the Worlds."' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 16) Thus, they were both sent forth in order to carry the same mission. Neither did each have his own particular message, rather, their message was one, not multiple, even if there were two Messengers—Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them*. To give an example—and Allah *Glorified is He* knows the best of examples—consider when a king or a president sends forth a delegation to another king. The members of this delegation would say, ‘We are the messengers sent by king so-and-so.’ Now, when it comes to the mission of Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them*—the former clearly played the prominent role of performing the various miracles. However, Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon him* also had a role to play in the overall mission; this is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘... We are your Lord’s messengers...’ (*Ta Ha*: 47).

This was due to Pharaoh having been a haughty, repulsive, and despicable person. Thus, if Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon him* were to say anything in support of his brother, Pharaoh might say, ‘Who are you to have any say in this?’ However, if they were to approach Pharaoh as a pair, and they have declared that they are both messengers, then any response Pharaoh were to direct at Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon him* was tantamount to a response directed at Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. I have said that in order to shut the door on those who seek to find fault in the Quran by asking, ‘Why does the Quran at times use the word *rasul* (a messenger), while at other times it uses the word *rasula* (The two messengers)? What I have said in this matter is a sufficing rebuttal of the claims made by these trying to find faults in the Quran.

In the verse that we are presently examining, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘After them We sent Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) with Our signs to Pharaoh and his leading supporters, but they acted arrogantly...’ (*Yunus*: 75). The word *al-Mala'* (leading supporters) refers to the leaders of the communities, their representatives, their masters and those who are close to the supreme

leader. They are known as *al-Mala'* because it they who fill the eyes; in other words, the eyes look up to none but them. Pharaoh, as we know, did not become a pharaoh except with the help of *al-Mala'*, for it is the latter who nominated him as their leader. Haman, for instance, used to promote the idea of the pharaoh and the priesthood used to support the idea that the pharaoh was a god.

Every pharaoh is supported by a group of powerful men who make him who he is. A popular Egyptian saying proceeds forth, 'They asked Pharaoh, "How did you become like a pharaoh?" He said, "I have not found anyone to rebuff me."' What this means is that he has not found anyone who would tell him: 'Be reasonable.' Were he to find somebody to tell him so, he would not exhibit the haughty arrogance of the pharaoh.

Now the signs that Allah *Glorified is He* sent forth to Pharaoh and his men through Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them* represent the miracles that affirm their truthfulness as prophets. In effect, these signs indicate that their message is truly conveyed on behalf of Allah *Glorified is He*. The signs could also amount to the Doctrine which affirms the existence of the Creator *the Most High*. However, Pharaoh and his men acted arrogantly by rejecting the signs. The word *al-Istikbar* means to ask for greatness; the word is similar in structure to the word *istikhrāj* which means to ask for extraction and also to the word *istafham* which means to ask for understanding. He who asks for greatness is thereby artificially forcing it upon himself since he knows that his own abilities cannot afford him such greatness.

Allah *Glorified is He* concludes this verse with His Words: '... they were wicked people.' (*Yunus*: 75) The gravest kind of criminality is that directed to oneself, for it might be acceptable for a person to harm his enemies. However, to commit a crime against oneself is unpardonable. The crimes of Pharaoh and his men earned them entry into hellfire where they will forever abide in disgrace. This is a great and degrading punishment.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا إِنَّ هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٧٦﴾

**When the truth came to them from Us, they said,  
'This is blatant sorcery'[76] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 76)**

The truth came to them through the messengers *peace be upon them*. Every human being must understand that the message of truth he receives at the hands of a messenger has nothing to do with a messenger's own ideas. Rather, a messenger merely communicates this message on behalf of Allah, the Creator *Glorified is He*. Thus, one who rejects a messenger is not thereby rejecting the opinion of his peer, for a messenger is the conveyer of a message from Allah *the Almighty* Who has sent him forth. One must realise the importance of any message coming from Allah, the True Lord; it is He Who is the True Lord and the Most High, and it is He Who has created all things properly: the sky has been created properly, the earth has been created properly, the sun runs its course properly, the rain falls from the sky properly, and all things—whether standstill or in motion—are governed by the laws willed by Allah *Glorified is He*. If man—unbridled by the Doctrine—were to acquire control over the laws which govern the natural phenomena, he would corrupt them since corruption affects those things which human beings have control over when they approach those beings in the absence of Allah's Doctrine. Corruption happens as a result of human beings choosing to engage in activities while being heedless of the Doctrine of Allah *the Exalted*. So, if you want your lives to enjoy that quality of uprightness which characterises the life of higher created beings—created beings which you have no control over—then, in that case, obey the Allah's Doctrine and abide by the balance which He has set, for He *the Most High* says: 'He has raised up the sky. He has set the balance so that you may not exceed in the balance.' (*ar-Rahman*: 7- 8) That is to say that if you want your life to become upright, if you want it to become as upright as the life of the other creatures—then be sure to submit that free will which you have been created with to the order mandated by the Doctrine of Allah *Glorified is He*. Direct your free will such that it operates within the framework of the Divine Doctrine.

Now when we contemplate Allah's Words: 'When the truth came to them from Us...' (*Yunus*: 76), you find these Words inform us that truth did not

come from messengers themselves, for their personal opinion has nothing to do with the matter. Furthermore, beware of rejecting a true message just because it has being conveyed to by someone whom you do not love. Rather, you should consider the truth inherent in the message itself. You should not engage in the labyrinthine search for the one who has brought forth this. Look at those who rejected Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* when they said: 'Why was this Quran not sent down to a distinguished man, from either of the two cities?' (*az-Zukhruf*: 31) They had thereby involved the person upon whom the Quran was bestowed into their assessment of the truth. The reasonable thinking would have been to consider the Quran itself and to receive the wisdom regardless of its source.

You must learn from this incident: you must be receptive to wisdom regardless of who said it, paying no attention to the one who has brought forth the piece of wisdom. You should not refuse to accept any wisdom only because you do not love the one who issued it, and you should not accept it only because you love him. Rather, you should be receptive to wisdom so long as it is true since if you do not heed the wisdom, then you will merely harm yourself.

The truth is the one thing which is fixed and enduring. Even if the truth appears, at times, to be undermined, and error seems to prevail, this denotes the appearance of corruptive elements, whereby people cry out for the truth to be restored. The prevalence of the corruptive elements is the reason why people call for the truth to be restored and become excited at the prospect of its return. Therefore, when people feel the harmful effects of falsehood, they thereby turn towards the truth so as to cling to it. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'He sends water from the sky that fills riverbeds to overflowing, each according to its measure. The stream carries on its surface a growing layer of froth, like the froth that appears when people melt metals in the fire to make ornaments and tools. In this way, Allah illustrates truth and falsehood—the froth disappears, but what is of benefit to man stays behind—this is how Allah makes illustrations.' (*az-Zukhruf*: 31) Allah *the Almighty* gives an example of the descending with the flow of water down the face of mountains, whereby every stream at the foot of the mountain absorbs as much water it can take.



Thus, the people drink their fill of water, and the earth becomes saturated with water as well. However, as the water is streaming down the face of the mountain, it picks up certain kinds of debris like silt and straw. This silt then settles as sediment on the riverbeds; this sediment benefits the earth. As for the debris like straw and impurities, they rise to the surface of the water. That floating debris is called *zabad* (froth). When you put this kind of debris in the fire, it produces crackling sounds. For example, when we light a fire so as to smelt iron ore, we find that the impure elements rise to surface, while the unalloyed iron remains on the bottom. This debris that is found on the surface of the water is later dumped on the banks. Look, for example, at the scene on the beach when the ocean waves dump their debris on the beach. This is the debris that was produced by ships which is then carried forth by the waves, whereby it passes away uselessly, whereas that which is useful to human beings stays in the earth; this is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘... In this way Allah illustrates truth and falsehood.’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 31) Therefore, Allah *the Exalted* allows some free rein for falsehood; however, He does not allow truth to succumb to it. Rather, He allows falsehood to exist so as to encourage people to turn to the truth. If they do not rally passionately around the truth, the truth will rally passionately around them. In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘When the truth came to them from Us, they said, "This is blatant sorcery."' (*Yunus*: 76) Since they were famous for sorcery, they believed that the miraculous signs brought forth by Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* were nothing more than blatant sorcery. In other words, they were quite clearly acts of sorcery.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ أَتَقُولُونَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَكُمْ أَسِحْرٌ  
هَذَا وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

**Moses said, ‘Is this what you say about the Truth  
when it comes to you? Is this sorcery? Sorcerers  
never prosper’ [77] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 77)**

This verse sheds light on the response of master Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*: ‘Is this what you say about the truth when it comes to you? Is this

sorcery?' (*Yunus: 77*). Those who criticise the Quran would say, 'How can the Quran assert that they said, "This is blatant sorcery." Then, in the next verse, it states that they asked, "Is this sorcery?"' These people who seek to find faults in the Quran have mistakenly believed the words: 'Is this sorcery?' (*Yunus: 77*) refer to the words uttered by Pharaoh and his people. However, these are the words uttered by Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. Thus, it is as though Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* had uttered such a question so that they might reconsider their judgment: could that which he had brought forth really be sorcery? This is a rhetorical question whose purpose is to assert that it is not sorcery. It is thus an assertion that is formulated as a question since Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* is certain that the honest response to such a question will confirm that that he has brought forth is no sorcery. Now if he expressed his words in the form of a simple statement, this could have entailed the possibility of either truth or falsehood. However, he chose to employ the interrogatory form, since his deniers would then be forced to answer hesitantly. To give an example—and Allah *Glorified is He* knows the best of examples—consider when you go to purchase fabric, the merchant tells you that it is pure, unadulterated wool; so you take a match and light one of the threads on fire. If the material burns as would plastic or some artificial fabric, you would then tell the merchant: 'How can this be pure wool?' At this point, the only option left for the merchant is to agree with you, otherwise he will remain silent, unable to conceal the truth any longer. Therefore, employing the rhetorical question in this instance will have a deeper impact than if you were to simply put your words in a form of a statement since your listener must respond.

Thus, the Words of Allah *Glorified is He* wherein He states Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* as saying 'Is this what you say about the truth when it comes to you?' (*Yunus: 77*) highlight the necessity of taking cognisance of the truth regardless of the one who brought it. This is why Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* did not say, 'Do you say about the truth when it comes to you that it is blatant sorcery?' The Words of wisdom contained in this holy verse affirm the necessity of considering the truth independently of the messenger who came bearing it.

Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the verse by saying: '...Is this sorcery? Sorcerers never prosper.' (*Yunus: 77*) Thus, our master Musa (Moses) *peace*

*be upon him* proclaimed that sorcery is ultimately of no avail. However, the miraculous signs which he delivered on behalf of Allah *Glorified is He* were effective. After turning into a snake, Musa's (Moses') staff devoured every rope that the sorcerers threw at it; it outdid every one of their magic tricks.

Allah *the Exalted* wished that Musa's (Moses') staff would be the vehicle for the miraculous signs of the same kind as that at which his people excelled. Thus, when Allah *the Almighty* delivers a miracle to a given community, He makes the miracle of the same type as that which that community excels at, so that the miracle might represent a challenge for them in the very same area where they have the most expertise and knowledge. For example, you would not challenge someone who has no knowledge of architecture to build you an apartment house. However, you might challenge an architect to build you a pyramid. In effect, modern science has still not uncovered certain discoveries of the ancients—knowledge which they might not have formally recorded in any manuscripts. Modern science has not also come across any discoveries which would explain how the ancients created a vacuum between every rock such that all the rocks were held together in perfect cohesion. In this instance Allah's Words, '... Sorcerers never prosper.' (*Yunus*: 77) reveal that the idea of *al-Falah* (prosper) is related to the physical work performed by a farmer—blowing the earth, sowing the seeds, irrigating the earth and thereafter waiting for his efforts to bear fruit. The term *al-Falah* is also derived of 'cleaving iron' into large masses or small pieces. Such an operation is only successful if the iron takes on a form that is suitable for use.

Allah's Words, '... Sorcerers never prosper.' (*Yunus*: 77), alert us to the fact that sorcery is a kind of illusion; it is not real. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says elsewhere in the Quran: '...they cast a spell upon the people's eyes...' (*al-A'raf*: 116). He also says: '...and—lo and behold!—through their sorcery, their ropes and staffs seemed to him to be moving.' (*Ta Ha*: 66) Thus, sorcery is nothing but illusion; it does not actually alter reality. Now due to Musa's (Moses') miracle surpassing the abilities of all Pharaoh's sorcerers, Pharaoh therefore mobilised everyone who was connected with sorcery, including those who excelled at it and even those who had only a modest understanding of it. Now, since sorcery is mere illusion, we find that when the sorcerers

gathered together and threw down their ropes and staffs, and Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* threw down his staff—the latter transformed into a snake that devoured their every artifice. What did the sorcerers do at this point? Allah *Glorified is He* says in the chapter of *Ta Ha*: '[So it was, and] the sorcerers threw themselves down in submission. "We believe," they said, "in the Lord of Harun (Aaron) and Musa (Moses)."' (*Ta Ha*: 70) This was due to the sorcerer perceiving his trick for what it really was. Even if they had cast a spell over other people's eyes, the sorcerers themselves perceived their ropes as mere ropes and their staffs as mere staffs.

As for Musa's (Moses') staff, it was no illusion. The sorcerers perceived it as a real, living snake which, in effect, snapped up all of their tricks. This is why they fell into prostration and proclaimed their faith in the Lord of Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them*. Thus, they did not proclaim their faith in Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them* rather, they proclaimed their faith: '... in the Lord of Harun (Aaron) and Musa (Moses).' (*Ta Ha*: 70) for they had realised from experience that what Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* had performed was no act of sorcery, rather, it was the act of the Creator *the Most High*.

Musa's (Moses') composure during this episode stemmed from the training that he had undergone by his Lord. Allah *Glorified is He* Who had asked him: 'Musa (Moses), what is that in your right hand?' 'It is my staff,' he said, 'I lean on it; restrain my sheep with it...' (*Ta Ha*: 17-18). Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* replied to Allah *the Almighty* in a detailed and elaborate fashion, for he was happy to speak with Allah *Glorified is He* at his leisure and be in His Company. However, when he felt that he had prolonged the conversation long enough; he wrapped it up and respectfully said: '...I also have other uses for it.' (*Ta Ha*: 18) Thus, at first, he was revelling in the company of Allah *the Exalted* then he realised the need for propriety when speaking with Him. Allah *Glorified is He* has coached him with respect to the staff when He commanded him to, first, throw it on the ground. It thereby transformed into a moving snake. If this action were merely a form of sorcery, Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* would not have winced in fear, for he would have seen it for what it really was, a simple staff. Thus, the difference between the miracle of Musa

(Moses) *peace be upon him* and the works of Pharaoh's sorcerers is that the latter cast a spell over people's eyes. Due to their sorcery, the people fell under the illusion that their staffs and ropes were moving. However, with Musa's (Moses') miracle—whereby he cast his staff—the sorcerers realised through direct experience that the innate nature of the staff had been altered.

A staff, as we know, comes from the branch of a tree. Now Allah *the Almighty* could have transformed it into a fruit-bearing tree. In that case, however, it would still have remained a vegetal being. So Allah *the Most High* willed to elevate it to a higher station than that of plants, namely that of animals. Thus, it turned into a snake, snatching up everything that the sorcerers had thrown.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

قَالُوا أَجِئْنَا لِنُلْفِنَا عَمَّا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ ءَابَاءَنَا وَتَكُونُ لَكُمُ  
الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُمُ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾

**They said, 'Have you come to turn us away from the faith we found our fathers following, so that you and your brother can gain greatness in this land? We will never believe in you' [78] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 78)**

In this verse, we see that Pharaoh's sorcerers were attributing the miracle—of the staff transforming into a snake—to Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* even though the latter attributed the miracle to Allah *Glorified is He*.

The recipients of the message—namely Pharaoh and his people—ought to have concentrated on the content of the messenger's message and not on the personality of the messenger. If Pharaoh had asked Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* 'Have you been sent to us?' this would mean that Pharaoh was proclaiming his faith in the existence of *the Most High* God. However, Pharaoh did not attain to faith at that moment; that is why he says: 'Have you come to us ...?' (*Yunus*: 78) Thus, Pharaoh is quoted as attributing the act of coming to Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*.

Now why did Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* come? Allah *Glorified is He* mentions what Pharaoh and his peoplesaid: 'Have you come to turn us away from the faith we found our fathers following?...' (*Yunus*: 78) Now the word

*al-Itifat* means the act of turning the face away from the object that it is facing. So long as a person is facing something, his vision and his orientation is focused upon that thing. Now the people of Pharaoh were indulged in corruption and aberrance. So, there was nothing in front of them except for that corruption and aberrance. When Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* came to them in order to turn them away from such corruption and aberrance, whereby they said: 'Have you come to turn us away from the faith we found our fathers following...' (*Yunus: 78*). Thus, they revealed their true position, for they had been imitating their forefathers. Such blind imitation gives the imitator comfort since he does not have to use his brain or his intellect in order to believe in a particular creed nor to model his behaviour accordingly.

The following popular aphorism captures the essence of this situation: 'like a deaf person at a wedding procession'. In other words, a deaf person does not hear what is being said no matter which party it is coming from. He simply walks with the crowd wherever it goes and completely lacks any sense of direction. An imitator, in effect, underutilises his intellectual capacity. He does not use it to choose between the various alternatives. Thus, he does not take cognisance of what is right so that he might act on it, nor does he take cognisance of what is wrong, so that he might avoid it.

Now, Pharaoh and his leading supporters were indulged in same aberrance of their forefathers. Aberrance does not require any mental effort of a person, nor does it entail making difficult choices. In fact, it satisfies his fleeting desires. As for discerning right from wrong and following the Doctrine of heaven, they help to curb the base desires and prevent a person from erring. Aberrance, on the contrary, only increases the intensity of human desire.

Thus, a person who blindly imitates is in one of the two following situations. The first situation is that he does not use his brain; rather, he just does what those before him have done or what those around him are doing. The second situation is that he realises that by doing what others are doing, he would not be bridled by any Doctrine. However, the messenger who arrives requires that he adheres to a doctrine. By following this doctrine, he could only earn profits in a legal manner; for example, he could not commit any sinful acts, nor could he act iniquitously towards anyone. Thus, the doctrine

bridles his actions. However, if he were to follow the actions of his aberrant forefathers, his range of movement would expand such that it would encompass more of his baser desires.

This is why I have always said that this issue of blind imitation must direct our attention to the principle of moral education. You will notice that, as long as a child has not yet reached puberty, he will remain without an independent core self and will simply imitate his parents. However, as soon as he acquires an independent identity, he will start to rebel. He might tell his parents, 'You follow old, outdate traditions which have no place in today's world.' However, if at an early age the child imbibes the proper religious values, he will abide by the principle of the truth and will abstain from indulging his base desires. We find that the families who do not follow Allah's Doctrine will suffer in the upbringing of their children from the behaviour of them when the latter comes under the influence of bad peers. Thus, they turn towards that which extends the range of desires, like addiction and other such perversions. On the contrary, the children of families who are committed to the Doctrine of Allah *Glorified is He* do not emulate any of the wayward people, for their consciences have learned how to discern right from wrong. Furthermore, blind imitation of parents might turn children into carbon copies of their parents. However, to coach and educate children on the importance of using one's mind in everything is the kind of upbringing whereby societies progress towards what is best, provided that parents follow Allah's Doctrine. Therefore, a child's identity will develop in the light of Allah's Doctrine. Accordingly, a child does not rebel and take wayward ways. In fact, he might rebel and take that which is virtuous so as to render it even more virtuous. Therefore, imitating someone needs deep research since a person whom you are planning on imitating cannot be held responsible for your actions. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'People, be mindful of your Lord and fear a day when no parent will take the place of their child, nor a child take the place of their parent, in any way...' (*Luqman*: 33). Thus, a child's actions must emanate from the conscience within, as should the actions of parents. Every human being must use his mind to choose between right and wrong. This is why you find that the Holy Quran mentions those who blindly imitated their forefathers as saying: 'But when it is said to them, "Follow the

message that Allah has sent down" they answer, "We follow the ways of our fathers..." (*al-Baqara*: 170). Then Allah *Glorified is He* answers them: 'What! Even though their fathers understood nothing and were not guided?' (*al-Baqara*: 170) Therefore, if a matter is of blind imitation, then why does the child bother to learn? Why did not children just sleep on the ground? Why bother buying mattresses? Why are they attracted towards developing things and tools which make life easier? Thus, blind imitation is the suspension of all brain function and intellectual abilities. To abandon these two things amounts to abandoning the project of development and progressing towards a better life.

Therefore, the Quran insists that we use our brains in order to discern right from wrong. If the Doctrine has come from Heaven, then follow that which has come to you from above. This guidance amounts to marching towards the virtuous life. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'When it is said to them, "Come to what Allah has sent down, and to the messenger." They say, "What we inherited from our forefathers is good enough for us..."' (*al-Ma'ida*: 104). What this means is that they declared that they had no need for the Doctrine of Heaven, whereby the Quran replies: 'Even though their forefathers knew nothing and were not guided.' (*al-Ma'ida*: 104)

Thus, we see that, in two separate places, the Quran describes two situations pertaining to the imitators. The first is wherein Allah *Glorified is He* says: '..."We follow the ways of our fathers." What! Even though their fathers understood nothing and were not guided?' (*al-Baqara*: 170) The second is wherein Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...They say, "What we inherited from our forefathers is good enough for us", even though their forefathers knew nothing and were not guided.' (*al-Ma'ida*: 104)

In this verse they announced that it was enough for them to continue following what their forefathers had done. There is a difference between the two verses. The word *al-'Aqil* (one who understands) is different from one who does not know since *al-'Aqil* is capable of making rational judgments. However, a person who does not have knowledge merely relies on the rational judgments arrived at by others. Thus, those who were content to follow the ways of their forefathers said: 'What we inherited from our forefathers is good enough for us...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 104). These are the people who took



extreme pride in the ways of their forefathers; this is why the Quran says that their forefathers knew nothing. This means that their forefathers could not think straight and that they did not have knowledge of anything. They lived in the deep darkness of ignorance.

In the verse we are presently examining, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions Pharaoh and his people as saying: 'Have you come to turn us away from the faith we found our fathers following, so that you and your brother can gain greatness in this land?...?' (*Yunus*: 78) What this means is that you have come to turn us away, to orient us away from our way which is that of our forefathers whom we imitate, so that you and your brother might gain greatness in this land. Thus, it becomes apparent that they believed that the greatness they enjoyed in the land is due to their emulation of their forefathers. They wished to hold on to this greatness.

There are two points to consider here: the first is abandoning that which they found their forefathers believing in and doing, while the second is relinquishing the political power that they possess in the land. An example of this is when one warrior tells another: 'Throw down your sword'. This is different from the command: 'Give me your sword' since throwing down a sword amounts to a stripping of power. However, taking a sword means adding another sword to the collection of weapons which the first warrior already possesses. For Pharaoh and his people, the message of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* represented a compound disaster. The first was abandoning the doctrine of the forefathers. The second was the stripping away of supremacy, namely temporal power, rank, authority, greatness, consultation and the advantages that come with all of these, for every member of Pharaoh's entourage derived his share of benefit depending upon his closeness to Pharaoh. That is why they declared their disbelief and said that with which Allah *Glorified is He* concluded the noble verse which we are currently examining: '...We will never believe in you.' (*Yunus*: 78) This means that the leading supporters of Pharaoh and his entourage declared their determination to hold on to their worldly gains and their temporal authority. They refused to believe in the message of Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them*.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ أَتَأْتُونِي بِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٧٩﴾

**And Pharaoh said, 'Bring me every learned sorcerer' [79] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 79)**

Pharaoh was well aware of the highly skilled sorcerers in his kingdom. It is enough that he himself succeeded in deluding people into thinking that he was a god. He then gave his aides the order to rally every sorcerer. As soon as he issued the order, the sorcerers were brought to him.

In the following verse Allah *Glorified is He* adds:

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالَ لَهُمُ مُوسَى أَلْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُلْقُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

**When the sorcerers came, Moses said to them, 'Throw down whatever you have' [80] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 80)**

The period between Pharaoh's issuing of the order and carrying it out was as short as possible. Thus, we should understand that an order issued by a man of great authority does not tolerate any procrastination or delaying on the part of those who execute it. When the Quran treats some issue or other, it always provides a detailed account of reality. The Quran does not refer to anything that could spoil the image of this reality. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And when the sorcerers came, Musa (Moses) said to them, "Throw down whatever you have.'" (*Yunus*: 80)

This verse effectively summarises the entire situation. When the sorcerers knew that Pharaoh needed their help in a predicament regarding the authority of the state, they knew that this issue was a tough and difficult one. Thus, they knew that they must hurry to his aid. In these verses, Allah *the Exalted* does not give a comprehensive account of the situation since there are other incidents of this story which are found in other passages of the Quran, and every verse sheds light on the incident with which it is concerned. This is why, in this instance, Allah *Glorified is He* does not say that Pharaoh's aides sent out a call to all of the cities that the sorcerers should come forth. This part of the story can be seen in other passages of the Quran.

Allah *Glorified is He* does not tell us here that the sorcerers wanted to take advantage from the situation as they told Pharaoh: 'Shall we be rewarded if we win?' (*al-A'raf*: 113) The stipulation of such clause reveals the nature of

human relationships in that society; asking for a reward means that, in their previous work with Pharaoh, they did not receive any recompense. Thus, when the opportunity presented itself, and they saw that Pharaoh was in a bind, they asked for a reward. Pharaoh promised to reward the sorcerers and to let them join his inner court because if their sorcery was able to defeat the miracle of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* such a feat would preserve Pharaoh's status as king. Therefore, they would have to be included among the royal entourage who benefitted the most from the royal graces. Pharaoh promised them all of this in order to encourage them to do their best to nullify Moses's miracle so that Pharaoh's throne might be consolidated. In the verse which we are presently reflecting on, Allah *Glorified is He* wishes to give a summary account of the events; the rest of them are mentioned in other passages of the Quran. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* presently says: 'When the sorcerers came, Moses said to them, "Throw down whatever you have."' (Yunus: 80) The sorcerers thereby threw down their staffs and their ropes.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَلَمَّا أَتَوْا قَالَ مُوسَىٰ مَا جِئْتُم بِهِ السِّحْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
سَيُبْطِلُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُصْلِحُ عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

**When they did so, Moses said, 'Everything you have brought is sorcery and God will show it to be false. God does not make the work of mischief-makers right [81] (The Quran, Yunus: 81)**

We know that, in this instance, Allah *Glorified is He* wishes to give a brief account of the situation. However, in another verse, He describes the events in detail. Allah *Glorified is He* says in that verse regarding the sorcerers: 'So they said, "Moses, will you throw first or shall we?"' (*al-A'raf*: 115) We know that in any showdown between two opponents, every side needs to taunt the other so as to lower the other side's morale. In this instance, Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* explains to them that what they had contrived is sorcery, amounting to mere illusion. Allah *Glorified is He* has informed His Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* that his staff would turn into a real snake, while the transformation of their staffs and ropes would consist of mere optical illusion. Musa (Moses)

*peace be upon him* conveyed to them Allah's verdict regarding such illusions: '...Everything you have brought is sorcery and Allah will show it to be false. Allah does not make the work of mischief-makers right.' (*Yunus*: 81)

Thus came the decisive statement which settled the matter; it was the judgment issued regarding the works of Pharaoh, his entourage and the sorcerers. All of their works were causing mischief on earth. Were it not for this fact, Allah *Glorified is He* would not have sent them a Messenger supported by a miracle which coincided with their own area of expertise. Indeed, they excelled at sorcery, so Allah *Glorified is He* sent forth a real miracle which devoured what they had contrived. If they excelled at creating illusions, Allah *Glorified is He* has created the universe with His utterance of the Word 'Be'. Allah creates realities, not illusions. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says in the following verse

وَيُحَقِّقُ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَتِهِ ۖ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

**He will uphold the Truth with His words, even if the evildoers hate it' [82] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 82)**

Thus, Allah's every wish is brought about by the word 'Be'. As soon as He utters this word, His wish is brought into being. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'When He wills something to be, His way is to say, "Be," and it is.' (*Ya Sin*: 82)

Now, the expression *kun fa-yakun* ('Be,' and it is) is a quite lengthy expression considering that it allegedly represents the amount of time that it takes for Allah's Command to be carried out. However, no shorter expression than this exists in the human language. Uttering the Arabic letters *Kaf* (K) and *Nun* (N) requires a certain amount of time. Nevertheless, doing what Allah *Glorified is He* wills does not require the passage of any time. In other words, the command *kun* (be) signifies that a thing is brought into existence even before the word *kun* has been spoken. Every existing thing is brought into existence and made manifest with the Will of Allah *Glorified is He*. Hence, He wills to show us here that the truth is conveyed through the words of the Messengers and that the miracles performed by them are evidence attesting to the authenticity of their Message, so that Allah *Glorified is He* punishes and humiliates the evildoers, while providing the world with relief from their aberrant and corrupt ways.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَمَا آمَنَ لِمُوسَى إِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِّن قَوْمِهِ عَلَى خَوْفٍ مِّن فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِمْ  
أَن يَفْتِنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

**But no one believed in Moses except a few of his own people, for fear that Pharaoh and their leaders would persecute them: Pharaoh was domineering in the land and prone to excess [83] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 83)**

Now, since the sorcerers—who were the aides of Pharaoh and his primary agents in the showdown with Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*—proclaimed their faith in Moses's Lord, Pharaoh therefore punished them, saying: ‘How dare you believe in him before I have given you permission?’ (*Ta Ha*: 71) This indicates that the idea of his own divinity still dominated his thinking; that is why the people were afraid to proclaim their faith, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘But no one believed in Moses except a few of his own people...’ (*Yunus*: 83) The word *dhurriyya* refers to the young children who were untouched by the widespread corruption in the land. In addition, young children enjoy the quality of purity, living in a complete detachment from the problems of the world. They have not yet reached the age when a person begins to covet power. They believed, even though they feared that Pharaoh and their leaders would persecute them. “For fear of Pharaoh and his establishment that they would persecute them”. (*Yunus*: 83)

The phrase ‘*ala khawf*’ (for fear) denotes a form of superiority similar to when we say ‘on the horse’ or ‘on the chair’. In this situation, the elevated subject is in a position of superiority compared to what he towers over. The one who rises over something is one who takes possession of that which he rises over; the latter, on the other hand, bears all the weight. However, one of the other uses of the preposition ‘*ala*’ (literally ‘on’) is when it serves to mean *ma’a* (in spite of). An example of this can be found Allah's Words: ‘They give food to the poor, the orphan, and the captive, though they love it themselves...’ (*al-Insan*: 8), meaning that they give away food in spite of their own love for it. When Allah *Glorified is He* uses one letter instead of another,

there is always a reason for that. An example can be found in Allah's Words quoting Pharaoh: 'I shall certainly cut off your alternate hands and feet, then crucify you *fi* ('on', but literally 'in') the trunks of palm trees...' (*Ta Ha*: 71) In this case, Allah *Glorified is He* employs the preposition *fi* (in) instead of the word '*Ala* (on) in order to indicate that the act of crucifixion shall be severe—so severe, in fact, that the parts of the crucified body shall be firmly fastened to the crucifixion object.

Likewise, witness the Words of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'They give food to the poor, the orphan, and the captive, though they love it themselves...' (*al-Insan*: 8). It is as though they were the ones who had mastery over the love, and such love could take them anywhere they wished. Also, witness Allah's Words in the verse we are examining: '... '*ala* (for) fear...' (*Yunus*: 83). That is, they are on top of fear which means that fear is leading them to the corridors of anticipation of pain. In this case, they had attained faith for 'fear that Pharaoh and their leaders would persecute them.' (*Yunus*: 83)

These words of Allah *Glorified is He* indicate that such fear is not fear of Pharaoh, because Pharaoh wages campaigns of terror through his agents and entourage. They are like the secret police in those countries which have no regard for human dignity. Due to his position and his status, Pharaoh does not torture in person; rather, this is done by his agents. In this instance, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...for fear that Pharaoh and their leaders would *yaftinahum* (literally, Pharaoh would persecute them).' (*Yunus*: 83) Allah *Glorified is He* does not say, '...for fear that they (both Pharaoh and their leaders) persecute them.' This indicates that the agents do not torture the believers because they take pleasure in it; rather, the agents do this because it is Pharaoh who takes pleasure in it.

Thus, the personal pronoun is mentioned in its plural form on one occasion and in its singular form on another occasion. This is so to ensure that every pronouncement in the Quran conveys its meaning in the clearest manner. When the exegetes wanted to shed light on the meaning of the word *dhurriyya*, they said, 'This word refers to Pharaoh's wife 'Asiya, Pharaoh's stockist, the wife of the stockist, Pharaoh's coiffeuse, and all from among Moses's people who attained faith but kept it a secret. All those people abstained from publicly proclaiming their faith in the Message of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon*

him out of fear of Pharaoh's punishment. Pharaoh was a tyrant in the land and claimed that he was divine, so, if Pharaoh suspected that someone was threatening his claim to divinity, he would inevitably submit him to the harshest of punishments. This was why they feared such punishment; previously, Pharaoh had, through his agents, slaughtered the newborn children of the Israelites while allowing their women to live. Thus, they lived in perpetual fear of Pharaoh's agents who carried out his every command. That is why the personal pronoun is employed to denote the plural form—as in the words of Allah *Glorified is He* '... and their leaders...' (*Yunus*: 83). The personal pronoun has also been employed to denote the singular form. In the following words of Allah *Glorified is He* the personal pronoun refers to Pharaoh as the giver of orders: '... for fear that he would....' (*Yunus*: 83). Therefore, they feared that Pharaoh persecute and torture them through his agents.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... Pharaoh was domineering in the land and prone to excess.' (*Yunus*: 83) The word *al-musrif* denotes exceeding proper bounds. In his excesses, Pharaoh had gone beyond all the limits, especially when he claimed to be a god. Allah *Glorified is He* quotes Pharaoh as saying: '...I am your supreme lord.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 24) Allah *Glorified is He* also says: 'Pharaoh said, "Counsellors, you have no other god that I know of except me"...' (*al-Qasas*: 38). Pharaoh rose to such great heights of arrogance that he routinely oppressed and terrorised other weak and helpless human beings. Allah *Glorified is He* also quotes Pharaoh as saying: 'Pharaoh said, "My people, is the Kingdom of Egypt not mine? And these rivers that flow at my feet, are they not mine?"...' (*az-Zukhruf*: 51) Thus, Pharaoh was guilty of the worst kind of excess.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يَاقَوْمِ إِن كُنتُمْ ءَامِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنتُمْ مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

**Moses said, 'My people, if you have faith in God and  
are devoted to Him, put your trust in Him' [84]  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 84)**

There are two stipulations involved in this verse. The first one is in Allah's Words: 'if you have faith in Allah' (*Yunus*: 84). The response to this stipulation

can be found in Allah's Words: 'put your trust in Him.' (*Yunus*: 84) Then, He mentions another stipulation: 'If you are devoted to Him.' (*Yunus*: 84) Thus, the first stipulation and its response are mentioned. Then, another stipulation comes—the latter is identical with the former; that is, the act of devotion to Allah because having faith in Allah *Glorified is He* entails their submission to Him and requires that they surrender to Him. From our own lives, we can give the example of the school principal who wants to punish a student who has violated the rules and regulations. The student tries to appeal to the principal's mercy, whereby the principal responds to his pleas by saying, 'If you show up to school on Saturday with your legal guardian, I will admit you'; the presence of the legal guardian is related to the appointment specified by the principal, if the pupil is to be readmitted into the classroom. Thus, we find that the second stipulation is connected to the first stipulation. It is this principle that is at work in the following Words of Allah *Glorified is He*: '...if you have faith in Allah and are devoted to Him, put your trust in Him.' (*Yunus*: 84)

Faith, as we know, is the inner work performed by the heart. Surrender to Allah *Glorified is He* is an external work. Sometimes, a person does perform the teachings of Islam. At other times, a person might abstain from performing the teachings even though he continues to cling to his faith in Allah *Glorified is He*. Likewise, you might find a person performing the teachings of Islam while lacking the inner faith. That is why we find Allah *Glorified is He* saying: '...those who believe and do righteous deeds.' (*Yunus*: 84). We find that Allah *Glorified is He* elucidates this matter by pointing to that pivotal statement in His Words: 'The desert Arabs say, "We have faith."' (*al-Hujurat*: 14) Faith is work of the heart; that is why the Divine Command follows: '...[Prophet], tell them, "You do not have faith. What you should say instead is, "We have submitted"', for faith has not yet entered your hearts.'" (*al-Hujurat*: 14) It means that, indeed, you perform the outward obligatory rites of Islam, however, faith has not yet entered your hearts.

In this instance, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... if you have faith in Allah and are devoted to Him, put your trust in Him.' (*Yunus*: 84) Thus, we see that trust in Allah *Glorified is He* is one of the requirements of faith: in every situation, a person must surrender his will to Allah *Glorified is He* in whom he



has faith. This is why faith is only efficacious when it is accompanied with total surrender to Allah *Glorified is He*. Thus, if you surrender to Allah *Glorified is He* along with your faith in Him, then place your trust in Him. However, if you have merely adopted the creedal aspect of faith and have not surrendered your will to Allah's directives— of 'Do' and 'Do not'—this type of trust in Allah *Glorified is He* is of no use. Thus, what we have said previously is being confirmed: if you come across a formulation such that it contains an initial stipulation, followed by a response and then followed by another stipulation—know that the latter stipulation is the one that is in the forefront because it is a stipulation concerning the first stipulation. In the present example, this means that the ability to place one's trust in Allah *Glorified is He* can only be achieved when the outer condition of surrender and the inner condition of faith are both present.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

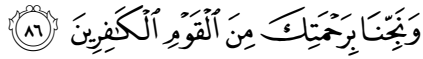
فَقَالُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

**They said, 'We have put our trust in God. Lord! Do not make us an object of persecution for the oppressors [85]  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 85)**

In other words, they responded positively to the Message of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* simply because they had said: 'We have put our trust in Allah.' (*Yunus*: 85). If the preposition is placed before its object, this implies that the matter is exclusive to the object. In this case, the act of placing one's trust is restricted to Allah *Glorified is He*; no one other than Him is a worthy recipient of our trust. Then, their supplication follows: 'Lord! Do not make us an object of persecution for the oppressors.' (*Yunus*: 85) The word *al-fitna* means trial. As we have said before, such trial is not bad in itself. However, what is bad is the end result of the trial if it proves to be disadvantageous for the tested subject. One could also use the word *fitna* as in *fatant adh-dhahab*, meaning 'I smelted gold; I refined it from all impurities'. We also know that goldsmiths mix it with other elements to make it stronger because gold that is not admixed with other elements can be brittle.

However, the word *al-fitna* used in the verse ‘Lord! Do not make us an object of persecution for the oppressors,’ (*Yunus*: 85) denotes the fear of renouncing their faith if Pharaoh were to seize and torture them. It is as if they were saying, ‘O Lord, do not allow Pharaoh to subjugate us through his harsh torture.’ This is if they are the ones being subjected to temptation, but what if they happen to be the tempters? In this case, if they do not follow the religion faithfully, Pharaoh and his people would not know that the people who proclaimed their faith have truly surrendered to Allah *Glorified is He*. If they deviate from the religion, the people of Pharaoh would say, ‘They are not true believers.’ We find Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him*—who is the father of the Prophets and enjoys great pre-eminence as a Prophet—saying: ‘Lord, do not expose us to mistreatment [at the hands of] the disbelievers.’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 5) This supplication of Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* teaches us the importance of adhering to the teachings of the religion; thus, no one should ever look at a Muslim or a believer and say, ‘This is a person who proclaims his faith and yet his behaviour is contrary to the teachings of his religion.’ That is why Ibrahim (Abraham) used to go above and beyond the call of duty when carrying out orders. Allah *Glorified is He* about him: ‘When Abraham’s Lord tested him with certain commandments, which he fulfilled...’ (*al-Baqara*: 124) That is, he used to fulfil every task faithfully and perfectly; he was a role model and did not perform his religious duties in a superficial manner. Therefore, if they happen to be the ones subjected to temptation, they ought to resist against these temptations. But if they happen to be the tempters, they must hold steadfast to the teachings of the religion, so that no one should ever accuse them of falling short regarding their religious obligations; otherwise, the disbelievers would fall even deeper into the darkness of disbelief and aberrance. Allah's Words, ‘Lord! Do not make us an object of persecution for the oppressors,’ (*Yunus*: 85) indicate that they are preoccupied with matters of religion, whether they are the ones subjected to temptation or they are the tempters.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**Save us, in Your mercy, from those who reject  
[Your message] [86] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 86)**

This noble verse clarifies that they were concerned with the state of the disbelievers; this means that they were hoping for the enemy to attain faith so that this enemy might come under the influence of the guidance of faith. Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: ‘No one of you becomes a true believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself.’<sup>(1)</sup> They wished for their enemies to attain faith in spite of the latter’s iniquity. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* teaches His creatures that it is the foolishness of enmity to wish for the misfortune of one’s enemies because it is your enemy’s evil side that makes you suffer, and it is in your advantage to pray for his wellbeing, because the benefit of his wellbeing will also reach you.

The believer must pray that his enemy will be guided to the truth; in becoming guided, you will in turn reap some of the benefit. One of the characteristics of faith is that its benefits extend over to others. When they prayed that Allah *Glorified is He* does not make them an object of persecution for the oppressors, this shows that there are various degrees of oppression and that Pharaoh and his people were guilty of the worst kind of oppression. Allah *Glorified is He* Himself says: ‘...attributing partners to Allah is a terrible wrong.’ (*Luqman*: 13) The climax of iniquity lies in stripping away the rights of one person and handing it to someone other than its rightful owner. Pharaoh and his people had attributed partners to Allah *Glorified is He*. Pharaoh thought of himself as a god, and those around him believed him. Therefore, the climax of iniquity consists of attributing partners to Allah *Glorified is He*. Below this grave act of iniquity, there are the major sins, and below them are the minor sins.

They prayed to Allah *Glorified is He* saying: ‘Save us, in Your Mercy, from those who reject Your Message.’ (*Yunus*: 86) Their words can be rephrased as ‘render us immune from the oppression of those people’. One of the biggest fears of the ancients was the gushing forth of floodwater in a way that only those standing on high ground would be saved. The term *an-najwa* means an

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(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari (13) and Muslim (45)

elevated area of the land; this is in fact the origin of the term *an-najah* (safety). Now in this instance, Allah *Glorified is He* quotes them as saying, ‘Save us, in Your Mercy, from those who reject [Your Message].’ (*Yunus*: 86) Mercy is tantamount to that ‘protection’ which prevents the coming of an illness. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘We send down the Quran as healing and mercy to those who believe...’ (*al-Isra*’: 82). The healing is required only if an illness is already present. Mercy, on the other hand, is that which safeguards against the coming of an illness.

Thereafter, Allah *Glorified is He* has wished to honour Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* and his people, so He says:

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ أَنْ تَبَوَّءَا لِقَوْمِكَ مِمَّا يَمْصُرُونَ بَيْوتًا وَأَجْعَلُوا  
بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

**We revealed to Moses and his brother: ‘House your people in Egypt and make these houses places of worship; keep up the prayer; give good news to the believers!’ [87] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 87)**

We have previously explained that Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them* were two Messengers bearing a single Message<sup>(1)</sup>; a revelation had descended upon the two of them in the form of a single Message. When Allah *Glorified is He* selects a Prophet or a Messenger, He does so based on certain excellent qualities of character and purity of soul. These virtues are what render a person qualified to bear a Message from heaven and to communicate what Allah *Glorified is He* wills.

Now, if Allah’s creatures have successfully crafted automated machines out of inanimate materials, which do not possess the capacity to think and to reflect—machines such as the clock which can make the call to prayer or the radio which broadcasts at specific times—if human beings have created such things, what should we suppose that Allah *Glorified is He* is capable of creating, given that He is the Creator of all the creatures and the universe and the One Who sends forth Messengers? Allah *Glorified is He* selects His Messengers in a

(1) Proofreader’s Note: This is the sheikh’s interpretation.

way that the inner strength of their character allows them to fulfil their assigned mission regardless of the external conditions.

In this instance, Allah's Words, 'We have revealed to Moses and his brother...' (*Yunus*: 87) indicate that the revelation was inspired to both Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them*. Thus, if there arose a situation which required Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* to speak, Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon him* would also be able to speak on the same subject, because their core faith and doctrine were the same. The events referred to in the verse took place after Pharaoh and his troops were drowned; thus, after the stifling atmosphere had been lifted, they were ordered to settle in the land of Egypt and to establish their homes therein.

However, we must ask a question here: has Pharaoh been drowned and perished forever? No, he has not because 'Pharaoh' is not the name of a person; rather, it is the name given to a particular function. All of the kings of ancient Egypt were known by the title 'Pharaoh', so, we need not speculate whether Pharaoh in question was Thutmose the first, Ramses or any of the other kings. Suppose that Pharaoh mentioned in the Quran had drowned, does this not imply that a new Pharaoh would have taken his place? We know from the history books that the ruling families succeeded one another; we know that there were Pharaohs, and that some of them used to persecute the believers. Thus, whoever succeeded the drowned Pharaoh must have been even more ruthless and hostile towards the believers.

Allah *Glorified is He* says in the holy verse which we are presently examining: 'We revealed to Moses and his brother: "House your people in Egypt..."' (*Yunus*: 87) We come across the word *Misr* (Egypt)—a term which, when used, is understood to mean a region. We, who live in this country, have employed the term *Misr* as a proper noun denoting the region that extends from the Mediterranean Sea to the border of Sudan. In other words, it is the region of the Nile valley. We have also employed the term *Misr* as a proper noun designating the capital of the Nile valley. We also call the train station in Cairo the *Misr* station.

From Allah's Words, 'House your people in Egypt' (*Yunus*: 87), we can deduce that the term *at-tabawwu'* means the act of consecrating a space for residential purposes. Such a space will, henceforth, be considered *maba'a*,

that is, a place to which people return. Therefore, the word *at-tabawwu'* means to settle down at a particular place. Thus, when a person establishes a place as his homeland, he then returns to it after a period of travel through other lands.

Leaving one's homeland is considered to be a mere journey that requires a person to eventually come back. The home plays a similar role for human beings. We might roam through the fields for an entire day, or we might spend it at the factory or at the office, but when the day comes to an end a person always returns home to sleep.

There was a condition concerning the houses which Allah *Glorified is He* has ordered Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them* to establish. As Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... and make these houses places of worship (Qibla)...' (*Yunus: 87*). The word *Qibla* denotes the direction towards which we pray. For example, the mosque is the direction marker for those who stand outside of it. When the mue'ghghin gives the call to prayer, the mosque effectively becomes the direction to which we head. When we are inside the mosque, we then orient ourselves towards the prayer direction. It is our orientation towards the prayer direction which determines our position within the linear arrangement of people inside the mosque. In this instance, the Commandment issued by Allah *Glorified is He* is as follows: '... and make these houses places of worship (Qibla); keep up the prayer...' (*Yunus: 87*). In this case, the establishing of houses is stipulated that they turn the houses into places of worship far removed from the eyes of their persecuting enemies. Their situation is akin to that of the early Muslims of Mecca at a time when Islam, still in its early stages, was weak. During that time, the Muslims used to pray inside the houses. This was the underlying reason that prevented their acts of prayer from being disclosed during the daytime. This secrecy helped keep the enemy unaware of the location of those offering prayer. As for the prayers which were conducted openly at night and at dawn, the purpose of these prayers was that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* could teach them how to recite the Quran properly.

Allah *Glorified is He* hereby commands them: 'House your people in Egypt and make these houses places of worship...' (*Yunus: 87*). One possible interpretation is that the houses must be facing one another. To this day, if you look at the

Jewish quarters of any city in the world, you will see that they all reside in the same neighbourhood, refusing to integrate into the surrounding neighbourhoods. Thus, in every country they have a neighbourhood where they reside—this is known as the ‘Jewish quarter’. In Egypt, they had ghettos; each was called the ‘Jewish ghetto’. Allah *Glorified is He* has willed that, and He says in His noble Book: ‘They were struck with humiliation and wretchedness...’ (*al-Baqara*: 61). By living closely to each other, they can protect themselves, and they can easily get together if a troublesome issue comes up.

Allah's Words, ‘... and make these houses places of worship...’ (*Yunus*: 87) can mean that the plan which determines the position of the streets and the houses should be such that they face the direction of prayer. An error in urban design such as the one in the plaza where the mosque of Imam Al-Hussain is built in Cairo—which makes people slightly skew to the right in order to face the proper direction of prayer—causes some confusion among the worshipers because this slight skewing to the right during the prayer means that every row must be shortened relative to the row in front of it.

Furthermore, when we pray in the sacred Mosque of Mecca, we find that some worshipers want to straighten the lines; their wish is that the rows be straight. Thus, we find some people alerting the others that a straightened line should extend for the length of one of the sides *Ka‘ba*; then, the line should be curved.

The same applies to the rows of worshipers praying on the upper levels of the sacred Mosque: we find curved rows facing the direction of the *Ka‘ba*. That is why I have always said, when I pray in the sacred Mosque, that when the leader of the prayer says, ‘straighten your lines,’ this means that you stand shoulder to shoulder. On the other hand, when we are outside the sacred Mosque where the *Ka‘ba* is, it is sufficient for us to face the direction of the *Ka‘ba* in prayer. When praying outside the Sacred Mosque, we do not face *Ka‘ba* itself, we merely pray towards its direction. If we were to pray towards the *Ka‘ba* itself, the length of the rows in any given mosque would not extend beyond twelve meters and a quarter—which is the extent of the longest side of the *Ka‘ba*.

Here, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...and make these houses places of worship...’ (*Yunus*: 87). This means, in other words, that we should design houses in such a way that they are aligned with the direction of prayer.

Although some people endeavour to apply this principle, the layout of the streets and the neighbourhoods do not often help them. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘... and keep up prayer...’ (*Yunus*: 87). We should understand from this command that prayer represents a renewal of our allegiance to Allah *Glorified is He*. For we proclaim the testament—that there is no god but Allah—once in our lifetime; we give the obligatory alms—if we have enough property—once a year and we fast—if we are not sick—during a single month of the year, namely, Ramadan. Furthermore, we perform the pilgrimage—if we are so able—once in a lifetime. Of all the five pillars of Islam, what we are left with is the prayer; a rite which is repeated five times every day—a person can offer more if he wishes. It is as though Allah *Glorified is He* underscores this critical pillar of the religion: prayer.

Who is it that chose the place of the houses mentioned in the verse which we are presently reflecting on? Is it Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them*? Or are the words of the verse addressed to the community as whole? We may note that the order of housing the people is directed to Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them*. As for the order to make the houses places of worship, it is directed not only to Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them* but also to their followers; that is why the latter order is formulated in the plural mode.

Allah *Glorified is He* concludes this holy verse with the words: ‘... and give good news to the believers!’ (*Yunus*: 87) This is a sign confirming that Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was the original recipient of the Message; that is why he is commanded to give glad tidings to the believers. One might note that Allah employs the dual mode in this verse when it comes to the command of ‘housing the people’. He then employs the plural mode when it comes to the command to make the houses places of worship. Afterwards, He employs the singular mode at the end of the verse as to alert us to the fact that Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was the original recipient of Allah's Message to the children of Israel.

Giving glad tidings as a result of a person's righteous actions amounts to giving the glad tidings that the person will enter paradise.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:



وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ ءَاتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئَهُ زِينَةً وَأَمْوَالًا فِي  
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا رَبَّنَا لِيُضِلُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِكَ رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْ عَلَىٰ أَمْوَالِهِمْ  
وَأَشَدِّدْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّىٰ يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٨٨﴾

**And Moses said, ‘Our Lord, You have given Pharaoh and his chiefs splendour and wealth in this present life and here they are, Lord, leading others astray from Your path. Our Lord, obliterate their wealth and harden their hearts so that they do not believe until they see the agonizing torment’ [88]**  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 88)

The word *az-zina* denotes any superfluous luxuries that exceed the basic necessities which sustain life. The sustaining life requires eating any food that satisfies hunger and drinking water that quenches thirst. If there are a variety of foods, this amounts to opulence. Other luxuries of life include clothes which do more than just covering the private parts of the body; in other words, we are talking about those fashionable clothes that are characterised by high quality textile, stitching, and design. Other luxuries of life include the place where a human sleeps; that is, the bed which might be furnished with the most luxurious of feathers. However, the basic requirement for a sleeping place consists of a place on the ground—any bed that protects from the cold or the heat of the floor. Thus, what is superfluous with respect to the basic necessities of life can be considered a luxury. Luxuries are brought about by having wealth, and the original standard value of money is gold, with silver occupying the second place.

One of the principles of the economy is that the balance of gold is considered to be the standard for assessing the richness of any country in the world; this is in spite of the fact that they have discovered precious stones to be more valuable than gold. If those precious stones—like diamonds, for example—are broken or scratched, their value diminishes. However, with gold, no matter how much it might break up, you simply melt it down again to create a nugget. Pharaohs of ancient times used to rule over Egypt all the way down to the source of the Nile. They used to put people to work on various tasks, including gold mining—in actual mines or through the process of sifting the sands of certain mountains to extract it.

You could extract gold yourself from certain places. However, the bottom line is always the economic cost of extracting the gold. When a particular mine is plentiful, containing numerous gold veins, in such a case, the extraction of gold becomes a matter of making an overall profit. However, when the cost of extracting the gold exceeds the market value of the gold, then nobody attempts to extract it.

If you contemplate the luxurious lifestyles of Pharaohs, you will see that the mask of Tutankhamen, for example, is a paragon of beauty. Likewise, their palaces reflect the peak of luxury. It would be enough for you to witness the colour pigments out of which the wall paints were made in those days—you would come to realise the refined craftsmanship involved and the extent of opulence the rulers enjoyed. Such luxuries far exceeded the basic necessities of life.

In this holy verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘And Moses said, “Our Lord, You have given Pharaoh and his chiefs splendour and wealth in this present life and here they are, Lord, leading others astray from Your Path...”’ (*Yunus*: 88). Not only were Pharaoh and his chiefs aberrant, but they also wanted to lead others astray as well. That is why they carried not only the burden of their own aberrance but also the burden of leading others astray. Has Allah *Glorified is He* bestowed splendour and riches upon them so that they might go astray and lead others astray as well? No, this was not the reason why they were given splendour and riches. The proposition *lam* (to) is not used to give the reason for giving them splendour and riches; rather, it is used to show the end result of that. Just as, for example, you give your son ten pounds and tell him: ‘Do with this money what you please; however, I would prefer it if you used this money for profitable ends.’ The child might go out and buy something useless; he might not purchase, for instance, books that could be beneficial. In this example, you gave your son a degree of purchasing power; however, he did not make good use of it. He used his freedom of choice to purchase toys. This is a situation where the son is blameworthy, not because he was free to act as he wished, but because of the consequences of his actions.

When Allah *Glorified is He* has wished to save Moses’s life during his childhood, He has inspired the mother of Moses by saying: ‘... and then, when you fear for his safety, put him in the river: do not be afraid, and do not

grieve.’ (*al-Qasas*: 7) There is no mother in the world that would ever accede to such a command, because it would amount to certain death for her son. If the son were to be kidnapped or if he were to go missing, this would amount to probable death. However, if he were to be thrown in the river, this would not amount to probable death; rather, it would amount to certain death—unless he is saved by Allah *Glorified is He*. However, by virtue of her unshakable faith in Allah *Glorified is He* the mother Moses carried out what Allah *Glorified is He* had inspired her to do—because what comes from Allah *Glorified is He* meets no opposition within the pure and sincere soul. As for the whisperings of the devil, they are met with stiff opposition from within the soul; such is also the case with the thoughts of the lower self. That is why the mother of Moses *peace be upon him* carried out that which Allah *Glorified is He* had inspired her to do, even though it ran contrary to all logic and rational thought. When Pharaoh’s family picked up Moses out of the water—and despite their continuous slaughter of children—Allah *Glorified is He* has instilled love for Moses in their hearts. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘... for I showered you with My love...’ (*Ta Ha*: 39). The moment they saw the young Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* they loved him and they did not kill him. Thus, Allah’s Will and Promise to the mother of Moses were fulfilled: ‘... for we shall return him to you and make him a Messenger.’ (*al-Qasas*: 7) That is, Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was destined for a mission which Allah *Glorified is He* had pre-ordained for him.

This is why we find a series of Commands which the Quran describes with respect to the mother of Moses placing him in the river. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘We inspired your mother, saying, “Put your child into the chest, then place him in the river. Let the river wash him on to its bank...”’ (*Ta Ha*: 38-39). These are all the Orders of Allah *Glorified is He*. Thereupon, Pharaoh’s wife saw him and said to her husband: ‘Here is a joy to behold for me and for you!’ (*al-Qasas*: 9) Now did Pharaoh know that this child whom his wife had picked up would grow up to be his enemy? No, Pharaoh had taken him out of the river, and they both gave the child a life of luxury, so that he would grow up to be a source of joy for him. This was the reason behind picking up Moses from the river. However, the end result was that Musa (Moses) *peace be*

*upon him* grew up to be Pharaoh's enemy; had the enmity between Moses and Pharaoh existed when the former was a child, Pharaoh would not have picked up Moses from the river, or he might have even killed him on the spot. Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* places certain things in His universe which undermine the guile of human beings. Thus, Pharaoh took him in and raised him, but the end result turned out to be different from what Pharaoh had expected.

When, in the verse which we are currently examining, Allah *Glorified is He* says, '... They are leading others astray,' (*Yunus*: 88) we should realise that Allah *Glorified is He* has not given them wealth so that they go astray. Rather, they chose to go astray. Many a people whom Allah *Glorified is He* has given wealth and power have used it towards good ends. Thus, we see that it is all up to the choices that human beings make—whether they chose to go astray or to follow the right Path. Thus, Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* said: 'Our Lord, You have given Pharaoh and his chiefs splendour and wealth in this present life and here they are, Lord, leading others astray from Your path. Our Lord, obliterate their wealth and harden their hearts...' (*Yunus*: 88).

The word (*at-tams*) refers to the act of hiding the distinguishing marks. For example, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... before We wipe out [your sense of] direction, turning you back...' (*an-Nisa*': 47). In this case, the word *at-tams* means the act of hiding the lineaments of those faces in a way that they become a single whole, devoid of forehead, eyebrows, eyes, ears, lips and chin. Thus, the word (*at-tams*) denotes the act of obliterating the form that a particular thing possesses. So, Moses's supplication in this verse, '... Our Lord, obliterate their wealth,' (*Yunus*: 88) means to spoil their riches. Some authors of books narrating this story have said that their riches were indeed spoiled. Thus, those who owned pieces of gold saw their wealth turn into stone; those who owned precious gems saw their wealth turn into glass. The words, '... Our Lord, obliterate their wealth,' (*Yunus*: 88) could also mean to obliterate their riches for their wealth was the means that enabled them to lead people astray.

Thereafter, Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* says: '... and harden their hearts so that they do not believe until they see the agonizing torment.' (*Yunus*: 88) This means: O Lord, set a seal over their hearts, such that the disbelief contained therein can never get out, and such that no glimmer of

faith can ever enter into them from the outside. For, indeed, they have forged a most blasphemous lie. Thus, may those seals remain forever grafted onto their hearts until they see the agonizing torment? Why did Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* utter such a supplication against the people of Pharaoh? Why did he not utter a supplication similar to that uttered by our Messenger Muhammad *peace be upon him*: ‘O Lord, guide my people for they comprehend not’? The answer is that Allah *Glorified is He* must have informed Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* that calling such people to faith would be of no avail. Moses’s main fear was not that the people of Pharaoh would persist in their aberrant ways, but rather that they would continue to lead others astray. Therefore, Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* uttered the following supplication against them: ‘... Our Lord, obliterate their wealth and harden their hearts so that they do not believe until they see the agonizing torment.’ (*Yunus*: 88) Elsewhere in the Holy Quran, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘... but believing after seeing Our Punishment did not benefit them at all...’ (*Ghafir*: 85). Thus, we can distinguish between faith that has been attained as a result of coercion and that which has been attained as a result of freewill. Therefore, when a Messenger comes forth to call people to faith, the audience has the right either to believe the Message or to reject it; for, Allah *Glorified is He* has created human beings, and He has given them freewill. However, faith attained by coercion can be of no benefit to a person. Pharaoh is a case in point: when the time of suffering came upon him, he proclaimed to have attained faith. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...But as he was drowning he cried, “I believe there is no God except the one the Children of Israel believe in. I submit to Him.”’ (*Yunus*: 90) Moses’ supplication against the people of Pharaoh is echoed by that of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*. The latter is cited in the Quran as saying: ‘Lord, do not leave any of the disbelievers on the earth [26]—if you leave them they will lead Your servants astray and beget only sinners and disbelievers.[27]’ (*Nuh*: 26-27)

Allah *Glorified is He* has accepted Moses’s supplication as He says:

قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَت دَعْوَتُكُمَا فَاسْتَقِيمَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعَانِ سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾

**God said, ‘Your prayers are answered, so stay on the right course, and do not follow the path of those who do not know’ [89] (The Quran, Yunus: 89)**

Note that the person who uttered the supplication was Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*; however, when Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Your prayers are answered...’ (Yunus: 89), this indicates that Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon him* had joined Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* in uttering the supplication. We have previously said that if we looked at the original recipient of the Message, we would conclude that it is none other than Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon him* was sent to provide Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* with support. Looking at the nature of these two figures, we would have to consider both as being Messengers bearing the same Message.

Since Allah *Glorified is He* has sent forth the two Messengers to carry out a common objective; then, if one of them reacts to something, the other must be expected to react to the same thing. Therefore, it is conceivable that when Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon him* heard his brother uttering such a supplication, he also made such a supplication, or he might have made it silently.

*Ad-du'a* (supplication) means that you seek recourse with someone who has the power to carry out what you cannot. Thus, you would only utter a supplication with respect to a matter whose circumstances you are powerless to tackle on your own. Thus, you would say, ‘I have my Lord in whom I believe, and He is Capable of overcoming any circumstances, for He is the Creator of the circumstances. Moreover, He can bestow bounties without any causes or means.’ The true believer takes on the events of his life, not with the secondary causes in mind; rather, he tackles them while being mindful of the Omnipotence of the One in Whom he believes and He is the Ultimate Originator.

That is why when Musa (Moses) and his people reached the sea, and Pharaoh and his legions were pursuing them, Moses’s people said: ‘We shall definitely be caught.’ (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 61). Whereupon Musa (Moses) replied: ‘No, my Lord is with me: He will guide me,’ (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 62). In other words, do not assess the situation according to human criteria, for with me is the Lord of human beings. Musa (Moses) thereby received the following

words of deliverance: ‘We revealed to Moses: “Strike the sea with your staff.” It parted—each side like a mighty mountain.’ (*ash-Shu’ara’*: 63)

Thus, a supplication consists of seeking the help of one who can overcome that which you cannot. The main issue which preoccupied the mind of Moses and Aaron *peace be upon them* was the persistence of the people of Pharaoh’s in their aberrant ways, as well as their insistence on leading others astray. Thus, it is only natural that the two Messengers would utter the same supplication. Similar instances of telepathy<sup>(1)</sup>—that is, when thoughts coincide simultaneously—can be found with other Messengers. In the history of Islam, one example of this phenomenon is when ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab *Allah be pleased with him* was preoccupied with thoughts of the Muslim army engaged in one of its battles. At the time, he was in Medina delivering a sermon from the pulpit. Suddenly, he uttered the words: ‘O Sariya, to the mountain.’ These words had nothing to do with the subject of the sermon. However, his thoughts were centred on the general who was engaged in combat. Despite being too far away, the general heard the order of ‘Umar and led his troops to the mountain. In such a situation, one could say that one mind telepathically made contact with another mind. This is as when you call someone on the telephone and the person whom you wish to speak to says, ‘I was just about to call you.’ This means that the two thoughts occurred simultaneously. Now, if these things can happen in our daily lives, then what can we suppose happens on the subtle spiritual realm, which the highest level is prophethood?

It could also be the case that Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* uttered the supplication, and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon him* was merely the one who said ‘Amen’. In this case, Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon him* can be considered as someone who participated in the supplication. Since Allah *Glorified is He* has answered Moses’s supplication, He has also answered the prayer of the one who, after the supplication had been uttered, said ‘Amen’. Some people think that, when a prayer is answered, this means that whatever was prayed for is granted immediately. However, the truth is that when a prayer is answered, this means that Allah *Glorified is He* has agreed to grant for whatever was prayed. This, for example, is what happened with the supplication uttered

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(1) Proofreader’s Note: This is the sheikh’s interpretation.

by Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* against Pharaoh and his leading supporters: when he uttered the prayer—and after Harun (Aaron) had said ‘Amen’—the answer would come forty years later: ‘Your prayers are answered...’ (*Yunus*: 89). It was then that Allah *Glorified is He* carried out their prayer that Pharaoh’s riches would be wiped out.

On the one hand, heaven is not subservient to the one who utters a supplication, nor is it obliged to accept any and all supplications. On the other hand, once a supplication is accepted, then the date of its execution must be specified. These are matters that are subject to Allah’s Will; He is not obliged to answer all prayers. However, He has control over everything, and when He agrees to answer a particular prayer, He will specify an appropriate date whereby the prayer is to be granted, because if the prayer is granted immediately, it might be detrimental to a person.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘yet man prays for harm, just as he prays for good: man is ever hasty.’ (*al-Isra*’: 11) That is why Allah *Glorified is He* specifies the date when the prayer will be answered and carried out on the practical level. He says: ‘... I will show you my signs soon, so do not ask me to hasten them.’ (*al-Anbiya*’: 37) Man knows that he might have prayed for things which, when Allah *Glorified is He* granted them, turned out to be detrimental. There are many supplications which human beings have uttered, but Allah *Glorified is He* has not granted them—and this is often a blessing in disguise. Thus, there is a Higher Power which watches over us and knows what is in our best interest. This Higher Power is not a collection of deities whose function is to answer man’s every prayer. This Higher Power above us is none other than Allah *Glorified is He*—the All-Wise, Most High. That is why, in our explanation of Allah’s Words: ‘If Allah were to hasten on for people the harm [they have earned] as they wish to hasten on the good, their time would already be up...’ (*Yunus*: 11) we say that the person might pray for what is detrimental. Is it not the case that a mother will sometimes utter a supplication against her son or her daughter, even though she loves them both? Were Allah *Glorified is He* to answer her supplication—which she has uttered against her children—would this not be detrimental for the mother? In a moment of anger, the son might tell his mother, ‘O Lord, I pray that I am



stricken in an accident, that way you can finally get rid of me, mother.’ Now imagine what would happen if Allah *Glorified is He* answered this prayer. Would this really please the son who supplicated against himself? Would it please his mother? Of course it would not; if Allah *Glorified is He* has abstained from answering a prayer for something bad, this is to your benefit. Similarly, if Allah *Glorified is He* delays answering a supplication for something good, you must assume that there is some good in this. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* has wished to tell Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them*: ‘Your prayers are answered, so stay on the right course, and do not follow the path of those who do not know.’ (*Yunus*: 89) In other words, remain steadfast on the Straight Path and do not concern yourselves with which you have no knowledge of. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Noah called out to his Lord, saying, “My Lord, my son was one of my family though your promise is true, and You are the most just of all judges.” [45] Allah said, “Noah, he was not one of your families. What he did was not right. Do not ask me for things you know nothing about. I am warning you not to be foolish.”’ (*Hud*: 45-46) That is, be respectful when praying to your Lord and giving vent to your worries; leave the matter to the All-Wise, for He will decide whether or not to answer your prayer. Answering the prayer might be either granted immediately or delayed to a specific time —either way, it will be good for you.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَجَوْرَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ بَغْيًا  
وَعَدُوًّا حَقًّا إِذَا أَدْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ قَالَ ءَامَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا الَّذِي  
ءَامَنْتُ بِهِ بَنُو إِسْرَءِيلَ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

**We took the Children of Israel across the sea. Pharaoh and his troops pursued them in arrogance and aggression. But as he was drowning he cried, ‘I believe there is no God except the one the Children of Israel believe in. I submit to Him’ [90]**  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 90)

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘We took the Children of Israel across the sea’ (*Yunus*: 90); the act of crossing the sea was not accomplished thanks to

human means; rather, this feat was due to the means that transcended those of human beings. If Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* had dug a tunnel underneath the sea floor, or if he and his people had embarked on ships, then, in this case, one could say that they had a hand in the feat of crossing the sea. However, this crossing was due to reasons that are imperceptible to human beings. It is Allah *Glorified is He* Who has inspired Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* ‘...to strike the sea with his staff...’ (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 63).

The water of the sea is like any other water—they are subject to the laws of liquids, or the hydraulic principles, where the water level tends to equalize throughout. This is in contrast to solid materials which do not tend towards equalization, even if they are in a state of inequality. The hydraulic principles are the basis for those techniques by which water is transported from water towers to residential buildings. Typically, the water towers stand higher than the residential buildings in the area. Water is pumped up into these water towers. The water is thereafter distributed to the houses depending upon the design of the plumbing systems in such houses. However, if there is a building which stands higher than the water tower, the residents of the building must install a pump to push the water up to the highest floors. Now, if the waters of the sea are governed by the laws of liquids and hydraulics, how were these laws suspended?

Allah *Glorified is He* says: “and it parted, and each portion was like a great towering mountain” (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 63). How did the water transform into mountains with passages and walkways, and Moses and his people cutting through them; how could they go forth with such reassurance? Surely, it could only have been Allah’s Company that protected them. This is the explanation of what Moses said: "No! Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me" (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 62).

However, Pharaoh and his legions pursued them in the hopes of catching up to them. As soon as Moses and his people had made it safely across, He wanted to strike the sea with his staff so that it might return to its original state of liquidity once again. Had he done so, he would not have allowed Pharaoh and his army to travel along the passageways across the mountains of water. Allah, however, had different plans. He wanted to both save Moses and

his people as well as destroy Pharaoh and his army using the same tool. Therefore, He inspired Moses *peace be upon him* “And leave the sea in stillness. Indeed, they are an army to be drowned” (*ad-Dukhan*: 24) Allah ordered Moses to leave the sea in its current state so that Pharaoh and his legions might be tricked, and as soon as the last soldier gets to the passageway between the two mountains of water, the sea would return to its original liquid state, whereby Pharaoh and his army would be drowned while Moses and his people would be saved.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: “and Pharaoh and his soldiers pursued them” (*Yunus*: 90) did this pursuit prove that Pharaoh harboured malicious intent? Is it possible that Pharaoh’s intention was to invite Moses *peace be upon him* and his people to return to Egypt and settle therein? The reality is that it was not Pharaoh’s intention, and that is why, Allah *Glorified is He* has described his way of pursuing Moses as “in tyranny and enmity until” (*Yunus*: 90) this means that Pharaoh was pursuing them with the intention of taking his revenge and humiliating them. The Holy Quran depicts the scene of Pharaoh drowning in the following terms: 'until when drowning overtook him, he said: I believe.' (*Yunus*: 90) The word *idrak* denotes the intention of somebody to catch up to something. However, drowning is a verbal noun, so how can this verbal noun be something that is pursuing Pharaoh? Actually, it is as though drowning was one of the soldiers of Allah who has an active intellect and is participating in events.

Pharaoh claimed that he had believed. Belief in a general and absolute sense refers to the faith in the Highest Power, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'the dwellers of the desert say: “We believe.” Say: “You do not believe but say, ‘We submit.’”’ (*al-Hujurat*: 14) Belief requires the subjugation of the heart vis-à-vis Allah, while submitting in Islam requires that a person abide by the five pillars of the religion.

Regarding belief, the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Say: I believe in Allah, and then be steadfast.' These words affirm quite explicitly that true belief is having faith in none other than Allah Most-High. However, when I say, for example, that I have faith that you are a good man, this kind of faith pertains specifically to someone or something, while proclaiming belief

or faith in the absolute sense, pertains to Allah; that is why Allah ordered the Bedouin to say that they have submitted. Here, in the verse which we are currently examining, Pharaoh is quoted as saying: 'I believe that there is no god, but He in whom the children of Israel believe, and I am of those who submit.' (*Yunus*: 90) The confrontation was between Pharaoh, who represented the side of disbelief, and Moses, Aaron and their people, who represented the side of faith.

Pharaoh proclaimed his belief in Allah and added that he was among those who submit. Nevertheless, Allah *Glorified is He* did not accept such a declaration of his and says:

ءَالَيْنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

**Now? When you had always been a rebel, and a troublemaker! [91] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 91)**

This can be rephrased as an exclamation of what Pharaoh had said. It is as if Allah tells him that such a proclamation of his is unacceptable since he is saying it now that he has attained faith and that he is among those who surrender themselves to Allah when it is the wrong time. There is a major difference between the faith that has been attained through coercion, and the faith that has been attained through man's own freewill. Are you saying that now, while you have transgressed against us in the past and spread corruption on earth?

It was possible that Allah could have accepted his declaration of faith had he uttered it in some safe place away from the imminent peril that encompassed him. Allah *Glorified is He* does not accept the declaration of faith uttered by one who is on the verge of death because this faith is a coerced one and not one that has been attained out of freewill. If Allah wanted from us a coerced faith, He would have forced all His creatures to be believers, and no one would be able to disbelieve in Him. We see the whole universe is completely subjugated to the Will of Allah, and no one rebels against Allah. The Absolute Power of Allah *Glorified is He* is capable of forcing human beings to believe in Him. However, it is a testament to the Absoluteness of His Power, and it is not used to prove love on the part of a man. Real love for

Allah can only be proved when you have a choice between believing and disbelieving. What Allah wants from you is that faith that has been attained through your own freewill.

Therefore, it was not Pharaoh's words that had been rejected; it was the timing of these words. It has been said: that the declaration of faith of Pharaoh had been rejected even though he uttered it three times, because the people of Moses *peace be upon him* had, at that time, began to distort the attributions of Allah's Essence. They were attributing corporeal attributes to Him and claimed, may Allah forbid, that He had sat down on a rock, lowered His feet into a pond of water and began playing with a fish and such falsehoods fabricated by the children of Israel. Thus, when Pharaoh announced that he had believed in the God as did the children of Israel, this implied that he had not attained faith in the True God.

Thereafter Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِدَنِّكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلَفَكَ آيَةً  
وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا لَغَافِلُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

**Today We shall save only your corpse as a sign to  
all posterity. A great many people fail to heed  
Our signs' [92] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 92)**

We know that man is composed of a body which is that material structure that takes on the form we are all familiar with; and within the body, there is the soul. The latter is what provides life and make work possible. When we say *badan* (body), know that we mean the body to the exclusion of the soul. In other words, *badan* is synonymous with *jasad*. Similarly, when we say *jasad*, we mean that material structure considered in and of itself to the exclusion of the soul. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And certainly We tried Sulaiman, and We put on his throne a [mere] body.' Solomon *peace be upon him* enjoyed, thanks to what Allah bestowed upon him, such great dominion that no one would ever enjoy after him. Allah put the Jinn and the wind to his service. Allah taught Solomon all the languages and thereby, he possessed great authority. He issued commands and laid down proscriptions. One day,

he found himself seated on his throne, unable to move, lacking his powerful spirit and subject to any challenge from his people. Then, Allah returned his powerful spirit to his body, thereupon he turned to Allah, regained consciousness and realized that everything he possesses is a gift imparted to him from Allah, and that none of it is innate. "And We certainly tried Solomon and placed on his throne a body; then he returned" (*Sad*: 34).

In the blessed verse which we are presently examining, Allah *Glorified is He* says that He would save only the body of Pharaoh so that it be a sign to those who would come after him. Now, if Allah had not ordered the sea to throw out the body of Pharaoh, would it have been possible for them to still believe that he is a god and shall return once again? However, Allah *Glorified is He* wished that the sea would spit out his corpse just as it spits out the corpse of any drowned animal in order to cut any doubt to his drowning. It was to let the survivors from among his people see him for what he was and know that he was merely human. Thereafter, his demise would act as warning to all after he was an iniquitous tyranny proclaiming divinity. "And Pharaoh said, "O eminent ones, I have not known you to have a god other than me" (*al-Qasas*: 38).

Some historians have said that the pharaoh in question is Thutmose, as they have conducted an autopsy on his mummified body and found traces of salt water. We contend, however, that Pharaoh is not the name of a particular person; rather, it is the description of a function. It is as if the mummified bodies of Pharaohs are telling us that the reason for the preservation of these corpses is to serve as warnings; let every human take a warning from their example and realize how civilizations collapse and how these corpses have endured so that we might learn a lesson from them.

Allah *Glorified is He* presented the issue of Pharaoh in the Quran and how tyrannical he was "And [with] Pharaoh, owner of the stakes?" (*al-Fajr*: 10) However, in the same chapter, He says "Indeed, your Lord is in observation" (*al-Fajr*: 14) We note that Allah *Glorified is He* includes in the chapter of *al-Fajr*, while mentioning the pharaonic civilizations, other civilizations of antiquity such as that of 'Ad and Thamud, for example. Allah *Glorified is He* has also spoken about the Pharaoh position during certain scenes from the story of Moses. However, the discourse differs when it comes to the story of

Joseph *peace be upon him*; the position of Pharaoh is not being referenced. Allah rather speaks to us of other kinds of functions, namely, '*Aziz Misr*, which means the prime minister of Egypt, and narrates the story of the king of Egypt not Pharaoh.

It was only with the coming of the French military campaign in Egypt that the difference between the function of pharaoh and that of king was discovered. When Champollion successfully deciphered the hieroglyphic language, thanks to the carvings etched onto the Rosetta Stone, we finally realized that the rulers of ancient Egypt were called pharaohs, except during a period which Egypt was ruled by the Hyksos. They had attacked Egypt, defeated its pharaonic rulers, and established their own rule over the land. Later, Pharaohs would regain their control over Egypt after having expelled the Hyksos. This is why the Quran does not refer to the pharaoh but to the king in the story of Joseph. This indicates that the knowledge contained in the Quran predates all discoveries. Every time a new discovery is made or a new invention is devised, we find that it corroborates the content of the Book of Allah.

Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the verse that we are presently studying with His words: 'and most surely the majority of the people are heedless to Our communications.' (*Yunus*: 92) This phrase illustrates that there are those who are heedless of the signs of Allah, and there are those who are cognizant of them. They contemplate and reflect on the signs. They wonder about the meaning of things and create new inventions that benefit humanity. They discover such inventions that Allah permitted to see the light of day while doing scientific research in order to manifest the wondrous work of Allah in the universe.

When a person thinks about those discoveries and inventions that humanity has produced over time, he will realize that they are the product of the minds of those who examined things closely and possessed the ability to grasp the fundamental concepts and conceiving innovative new ideas. If the majority of human beings were not so heedless of the signs of Allah in the universe, the heavens, and the earth, more innovations and inventions would see the light of day.

Allah *Glorified is He* Himself has said: 'And how many a sign in the heavens and the earth which they pass by, yet they turn aside from it.' (*Yusuf*: 105) Consider, for example, the law of gravity which was discovered by Newton.

He observed an apple falling from a tree. However, there have been tens of thousands or millions of people before him who witnessed the same scene of a fruit falling from a tree; Newton reflected on the dynamics of such an event, and this led him to discover the law of gravity; the scientists after him applied his principle of gravity as well as other principles to construct spaceships. Similarly, those who designed submarines, as well as huge ships that look like floating cities, relied on Archimedes' principle of buoyancy, which he discovered by noting that the level of a given liquid rises in proportion to the volume of the object immersed in that liquid.

All of these personalities discovered and did not create those secrets that had been deposited in the physical cosmos. They were only keen observers of phenomena. In addition, the scientist who discovered penicillin had noticed that a beaker holding organic matter was exuding drops of putrid water. He also noticed that any insect that came into contact with that water died. He, therefore, took a sample of this water and ran tests on it in his laboratory and discovered penicillin. Thus, the above mentioned verse (*Yusuf*: 105) suggests that if men had not turned away heedlessly, they might have made numerous discoveries.

Similarly, the stories narrated in the Quran are to prompt people to consider carefully and to contemplate. When Allah sends forth a Messenger, imparting him with the ability to perform a miracle that humans are incapable of reproducing, people must submit to the message and believe. They must not keep repeating past experiences. Humanity has been progressing steadily on the material plane, and every new generation of scientists builds upon the knowledge accumulated by the previous generation. Hence, why does not this process occur when it comes to matters of doctrinal nature? If people were to start from where predecessors stopped, we would find that everyone would be a believer in Allah. If every new born built upon the sum of his father's knowledge, the excellent qualities of Adam would be transmitted to every new generation thereafter. Unfortunately, man is plagued by the desire to experience everything himself.

This is the case with respect to harmful things like alcohol, for example. It is detrimental to anyone who indulges in it, but when such substances are



prohibited by religious laws, there are still those who wonder why it has been prohibited. The same is applicable to smoking; there are those who engage in the practice of smoking tobacco even though past experience has demonstrated its extremely detrimental effects. The reality is if every person was to imbibe the lessons learned of his predecessors, he would effectively reach their same level of experience and wisdom. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ مَبْوَأَ صِدْقٍ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا حَتَّى  
جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

**We settled the Children of Israel in a good place and provided good things as sustenance for them. It was only after knowledge had come to them that they began to differ among them- selves. Your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection regarding their differences [93]**  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 93)

The word *tabawwa'* in this verse means to establish a *maba'a* which is a private house. The absolute and general meaning of the word *mubawwa'* denotes a province or a country. The difference between a country and a private house is that you and anyone else can travel at leisure within a country, while a private house is someone's private quarter that is exclusive to him and his family. A rich man could have a private suite in his house reserved for himself, for his son and yet another for his daughter. However, most families reside in an apartment composed of one, two, or three rooms depending on the family's financial means. Thus, there is a difference between *tabawwu'* in terms of houses and *tabawwu'* in terms of countries. When it comes to countries it refers to citizen. Allah *Glorified is He* Says: "And We inspired to Moses and his brother, "Settle your people in Egypt in houses and make your houses [facing the] qibla and establish prayer and give good tidings to the believers" (*Yunus*: 87) This is the case it is pertaining to private houses. However, When it comes to *tabawwu'* pertaining to society at large, the agency of Allah *Glorified is He* is required. In the verse we are discussing, Allah *Glorified is He* enabled them to do so in the time of Moses. Allah allowed them to take up residence in the lands of Egypt and the Levant, as per His

words: 'Glory be to Him Who made His servant to go on a night from the Sacred Mosque to the remote mosque of which We have blessed the precincts, so that We may show to him some of Our signs; surely He is the Hearing, the Seeing.' (*al-Isra'*: 1) Since Allah *Glorified is He* has blessed the precincts of the House of Worship in Jerusalem, this means that much good is to be found there and that the lands in the vicinity represent a goodly abode.

The word *as-sidq* (truth) signifies the height of goodness and virtue. That is why when the Messenger of Allah was asked about the possibility of a believer being a liar, he said no. It is narrated that the Prophet was asked, 'Can the believer be a coward?' He said, 'Yes.' He was asked, 'Can the believer be a miser?' He said, 'Yes.' He was asked, 'Can the believer be a liar?' He said, 'No.'<sup>(1)</sup> That is why there is a punishment for adultery in the Islamic law just as there is a punishment to be carried out against the thief. Lying, on the other hand, is a characteristic in which a Muslim does not engage because he is required to be truthful. Every virtuous characteristic is a goodly abode. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And say: "My Lord! Make me to enter a goodly entering, and cause me to go forth a goodly going forth."' (*al-Isra'*: 80) In another verse, Allah *Glorified is He* also says: 'and give good news to those who believe that theirs is a footing of firmness with their Lord.' (*Yunus*: 2) Allah *Glorified is He* also says: 'And ordain for me a goodly mention among posterity.' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 84) This means that Abraham *peace be upon him* asks for a good reputation when people mention his name. Thus, they do so in a laudatory manner and do not say that so-and-so was a liar. As for the expression *qadam sidq*, it denotes those virtuous deeds which he seeks to perform. That is why the reward for the virtue of truthfulness is what Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'In the seat of honour with a most Powerful King.' (*al-Qamar*: 55)

Therefore, the honest person will be seated at a seat in the presence of a Lord, Who is no miser and with Whom are only those whom He loves. He is a Lord Who does not withhold His Bounty from those who are in His Presence. Such a seat of truth is the reward of one whose prayers Allah has answered and whereby, He caused him to enter a sound entrance and to exit a

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(1) Narrated by Imam Malik in his *Muwatta'*

sound exit. Allah also granted such a person to a reputation of honour and granted him an elevated rank.

Hence, Allah had allotted unto the Children of Israel a most goodly abode in the lands of Egypt and the Levant, and after He had answered their call, ordered them to go to a particular place, granted them different types of food. "O Moses, we can never endure one [kind of] food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions." (*al-Baqara*: 61) He had also saved them from Pharaoh, and it was presumed that their lives would go back to normal and that they would prosper. However, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'but they did not disagree until the knowledge had come to them.' (*Yunus*: 93) These words refer to their knowledge of the signs of the coming final Messenger of Allah, Muhammad. Some among them eagerly awaited the coming of the Prophet in order to believe in him. There were others, however, who grew tyrannical, and that is why Allah caused them to disperse into splinter communities all across the earth. Looking at the Quranic precise portrayal, we find that it identifies this process of scattering. The Jewish community represents a distinct part in every community. In other words, Allah did not cause them to assimilate into other communities; rather, they represent a distinct social entity in whichever community they had settled, but they do not mingle with outsiders.

Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And We said to the Israelites after him: "Dwell in the land."' (*al-Isra'*: 104) One of the literalists might wonder where else a human can dwell but on earth. Our response is that Allah *Glorified is He* did not specify which area of the earth in which they were to dwell. It would seem as if Allah manifests the ruling that He decreed on them to scatter into splinter communities. Allah *Glorified is He* has decreed his verdict; to be sure, Allah says: 'And We cut them up on the earth into parties.' (*al-A'raf*: 168)

We may note that they have acquired a nation for themselves in our own day and age. However, let us keep in mind the following words of Allah: 'And We had made known to the children of Israel in the Book: Most certainly you will make mischief in the land twice, and most certainly you will behave insolently with great insolence.' (*al-Isra'*: 4) Towards the end of the chapter

of *al-Isra'*, Allah has also said: 'And We said to the Israelites after him: "Dwell in the land: and when the promise of the next life shall come to pass, we will bring you both together in judgment."' (*al-Isra'*: 104) The meaning of gathering them together into a single crowd is that Allah will cause them to amass into a single community, whereby the final blow shall befall them as per the following words of Allah: 'So when the second promise came [We raised another people] that they may bring you to grief and that they may enter the mosque as they entered it the first time, and that they might destroy whatever they gained ascendancy over with utter destruction.' (*al-Isra'*: 7) That is because we will not fight them in all the countries where Allah has dispersed them. However, when they get together in single location, this paves the way for the coming of Allah's judgment.

When we look at their journey, we find that Yathrib (Medina) was the place that welcomed them after they had been persecuted in the other communities where they had settled. When they gathered in Yathrib (Medina), they acquired a pre-eminent stature, because they were a people reputed for their knowledge and their skill in commerce and warfare. Now, they had gathered in the city of Medina because the faithful from among the people of the Book had informed them that this was the city to which an Arab Prophet and Messenger would emigrate during the end times. Thus, they stayed in Medina waiting for him. They used to tell the disbelievers of Quraysh that the time when a Prophet should appear was approaching, and we should follow him and smite you on his behalf just as the tribes of 'Ad and Aram had been smitten.

It was presumed that they would accept the message of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*; however, as soon as the Messenger of Allah came forth with the light of the message, they denied him, fearing for their political and economic stature. This much is confirmed in the verse which we are presently examining (10: 93). Their discord stems from the knowledge of the coming of the Messenger. Some among them had recognised the signs of his coming and believed in him, while others had not.

In the past, they did not hold divergent views and were all in agreement. They issued bold threats to the idolatrous tribe of Quraysh. As soon as the

Messenger appeared on the scene, and the tribes of al-'Aws and al-Khazraj knew that a Messenger from Allah had come forth in Mecca, they said to themselves that he was the Prophet whom the Jews had been threatening them with, so they should go to him and become his followers before they the Jews got to him, whereupon they might indeed smite us. It is as though the Jews precipitated the Prophet's migration to Medina because the tribes of Al-'Aws and Al-Khazraj had advanced them to him. Therefore, we might know how Allah grants victory to His cause using His enemies.

That is why 'Abdullah ibn Salam approaches the Messenger of Allah and informs him of their state of internal discord. He said that the Jews were a people who were quick to slander a person. He added that if he embraced Islam, they would advance libellous arguments against him. He asked the Prophet to ask them about him before he pronounces his conversion to Islam. In so doing, Ibn Salam *Allah be pleased with him* was following conduct that suited his Jewish identity. When the Jewish community got together, the Prophet asked them what their opinion of Ibn Salam was. They said he was their Rabbi, their spiritual leader and the most Allah fearing among them. After having paid such a laudatory tribute to him, Ibn Salam said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I testify that there is no god but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah.' At that point the Jews began hurling abuse against him, whereupon Ibn Salam said, 'Did I not tell you O Messenger of Allah that they are a people who are quick to slander?'

Therefore, when Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'they did not disagree until the knowledge had come to them' (*Yunus*: 93), this means that some people persisted in their error, while others believed in the True Messenger of Allah. After that, Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the verse by saying: 'surely your Lord will judge between them on the resurrection day concerning that in which they disagreed.' (*Yunus*: 93) This means that Allah shall judge between those who joined the ranks of the believers and those who remained devoted to Judaism that was intolerant to Muhammad's message.

Let us note that the word *baynahum* (between them) signifies that the personal pronoun encompasses both parties. We might also add that Allah *Glorified is He* on the Day of Resurrection, shall judge between the believers

and the disbelievers, and, moreover, judge between the disbelievers themselves because some among them wronged their fellow disbeliever, others were either embezzlers or accepted bribes and others had acted contrary to the directives of their faith; thus, Allah will judge between them. In addition, the verse above denotes generality regarding the judgment. It shall be passed on people at large whether those of past, present and future. Allah will judge between every believer and disbeliever and every repentant and recusant.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَإِنْ كُنْتَ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ فَسْأَلِ الَّذِينَ يَقْرَأُونَ الْكِتَابَ  
مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَقَدْ جَاءَكَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾

**So if you [Prophet] are in doubt about what We have revealed to you, ask those who have been reading the scriptures before you. The Truth has come to you from your Lord, so be in no doubt and do not deny God's signs [94]**  
**(The Quran, Yunus: 94)**

These words are addressed to the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him*. However, we know that the Prophet said, from the outset, that he harboured no doubts as to the authenticity of his message. When his people promised him a position of power in exchange for abandoning his message, He said, 'By Allah if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left on the condition that I abandon this course, until Allah has made me victorious or I perish therein, I would not abandon it.' We might also point out that Allah implies an address to the *Ummah* (Islamic community) within the speech addressed to the Prophet. Thus, when the followers of the Prophet read or hear the words that are addressed to the Messenger in such manner, they will not abstain from carrying out any order that is issued to them.

A commander, for instance, issues orders to his two aides who are in charge of leading two groups of warriors. The supreme commander tells them both, 'Beware not to do such and such thing.' By issuing these instructions, the commander is not addressing his two aides; rather, he is addressing all those subordinates who are under their command. Therefore, the above verse

contains an order addressed to the Prophet, so that his *Ummah* (Islamic community) might realize that the Messenger is not one to refuse an order issued by Allah and that he executes everything that he is ordered to do with accurate efficiency. Hence, that is a speech addressed to the Islamic community in the in the person of the Prophet.

When Allah *Glorified is He* addresses the Prophet to ask those who have been reading the Scripture before him in case of doubt, this indicates that those, who were familiar with the divine writs from before the coming of the Messenger of Allah, were aware of the self-evident truth of his message. Those who were intransigent and disbelieved in the Prophet of Allah and his message knew Him as they knew their own son. In fact, 'Abdullah ibn Salam *Allah be pleased with him* said, 'When I first saw Muhammad, I recognised him as I recognise my own son; nay, my acquaintance with Muhammad is even stronger.' Thus, the truth about his coming is plain written in the Torah as due to the glad tiding referring to him. This proves that your message, O Muhammad, is true with the testimony of the people of the Book themselves.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: "The truth has certainly come to you from your Lord, so never be among the doubters" (*Yunus*: 94). The truth that issues forth from Allah is immutable and unalterable. It does not change, for it is real, and that which is real does not take on multiple forms; it manifests as a single form. However, lying can take on a variety of forms. That is why the job of a diligent inspector is to investigate every angle of the testimonials that are presented to him at court in order to reach a final judgement which is of absolute accuracy and free from any conflicting evidence.

The words of Allah that declare that the truth has come unto Muhammad indicate that those who have read the divine writ have realized that he was indeed the Messenger of Allah. Thereafter, some of them have left the Jewish camp behind and come over to join the camp of believers in Muhammad, as the truth that has come is completely untainted by any human interference. It rather came from your Lord; thereby, do not be among the doubters.

Such a manner of speech presented in the verse we are discussing, as I have clarified before, indicates that they are addressed to the *Ummah* (Islamic community) as embodied by the person of the Prophet. Allah warns the

Prophet in another chapter that if he were to associate [with Allah], his work would certainly come to naught. Such words were revealed to the Messenger of Allah, even though it is inconceivable that the Prophet should ever fall into idolatry. Therefore, all of the Quranic verses that contain directives regarding things from which the Messenger of Allah is ontologically immune are particularly addressed to his community.

Allah *Glorified is He* adds in the next verse:

وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَتَكُونُوا مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

**Then you would become one of the losers [95]  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 95)**

Allah *Glorified is He* when exhorting to that which is good, often cites the opposite of that good to elucidate things through juxtaposition. In our own daily lives, we find a father tells his son to work hard in his studies and pay close attention to his instructors so that he might succeed, and not to be like so and so, a person who dropped out. In this scenario, the father urges his son to work towards the good and, at the same time, brings up a reference to the counter of that good, which is warning against malfeasance. As one poet has composed, the face is like the morning white, and the hair is like the night black. Two opposites together are comely, and one counter reveals its counter beauty.

We know that the signs of Allah are numerous. *Ayat* (signs) could be the cosmic signs, which are the basis of the creed, positing that their creator is the Most-High Creator. These signs alert us to the splendour of His work, the finesse, and subtlety that are present in the formation of His creation and His All-Encompassing Power. Signs could be the miracles which have been given to the Messengers *peace be upon them* so that each might prove his verity as a communicator of a message on Allah's behalf. Another type of *ayat* is the *ayat* of the Holy Quran which embody the Doctrine of Allah. However, the disbelievers were denying all of the signs.

Likewise, the present verse is addressed to the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and connected to the preceding verse, where Allah had ordered to ask those who have been reading the Scripture before him in case of doubt.



We must not deduce that the Messenger of Allah was having doubts or that he was among those who have disbelieved in the signs of Allah. The reason why such matters have been brought up is to reject the tendencies of humankind, wherever they may arise. Thus, even if the words of revelation are, by default, addressed to the Messenger of Allah, the ultimate purpose of such proscriptions is to balance the understanding of the *Ummah* (Islamic community) in order to teach and guide them. After all, the Doctrine has been revealed to the Prophet to communicate it to his community as he bears witness to the truth before all the communities.

If the previous verse gives the meaning that Allah asks the Prophet to ask if He is in doubt, Allah asks him whether or not he doubts what was revealed to him, so that He might hear the answer from the Prophet and let the whole *Ummah* hear the answer, 'I do not doubt nor do I question. That is which Allah has revealed to me suffices me.' The Holy Quran mentions how Allah *Glorified is He* shall ask the angels, on the Day of Judgment, with the presence of those who worshipped them 'Did these worship you?' (*Saba'*: 40) We know that the angels do not disobey Allah in whatever He has commanded them and that they do what they are bidden to do. Allah says "over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded" (*at-Tahrim*: 6).

Allah *Glorified is He* foreknows the response of the angels negating that they worshipped them "They will say, "Exalted are You! You, [O Allah], are our benefactor not them. Rather, they used to worship the jinn; most of them were believers in them" (*Saba'*: 41) However, Allah wishes to make all those who are gathered on that day hear the response of the angels as they denied being worshiped by other creatures and affirming that those people had worshipped the Jinn.

Thus, the question had been posed to demonstrate its answer. Similarly, when Jesus *peace be upon him* is worshiped by certain members of his community, Allah asks him: 'O Isa son of Maryam! Did you say to men, Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah?' (*al-Ma'ida*: 119) Then, the response comes, 'Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to [say].' (*al-Ma'ida*: 119) Thus, the purpose of the question of Allah to his Prophet is that the Messenger might say, 'I do not doubt nor do I question.'

The word *ash-shakk* (doubt) means that the scale of denial and the scale of confirmation balance each other out. If one scale outweighs the other, this would be a case of *dhann*, where the heavier scale represents a belief and the lighter scale represents an illusion, a fabrication, and a lie. The word *ash-shakk* is actually related to something concrete. After fishermen make a catch, they attach each fish to a string called *al-mishkak*. In addition, those who make necklaces put a string through every piece; thus, it means to join one thing to another. Likewise, there comes the word *ash-shaka'ik*, which means those houses that stand next to each other in a neat pattern. Hence, the expression *shak as-silah* also means to put on armour. Therefore, the word *ash-shak* denotes joining one thing to another and also connotes denial and confirmation existing side by side, owing to the fact that one is unable to give priority to either one. All the above versions of meaning are invoked whenever one refers to *ash-shakk*.

The verse which we are currently examining speaks of signs, and we know that the Messenger himself represents one of these signs. Thus, the words of this verse are evidently addressed to the Prophet's *Ummah*. It is impossible that the Prophet be among those who are bent on lying about Allah's signs. To reject the signs of Allah is tantamount to turning truth into falsehood and reality into non-reality. Those who disbelieve in the signs of Allah either do not believe in God or believe in God but not in a Messenger. They could believe in both God and a Messenger, but do not believe in the Doctrine which has been revealed to the Messenger. This is corroborated by a verse at the end of the chapter *Yunus*, wherein Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'if you are in doubt as to my religion, then [know that] I do not serve those whom you serve besides Allah.' (*Yunus*: 104) Thus, it is as if the speech is addressed to the *Ummah*.

Thereafter, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

**Those against whom your Lord's sentence is passed  
will not believe [96] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 96)**

These words demonstrate that Allah *Glorified is He* has foreknown that they would not incline towards faith. This, however, does not preclude their responsibility in the act of choosing. He has foreknown the choice that they

would end up making. When the time came, they made the choice that Allah had known they would make. His Judgment incorporates the element of human freewill; however, it is, at the same time, a providential judgment. Consider, for example, and Allah knows best, when the minister of agriculture comes forth and announces the forecasted quantity of cotton to be harvested during a given year. This estimate is based on the area of arable land dedicated to cotton production and the average per-acre output of cotton expected. The estimate might be accurate. It might not be off target due to the various factors that are involved in cotton production. It is possible that the year's crop might succumb to some disaster or other problems such as the cotton bollworm or the pink bollworm.

Thus, in the human domain, estimates may be accurate, or they may miss the mark as human estimates are based on knowledge that is relative and not absolute. However, the predictions of Allah are based on pre-eternal knowledge, and when He puts forth a prediction, it must necessarily come to pass. That is why we must discern between divine judgments that are destined, pre-ordained and in which man has no say, and predictions put forth by Allah, which humans carry out while exercising their freewill. Here the great mystery of the unseen is observed.

Take for instance, the behaviour of Abu Lahab. The Quran says about him: 'Perdition overtakes both hands of Abu Lahab, and he will perish. His wealth and what he earns will not avail him.' (*al-Masad*: 1-2) This chapter was revealed while Abu Lahab was still alive. Allah *Glorified is He* had foreknown that his disposition was such that he would never attain faith. Had Abu Lahab been marginally intelligent, he would have approached the Messenger of Allah and proclaimed, 'you have said that I will have to endure hellfire; however, I now testify that there is no God but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah.' Abu Lahab was not a man of such intelligence. Allah had foreknown that his disposition was such that he would never embrace Islam, unlike Hamzah ibn Abd al-Muttalib, the Prophet's uncle, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, Khalid ibn al-Walid or 'Amr ibn Al-'As *Allah be pleased with them* who have converted to Islam in spite of their initial opposition to the Prophet.

Thus, human beings can predict something, but such is based only on the information that is available to them. Man does not have access to universal,

pre-temporal knowledge when making his predictions. Man has a limited knowledge. Therefore, it is conceivable that he errs in his calculations as he does not have dominion over what he predicts. Thus, let nobody say that Allah punishes human beings for acts which He has preordained. The predictions of Allah stem from His pre-temporal knowledge, and human beings have the right to choose. Allah has said: 'And whenever a chapter is revealed, there are some of them who say: Which of you has it strengthened in faith? Then as for those who believe, it strengthens them in faith and they rejoice. And as for those in whose hearts is a disease, it adds uncleanness to their uncleanness and they die while they are unbelievers.' (*at-Tawba*: 124-125)

In the next verse Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَوْ جَاءَتْهُمْ كُلُّ آيَةٍ حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٩٧﴾

**even if every sign comes to them, until they see the agonizing torment [97] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 97)**

Thus, the coming of the numerous signs will not help them move toward faith; Allah *Glorified is He* knows that they will use their freewill to choose disbelief. Allah *Glorified is He* quotes them as having said: 'And they say: We will by no means believe in you until you cause a fountain to gush forth from the earth for us. Or you should have a garden of palms and grapes in the midst of which you should cause rivers to flow forth, gushing out. Or you should cause the heaven to come down upon us in pieces as you think, or bring Allah and the angels face to face [with us]. Or you should have a house of gold, or you should ascend into heaven, and we will not believe in your ascending until you bring down to us a book which we may read. Say: Glory be to my Lord; am I aught but a mortal messenger?' (*al-Isra'*: 90-93)

It is as if Allah *Glorified is He* were ordering His Messenger to explain that he does not reveal the signs; rather, these signs are from Allah. The Quran mentions the reason why those signs which they asked for were not revealed and Allah says: 'And nothing could have hindered Us that We should send signs except that the ancients rejected them.' (*al-Isra'*: 59) Numerous signs have been revealed to previous generations of sceptics and deniers who oppose the prospect of faith with hearts filled with disbelief. If one is

searching for faith, one should do so without any preconceptions. May the person contemplate the matter and let into his heart that which he accepts. This choice of the heart that is free from any previous conditions is the most excellent form of acceptance

Previously, Allah *Glorified is He* speaks about His Unity, His miraculous signs, the legitimacy of Prophethood and the Day of Resurrection. He also narrates the stories of some of the Messengers who succeeded one another through history, from Noah *peace be upon him* to a partial account of the story of Moses and Aaron *peace be upon them* and Allah tells the story of Jonah *peace be upon him*. We notice that Allah narrates the story of Noah in great detail and then He mentions the stories of Messengers of whom He does not say anything. He mentions the story of Moses and Aaron after that and later, He mentions the story of Jonah *peace be upon him*. The chapter therefore comprises three messages, which are that of Noah, Moses and Aaron and the message of Jonah *peace be upon them*. The latter is the Messenger after whom the chapter is named.

One might ask why Allah narrates the story of these three Prophets in this chapter. We with many exegetes have become very tired to grasp the wisdom behind including the stories of the three aforementioned Messengers and not the story of Hud, Thamud and Jethro. There must have been wisdom in this. As far as we have been allowed to understand, the wisdom is that Allah presents the succession of messages as well as the deniers of every Messenger. He also presents the fate that befell the enemies and what befell the Messenger and his followers. We find that those whom Allah has mentioned in this chapter have all been destroyed in a similar fashion. The destruction of the people of Noah was through drowning; likewise the destruction of the people of Pharaoh was also effected through drowning. The story of our Messenger Jonah was also related to the sea as he had been swallowed by a whale and had coursed throughout the sea.

Thus, all of the Messengers cited in this chapter have a connection with water unlike the rest of the Messengers. We know that water is both a source for life and for destruction. The One who gave life is capable of giving life by means of some element while also bringing about death by means of the same element. It would seem that Allah *Glorified is He* is imparting us with the

following piece of wisdom that He has smitten by drowning in one instance, and He has saved from drowning in another instance. Thus, divine omnipotence is the theme that dominates this chapter; at the same time, Allah's Absolute Power also manifests itself in other domains and through other forms.

This chapter is known by the name Yunus (Jonah) because Allah *Glorified is He* had sent forth this Prophet to a community which was more than a hundred-thousand strong. This community is the only one which, in this context, Allah *Glorified is He* has spared from destruction. He caused the peoples of both Noah and Pharaoh to drown after denying and rejecting the Messengers. However, the people of Jonah saw the terrible fate that was on the verge of befalling them, attained faith, and Allah spared them from the suffering. Therefore, the chapter is named after the Messenger whose people had been saved from suffering for they had turned to Allah before they experienced suffering. In fact, they had witnessed only the early signs of an impending suffering, but that was dreadful enough that they moved to save themselves by attaining faith. Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ ءَامَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَّا ءَامَنُوا  
كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخُرْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٩٨﴾

**If only a single town had believed and benefited from its belief!  
Only Jonah's people did so, and when they believed, We relieved  
them of the punishment of disgrace in the life of this world, and  
let them enjoy life for a time [98] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 98)**

Here, Allah *Glorified is He* shows us that there have been many communities which only attained faith at the moment when suffering was befalling them; however, such faith was of no avail to any one of them. The people of Jonah, on the other hand, proclaimed their faith before the coming of the terrible punishment and suffering. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* accepted their faith, for He is not unjust towards His servants. He who reaches the very brink and proclaims his faith when the suffering is at hand, repentance will not be accepted from such a person; while for he who senses the early signs of suffering and proclaims his faith at that moment, Allah *Glorified is He* will accept his repentance.

When you hear the word *lawla*, know that it is synonymous with the word *lawma*. If the word *lawla* is used with a nominal sentence, its function is different than using it with a verbal sentence. When it is used within a nominal sentence, such as in *lawla zayd 'indak la'tatytuk* (was there not that Zayd is at your place, I would have come to you.) The term *lawla* here denotes the reason for not coming, which is the presence of Zayd. However, when it is used with a verbal sentence, it functions as a term of exhortation and forceful persuasion. For example, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'why should not then a company from every party from among them go forth that they may apply themselves to obtain understanding in religion.' (*at-Tawba*: 122) It means that there was supposed to be, from every group, a few who would seclude themselves to study the religious matters.

In the verse we are studying, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'wherefore was there not a town which should believe' (*Yunus*: 98). In other words, if there was a community who attained faith before the suffering befell them, We would spare it like We have spared the people of Jonah *peace be upon him*. Thus, the people of Jonah are the exception since they had attained faith before the suffering had befallen them. There is another verse related to this story wherein Allah *Glorified is He* says: But had it not been that he was of those who glorify [Us], He would certainly have tarried in its belly to the day when they are raised.' (*as-Saffat*: 143-144) It means that it was Jonah's prayers that saved him from remaining in the belly of the whale until the Day of Resurrection.

Allah *Glorified is He* points out the exception that was made with respect to the people of Jonah. This means that when the people of Jonah had believed before the suffering befell them, it had benefited them. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says that He removed from them the punishment of disgrace in worldly life and gave them enjoyment for a time.

Now, we know that the word *qarya* means a furnished place whose population resides therein and where, if a visitor were to visit them, he would be offered *qirya*, which is a meal.

There are those who use the word *balad* to describe homelands with a large population who always have plentiful food at hand. Whereas those

homelands with small populations often have meagre food reserves which are enough to feed themselves and a one-time visitor. Mecca is called *um al-Qura* (the mother of all villages) as the people of all of the other cities visit it. The Prophet has spoken about the town of the people of Jonah *peace be upon him* Nineveh, in the story of his travels to At-Ta'if. The latter is the town of the virtuous servant Jonah *peace be upon him* who was the son of Matta. The town is located in modern day Iraq near the city of Mosul. It is Jonah *peace be upon him* regarding whom Allah has said: 'And Yunus, when he went away in wrath.' (*al-Anbiya*': 87)

The phrase 'in anger' is different from the word 'angry', for the latter refers to one who gets angry without someone provoking him whereas the former refers to one who has been angered by someone. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'And [mention] the man of the fish, when he went off in anger and thought that we would not decree [anything] upon him. And he called out within the darkness, "There is no deity except you; exalted are you. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers."' (*al-Anbiya*': 87)

Yunus (Jonah) *peace be upon him* has been called 'man of the fish' because his name is connected with the whale that swallowed him. We all know the story when he exhorted his people to faith and they rejected him at first. A Messenger always comes forth to reform a society's corrupt lifestyle. The Messenger is then persecuted by those who lead such degenerate lives because they want to hold on to the power that allows them to steal, embezzle, and satiate the desires of the lower self. Thus, when they acted in such manner with Jonah *peace be upon him* he became angry and left. In other words, they caused him to be angry.

After Jonah *peace be upon him* became angry and left, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'and thought that we would not decree [anything] upon him.' Meaning, he believed that the True Lord *Glorified is He* would not restrict his movement in Allah's vast earth. He thought that Allah would assign him to some place other than the city—of a hundred-thousand and more—to where Allah *Glorified is He* had originally sent him. He was supposed to withstand the malice which they had directed at him. However, Jonah's wish to move elsewhere indicated that the resistance that was put against his



message was strong. Indeed, it was cause for anger, and it filled his heart with pain and weariness. He ought to have braced himself for the inevitable hardships of his mission. Nineveh is the city that Jonah *peace be upon him* was sent to. This is the city that was mentioned in the conversation between Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the Christian young man ‘Addas, whom he had met during his return from At-Ta’if.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had travelled to At-Ta’if to ask its people for their assistance. This was after he had been persecuted by his people in Mecca and had not found anyone who would support his cause. The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* sat near the wall of a farm. When the owners of the farm— ‘Utaba and Shayba sons of Rabi’a— saw him and realized what torment he had endured at the hands of the mob, they were moved to compassion. They summoned a Christian servant of theirs named ‘Addas and told him: ‘Take some of these grapes, place them on this tray, take it to that man and offer it to him.’ Thereupon, ‘Addas did what he was told, and when he had placed the grapes in the hand of the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* he said to him: ‘Eat.’ When the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* picked up the grapes, He said: ‘In the Name of Allah,’ and then he started to eat. ‘Addas looked at him and said: ‘These are words which the inhabitants of this land do not generally use.’ Then, the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* said to him: ‘Where do you come from ‘Addas, and what is your religion?’ Addas said: ‘I am a Christian, and I hail from the people of Nineveh.’ The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* said: ‘You belong to the city of the righteous Jonah, son of Matta.’ ‘Addas said: ‘What do you know about Jonah, son of Matta?’ The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* said: ‘He is my brother. He was a Prophet and so am I.’ ‘Addas paid homage to the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* and kissed his head, hands and feet. When the two owners of the farm inquired ‘Addas about the matter, he said to them: ‘This man informed me of that which only a Prophet would know.’

Now, we know that the righteous servant—Jonah *peace be upon him* —was distressed, sad and angry about his people’s lack of responsiveness to his message of faith. However, when they saw the signs of a gathering storm on

the horizon, and Allah *Glorified is He* caused them to believe that this storm was the beginning of Allah's punishment for them, they hastened to the wise men of the community, whereupon the latter informed them that these were the initial signs of impending suffering. The elders told them: 'You must please Jonah *peace be upon him* for he has been sent by Allah *Glorified is He*. Thus, you should believe in his message so that he may [pray to Allah to] spare you from the coming affliction.'

Then, the people quickly proclaimed their faith in the All-Living Who never dies, He Who Lives when all else is dead—The All-Sustaining. The people went to their Messenger to seek his pleasure. After he was pleased with them, they began to look back at all the past injustices they had committed, to the point that one man among them began tearing apart the walls of his house because it contained a brick which he had stolen from his neighbour. Allah *Glorified is He* thereby spared them from the punishment. He *Glorified is He* hereby says: 'We removed from them the punishment of disgrace in worldly life and gave them enjoyment for a time.' (*Yunus*: 98) One related incident with the story of Jonah *peace be upon him* along with his anger incident is his encounter with the whale; after he had become angry and taken his leave of his people, he boarded a ship.

Once at sea, the ship was violently assailed by waves, and it appeared that its passengers were destined to drown. Thereupon, they threw their cargo overboard to lighten the ship's load. However, the turbulence continued unabated; so, they decided to hold a lottery whereby whosoever was selected would be thrown overboard. Lo and behold, the Prophet of Allah, Jonah *peace be upon him* was chosen. Similarly, when we ride an elevator, there is a red light which flashes to warn us that the machine is overloaded beyond capacity and that it will not operate. When this happens, one or two people need to step out so that only the allowable number of people remains in the elevator. Usually, it is the well-mannered people who volunteer to step out, because they want to make things easier for other people. It was a similar situation on the ship that Jonah *peace be upon him* had boarded. The vessel was on the verge of sinking, so they drew the lottery and Jonah *peace be upon him* was picked to jump overboard. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'And then they cast lots,

and he was the one who lost.’ (*as-Saffat*: 141) Thus, Jonah *peace be upon him* threw himself into the sea, whereupon he was swallowed by the whale.

Regarding Jonah’s stay inside the belly of the whale, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘And had he not been of those who exalt Allah, He would have remained inside its belly until the Day they are resurrected.’ (*as-Saffat*: 143-144) Here, in the verse which we are presently examining, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘We removed from them the punishment of disgrace in worldly life.’ In the life of this world, the ‘suffering of disgrace’ can be seen manifested in the person who is dishonest and arrogant with other people. Then, the people see him in a state of ignominy and abasement. Such is the ‘suffering of disgrace’ in the life of this world, and surely, the suffering in the life of the Hereafter is even more disgraceful and insurmountable.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* concludes the verse with His words: ‘and gave them enjoyment for a time.’ That is, they were spared from the suffering for the remainder of their lives and until they died a natural death.

Thereafter, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا  
أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٩﴾

**Had your Lord willed, all the people on earth would have believed. So can you [Prophet] compel people to believe? [99] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 99)**

The True Lord *Glorified is He* explains that if a battle arises between a Prophet sent forth (from heaven) backed with his followers against those who disbelieved in him, the True Lord *Glorified is He* must, in the end, bring down suffering upon those who disbelieved.

Beware not to think the True Lord *Glorified is He* has any need for the acts of worship that His servants perform; Allah’s Existence is pre-eternal in nature, and He possesses all the attributes of Perfection/Completeness even before He created the universe. Out of His attribute of Perfection, He brought His creation into existence. His Omnipotence is an innate feature of His

Essence. He was the Creator before He created the universe, just as He was the All-Sustainer before He created either sustenance or the creatures that require sustenance. The created universe is a manifestation of His Attributes of Perfection/Completeness. It is He Who brought all things into existence.

That is why His Attributes are called the Attributes of Essence, for their existence antedates the existence of the created things that depend upon them. Thus, when you say: The 'Ever-Living' and the 'One Who grants life', this does not mean that Allah *Glorified is He* becomes characterized as 'One Who grants life' only after those to whom He grants life come to exist. Rather, He is the 'One Who grants life' and it is by virtue of this very attribute that He has brought creatures to life. Consider for example—and Allah knows best, being that He is far above the possibility of comparison—the photographer or the painter who has created a beautiful piece of art. This is a case where we are witnessing the manifested effects of the art which the artist (spent so many years) mastering. Thus, the painting or the photo is merely the manifestation of the artist's innate talent. Therefore, the True Lord *Glorified is He* possesses all of the Attributes of Perfection even before He created the universe. Beware not to think that something new has been added to Allah's Essence. There is nothing that is ever added unto what the True Lord *Glorified is He* already possesses. At the same time, Allah *Glorified is He* in no way derives benefit from His creatures; rather, it is He Who benefits them.

We know that faith is something that is required of us as human beings—human beings are the creatures that are visible. Faith is also required of another kind of creature which Allah *Glorified is He* and has informed us of, namely, the jinn.

As for the rest of the cosmos, it glorifies Allah forever. The universe is composed of numerous worlds which have no end, and unto each there is an order which it follows unswervingly. If Allah wanted to incorporate the two special beings—human beings and jinn—into the realm of subjugated creatures (which have no freewill), such a task would not be beyond His reach.

Doing so, however, would indeed reaffirm His Omnipotence, but it would not prove that His creatures love Him. That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* has given human beings freewill, so that they may choose to either believe or

disbelieve. If you turn to Him with a believing heart, this would prove that He is loved. Faith of this kind is different from the faith of the coerced. What is asked of both human beings and the jinn is the faith that has sprouted from the soil of their freewill. As for the kind of faith that is forced and compelled—this is demonstrated by everything else that exists in the universe: all are believers, and all proclaim His Glory. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] by His praise.’ (*al-Isra’*: 44)

There is nothing symbolic about the statement put forth in the above verse—these creatures’ extolment (of their Creator) is real. As Allah says: ‘but you do not understand their [way of] exalting.’ (*al-Isra’*: 44) If Allah *Glorified is He* were to teach you their languages, you would come to know of the extolment of such creatures. To be sure, He had taught Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* the language of the birds. Solomon *peace be upon him* had also heard an ant saying: ‘O ants, enter your dwellings that you not be crushed by Solomon and his soldiers while they perceive not.’ (*an-Naml*: 18) In addition, the hoopoe bird communicated to Solomon *peace be upon him* the news which he had obtained regarding Bilqis—the Queen of Sheba: ‘I found her and her people prostrating to the sun instead of Allah, and Satan has made their deeds pleasing to them and averted them from [His] way, so they are not guided.’ (*an-Naml*: 24)

Thus, everything in the universe extols the Glory of Allah *Glorified is He*. All things conform to (their essential nature as dictated by Allah)—all except for the two special beings: human beings and the jinn. They both are endowed with a mind, and both have the freedom to choose between alternatives. It is a testament to the Greatness of the True Lord *Glorified is He* that He has endowed man with freewill—such that the believer turns to Allah voluntarily. If the True Lord *Glorified is He* so wished, He could compel all human beings to have faith. I say this so that nobody should ever ask: what is the need for creating the creation, sending messengers to them, the denial of some of them, and eventually damning those deniers? That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed - all of them entirely. Then, [O Muhammad], would you compel the people in order that they become believers?’ (*Yunus*: 99) Thus, the True Lord *Glorified is He* has created man and has put all of the other creatures at man’s service. At the

same time, Allah did not force faith upon human beings, rather, as He *Glorified is He* says to Prophet Muhammad: ‘Perhaps, [O Muhammad], you would kill yourself with grief that they will not be believers.’ (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 3)

The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* was loyal to his people and loved them very much. Having tasted the sweetness of faith himself, he was sad they did not. This is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* reminds him that his mission is to merely convey the Message. He should not be overly saddened (by their reaction to the Message). The True Lord *Glorified is He* bestowed upon human beings the freedom to choose. Allah has also put the universe at the service of human beings. There are some men who believe, and there are others who disbelieve. There are believers who at times obey Allah but at other times disobey Him. This has all been willed by the True Lord—so that the universe maintains balance. Every virtuous quality is all the more accentuated if there are people who would violate it. This is what Allah has willed for human beings; hence, do not be saddened, O Messenger of Allah—for it is all part of the True Lord’s Will. If someone were to become angry because other people refuse to acknowledge his beautiful attributes, we would tell him: the True Lord *Glorified is He* is the Creator of the Universe, and He is the All-Sustainer. They may have disbelieved in Him, digressed from the straight path and set up associates besides Him—but did they take on the attributes of Allah? That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed - all of them entirely. Then, [O Muhammad], would you compel the people in order that they become believers?’ What Allah wants is faith that stems from love and man’s freewill. Thereafter, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَمَا كَانَتْ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَيَجْعَلُ  
الرَّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

**No soul can believe except by God’s will, and He brings  
disgrace on those who do not use their reason [100]  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 100)**

The True Lord *Glorified is He* shows us that none shall attain faith except by His leave. Attaining faith means that your faith must stem from the

primordial and inalienable essence of the human soul. Such a faith should result from your contemplation of the heavens with its constellations, of the earth with its passes, of the surging seas and of the howling winds—all point to the existence of the Creator *Glorified is He*. However, has Allah left human beings (to search for the truth merely by means of) their original disposition? No, Allah *Glorified is He* has sent the messengers so that they remind them of the signs that exist in the universe hoping for the return of the negligent. Allah *Glorified is He* does not wish to judge people while they are in a state of forgetfulness. That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘That is because your Lord would not destroy the cities for wrongdoing while their people were unaware.’ (*al-An‘am*: 131) This is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* alerts them to that fact that there are things which they need to be reminded of. It is as if the True Lord were telling us: beware not to think that a person can leave My dominion except with My permission. By creating him and endowing him with freewill, I have allowed him to either disbelieve or believe, to obey, or to disobey. The reason for all of this is that—by voluntarily submitting himself to me— man will prove my attribute as One Who is worthy of being loved. That is why nobody attains faith except by Allah’s leave, neither does anyone disbelieve except by His leave. Allah has created man and endowed him with freewill, and He knows what kind of person each man shall be: the disbeliever was not forced to disbelieve, nor was the believer forced by Allah *Glorified is He* to believe.

When a Messenger comes forth to exhort people to faith, man remembers the faith that is part of his original disposition. He says: ‘This Messenger has come forth with such a doctrine so that he might rectify my life affairs. I must, therefore, give him my full attention.’ Once the servant turns to Allah, the Lord *Glorified is He* allows him to enter into the realm of faith. There are some servants among us who go to see another servant who enjoys power and prestige. With Allah’s help, the prestigious servant realizes the reason why the other servant has come to see him, he tells his aids: do not let him in. He says this because Allah *Glorified is He* gave him a glimpse of what is in the other servant’s heart: malevolence, jealousy, and hypocrisy. However, if some other servant knocks on his door, he will tell his aides to let him in and welcome him, because he is aware of the love, sincerity and friendship that is

in his heart. Now, if this can happen between servants—who are, as human beings, at the mercy of their own passions and desires—then what can possibly happen when it comes to the True Lord *Glorified is He*?

Allah Himself says in a Qudsi Hadith: ‘Whosoever makes mention of Me within himself, I shall make mention of him in an even better assembly.’ How wonderful is it when a servant attains faith in Allah while being free of any other god save Allah? Thus, turn to Allah and invoke His Name, for if you make mention of Allah within yourself, Allah will make mention of you within Himself, and if you make mention of Allah in an assembly, Allah will make mention of you in an even greater and better assembly. The assembly in which you will make mention of Allah is predisposed to error, but when Allah *Glorified is He* makes mention of you, He will do so in an assembly that is pure. In the same Hadith <sup>(1)</sup>, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘If He draws near to me an arm’s length, I draw near to Him by a fathom’s length.’ A fathom’s length is longer than an arm’s length. Allah also says: ‘If he comes to me walking, I go to him at speed.’ Since walking might tire the servant, the True Lord goes to him at speed. In spite of His Great Majesty, when the Lord witnesses that a servant has purified his heart from all animosity towards Him, He opens the doors of His Love for His servant. Allah makes all of his creatures love the servant. Allah also causes the servant to engage upon all activities with sincerity and to conclude all difficult activities with sincerity. The True Lord Himself says: ‘And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness.’ (*Muhammad*: 17)

We notice that the verse under study, the True Lord *Glorified is He* emphasises the fact that, if He so wished, all the inhabitants of the earth would attain faith, even Satan—who contended with Allah—could attain faith if the True Lord *Glorified is He* so wished. The True Lord *Glorified is He* emphasises this point so as to affirm that He is in full control of all of His creation—none can ever act contrary to His Will.

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(1) *Agreed upon Hadith; it is related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (7405) and by Muslim (2675). The full Hadith is as follows: ‘I am as My servant thinks I am. I am with him when he makes mention of Me. If he makes mention of me to himself, I make mention of him to myself; and if he makes mention of Me in an assembly, I make mention of him in an even greater assembly. If he draws near to me by an arm’s length, I draw near to him by a fathom’s length. If he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed.’*



In the same verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘Then, [O Muhammad], would you compel the people in order that they become believers?’ The True Lord *Glorified is He* wishes to alert Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and all of the believers to the fact that: ‘There shall be no coercion in religion.’ (*al-Baqara*: 256) To be sure, the requirements of faith are not limited to only those outward requirements, which are obvious. There are other requirements which are not apparent. Suppose you succeed in coercing someone outwardly, do you think you could force him inwardly to have a change of heart? What the True Lord *Glorified is He* wants is the sincere faith of the heart—not the faith (that is limited to) the outward conformity (with religious law). Thus, coercion is inappropriate when it comes to matters of faith. However, one must not misapply this principle, for you might find a Muslim who does not pray, and so his friend reprimands him. He then retorts: ‘There shall be no coercion in matters of faith.’ This is an inappropriate application of the principle, and it is a case of false reasoning.

Coercion in matters of faith is forbidden when it comes to the fundamental question of creed. However, if one proclaims to be a Muslim, and if he testifies that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah—such a proclamation binds him to all the decrees contained in Islamic law. He, thereby, becomes judged according to Islamic principles. If he violates any of the rules of Islamic law, he must be held accountable. The principle—that there shall be no coercion in matters of faith—applies to the fundamental choice that one has when it comes to choosing a creed. You are free to either embrace Islam or not. However, once you do embrace Islam, you become bound to the decrees of Islamic law—for you have come to believe in the religion of Islam and will, henceforth, be judged according to the principles of Islamic law. Therefore, abide by the legal limits of Islamic law and do not violate them. For example, if you steal, your hand shall be cut off; if you commit fornication, you will be stoned or whipped; if you drink alcohol, you will be whipped; for you have accepted the legal precepts of Islamic law the (*Sharia*).

Therefore, the principle that ‘There shall be no coercion in religion,’ means that it is forbidden to coerce someone when it comes to the fundamental question of creed. However, once you attain faith, you are obligated to abide by the

stipulations of the faith, and you are to be punished if you violate the legal limits. Furthermore, the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* says: 'The example of the person abiding by Allah's orders and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them is like the example of those persons who drew lots for their seats on a boat. Some of them were seated in the upper deck while others in the lower deck; when the latter needed water, they had to go up to bring water. Seeing that this troubled the others, they said: 'Let us make a hole in our section of the ship (and get water), saving those above us from the trouble we might cause them. So, if the people in the upper part left the others do what they had suggested, all the people of the ship would be drowned, but if they prevented them, both parties would be safe.'<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus, abiding by the provisions of faith is obligatory upon anyone who embraces the faith freely. If he violates any of the rules, he is to be punished. There are provisions that are even more severe than this, such as the punishment that is incumbent upon the person who abandons Islam, which is death <sup>(2)</sup>. A person might say that such a punishment is rather barbaric. Our answer to him is that the person who has adopted a faith has known from the outset that, if he embraces the faith and then abandons it, he shall be killed. That is why he must not enter Islam except if he is in a state of absolute certainty. This stipulation serves to protect the religion. It is a credit to the religion and should not be held against the religion. You, therefore, embrace the faith only when you are certain of your ability to abide by its directives and keep your own desires in check. You also know that if you embrace the

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(1) *This Hadith has been related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (2493), by Ahmad in his Musnad (4/268) and by At-Tirmidhi in his Sunnan (2173). He qualifies this Hadith as being hasan-Sahih.*

(2) *It is narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas may Allah be pleased with him that the Messenger of Allah said: 'If a person switches religions, kill him.' – Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (6922), by Ahmad in his (Musnad) (1/217, 282, 283, 323) and by Ibn Majah in his Sunnan (2535). The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said in another Hadith, narrated on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud: 'It is not right to take the life of any Muslim who testifies that there is no god but Allah and that I am The Messenger of Allah except for these three [types]: he who takes another's life (for reasons other than eye-for-an-eye retribution), he who commits adultery and he who abandons his faith and leaves the group.' – Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (6878) and by Muslim (1676)*

faith and thereafter abandon it, you will be killed. The result is that the decision to embrace the faith becomes a difficult (and serious) one. In principle, no one will embrace the religion except if they have a deep spiritual conviction. Such a stipulation (against abandoning the faith) is a credit to the religion and should not be held against it.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘And it is not for a soul to believe except by permission of Allah, and He will place ruin upon those who will not use reason.’

The word ‘ruin’ means punishment and sin. The True Lord *Glorified is He* lays it upon those who do not use their reason, for if the concept of religion is ever presented to a mind free of desires, there can be no other outcome but that the mind accepts faith. That is why when world-class intellectuals study religion, they turn towards Islam because it is the religion that quenches people’s spiritual thirst. As for those who treat religion as something bequeathed to them by their parents, they end up losing their spiritual bearings. Those world-class intellectuals who embraced Islam did not do so because they witnessed the conduct of Muslims; in our day and age, the conduct of many of those who are nominally attributed to Islam is far removed from the ideals of the religion. Nevertheless, such world-class intellectuals embraced Islam and studied the principles of Islam. In doing so, they distinguished between the principles of the religion and the adherents of the religion. Maintaining this distinction represents a kind of justice on the intellectual plane, for when the religion declares a particular act to be a crime, the decree does mean that the religion is sanctioning such an act. The proof of this is that the specified punishment is directly proportionate to the severity of the crime. To be sure, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘[As for] the thief, the male and the female, amputate their hands.’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 38) This injunction implies the possibility that such a crime as stealing should be committed. This is also the case for the punishment pertaining to fornication and other wrongdoings to which the True Lord *Glorified is He* has specified punishments commensurate with the damage they cause to the soul and to society at large. Therefore, if you see a Muslim stealing, remember the punishment that Islam prescribes for the thief. If you see a Muslim committing fornication, remember the punishment that

the True Lord *Glorified is He* has prescribed for the fornicator. Such is the case when it comes to all crimes. When those great intellectuals embrace Islam, they study the principles of the religion while disregarding the conduct of contemporary Muslims. The latter have strayed far from the principles of the true religion (of Islam).

Witness the French thinker *René Guénon* who said: 'Praise be to Allah who guided me to Islam before I had become acquainted with Muslims, for if I had come to know Muslims before my embracing of Islam, I would have likely suffered from such cognitive dissonance as to cause me to hesitate about embracing such a lofty religion.' Thus, the cogitation of the brilliant mind will always lead the person to Islam. Clear-headedness reflects that primordial state in which Allah created human beings, and Islam will only serve to grow the mind. Through Islam, the mind will soar to even loftier heights. Reason is the locus where man realizes his religious vocation and accepts his religious duties.

Sin and suffering is what befalls those who do not use their reason. To use the mind in a conscientious and virtuous way precludes the possibility of committing sin or being punished, for Allah *Glorified is He* will permit them to approach their religious duties in a way that they will use their reason. If someone were to ask me: What is the reason? What is the domain of religious duties?

Therefore, reason was given to us by Allah *Glorified is He* so that it might prevent us from seeking to fulfil our desires in an impulsive, wild manner; Allah *Glorified is He* has created the human soul, and He knows that the soul is inclined towards the immediate gratification of desires. Allah *Glorified is He* wants human beings to curb those impulses with the help of reason. When a person thinks about satisfying a particular desire, his mind will whisper to him: you might enjoy this particular pleasure momentarily; you might even have to steal it from someone else—that is, someone else's sacred property or someone else's wealth—however, would you ever let someone satisfy a particular desire of his at your expense? Therefore, you must realize that Allah *Glorified is He* has endowed you with reason so that it hinders your desires and prevents you from satisfying your desires at someone's expense—the consequences of acting on such impulses are always detrimental.

It would be a mistake to think that, in the name of freedom, the reason's function is to open the door to unbridled freedom. To anyone who is of this opinion, we say that the mind represents the centre which handles all issues related to religious duties. It is the mind which notifies you of your responsibilities when it comes to all manners of activities. It is by virtue of the True Lord's Justice that He has not charged the insane person with religious duties because his judgment of things and actions is unnatural since he lacks the faculty of discernment.

Moreover, Allah *Glorified is He* has not placed any religious duties upon the person who has not yet reached the age of puberty, because he has not fully developed his mental faculties yet, nor does he have the ability to reproduce. Previously, we have given the parable of the date. We do not consider a date to be ripe and palatable unless the seed that it contains is able to produce a new tree if planted in the ground. For example, if you cut open a watermelon and find its seeds to be white, you would not eat it. You will make sure to eat only those watermelons whose seeds have turned black, for that is a sign of the watermelon's ripeness. If you were to take the black seeds and plant them, a new watermelon plant would grow. Therefore, when a person reaches maturity, his mind becomes able to weigh various courses of action before proceeding with any of them. The religious duties are required of the person who is mature, in full possession of his mental faculties. They are not required of one who is compelled by some outside force to do what he knows is wrong.

When a person has not yet reached the age of puberty, Allah does not require him to perform any religious obligations. However, the person's family may do so, so as to prepare him for a life of religious obedience. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* tells us: 'Order your children to pray beginning from the age of seven, and punish them if they did not do so beginning from the age of ten, and separate their sleeping places.'<sup>(1)</sup> In this case, we find that the one who is giving orders is the father—and not Allah. Also, the one who doles out punishment is the father—and not Allah. Once the child reaches the age of puberty, Allah is the one who charges him

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(1) *Related by Ahmad in his Musnad (2/187) and by Abu Dawud in his Sunnan (490) – The Hadith is narrated on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr Ibn Al-'As*

with his religious duties. However, if someone were to use overwhelming force and compel him to commit a sin, such as if someone held up a gun to him and said: 'if you did not drink this alcohol, I will open fire'—in this case, the person is no longer bound by religious responsibility. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said in a Hadith: 'Allah forgives the members of my community if they fall into error or forgetfulness or if they are compelled against their will.'<sup>(1)</sup>

Reason is the centre that deals with religious obligations. Its function is to choose between alternatives in all areas of life. When it comes to food, for example, there are those who prefer to sprinkle hot sauce over their food because it stimulates the appetite. After the person finishes his meal, we might find him screaming from heartburn and asking for antacids. In fact, the latter might not help to alleviate his pain: the protective layer of mucus on the inner walls of his stomach might already be damaged. Thus, the hot sauce that he used for one meal might prevent him from enjoying many meals to come. That is why we find his mind telling him: be wary of this kind of appetizing sauce, because it is detrimental to your health. We realize that the reason is the faculty which notifies the person of the consequences of his actions. It is also what prompts a person to deliberate before acting and to apply oneself during the execution of tasks, so that the results of the work might be consistently useful to him and to others. It is not reason's function to make error feel pleasurable.

In short, we realize that reason recognises and discerns the right course of action in all situations. To be sure, reason causes a person to incline towards faith even during the pre-pubescent stage. When a human being uses his reason to contemplate this universe, he will inevitably have to recognise the beauty of the Creator's work.

Then, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

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(1) *Related by Ibn Majah in his Sunnan (2040), Ad-Daraqutni in his Sunnan (4/170) and by Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak (2/198) – He revised it according to the criteria of the two Sheikhs. The Hadith is narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas; however, Ibn Majah's chain of narrators (isnad) is discontinued.*

قُلْ أَنْظَرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا تُغْنِي الْآيَاتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾

**Say, ‘Look at what is in the heavens and on the earth.’  
But what use are signs and warnings to people who will  
not believe? [101] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 101)**

In this verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* speaks to us about the corporeal universe which is visible to you. Allah *Glorified is He* is not speaking about the subtle universe which is invisible to you. It is as though you were convinced of the corporeal universe, and said: ‘Behind this universe, there is an All-Capable, All-Powerful, Divine Creator,’ and you come to believe in Him. At this point, portions of knowledge of the unseen will descend upon you like a soft breeze, and you will reach the subtle realm, because you have discovered within yourself the promise that you owe yourself, and you declared your faith in the Creator, and you beheld the beauty of His work in the sky and the stars, and you were amazed by the precision of the stars’ orbital system.

You see the precise timing of the rising of the sun and the moon. You see the precise timing of the partial and total eclipses. You are astounded at the precision of the Creator *Glorified is He*. Furthermore, you will not find the planets passing by each other in tight spaces so that the moon or the earth is ever delayed, and no planet will ever come to a halt because it ran out of fuel. Allah says: ‘It is not allowable for the sun to reach the moon, nor does the night overtake the day, but each, in an orbit, is swimming.’ (*Ya Sin*: 40) In our daily lives, when we witness precise craftsmanship—in things not nearly, not in the slightest, as magnificent as the sky, the sun or the moon—we always honour the craftsman in question. Humanity has honoured the creator of the telegraph and the creator of the television set—should not we also honour the Creator *Glorified is He* of the universe? It is enough that we know that the sun is eight light-minutes away from earth—one light-second is equivalent to three-hundred-thousand kilometres. That is the one and only sun which you see—not the thousands of other suns in the other galaxies. Every galaxy contains millions of solar systems. It is enough for you to know that the True Lord *Glorified is He* has sworn by the sun. Also, Allah *Glorified is He* has said with respect to the star Sirius: ‘And that it is He who is the Lord of Sirius.’ (*an-Najm*: 49) For the star Sirius is bigger than the sun.

Now, when you contemplate the sky and the earth, you will find that the earth consists of high mountains. When you travel through these mountains, you will be amazed at their impeccable formation and their remarkable cohesion. Inside these mountains, you will find stones and minerals at various depths. You might find the surface of the mountains covered with fertile elements spread out in a crisp manner. When the rain falls upon it, it goes alongside it into the earth, because they are merely shreds that resemble iron fillings; thus, they percolate into the soil which has been cracked open by the heat of the sun. One evident example of this is all the silt which the river Nile used to carry to the delta region during the floods. During this time of annual flooding—before the construction of the High Dam—the water of the Nile used to resemble *Tahini* due to the high levels of silt that it contained. It is within this type of silt that one finds the rich, fertile elements that provide us with sustenance. If all mountains were composed of such crisp materials, the rain would erode them away all at once and, thereby, add half a metre depth to the surface of the earth. Fertile soil would disappear from the face of the earth in a few years. However, the True Lord *Glorified is He* wished to make the mountains firm. He created the mountains in such way that only their surfaces are delicate; then, every year, when the rains come, they carry some of the fertile silt to lower ground.

Anyone who studies Allah's creative work in the field of life maintenance will find that the mountains are the storehouses of sustenance. To be sure, human beings require iron if they are to build the tools and machines that they need. Whether it is machines to plough the earth or other tools that help make life easier, you will find that iron (which goes in to their manufacture) is stored in the mountains. We also find other minerals like phosphate, manganese, marble, turquoise, etc., as well as various gases. Therefore, hidden within mountains is sustenance, the means of acquiring sustenance or the means of acquiring luxuries over and above basic sustenance.

Therefore, when rain falls on the sides of mountains, it takes the fertile topsoil on the mountain surfaces and leaves the remaining materials as resources for humankind to exploit. In Africa, for example, there are mines for coal and diamonds. In other countries, you will find agar wood which consists of



the roots of trees. If you were to cut up the world as pieces from the circumference of the earth to its centre, you will find the earth to be fertile whether the surface happens to be desert, water, or mountain—all sections are equal to each other in the measure of their fertility.

The nature of sustenance might vary from region to region. If you counted, from the beginning of creation how much fertile silt from the mountains the rain has transported to the river Nile in Africa; and if you count how much crude oil Allah has placed in the deserts of the Arab Emirates, for example, you will find that the bounty of the Nile is equal to the bounty of the oil—even if oil has only been discovered recently.

Every amount of sustenance is accounted for from the storehouses. Furthermore, every part of sustenance has a set date for when it will be discovered. There is a set date for the discovery of coal, a set date for the discovery of oil—all of this according to a precise system laid down by Allah, the Infinitely-Wise, the Most Exalted.

Since the True Lord *Glorified is He* has used the expression: ‘use their reason?’ in reference to contemplating the heavens and the earth, this signifies an exhortation to reflect upon the wonders of the heavens and the earth. Among these wonders is the fact that the towering mountains have summits and bases, just like the pyramids. You will also find rivers existing in a manner contrary to that of the mountains because rivers run between two mountains. Also, you will find the riverhead at its bottom and the summit of the mountain at its top. When rain falls, it passes by the narrow head of the mountain; then it flows down to the bottom of the narrow river. The more rainfalls, the more sediment from the face of the mountain is eroded; this sediment fills the area of the wide river. The more people there are, the more Allah *Glorified is He* increases the volume of sustenance. You can find an example of this in the silt coming from the sources of the Nile. It flows down the Nile and arrives at the Nile Delta. Formerly, the delta region used to be a collection of salty swamps. The True Lord *Glorified is He* willed it to become a fertile land. When we reflect upon this fact, we realize that everything in the universe has been purposefully brought into existence by the True Lord *Glorified is He*. What destroys our wellbeing on earth is that we do not work proactively towards

creating more sustenance and wealth; rather, we wait until the earth becomes overcrowded with all its inhabitants. Only then do we start thinking about acquiring more arable land, whereas we should have been doing this before the crisis began.

The more rainfalls upon the mountains, the more topsoil erodes away bringing hidden minerals to light. This is so that man might discover them and, thereafter, exploit them creatively. When the believer sees this, his faith increases; and as the believer continues to abide by the religious directives which are incumbent upon him, he will find the light of faith dawning in his heart.

Let every Muslim try the following experiment. For one week, let him try to live by the light of Allah's religion. Then, let him evaluate himself and note the difference between the state of his soul before and after. He will find that, during this week that he prayed his prayers on time, he applied himself diligently at work to gain lawful income; he will also find that he only spends his money on what is lawful. Evaluate yourself sincerely at the end of this week, and you will find that you have undergone a wonderful, healing transformation. You will find that the light of faith has begun to create a harmonious synergy between you and the universe in terms of the simplest of details as well as in more profound ways. For example, you might find a man—from among those who, from years of practicing Allah's religion, have been blessed with the virtue of 'limpidity'—if his wife asks him: what shall we cook today? He might say to her: 'let us make do with yesterday's leftovers.' Then a family member from the countryside pays him a surprise visit. The latter comes bearing food and drink. Such a man has reached such a degree of 'limpidity' that he has become completely integrated with the cosmos—Allah's bounty reaches him from an astounding variety of sources. This quality of 'limpidity' can also be found in the most complex of matters. Did Ya'qub (Jacob) *peace be upon him* not say: 'Indeed, I find the smell of Joseph'? (*Yusuf*: 94)

The brothers of Yusuf (Joseph) *peace be upon him* were still on their way back from Egypt to meet their father. They had Joseph's shirt, which the latter had instructed them to place over the face of his father so that he might regain his sight. Jacob *peace be upon him* felt the breath of his son in the air because Jacob *peace be upon him* had lived in harmony with the universe. There was no

tension in his relationship with the rest of the universe. One patent example of this is the joy expressed by the universe when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was born into the world. The universe rejoiced at his coming because the universe is as (a single organism) submitted to its Lord *Glorified is He* and full of praise for Him. Thus, when someone comes forth, exhorting people to recognise Allah's Uniqueness, the universe can only rejoice. Conversely, the universe loathes and scorns the person who disobeys Allah—the two parties are full of hate towards each other. The universe rejoiced at the coming of the Messenger destined to be the recipient of a Divine Message that would re-establish a balance in man's relationship with the universe.

In the present verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'Say, "Observe what is in the heavens and earth.' The entire universe is in front of them, so why did they not contemplate upon it? They might indeed be able to physically see, but they do not possess the ability to grasp the significance of things. They are like the person who lets words go in one ear and out the other. That is why Allah says: 'But of no avail will be signs or warners to a people who do not believe.' Thus, their lack of faith caused them to lose their insight and their ability to contemplate. That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا مِثْلَ أَيَّامِ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ  
قُلْ فَأَنْظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ

**What are they waiting for but the punishment that came to those before them? Say, 'Wait then, I am waiting too' [102]**  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 102)

These people who do not believe remain mired and lost in their wicked ways. It is as though they are waiting to relive the events that befell previous generations of unbelievers who came before them. The Messenger had come forth to them with clear evidence like all previous generations of deniers. Now we know that the 'day' is a unit for measuring the duration of time. The next unit is the 'week', then after the week, there is the 'month', and then the 'year'. As a person matures, he looks upon every day as a number of hours, hours as minutes and minutes as seconds. As the events (of human history)

become more complex, the measurements which keep track of time become more precise. The day—as we have said—has been created by Allah as a unit of measurement of time. It consists of one day and one night.

Sometimes, however, the word day might be used to denote some significant event that occurred during that day. For example, we might say: day of Dhi qarad<sup>(1)</sup>, or day of Hunayn<sup>(2)</sup> or day of Uhud. Thus, when the word *day* is used, it might be in reference to the significant event that occurred during that day. When we look at history, we find a book by the name of ‘The History of Arab Days’; in it, we find references to day of Bu‘ath<sup>(3)</sup>, for example, or day of awtas<sup>(4)</sup>. Each *day* represents a particular battle. Thus, the word *day* (*yawm*) represents duration of time. Yet, it can also refer to an event that took place on a particular day. For example, you might find a contemporary of yours who has lived through some crisis in the past. When he looks back on earlier times, he might say: ‘Prices were lower back then, and everything was readily available.’ Then someone else adds: ‘Those were the days.’ In other words: those were times of plenty. In short, the word *day* might refer to the event that took place during that time.

In this verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘So do they wait except for like [what occurred in] the days of those who passed on before them?’ Among ‘those who passed on before them,’ we can cite the people of Noah *peace be upon him* whom Allah *Glorified is He* had caused to drown. We can also cite the people of the Pharaoh whom Allah *Glorified is He* had also caused to drown. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘So each We seized for his sin; and among them were those upon whom We sent a storm of stones, and among them were those who were seized by the blast [from the sky], and among them were those whom We caused the earth to swallow, and among them were

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(1) *Dhi qarad*: a place in the region of Najd which has water. It is located about a day away from the city of Medina.

(2) It occurred in the year 8 AH after the liberation of Mecca.

(3) *Yawm bu‘ath*: this was the day when the tribes of ‘Aws and Khazraj battled each other. On that day, victory went to the tribe of ‘Aws over that of Khazraj.

(4) *Yawm ‘awtas*: this is another name for the aforementioned *yawm Hunayn*. It occurred in the year 8 AH after the liberation of Mecca. The name (*‘Awtas*) refers to a river in *Diyar Hawazin* where the battle of *Hunayn* took place.

those whom We drowned. And Allah would not have wronged them, but it was they who were wronging themselves.’ (*al-’Ankabut*: 40) They were aware of the events that occurred during that time; were they, then, waiting until times like these befall them? Of course, they ought not to have revelled in their state of disbelief; otherwise, they would incur upon themselves the same calamities that befell their disbelieving predecessors.

In our own vernacular, there is a local expression which expresses the innate faith. You might hear a person saying: ‘There will come a day of reckoning, O you unjust one.’ In other words, the day when Allah *Glorified is He* takes revenge upon the unjust person will become famous, for the unjust person oppresses Allah’s creatures. That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* will bring upon this person a momentous event wherein Allah *Glorified is He* will get the best of him and make him taste all of the injustice he wrought on people. When the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘Then wait; indeed, I am with you among those who wait.’ Allah’s words ‘then wait’ express a defiance, ‘indeed, I am with you among those who wait’ are a herald of good news, because the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* will await this day so that he can witness their punishment. For his part, the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* will have achieved victory on that day.

Then, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كَذَلِكَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نُنَجِّي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

**In the end We shall save Our messengers and the believers. We take it upon yourself to save the believers [103] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 103)**

The True Lord has saved His Messengers and those who came to believe in them, so that they might remain on earth as beacons of truth and virtue. However, amid such beacons of truth and virtue, there must also remain certain elements of evil because were it not for the evil—which manifests itself in the calamitous events that befall people—mankind would not reach towards the good. As we always say: the pain that a patient suffers is actually a soldier fighting on the side of good health. Pain alerts a person to the fact that there is a deficiency which he must diagnose and cure with the help of a doctor. Now,

pain is felt during the waking hours when a person is conscious. However, it recedes during the sleeping hours. Sleep is a natural painkiller. When the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'Then We will save our messengers and those who have believed. Thus, it is an obligation upon Us that We save the believers.' These words affirm that the elements of good shall endure in this world.

The deeper a community falls into disbelief, the more Allah *Glorified is He* holds out opportunities for salvation. In any land where faith is undermined, believers are persecuted, and iniquity abounds. You will find people who are completely devoted to Allah *Glorified is He* and who are dedicated to understanding (and embodying) the virtues; when the evil and iniquity of the world becomes unbearable, the people head towards these devotees of Allah and ask them for their prayers. The True Lord *Glorified is He* has committed Himself to deliver the believers when He says: 'It is an obligation upon Us that We save the believers.' Then, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

قُلْ يٰٓأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِّن دِينِي فَلَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ  
وَلٰكِن أَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

**[Prophet] say, 'People, even if you are in doubt about my religion, I do not worship those you worship other than God, but I worship God who will cause you to die, and I am commanded to be a believer' [104] (The Quran, Yunus: 104)**

The word *doubt* is when you consider two possibilities to be equally plausible. In this instance, the True Lord *Glorified is He* orders His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* to present the issue of religion for the disbelievers so that they measure it against what they are currently want to worship. Then, the Prophet is ordered to let them make their decision in the matter. Thus, they are in a state of doubt: is this (new) religion true or false? If Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has presented the issue of religion so that it might be judged, this means that the disbelievers are somewhat able to recognise the uniqueness of the new religion of Islam. In other words, when they experience occasional states of clarity, they can grasp its value. They are, therefore, in a state of doubt as to whether the religion revealed to Prophet

Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is true, and whether the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* and his followers will be victorious or not.

When the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* presents the issue of Islam to them—leaving it up to them to decide—it demonstrates a confidence on his part that, if a person is left to make a judgement on the merits of the Islamic religion, the person cannot help but incline towards faith. The True Lord *Glorified is He* settles the issue of setting up false deities besides Him. Allah *Glorified is He* also orders the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* to say: ‘I do not worship those which you worship besides Allah.’ (*Yunus*: 104)

In other words, it is impossible that the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* should worship associates (beside Allah) while worshipping Allah at the same time; he only worships Allah: ‘but I worship Allah.’ Then, Allah *Glorified is He* puts forth the proof which can leave no doubt, the unassailable evidence, which is that the True Lord *Glorified is He* alone is worthy of being worshiped. It is He who ‘causes your death.’ There is nothing that can object to Allah when He causes them to die. There are two issues involved here: first, the issue of worship, as in when Allah says: ‘I do not worship those which you worship besides Allah; but I worship Allah, who causes your death.’

These two issues can only be mentioned together: the issue of the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* not worshipping any other deity besides Allah, and the issue of singling out Allah *Glorified is He* alone for worship. The dichotomy here is unequivocal in that there is a complete and unbridgeable chasm between the army of the true faith and the army of idolatry. As the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘Say, “O disbelievers, I do not worship that which you worship, and neither do you worship that which I worship. Nor will I be a worshipper of what you worship. Nor will you be worshippers of what I worship. For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.”’ (*al-Kafirun*: 1-6) Those who say that chapter *al-Kafirun* contains repetition do not realize that such language serves to sever ties completely, so that the separation remains for all time. It is not a temporary severance of ties. This was the first instance of a severance of ties in Islam; and it was done in a definitive manner so that there was no opportunity for any compromise to be reached. Each camp remained entrenched in its position.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says in the chapter of *an-Nasr*: ‘When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest. And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes. Then exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever accepting of repentance.’ (*an-Nasr*: 1-3) Here, the matter is confirmed, because after Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* severs all ties with the camp of idolatry, Allah’s succour and victory came, whereupon the people abandoned the camp of idolatry and hurried over to join the camp of faith.

Therefore, it is they who ended up embracing the true faith; this is the first issue. ‘Then I do not worship those which you worship besides Allah; but I worship Allah.’ They used to worship idols carved out of rock. Now, if you look at the various species of creatures in existence, you will find that the noblest of them is man since he is the creature to whom the True Lord *Glorified is He* has made all other creatures subservient. Below mankind, the next creature on the echelon is the animal. Then, there comes the next rank that is lower than man and animal, namely, plants. Finally, the lowest rank of creation consists of inanimate things. Thus, they had taken to worshipping idols made from the lowest form of creation. This is the ultimate instance of failure.

The second issue is mentioned in the following words of the True Lord *Glorified is He*: ‘And I have been commanded to be of the believers.’ If Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* refused to worship anything besides Allah *Glorified is He*, this meant that he worshiped Allah *Glorified is He* to the exclusion of all else. This does not represent a negative position, but rather the ultimate positive position. Worship requires a person to accept the path of Allah which is obedience to the directives contained therein as well as abide by the proscriptions. Thereafter, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَأَنْ أَقِمَّ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

**[Prophet], set your face towards religion as a man of pure faith. Do not be one of those who join partners with God[105]  
(The Quran, Yunus: 105)**

Since these words are addressed to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* it contains the same implications as the other instances when the



True Lord *Glorified is He* has addressed him—such instructions apply to every believer. If the believer worships Allah *Glorified is He*; this means that he accepts Allah's Judgments. That is why, in this instance, the order is stated that a believer's face should be directed towards Allah. Thus, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says; 'Direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth.' Thus, while worshipping, a person must turn neither right nor left. Since the believer worships Allah and none else, he should know that there is also a certain subtle polytheism. For example, a person might worship those who are stronger or more affluent than he is. These are but a few examples of the types of people which a believer might be tempted into worshipping or idolizing.

Previously, we have come to know the following words of the True Lord *Glorified is He*: 'And who is better in religion than one who submits himself to Allah while being a doer of good and follows the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham) *hanifa*? And Allah took Abraham as an intimate friend.' (*an-Nisa*': 125) The word *hanifa* means a state of disinclination from the path of error; in other words, a state of travelling on a straight path. Why is such an expression used? The answer is that religion does not come forth with a new Messenger and a new miracle unless corruption has become rampant. Only then is religion revealed from heaven with the objective of exhorting people to turn away—to disincorporate—from this corruption and perversion. If the people respond positively to such a message, this would amount to a recalibration of the behaviour of both individual and society.

Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* warns us from falling into the subtle forms of polytheism—even if we have formally proclaimed our faith in the One True God *Glorified is He*. The reference to this form of polytheism is found in the following words of the True Lord *Glorified is He*: 'and never be of those who associate others with Allah.'

The secondary form of idolatry—which is less severe than the first— is creedal polytheism; it consists of believing that someone or something shares in Allah's Ability. For example, if you see that a doctor or a medicine has the ability of healing, then tell yourself: the doctor is merely the one who prescribes the medication; however, Allah *Glorified is He* is the One Who heals. To be sure, a doctor might make a mistake; he might prescribe a

medication which ends up producing adverse side effects to the patient. The believer must not be seduced by any 'secondary causes'. Let us put forth another example: some years ago, a country with vast agricultural lands announced that it had planted wheat over such a vast area that it would suffice the entire world population. The wheat spouted and matured—but then the crop was ruined by a storm. That country was then forced to import its wheat from other countries. The True Lord *Glorified is He* and then says:

وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ فَإِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا مِنْ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

**Do not pray to any other [god] that can neither benefits nor harm you: if you do, you will be one of the evildoers [106]**  
(The Quran, *Yunus*: 106)

When these idolaters took to worshipping idols and prayed to them instead of Allah, did the idols respond? When they worshiped these idols, did the latter say: 'do this!', or 'did not do that'? The idols—which the idolaters had deified—had not put forth a doctrine. None of the idols were capable of either helping or harming their subjects. When a person experiences beneficial circumstances, idols know not how to prevent them, and when adversity befalls a person, idols know not how to repel it. Thus, anyone who prays to deities other than Allah *Glorified is He* is, in reality, offering prayers to that which can neither help nor harm. Whosoever does such a thing is, therefore, among the unjust, for injustice is to hand over rights to someone who is undeserving of them. Injustice can be committed at the highest levels and at the lower levels. Thereafter, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِهِ يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٠٧﴾

**If God inflicts harm on you, no one can remove it but Him, and if He intends good for you, no one can turn His bounty away; He grants His bounty to any of His servants He will. He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful [107]** (The Quran, *Yunus*: 107)

These are words spoken from a position of absolute lordship, self-sufficiency unto itself and having no need for creation. Indeed, Allah *Glorified is He* has

brought human beings into existence. He has exhorted them to attain faith in Him and to love Him—because He loves them. He gives them and does not take away from them, for He has no need for His creation. In this verse, the reference to adversity features the use of the verb *touch*. In this instance, Allah’s reference to adversity indicates that it is merely a light adversity. However, do not say: if the adversity is light, creatures will be able to bear it. Nobody is able to bear either misfortune or good fortune, whether this misfortune is light or burdensome, whether the good fortune is copious or sparse—save by Allah’s permission.

None can remove those adversities save Allah *Glorified is He*. It is a testament to Allah’s Greatness that, when He mentions the state of being touched with adversity, He also mentions the removal of it. This is truly a manifestation of His Mercy. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the counterpart of misfortune, which is the good. When Allah *Glorified is He* speaks of the good that happens to a person, He emphasizes that none can turn it away. Now, in describing the coming of good fortune to a person, we find the word *intends*. Thus, the True Lord *Glorified is He* causes it to come to whomsoever He wills of His servants. The True Lord *Glorified is He* concludes the verse with a beautiful conclusion. He *Glorified is He* says: ‘And He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.’ We see a clearer picture of the manner in which Allah’s bounty reaches His servants. When it comes to adversity, Allah mentions that it is light, and that He removes it. When it comes to good fortune, Allah indicates that He causes it to come to His servants, and He does not prevent it. Furthermore, Allah *Glorified is He* is the All-Forgiving, the Dispenser of Mercy, for if He were to hold people—even the believers—accountable for what they do, He would surely punish them. However, He is the All-Forgiving, the Dispenser of Mercy; for His Mercy precedes His Wrath. That is why you find Him saying in the verses speaking of His blessings: ‘And if you should count the blessing of Allah, you could not enumerate them.’ (*an-Nahl*: 18)

The True Lord *Glorified is He* leaves the issue in doubt using ‘if.’ He does not say: ‘Were you to count Allah’s blessings,’ because such a thing will never happen. The very act of starting to count makes it seem as if such thing is even possible. You might count money, and the principle might count the

students in his school. However, nobody can count or compute the total number of grains of sand, for example. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'And if you should count the blessing of Allah, you could not enumerate them.' This verse is phrased in such a way as to throw serious doubt on the possibility of tallying all of Allah's blessings. What a curious thing it is, indeed, that counting implies the existence of multiple things that need to be counted. However, Allah *Glorified is He* uses the word *blessing* in its singular form. This would suggest that a single blessing contains within itself countless other blessings. Therefore, we will not even be able to count all the blessings that are contained in a single blessing. The True Lord *Glorified is He* speaks of this issue—counting Allah's blessings—on two occasions in the Quran. In the first instance, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And if you should count the blessing of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, mankind is [generally] most unjust and ungrateful.' (*Ibrahim*: 34) In the second instance, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And if you should count the blessing of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.' (*an-Nahl*: 18)

Both verses start identically but differ at the ending. Every blessing is given by a giver. Obviously, every blessing is received by a recipient. Now the recipient—with all his sins—is not deserving of the blessing, for he is most persistent in wrongdoing, and obstinately in denial of the blessing. However, the Giver of the blessing is All-Forgiving and a Dispenser of Mercy. Thus, one verse is about the Giver of the blessing, whereas in the other is about the recipient of the blessing. As far as the recipient of the blessing is concerned, he is in a state of severe iniquity and stubborn ingratitude, as he takes the blessing but shows no gratitude towards Allah for it. Has the sky not exclaimed: 'O Lord! Give me permission to crash down upon the sons of Adam by way of reprimand. They have relished Your blessings, but have abstained themselves from giving thanks to You.'

The earth also exclaimed: 'Give me permission to swallow up the sons of Adam, for they have relished Your blessings, but have abstained themselves from giving thanks to You.'

The mountains also said: 'Give us permission to come crashing down upon the sons of Adam.' The ocean, for its part, said: 'Give me permission to

drown the sons of Adam, for they have relished Your blessings but have not shown an inkling of gratitude towards You.’ This was the reaction of the elements who, in their ardent love for Allah, wanted to rain down punishment upon mankind. However, Allah *Glorified is He* the Lord of all said: ‘Leave Me to deal with My servants as I please, for if it was you who brought them into being, you would have mercy on them. Thus, if they repent and turn to Me, I will love them back, and if they do not repent, I will be their spiritual guide.’ Then, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنِ اهْتَدٰى فَلِنَفْسِهِ  
وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَا اَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيْلٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾

**Say, ‘People, the Truth has come to you from your Lord.  
Whoever follows the right path follows it for his own good,  
and whoever strays does so to his own loss: I am not your  
guardian’ [108] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 108)**

Therefore, the True Lord *Glorified is He* has not failed His creatures. He has given them reason. Had you but used these reason, you would have attained faith, and there would not have been a reason for the coming of a Messenger. Reason ought to have contemplated upon the All-Powerful who created the entire universe. It is, in fact, this reason that asked the All-Powerful to send forth a Messenger so that he might communicate what Allah *Glorified is He* wanted of His servants. Thus, when the Messenger does come forth—when he informs them that he is a Messenger from Allah and that he bears Allah’s Doctrine—at this point, they ought to have paid their full attention to what the Messenger was saying.

Allah’s servants ought to have found guidance with their reason. That is why we find that, when the philosophers searched for knowledge, they said: ‘there exists a ‘material philosophy’, which attempts to collect knowledge about the physical makeup of the universe; then, there is a ‘metaphysical philosophy’ which attempts to collect knowledge about that which lies beyond the corporeal universe. Who, therefore, informed the philosophers that there is anything behind the corporeal universe? When the uncorrupted

reason beholds the meticulous order of the universe, it should realize there is a hidden power behind the visible, physical universe.

The philosophers would not have embarked upon a quest to discover what lay beyond the material universe had they not surmised that, behind the material universe, there was something hidden. What is hidden behind the material universe has a way of making itself known, for it is not something that human beings can ascertain through reason.

Previously, we have given the following example: imagine that we are sitting in a room and the doorbell rings. Thereupon, everyone in the room knows that there is someone at the door, and everyone in the room holds this fact to be true. This is what the philosophers said when they agreed that that there exists superior power behind the material universe. However, they went over and above their mission; they wanted to inform us of the essence, or the reality of this power. They did not take note of the obvious fact that this power is not susceptible to being known by reason. Thus, if we know that there is someone at the door, we should not presume to know his identity, nor should we leave the matter to opinion or conjecture. Rather, we should allow the person at the door to announce his own identity, to make known his wishes. In effect, it is up to the person at door to tell us about himself.

Therefore, let us ask him to reveal his name and to describe his qualities, for this is a matter which we cannot grasp through reason. Thus, the mistake of the philosophers is that, after ascertaining that there is a superior power behind the physical universe, they did not stop there. Seeking to go beyond being reasonable, they attempted visualization. However, visualizations are not borne of the mind. We may only be informed of them. The True Lord *Glorified is He* hereby says: ‘Say, “O mankind, the truth has come to you from your Lord.”’ (*Yunus*: 108)

Truth, as we know, is that which is in stillness, never changing. We also know that the truth comes to us from the Lord—He who guides and instructs after having creating; He, who does not impose religious obligations upon us until we have reached the age of maturity; He, who created the whole universe and appointed us vicegerents therein. Therefore, He is our guardian. If the truth comes to us from Him, why should we not incorporate this doctrine into our education? Why have we accepted the education regarding the proper

ways of eating, dressing and the proper gender roles? Therefore, we ought to have taken from Our Educator *Glorified is He* that doctrine which will govern every aspect of our lives so that our lifestyles do not become corrupted.

When the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘truth has come to you from your Lord,’ this means that nobody can give the excuse: ‘I have not been informed of Allah’s obligations.’ The True Lord *Glorified is He* has given us reason so that we might comprehend—not so that we may try to visualize every detail. The actual details of Allah’s Message came to us when the True Lord *Glorified is He* sent forth a Messenger who said: ‘I am a Messenger from Allah; He is the Power that has created the universe.’ At his point, and after the Messenger’s miracle had proven itself true, we ought to have welcomed the Messenger and said: ‘you are exactly the man we were looking for.’ Therefore, tell us: what does the High Power want you to convey to us? Then, in the same verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘so whoever is guided is only guided for [the benefit of] his soul.’ This is because man’s reward for following the right path does not benefit He Who created and guided him. Rather, the reward benefits man himself in various aspects [including] living harmoniously with the universe, rehabilitation of the soul, inner tranquillity and attentiveness to what inhabits the universe, not what demolishes it. Such a state is the very opposite of what is experienced by the person who, disregarding Divine guidance, allows himself to go astray.

With respect to this type of human being, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘and whoever goes astray only goes astray [in violation] against it.’ The phrase *going astray* signifies that the person who went astray had been, at first, provided with guidance. However, he chose to shun such guidance. The True Lord *Glorified is He* concludes the verse with His words: ‘And I am not over you a manager.’

The only reason why you would put another person in charge of your affairs is if your own time is limited, or if your current capacity for work and action does not allow you to take charge yourself. Thus, Prophet Muhammad (*peace and blessings be upon him*) informs the people: ‘I myself cannot prevent you from going astray, nor can I compel you to follow guidance, for I am not responsible for your actions. All that I am charged with is to convey the

message on Allah's behalf. If you listen to this Message with pure hearts, you will surely be guided. Then, if you are rightly guided, the benefits shall rebound upon you, for the reward shall be everlasting bliss, and it shall be given to you in exchange for a life lived in accordance with the doctrine. Now, even if it has restricted the desires of your lower self, the doctrine guides you towards a life of bliss in the hereafter, where every conceivable pleasure can—and shall—be had.'

If a man is willing to exert effort such that he can learn a trade, a craft or a profession—that he might eventually master whatever he undertakes and thereby earn a living from it for the rest of his life—toiling in such a [voluntary] manner—should he not also be willing to exert himself in his religion? A life of worship will serve to rehabilitate his mind, expedite his goal of inward serenity and outward harmony with society. Religion will also serve to re-channel and refine the desires of the lower self; and after all of that, a person will earn an everlasting state of bliss in the Hereafter. When a person deems it to be too troublesome to exert himself for the sake of gaining knowledge, or learning a trade or a craft, such a person lives in a state of constriction and fails to develop himself, for he does not push himself to learn. We see that those who learn new things and apply themselves end up raising their own social and economic status. They might reach the doctorate level, for example, or become specialists in a lucrative field.

The more exalted a person's goals—the more worthwhile they are—the harder he needs to work to achieve them. Now, compare the work that you perform in your professional life to the blissful reward that awaits you in the Hereafter! You will find an enormous gap between the fruits for your professional efforts and the fruits of your religious efforts; the two are not even comparable. When the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'and whoever goes astray only goes astray [in violation] against it.' The word 'against' signifies that a person violates the rights of his soul in a tyrannical fashion and marches forth proudly in to the abyss. In contrast, you will find the words of the True Lord: 'so whoever is guided is only guided for [the benefit of] his soul,' where the phrase 'for his' signifies ownership.

Thereafter, in concluding chapter *Yunus*, the True Lord says:



وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَأَصْبِرْ حَتَّىٰ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

**[Prophet], follow what is being revealed to you, and be steadfast until God gives His judgement, for He is the Best of Judges [109] (The Quran, *Yunus*: 109)**

If the True Lord *Glorified is He* has quoted His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* as saying: ‘O mankind, the truth has come to you from your Lord,’ (*Yunus*: 108) This is a theoretical statement, referring to the Prophet’s eventual completion of his mission of conveying Allah’s doctrine. The people must believe in the doctrine. They must also know that the Messenger is the first one to practice the doctrine, for, Allah forbid, even if he were to cheat them all, he could not cheat himself. Thus, after communicating the Message on the True Lord’s behalf, he explained to people that the rewards of right-guidance do not benefit the True Lord, but rather, they benefit humankind. Thus, man is in charge of his own destiny. He can go through life with peace of mind, confident that he will have earned bliss in the Hereafter. He may also be sure that delusion cannot haunt him ever again—save if a person does himself injustice and leads himself to perdition. The Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* is not responsible for your conduct; he shows you the way to the good at a time when you do not practice the good. He cannot save you from evil if you cling stubbornly to evil ways. That is why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* ought to be a model: ‘There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often’ (*al-Ahzab*: 21).

In this instance, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘And follow what is revealed to you.’ That is, you must be a model, and when you follow that which is being revealed to you, you will encounter resistance from those who live decadent lifestyles. They will not be pleased that someone exhorting moral reformation has come forth. Therefore, resolve yourself to follow what is being revealed to you and resolve yourself to be patient.

The Prophet being ordered to be patient implies that there are numerous obstacles along the path. You must be patient and an example for others. You must also have confidence in the fact that if there was not any

good to be had in following the doctrine, you would not be able to bear it until Allah's judgment came—'and be patient until Allah will judge.' There is no one who is more just or wiser than Allah *Glorified is He*. The chapter of *Yunus*—which ends as it does on this blessed verse—has delved into the issue of faith in Allah, the height of the doctrine that Allah is Unique and that we must accept His Message. He is the Lord Who has created out of nothing, Who brought everything into existence, and Who did not charge us with religious obligations until we had lived through our childhood years and reached the age of maturity.

This is so that it might be verified beyond doubt that the one who is charged with religious obligations deserves to be charged, especially after having benefited from every conceivable blessing in existence, and after he has ascertained the truth of Allah's Lordship. The Meaning of Lordship is education. In other words, the educator takes charge of the education of the disciple until he reaches the degree of perfection required of him. This issue has proved to be true in the universe. We listen to the Lord Who created when He explains to us what our purpose in life is and how we must follow the doctrine so that our lifestyles are rectified.

Moreover, a person becomes at peace with the purpose of his life—a purpose which he is aware of even before he takes his first step. It is unlikely that Allah *Glorified is He* would create a creature and then let him down. Rather, Allah must provide him with a set of principles with which a human being will preserve himself. Every created object has a set of rules and is assigned a purpose by its creator. Thus, if we go against our original vocation, we will effectively alter everything; and as a result, the world becomes an absurd tangle, where every person has his own purpose and doctrine, and every mind thinks differently. The world is then plunged into a state of discord: people's desires will invariably clash with each other, and the power of the individual will decline. Conflict amongst fellow human beings will diminish the power of the individual to remedy what needs to be remedied. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* wishes for unity of creed as well as unity of doctrine. In addition, the True Lord *Glorified is He* wishes to give us a practical example taken from the stories of the Messengers who succeeded one another.

In this chapter, He has mentioned the stories of Noah, Moses, and Aaron, as well as the stories of other Messengers. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the story of Jonah. Finally, He concludes the chapter with His words: ‘And follow what is revealed to you.’ Furthermore, convey—on Allah’s behalf—that which is being revealed to you to the world at large.

Since you are conveying the Message, your community has been given the honour of inheriting the Prophetic baton. It shall remain until the end of time, for you are, O Muhammad, the seal of the Prophets. The True Lord *Glorified is He* has willed that your community will propagate the doctrine which has been revealed to you.

Thus, the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* will bear witness that he has conveyed the Message, and his community must also bear witness that it has been conveyed. His community must also bear witness that it has conveyed Allah’s Message to the world at large—such is the distinguished mission that has been assigned to the community of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. No other community has been bestowed such an honour, for when it comes to the Messengers who preceded Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* their messages languished over time, the light of their religious directives faded<sup>(1)</sup>, and the people became forgetful of them.

Allah *Glorified is He* would send forth a new Messenger. However, things changed after the Message of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. The chain of prophecy ended with him, and no more messages from heaven would follow. Henceforth, the Muslim community itself is to carry forth Allah’s doctrine. Why is the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* a paragon of excellence? Because it is he who conveys Allah’s doctrine, and he is the exemplar of the manner in which religious directives must be applied if they are to effectively safeguard the life of human beings in this world. He is a practical example such that human beings are not charged with that with which their human nature cannot put up. This is why the Prophet used to insistently remind people that he was human. The Quran also corroborates

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(1) That is, with the passage of time, the religions of the previous Messengers became forgotten. The substance of these religions were altered and tampered with, and false innovations were added to them. This process occurred more frequently with the children of Israel.

this fact in unambiguous fashion: 'Say, O [Muhammad], "I am only a man like you."' (*Fussilat*: 6)

This confirms that he is a true exemplar because if the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* were not human, but asked people to emulate him, they would answer: we cannot do so because you are not like us. That is why the Quran emphasizes Prophet Muhammad's humanity. However, he is above other human beings by virtue of the distinction which Allah *Glorified is He* has conferred upon him, namely, that of being a Messenger who receives revelation from on high. Thus, his primary Prophetic Mission is to convey this revelation. His secondary mission as a Prophet is to demonstrate, through his exemplary behaviour, that he is fully convinced of the revealed religion and practices it himself. Then, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone.'

In terms of wealth, the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* was one of the poorest people. He was not arrogant. He was a paragon of excellent behaviour—one in whom all the virtuous qualities came together in harmony. He never asked anything for himself. In fact, he refused to bestow privileges on the members of his own family, even while he bestowed these privileges on other Muslims. He forbade the members of his family from inheriting anything he owned after his death. This is so that any actions performed by the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* or by his kin would be purely for the sake of Allah. This kind of behaviour is the opposite of that exhibited by other powerful families or political authorities. The latter bestow wealth and privilege first and foremost upon themselves, then upon their circle of friends and allies—depending upon their relative proximity to the epicentre of power. Those who are closest are first in line and stand to profit greatly. Those who are in the outer circles benefit less, depending upon how distant they are.

However, the companions of the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* received what not even a poor person would receive in the community of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. It would seem that Allah *Glorified is He* was indicating to us that it is improper that the Prophet's relatives or descendants should be in a position to receive alms. Thus, the obedience that Allah has ordered is that of following the revelation and propagating it. It is to

follow the revelation by abiding by its principles and applying its directives. This will certainly entail numerous hardships. He will cross paths with the arrogant strongmen who stand to benefit from the world's corruption. The latter will inevitably resist his moral exhortations so as to maintain their temporal authority.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* orders His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* to be patient. Such a command—to exhibit patience—is an indication to the effect that the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* will encounter obstacles. He must therefore brace himself such that he endures these obstacles with fortitude. In another verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* orders him and the believers to be patient, to vie with each other in patience. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘persevere and endure and remain stationed.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 200) In other words, if you are patient, your enemy might also exhibit patience. In this case, you must display more patience than them. The phrase ‘be patient’ indicates that spreading the True Lord’s Doctrine will inevitably entail hardships. If there were no need for this Doctrine to be made known—if the world were already in harmony—then what demand would there be for such a Doctrine?

However, the Doctrine has been revealed from on High because corruption had become rampant in the universe. There was a dire need for reform and for confronting the spreaders of corruption. Herein lies the source of hardship for all those who exhort the people to Allah’s cause. Since a person has chosen to go forth and exhort people to the Doctrine of the True Lord *Glorified is He* let him therefore brace himself for such trials.

Any exhorter in Allah’s Cause who is touched by harm will not receive as much reward from the Prophetic inheritance because he who is harmed is the one who receives reward from the Prophetic inheritance. The amount of harm a person suffers is proportional to the danger that the exhorter in Allah’s Cause is exposed to. This danger comes from the spreaders of corruption who join forces to persecute him.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* says: ‘Allah bestows a radiating glow on the one who, upon hearing my sayings, imbibes them, safeguards them and conveys them to those who did not hear them, for many a transmitter (of knowledge) have conveyed knowledge to one who is more knowledgeable than him.’

As the community of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* we have inherited from him the task of spreading the religion. We have also inherited from him the paragon of excellence: 'There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.'

Thus, when the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'And follow what is revealed to you,' this means that the revelation is in the process of being revealed because the Quranic revelation was not brought down from heaven all at once. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* received revelation in stages, until the end of his life. The span of his life represents the seat of receiving the revelation. When the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'and be patient until Allah will judge,' this indicates to us that Allah *Glorified is He* has specified a limit to the time that the Prophet needs to be patient. In other words, the matter shall be concluded soon when Allah gives His judgment. The verb *judge* indicates that there are two parties involved; each party claims to be right; then, there comes the person who shall pronounce a judgment in the matter. The proof can be either their admission or the testimony of a witness.

Of course, the disbelievers will not admit their disbelief, whereas the witnesses might abstain from speaking out, or they might be among those who want their wantonness to pass for justice. Now, if Allah *Glorified is He* is the Judge in the matter, He has no need for witnesses, because He is the best of witnesses. Furthermore, Allah *Glorified is He* does not pronounce a judgment without having the ability to carry out the said judgment. No, He is both the judge and the executor of the judgment. He has witnessed, pronounced a judgment, and carried out the judgment. There exists no power capable of either standing in the way of Allah's Power or standing in the way of Allah's judgment. In our own day, we see various forms of power. We find powerful nations that might dominate over weaker ones. Then, the weak nations resort to the United Nations and the Security Council. The latter then issues resolutions. Even if we assume that these resolutions are fair, where is the power that will enforce them? No such power exists.

However, the Power of the True Lord *Glorified is He* corresponds to the power of the most excellent of all judges; it is He *Glorified is He* Who witnesses, and

He has no need for witnesses who might, in any case, try to mislead Him with their testimony. If you succeed in misleading the judge in a court here on earth, you will not be able to mislead the Supreme Judge in heaven. Thereafter, the True Lord *Glorified is He* will pronounce a judgment free of sentimentality because the trouble with judgments pronounced by human beings is that they become tainted with sentimentality and thereby end up sympathizing with the guilty party. The True lord, however, has no such biases. He stands to gain nothing from His servants, being the Creator; *Glorified is He* that He is. He will not strip a creature of his rights. The True Lord *Glorified is He* reassures us that, for his part, His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* also does not act or speak out of desire. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed.’ (*an-Najm*: 3-4)

In other words, be confident in his judgment, for he does not speak out of his own desire. He wishes to accomplish nothing other than exhorting people to worship the Creator properly. A person might say that the True Lord has corrected the Messenger on certain occasions. We would reply that, as a human being, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to try his best to arrive at a proper judgment regarding those issues for which Allah did not provide him with direction. When Allah did provide him with explicit directives, the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* would submit to Allah’s judgment. Even when the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* articulated his own opinion on matters, he would not do so based on mere desire. Rather, he would pass judgments based on what he believed was fair. Then, if the True Lord *Glorified is He* issued a different judgment on the matter, he would promptly inform the Muslims and rectify the judgment. Therefore, the Prophet’s amendment of judgment regarding certain issues is a testament to his fidelity as the conveyer of Allah’s wishes. When the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* would formulate a judgment—regarding an issue for which Allah had not pronounced an explicit ruling—he would do so based on his personal opinion. Then, if a different judgment came to Him from Allah, he would communicate it to the community. In this case, he would amend his judgment at the behest—not of some fellow human being—but of his Creator.

In addition, it is the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* himself who informs us that Allah *Glorified is He* corrected his judgment. Would anyone

else undermine his own credibility and admit that his own judgment has been corrected by another? The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him*—the recipient of Divine revelation—was characterized by perfect fidelity in his transmission of Allah's wishes.

The Prophet has even told us about the time he was admonished by his Lord. This is the ultimate proof of his fidelity as Allah's Messenger. The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* would opine solely on those issues for which Allah had not issued a judgment. In doing so, he set an example for us that we might also have the courage to think for ourselves and strive to reach judicious opinions. The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* had sent Mu'adh ibn Jabal *Allah be pleased with him* to Yemen. He asked him: 'How would you proceed if a case was brought to your attention?' He said: 'I would apply the principles contained in the Quran.' The Prophet then asked: 'What if none of the principles mentioned in the Quran applied to the case?' He said: 'I would refer to the *Sunna* of Allah's Messenger.' The Prophet then asked: 'What if none of the principles contained in the *Sunna* of Allah's Messenger applied to the case?' He said: 'I will exercise my own judgment and will make every effort to arrive at a judicious ruling.' Thereupon, the Prophet *peace and blessing be upon him* tapped the envoy's chest and said: 'All praise is due to Allah, the One Who made the messenger of the Messenger of Allah suitable.'<sup>(1)</sup>

The True Lord *Glorified is He* is the most excellent of all judges. He is the Witness Who is aware of the deceitful eye, Who is conscious of that which is secreted inside the hearts of men. From Him *Glorified is He* there is no secret that can be hidden, and neither is He ever the subject of desire. It is He Who, by His Grace, pronounces fully equitable judgments. He is also capable of carrying out the judgments which He pronounces. There exists no power that can dominate Him. There is no judge who is capable of all of this, except Allah *Glorified is He*. The True lord *Glorified is He* has wished to honour the believers whose function is to pronounce judgements in people's affairs. Thus, Allah has tacitly inserted Himself in the process so that human judges tend toward benevolence.

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(1) *Related by Ahmad in his Musnad (5/230, 236, 242), Abu Dawud in his Sunnan (3592) and At-Tirmidhi (1327)* – He said: 'Its chain of transmitters is not continuous in my book.' This is the only version of which we are aware.



The fact of the matter is that there are human beings who pronounce judgments in the case of other human beings. However, the True Lord *Glorified is He* has judged that He is the best of them. There are judges, for example, who might fall victim to fraud. In addition, desire might influence the decisions of these judges. With Allah, however, there is no secret that can hide from Him, nor can desire ever influence His decision. His judgments are carried out by virtue of His Absolute Power. That is why He is the absolute best of all judges.

When, in the Quran, Allah describes Himself and His creatures using the same noun in the plural, know that this is a sign for you to infer from those qualities that you see in this world, the Attributes of Allah Whom you do not see. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘So blessed is Allah, the best of creators.’ (*al-Mu’minun*: 14) Allah also says: ‘And Allah is the best of providers!’ (*al-Jumu’a*: 11) Allah also says: ‘O My Lord, do not leave me alone [with no heir], while you are the best of inheritors.’ (*al-Anbiya*: 89) Allah also says: ‘Is not Allah the most just of judges?’ (*at-Tin*: 8) Whenever you find a plural noun by which Allah describes both Himself and His servants, this indicates that those whom He describes are characterized by the aforementioned attributes. However, His attributes are pre-eternal and absolute. Their attributes, by contrast, are accidental—being the mortals that they are, their power wanes; they can succumb to vicissitudes, and become weak. You will find Allah *Glorified is He* describing Himself as: ‘the best of creators!’ We all know that Allah *Glorified is He* is the Creator of all things from nothingness. However, there are creatures that create things from existing things. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* is the best of all creators. The True Lord *Glorified is He* also describes Himself as: ‘the best of providers!’ (*al-Jumu’a*: 11) Sustenance is that from which we benefit. Your superior might bring you food, drink, and clothing. He might give you that from which you benefit. However, the True Lord *Glorified is He* is the Creator of all of the universe’s sustenance.

In describing Himself, the True Lord *Glorified is He* also says: ‘And the disbelievers planned, but Allah planned. And Allah is the best of planners.’ (*Al-Imran*: 54) When a human being schemes, he might study a situation and still neglect some aspect of it. Allah, however, neglects nothing. Benevolence in human judgments stems from Allah’s Absolute Power. Now, we have learned that when the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* pronounced judgments

upon certain things, Allah *Glorified is He* subsequently corrected him. It was because Allah had not pronounced a judgment upon such matters that forced the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* to opine on them.

One example of this is the story of Zayd ibn Haritha *Allah be pleased with him* owned by Khadija Bint Khuwaylid *may Allah be pleased with her*. She gifted him to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Then, his family who had been searching for him, learned that he was in Mecca. He had been abducted as a child and sold into slavery in Mecca—this was a common practice with the Arabs in pre-Islamic times. When they learned of this, they went to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to get their son back. He, thereupon, said to them: ‘By Allah, I shall give him the choice: if it is you he chooses, take him, but if he chooses me, then he is mine.’ Zayd *Allah be pleased with him* chose to stay with Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Following this incident, the Messenger of Allah no longer neglected Zayd. In fact, he bestowed upon him the honour of being his son and renamed him Zayd, son of Muhammad.

The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* saw that making him his son was a way of honouring him. However, Allah *Glorified is He* willed otherwise. He says: ‘Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah and last of the prophets. And ever is Allah, of all things, Knowing.’ (*al-’Ahzab*: 40)

Making someone your son might create confusion in genealogy. Originally, such a son has the right to marry the daughter of the one who adopted him as a son. How could we deny him this right? Also, such a son could be denied the right to marry the wife of the one who adopted him, if the latter were to pass away or divorce her. For this reason, the True Lord *Glorified is He* preserved the integrity of genealogical relationships so as to preserve the rights and responsibilities of the people involved. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah and last of the prophets.’

His Mission as a Messenger from Allah is far more important to you than his relationship as a father. The True Lord *Glorified is He* said when correcting the Prophet’s decision to adopt a son: ‘Call them by [the names of] their fathers; it is more just in the sight of Allah.’ (*al-’Ahzab*: 5) This amounts to a refutation of the Messenger of Allah’s decision; however, it is done in a manner that honours him. What Muhammad *peace and blessing be upon him* had done was just and

equitable in human terms; however, Allah's judgment in the matter is even more just and equitable. Hence, his lineage as Zayd, son of Muhammad, came to end, and he went back to his original family name as Zayd, son of Haritha.

So as not to sadden Zayd, the True Lord *Glorified is He* conferred upon him honours the likes of which He conferred upon no other companion of the Prophet. He is the only companion who is mentioned by name in the Quran. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'So when Zayd had no longer any need for her, We married her to you.' (*al-'Ahzab*: 37) Thus Zayd's name came to be featured in the Quran; it came to be recited and mentioned aloud in the prayer. Thus, even if Allah had forbidden him from being genealogically related to Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* He accorded him an eternal, honourable mention in the Noble Quran—which is a great honour.

When the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'and be patient in adversity, until Allah shall give His judgment: for He is the best of all judges,' these words imply that Allah's judgement is more than just a judgment in this world and in the next. Allah's judgment in this world represents a victory for Allah's religion; in addition, those believers or disbelievers who die shall have another judgment in the Hereafter.

Allah *Glorified is He* thus concludes the chapter of *Yunus* with this judgment, and Allah *Glorified is He* has guided every believer with the example of Jonah—as one of Allah's Prophets—when stormed off in anger. Regarding this incident, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says: 'and [mention] the man of the fish, when he went off in anger and thought that We would not decree [anything] upon him. And he called out within the darkness, 'There is no deity [worthy of worship] except You *Exalted are You*. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.' (*al-Anbiya*': 87) The True Lord *Glorified is He* conferred an honour upon him with His words: 'So We responded to him and saved him from the distress.' (*al-Anbiya*': 88) The True Lord *Glorified is He* has included us in his honour with His words: 'And thus do We save the believers.' (*al-Anbiya*': 88) Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *peace be upon him* paid us a great favour when Allah *Glorified is He* inspired him to say: 'There is no deity [worthy of worship] except You *Exalted are You*. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.' Allah *Glorified is He* answered his prayer and saved him from distress. The latter is the most aggressive of Allah's soldiers, because what

distresses you is that which you cannot repulse. That is why it is said: 'the smaller the enemy, the more aggressive it is,' because if the enemy is massive in size, it is easier to deal with than the enemy who is small and agile. If the enemy is massive, a human being sees his massive size from afar. Then, a person either runs or hides. However, if the enemy happens to be a snake—for example—then a person might not see it; a person might not be able to run away from it either. If the enemy happens to be a microbe or a virus which cannot be seen with the naked eye, then it is even more aggressive and potent in the way it attacks a human being. You can guard yourself against almost every ill in this world save those who scheme against you quietly and subtly, as you do not know from whence such enemies will infiltrate you.

We hear, for example, that so-and-so has been affected by some illness because he caught some virus or another. This person does not know when the virus entered his system. However, he was stunned to see the symptoms of the illness manifesting themselves on his body, after the virus had been dormant for two weeks in his body.

Furthermore, distress is one of the most severe forms of suffering. We all know the story of the 'Ali *Allah be pleased with him* who is famous for his ability to pronounce legal opinions. People used to consult him regarding issues for which they were unable to find a solution. Some people got together and said: 'we want to identify certain difficult things and ask him about them so as to test him.' When they gathered, they told 'Ali *Allah be pleased with him*: 'We want to inspect Allah's universe, so we have sat together to figure out what is the strongest creature Allah has created. However, we each have different opinions on the matter and so each named the creature which, in his opinion, was the strongest. 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb *Allah be pleased with him* did not deliberate, neither did he utter discontinuous sentences in a way that he paused at intervals, nor did anyone ask him for more clarification. Rather, in a single sentence he indicated the number of powers according to their ranking and their power. He did so to the effect that the number corresponded to the number of things counted. This is proof that he was capable of grasping the issue in a firm manner. He extended all ten fingers and said: 'The strongest of Allah's soldiers are the following ten: the firm mountains, iron which cuts through the mountains, fire that melts iron, water which extinguishes fire, the clouds that straddle the area

between the sky and the earth which carries water, the wind that cuts up the clouds, mankind who defeats the wind—covering himself with some form of cloth, he goes on with his business. Then, there is drunkenness which gets the better of mankind, then sleep which conquers drunkenness, then distress which overpowers sleep. Thus, the fiercest of Allah's soldiers is distress.

Such were the words of 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb *Allah be pleased with him*. Distress and anguish are ones of the fiercest soldiers of Allah. Jonah *peace be upon him* was the reason why Allah *Glorified is He* promised to deliver every believer until the end of time from distress and anguish through the supplication that He inspired Jonah to utter. Allah says: 'There is no deity [worthy of worship] except You *Exalted are You*. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers. So We responded to him and saved him from the distress. And thus do We save the believers.'

Deliverance from distress went from the grace that is bestowed on a select few to a grace that is bestowed on all. Ja'far As-Sadiq has taken this supplication and fashioned it into a spiritual reminder for the believer so that the latter might accept all of life's events—even the most frightening ones—in a state of content, for man is haunted by the fear of what he knows. As for anxiety, a person does not realize its danger, nor does a person know how others are deceiving him. A person does not know what guile they have prepared for him. It is man's preoccupation with his worldly life—his desire to live in comfort and luxury to the largest extent possible—that makes him susceptible to anxiety.

Ja'far As-Sadiq<sup>(1)</sup> used to possess keen insight into the verses of the Quran and their implications. He once said: 'I am amazed at those who experience fear and do not seek recourse in the words of the True Lord: 'Sufficient for us is Allah, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs.' (*Al-Imran*: 173) No amazement is needed for the one who, after experiencing fear, finds a way to remove that fear.

A person who suffers from a headache can treat it with a painkiller. When it comes to fear, Ja'far has prescribed the medicine that is contained in the following words of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'Sufficient for us is Allah, and [He is]

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(1) His full name was Ja'far ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Ali ibn AL-Hussin, Abu 'Abdullah. He was too preoccupied with the worship of Allah to have any ambition for political power. The following individuals have narrated Hadith from him: Shu'ba, Ath-Thawri and Malik. He died in Medina in 148 AH.

the best Disposer of affairs.' Therein is the cure for all manner of fears. Ja'far As-Sadiq then provides us with the reason because, subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'So they returned with favour from Allah and bounty, no harm having touched them.' (*Al-'Imran*: 174) In other words, Ja'far located the justification for his interpretation from the same passage of the Quran. He also added: 'I am also amazed at those who experience anxiety—which is the affliction that we are currently examining—and do not seek refuge in the following words of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'There is no deity [worthy of worship] except You *Exalted are You*. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.' Then, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the following words: 'So We responded to him and saved him from the distress.' (*al-Anbiya*: 88)

I have also been amazed at him who, after having been deceived, did not seek recourse in the following words of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'And you will remember what I [now] say to you, and I entrust my affair to Allah. Indeed, Allah is Seeing of [His] servants.' (*Ghafir*: 44) For I have heard Allah following these words with: 'So Allah protected him from the evils they plotted, and the people of Pharaoh were enveloped by the worst of punishment.' (*Ghafir*: 45)

I am also amazed at him who, seeking the pleasures of this world, has not sought recourse in the following words of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'Whatever Allah wills [shall come to pass, for] there is no power except in Allah!' (*al-Kahf*: 39) For I have heard Allah *Glorified is He* following these words with: 'It may be that my Lord will give me [something] better than your garden and will send upon it a calamity from the sky, and it will become a smooth, dusty ground.' (*al-Kahf*: 40) Ja'far As-Sadiq located in Allah's Holy Book four verses corresponding to four psychological states that affect human beings. Furthermore, for each situation he provides its corroborating evidence in the Quran. When the True Lord *Glorified is He* says at the very end in the chapter of *Yunus*. The words of Allah *Glorified is He* at the end of the chapter of *Yunus* that command the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon Him* to follow what is revealed to Him are related to the very first verse of the next chapter. Allah says, '*Alif Lam Ra* [This is] a Book, whose verses are made decisive, then are they, made plain, from the Wise, All-aware.' (*Hud*: 1) For what is revealed is a Book composed, indeed, of verses that have been made truly clear.

the chapter of

***Hud***





## In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

**T**he chapter of *Hud* begins with the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*:

الرَّكَتَبُ أَحْكَمَتْ أَيْنُهُ، ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَيْرٍ ﴿١﴾

***Alif Lam Ra* [This is] a Scripture whose verses are  
perfected, then set out clearly, from One who is  
all wise, All-Aware[1] (The Quran, *Hud*: 1)**

The verse starts with the disjoined Arabic letters that some chapters of the Holy Quran start with. Each of these letters is pronounced separately as if you were reading them from the alphabet. Every letter, as we know, has a way of pronouncing that is different from the way a letter is pronounced in context. When we use a letter in writing or in speech, we are using the letter in context and we do not pronounce the title of the letter. Some of the Quranic chapters, however, begin with letters which we pronounce by their titles. With the exception of these special letters, all other letters are pronounced normally as elements of the word which they form.

To illustrate the difference between these two ways of pronouncing letters, consider the first verse of the chapter of *al-Baqara*. It reads, *Alif Lam Mim* even though it is written as one word. (*al-Baqara*: 1) So, we pronounce the title of each letter in contrast to the way we would pronounce the word *alam* (Have we not) in following verse where Allah says, ‘Have we not expanded for you your breast.’ (*ash-Sharh*: 1)

Why do we pronounce these letters in such a peculiar way? This is because Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* heard them pronounced in this way by Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him*. The Quran is originally heard. You would not be able to read the Quran without having heard the Quran to

recognise how to pronounce those disjointed letters by their titles while reading the rest of the letters of the Quran normally as they are uttered in words. Years ago, we used to have our teacher reading the Quran first before memorizing so as to teach us the correct way to read its verses. People, however, often want to read the Quran on their own, without sitting down with a teacher and without listening to someone reciting it properly.

We must put emphasis on the fact that the Quran is no ordinary book. It has unique characteristics. Its letters can take different forms as we sometimes pronounce them by their titles and at other times we read them as sounds forming a word.

We notice something wonderful when we read '*Alif Lam Mim*' in the beginning of the chapter of *Hud*. We are reminded of how the Quran is always based on the principle of *wasl* (connectivity). That is when we pause at the end of verses, there are diacritical marks. Consider verses like (*ar-Rahman*: 64-66); despite having breaks between the individual verses, the principle of *wasl* is called for there. At the end of chapter *Yunus*, Allah says, 'and He is the best of the judges.' (*Yunus*: 109) The last letter has a diacritical mark. It would be pronounced differently if it does not have diacritics. You would pronounce it with *sukoon* (absence of a vowel sound) instead of being accusative by *fath*. That is because the last letter is connected to the *basmalah* after it.

It is remarkable that the disjoint letters at the beginning of chapters are paused on with no diacritical marks involved. We read every letter individually. We would not say '*Alifun Lamun Mimun*', but rather, '*Alif Lam Mim*'. Similarly, we read the beginning of the chapter of *Maryam* as '*Kaf Ha Ya 'Ain Sad*'. We would not read the letters with their inflection and this indicates that there is a hidden wisdom behind that. There are verses in the Quran that begin with only one letter as in the chapters of *Sad*, *Qaf* and *al-Qalam*. In addition, we notice that the special letters do not constitute whole verses on their own. However, they consist of a full verse in many chapters of *ash-Shura*, *Maryam*, *Ta Ha*, *Ya Sin*, *al-A`raf*, *ar-Ra`d* and *an-Naml*.

Therefore, there is no clear specific pattern for these letters. This means that at every pause and letter there is wisdom. We find wisdom when we

contemplate the material world in which we live and thereby, discern the wonders of Allah *Glorified is He* in the sensible cosmos and the infinite wisdom of Allah. For example, when one checks into a luxury hotel, one finds that each room has an assigned key which opens no other room. However, the hotel manager holds a master key which can be used to unlock all the rooms of a particular floor. The manager has done so to let no guest opens any room but his. With the new technological advancements, every room now has its own electronic card which unlocks the door as soon as the card is inserted in a special slit. Similarly, for every floor, the hotel manager holds an electronic card which can open all the doors. Therefore, when you read the openings of chapters, know that each verse has a key and every letter of these opening verses might resemble the key. If you do not have the right key to open the door, then the chapter will not open itself up to you. So there are certain keys to the Book of Allah. At times the disjointed letters constitute independent verses and at other times the letters constitute only a part of a verse. Before you start reading you say, 'I seek refuge with Allah *Glorified is He* from Satan, the accursed' to rid yourself of malevolent influences that might compromise your reading of the Quran. Then you insert your special key, such as the words, '*Alif Lam. Mim.*', (*al-Baqara*: 1) and the door opens.

Thus, we realize that there is a key and that there is someone who opens the door as well. Consider the openings of chapters as keys which are carved differently and has a particular shape that when you transpose the key of one chapter to another, it would fail to unlock it.

Allah *Glorified is He* begins the chapter of *Hud* with '*Alif Lam Ra*' which are three letters just like in '*Alif Lam Mim*'. The formula *Alif Lam Ra* is mentioned in five chapters of the Quran and is read as a part of a verse. These chapters are *Yunus*, *Hud*, *Yusuf*, *Ibrahim* and *al-Hijr*. The formula *Alif Lam*, however, is an independent verse although both are read in the same manner as the other formulae of the chapters of *Yunus*, *Hud*, *Yusuf* and *Ibrahim*. Likewise, the chapter of *al-A'raf* begins with a four-letter verse which is *Alif Lam Mim Sad*. However, the chapter of *ar-Ra'd* begins with four letters which are part of a verse.

Therefore, there is no standard set of rules that apply to these letters that appear in the beginning of the Quranic chapters. Every letter has a speciality

that its hidden meaning has not yet been fully discovered. This has led some commentators of the Quran to say regarding these letters that, 'Allah knows what He intends'.

Allah *Glorified is He* says in the verse we are studying, '*Alif Lam Ra* [This is] a Book, whose verses are made decisive, then are they made plain, from the Wise, All-aware.' (*Hud*: 1). He sometimes qualifies the Quran as a *kitab* (book) and sometimes calls it Quran. We note that the word Quran is derived from the root word *qara`a*, which means to read, while *kitab* is that which is read. Allah *Glorified is He* has willed it this way to show you that preservation of the Quran happens in two places, i.e. the breasts of those who have memorized it and the copies of the written script of the Quran. And if the heart forgets, then there will always be the books.

Therefore, when the early Muslims wanted to compile the Quran conforming that what is memorized to that which is written, they laid down certain guidelines to be followed when performing this delicate operation. One of the most important stipulations was that for every verse it was imperative that at least two people could confirm its accuracy. However, the last two verses of the chapter of *at-Tawba* proved problematic as there was only one witness to attest to the accuracy of these verses, who was Khuzayma. They believed Khuzayma and wrote down those two verses because the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* had once commended his trustworthiness when he said of him, 'whoever Khuzayma testify on his behalf, it suffices him.'<sup>(1)</sup> So, the reason for describing the Quran as *kitab* is because it is written and the reason for describing it as Quran is because it is recited. The act of writing was no simple matter in early Islamic history and thus, only the most precious works were written down. The reason for calling it a Quran could be due to its being engraved on the guarded tablet.

Allah *Glorified is He* describes the Quran as a Book whose verses are made decisive. He uses the word *u`hkimat* which is from the letters *h k m* (confirm). This word denotes perfection of a structure so that it precludes any possibility of corruption so there are no flaws, contradictions, discrepancy, or collision.

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(1) Narrated by *Al-Hakim* and *At-Tabarani*

There is a need for architectural balance in the apertures of structures. They do not all fall parallel to each other lest cracks might appear in the walls or the entire structure might collapse. This is what it takes for precise engineering in the physical world.

Allah *Glorified is He* wills to qualify the Quran which is the summation of the Islamic Path as a book of decisive verses. So, use the perfection of the Quran as a shield against the corruption of you since the very structure of the Quran is such that it prevents corruption and promotes reform. In addition, considering that the Glorious Quran is preserved in the Guarded Tablet, conveyed all at once from the Guarded Tablet to the worldly realm, then sent down according to different situations where specific guidance was needed and Allah has scattered such rulings throughout the segmented structure of the Quran, you would see that the Quran was absolute and decisive in heaven then it was partitioned and presented in an ordered arrangement. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘...a Book, whose verses are made decisive, then are they made plain.’ (*Hud*: 1)

The meaning of the Quran being made plain could be that it was divided into large partitions which are the chapters and the small partitions are the verses. To encourage people to memorize the Quran, Muslims divided it into thirty equal parts which are called *ajza*’; they divided every *juz*’ into two *hizbs* and every *hizb* into four fourths. The original units of the arrangement of the Quran are the chapters and every one of these being a collection of verses. The implication might very well be that the Quran was perfected then expounded, because it was brought down from Allah *Glorified is He* as a comprehensive guide for the ordering of the life of man.

When you look at the Quran, you find that its themes are widely varied. At times, the Quran discusses the highest summits of Islamic doctrine, other times it talks about prophethood, the succession of Divine Messages and miracles. Sometimes the Quran delves into the details of what is prescribed and what is proscribed and at other times it recounts the stories of other eras and other peoples. It sets down the laws of correct conduct or describes the various cosmic signs. Sometimes it talks about the rules and regulations governing inheritance.

Therefore, the Quran is partitioned both linguistically and contextually as it includes multiple meanings which are all necessary in decree. It is composed of everything from the supreme principle that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger, to the finest detail. The meaning of the Quran being made plain, from another perceptive, could be that the Quran was brought down to the earthly realm all at once, and then it was revealed in parts, depending on what was needed at different times. It was intended to make the soul cherish the particular Quranic piece that descends precisely when it is needed.

For instance, when you prepare a personal pharmacy in your home, you might collect a variety of medicines, but if you get a headache, you might search in vain for aspirin pills. However, if you go to a real pharmaceutical store, you would find it when you need it. Likewise, when you get thirsty, you might open your fridge and not even realize that there is a bottle of water right under your nose due to your zeal for water. Thus, the reason for Allah revealing the Quran in parts is so that the human soul quenches its thirst as it receives the Quran. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'And it is a Quran which We have revealed in portions so that you may read it to the people by slow degrees, and We have revealed it, revealing in portion.' (*al-Isra'*: 106) In addition, Allah reports the disbelievers saying, 'why has not the Quran been revealed to him all at once?' (*al-Furqan*: 32) Allah *Glorified is He* responds saying, 'Thus, that We may strengthen your heart by it and We have arranged it well in arranging.' (*al-Furqan*: 32)

Had the Quran been disclosed to the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* all at once, no one would have paid close attention to all its details. Allah willed, however, that He would reveal the Quran bit by bit to His Messenger to make every piece of revelation a means of reinforcement to the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* during different situations. The Prophet, and the His *ummah* (followers), are indeed in need of such divine backups on many different encountered occasions. That is why Allah clarifies that it is meant to strengthen the heart of the Prophet therewith. (*al-Furqan*: 32) Thus, when some verses are revealed in a certain situation, the believers are most disposed to receiving them and more likely to internalise and apply the wisdom that they contain.

Allah *Glorified is He* did not reveal just one verse but many verses as evident in the fact that when they came across an issue requiring divine guidance, Allah *Glorified is He* would disclose a fully detailed ruling on the issue. Thus, He affirms, ‘And they shall not bring to you any argument, but We have brought to you [one] with truth and best in significance.’ (*al-Furqan*: 33)

Had the Quran not been piecemeal, how could it satisfy all the questions presented in the Quran under the expression ‘they ask you about’? Allah *Glorified is He* gives the example of a mosquito and they wonder contemptuously how Allah gives such an example. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘surely Allah is not ashamed to set forth any parable-- [that of] a gnat or anything above that.’ (*al-Baqara*: 26) If they were wiser, they would have wondered how Allah has assimilated in this miniscule creature all the necessary components that a living organism requires, including the digestive system and the respiratory system down to the circulatory system and nervous system. They ought to have realized that this creature is a testament to the greatness of The Creator. For the greatness of design can be perceived in two different ways which either are the sheer immensity of the object designed or its extreme minuteness to the point that it is imperceptible to the senses.

For example, and Allah is the Most High, when they designed the Big Ben clock, people marvelled at its size and its precise craftsmanship and when craftsmen in Switzerland began producing marvellously small and compact watches, people were even more baffled at the finesse of its design. Thus, true power lies in the ability to create something that is enormous or subtly miniscule in size. How powerful, then, is The Creator of the universe, from the largest of its contents to its smallest?

Allah *Glorified is He* also gives another example of a fly. He says, ‘surely those whom you call upon besides Allah cannot create fly, though they should all gather for it.’ (*al-Hajj*: 73) If the disbelievers or those arrogant were to gather together and beseech their idols to create a fly, or even if they themselves endeavoured on such a task, they would fail. Their impotence goes even further as Allah says, ‘should the fly snatch away anything from them, they could not take it back; weak are the invoker and the invoked.’ (*al-Hajj*: 73) If a fly were to land on some food and then take some of it, would anybody be able to

retrieve what the fly ate? No, no one would. Hence, we see the impotence of the seeker and the sought.

Allah *Glorified is He* informs us that the verses of the Quran were decisive and then made plain. There is no contradiction between the acts of making something decisive and making it clear since it is none other than Allah Who has made the essence decisive as well as He is the one who elaborated upon it in detail. He is All-Wise when it comes to what is best expressed implicitly and All-Knowing when it comes to what is best spelled out in detail with infinite eloquence. He is wise such that He perfects that which He creates rendering it immune to corruption, moreover, He is All Knowing and has knowledge of the unseen. As Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends [all] vision; and He is the Knower of subtleties, the Aware.' (*al-An'am*: 103) No eye is able to perceive Allah *Glorified is He* and however, His eye perceives the slightest of things and the most concealed of intentions.

Therefore, the very first verse of the chapter of *Hud* shows us that the Quran is the Word of Allah *the All-Powerful* is flawless in its design. It was perfected and sent down as a whole, all at once to the earthly realm. Then certain events occurred on Earth and the corresponding appropriate Quranic verses was descended piecemeal to each event. The reason for the process mentioned above could not be more crucial. Its purpose is related to the entire religion of Islam and thereby, Allah indicates it in the following verse saying:

﴿أَلَّا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ﴾

**[Say, Prophet], 'Worship no one but God. I am sent  
to you from Him to warn and to give good news [2]  
(The Quran, *Hud*: 2)**

Thus, the reason for which the Quranic revelation was perfected and then expounded is that we shall worship none other than Allah. The act of worship entails that the worshiper conforms completely to the will of the worshipped as to what has been ordered and to what has been proscribed.

Evidently, the act of worship entails the presence of that which is worshiped and which have a set of commands and proscriptions. If the worshiped object



has no such set of do's and do not's, it is not worthy of worship, Have those who worshiped idols ever received an order or a prohibition from them? Do those sun-worshippers get guidance from the sun? Thus, the act of worship of anything other than Allah is futile because other objects of worship simply cannot issue decrees concerning what to do and what not to do. Moreover, they have no way of rewarding action that is either pleasing or displeasing to them. No religious worship is possible without clear directives for do's and do not's, neither is any religious worship possible in the absence of recompense for action.

Here we must take note that Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'you shall not serve [any] but Allah.' As opposed to saying, 'serve Allah.' (*al-Ma'ida*: 72) Had the prophets been sent to people who were not preoccupied with the worship and veneration of any kind of deity, they would have had told them 'serve Allah.' However, in the verse we are discussing Allah *Glorified is He* and says, 'you shall not serve [any] but Allah.' It is as if Allah was confronting a community whose worship is oriented towards an object that is undeserving of it. Thus, Allah wishes to put an end to this practice and redirect their worship to Him.

Therefore, here we have a negation combined with an affirmation. Just like the formula that we declare that 'There is no God but Allah'. In this formula, we begin by negating any other deities save Allah and affirm that divinity belongs to Allah alone. So, to testify to the Oneness of Allah *Glorified is He* is necessary only if a people believe in another deity. We do not testify to this except because there are other people worshipping other than Allah. Had these people already accepted that divinity belongs to Allah Who is The One and Only, then uttering the formula of faith would have been redundant.

The words of Allah ordering us not to serve any but Him consist of an explicit refutation of error and an affirmation of the truth since error was refuted so that all rests on solid foundations. Thus, the known jurisprudential principle say eliminating error must advance bringing about truth. First, desist from the worship of false idols and then, orient worship towards Allah.

As long as the act of religious worship consists of obeying commandments and abiding by prohibitions, thus, it includes everything to be commanded or prohibited. On pondering over the commandments and prohibitions, you realize that they encompass all facets of life, from the supreme principle that

is 'There is no God but Allah' down to removing a harmful object from a path. Every action in life which has the effect of reinforcing goodness or even increasing it is part and parcel of worship. So, Islam does not recognise that there are some actions that are lowly and others that are elevated. However, it recognises that there is someone who is inferior and another superior. Every worker who performs a job which life requires, either to maintain that which is virtuous or to increase its goodness and prevent it from being corrupted, is a noble worker. The value of a man can be measured through that he perfects.

To recapitulate, the word worship encompasses all aspects of life. It contains prescriptions for that which is good and is meant to be as well as proscriptions against that which is not meant to be. An action which has no specific directive is left up to you whether to perform or not to perform it. In fact, when you consider all those actions which are either prescribed or proscribed, you find that they make up no more than five percent of all the possible actions you could perform in life. This five percent, however, is the basic guide for all other facets of life.

Accordingly, the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Islam is raised on five (pillars), testifying (the fact) that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, the establishment of prayer, payment of *zakat*, Pilgrimage to the House (*Ka'ba*) and the fasting of *Ramadan*.'<sup>(1)</sup>

The enemies of Islam try to limit religion to these five basic pillars. However, these pillars are but the foundations upon which the structure of Islam rests. The pillars of Islam reaffirm devotion to Allah *Glorified is He*, however, even the smallest actions in life are part of the religion because they promote virtue. Thus, knowing the basics of one's religion is obligatory to everyone on this earth. As for the other forms of knowledge, such as the physical sciences, it is incumbent on those who specialize in them and go further to benefit everyone. When it is a Muslim who excels in the sciences, it is a great boon to Islam as a whole.

Therefore, the common denominator in life is knowledge of religion. However, we must give everything what it deserves not to give a chance to someone ignorant of the basic principles of religion to discuss matters of

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(1) Narrated by *Al-Bukhari and Muslim*

religion since it is limited to the people of knowledge. If it be said that religion is for all, we would say, ‘you are right in the sense that all can be religious, however, to know religion fully requires studying jurisprudence for years’.

The scientists of other disciplines also spend years of their lives studying fields of medicine, architecture and the like. Even blue-collar type work takes time and effort to master. So, imagine what it would take someone who establishes the foundation of every facet of people’s lives. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘Why should then a company from every party from among them not go forth that they may apply themselves to obtain understanding in religion, and that they may warn their people when they come back to them that they may be cautious?’ (*at-Tawba*: 122)

Thus, we would not expect every Muslim person to study the science of inheritance and to be knowledgeable in such things as *al-`usba*<sup>(1)</sup>, *ashab al-furud*<sup>(2)</sup> and *ulu al-arham*<sup>(3)</sup>, *al-`awl*<sup>(4)</sup> and *ar-rad*<sup>(5)</sup>. That is because man could live

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- (1) *Al-`Usba* are the sons of the man and his relatives on his father’s side. In this science of jurisprudence, the term refers to those allotted what remains of the inheritance after the people to whom a statutory portion is owed have been given their share. Examples of them include the brother, the uncle, and the father. If anything remains after the allotment of the inheritance it is allotted to these members according to the principle of *ta`ib* (this is over and above what was already allotted to them by virtue of the statutory portion).
  - (2) *Ashab al-furud* are those who are entitled to a statutory portion or a lawful share. There are twelve types of people in this category: four of them are male, namely, the father, the grandfather regardless of his age, the brother of the mother and the husband. The other eight types are females, and they are: the wife, the daughter, the full sister, the sister of the father, the sister of the mother, the daughter of the son, the mother, the grandmother regardless of age. To each of these is due their statutory portion that is mentioned in the Holy Quran.
  - (3) *Ulu al-arham* are those relatives that belong neither to the category of (*fard*) nor to that of (*`usbah*).
  - (4) *Al-`awl*: the general linguistic meaning is: ‘height’. In the domain of jurisprudence, it refers to the increase in the allotment of the recipients of inheritance, and a decrease in their share of the inheritance. This is an issue that comes up when calculating allotments, the judge who presides over this process is sometimes forced to increase one side and decrease another side.
  - (5) *Ar-rad*: allotting whatever is leftover of the inheritance to those who are lawfully entitled to it and according to their statutory portion, and when no other people are deserving of it. This happens according to the following three principles:

1 – The presence of the person who is entitled to his lawful share

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all is life without a need to ask about an issue of inheritance or to know who should have a share and who should not and so on. In addition, when someone faces such an issue, we direct him to those who are specialised in such science among scholars of jurisprudence and legal ruling. Exactly as when you feel ill, you would go see a doctor, when you need an engineering issue, you would consult an engineer and when you are exposed to a mathematical equation, you would ask an accountant. Thus, it is exactly the same when it comes to religious issues, you would have to go to a scholar of religion.

When you look at religion you will find that it requires and incorporates all the actions which we perform regularly in life. Previously, I had given the example of the man who prays. If he does nothing else but praying, how would he then purchase the garment which he needs to cover his private parts since he has no occupation other than prayer? In order to purchase clothes, he would need to work a regular job where he would get paid, and then he would need to buy his clothes from a retailer, who would have had to purchase them from a wholesaler. The latter would have had to buy them from the factory where it had been merely assembled. It was another factory that actually weaved the cotton or the wool. The cotton was a product of agriculture, and the wool was fleeced off the hides of sheep. Thus, just the act of standing to face your Creator in prayer requires that you be dressed appropriately by covering your private parts, at a minimum, from the belly button to just below the knees. This requires being involved in the world through practical hands-on work.

Just ask yourself this: “what did you have for breakfast today”? Even if a piece of bread was all you had, you must have made the trip to a grocery store to buy it and that store had had it delivered from a bakery which relies on a mill to supply it with flour. Obviously, the flour was produced by grinding the wheat from the fields. Even the grinding machines themselves are produced in special factories, most likely foreign ones.

Thus, the process of making bread required a long and complex production chain. For there is the farmer who tilled the soil, the designer of the grinding

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= 2 – The presence of leftover or surplus inheritance

3 – The absence of a son of the man and his relatives on his father's side

machine, who studied engineering, the geologist who surveyed the deep layers of earth so that the iron ore could be extracted, then there is the factory where the iron ore was smelted in so that it might become industrial-grade steel.

Therefore, you find that every action in life has, in some way or another, served you in your religious life and made it possible for you to face your Creator in prayer. So, do not think that you can withdraw from the world and consecrate your whole life to prayer alone because every action that is performed in one's daily life is, in fact, part and parcel of the act of worship. If you wanted to desist completely from all worldly work, abstain from the fruits of the labour of someone. This is impossible, because without the work that others perform you would not be able to pray or have the energy to pray. Thus, worship, in its general sense, comprises all the actions that life requires regarding do's and do nots. Here, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'That you shall not serve [any] but Allah; surely I am a warner for you from Him and a giver of good news.' (*Hud*: 2)

A warner is someone who warns of an impending danger so that there would still be time and a chance to rectify that which is wrong, while a bearer of good news is someone who heralds the coming of blessings if man remains steadfast on the road that leads to that blessing. Thus, the act of warning and the act of delivering good tidings are both related to matters which have not come to pass yet.

Warning naturally implies a threat and a kind of lesson to be learned. When you want to make your child be better in school you tell him that if he does not do his homework he will end up like the son of so and so, a person who is a lazy bum and a failure in life. In effect, you warn your son so that he avoids, from now, that thing that led to his poor performance in school. Similarly, you give glad tidings to your son or any other person of the good that awaits him if he continues on the right path.

So, religious worship consists of all actions in life so long as man remains faithful to the directives of truth which take the form of thou shalt or thou shalt not, actions where there are no command of dos and do nots are allowed actions.

It is incumbent on every Muslim to make himself aware that performing an action that is labelled as 'thou shalt' is a must. Additionally, he should abstain from actions which are labelled as thou shalt not as long as Allah *Glorified is He* has proscribed the likes of these. The Muslim must apply utmost precision in determining the value of all actions. Although, we are well aware that the religious obligations can be a trial for the soul; it is necessary that we point out to man that the hardship which the soul undergoes will be greatly rewarded. For example, you see farmers carrying fertilizing manure, load it on to the back of his donkey to transport to his field and mix it in with the soil. They do all this work despite all hardships in anticipation of the harvest.

Allah *Glorified is He* emphasises, by way of His Messenger, that the command not to worship any other being except Allah is a command from Allah. Allah also stresses that the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* is a warner and a bearer of good tidings from Allah. The phrase 'you shall not serve [any] but Allah' contains a negation of worshipping that which is not Allah and an affirmation of worshipping of Allah. This is all congruent with the notion of forewarning and the notion of bringing good tidings as the worship of that which is other than Allah calls for a warner, while the worship of Allah in Islam calls for a bearer of good tidings.

Allah *Glorified is He* is the Creator of man Who is aware of man's weaknesses. Since He knows that such weakness could make man decline to a short-term good, distract him from a longer-term good and make him slip into the forgetfulness of the self. He has made it clear that for he who falls into one form of forgetfulness or another of the self, he must ask for forgiveness from Allah, Who is not miserly with His Mercy and dispenses it freely to his creatures.

If a sinner, in a turnabout, asks for Allah's forgiveness, the way back to Allah is always open, through giving up sins and doing good deeds. No servant of Allah ever falls into sinfulness but that he erred from the path of his Lord. When he repents and asks for forgiveness, he returns to the path of Allah and strives not to fall in sin anew.

Here Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَأَنِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُمْنِعْكُمْ مِّنْعًا حَسَنًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَيُؤْتِ  
كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ ۚ وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ كَبِيرٍ ﴿٣﴾

**Ask your Lord for forgiveness, then turn back to Him. He will grant you wholesome enjoyment until an appointed time, and give His grace to everyone who has merit. But if you turn away, I fear you will have torment on a terrible Day [3]**  
(The Quran, *Hud*: 3)

Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* clarifies that a servant must ask for forgiveness of past sins, repent from now, and return to the path of Allah to earn grace from Allah. Therefore, what is demanded of a servant is to ask for forgiveness of Allah and turn back to Allah in repentance.

This is what Allah *Glorified is He* asks of the transgressor since eliminating bad advances obtaining good. When a servant turns to Allah in repentance, he knows and admits that he has fallen into sin in the past, thus, he must not postpone the act of repentance, for he does not know whether he will still be alive or not. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘And that you ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him; He will provide you with a goodly provision to an appointed term.’ (*Hud*: 3)

Allah *Glorified is He* describes the blessings that await one when one follows His Path when He says, ‘then whoever follows My Guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy.’ (*Ta Ha*: 123). Elsewhere He says, ‘Whoever does good whether male or female and he is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life.’ (*an-Nahl*: 97). Thus, leading a good life here on earth and not going astray or living in misery depends on following the way of Allah.

Some scholars have thought that leading such a good life contradicts what the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* has said, namely, that ‘The world is the believer's prison and the disbeliever's *janna*.’<sup>(1)</sup> The Prophet has also said, ‘Those who are tried most severely are the prophets, then those nearest to them, then those nearest to them.’<sup>(2)</sup> Those scholars wonder how Allah says that He will provide such people with a goodly provision and enjoyment.

(1) Narrated by Muslim and Ibn Majah

(2) Narrated by Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah

To clarify what is meant by provision or enjoyment, it is that which you enjoy and receive with joy and elation. The believer knows that for every disaster that befalls him in his worldly life he will be compensated for, infinitely, in the afterlife. So, the believer accepts the will of Allah with resignation because such is his fate and because he will be rewarded for enduring such hardships. Thus, there are even some believers who might pray for such hardships.

Therefore, everything that the believer goes through is good. So, do not ever think that someone who has been struck by a catastrophe in life is stricken. The real catastrophe is to be denied any goodly reward.

We read in the Quran the story of the righteous servant who killed a youth whose parents were devout believers. The righteous servant had feared that this disobedient and rebellious youth would cause his parents grief and drive them to commit every conceivable sin and ultimately lead them to misery. Thus, a true believer is one who immediately remembers the compensating blessings of a catastrophe. Some of us will recall the story of the virtuous believer who was on the road from Medina to Damascus when he injured his foot and the wound became gangrenous. The doctors decided that the foot needed to be amputated. When they tried to administer a pain-killing substance which would render him unconscious and help him get through the painful ordeal, the righteous believer refused. He explained that he did not like to forget about his Lord for even a blink of an eye.

Allah *Glorified is He* bestows upon such faithful servants a super-human capacity for enduring pain. Since they remain ever conscious of the presence of Allah such believers are allowed to share in His infinite power. After the doctors performed the operation, the virtuous believer asked to see his severed limb before it was buried. He held it and said, 'O Lord! Even if it may be that I have been tested by suffering the loss of a limb, indeed I have been absolved from such suffering in many other limbs.'

Thus, when a tested person recalls the reward he gets during a calamity, he is resuscitated in pleasure. Therefore, do not be surprised when people praise their Creator at times of a tragedy. Usually, one praises Allah for having bestowed blessings, however, even calamities could bring blessings that greatly compensate for what was lost.



Similarly, one hears of the story of the two mystics who competed with one another in piety. One of them asked the other, ‘How are you doing in your hometown, O fuqara’? The word *fuqara*’ refers to those servants of Allah who are particularly ascetic and who devote most of their time to the worship of Allah. So, the second one replied, ‘we give thanks when we are blessed with His bounty and when we are patient when denied.’ The first servant scoffed at him saying, ‘That is the disposition of the stray dogs of Balkh.’ In other words, a dog will wag its tail when fed otherwise he will wait patiently.

So the second servant asked the first, ‘how are you doing?’ ‘When Allah gives us anything we offer it to others and when He denies us anything we thank Him.’

Therefore, every believer following the way of Allah remembers that patience and perseverance in times of trial will be infinitely rewarded by Allah. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘He will provide you with a goodly provision.’ (*Hud*: 3)

The amount of good acquired differs depending on the loftiness of the ultimate goal. When you gather the goal together with the action, the full significance of the word 'goodly' becomes apparent. An example of this is the student who never leaves his books. To be sure, even during meals he manages to eat while his eyes continue to browse a textbook. Such a student draws endless motivation from the thought of success: he enjoys the sweetness of his end-goal now even while he is still toiling in the hard work that is supposed to get him there.

Allah *Glorified is He* says in the same verse, ‘...and bestow His grace on everyone endowed with grace.’ (*Hud*: 3) This means that Allah disproportionately rewards extra things offered to those without it. It is as if Allah *Glorified is He* causes the good deeds of a servant to grow. An example of this is the farmer who takes a portion of his seed stock and scatters it over the land. Allah causes these seeds to multiply so that the resulting harvest produces fifteen-fold of what was originally planted, the word *fadl* (grace) in this verse indicates a reward that exceeds the effort expended. For example, you might have an excess of money which is superfluous money to your needs. While another person might not even

have enough money to make ends meet. If you offer some of your excess money to him you are investing this gift in yourself through Allah.

Allah *Glorified is He* might also grant you physical strength. You can use some of your strength to help someone who is not so powerful. Allah might have blessed you with forbearance. You can share this blessing with someone who is brazen or impatient. Thus, if a man shares his goodly virtues with others then these qualities develop and mature further with Allah. However, if he withholds these gifts from others, they diminish. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'And whatever you lay out as usury, so that it may increase in the property of men, it shall not increase with Allah; and whatever you give in charity, desiring Allah's pleasure – it is these [persons] that shall get manifold.' (*ar-Rum*: 39)

Some of the scholars understand this clause of the verse we are currently examining that a person who shares what Allah has given him of gifts, Allah, will reward him with more than what he gave away make up what he lost. Or that Allah rewards every endower with gifts from Him and this is truly the ultimate gift.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'and if you turn back, then surely I fear for you the chastisement of a great day' (*Hud*: 3). If they turn away, then let them know that you dread the suffering that will befall them on the Day of Judgment. This suffering is sometimes described as grievous, great, and shameful punishment because it is an unending punishment which varies according to the sufferer. Worldly suffering is, on the one hand, tolerable because there is that intuition that it will inevitably come to an end one day. As for the suffering of the next world it is, on the other hand, unending and permanent for the disbelievers and idolaters.

Allah *Glorified is He* and then says:

إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

**It is to God that you will all return,  
and He has power over everything' [4]  
(The Quran, *Hud*: 4)**

This means that it is Allah to whom everything returns, including the creation and the sustentation throughout life and initiating and terminating

and the initiation of the final return that never ends. Those who did good deeds will be rewarded and those who did bad deeds will be punished. Thus, every good deed performed is rewarded on earth and will be rewarded in the next life as well. He who has good deeds that outweigh his sins will enter paradise and he whose sins outweigh his good deeds will enter hell. In addition, there are those whose good deeds outnumber their sins and their lives alternate between depression and joy. Such states of depression and joy are the mark of those who seek repentance from Allah by confessing their sins and admission to sin is the beginning of repentance.

As for him whose sins outnumber his good deeds, he will feel constriction in life and his soul will suffer from angst. So, Allah duly gives every doer of favour his favour. Thereby, those who strove to win His favour, Allah bless them through letting them come to His realm of good deeds, whereas those who turned away face the frightening prospect of suffering on the Day of Judgment. 'He has power over all things.' (*Hud*: 4) For Allah *Glorified is He* is capable of creating and sustaining, of initiating and terminating and initiating the everlasting life which is either in heaven or in hell, according to the case. He is Omnipotent. Allah *Glorified is He* then says:

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ يَنْتُونْ صُدُورَهُمْ لِيَسْتَخْفُوا مِنْهُ أَلَا حِينَ يَسْتَغْشُونَ ثِيَابَهُمْ  
يَعْلَمُ مَا يَسْرُوكْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

**See how they [the disbelievers] wrap themselves up, to hide their feelings from Him. But even when they cover themselves with their clothes, He knows what they conceal and what they reveal: He knows well the innermost secrets of the heart [5] (The Quran, *Hud*: 5)**

Obviously, when you find the particle *ala* in the beginning of a sentence, you know that its purpose is to demand special attentiveness to what is about to be said. If the listener is absent-minded this reminds him to concentrate so as not to miss anything. This rhetorical alarm is effective insofar as it succeeds in alerting the listener. Its role is to mentally prepare him so that he can receive what you are about to say. Speech is a veil between the speaker and his audience. The audience is ignorant of what the speaker will say. The speaker is in control of the situation. He arranges his thoughts in preparation

for speaking, while the audience is yet oblivious to the subject matter. To not surprise the listener or make him miss the whole speech the speaker alerts with such a particle.

'Allah *Glorified is He* hereby says that the disbelievers try to turn away and hide from Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. They fold up their breasts. To fold something is to bend it in half so that one part of it lies on the other part. When a man folds his breast, he bends it forward towards his stomach, thus hiding the gestures of his face. The purpose of hiding one's face in this case is to conceal the facial features as it betrays the state of the human soul. They hated the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and felt envious of him, however they are reluctant to expose the spiteful state of their soul.

A similar disposition can be noted among the people of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'And indeed, every time I invited them that you may forgive them, they put their fingers in their ears, covered themselves with their garments, persisted, and were arrogant with [great] arrogance.' (*Nuh: 7*)

Now obviously, it is impossible for an entire finger to be thrust into an ear. It is only the tips of the fingers that cover up the ear's aperture. This exaggeration shows the situation of Nuh (Noah). They all wanted to plug up their ears so as not to hear any message. This is ample proof of their odium and a testament against them. For they know that if they allowed themselves to hear the message, their hearts might be swayed by it. The Quran also mentions what the disbelievers of Mecca were saying amongst themselves. Allah says, '...And those who disbelieve say, "Do not listen to this Quran and make noise therein" ....' (*Fussilat: 26*)

It is as if they had conspired to make noise about the Quran because they knew that if its verses reached their ears it might affect their soul. For the human soul is in constant flux and might be drawn to the truth without the person being aware of it. If the Quran really was false, why were they afraid of hearing its verses? There is really an element of stupidity in their obstinate denial.

Here Allah *Glorified is He* describes how they had covered themselves with their garments so as to hide their faces and conceal the emotions that are written on them. These emotions were most likely, but not necessarily, hateful. A

few of them might react positively to the words of the Quran, and this is also something worth masking. Thus, such positive reactions are sometime irrepressible. The disbelievers of Quraysh would often steal off to the Prophet's home to hear the Quran being recited, despite their outward hostility against the Prophet. When they would catch each other listening to the Prophet praying, they excused that they were just passing by his house by accident. On that topic, the poet composed lines reminding them how they sneaked away to the room of Muhammad, late at night after they went out of their assembly, to listen to the revelation and how they used lame excuses like claiming that they wanted to keep an eye on him.

Allah *Glorified is He* again employs the particle *ala* when He says, 'now surely, when they use their garments as a covering, He knows what they conceal and what they make public; surely He knows what is in the breasts.' (*Hud*: 5) Having deceived Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* are they really capable of hiding from his Lord? That which eludes the Prophet will not go unnoticed by Allah. Since Allah knows their innermost secrets, He, is clearly also aware of what they deliberately divulge. Allah *Glorified is He* is unseen, and thereby, someone might believe that something can hide from Him. However, Allah *Glorified is He* encompasses but is not encompassed. If someone thinks that Allah *Glorified is He* knows only the unseen; because He is unseen, then this idea is wrong as He knows that which is secret and that which is openly announced. He is the Knower of the innermost secrets of breasts. The word *`alim* is a term of hyperbole. It is an entity whose essence is knowledge.

Allah *Glorified is He* uses the word *that* which refers to that which accompanies. Therefore, *that as-sudur* means that which accompanies the breasts of men. As we know, the breast is the seat of the heart and lungs. The heart is the seat of those core beliefs and certainties which are firm therein and around which outward life revolves. Thus, what is meant by *that as-sudur* are those innermost thoughts which dwell permanently in the breasts. They are everlasting companions which never leave it be it spiteful and hateful thoughts or feelings and intentions, whether good or bad which do not come up to the surface in normal interactions. Allah *Glorified is He* is so intimately knowledgeable of the thoughts of the heart that it is as if the physical heart itself was known too.

Next, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا  
وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٦﴾

**There is not a creature that moves on earth whose provision is not His concern. He knows where it lives and its [final] resting place: it is all [there] in a clear record [6] (The Quran, *Hud*: 6)**

Here the Quran is further illustrating one of the qualities of Allah. When the Quran comes to an attribute of Allah, it mentions what is related to that attribute. While Allah *Glorified is He* has full knowledge of what is in the hearts: in this case, the hidden, negative elements; He also has full knowledge of the positive aspect of things. Therefore, He is also aware, for example, of the good intentions. However, these verses pertain to the group of people who fold their breasts.

Here, the word *daaba* (animal) denotes all those creatures which walk upon the earth. Traditionally, however, it excludes human beings. We can infer this from what Allah *Glorified is He* and says in another verse, ‘and there is no animal that walks upon neither the earth nor a bird that flies with its two wings but [they are] general like yourselves.’ (*al-An‘am*: 38)

It is mentioned that when Allah *Glorified is He* charged Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* with carrying His message, He expressed concerns regarding his family and wondered how he could spread the message while his family is unattended. So Allah *Glorified is He* inspired Musa (Moses) to hurl a boulder. When he did, the boulder turned into a small rock. Allah ordered Musa (Moses) to hit that rock that split into two. When he did, inside the rock Musa was able to perceive a miniscule insect that appeared to be feeding off an even tinier morsel of food. Musa realised that Allah who provided for that insect that lived deep in the shadows of this rock, can surely provide for His family. Thus, Musa (Moses) turned his attention to his mission.

This is natural; for Allah *Glorified is He* is the Creator of all human beings, and He must guarantee to sustain their lives with provision and ensure the survival of their progeny by marriage and spousal affinity. Thus, among the

arrangements required by creation is that Allah *Glorified is He* provides physical survival through sustenance, and that He ensures the survival of progeny through marriage.

That is why we have always emphasised the distinction between the bestowal of Divinity and that of Lordship. For, while Allah *Glorified is He* is the Lord of everyone, He is the God of those who believe in Him. Since Allah *Glorified is He* is the 'Lord' of all, He is responsible for everyone. The sun, for example, rises on both the believer and the disbeliever. The latter might benefit from the sun by extracting solar energy from it; so why should not the believer pursue the causes of this phenomenon? Air also is available to both the believer and the disbeliever, for it is a provision bestowed by the 'Lord'. So, if the disbeliever studies the composition of the atmosphere and learns to benefit from it, the believer should also strive and persevere in understanding these phenomena. Therefore, the bestowal of Lordship is shared by everyone, whereas the bestowal of Divinity is confined to the worshippers. And by worshipping Allah *Glorified is He* He directs you away from what your ego desires to what He wills. When your desires tempt you to do something wrong, Allah's law prevents you. In this way, you can control your desires and make better choices. However, as far as basic needs of life are concerned, the bestowal of Lordship is given to all living creatures in order to sustain themselves.

Here, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'There is not a creature that moves on earth whose provision is not His concern....' (*Hud*: 6) The word '*ala*' indicates that every creature has a right to such provision. However, they did not compel Allah *Glorified is He* to provide for them; rather, He has imposed this obligation on Himself.

Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'He knows where it lives and its [final] resting place....' (*Hud*: 6) Since He provides for all creatures, He knows where they rest and live so that He delivers this provision to them. The word *al-mastaqar* means the place of 'resting', whereas *al-mustawdi* is the place where 'trusts' are deposited. Hereby, Allah *Glorified is He* tells us this to reassure us that everyone's provision knows his place even though the person does not know where his provision is. The provision might come from unexpected sources; but seeking the provision is something different, for you may seek a provision

destined for another person. Imagine, for example, that you planted wheat in your plot of land, but you were then forced to travel, leaving your wheat for someone else to eat. You then eat from another's wheat, and so forth.

Allah *Glorified is He* therefore, says, 'He knows where it lives and its [final] resting place: it is all [there] in a clear record.' (*Hud*: 6), meaning all is preordained. There is a difference between acting on the first impulse that comes to your mind and between carrying out a preconceived plan of action where you carry out your actions deliberately and according to what you had previously planned. The Greatness of the Creator *Glorified is He* manifests itself when everything in life happens according to what He has preordained.

The evidence, for example, is that Allah *Glorified is He* has revealed the chapters of the holy Quran to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. When the revelation departs him, he would recite the revealed chapter to his companions who would either write it down if they were able, or memorise it. Then, when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would come to pray, he would recite every chapter exactly as Allah *Glorified is He* has ordained, with every verse in its proper place that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has dictated to his companions. How could this happen? This happened because Allah *Glorified is He* says to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* 'We shall teach you [the Quran] and you will not forget.' (*al-A'la*: 6)

The chapter of *Hud* continues with Allah's saying:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى  
الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَلَئِنْ قُلْتُمْ إِنَّكُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِ  
الْمَوْتِ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٧﴾

**It is He who created the heavens and the earth in six Days — His rule extends over the waters too — so as to test which of you does best. Yet [Prophet], if you say to them, 'You will be resurrected after death,' the disbelievers are sure to answer, 'This is clearly nothing but sorcery' [7] (The Quran, *Hud*: 7)**

The Quran has addressed the issue of creating the heavens and the earth more than once. We have pointed out previously that Allah *Glorified is He* has



willed to create the heavens and the earth in six days. He could have, if He has wished, created the heavens and the earth in the blink of an eye by saying, 'Be!' We have also come to know that creating something is not the same as combining pre-existing elements into a new form.

An example of this - and Allah *Glorified is He* knows the best example - can be seen in the making of yoghurt: yeast is added proportionally to warm milk (this only takes a few minutes), then this mixture is left to sit for twenty-four hours during which time it transforms into actual yoghurt. A similar process occurs when it comes to human actions, for they require a passage of time. Divine actions, however, do not require the passage of time because they all happen when Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Be!'

As some Islamic scholars have said, Allah *Glorified is He* has willed that the heavens and the earth be created in six days. Some orientalist have taken this verse and other verses as an opportunity to criticise the Holy Quran by claiming that there is a contradiction therein, for Allah *Glorified is He* says here: 'It is He who has created the heavens and the earth in six Days.' (*Hud*: 7) The orientalist came to the detailed verses of creating the heavens and the earth and they counted the total number of days therein; they concluded that they are eight days. These detailed verses are Allah's Words, 'Say, "How can you disregard the One who created the earth in two Days? How can you set up other gods as His equals? He is the Lord of all the worlds!" He placed solid mountains on it, blessed it, measured out its varied provisions for all who seek them—all in four Days. Then, He turned to the sky, which was smoke—He said to it and the earth, "Come into being, willingly or not", and they said, "We come willingly" and in two Days He formed seven heavens, and assigned an order to each. We have made the nearest one beautifully illuminated and secure. Such is the design of the Almighty, the All Knowing.' (*Fussilat*: 9-12)

Thereby, some orientalist said that if these detailed verses were the story of the creation of the heavens and earth, the general verse narrating the same story should be consistent with these detailed verses. One of these orientalist said, 'Suppose I have ten measures of grain, and I gave away five measures to one person, three measures to another person and two to another person. I would have nothing left because the portions of grain I gave away to people amount to the total grain I had in the beginning.'

Similarly, some of the orientalists claimed that the six days mentioned in the chapter of *Hud* do not match the days they counted in the detailed verses of the chapter of *Fussilat*. However, they do not realise that the speaker here is Allah *Glorified is He* and that He is addressing people who are intelligent, articulate, and perceptive. These people understood that which the orientalists failed to grasp. Those people who mastered Arabic understood that Allah *Glorified is He* has created the earth in two days, and then He placed solid mountains on it, blessed it, and measured out its varied provisions. All this is a sort of continuation of the description of Allah's creation of the earth. For example, when travelling from Cairo to Alexandria, I know I will reach the city of Tanta in an hour, then Alexandria in two hours meaning the hour that it took me to reach the mid-way city of Tanta is part and parcel of the total of two hours that it took me to travel to Alexandria.

Likewise, creating the earth and the solid mountains and measuring out its varied provisions all took place in four days which include those two days during which the earth by itself was created. Then the heavens were created in two days.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says, '...His rule extends over the waters.' (*Hud*: 7) From all these matters that deal with the unseen world, there is one essential thing that we must retain, namely it is Allah- the Truthful informer - Who tells us about such matters. For nobody doubts that the heavens and the earth were created and no one doubts that the creation of the heavens and the earth is grander than the creation of man, and no one has ever claimed that it was he who created the earth or the heavens.

We know who the individuals behind human inventions are, like the light bulb, the telephone, the microphone, the television, the car and so forth. But when it comes to the heavens and the earth, no human being claims to have created them. Allah *Glorified is He* has informed us that He is their Creator and it stays as such until someone challenges this fact, and no one ever will.

And the purpose of Allah's creation is to test us, '...so as to test which of you does best.' (*Hud*: 7) meaning that He might test us to see which of us does the best actions; but who determines what action is best? It is Allah *Glorified is He*. But does He really need to test His creatures? No, since He has

known pre-eternally all what creation does. However, the purpose of the testing is that His creatures' acts match what He knows pre-eternally, and (on the Day of Judgment) what they did in life will serve as evidence (either of their goodness or of their wickedness).

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Yet [Prophet], if you say to them, "You will be resurrected after death", the disbelievers are sure to answer, "This is clearly nothing but sorcery."' (Hud: 7) Here, Allah *Glorified is He* is demonstrating the accusation made by the disbelievers that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is lying. They pronounced words without giving them any thought. Had they paused to reflect on what Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was saying, they could not have logically answered him the way they did.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was merely reporting Allah's Message that they will be resurrected after death. He was just informing them that when they die - which will inevitably happen - Allah *Glorified is He* will resurrect them. All they could say in response was, 'This is clearly nothing but sorcery.' (Hud: 7) If Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is merely delivering to them a message, where does sorcery fit in here? They knew that what he was saying comes directly from the text of the Holy Quran. Therefore, as they labelled the entire Quran as 'sorcery', it is as if the content of the message itself is part of that sorcery.

Previously, we explained how logically their claim that the Holy Quran is sorcery has been refuted. They had claimed that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*— or simply 'Muhammad' as they used to call him—had put a spell on the community of his followers. The sorcerer has an effect over the one who is hypnotized, and the person who is hypnotized is powerless and has no say in the process of sorcery, so if Muhammad had indeed put a spell on those who had followed him, then why did he not also put a spell on those people who adamantly denied his Message? How could he have not put a spell on them in the same manner that he supposedly put on the others?

The fact that there were some people kept on their stubborn opposition to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and his Message proves that this is not a case of sorcery. If this was the case, he would have cast a spell on all of them.

The words of Allah, 'This is clearly nothing but sorcery' (*Hud: 7*), indicate that the alleged sorcery is of an 'encompassing' kind, not that whose effect is restricted to a particular group of people. Thus, the words, 'This is clearly nothing but sorcery.' (*Hud: 7*), mean that it is sorcery of the type that encompasses and affects all the people who are targeted. The remaining of even one single person in a state of disbelief in Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* proves that this is not a case of sorcery.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَيْنَ أَخْرَجْنَاهُمُ الْعَذَابَ إِلَيْهِ أُمَّةٍ مَّعْدُودَةٍ لَّيَقُولُنَّ مَا يَحْبِسُهُ أَلا يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمْ لَيْسَ مَصْرُوفًا عَنْهُمْ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٨﴾

**If We defer their punishment for a determined time, they are sure to say, 'What is holding it back?' But on the Day it comes upon them, nothing will divert it from them; what they mocked will be all around them [8] (The Quran, *Hud: 8*)**

In the word *l'in*, the letter '*l*' indicates that there is a dropped affirming oath by Allah. So, taking an oath serves as an affirmation of a matter through what is sworn by. Taking an oath for a matter only happens because someone doubts this matter. For example, you would never tell someone you met, 'I swear by Allah that I visited my friend yesterday'. The purpose of a swearing is to dispel the doubt of the listener, and that is why it is not used initially. The degree of an oath is in proportion with the degree of doubt.

The Holy Quran says, 'If We defer their punishment for a determined time...' (*Hud: 8*). So there is the letter (*waw*) which indicates that what follows is an oath. There is also a conditional clause. And they both require a response. When an oath and a clause are combined in a single expression, one response will eloquently suffice for both. As for example when one says, 'By Allah if you do this, I will do such and such a thing with you'. The response of the oath suffices as a response to the clause. And whichever precedes the other, whether it is the oath or the clause, its response satisfies the response of the other. For instance, when we say, 'By Allah, if so-and-so shows up, I will treat him with generosity'. The oath in this case comes first, and its response satisfies

the response of the clause. And if you had said, 'If so-and-so shows up, by Allah, I will treat him with generosity'; in this case, the clause comes first.

The two are united, and the purpose of this is that the oath is an affirmation and the clause is a foundation. If new information precedes both the clause and the oath, then we state the answer to the clause immediately, for example, we would say, 'Zayd, by Allah if he shows up, treat him with generosity' because the clause is, as we have said, a foundation and the oath is an affirmation. And in this last case the clause takes precedence since the foundation takes precedence over the affirmation.

And here Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'If We defer their punishment for a determined time, they are sure to say, 'What is holding it back?' (*Hud*: 8) The answer here is to the oath, and it suffices as a response to the clause as well. This means that punishment will be deferred. Allah *Glorified is He* has promised to punish those who disbelieved in Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. The punishment of the previous people was that of eradication. Allah *Glorified is He* has struck some of them with a violent storm; some were overcome by a sudden blast; some were drowned, and still others Allah *Glorified is He* has made the earth swallow.

It is indeed as if the mission of the previous prophets was to convey the Message, and then Allah *Glorified is He* takes over the job of punishing those who disbelieved in the Messages. However, Allah *Glorified is He* has favoured the *ummah* (The followers of Islam) of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* over previous peoples and willed that the disbelievers would be punished firstly on the battlefield. And when Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* promises that they will be punished, this punishment will come at a certain time. It might be postponed so that the error and the corruption of the disbelievers is brought to light, then when Allah's punishment finally befalls them, no one will mourn them. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* wishes to postpone the punishment of the disbelievers and to give them respite. He lets the unjust have free rein such that his iniquity keeps increasing to the point when the community amongst which he lives begins to hate him. Then when a punishment befalls him, nobody feels any sympathy for him.

Now, as we know, the human soul is such that it is deeply affected by what is happening in the present moment. For example, when someone commits murder, and years go by before he is tried, and then he is sentenced to death, people tend to forget about the villainy of the murder that happened so long ago, and they feel sorry for the murderer when he is sentenced to death. That is why I have always maintained that one of the main reasons for the continuation of committing crimes is the slowness of the court system. That is why the public's feelings lean toward the criminal; because the scene of the dead victim has long since left their memories.

However, if people would only recall - when the sentence is pronounced - the circumstances of the crime, they would rejoice in the verdict. That is why, when Allah *Glorified is He* wills that someone should be punished, He says, '...and ensure that a group of believers witnesses the punishment.' (*an-Nur*: 2) So the punishment takes place in full view of the community that suffered from their corruption and injustice. Those who were most directly affected by the crime, by witnessing the punishment, will heal. Here Allah *Glorified is He* tells Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: you have promised them that they will suffer one day, and We are delaying that day and are, for the moment, giving them free rein. However, they have seized that as an opportunity for mockery and sarcastic ridicule, and they asked where the punishment was. In the Quran, we find that these same people also utter the following, 'They say, 'Our Lord! Advance us our share of punishment before the Day of Reckoning!' (*Sad*: 16) The word *al-qatt* means: the reward of one's work; it is derived from the word *al-qat`* which means: a cut or portion.

Now the degree of punishment is proportional to the crime. If the crime is serious, then the punishment is great, and if the crime is minor, then the punishment is also limited. Thus, the severity of the punishment always depends on the crime.

Strange indeed, that some of them could utter, 'Allah, if this really is the truth from You, then rain stones on us from the heavens, or send us some other painful punishment.' (*al-Anfal*: 32) The Quran also mentions them to have said, 'Or make the sky fall on us in pieces, as you claimed will happen....' (*al-Isra'*: 92) Certainly, no man wishes that punishment would befall him; the

disbelievers, nevertheless, said what they said in defiance and in sarcastic mockery. But Allah *Glorified is He* has willed not to punish the disbelievers who were the contemporaries of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in the same way that He has punished the disbelievers who were the contemporaries of previous prophets. As Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘But Allah will not send them punishment while you [Prophet] are in their midst....’ (*al-Anfal*: 33) Moreover, there were some who concealed their faith simply because neither they were powerful enough to confront the disbelievers openly nor did they have the means of emigrating to Medina. Their circumstances forced them to live amongst the disbelievers.

This is made clear in the chapter of *al-Fath* where Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘They were the ones who disbelieved, who barred you from the Sacred Mosque, and who prevented the offering from reaching its place of sacrifice. If there had not been among them, unknown to you, believing men and women whom you would have trampled underfoot, inadvertently incurring guilt on their account – Allah brings whoever He will into His Mercy— if the [believers] had been clearly separated, We would have inflicted a painful punishment on the disbelievers.’ (*al-Fath*: 25) meaning that had the disbelievers been distinguishable from the believers, Allah *Glorified is He* would have inflicted an agonising punishment on the disbelievers. However, had the Muslims entered Mecca with their army (which was stationed nearby in Al-Hudaibya, and had a battle taken place, it would have affected all the residents of Mecca, amongst whom there were some believers who were spread out amongst the disbelievers, and were not concentrated in an area so that the Muslims would be able to deliver a blow to the side of the disbelievers only. Thus, had the Muslims attacked the city and stricken its fighters, they would have unwittingly stricken some believers and this is what Allah *Glorified is He* has wished to avert as in ‘If We defer their punishment for a determined time....’ (*Hud*: 8)

*Al-ummah* is a group of members of the same species, like a group of people, a group of Jinn, or a group of ants...and other creatures of Allah *Glorified is He*. Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘All the creatures that crawl on the earth and those that fly with their wings are communities like you are. We

have missed nothing out of the Record— in the end they will be gathered to their Lord.’ (*al-An‘am*: 38) Thus, *al-ummah* is a group that is united by a singular law and system; its members are equal in everything. *Al-ummah* might also refer to a period of time, such as in Allah's Words, ‘But the prisoner who had been freed at last remembered [Joseph]...’ (*Yusuf*: 45) meaning he recalled even after a long time had passed; the period referred to as *ummah* might be the amount of time roughly equivalent to ‘a generation’.

*Ummah* then, is a group that is united by the similarity of its members; these members might have distinctive qualities, but they generally share some common qualities. Human beings belong to an *ummah* that can be defined as animals who have the ability to speak and who can think rationally. Although there are common features shared by all humans, there are also differences in talents.

And there is no one human soul that possesses the aptitude for architecture, medicine, business, pharmacy, and accounting. All these kinds of work require years of serious study. And man does not have a long enough lifetime to specialise in all these fields; that is why everyone specialises in only one field; so that through his knowledge he can serve others, and so that others can specialise in other fields and serve the rest, and so on. In such a way, there develop symbiotic relationships in society, so that each member feels that he needs others, and that he is unable to survive independently from the rest of creation. Suppose that one person could have knowledge of all the different professions in the world - medicine, architecture, law, iron-works, carpentry, agriculture and others - then would he care about other people? That is why Allah *Glorified is He* has willed that societies come together out of practical necessity and not as a favour between one person and another. The person who sweeps the streets or the one who cleans the sewage does not perform this work out of graciousness; rather, he does it out of need. He needs to work and he needs money because his body requires food and clothing and because his children need food, shelter and clothing as well. Were it not for this, he would not work that job. And if he works hard at his job, Allah *Glorified is He* will make him love his work. And even if his situation improves, he remains steadfast to his profession because he loves to master and perfect his job.



I once saw a man who worked in this field, carrying loads of sewage on his shoulders. When Allah *Glorified is He* improved his financial situation, he bought a donkey-pulled carriage to carry extra loads. And when Allah *Glorified is He* improved his financial situation even further, he purchased a car which had a suction device so that he could remain seated, all while operating the machine which sucked up the sewage and sent it to a special storage unit in the back of the vehicle.

So, social relationships are born out of necessity, not out of favour. Because favour is not binding, it does not compel one to perform work. Necessity, however, forces one to perform work; it keeps the wheels of daily life moving.

Whosoever loves his work - whatever this work may be – Allah *Glorified is He* grants him more success in it; for such a person respected what Allah *Glorified is He* has destined for him, and was not conceited. And Allah *Glorified is He* grants him all kinds of gifts through this work, since he loves his work, and works sincerely at it. If you look at those who achieved greatness in their professions - however lowly - you will find that their stories start with acceptance of what Allah *Glorified is He* has chosen for them.

As we know, the value of a person lies in that which he perfects. Thus, you will find that society is composed of various talents which complement each other rather overlap with each other such that every man is in need of the expertise of others. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘We have raised some of them above others in rank, so that some may take others into service.’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 32). One does not solicit another’s services unless the one who is solicited is in need of compensation from the work. That is way you will find people knocking at your door asking, ‘Do you need a driver? Do you need a servant?’ The person in need is the one who offers his services, in the hopes of finding a job that he might perform well. Therefore, the family of a person must not conceive of his work - whatever this may be - as a means of serving the one served. No... he is serving his own needs. And thus, social bonds develop out of necessity, and not out of goodwill.

Allah *Glorified is He* says of Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* ‘Abraham was truly an example...’ (*an-Nahl*: 120) for he *peace be upon him* possessed many virtues which are usually found scattered amongst different people in

society. The term *ummah* is used to describe a period of time, or a group of members of the same species and it can also be used to describe a man who combines within himself all the good qualities.

And here Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'If We defer their punishment for a determined time....' (*Hud*: 8) Normally, the word *ma`duda* (determined) describes a state of paucity as in Allah's Words, 'and then sold him for a small price, for a few (*Ma`duda*) pieces of silver: so little did they value him.' (*Yusuf*: 20) So long as the price was low, there must have been a limited amount of silver coins.

The reason for taking the word *ma`duda* as signifying scarcity is that we do not proceed to count something unless we are convinced that we will be able to do so, that is because the number is relatively small. We would not proceed to count that which we know is a lot. No one, for instance, has counted all the grains of sand in the world or all the stars in the universe. Hence, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'If you tried to count Allah's favours you could never calculate them....' (*Ibrahim*: 34) The Arabic word *in* (if), as we know, serves to express doubt; and Allah's blessings are not conceivably countable.

Despite the progress that man has made in the science of statistics, has anyone devoted himself to count the blessings of Allah *Glorified is He*? No, of course not...even though it is possible to calculate population numbers and their distribution according to profession, for example.

In the old days, those who oversaw counting what was in the donation funds would sort all the one-hundred bills together, the ten bills together, and similarly with all the other bills. When it was time to count the coins, they would count them by weight: knowing how many coins were in a kilogram, they would simply calculate how many kilograms there were.

And Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'If We defer their punishment for a determined time, they are sure to say, "What is holding it back?"' (*Hud*: 8) It is as if they mockingly and sarcastically ask, 'Why has the punishment promised to us by Messenger Muhammad been delayed?' for no one looks forward to something painful, so such talk is only said sarcastically. The response to this begins with that rhetorical device that we discussed earlier, namely, *'ala*. In other words: pay close attention to what is about to be said. And Allah says, 'But on

the Day, it comes upon them, nothing will divert it from them....' (*Hud*: 8) This is an assertive confirmation that the punishment will come, even though man is always impatient, rushing things.

However, Allah *Glorified is He* does not rush things in the way His servants do; everything takes place the time He has determined; and when the predestined moment arrives, they will indeed get what they were impatient for. So, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'what they mocked will be all around them.' (*Hud*: 8) The confirmation of their punishment is evident, firstly, because of the term '*ala*', which is a forceful assertion and also because of Allah's Words: 'on the Day it comes upon them' (*Hud*: 8) which is a guarantee that this day is coming, since the informer is Allah *Glorified is He*. Also, this punishment stated clearly in the saying of Allah, '...nothing will not divert it from them.' (*Hud*: 8) is continuous, uninterrupted. And the danger is inescapable: 'what they mocked will be all around them.' (*Hud*: 8)

Now, the verb *haq* is in the past tense, even though the current discussion concerns that which has yet to pass for which the present tense, which expresses the present or the future, should be used. Thus, how are the disbelievers trying to hasten something that is expressed in the past tense? However, the speaker here is Allah *Glorified is He* and it is He Who determines the rules of discourse. And every action is determined by the power of its doer, and Allah is the source of all power.

Elsewhere in the Quran, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Allah's Judgement is coming, so do not ask to bring it on sooner.' (*an-Nahl*: 1) The verb *ata* (came) is by all grammatical standards in the past tense meaning that the statement came after the event had occurred. As when, for example, we say 'Mohammad passed his exams'; this means that Mohammad's successful passing of his exams has happened.

When Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Allah's Judgement is coming (literally, has come) ...' (*an-Nahl*: 1), we understand it as a speech preceded by actual happenings. Allah *Glorified is He* says afterwards, '... so do not ask to bring it on sooner.' (*an-Nahl*: 1) Thus, this indicated that the event has not yet come to pass. However, the speaker is Allah *Glorified is He*. Therefore, the overall

meaning is that the event is undoubtedly bound to occur because every action depends upon the power of its doer.

To give a real-life example - and Allah *Glorified is He* knows best - that you needed to move a heavy, cumbersome suitcase; so your son who is young says, 'Let me carry it for you.' Your son is offering to carry it in your place because he can move it faster as his ability to carry it corresponds, of course, to his strength. If your youngest son came to you and said that he would carry it for you, you know that he could carry it only insofar as his limited strength allows.

Therefore, on the human plane, you can look back and evaluate the past, rightly or wrongly. However, you cannot pronounce any judgment when it comes to the future because you have no hold on future events. But when the speaker is capable of carrying out in the future that which He promises in the present, and there is nothing that can bar Him from doing so, then you can be absolutely certain that the matter shall come to pass.

Thus Allah *Glorified is He* is hereby informing us of that which will come to pass, and nothing in the created universe can thwart His plans. And so long as Allah *Glorified is He* has said that it is a matter that has already come, then it will certainly come to pass. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'what they mocked will be all around them.' (*Hud*: 8) Even though, in the context of the human plan, the proper formulation would be: they will be overwhelmed by the very thing which they were wont to deride given that they wanted to hasten their own punishment. The word *wahaq* implies, therefore, that no obstacle whatsoever will prevent the fated event from coming to pass.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَكِنْ أَذَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً ثُمَّ نَزَعْنَاهَا  
مِنْهُ إِنَّهُ لَكَفُورٌ

**How desperate and ungrateful man becomes  
when We let him taste Our mercy and then  
withhold it! [9] (The Quran, *Hud*: 9)**

This verse also begins with (*wa la'in*), where the 'l' indicates taking of an oath. And it is as if He is saying, 'If we let man taste some of Our Mercy, then

We withheld it, he would sink into despair'. Here again it is a case of the taking of an oath and a clause, with the oath coming first; thus, the response is for the oath. The word *adhaqna* (To let someone taste) implies that the primary place for taste is the mouth: this means that you taste something to find out about its taste: sweet or sour, acidic or alkaline. It is interesting, as far as the precision of human formation is concerned, that every part on the tongue has a corresponding taste that to which it reacts. Thus, the front part of the tongue reacts to a certain food, and the middle of the tongue reacts to another food, and the sides of the tongue react to yet a third type of food, and so on and so forth.

All of this on a single organ, thus Allah *Glorified is He* has willed to create in such precise construction. And every taste bud on the human tongue has a taste that it detects; that is why we find a person tasting food and saying that this dish needs more salt, or when tasting sweets - like *kunafa* - and saying that the sugar in it is just right.

This is similar to body temperature. A person takes his temperature, and if he finds it to be thirty-seven and a half degrees centigrade, he says that this is normal temperature. If man's temperature drops below this level, it is said that one has hypothermia. If it rises above this level, it is said that one has a fever. However, this is the human body's overall temperature. Every individual organ in the body requires a particular temperature which enables it to function correctly.

Thus, if the liver's temperature drops below forty degrees centigrade it stops functioning correctly. The human body has multiple organs; the temperature of the eye for example is a mere nine degrees because if its temperature increases above that level the eye could burst. Similarly, the ear's temperature is eight degrees centigrade. You would be unable to bring together multiple entities of different temperatures together, but Allah has willed as much for the human body.

Here, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'When We let man taste....' (*Hud*: 9) And to taste is to perceive; when you are shopping for fruits at the market, the vendor will offer you a taste of the fruit he is selling; so you try a piece to enjoy its taste. To taste, then, is the act of putting something to one's tongue to perceive its flavour.

When Allah *Glorified is He* wills someone to be showered with His blessings, then they are taken away from him, the person becomes sad or depressed or struck by panic or despair. Man cherishes blessings from Allah *Glorified is He* however small they might be; and if he is stripped of them, he sinks into despair and ingratitude. And to despair is to lose all hope that something will happen; and because man is incapable of 'blessing himself', for if he were capable, he would not fall into despair. The true believer never despairs; for Allah *Glorified is He* says, '...and do not despair of Allah's Mercy—only disbelievers despair of Allah's Mercy.' (*Yusuf*: 87) Thus, despair is when all hope is lost, and you have neither the means nor the power to attain that which you desire. And he who despairs is he who has no God to turn to; for Allah *Glorified is He* is unfaltering Guide, and when the believer loses something he should say, 'Allah will compensate me with something better'. As for he who has no faith in Allah *Glorified is He* he would say, 'This is but an unfortunate coincidence that will probably never occur again'.

For the person who has a pound stolen from him might be sad, but if he knows that he has ten pounds at home he will mourn but a little over the stolen pound. A person despairs only when he has no faith in a source which can replace his loss; however, if a person has faith in a source that is capable of granting him all that he wants, such a person is never despondent or in despair.

The believer knows that for every blessed bounty there is a giver; if blessings do come he gives thanks to Allah *Glorified is He* for them, and if withhold, he knows that Allah *Glorified is He* has done so out of wisdom.

Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'When We let man taste Our Mercy....' (*Hud*: 9) We know that what is meant by 'man' is all humankind, all the descendants of Adam *peace be upon him*; and they are numerous, some are believers, and some are disbelievers. The term 'man' is used in its general sense, but elsewhere Allah *Glorified is He* excludes the believers saying, 'By the declining day, man is [deep] in loss, except for those who believe....' (*al-'Asr*: 1-3) Thus, the term 'man' denotes humanity at large, but Allah *Glorified is He* excludes all those who believe in Him. So, if you see the term 'man', then realise that it includes all members of humankind.

And if man drifts away from the path of Allah *Glorified is He* he becomes doomed to perdition - unless he returns to the path of Allah *Glorified is He*; for

His path protects him against going astray, and transforms him such that his very instincts tend towards the Will of Allah *Glorified is He*.

Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* has created instincts for fundamental functions; the hunger instinct drives man to find food, and as for thirst, Allah *Glorified is He* has willed that its purpose be to alert man that he needs to find water to quench his thirst. The instinct of reproduction drives man to get married, and the instinct of curiosity pushes man to discover and invent new things.

Allah *Glorified is He* says the following about those who are oblivious of His signs in the cosmos, ‘And there are many signs in the heavens and the earth that they pass by and give no heed to.’ (*Yusuf*: 105) The experimental researcher looks to the phenomena of the universe to discover its secrets. Beware, however, that there is a difference between the love for scientific discovery and that unhealthy curiosity about other people’s affairs. Generally speaking, passionate curiosity is a healthy instinct; it is what makes the world go round. However, our instinct to discover should be directed by religion and good conduct. Therefore, instincts have specific functions outside of which they should be allowed to wander. And the directives of religion are here to elevate the instincts and to direct them toward their proper function.

That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘And do not spy on one another.’ (*Yusuf*: 105) meaning not to seek to discover other people’s private lives; for if we allowed someone to expose people’s secrets, we would have to let everyone else expose his secrets. And when Allah *Glorified is He* forbids man from delving into the personal lives of others; He has thereby protected him against others’ delving into his.

Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘When We let him taste Our Mercy and then withhold it....’ (*Hud*: 9) Notice that the word *an-naz* (withholding) testifies to the fact that man is keenly protective over that which Allah *Glorified is He* bestows upon him like goodness, good health and happiness. When these are taken away from him, he resists. To take away implies the ‘confiscation’ of that which was once ‘possessed’.

That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says in the chapter of *Al-‘Imran*, ‘Say, “Allah, holder of all control. You give control to whoever You will and

remove it from whoever You will..." (Al-'Imran: 26). It is as if he who is present in control is strongly holding on it.

And here Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'How desperate and ungrateful man becomes when We let him taste Our Mercy and then withhold it!' (Hud: 9) In the same chapter, the exception to the rule is mentioned, 'Not so those who are steadfast and do good deeds: they will have forgiveness and a great reward.' (Hud: 11) And we will give our commentary on this verse shortly.

Going back to those from whom Allah *Glorified is He* has taken His Mercy; those who are desperate and ingratitude, He says about them:

وَلَيْنَ أَذْقَنَهُ نِعْمَاءَ بَعْدَ ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ ذَهَبَ  
السَّيِّئَاتُ عَنِّي إِنَّهُ لَفَرِحَ فَخُورٌ ﴿١٠﴾

**And if We let him taste mercy after some harm has touched him, he is sure to say, 'Misfortune has gone away from me.' He becomes exultant and boastful [10] (The Quran, Hud: 10)**

Here, it is harm that is the pre-existing condition, and the state of mercy and plenty is the condition that is introduced - the opposite of the first case, where the pre-existing condition was dominated by mercy, ease, and munificence. In the first scenario, the 'taking away' replaced the state of Mercy. In the second scenario, mercy and ease replaced the state of harm.

There is a difference between *na`ma`* (bliss) and *ni`ma* (a blessing), and between *darra`* (a state of affliction) and *durr* (an affliction). For *durr* is that which harms the soul, and *na`ma`* is that which gives the soul pleasure. However, pleasure or pain might exist in the soul, their effect might not necessarily be visible. However, if noticeable effects of pleasure become apparent in a person, then it is called *na`ma`* (bliss), and if the noticeable effects of pain become apparent in a person, then it is called *darra`* (a state of affliction). So Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'And if We let him taste mercy after some harm has touched him, he is sure to say, "Misfortune has gone away from me."' (Hud: 10) He who utters this statement does not realise that it is Allah *Glorified is He* who has taken misfortune away; for misfortune does not go away on its own



accord. If it were a believer, he would say, ‘Allah has taken my misfortune away.’ But he who uttered the statement quoted in the verse is not a believer; and that is why he sinks into false happiness and baseless conceit. Allah *Glorified is He* describes him as, ‘He becomes exultant and boastful.’ (*Hud*: 10) Overjoyed at such blessed gifts, it is as if he forgot about He who bestowed the gifts and removed the misfortune.

As for pride, we know that it consists of flaunting one’s own qualities; thus, you might find a person touting his virtues and qualities to another person who lacks them. And we know that in society there are certain distinguished people; however, the morals of faith require us not to flaunt our individual qualities. That is why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘I am the master of the children of Adam on the Day of Judgment, and I am not boasting.’<sup>(1)</sup> During one of the battles we find him saying, ‘I am the Prophet, and there is no lie about it; I am the son of ‘Abd Al-Muttalib.’<sup>(2)</sup>

In fact, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was forced to utter such a statement because the disbelievers in that battle had thought that they had him and his companions surrounded and that he would try to flee. However, he bravely announced, ‘I am the Prophet, and there is no lie about it; I am the son of ‘Abdul Muttalib.’ Indeed, among the ranks of the Muslims, he was the closest vis-à-vis the disbelieving enemy on the battlefield.

We find that in sports, for example, among a group of wrestlers or competitors, there will be an individual who will bellow mightily such that he raises the morale of his own side and intimidates his opponent.

A man who is prideful is in effect oblivious of He who bestows those very qualities of which he is proud. And had he been conscious of the majesty of the Bestower, he would show humbleness towards Him. And if the vision of he who is arrogant and boastful would be turned towards Allah, he would shrivel up in His presence, and would attribute everything he had to the Bestower. An example of this in the Quran is when Allah *Glorified is He* quotes the companion of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon them* as saying, ‘I did not do [these things] of my own accord.’ (*Hud*: 10) Such is the attitude of the modest worshiper.

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(1) Narrated by Muslim

(2) Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

As for the prideful and those who are oblivious of Allah *Glorified is He* the Quran portrayed their attitude in the following quote from Qarun, 'This wealth was given to me on account of the knowledge I possess.' (*al-Qasas*: 78) His fate was, as Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'We caused the earth to swallow him and his home.' (*al-Qasas*: 81)

That is why we have insisted that one should cherish every blessing that one has by saying, 'In the Name of Allah, this is Allah's will' so that you might realise that this blessing did not come to you as a result of your own efforts only, but that it primarily came to you because of the will of Allah *Glorified is He*. And if you come to realize this truly, then the Bestower will safeguard for you those blessings which you have. On the other hand, when you forget about the Bestower, He will not safeguard for you those blessings.

Notice that Allah *Glorified is He* has not prohibited that joy that emanates from the expanded breast nor that delight in His blessings. On the contrary, He commands us to display such joy when He says, 'Say [Prophet], "In Allah's Grace and Mercy let them rejoice..."' (*Yunus*: 58) However, Allah *Glorified is He* commands the believer not to express joy over the most trivial of things, lest he become one the gloating people whom Allah *Glorified is He* dispraises.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ  
لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

**Not so those who are steadfast and do good  
deeds: they will have forgiveness and a great  
reward [11] (The Quran, *Hud*: 11)**

Here, the word *sabaru* (those who are steadfast) corresponds with the two orders that came before in the two previous verses; for there is a taking away of mercy, and there is also bestowing of mercy after some harms, and both situations call for steadfastness; for each of us will go through predestined events, and must be patient and have faith in the wisdom of the Omnipotent *Glorified is He*.

Allah *Glorified is He* begins this verse with making an exception for He says, 'Not so those who are steadfast....' (*Hud*: 11) Were it not for Allah

*Glorified is He* making this exception, all human beings would fall under the verdict of the previous two verses, that is, despair and disbelief, or prideful joy devoid of any acknowledgement of the Bestower of blessings.

This exception to the rule comes as a reassurance for those who would endure patiently the hardships that might befall them in their struggle to spread Allah's Message or those who would endure adversity in their personal lives which is not caused by the disbelievers; rather, such adversity is the predestination of the Almighty, the All Knowing. They might also endure hardships caused by their fellow believers.

Therefore, patience means to curb one's ego so as to accept the adversity which Allah *Glorified is He* puts before us. The adversity comes from different sources: Sometimes it befalls, not from some external antagonist, but from within, such as when one falls sick. Often, however, it is other human beings who test our patience such as when someone steals something from you, or when someone wrongs you. In such cases, you can become fully busy with a burning desire for revenge, for getting back at this person; this can be even more frustrating than those cases where there is no external opponent to blame, such as when one falls ill. Where there is a desire for revenge, patience that is required in such cases differs from that required when there is no external foe.

Thus, Allah presents to us how to adapt our patience according to these different circumstances. Luqman, for instance, tells his son, '...bear anything that happens to you steadfastly: these are things to be aspired to.' (*Luqman*: 17) Elsewhere, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Though if a person is patient and forgives, this is one of the greatest things.' (*ash-Shura*: 43) The Arabic phraseology of this verse has the function of firmly asserting that such a situation requires a strong will; for there is an antagonist who is drawing my ire in that case. At some point, I might run into the person who hit me, or insulted me, or robbed me or abused me verbally - the situation requires patience, strength of will.

As for when there is no external enemy, Allah *Glorified is He* simply says, '...bear anything that happens to you steadfastly.' (*Luqman*: 17) However, Allah *Glorified is He* added the letter *lam* in the other verse to emphasise the need for forbearance and forgiveness when there is an enemy. So, He says, 'Though if a person is patient and forgives, this is one of the greatest things.'

(*ash-Shura*: 43) These, then, are the exception - the patient ones, in all their different situations. And here Allah says, 'Not so those who are steadfast and do good deeds...' (*Hud*: 11) So long as we are discussing patience, we must point out that this virtue is required when one has been harmed. However, beware of letting harm—that has touched you by an adversary who shares your faith, or by one who does not share your faith — distract you from your religious duties to Allah *Glorified is He*; for the virtue of patience does not mean simply keeping your anger inside and tormenting yourself such that all the suppressed anger prevents you from performing your normal functions in life. Allah *Glorified is He* in fact permits you to get rid of your bitterness and resentment through adhering to faith which alleviates some of the anger.

In order to take the sting out of one's anger, Allah *Glorified is He* permits you to retaliate against he who has harmed you by harming him in like; for Allah *Glorified is He* does not wish that you remain in such a state of fierce anger and suppression that it prevents you from doing your work; rather, He wishes that you devote yourself fully to performing your duties. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* asks of you nothing less than justice when He says, 'So if anyone commits aggression against you, attack him as he attacked you...' (*al-Baqara*: 194). There are some, however, who are capable of controlling their anger, hence Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Those who restrain their anger...' (*Al-'Imran*: 134). The meaning of *kazhm al-ghaish* (restraining anger) is that, even though one feels angry, one does not react vindictively. Just as one would say, 'I restrained the water bag', for if the water bearer does not restrain the water bag, the water would splash out, thus, he restrains the water bag to keep the water contained. Though containing one's rage can be an estimable virtue, it is not always a positive thing; especially if there is still much anger still raging inside; thus, there is yet a loftier way of dealing with anger, and it is presented in Allah's Words, 'Those who pardon people...' (*Al-'Imran*: 134) meaning that you expel anger from your heart and forgive.

Thus, you are faced with three options: You repay harm done to you in kind. This option is merely theoretical; for if someone slaps you in the face, how can you gauge the exact amount of pain to inflict when you slap him in return? When seeking exact revenge, anger is a poor judge; anger is unable to

fairly gauge how much pain to inflict in return, and so fair justice will not be served. In this case, therefore, patience is a better alternative; for as Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘...but it is best to bear steadfastly.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 134) For if you put too much power in your counter-blow, you would then be the aggressor.

Let us recall Shakespeare’s play ‘The Merchant of Venice’ where the main character is this Jewish merchant who lends out money to a man. Now, part of the agreement stipulated was that the Jewish merchant would cut out a pound of the borrower’s flesh, if the latter was late in his repayment. The borrower was indeed late in his repayment, and the Jewish merchant wanted to cut out a pound of the borrower’s flesh. The case was brought to a judge—a very wise man—who wanted to issue a ruling that was equitable and just. So the judge said, ‘You are justified in taking a pound of this man’s flesh; bring forth the knife, and cut out one pound of flesh, no more, no less; for if you cut out more than one pound of flesh we shall cut out the difference from your own flesh and with the same knife; and if you cut out less than one pound of flesh, we will also cut out the difference from your own flesh—as punishment.’ The Jewish merchant hesitated because no butcher can steady his hand so much as to cut out a piece of meat weighing exactly one pound; rather, he sometimes cuts out a little more than the exact weight, and other times he cuts out a little less than the exact weight, then he adds a little or takes off a little according to the case. So, the Jewish merchant withdrew his case and dropped the charge; what prompted him to do this was his inability to exact a fair revenge. Had he been able to temper his feelings a little, the situation would have not reached such a verdict.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* encourages us to return harm done to us in in the same way, and if we wish to elevate ourselves, then let us contain our anger. If we wish to elevate ourselves further, then let us expel anger from the heart and let us be among those who forgive; that we may earn Allah’s good pleasure; for Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘...who restrain their anger and pardon people— Allah loves those who do good.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 134) Through such acts, the believer rises by adhering to Allah’s path which encourages the one who has been harmed to be the doer of good. When you try to explain Allah’s love for those who do good deeds—whether from a philosophical, logical or economic point of view—you will find that it is a sound argument, and Allah

*Glorified is He* says, ‘...let them pardon and forgive. Do you not wish that Allah should forgive you? Allah is most forgiving and merciful.’ (*an-Nur*: 22)

So, if your brother in the faith wrongs you, you can either retaliate in kind, suppress your anger or rise to the level of forgiveness; in doing so, you join the ranks of those who do good; for, if you had committed a sin, then, learned that Allah *Glorified is He* intends to forgive you for it, would you not feel joy? Therefore, as long as you want Allah to forgive sins that you have committed against Him, why then would you not forgive the sin that your brother in the faith has committed against you?

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘...Do you not wish that Allah should forgive you?’ (*an-Nur*: 22) Here, the True Lord addresses the human soul; for a servant who forgives the wrong deed of a brother in faith towards him, he will be credited a good deed. Forgiveness earns its author significant credit with Allah *Glorified is He*; for the servant who forgives, shall earn the forgiveness of Allah because you refrain from punishing and retribution for Allah’s sake, for comfort lies in submission to Allah.

If you were to take revenge on those who have harmed you, your revenge would be proportional to your strength. However, if you leave the matter to the strength of Allah *Glorified is He* then, your revenge would be much more powerful as you are leaving it to the Power of all powers. Thus; he who forgives a wrongdoer, earns a lofty rank because he brought Allah *Glorified is He* to his side. Some ask: ‘how can religion ask people to show kindness to those who wrong them?’ Rationalizing this query by saying that such behaviour goes against human nature, We would reply: showing kindness to a wrongdoer is the most supreme of behaviours, and it is not something that is obligatory for the True Lord *Glorified is He* has permitted that we retaliate in kind to an aggression committed against us; at the same time, Allah also encourages the believer to restrain his anger, or even to ascend to the commendable heights of forgiveness and kindness. All of these correspond to degrees of certitude and faith in Allah *Glorified is He*.

Take yourself, for example—and with Allah is the highest example—if you want to apply this principle to yourself when one of your children has

wronged another, your heart, your feelings and your sympathy inclines towards the child that was wronged.

He who asks: how can the law require that I show kindness towards he who wrongs me? We would say to him: remember what Al-Hasan al-Basri<sup>(1)</sup> *Allah be pleased with him* once said, ‘Should I not show kindness towards he who Allah has placed by my side?’ If all those who know this principle in theory put it into practice with certitude and sincerity, life will become an earthly paradise, where forgiveness is swift, intimacy between people dominates, and love becomes its creed.

In the verse which we are discussing, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘...Not so those who are steadfast and do good deeds: they will have forgiveness and a great reward.’ (*Hud*: 11) If one were to ask: why do they earn forgiveness? We say: because they were patient and forgave; that is why Allah *Glorified is He* grant them His forgiveness because they endured abuse patiently, and forgave those who committed the abuse, so Allah *Glorified is He* cannot but reward them, not only with forgiveness, but also with great credit as well.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَلَعَلَّكَ تَارِكُ بَعْضِ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَضَائِقٌ بِهِ صَدْرُكَ أَنْ يَقُولُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ مَلَكٌ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ نَذِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ﴿١٢﴾

**So [Prophet] are you going to abandon some part of what is revealed to you, and let your heart be oppressed by it, because they say, ‘Why is no treasure sent down to him? Why has no angel come with him?’? You are only there to warn; it is God who is in charge of everything [12] (The Quran, *Hud*: 12)**

Here, the True Lord *Glorified is He* uses a rhetorical question when He says, ‘So [Prophet] are you going to abandon some part of what is revealed to

(1) Al-Hassan ibn Yasar Al-Basri, Abu Sa’id, Tabi’i, was the Imam of the people of Basra, an eminent religious authority in his time, and a learned religious scholar, extremely pious and ascetic. He was born in Medina in the year 21 of the Islamic calendar and grew up under the wing of ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib. He used to counsel the political rulers of the time, advising them on what to do and what not to do; he lived in Basra and died there in the year 110 of the Islamic calendar at the age of ninety.

you....' (*Hud*: 12) This is a rhetorical question that implies negation. For instance—and Allah has the highest example—you might want to persuade your son to work hard at school, so you would tell him: 'perhaps you are comforted by your classmate's failure?' This is a rhetorical question that implies negation, and at the heart of this rhetorical question is a plea. Here, the One Who makes the plea is Allah *Glorified is He* Who has trusted Muhammad *peace be upon him* with His Message.

Thus, the True Lord's statement means to not let your breast (heart) be distressed—O Prophet—by these obstinate and intransigent people who want to dislodge you from your station which you have always insisted strongly on, for you have constantly insisted that you are human, and that which they demand of you ought to have been with the station which you have ascribed to yourself for you have never told them that you were a god wherefore they would ask of you to bend the laws of nature; rather, you are a conveyor of Allah's message.

Let not your breast become distressed such that you intentionally withhold certain parts of that which was revealed to you because the Message represents an incriminating proof against them. Though you might feel distress when they deny the verses, nevertheless, so long as you convey the entire message that you have been charged with, know that Allah *Glorified is He* will increase their punishment in proportion to that which they have denied.

The word *da'iq* (distressed) is the active present principle. It means that he who is thus described will not remain in such a state permanently, but it is just a phase among others. For example, we can say: 'so and so is *najir*' which means he is capable of performing some carpentry work, but that his capacities in this craft are limited and he is not a professional. The word *da'iq* is also indicative of how much obdurate denial the disbelievers directed at the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and how superhuman in nature were the demands they imposed upon him; for in this instance they had asked that treasure would descend upon him.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* in fact alludes to this issue of a treasure to illustrate what their values in life are; their most supreme value centres on money; that is why they had wished that the Quran would have descended on someone who is rich, as the following verse from the True Lord *Glorified is He*



confirms, ‘and they said, “Why was this Quran not sent down to a distinguished man, from either of the two cities?”’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 31)

Therefore, their objection was not with the Quran, but with he to whom the Quran was revealed. In the verse which we are considering, they ask that a treasure be brought down to him thinking as they did that wealth and riches would distract him and his followers from spreading the message of Allah *Glorified is He*. They had forgotten that they had tempted him with worldly wealth once before. Thereby, the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* has made it clear to whosoever makes him such offers that he is uninterested in treasure. The Arabic word *al-kanz* (treasure) linguistically—refers to that which is densely rich; if cattle, for instance, were full of meat one would say that they are *muktaniza lahma*. But the word *al-kanz* designates by which the price and value and everything else is determined, namely gold. Therefore, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘...tell those who hoard gold and silver instead of giving in Allah's cause that they will have a grievous punishment.’ (*at-Tawba*: 34)

We know that there is a difference between direct sustenance and indirect sustenance. Indirect sustenance is that, which you benefit from in terms of food or drink, and there is something that brings to you the indirect sustenance; however, it cannot take the place of direct, continuous sustenance.

If a man in the desert has tons over tons of gold but cannot find any food, then what good does all the gold do him? If someone were to offer him a loaf of bread and a drink of water in return for all his gold he would agree immediately. In this case, the assessment of values does not equate a ton of gold to a loaf of bread and a sip of water; rather, a ton of gold is equivalent to basic survival and vital needs.

Thus, *kanz* (treasure) means a hoarded amount of gold and silver; in our own Egyptian dialect, we would say: ‘*nuqud taht al-balata*’ (money (stashed) under the floor tile) which corresponds to the phrase ‘money under the mattresses’. But, if the owner of this currency gives away a portion of what he owns for the sake of Allah *Glorified is He*, then it is not considered a *kanz* because the condition of the *kanz* is that it is hidden; and the portion of stored wealth that is given away as a poor-due lets the society know that the owner is not hiding away what he has.

*Kanz* only applies to that which has been densely accumulated, where Allah's share has not been disbursed. For, if he disburses the portion that belongs to Allah *Glorified is He*, then its *kanzya* status is lifted because the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...tell those who hoard gold and silver instead of giving in Allah's cause that they will have a grievous punishment.' (*at-Tawba*: 34)

From these sacred words of Allah, we can gather that he who possesses money and from that money gives Allah His due, his wealth may not be considered a *kanz*. When, on the surface of things, the giving away of the poor-due appears to cause one's net worth to diminish, this drives the person to better invest his money such that he does not lose it over the course of forty years, for the poor-due is 2.5% of one year's total cumulative wealth; which is why he who possesses wealth invests and grows his money, whereby he also creates an opportunity for unemployed people as well as provides for those incapable of work, and thus unemployment levels fall.

You might happen to be the owner of such wealth, but you are ignorant of the secrets of commerce and industry, so you partner up with those who are savvy in commerce and industry, thereby opening the doors of opportunity to those who seek work and to those who are capable of managing business operations, but do not have the money.

Thus, the True Lord *Glorified is He* has willed that, through the consolidation of complementary skill-sets, growth and development come about. He has also willed that when capital becomes integrated with labour, economic activity ensues. When the owners of capital and the workers come to an understanding, they share in the profits according to supply and demand because every exchange involves this principle—supply and demand—. The cooperation between capital and labour produces merchandise, and the merchandise has no particular inclination itself, but the party who owns the merchandise and the party who buys the merchandise have their separate incentives. The party who owns the merchandise seeks to sell it at the highest possible price, and the party who wants to buy the merchandise wants it for the lowest possible price; the merchandise itself, however, has no particular inclination one way or the other.

So long as merchandise is controlled by the law of supply and demand, it represents an economic equilibrium. For instance, if you saw meat on sale for

a high price, those for whom the meat is beyond their budget would be swayed by their self-pride and would say: eating meat is bad for my health. Then they would turn to foods that are within their budget; because it is the merchandise that has control. However, if someone were to intervene in the pricing of the merchandise, in an attempt to hoard the profits and not withhold the capital from the markets for investment, then the power of he who has capital disappears, and he who is talented finds no outlet for his skills.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says in this verse, ‘...Why is no treasure sent down to him? Why has no angel come with him?’ (*Hud*: 12) The word *lawla* indicates a wish, and the disbelievers had first wished for a treasure then they asked that an angel comes with the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*. How would this angel descend (to earth)? Would he appear in his actual form or would he take on the shape of a man? The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘Indeed, if We had sent an angel as messenger, We would still have sent him in the form of a man....’ (*al-An‘am*: 9) If he were to appear in the shape of a man, then how would they ascertain his angelic origins? This is a senseless demand. Also, the True Lord says, ‘The only thing that kept these people from believing, when guidance came to them, was that they said, “How could Allah have sent a human being as a messenger?” Say, “If there were angels walking about on Earth, feeling at home, We would have sent them an angel from Heaven as a messenger.”’ (*al-Isra’*: 94-95) Had the True Lord *Glorified is He* sent down an angel, this angel would take on human characteristics, same as their own. He would meet them and talk with them, and they would not be able to distinguish him from among the rest of the people; thus, they would deny him as well.

In the verse which we are presently studying the True Lord *Glorified is He* says in response to their request, ‘You are only there to warn.’ (*Hud*: 12) These words are addressed from Allah *Glorified is He* to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to advise him on how to respond to them. The Prophet, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had already told them himself that he was a warner and a conveyor of good tidings, and that previous nations had asked for proof (from their prophets), and when the proof that they asked for was furnished they insisted on denying, so, the True Lord *Glorified is He* punished them severely.

Obstinacy of disbelief is not likely to be converted into faith merely because of the ascendance of clear signs. The True Lord Himself says, 'Nothing prevents Us from sending miraculous signs except the fact that previous peoples denied them...' (*al-Isra'*: 59) meaning that Allah *Glorified is He* has not sent down the miraculous signs which the disbelievers asked for because the people of previous nations had denied them; that is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* informs the Prophet, 'You are only there to warn.' (*Hud*: 12) The Prophet, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had received the Quran as part of his function as a warner and bearer of good tidings.

The True Lord concludes the verse by saying, '...it is Allah who is in charge of everything.' (*Hud*: 12) When you put someone in charge of your business affairs—the buying, selling and transporting of goods—and you monitor his performance and his activities closely, then if you like his performance, you will keep him in charge, and if you do not like his performance, you repeal the authority that you put in him. Such is how things go in the human world. However, when Allah invests authority with one of his agents on earth, it is forever, and it does not matter if the disbelievers turn away The True Lord *Glorified is He* continues:

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ وَادْعُوا  
مَنْ أَسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

**If they say, 'He has invented it himself,' say, 'Then produce ten invented suras like it, and call in whoever you can beside God, if you are truthful'[13] (The Quran, *Hud*: 13)**

In the words of the True Lord *Glorified is He*, we can discern another aspect of the disbeliever's opposition to the message of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. They claimed Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* invented this Quran. *Al-iftira'a* is intentional lying, providing information that is contradictory to actual facts.

If in reality the matter was negative, but you affirmed it is positive, you thereby contradicted the facts; for instance, if there existed some sort of evil, then you said, 'there exists no evil in this place', the reality is positive, whereas what you said was denial and what you had said was a negation.

Alternatively, reality might be negative and the statement might be positive; this is also a form of lying. To be truthful is when the given statement agrees with the existential reality; but if the statement is in conflict with the existential reality, then the statement is a lie.

There are two types of lies: intentional and unintentional. Lying is the violation of reality and a fabrication of a false reality. One could say: *kharaqta ash-shay`a* meaning you distorted and manipulated reality. The True Lord says, ‘...and they attribute sons and daughters to Him without any true knowledge....’ (*al-An`am*: 100) The True Lord also says, ‘...what you invent is nothing but falsehood....’ (*al-`Ankabut*: 17) meaning that you refer to things that do not exist when, in fact, it is from yourselves. Allah *Glorified is He* also says, ‘...they are merely guessing.’ (*al-An`am*: 116)

When they slanderously accused Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of concocting the Quran himself, the response that came simply from the Quran; you—O Arabs—are people of eloquence and have the gift of speech; and since the Quran manifests that same type of linguistic genius and since you claim that Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has fabricated the Quran and that its verses are not the words of Allah, why cannot you come up with something to match it? So long as fabrication is an easy matter for you, why cannot you come up with just ten verses similar to those of the Quran? You have lived alongside Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* since his childhood, and you know that he had no special gift for poetry, nor was he exceptionally eloquent, in fact, he had no connections whatsoever with your language games; he never engaged in any poetry or speech writing, and he never participated in any of the poetry contests which used to take place in famous markets such as `Ukaz during the pre-Islamic era.

If it is possible that someone with no training or experience in the art of rhetoric can come up with such a feat as the Quran, then why cannot you—who are capable of and familiar with the art of rhetoric—come up with a few verses that match the eloquence of the Quran; if Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has fabricated the Quran why do you stand incapable of fabricating a literary work to match? You are familiar with the competitions that are held at the poetry (eloquence) gatherings: when a poet stands up and

delivers a poem, another poet tries to outdo him with a better poem than the first, then a judging committee analyses the merits and faults of each poem.

In the verse, Allah answers the disbelievers' query as follows, If Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had fabricated the Quran—as you claim—then where have you been? Have you not known him since he was a child? That is why the True Lord orders the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* to say, 'Say, "If Allah had so willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you. I lived a whole lifetime among you before it came to me; how can you not use your reason?"' (Yunus: 16)

Had Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* ever uttered a word of poetry, given a speech or competed in 'Ukaz<sup>(1)</sup>, Al-Marbad, Dhi al-Majaz<sup>(2)</sup> or Al-Majna<sup>(3)</sup>—the main venues for art of rhetoric festivals in those days? He never frequented those places as a competitor. Were those not, who competed in those festivals, more capable than he was at forging counterfeit literature? Was Imru'u Al-Qayss not a prodigious poet? He was indeed, and he had peers who would rival him as well. There was also 'Amr ibn Kalthum, Al-Harith ibn Hilza Al-Yashkuri, and others would follow down through the centuries like Jarir and Al-Farazdaq.

You (the disbelievers mentioned in the verse) are well aware of those who compose poetry and all their peers who compete with them in eloquence. So, bring forth someone who can forge verses akin to the Quran, and if you cannot, this means that the Quran is no human fabrication. That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'If they say, He has invented it himself, say, "Then produce ten invented chapters like it..."' (Hud: 13)

Were they able to accept the challenge of bringing forth ten chapters comparable to the Holy Quran in its enthralling, intelligible speech, its eloquence, and its depth of meaning? The True lord, first, challenged them to bring forth

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(1) *Suq 'Ukaz: a market not far from Mecca where the Arabs got together every year where each tribe would show off and take pride in its finest poets. Ta'akuz qawm: they competed and contended with each other. Lissan al-'Arab- 'Akz.*

(2) *Dhi al-Majaz: a location in Mina—coinciding, it said, with 'Arafat—where a market used to be held in pre-Islamic times. Al-Lissan—under jwz.*

(3) *Al-Majna: a place a few miles from Mecca, the location of one of the Arabs' markets*

something that matches the Quran, and they could not; then He challenged them to bring forth ten chapters, and they could not, and He challenged them to bring forth one surah (chapter) finally, He challenged them to bring forth a mere few sentences that were comparable to the Quran, and they could not.

Then, the True Lord proceeded to the next phase of the challenge—that they bring forth ten chapters. The True Lord *Glorified is He* did not stop there: he allowed them to consult with however many eloquent poets and writers they wished: ‘...and call in whoever you can beside Allah, if you are truthful.’ (*Hud*: 13) meaning summon all your partners and all men of eloquence—other than Allah.

The True Lord, thus, abrogates the possibility of their calling upon Him so that they do not say: we will call on Allah to aid us in this task; that is why the True Lord asks them to count Him out, ‘...and call in whoever you can beside Allah, if you are truthful.’ (*Hud*: 13) meaning if what you say is indeed true, and Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did invent the Quran, and since you are fluent in the art of rhetoric, then compose ten chapters like the Quran—you and the partners you manage to bring to your cause.

That is why, in the next verse, the True Lord wisely responds:

فَإِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أُنزِلَ بِعِلْمِ اللَّهِ  
وَأَن لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

**If they do not answer you, then you will all know  
that it is sent down containing knowledge from  
God, and that there is no god but Him. Then will  
you submit to Him? [14] (The Quran, *Hud*: 14)**

This speech is addressed to those who had alleged that the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had invented the Quran, or it could also be addressed to the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for the True Lord says in the previous verse, ‘Then produce ten invented chapters like it, and call in whoever you can beside Allah, if you are truthful.’ (*Hud*: 13) Then He continues in the next verse, ‘If they do not answer you...’ (*Hud*: 14), meaning if they cannot stand up to the

challenge, then they should know and be certain—that the Quran is from Allah which was testified by the opponents from amongst them (through their inability to challenge it).

So, why does the True Lord shift His approach by saying, 'If they do not answer you...' (*Hud: 14*)? 'They' refers to whom the opponents may be calling to their aid as well as the opponents themselves which the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* has challenged. Then, Allah says, '...then you will all know that it is sent down containing knowledge from Allah...' (*Hud: 14*) The True Lord says this because Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has been asked to convey the Message, and what Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* conveyed to the believers, the believers are required to convey, even if the disbelievers do not respond to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* or to the believers, and even if no one ever stands up to support the disbelievers in their claim that the Quran is the invention of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

It is likely that these poetic and linguistic prodigies are intimidated by the challenge because they realized that the Quran was the truth; and had they tried to come up with something similar, they would have failed. Therefore, all you who do not believe in the Quran, know that, 'it is sent down containing knowledge from Allah.' (*Hud: 14*)

In the verse Allah addresses, for once, His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and his people. That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* switches from the singular pronoun (say, O Muhammad- in the previous verse) to the plural pronoun (know – in this verse) when He says, 'If they do not answer you, then you will all know that it is sent down containing knowledge from Allah...' (*Hud: 14*) Here the word 'know' is in the plural form meaning, be even more certain O believers that the Quran has been bestowed from Allah.

As we know, knowledge has three levels: the knowledge of certainty, the eye of certainty and the truth of certainty.

However, the verse can also be seen as addressing the disbelievers whom the Quran had asked to seek the help of whomever they can in their efforts to subvert the Quran: '...then you will all know that it is sent down containing knowledge from Allah...' (*Hud: 14*)



The highest orders of knowledge are contained with the True Lord *Glorified is He* who has known all knowledge since pre-eternity. We are not privy to such knowledge. In any case, our knowledge changes depending on that Allah *Glorified is He* allows us to know. For you might have knowledge of one thing but be ignorant of many other things. Or you might have knowledge of one thing but many other things have slipped your mind.

That is why you find doctors and the folk who work in the field of precision industry and other researchers and scientists—you find that these people are constantly correcting each other when it comes to the vast quantities of knowledge that they deal with. So, when a sick person goes to visit a doctor, and the patient finds that he does not respond well to the medicine which this doctor has prescribed, he will go and see a second doctor who will rectify the first doctor's prescription and recommend a different medicine. Then, if the patient once more does not respond well to the medicine, then, in this case, a physicians' committee will convene and decide on which treatments work and which do not work for the patient. Thus, each doctor will redress the other doctor's medical opinion until they reach a decision. Every doctor who redress the other's opinion is increasingly wiser and more knowledgeable because the first doctor had prescribed a remedy that did not sit well with the patient—the first doctor made this judgment based on what knowledge he had, and so it is for the rest of the researchers and scientists. So, for every knowledgeable person there is one who is wiser and more knowledgeable. The second doctor corrects the first and so on and so forth....

But, is there anyone who can correct Allah's Knowledge? There is not. Therefore, as long as the Quran is sent down containing knowledge from Allah, then no human knowledge can ever come forth with anything comparable, '...then you will all know that it is sent down containing knowledge from Allah...' (*Hud*: 14). Furthermore, the True Lord *Glorified is He* declares that there is no other deity save Him; so that no one should claim that there is any other deity save Allah. Allah mentions this because the entire Quran was revealed within the framework: 'that there is no deity but Him' (*Hud*: 14). So long as it is the True Lord who makes this ruling, then let us trust it.

An example of this is the True Lord's ruling toward Abu Lahab<sup>(1)</sup> and his wife<sup>(2)</sup>—that they shall enter Hellfire. Would it have been possible for Abu Lahab to announce his faith even if it were pure hypocrisy? Of course not, because He Who created Abu Lahab knows how he behaves. That is why we find that in the next chapter after the chapter of *al-Masad*<sup>(3)</sup>—which condemns Abu Lahab to hellfire—The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'Say... "He is Allah the One"...' (*al-Ikhlās*: 1), meaning so long as the True Lord *Glorified is He* has issued the decree that Abu Lahab and his wife shall enter Hellfire, no one will be able to alter His ruling, for there is no deity but Him. The True Lord concludes the holy verse by saying, 'Then will you submit to Him?' (*Hud*: 14) Questions are usually posed as a means to elicit a response so as to understand something, but this is not always the case. This question is posed by a power that would be capable of imposing Islam on those who are thus questioned. Allah has willed that this question be posed by his Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* so that he might elicit a response; and had the questioner not been certain that Islam is the only reality, he would not have posed the question; and had the questioner not been certain that the only possible response is that the listener become Muslim, he would not have taken the answer to the question as a proof against the listener.

The Creator *Glorified is He* is the One Who says these words—and to Allah belongs the highest example—and He Himself is immune from any comparison—you might listen to a person giving a detailed account of something, then asks you: Am I not right in what I have told you? The reason he asks this question is because he is sure that you will tell him: yes, you are right.

When we look at the verse which prohibits intoxicants and games of chance—for example—we find that the True Lord says, 'With intoxicants and gambling, Satan seeks only to incite enmity and hatred among you, and to stop you remembering Allah and prayer. Will you not give them up?'<sup>(4)</sup> (*al-Ma'ida*: 91)

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(1) Abu Lahab is one of the Prophet's uncles.

(2) His wife was one of Quraysh's eminent ladies; she was Um Jamil; her name was Arwa bint Harb ibn Umyya and was the sister of Abu Sufyan. She was her husband's accomplice in his disbelief, ingratitude, and intransigence.

(3) *Masad al-habl Masada*: he twisted the rope into strands. *Al-Qamus Al-qawim*.

(4) See Ibn Kathir's Tafsir 2/95.

It is as if the rhetorical question represents a command: desist from the consumption of wine and gambling, and be ashamed of engaging in such activities. Therefore, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says at the end of the blessed verse, ‘...Then will you submit to Him?’ (*Hud*: 14) meaning: surrender yourselves, and stop your importunity; and refrain from saying that the Quran is fabricated by Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*; The Quran is from Allah and there is no deity but Him.

After that, the True Lord says:

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُخْسُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

**If any desire [only] the life of this world with all its finery,  
We shall repay them in full in this life for their deeds – they  
will be given no less [15] (The Quran, *Hud*: 15)**

The True Lord says that the disbelievers said, ‘...Why is no treasure sent down to him?’ (*Hud*: 12) In other words, they are preoccupied with the pleasures and extravagance of the life of this world. There are certain fundamentals which life requires, such as clothing for one’s body, morsels to eat and a house where one takes shelter. Extravagance, on the other hand, is a different matter, for rather than covering one’s body with modest clothing, a man will ask for smooth wool for winter and sleek silk for summer; and rather than asking for a humble abode to shelter him from cold or from heat, he asks for a castle. Regarding this issue, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘The love of desirable things is made alluring for men— women, children, gold and silver treasures piled up high, horses with fine markings, livestock, and farmland....’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 14) All these things are part and parcel of the enjoyment of life in this world. The True Lord says, ‘...these may be the joys of this life, but Allah has the best place to return to.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 14)

What does the word *zeena* signify (all its finery)? Its meaning is beauty or that which is made beautiful by the beautification of oneself; and there is a difference between inherent beauty and beauty that is the result of made-up or artificial beauty. When a woman—for example—wants to look nice she wears beautiful, flashy clothes, and adorns herself with lustrous gold, for it is

the mineral that derives its value from the intense, eye-catching gleam. However, only a woman who feels insecure will overdo these things. As for the woman that is naturally beautiful, she refuses to beautify herself. That is why she is called *al-ghaniyah* meaning, she for whom cosmetics is unnecessary by virtue of her natural beauty, who does not need to hide her ears behind large earrings, nor does she need to hide her neck with a large necklace, nor does she try to hide her wrists with bracelets <sup>(1)</sup>, and she refuses to cover up the natural beauty of her fingers with rings. When a woman overdoes all these adornments she gives off the opposite impression.

The example I am giving now might seem to be far-removed from the original topic, but at least it illustrates how when something is overdone it gives the opposite effect.

As Al-Mutanabbi <sup>(2)</sup> says, 'You are the perfume, when perfume touches your body -- And you wash the water, if water touches your body.' Here the poet is saying that if perfume touches such a person, it becomes perfumed itself; also, it is the water itself that becomes washed if it makes contact with this person. Likewise, a beautiful woman declines to beautify her chest with a necklace because her neck is more beautiful without it. Such types of women are dubbed *ghanya* (derived from *ghina*: needlessness) because their natural beauty has no need of enhancements.

They say that the beauty of city women is begotten from artificial powders. It is as if these powders are fixed to the face with the help of pastes, the type of pastes that are used to paint walls; it is as if every one of these women is applying these pastes to her face in order to cover up its jagged cracks. The instance these pastes start to run she is in discomfort, as her face turns into a sorry goulash of colours; hence, it is said that the beauty of city women is artificial and fabricated but Bedouin women's beauty is inherent, not acquired.

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(1) *As-siwar*: gold necklace. Plural: *aswar wa iswira*. *Al- Mu`jam Al-Wassit*.

(2) Ahmad ibn Al-Hussin, a sagacious poet. He was born in Al-Kufa in a place called Kindah in the year 303 of the Islamic calendar and spent his formative years in the Levant. He claimed to be a prophet in a village called As-Sammawah between Al-Kufa and As-Sahm, which is why he is called Al-Mutanabbi. Then he renounced his claim after being imprisoned. He died in the year 354 of the Islamic calendar at the age of 52.

Therefore, *az-zeena* is the enhancement of something with something else, and that which is already good has no need of *az-zeena*.

So, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘If any desire [only] the life of this world with all its finery, we shall repay them in full in this life for their deeds, and they therein will not be deprived.’ (*Hud*: 15) This means that if you disbelieve in Allah *Glorified is He*, He will not cease to accord you with provisions and pleasures of life in this world; for He is the Lord, and it is He who has summoned you to existence, and He has made it obligatory upon Himself to provide for you whatever you desire in the way of life’s provisions and pleasures because He is capable of making good on what He has promised.

Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘...We shall repay them in full in this life for their deeds...’ (*Hud*: 15) meaning that if they adhere to the basic principle of reaping what they sow, then the True Lord makes it obligatory upon Himself to grant full, undiminished remunerations for actions performed. In their life in this world they will not be cheated of their fair due, and whomsoever perfects an action shall collect the fruits of that action.

This bounteous statement brings up an important issue which concerns us currently, for there are some who say: these Muslims who testify that ‘There is no deity but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger’, and are steadfast in prayer, and who erect mosques—their civilization is backward and underdeveloped, while the disbelievers wallow in the luxuries of their advanced civilization. Our response is that the bestowals of Allah *Glorified is He* —as ‘Lord’—are governed by worldly principles, for whosoever performs an action properly, he shall receive the worldly rewards of his labour, even if he is a disbeliever. However, he shall receive no credit in the life to come; because the True Lord says, ‘and we shall turn to the deeds they have done and scatter them like dust.’ (*al-Furqan*: 23)

The True Lord rewards the disbeliever who is good towards people with good in this world, rewards the disbeliever who is sincere with the sincerity of others towards him and rewards the disbelievers who extend a helping hand with assistance in return.

These are all works required by the religion, and even a disbeliever might perform them, then Allah *Glorified is He* will see that he is recompensed justly

in this world. If he had performed them so that people would say: he performed such a work, or he was virtuous in that situation, then one could tell him: 'you performed good deeds to win people's approval, and indeed you have won their approval.' So, if the disbelievers perform actions in this world to reap rewards in this world, the True Lord accords them the fruit of their actions.

It must be said to those who accuse the Muslims of being backward: The Muslims were in fact advanced in the early stages of their history, and they were masters when they applied the principles of their religion, outwardly and inwardly, in form and in content. Backwardness is not the imperative of Islam, nor is it its predetermined fate; rather, backwardness crept in because we abandoned the spirit of Islam and stopped applying its principles.

If we were to set up a comparison with the state of Europe during the time when the church was dominant, we would find that innovative intellectuals were punished and executed for their creativity. That period in Europe is called the dark ages. Then the crusades began, and Europe came to know the strength of Islam and Muslims—for they were repelled and their armies defeated. They then tried to shrug off the authority of the pope and the church. When they did that, they started to become more advanced as a civilization. Thus, when they turned their backs to the Pope's authority, they became advanced, and we, when we ceased applying the teachings of Islam, became backward. Therefore, which of the two options is better? History shows that the Muslims were advanced when they took the teachings of Islam seriously, and they became backward when they abandoned them.

So, the criterion of worldly success is hard work, and whoever applies himself diligently and utilize the means—and is at the same time a believer—earns a goodly reward in this life and a goodly reward in the life to come; and he who is a disbeliever and applies himself earns a goodly reward in this life but not in the next.

The True Lord says, 'But the deeds of those who disbelieve are like a mirage in a desert: the thirsty person thinks there will be water but, when he gets there, he finds only Allah, who pays him his account in full- Allah is swift in reckoning.' (*an-Nur*: 39) Thus, the disbeliever will be shocked by the

fact that Allah, whom he has denied, is true. The True Lord says, ‘the deeds of those who reject their Lord are like ashes that the wind blows furiously on a stormy day: they have no power over anything they have gained.’ (*Ibrahim*: 18) So, he who desires the world and its pleasures, the True Lord, Most High, remunerates him and will not in the least short change him when it comes to due rights. Hatim At-Ta’i—for instance—took on the virtue of generosity, and Antara took on the virtue of courage, and every man who puts in effort in his actions will reap his rewards, but the rewards of the Hereafter are for those who performed their works for the sake of Allah *Glorified is He* and who had faith in Him. Even those hypocrites who entered Islam and fought alongside the Muslims took their share of war booty, but they shall have no reward in the Hereafter. Hence, loyalty implies the existence of a binding contract, and as long as there is a binding contract that connects the worker to the work, and the worker perfects his work, he cannot but receive his full reward—full because any less would be to curtail what is rightfully his.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا النَّارُ وَحِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا  
فِيهَا وَبِطُلَّ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

**But such people will have nothing in the Hereafter  
but the Fire: their work here will be fruitless and  
their deeds futile[16] (The Quran, *Hud*: 16)**

Thus, hellfire is the resting-place of those who worked towards worldly goals and did not have faith in Allah, for they had received their due on earth, but all their works counted for nothing in the Hereafter. The word *habita* (is futile) is derived from *al-habat* which refers to the bloating of cattle when they have eaten unripe greens. In the countryside, it is said, ‘*intafakhat al-bahima*’ (the animals have become swollen) meaning that there are gases in their stomachs. The ignorant might take this to mean that they have fattened, but this bloating disappears when its real cause is removed. The works of the disbelievers are rendered futile in the Hereafter; for they are useless in the absence of faith.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says after that:

أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ وَيَتْلُوهُ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْهُ وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كُتِبَ مُوسَىٰ إِمَامًا  
وَرَحْمَةً أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ ۚ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِهِ ۚ مِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ ۖ فَلَنَارٌ مَّوْعِدَةٌ ۚ فَلَا تَكُ  
فِي مَرِيضَةٍ مِّنْهُ إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

**Can they be compared to those who have clear proof from their Lord, recited by a witness from Him, and before it the Book of Moses, as a guide and mercy? These people believe in it, whereas those groups that deny its truth are promised the Fire. So have no doubt about it [Prophet]: it is the Truth from your Lord, though most people do not believe so [17] (The Quran, *Hud*: 17)**

The word *al-bayyina* (have clear proof) denotes that the insight of flawless natural disposition which alerts man to the existence of the Necessary Being; it leads man to the realization that this beautifully designed cosmos must have been brought into existence by that Supreme Being. Thus, through pure, uncorrupted discernment, man is guided.

When the ancient Arabs would be crossing open deserts, and would come across animal droppings, and would also notice animal tracks, they would say, ‘these droppings imply the presence of an animal that had recently left the place, and the tracks imply that the animal was moving. Then, what of the sky with its planets, the earth with its mountainous passes and the ocean with its waves, does all this then not testify to The Subtle, The Aware?’ Thus, were the Arabs guided through the discernment of his primordial nature; it is the gift of Certainty from Allah.

Allah *Glorified is He* has instilled this natural disposition in every human being, and it was with this natural disposition that we all testified that He is our Lord *fi `alam adh-dharr* (primal covenant - in the world before creation).

In this regard, the True Lord says: ‘[Prophet], when your Lord took out the offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about themselves, He said, “Am I not your Lord?” and they replied, “Yes, we bear witness”...’ (*al-A`raf*: 172). The pure, uncorrupted



discernment springs from the primordial faith in Allah which is inherent in the hearts of all things.

Now pleasures and temptations might sully this primordial faith, and so man errs from Allah's path, and so Allah, out of mercy, sends down messengers to remind us of the primordial certainties we once held and to point us towards the underlying causes and deeper wisdom. This is so that the certainty of the prophets *peace upon them* might unite with our own primordial certainty. The True Lord shows us the way to arrive at religious certainty, for the created being might be ignorant of this, so Allah *Glorified is He* explains to us that this ignorance is an unnatural ignorance; for the pure, uncorrupted state that is our primordial nature shows us the way even before the existence of any messengers have to remind us of the higher power that governs the universe.

I have given this example before, where a man's plane crashes and maroons him in the desert, and he finds himself without water, food, company or shelter; then sleep overtakes him. When he wakes up he finds a sumptuous banquet with the most exquisite of foods and the finest of drinks. This person must utilize his faculty of thought and ask: who made all of this? In fact, he will ask himself this question before he proceeds to enjoy any of this food and drink, especially as there is no one around to tell him: 'you are my guest'. Therefore, he must use his faculty of thought.

The same applies to the man who finds himself in the realm of existence. None of Allah's creatures has ever claimed that it is he who brought all of this into existence, no one has claimed that it is he who created the heavens and the earth and no one has claimed that he has summoned all that is in the universe to the service of man.

It is necessary that, before taking pleasure in all of this, man should ask: who is it who made all of this for my benefit? If a human messenger tells him: I have come to solve this riddle for you, it is incumbent upon a human being to lend his full attention to the messenger; for he has come to address that concern that was on his mind.

It is out of Allah's Mercy for us that He did not ask of us to give it much thought from the beginning; for a long time, He left us without any obligations in this world, so that man might enjoy the many blessings of his

Lord, and after that, when man reached full maturity, and without being forced, then the True Lord has charged him with the duties of faith.

Man must then ask: everything—no matter how small or insignificant—must have a maker, and the light bulb that illuminates a circle with a diameter of twenty meters, we know its maker, and we have studied the factories which produced it, the bodies of knowledge that were applied to its production and the materials of which it was made. Do we not try to know how old this sun of ours is, and who has made it so that it does not need any maintenance nor fuel nor extra parts, and illuminates half the globe?

This is an issue that we should have researched, so that we might see how wide are the horizons of this certainty, an illuminating certainty and one of strength and primordial nature which Allah bestows upon the thinking human beings so that he might be led to the realization that behind this universe there is an orchestrating Creator.

So, if another human being like him comes to him and says: Allah is the creator of the world, and Allah *Glorified is He* asks of you such and such, we should, quite obviously, listen to this human being and apply what he says based upon our primordial intuition and our vision of the certitudes.

In this way, we come to know what we are ignorant of through our primordial nature. We might also arrive at this knowledge through our intelligence, that is pure and uncorrupted by any doubts, for when you perceive smoke you come to realize, through your intelligence, that there must be a fire; and when you are walking in the desert and you see greenery; do you not then conclude, through your intelligence, that there must be water to sustain it? These, then, are things which are elementary and which you know pre-logically, without the need for research or effort.

There are matters which might require of your intellectual effort to reach certain conclusions based on certain initial premises such as the mental effort which the ancient Arabs applied to conclude that there is a Creator Who runs this universe for they were able to conclude from the droppings on the ground that there must have been a camel which had recently left the area, and who were able to conclude from the footprints that it was in motion. They also inferred from this that the planets with their orbits, and the earth with its

mountainous passes, and the sea with its waves—that all these things prove the existence of The Subtle, The Aware.

The mind cannot but take all these things and make a general judgment, even if it might be ignorant of the details. The mind has come to know that behind this universe there is a Creator, a Maker a Being Who is Wise, but he did not know what the name of this Being was, and a human being cannot come to know this matter with his mind; he also does not know what kind of directives this Creator requires that he follow in his life, and the manner in which this Being rewards those who are obedient to Him, and how this Being punishes those who are disobedient towards Him.

There is a need for Divine Revelation which will further establish the existence of that Power which you had accepted prior. Those who inspect the universe, using their minds, know that behind this universe there is a Creator, but they neither know His Name, nor what His commandments are.

You cannot know the Name of Allah unless He reveals it to you, through His revelation to His messengers, and you know what His commandments are only through the messenger who has received the message.

It is out of His Mercy that Allah *Glorified is He* has sent Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the miracle that is with Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is the Quran because even when the mind is guided to the Power of the Fully Capable, the Highest, it will remain ignorant of the specifics of faith, and so when the True Lord revealed the Quran, it was out of mercy for His servants, an illumination for them.

‘Compared to those who have clear proof from their Lord, recited by a witness from Him....’ (*Hud*: 17)

For the Quran is an illuminating proof which guides man’s innate, uncorrupted capacity of discernment, ‘recited by a witness from Him.’ (*Hud*: 17) That is, he who has received revelation, and conveyed to us—on behalf of the True Lord – that which confirmed Allah *Glorified is He* as the Highest Creator, the Absolute Power. Furthermore, the ‘witness’ explained to us that which Allah demands.

We are faced, here, with three witnesses. The first witness is the clear, illuminating proof. The second witness is the clear, uncorrupted discernment

that the mind is guided to. After we accept the truth as a whole, the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* provides us with the details. Before the message of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* there was the Book of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* ‘...and before it the Book of Musa (Moses), as a guide and mercy.’ (*Hud*: 17) This is the third witness.

He who does not take note of the evidences furnished by these three proofs is intellectually negligent. For he who possesses the discernment, and he who hears the testament of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the testament that preceded him—that is, the book of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* in addition to the Gospels which were given to `Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* to convey to the Children of Israel—all of this must certainly guide him to true faith.

The True Lord’s words, ‘These people believe in it’ (*Hud*: 17) refer to those who took note of the evidences: Innate discernment, the witness of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the witness of Musa (Moses) who came before.

Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘...whereas those groups that deny its truth are promised the Fire....’ (*Hud*: 17) Disbelief—as we have learned—is ‘covering up’ the truth, and thus disbelief is itself a proof of faith, for one cannot cover up a truth that does not exist. The existence of that which is covered up precedes the act of ‘covering up’. The ‘covering up’ comes later. Thus, belief precedes disbelief because belief is at the origin of the primordial state.

‘Whereas those groups that deny its truth are promised the Fire.’ (*Hud*: 17) The word *ahzab* (groups) is the plural form of *hizb* which means a group that is united over a common cause; like the political parties we see today, they are human factions that compete with one another over values and principles; they are free to do so since this is an intellectual competition.

As for the first doctrine, the directives of the path of Allah come from the True Lord, the Highest Planner. This way leads to Him, and that is why Allah says of those who follow His way, ‘They are Allah’s partisans’ (*al-Mujadala*: 22) meaning they are part of a league that is different from the other human leagues which vie with each other in the intellectual domain.

Here, the True Lord says, ‘...whereas those groups that deny its truth are promised the Fire....’ (*Hud*: 17) The verse refers to the disbelievers of Quraysh,

the idol-worshippers, the pagan animists and the Jews and Christians who did not believe in the message of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Each of these groups represents a league of which the True Lord says, ‘...but they have split their community into sects, each rejoicing in their own.’ (*al-Mu’minun*: 53)

Of these, those who deny the Message of Allah’s Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* or deny His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* their recompense is the Hellfire. Allah shows us that there are two leagues: the league of Allah, and the other leagues; and these two leagues are diametrically opposed to each other.

The True Lord says to His Messenger, and by extension, to the community of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* at large, ‘So have no doubt about it.’ (*Hud*: 17) Do not have, O Messenger of Allah, any doubts about the matter; for your Message and your mission are supported by self-evident, clear proofs, by the primordial state, and by the guidance and light that Allah *Glorified is He* requires; it is also supported by those who attest with you, just as those who came before you attested that yours is the path of the truth, ‘it is the Truth from your Lord.’ (*Hud*: 17) The True Lord—as we have learned previously—is that which is static and is not subject to change, and this truth cannot but come from a Lord that is consistent in his actions.

The True Lord concludes the verse by saying, ‘...though most people do not believe so.’ (*Hud*: 17) These people do not believe out of spite because the proofs are as self-evident as can be; and he who persists in denying them is merely doing so out of intransigence. The True Lord says of such people, ‘They denied them, in their wickedness and their pride, even though their souls acknowledged them as true....’ (*an-Naml*: 14) Even as they formally denied the Message of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* they were aware of the undeniable proofs of the Message and of his prophethood. So, their denial was out of spite; for the corroborating evidence was strong and clearly laid out; for, those who refuse faith, given all these proofs, are surely obstinate persons.

In the next verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أُولَٰئِكَ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَقُولُ  
 الْأَشْهَادُ هَٰؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ أَلَا لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

**Who could do more wrong than someone who invents lies about God? Such people will be brought before their Lord, and the witnesses will say, ‘These are the ones that lied about their Lord.’ God’s rejection is the due of those who do such wrong [18] (The Quran, *Hud*: 18)**

This verse begins with rhetorical question which stresses the fact that those people who attribute their own lying inventions to Allah are unjust. The question precedes their acknowledging confession against themselves which represents the best proof. If any of them would disinterestedly contemplate the wrongdoings ever done in this world, he would admit that there is no evil deed worse than fabricating lies to Allah. Thus, Allah expresses this fact in the form of a rhetorical question so that the later confession of the culprits will admit their abominable breach. They will be arraigned before Allah, as He says, ‘Such people will be brought before their Lord.’ (*Hud*: 18)

The act of bringing people before Allah is done to uncover the hidden misdeeds to be dealt with. In our life, there is an example of bringing soldiers in military parades and war-games so that the army shows strength to the foes, and so that the government shows off military strength to the governments of other countries. Also, the officer lines up his squad so that he can inspect each one, assess their well attiring and their ability to carry out orders.

Another example is illustrated as the principal of a school lines up the pupils on the day of announcing exam results to be able to see the shame on the faces of the negligent and careless.

How awful the arraignment of people before Allah *the Exalted* will be and how ashamed the deniers will be then! Indeed, they will be speechless in the presence of Allah Whom they had previously denied spitefully, as Allah says, ‘But the deeds of those who disbelieve are like a mirage in a plain desert.’<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Mirage: Something (such as a pool of water in the middle of a desert) that is seen and appears in the afternoon to be real but it is illusionary. A plain desert: A large area of flat land surrounded by highlands, as Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘They ask you [Prophet] about the mountains, say, “[On that Day] my Lord will blast them into dust and leave a flat plain, with no peak or trough to be seen.’ (*Ta Ha*: 105-107)

the thirsty person thinks there will be water but, when he gets there, he finds only Allah....' (*an-Nur*: 39)

Allah *Glorified is He* discloses the veiled cover-ups as they will be brought before Him, as He says, 'They will be lined up before your Lord....' (*al-Kahf*: 48) Moreover, they are also brought before the Hellfire, as Allah says: 'they will be brought before the Fire morning and evening<sup>(1)</sup>....' (*Ghafir*: 46) Thereupon, the shame, humiliation and contrition will appear on those who attributed their own lying inventions to Allah.

Allah *the Almighty* knows all things before time begins, but He wills to expose people before each other and before themselves, so that when someone in Heaven sees another in the Hellfire, the scene would not provoke the believer's pity because he knows that the punishment for attributing falsehood to Allah is the Hellfire. Moreover, the matter will not only be limited to such embarrassment. In fact, there is also the testament of the witnesses, as Allah says in the same verse, 'And the witnesses will say, "These are the ones that lied about their Lord."' (*Hud*: 18)

There are angels among the 'witnesses', as Allah *the Exalted* says, 'He (the person) does not utter a single word<sup>(2)</sup> without an ever-present watcher<sup>(3)</sup>.' (*Qaf*: 18) Allah, also, says, 'Over you stand watchers<sup>(4)</sup>, noble recorders who know what you do!' (*al-Infitar*: 10-12) Furthermore, there are witnesses from the prophets who had conveyed the right path to Allah. As Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'What will they do when we bring a witness from each community, with you [Muhammad] as a witness against these people?<sup>(5)</sup>' (*an-Nisa*: 41)

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(1) This verse refers to the Pharaoh and his people. It is used to prove the concept of 'Punishment in the grave' by Ahl As-Sunna or Sunni Islam (the majority branch of Islam), cited in *Tafsir ibn Kathir (Quran exegesis of ibn Kathir)*, 4/81.

(2) speaking a word means uttering anything.

(3) Ever-present watcher: An observing angel recording every uttered word; whether good or bad, in the man's Book of Deeds, cited in *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*.

(4) Watchers: The ever-present angel guarding every man, as Allah *the Exalted* says, 'There is a watcher over every soul' (*at-Tariq*: 4). Also, Allah says, 'He is the Supreme Master over His subjects. He sends out recorders to watch over you.' (*al-An'am*: 61)

(5) Abdullah ibn Mas'ud narrated, 'Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said to me, "Recite (the Quran) to me." I said, "O Allah's Messenger! Shall I recite (the Quran) to you while it has been revealed to you?" He said, "Yes." So, I recited from the chapter of *An-Nisa* (The Women), but when I recited the verse, "How (will it be) then when We bring =

Moreover, another type of witnesses is the Muslim believer, who is responsible for the propagation of the Message to others, as Allah *the Almighty* says, 'We have made you [believers] into a just community, so that you may bear witness [to the truth] before others and so that the Messenger may bear witness [to it] before you....' (*al-Baqara*: 143) 'Bearing witness' implies that everything is recorded; their actions after receiving the Message and going astray after being shown the right path. Thus, they commit the crime which entails punishment because punishment is only due when the person is incriminated on the basis of an existing promulgated legislative provision. That is the reason that laws decreed by the government come into effect as of date of publication in the official gazette.

Thus, the job of the witnesses is to attest that those people denied the Message conveyed by the messenger, that they had been acknowledged that denying the right path is the most abominable crime, and that they had been notified that the penalty for such crime is the eternal hellfire.

Due to the fact that Allah *the Almighty* is the Ever-Just of judges, no punishment could have taken place unless the crime has been verified by multiple witnesses. Hence, there are the testimonies of the angels, as a dissimilar category of creatures, the testimonies of the prophets, as infallible human species and those of Muslim believers who bear witness that the Message had been conveyed to all. Above all, there is the ample testimony of the partial (body organs) against the whole (human being). Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'On the Day when Allah's enemies are gathered up for the Fire and driven onward<sup>(1)</sup> their ears, eyes, and skins will, when they reach it, testify against them for their misdeeds. They will say to their skins, "Why did you testify against us?" and their skins will reply, "Allah, who gave speech to everything, has given us speech— it was He who created you the first time and to Him you have been returned."' (*Fussilat*: 19-21) Thus, the human organs bear witness against the sinners.

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= from each nation a witness and We bring you (O Muhammad) as a witness against these people." (*an-Nisa*': 41), he said, "Enough for now", I looked at him and behold! His eyes were overflowing with tears.' It is related by Muslim and Al- Bukhari.

(1) Driven onward: They are assembled into groups and gathered collectively (the first and the last).



The sinners should not ask ‘how’ would their own organs acquire the capacity to talk; but rather, ‘why’ would they bear witness? The organs are the instruments with which the sinners commit their crimes; it is the hand which is extended to steal, it is the tongue which gives false testimony, it is the heart which harbours malice and they are the feet which walk towards sin. It is known that the organs function together to operate the whole body. The director of the body is the brain; it is the one which either directs the hand to steal or to provide some compassion for an orphan; it also directs the eye either to contemplate the beauty of the nature and the surrounding events, or to forbiddingly gaze on anything prohibited.

However, the body organs are subservient to the person’s will and commands in this worldly life; yet, the matter is different on the Day of Judgment, where they will not be subservient to anyone but to Allah, Who has the only power to give commands. Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘Who has control today? Allah, the One, the All Powerful.’ (*Ghafir*: 16) On the Day of Judgment, the parts of the body tell their owners that they had obeyed every order and were compelled to perform sinful acts as they were subservient to human beings in the worldly life. Though, on that Day, they are no longer agents of human will; but rather, they are going to bear witness to every sin they were forced to commit.

Thus, the witnesses testify, as Allah *the Exalted* says, ‘...And the witnesses will say, “These are the ones that lied about their Lord.” Oh, verily, Allah’s rejection is the due of those who do such wrong.’ (*Hud*: 18) As they had lied about Allah *the Almighty* they deserve to be banished from Allah’s Mercy because, undoubtedly, they had committed the most abominable sin. They disbelieved in the Oneness of Allah, fell into heresy,<sup>(1)</sup> denied Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the Message of Islam.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

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(1) The person who falls into heresy is the atheist who deviates from the right path and tries to deform the faith, *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*.

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

**Who hinder others from God's path, trying to make it crooked, and deny the life to come [19] (The Quran, *Hud*: 19)**

In this verse, the Quran mentions that those transgressors did not only deny Allah, His signs or His Messenger Muhammad; but rather, they further lead others astray from Allah's Path. Thus, the crime is doubled; in addition to transgressing themselves, they entice others to commit the crime as well.

Allah *the Almighty* has previously mentioned the people of the earlier Scriptures, who received the Message by messengers antecedent to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. However, greed and temporal power blinded such people so that they distorted the verses of their Divine Books anticipating the advent of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Thus, they had turned people away from the right path, trying to make it crooked.

Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Say, "People of the Book, why do you turn the believers away from Allah's path and try to make it crooked, when you yourselves [should be] witnesses to the [truth]? Allah is not heedless of anything you do."' (Al- 'Imran: 99) Allah *the Exalted* has sent Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to rectify any deviousness resulted from distorting previous Heavenly Books. Deviousness is the lack of straightness and uprightness. It might refer to moral values; the manners or the trustworthiness are said to be devious. As Allah says, 'Praise be to Allah, who sent down the Scripture to His servant and made it unerringly straight.'<sup>(1)</sup> (al-Kahf: 1) The adjective 'crooked' can be applied to concrete objects,<sup>(2)</sup> as Allah *the Almighty* says, 'They ask you [Prophet] about the mountains, say, '[On that Day] my Lord will blast them into dust and leave a flat plain,<sup>(3)</sup> with no crookedness or unevenness to be seen.'<sup>(4)</sup> (Ta Ha: 105-107)

(1) 'Made it unerringly straight' means that Allah made the Munificent Quran upright and unerringly trustworthy, the meaning is transcreated from *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*

(2) Ibn Manzour explained in *Lisan Al-Arab* that crooked can. be applied both to concrete and abstract objects according to different diacritical marks.

(3) A plain: A large area of flat implanted land surrounded by highlands, *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*.

(4) This verse stresses that the land is plain, flat and even, with no crookedness, *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*.

The word ‘crooked’ shows the linguistic precision of the Quran because it describes certain curvatures which are noticeably felt. When the man is in the desert; he will find that the road is crooked and uneven, going up and down though flat terrain, such as the agricultural plot of land, is thought to be perfectly even. Nevertheless, this is not the case because when the farmer irrigates the land, some parts are submerged with water while other parts are dry. Thus, by watering the land, it is deduced that it is crooked and uneven because water measures the evenness of all things. Therefore, to determine the flatness of a wall or a plot of land, a water balance is used because it prevents any slightly imperceptible unevenness.

On the Day of Judgment, those who followed the crooked doctrine are brought forth. Allah *Glorified is He* describes them, ‘On that Day, people will follow the summoner from whom there is no escape’;<sup>(1)</sup> every voice will be hushed<sup>(2)</sup> for the Lord of Mercy; only whispers will be heard.’ (*Ta Ha*: 108) Thus, they are lined up into perfectly straight lines, such as criminals who are lined up and driven by guards to jail in silent shame.<sup>(3)</sup>

In the verse under discussion, the reason of hindering others from the right path of Allah is because they wish that others would also lead a twisted and uneven course. The evildoers want to lead people away from faith so that they can secure temporal power for themselves and can spread corruption on earth. Faith and the reformation deeply bother them and nullify every gain of corruption and perversion.

Subsequently, Allah *the Exalted* says:

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- (1) *This verse means that on the Day of Judgment, the wrongdoers will follow submissively the summoner after encountering all horrors of this Grave Day. If they had followed the right path in the world, they would have been living in eternal bliss, Tafsir ibn Kathir.*
  - (2) Hushed means that voices calmed down referring to full horrors of the Day of Resurrection, *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*, 1/194.
  - (3) Driven in silent shame: To be disgracefully and submissively humiliated, *Lisan Al-Arab*.

أُولَئِكَ لَمْ يَكُونُوا مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ  
يُضَعَّفُ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مَا كَانُوا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ السَّمْعَ وَمَا كَانُوا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

**They will not escape on earth, and there will be no one other  
than God to protect them. Their punishment will be  
doubled. They could not hear, and they did not see [20]  
(The Quran, *Hud*: 20)**

*A`jaza* means that someone is incapable of carrying out an action. This word manifested the inability of those who denied that the Quran is a miracle, to come up with a single comparable verse. Allah *the Almighty* shows us that there is no disbeliever on Earth invulnerable to Allah's wrath. There are plenty of examples of the past disbelieving communities who were either blown away by hurricane-strength winds, swallowed up by the earth or drowned. When they move on to the Afterlife, they will have neither fellowship nor protection from Allah's wrath. It is known that the 'fellow' does not lead his friend to torture; but rather, he is the closest friend who benefits and offers him the best.

In case that a close friend is more skilled, so some of his talents will rub off on you; if he is more powerful, his strength will shield you; if he is rich, you will be in welfare; if he is knowledgeable, you will gain from his knowledge; and if he is forbearing, he will help calm you down when you are angry. In fact, every person whose talent surpasses his close friend, then he will benefit from his talent. A fellow can also be a protector as well because when you call out in times of distress, he is the first to respond as he is the closest to you.

However, those who turned others away from Allah's path will have neither friend nor protector in the Hereafter even if they actually had them in this worldly life. On the Day of Judgment, every soul shall be tending to its own affairs: 'On the Day you see it, every nursing mother will think no more<sup>(1)</sup> of her baby, every pregnant female will miscarry, you will think people are drunk when they are not, so severe will be Allah's torment.' (*al-Hajj*: 2)

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(1) 'Think no more' means that the nursing mother will forget her baby deliberately or unintentionally, signifying the ultimate horrors of the Day of Resurrection.

Also, Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘People, be mindful of your Lord and fear a day when no parent will take the place of their child, nor a child take the place<sup>(1)</sup> of their parent, in any way....’ (*Luqman*: 33) Moreover, Allah *the Exalted* says, ‘On the Day when man will flee from his own brother, his mother, his father, his wife, his children; on that Day, each of them will be absorbed in concerns of their own.’ (*Abasa*: 34-37)

Thus, those disbelievers, who turned others away from Allah’s path, can neither evade His wrath in the worldly life, nor would have a friend or a protector in the Hereafter; but rather, as Allah says, ‘Their punishment will be doubled.’ (*Hud*: 20) It is understood that the doubling of punishment implies that it occurs twice and that it entails the idea of power and strength. Yet, this is not the matter; because the concept of the existence of two entities implies that the former is weak relative to the latter. Therefore, this ‘doubling’ process demonstrates the weakness of the entity which had to be reinforced in the first place.

The disbelievers deserve this doubling of the punishment because they targeted to distort faith and turned others away from Allah’s Path in an attempt to lead them astray. There is no contradiction between Allah’s saying, ‘Their punishment will be doubled’ (*Hud*: 20) and His saying, ‘Each soul is responsible for its own actions; no soul will bear the burden of another.’ (*al-An‘am*: 164) Those people who tried to lead others astray from Allah’s path have not committed only one sin, but two; that of going astray, and that of leading others astray.

There is another verse in this concern, ‘Those who never invoke any other deity beside Allah, nor take a life, which Allah has made sacred, except in the pursuit of justice, nor commit adultery. Whoever do these things will face the penalties<sup>(2)</sup>. Their torment will be doubled....’ (*al-Furqan*: 68-69)

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(1) ‘No one takes the place of’ means that everyone shall not be able to avail aught for others, As Allah says, ‘Guard yourselves against a Day when no soul will stand in place of another.’ (*al-Baqara*: 48) The verse (*Luqman*: 33) means that both the parent and the child are not able to defend the other or to stand in place of another against Allah’s punishment. Transcreated from *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*

(2) Whoever does these things will face the penalties: means that whosoever does these abominable acts shall be punished for committing sins. The sin means committing forbidden abominable acts. *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*

This means that whosoever does these abominable acts shall be doubly punished because he represented a model for others to commit the same crime.

Allah *Glorified is He* ordains that sins should not be propagated among people; thus, Allah *the Almighty* insists that the punishment of the sinner should be witnessed by several believers. Concerning adultery, Allah *the Exalted* says, '...And ensure that a group of <sup>(1)</sup> believers witnesses the punishment.' (*an-Nur*: 2) As the believers witness the punishment for a given crime, this implies a warning against committing this abominable act. In fact, this is a means of reducing all crimes.

In this verse under discussion, the punishment is doubled for those who committed two crimes; the former is that they themselves went astray and the latter is that they led others astray. Hence, on the Day of Judgment, some of those who went astray will cry out, as quoted in the Quran, 'Our Lord, show us those jinn and men who misled us and we shall trample them underfoot, so that they may be among the lowest of the low.' (*Fussilat*: 29)

They will also say, '...Lord! We obeyed our masters and our chiefs,<sup>(2)</sup> and they led us astray. Lord! Give them a double punishment and reject them completely.' (*al-'Ahzab*: 67-68) Thus, encouraging people to go astray from Allah's path is a form of misguidance and delusion, and performing any action dishonestly is also a delusion, because it gives a bad example. The doubling of punishment does not mean to be burnt once in the Hellfire because the pain would have an end there; thus, Allah *the Almighty* ordains that suffering will be kept up unceasingly. As Allah *Glorified is He* says, '...When their skins have been burned away,<sup>(3)</sup> we shall replace them with new ones so that they may continue to feel the pain....' (*an-Nisa*': 56) Thus, the doubling of punishment is conceivably the constant and endless suffering, or perhaps

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(1) *A group of*: A section of people. Imam Malik and Ash-Shafei, Allah have mercy on them, assumed that the group of people means at least the existence of four people because adultery is not testified except by the minimum of four witnesses; while ibn Rabia`a conceived that they should be five in number; whereas, Al-Hassan Al-Basri presumed that they are ten. Ibn Kathir, 3/263

(2) *At-Tawoos* said that 'masters and chiefs' refer to the elite and the scholars, *Tafsir ibn Kathir*, 3/519. Referring to Ibn Abu Hatem

(3) Skins have been burned away means that they totally burned as a result of utmost torture.

the punishment may differ according to the kind of crime; one for their disbelief and another for enticing others to go astray.

As Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘...We shall add torment upon torment for those who disbelieved and barred others from the path of Allah.’ (*an-Nahl*: 88) The punishment of disbelief does not wipe out the punishment for other transgressions committed by the disbeliever.<sup>(1)</sup>

For example, on the Day of Judgment, the horned sheep which butts another hornless one<sup>(2)</sup> will be made to pay justice for its counterpart because the aggressor will be brought to justice even though animals are not held to account as they have no choice. However, they shall be used as a means of demonstrating the principle of Justice.

As Allah *the Exalted* says, ‘...Their punishment will be doubled. They could not hear,<sup>(3)</sup> and they did not see.’ (*Hud*: 20)

This means that they failed to make use of their sense of hearing even though they were endowed with this ability, because they refused to hear the Message of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Furthermore, they failed to make use of their sense of sight, for they failed to perceive Allah’s signs in the universe; they seemed to be deaf and blind. This verse can also be conceived as the punishment shall be doubled many times as long as they were able to hear and see.

In another verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘How sharp of hearing, how sharp of sight<sup>(4)</sup> they will be when they come to Us....’ (*Maryam*: 38) This

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(1) This is done because he does not believe in Islam; that is the reason of his punishment. As well as he is additionally punished for his going astray, whether he was believing in the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* or not.

(2) *Abu Hurayra* narrated that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘The claimants would get their claims on the Day of Resurrection so much so that the hornless sheep would get its claim from the horned one’, it is narrated in *Sahih Muslim, The Book of Virtue, Enjoining Good Manners, and Joining of the Ties of Kinship*.

(3) This means that they failed to understand or to make use of their sense of hearing even though they were endowed with this ability. Allah says, ‘Allah has sealed their hearts and their ears, and their eyes...’ (*al-Baqara*: 7).

(4) This means that the sense of hearing and of sight of the disbelievers shall be perfectly intact and functional on the Day of Judgment. They will see and hear every fact obviously and clearly to witness against himself. *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*

means that the senses of hearing and sight shall be perfectly intact and functional on the Day of Judgment.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says:

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْقَرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

**It is they who will have lost their souls, and what they invented will have deserted them [21] (The Quran, *Hud*: 21)**

Therefore, they are losers because having wronged their souls by indulging themselves in immediate and short-term temptations, led them to deserve eternal suffering.

They transgress against themselves the matter which demonstrates the epitome of blunders, and the imbalance of values. A man might be unjust towards others by usurping their own rights for his own benefit. However, transgressing oneself means that the man gives his soul immediate pleasures while ignoring the longer-term suffering that waits. Short-term enjoyment is temporary; however, suffering is endless.

As Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘...And what they invented will have deserted them’<sup>(1)</sup> (*Hud*: 21). This means that all deities worshipped other than Allah, shall be of no avail to them. If the false idols were to have any power on the Day of Judgment, they would have rushed to save them from the suffering, but these idols are completely powerless. Concerning the disbeliever, Allah *the Exalted* decrees, ‘...And there will be no one on Earth to protect or help them’ (*at-Tawba*: 74).

None of those false idols or alleged gods other than Allah shall come to their aid. Even though the disbelievers had ascribed to them the power to succour, they will neither be able to grant help nor to even remember them at all.

Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘...And what they invented will have deserted them’ (*Hud*: 21). This means that all that which they claimed falsely shall be lost, and forgotten.

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(1) This means that the disbeliever failed to have reasonable causes and that he went astray from the truth.



Consequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمُ الْآخَسِرُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

**There is no doubt they will be the ones to lose  
most in the life to come [22] (The Quran, *Hud*: 22)**

The term *la jaram* is controversial among religious scholars; yet, it generally means that a definite event truly, rightfully, or certainly happens.

Thus, when Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘...Without doubt it is the Fire that belongs to them...’ (*an-Nahl*: 62), it means that truly and certainly they shall earn the Hellfire as a result of the evil deeds committed. Such deeds entail the punishment, as well as combining the word *la jaram* with the sins, entail that Allah *the Almighty* shall rightfully punish them.

Some scholars conceived that *la jaram* means truly or certainly,<sup>(1)</sup> whereas others maintained that it means undoubtedly and impossibly avoided.<sup>(2)</sup> The two meanings are related because being impossibly avoided implies that it is firmly set. The scholars should have searched for the root of the word *jaram*, which means cutting or undermining.

In this verse under discussion, Allah *the Almighty* decrees that the disbelievers shall have the Hellfire; His decrees cannot be breached or undermined. Indeed, they shall assuredly meet this fate; thus, *la jaram* comes to mean undoubtedly and impossibly avoided.

Therefore, the word *la jaram* means assuredly, and that the promised fate shall undoubtedly come to pass. The word *jarima* (crime) which is derived from the root *jaram* means the violation of inviolable laws. If it is decided that one should not steal from another, this would be an inviolable law. When someone does steal from another, he has violated these laws and people’s peace of mind. Thus, every crime is a violation and disruption of society’s norms.

(1) This concept is maintained by Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad Al-Farahidi, Sibawayh, Al-Farra’ and Mohammad ibn Yazid. They dealt with *la* and *jaram* as one coherent word, *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi* (Quran exegesis of Al-Qurtubi), 4/3338.

(2) This concept is maintained by Al-Mahdawi as well as Al-Khalil the term signifies ‘assuredly’ and ‘undoubtedly’. Al-Farra’ has also the same opinion, cited by Ath-Tha’labi, *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi* 4/3338.

It is also said, 'He had the *jaram* of something' meaning he earned the sins of a wrongful action. Therefore, if there is a disruption of the principle of order, then there is no crime if Allah punishes with Hellfire those who made false claims about Him, who wrought injustice and turned others away from His path. Punishment is not a crime because the punishment for a crime is a means of preventing the wrongdoing.<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus, all meanings come together; on saying *la jaram*, it is understood that there is no injustice in the punishment because the real crime is their own heinous transgressions.

Therefore, Allah says, 'Let harm be requited by an equal harm...' (*ash-Shura*: 40). Allah calls it a sin because it represents an injustice towards society, or an injustice towards the individual himself. As Allah says, 'If you [believers] have to respond to an attack, make your response proportionate' (*an-Nahl*: 126).

It is now obvious that there are several meanings to interpret *la jaram*. It signifies that nothing shall 'undercut' Allah's decree of sending the disbelievers to the hellfire or that these disbelievers shall 'certainly' be thrown in the hellfire. It may also signify that sending the disbelievers to hell is just and righteous or that there is no crime at all that Allah *the Almighty* sends them to the Hellfire, for it is they who committed the crime worthy of punishment.

In Allah's saying, '*La jaram* (There is no doubt) they will be the ones to lose most in the life to come' (*Hud*: 22), the words 'the ones to lose most' describe the doer's deed of losing.

'Losing' worldly affairs happens when someone gets an unfair deal,<sup>(2)</sup> such as when someone sells something less than its original value. Whoever does this is called a 'loser', but losses in worldly affairs are limited to this life on earth, and even if one loses today, he may win tomorrow.

Assume that the man lost all deals throughout his life; yet, how short-lived is life on earth! Everything that is finite is short-lived; however, the harm of

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(1) For this reason, Allah *the Almighty* says, 'Fair retribution saves life for you, people of understanding, so that you may guard yourselves against what is wrong.' (*al-Baqara*: 179).

(2) Unfair deal: Not based on or not behaving according to the principles of equality and justice, Lisan Al-Arab

the Hereafter is the eternal real loss. Allah says, ‘Say [Prophet], “Shall we tell you<sup>(1)</sup> who has the most to lose by their actions, whose efforts in this world are misguided, even when they think they are doing good work?”’ (*al-Kahf*: 103-104) Sometimes, Allah describes them as the ‘greatest losers’ and other times, Allah *the Almighty* describes their fate as being, ‘The most obvious loss’ (*az-Zumar*: 15). It is an all-encompassing loss.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the corresponding fate to that of the disbelievers, to comfort people’s souls. When a ruling is made for or against someone, the man likes to hear the opposite one to satisfy the curiosity for knowing the concept of requital.

On hearing Allah’s verse, ‘the good<sup>(2)</sup> will live in bliss’ (*al-Infitar*: 13), one necessarily wonders about the fate of the wicked, so Allah says next, ‘and the wicked<sup>(3)</sup> will burn in the Fire.’ (*al-Infitar*: 14) This technical juxtaposition creates a sense of elation in the first case and a feeling of constriction in the second. Accordingly, the person should consider carefully which of the two fates he decides to face.

Allah *the Exalted* juxtaposes the fate of the disbelievers, who led themselves and others astray from Allah’s Path and consequently earned the punishment of Hellfire, with the likely fate of the believers, the doers of righteous deeds. Thus, Allah says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَآخَبَتُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ أُولَٰئِكَ  
أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

**But those who believed, did good deeds, and humbled themselves before their Lord will be companions in Paradise and there they will stay [23] (The Quran, *Hud*: 23)**

It is cognisant that faith is a matter of creed,<sup>(4)</sup> where the person announces his belief in the concept of monotheism and keeps on pursuing Allah’s Message

(1) To tell somebody of something: communicate information to someone in spoken or written words. *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*, 2/250

(2) The good: The virtuous, the moral, the upright, and the religious. Transcreated from *Lisan Al-Arab*

(3) The wicked: the sinful, the irreligious, and the vile. Transcreated from *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*

(4) Ibn Manzour said in *Lisan Al-Arab* that the place of faith or creed is the heart

revealed by Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Whosoever believes in Allah but does not perform virtuous deeds, shall be punished because the essence of faith is embodied in righteous acts.

That is the reason of Allah's saying, 'The desert Arabs say, "We have faith." [Prophet], tell them, "You do not have faith."<sup>(1)</sup> What you should say instead is, "We have [outwardly] submitted."' (*al-Hujurat*: 14) This means that they have merely followed the outward injunctions of Islam.

Thus, the believer is the person who firmly has faith in the Existence and Oneness of Allah, and in the belief that Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is a Messenger conveying revelation from Allah. However, the righteous deeds determine the ranks of believers.

There is a difference between the believer and the Muslim. The former devotedly perfects his righteous deeds; wherever the latter performs deeds lazily and barely perform the minimum religious commitments. Both the believer and the Muslim differ significantly from the hypocrite who feigns enthusiasm when performing religious rites, as well as, who harbours a secret,<sup>(2)</sup> hatred and animosity towards Islam which he does not actually believe in.

During the era of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* the hypocrites were amongst the first to line up in prayer; nevertheless, they harboured an inner hatred and organised conspiracies against him.

In the verse under discussion, Allah shows that the criterion of faith depends on the belief in the Oneness of Allah and on performing the commitments of faith with humility and surrender. It is said that 'Perhaps the sin that humbles you is better than the good deed that makes you arrogant'. This means that the believer should not be arrogant or self-conceited of religious obedience.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Having faith: strong belief in the doctrines of Islam; based on spiritual conviction such as believing in Allah, the Day of Judgment, the Books and the messengers, whereas, Islam includes apparent acts of worship such as prayer, fasting and others.

(2) Harbours a secret: Organizes a conspiracy secretly. *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*, 1/89.

(3) Arrogance: An attitude of offensive display of superiority or self-importance; manifested in an overbearing manner or in presumptuous claims or assumptions

The term *akhbatu* (humbled themselves) means that they fear and submit themselves to Allah. This term infers that the believers do not merely perform their religious commitments to evade Allah's punishment; but rather, to truly revere Allah.

The Arabic root *al-khabt* is derived from the term *akhbatu* (humbled themselves), that denotes the plain land that is outstretched, good and comforting; therein is the similarity with faith.

Allah describes the humble believers as, 'Will be companions in Paradise and there they will stay.' (*Hud*: 23) This means that paradise will be their destined eternal abode, wherein they shall enjoy everlasting bliss. Conversely, the world pleasures are intermittent and discontinuously ended by death or deprivation.<sup>(1)</sup> However, in the Hereafter, the believers, who performed good deeds and humbled themselves before their Lord, would enjoy everlasting bliss.

Thus, Allah describes the cases of the two parties; the first group of people, who wronged themselves by alleging false claims about Allah, sent people away from His Path and sought to make the straight path to be crooked, shall be powerless<sup>(2)</sup> to evade Allah's vengeance, and shall have no helping friend to protect them from the double punishment decreed. They sabotaged and lost themselves, with no help received from the false deities worshipped in lieu of Allah. There is nothing that can make them evade torture; they are the greatest losers.

As for the second group, who believed and performed righteous, virtuous deeds in complete submissiveness, reverence and love for Allah, deserve the eternal abode of paradise. Therefore, each party has its distinctive path and targeted end.

Accordingly, Allah says:

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(1) Deprivation: Man's disposition of blessings

(2) Powerless: unable to evade something

مَثَلُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ كَالْأَعْمَى وَالْأَصَمِّ وَالْبَصِيرِ وَالسَّمِيعِ  
هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلًا أَفَلَا نَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

**These two groups are like the blind and the deaf as compared with those who can see and hear well: can they be alike? How can you not take heed? [24]**  
**(The Quran, Hud: 24)**

The word party means a group of people joining together to strive towards a common goal, such as the 'soccer team' or any other kind of team. It refers to groupings; each has a common goal uniting them.

Allah *Glorified is He* says, '...A party shall be in the Garden and another in the blazing Flame'<sup>(1)</sup> (*ash-Shura: 7*).

In the verse under discussion, Allah *the Almighty* refers to the two chief human senses; the hearing and the sight. They are the primary means of registering information for human beings, whether auditory or visual. This allows the human being to have the ability of inference<sup>(2)</sup> using his senses.

Hence, Allah *the Exalted* tells us, 'Allah is He who brought you out of your mothers' wombs knowing nothing, and gave you hearing and sight and minds, so that you might be thankful.' (*an-Nahl: 78*) Therefore, as Allah has granted us the sense of hearing and sight and has made them along with hearts to be the source of intellective power used for information collection and analysis ;<sup>(3)</sup> Thus, Allah *the Almighty* should be thanked.

It is known that great cultural strides and scientific breakthroughs<sup>(4)</sup> arise thanks to operating the senses of hearing and sight, used to obtain information. Afterwards, inference practically applied this information to serve humanity. For example, steam power was discovered when someone noticed that the lid of a cooking pot started to rise because of the boiling water inside. The

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(1) Blazing flame: The fierce fire of the Hell

(2) Inference: Deducing the right or the accurate logical conclusion based on evidence and reasoning

(3) Analysis: Scrutiny and meticulously testing something, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasit*

(4) Breakthrough: A sudden, dramatic, and important discovery or development. *Lisan Al-Arab*

discoverer deduced that the water vapour grows increasingly in volume, and thus the lid starts to rise. This discovery led to much advancement which changed many aspects of life.

But for the gift of deduction and conclusion from sense perception beside the gift of hearing and sight, cultural breakthroughs would not have been achieved.

Thus, Allah says, ‘these two groups are like the blind and the deaf as compared with those who can see and hear well: can they be alike?’ (*Hud*: 24) The blind or the deaf has never doubted that he who sees and he who hears would have an advantage over him. They cannot be compared as they are not gifted the same senses.

Once more, Allah *Glorified is He* uses juxtaposition, so that he who hears or he who reads this verse might use his judgment to realise the difference between them to recognise that they cannot be ordinarily the same.

Therefore, Allah concludes the verse as saying, ‘...How can you not take heed?’ (*Hud*: 24) This means that they should, then, reflect on the existence of such juxtaposition.

As Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘...It is not people’s eyes that are blind, but their hearts within their breasts’ (*al-Hajj*: 46). This means that the person might possess the capacity for seeing, or the capacity for hearing; however, he does not properly use any of them for acquiring the intended knowledge about unknown matters.

Allah describes each party and its struggle with the counterpart, He, as well, shows the differences of purposes. The ongoing struggle between the two parties is illustrated in the stories of the messengers of Allah all throughout the Quran.

Almost every chapter in the Quran contains a different snippet from one of the stories of the prophets. The story of the same prophet is variously tackled in each snippet. For example, in the chapter of Yunus, Allah *the Exalted* speaks once about Nuh (Noah), Musa (Moses), Harun (Aaron) and Yunus (Jonah) *peace be upon them*. Moreover, here, in the chapter of *Hud*, Allah *the Almighty* tackles the story of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* again from a different point of view. As Allah says:

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

**We sent Noah to his people to say, ‘I have  
come to you to give a clear warning [25]  
(The Quran, *Hud*: 25)**

The verse illustrates the purpose of sending Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* as a messenger to his people. It is incumbent upon Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* to fulfil his mission, i.e. delivering his message. Hence, Allah states his saying, ‘...I have come to you to give a clear warning.’ (*Hud*: 25)

In this verse, there are two versions of pronouncing an Arabic vowel; the former means that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* came with the message which he delivered to his people. As for the second way,<sup>(1)</sup> it means that the message itself warns people and speaks on the tongue of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*. Thus, the former is a narration of the story of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* while he was delivering his message; whereas, the latter is indicating the content of the message.

In the first way of reading the verse, the speech of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* is stated directly without prior introduction. This style of omitting the word of saying is a common literary device throughout the Quran. For example, Allah *the Exalted* says, ‘...The angels will go in to them<sup>(2)</sup> from every gate “Peace be with you, because you have remained steadfast.”’ (*ar-Ra’d*: 23-24)

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(1) The second way is read by ibn Kathir, 'Abu Amr and Al-Kassa'i, cited in *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi* (Quran exegesis of Al-Qurtubi), 4/3340

(2) The pronoun ‘them’ refers to the believers who will enter Paradise from every gate, as Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘Can someone who knows that the revelation from your Lord is the Truth be equal to someone who is blind? Only those with understanding will take it to heart; those who fulfil the agreements they make in Allah’s name and do not break their pledges; who join together what Allah commands to be joined; who are in awe of their Lord and fear the harshness of the Reckoning; who remain steadfast through their desire for the face of their Lord; who keep up the prayer; who give secretly and openly from what We have provided for them; who repel evil with good. These will have the reward of the [true] home.’ (*ar-Ra’d*: 19 -22)



This means that the angels will come unto the believers from every gate of Paradise,<sup>(1)</sup> there, the angels will welcome them and will say, ‘Peace be with you, because you have remained steadfast....’ (*ar-Ra’d*: 24)

As previously mentioned, if someone is warned of an impending danger to come, it is so he might be prepared in response to the alert. Thus, Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* has been sent by Allah to warn people, as per the discussion began in the previous verse. This means that there is a disobeying and disbelieving group, to whom Allah sent a prophet to warn them. Whereas, as for the other group, the prophet is a bearer of glad tidings who informs them of the coming blissful rewards, to be prepared with peace of mind

As for the group of disbelievers, Allah *Glorified is He* elaborates the warning:

أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

**Worship no one but God. I fear you will have torment  
on a painful Day [26] (The Quran, *Hud*: 26)**

Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* and his people are mutually concerned for each other; that is why he fears for them because he is strongly tied to them as his community.

Therefore, Allah tries to soften the hearts of the people of the messenger to hospitably welcome him. For example, Allah says, ‘To the people of `Ad, We sent their brother, Hud (Eber) ...’ (*al-A`raf*: 65). As long as the messenger is their brother, they will be assured that he will not cheat or trick them.

The prominent disbelievers of the people of Nuh (Noah) responded to his message by saying:

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(1) Paradise has eight gates, as per the Hadith, ‘Whoever of you performs *wudu`* carefully and then affirms: “*Ash-hadu an la ilaha illallahu wahdahu la sharika lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan `abduhu wa rasuluhu* [I testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah Alone, Who has no partners and that Muhammad, is His slave and Messenger],” the eight gates of Paradise are opened for him. He may enter through whichever of these gates he desires (to enter)’. It is narrated in *Sahih Muslim* (234) on the authority of `Ubadah ibn `Amer.

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا نَرَاكَ إِلَّا بَشَرًا مِثْلَنَا  
وَمَا نَرَاكَ اتَّبَعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَادُوا بِآدَائِكَ الرَّأْيِ وَمَا  
نَرَى لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَاذِبِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

**But the prominent<sup>(1)</sup> disbelievers among his people said, ‘We can see that you are nothing but a mortal like ourselves, and it is clear to see that only the vilest among us follow you. We cannot see how you are any better than we are. In fact, we think you are a liar’ [27] (The Quran, *Hud*: 27)**

It is known that the prominent people are the highest representatives; they are the elite who evoke awe and admiration in any gathering. There is a folk proverb tackling the previous meaning: ‘He catches the eye’. This denotes that when a dignified person publicly appears, people cannot turn their eyes away from him, as they could not see or be convinced by anyone but him due to his potentials.

The general meaning of the term ‘prominent people’ is the ‘close preeminent circle of elders and leaders’. Thus, they are the first closest group to the centre. Around the circle of leaders there are many concentric circles other than that of the prominent. Instability only occurs when the circle has more than one centre; this causes the dissolution of all circles.

The response of the leading people of Nuh’s (Noah’s) *peace be upon him* community implies that they alleged that there is no special potential in Nuh (Noah) to be superior to them, so they asked him about the reason that makes him preeminent to be the messenger.<sup>(2)</sup>

Their reply is an indication of foolishness because once the messenger is human, his comportment is exemplary, and he deserved to be followed. Whereas, if he is not human, they would be justified in objecting him; because they would be unable to take an angel as an exemplary model.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) The prominent people: All preeminent most honoured people.

(2) To make the prophet preeminent means to make him the foremost ordering leader.

(3) They would be unable to take an angel as an exemplary model because he is a different creature with various capabilities and powers. Thus, the power of the angel cannot be used to verify anything related to man. Transcreated from *Tafsir ibn Kathir*, 2/124

Allah sheds light on this issue, as He says, ‘The only thing that kept these people from believing, when guidance came to them, was that they said, “How could Allah have sent a human being as a messenger?”’ (*al-Isra*: 94)

After that Allah says: ‘Say, “If there were angels walking about on Earth, feeling at home, we would have sent them an angel from Heaven as a messenger.”’ (*al-Isra*: 95). Therefore, messengers come forth to reveal Allah’s Message and to be comportment exemplary models.<sup>(1)</sup> But for the messenger’s humanity, he would not have been appropriate as a role model, but as a mere conveyer of the message.

For example, when you see a lion in the zoo, roaring, bellowing, eating meat given by the zookeeper, you would never be tempted to emulate its behaviour. Whereas, if you saw a valiant knight riding his horse with a sword in hand, you might want to be like him. Thus, the role model is only applied to members of the same species. This principle is the key to refute those who ascribe divinity to ‘Uzayr (Ezra)<sup>(2)</sup> or to ‘Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon them*.

Then Allah quotes the saying of the disbelieving elite of the people of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* ‘...We can see that you are nothing but a mortal like ourselves, and it is clear to see that only the vilest among us follow you...’ (*Hud*: 27). The ‘vilest’ means the low, the dishonourable and the debased person, the ‘vilest’ of anything is the residue or the waste.

In the countryside, during the cotton harvest, the process of sorting the cotton is done by young boys and girls; where they separate the clear cotton from the buds which have not been fully opened up. This is done because defective buds usually suffer from slow growth, as they have not yet reached full maturity.

Furthermore, the farmers also perform a similar process during wheat harvest, where they separate the wheat from the chaff. Therefore, the ‘vilest’ of something entails to be thrown away and discarded.

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(1) The exemplary model means the excellent model to be followed, as Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘The Messenger of Allah is an excellent model...’ (*al-Ahzab*:21).

(2) ‘Uzayr (Ezra): *a virtuous man from the People of Israel. He was called, by the Jews, the son of Allah and they worshipped him for his perfect knowledge of every word of the Testament, Al-Qamus Al-Qawim 2/18 and Tafsir ibn Kathir 2/348.*

In this verse under discussion, the disbelieving elite of the people of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* described the believers as being the vilest and the rejects of society. Additionally, Allah quotes them, elsewhere, as having said, 'Why should we believe you when the worst sort of people follows you?' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 111).

Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* does not deny this because many of his followers might be weak, as they are victims of the cruelty of the unchallengeable powerful elite. The strong people do not suffer from the pressures of the unjust; it is the weak people who suffer the brunt of their maliciousness; so that when a saviour who can defend them from their oppressors appears, they naturally tend to cling to him.

However, this does not mean that faith does not enter the hearts of powerful people because there are some powerful and wealthy people of Mecca who believed in the Message of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* such as Abu Bakr As-Siddiq, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, 'Uthman ibn Affan, 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf etc. Allah *be pleased with them*.

However, the oppressed is the one who usually answers calls for reform, because he feels the sting of injustice and boils in cauldrons of pain.<sup>(1)</sup> As soon as a call for reform appears, and a movement to drive out corruption arises, such oppressed people rally around their leader and give him support. If they happen to be freemen, ruled by an unlikely power, they voice their support for the reformer openly, whereas, if they happen to be slaves and subjects, they support their saviour secretly, except those who are strong enough, bear the brunt of persecution and torture.

All Messengers come forth in times of corruption, from which certain people get benefits, whereas many others suffer from the tyranny and corruption of those people. The advent of the messenger is a revolution against tyranny and oppression; that is why the weak and the oppressed earnestly rally around him and heartedly gives him allegiance.

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(1) A figure of speech referring to the suffering of the oppressed who groan with pain from the injustice.

As for those who benefit from corruption, they alleged that the followers of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* are merely the bottom of society. This is a trial to ridicule and deride the messenger; however, they show absolute folly because their saying is a sign that the advent of the messenger is needed to liberate those weak, and to angrily fight and to root out corruption.

However, this revolutionary advent of the messenger is not the same as the anger of the common revolutionary, for the latter is always conceitedly seeking the applause of his supporters from the oppressed class.

The only fault<sup>(1)</sup> made by the common revolutionary is his craving to remain always a revolutionary. However, the true revolutionary is the one who originally revolts to eradicate corruption, and then he peacefully reposes to build the foundations for a glorious future. The true revolutionary should neither indiscriminately avenge all people, nor prefer a group of people to the other, nor humiliate the oppressed, nor be unjust towards the oppressor. He should rather deal with all people justly and mercifully so that everything is made right; old grudges are buried and all people come to know that he does not oppose a particular group of people, but rather only the oppressing one. Thus, if he seizes the property of the oppressor and gives it to the oppressed, he should then deal unbiased with the two parties afterwards. As a consequence, peace and stability can prevail again in society.

Returning to the concerned verse, the words of the prominent disbelieving people of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* are a confirmation that corruption plagues society and that those who suffer from the oppression had followed Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*.

Allah then says, ‘...And it is *badi* (clear) to see that...’ (*Hud*: 27) *Badi* means the outward, the apparent which is opposite to the hidden, the esoteric, and the concealed. There is another recitation of reading the word *badi* to be read as *badi*<sup>(2)</sup> ‘...And it is seen *badi*’ (at first glance) that...’ (*Hud*: 27)

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(1) This fault is a defect in the revolutionary. *Lisan Al-Arab*

(2) This version is cited in *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi (Quran exegesis of Al-Qurtubi)*, 4/2433: it means at first glance. The disbelievers assumed that the weak believers followed the prophet superficially, at first glance and that if they examined the message deeply they would not have believed. The word, either read *badi* or *badi*, has the same meaning.

*Badi`* here means at first sight or at first glance. Thus, *badi* means the outward appearance or the first impression. When someone takes a first look at something, the initial impression is a superficial one. It is only afterwards that he can deeply think about it.

When someone hears of a particular case for the first time, he should not rush to judgment based on the outward appearances; rather, he should think deeper and study the case or the message thoroughly and calmly.

They had told Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* that he is a mere human like them and that only the vilest people among them have followed him, only because they had considered his message superficially. The disbelievers assumed that if the believers had examined the message closely and studied its aspects and repercussions diligently, they would not have believed in it.

Allah exposes the folly of the elite people of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* as they said that the weak people should have examined the message more closely before believing. This is contradicted by the fact that the followers adamantly believed in the message. The matter which actually confirms that their judgment was sound because they do not judge matters superficially with the same standards as those of the rich, nor as those of the empowered, nor as those who owns slaves. Those believers judged matters deeply with their heart, which is given the power to 'perceive' and with their tongues, which proclaimed faith. A man's worth depends on his two smallest organs: his heart and his tongue.<sup>(1)</sup>

But as for the service offered by the so-called vilest people, their 'masters' would certainly be traumatised and grievously suffer. It is the 'common' people who offer the services; had it not been for the work of the carpenter, there would not be any furnished houses. Similarly, had it not been for the labourers and the constructors, there would not be any sumptuous palaces. Likewise, had it not been for the work of the cook, there would not be any

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(1) This is an Arabic proverb. Ibn Manzour explained its meaning in *Lisan Al-Arab* that the person should judge and deal with matters by using his gifted organs; the heart and the tongue.

lavish meals; all services rendered by the ‘weak’ are in the interest of the rich and the powerful.

Thus, society needs wealthy people, even by the way of inheritance, to spend their money to help the needy who provide services through strenuous work. Therefore, the weak and the poor are an integral essential category for powerfulness and welfare.

On looking closely at wealthy and powerful people, their supremacy refers to the efforts of the so-called ‘vilest’ Thus, if common people relinquish the service of their masters, the latter will lose his power and authority.

The disbelieving elite of the people of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* are quoted as saying ‘...We cannot see how you are any better than we are. In fact, we think you are a liar.’...’ (*Hud*: 27) Having said this, they had thereby refuted the fact that they owe their power and wealth to the efforts of the so-called ‘vilest’; in this manner, they had denied them any importance.

Allah *the Exalted* points out the wrong deeds of certain societies, ‘And they said, “Why was this Quran not sent down to a distinguished man, from either of the two cities? <sup>(1)</sup>” Are they the ones who share out your Lord’s grace? We are the ones who give them their share of livelihood in this world and We have raised some of them above others in rank, so that some may take others into service...’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 31-32). Therefore, Allah *the Almighty* has allotted each human with his share of wealth. It would be an error of judgment to think that the people who have ‘exceptional wealth’ are the affluent; rather, they are merely gifted. When someone is distinctly skilled in one field, he will help others in his field of expertise, and others will help him in theirs; it is basically a matter of integration. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* never sustains anyone’s wealth forever; rather, He has made the world such that it is in a constant state of flux.

Therefore, had the disbelievers of Nuh’s community realised what the word *fadl* (superiority, advantage, favour or surplus) really meant, they would

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(1) The two cities are Mecca and Ta’if.

not have uttered it. For the first direct meaning of *fadl* is the surplus of something, whether it is concrete, physical or moral and ethical. The parties involved in the issue of *fadl* are *fadil* (the superior person, the benefactor, or the favour doer) and *mafdul* (the inferior person or the favour beneficiary).

If only every tyrant could tell us what is the advantage or favour in their life, it is some more money or power, yet all those who serve the tyrant are superior to him because the authority of the tyrant is built upon their actions. They are the actual owner of advantage in terms of what is more than necessary.

Thus, the real link between creatures in this world is the 'need' to one another, not 'domination'. Hence, when we see a tyrant abusing his power, we tell him: think about the situation because it is only through 'abject' people that you are only able to exert your tyrannical rule; you display your power by means of those who are skilled in the use of weapons, or those who are causing harm to other people. So these 'abject' people are the basis of such a power and the means to realise this domination.

The disbelievers from Nuh (Noah's) people said, '...and we do not see that you could be in any way superior to us...' (*Hud: 27*). This demonstrates that they understood *fadl* to mean material wealth and power. They completely misunderstood the word's meaning.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* concludes the verse by saying, '...on the contrary, we think that you are liars!' (*Hud: 27*)

The Arabic word *zhann* (thinking) means more likely probability, while the less likely is *wahm* (illusion). This confirms the existence of an innate light of truth that flashes inside the human soul which is called in *fitrah* (sound disposition) for the arrogant will remain steeped in arrogance until their *fitrah* at some point flashes, making them realise truth and falsehood. So, when these disbelievers were hit by one of these flashes they said, '...on the contrary, we think that you are liars!' (*Hud: 27*) They did not say, 'We believe that you are liars'.

Then, in the next verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:



قَالَ يَقَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ يَدَيْنِي مِنْ رَبِّي وَءَانِنِي رَحْمَةً مِنْ  
عِنْدِهِ فَعُمِّيَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنزِلْكُمْ مَوَاطِنَ هُنَا وَأَنْتُمْ هَٰكَذَا كَذِبُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

**He said, ‘My people, think: if I did have a clear sign from my Lord, and He had given me grace of His own, though it was hidden from you, could we force you to accept it against your will? [28] (The Quran, *Hud*: 28)**

When Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* says *ara`aytum* (What do you think?), it means: tell me, if I possess a clear evidence from Allah and He has vouchsafed unto me such a grace (the divine message) and the secrets of these matters have been veiled from you, can I force you to accept it? No, because faith must come voluntarily as a result of obvious persuasion, and out of emotional fervour, and a result of clear choice.

When we look at His words, ‘...can we force it on you even though it be hateful to you?’ (*Hud*: 28), it is clear that a messenger cannot force his people to believe, because faith must capture the inner heart and not the outer shell; and coercing the outer shell does not foster faith in the heart.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* wants submissive, humble hearts from the believers, not just submissive outer shells. Had He wished so, He would have forced them to believe since everything in the universe is subjected to His power. Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘O men! Are you more difficult to create than the heaven which He has built?’ (*an-Nazi`at*: 27)

Thus, the True Lord *Glorified is He* has subjected the sky, the sun, the moon, and the whole universe to His will. Allah *Glorified is He* also tells us, ‘Greater indeed than the creation of man is the creation of the heavens and the earth...’ (*Ghafir*: 57). The entire universe is subjected to the will of Allah.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* has also created the angels who are a nobler class of creatures than human beings, and Allah *Glorified is He* says regarding them, ‘...who do not disobey Allah in whatever He has commanded them, but [always] do what they are bidden to do.’ (*at-Tahrim*: 6)

Therefore, if the True Lord *Glorified is He* wished blocks of obedience, He would have forced all of them to worship Him. However, He wants the loving

submissive and humble hearts of His free creatures and that is why Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Would you, perhaps, torment yourself to death (with grief) because they (who live around you) refuse to believe (in it)? Had We so willed, We could have sent down unto them a message from the skies, so that their necks would (be forced to) bow down before it in humility.' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 3-4)

Thus, we understand that the True Lord *Glorified is He* is above than to coerce the outer shapes of human beings. Rather, it is His will that we are given a choice and that is why Allah *Glorified is He* does not coerce anyone into faith.

Faith, in principle, should not be out of coercion, but should come because of willingness and satisfaction. As the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'there shall be no coercion in matters of faith. Distinct has now become the right way from (the way of) error...' (*al-Baqara*: 256).

Thus, the True Lord *Glorified is He* calls upon His creatures to present the issue of faith to their intellects. When their intellects realise the excellence of Allah's creativity, they promptly choose the certainty of faith. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, there are indeed messages for all who are endowed with insight.' (*Al-Imran*: 190)

Coercion deals with things that are unclear. However, with faith the guidance is clear. For when the Law of Allah requires that you do not steal from anyone, it guarantees in return, that no one shall steal from you. When it orders you not to pry into the private life of others, it thereby protects your own private life, and when it orders you not to cheat or envy anyone, this is a comfort for man.

Therefore, the demands of Allah's Way consist of things that are comfortable for man. If you were to look at the demands of Allah's Way, you would find that they are not addressed to you alone, but everyone else is commanded to follow them as well. Allah has intended that such a harmonious exchange will make a world of give and take.

Therefore, the 'right way' does not need to force its followers to walk onto it, for its truth is clear and visibly distinct from error. However, the

mistake that some people make is that they take this verse out of context, for example when you ask a Muslim to pray, they might reply with this part of the Quran verse, 'there shall be no coercion in matters of faith...' (*al-Baqara*: 256). You should tell such a person that there is no coercion in making someone adopt faith, but once you become a believer, beware not to break its rules and do not be lax towards its commands. That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* has prepared a harsh punishment for abandoning faith because The True Lord *Glorified is He* did not coerce anyone to adopt faith. One must think and contemplate because if they enter the realm of faith and then commit a sin, they shall suffer the corresponding punishment for that sin. For they came into faith out of their own free will and they used their intellect to make this choice. Thus, for every transgression there is a corresponding punishment. Therefore, there is no coercion when it comes to adopting faith, but to abandon faith entails punishment to the apostate, and other minor transgressions entail relevant punishment too.

So, when everyone becomes aware of such matters, they realise that the True Lord *Glorified is He* has made the adoption of faith arduous, if only because the consequences of leaving faith are arduous.

Then, Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* is quoted as saying:

وَيَقُولُ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَا لَا إِنِّ أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ  
ءَامَنُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُلَقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَىٰكُمْ قَوْمًا يَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

**My people, I ask no reward for it from you; my reward  
comes only from God. I will not drive away the faithful: they  
are sure to meet their Lord. I can see you are foolish [29]  
(The Quran, *Hud*: 29)**

All messengers uttered similar lines. For example, in other parts of the Quran, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...No reward do I ask of you for this (truth)...' (*al-An'am*: 90). For the reward might not necessarily be money, it might be dates, or barley, or cotton and so on, and 'reward' can be more than just money. That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'No benefit do I ask of you for this (message), my reward rests with none but Allah' (*Hud*: 29).

So, here we find that the True Lord has elevated the matter to a higher status. Nuh (Noah) says, ‘...my reward rests with none but Allah...’ (*Hud: 29*)

This indicates that the matter which the messenger has brought forth is highly propitious since the reward should correspond to the value of the service rendered. We know that to exchange something for money or for its equivalent is called buying, whereas when someone utilises a property or an asset, while the ownership title is maintained to the original owner, then the beneficiary pays a rent fee for it. Here, it is as if Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* is saying, ‘I deserve a reward since I am offering you this service, but I have not accepted anything from you, not because of any ascetic attitude, but because I hope to receive a reward from He Who is Greater, more Beneficent than you’.

Furthermore, because the disbelievers had described Nuh’s (Noah’s) followers as being ‘the most abject among us’, Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* answered by saying, ‘...And I shall not repulse (any of) those who have attained to faith...’ (*Hud: 29*). This response makes it clear that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* cannot possibly repulse a believer from the community of faith just because he is poor. Spiritual certainty has nothing to do with wealth and power or with poverty and need.

Allah's messenger never cast out his poor followers to make room for wealthier newcomers, for all stand equally before Allah *Glorified is He*.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘Hence, repulse not (any of) those who at morn and evening invoke their Lord, seeking His countenance. You are in no wise accountable for them – just as they are in no wise accountable for you – and you have therefore no right to repulse them; for then you would be among the evildoers.’ (*al-An‘am: 52*)

The True Lord *Glorified is He* had made the so-called ‘abject’ people a test for others. Let those who would become arrogant because of the poverty and weakness of the messengers' followers, drown in their own conceit! That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘For it is in this way that We try men through one another – to the end that they might ask, “Has Allah, then, bestowed His favour upon those others in preference to us?” Does Allah not know best as to who is grateful (to Him)?’ (*al-An‘am: 53*)

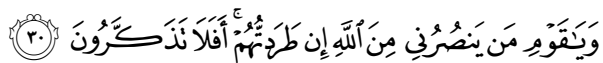
The True Lord *Glorified is He* also orders His messenger to be kind to the weak, and not to abandon them or neglect any one of them. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘And contain yourself in patience by the side of all who at morn and at evening invoke their Lord, seeking His countenance, and let not your eyes pass beyond them in quest of the beauties of this world’s life...’ (*al-Kahf*: 28).

Such commands from Allah came so that no misconduct or animosity should arise between the believers over the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and it would not be said that, ‘so-and-so is close to him’. That is why when the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was surrounded by company he would distribute his looks evenly between the present companions, so that each would feel as if the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* was looking solely at him.

In the verse which we are presently studying, the True Lord *Glorified is He* mentions Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* describing the poorest of the believers, ‘...Verily, they (know that they) are destined to meet their Lord...’ (*Hud*: 29). This is a declaration that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* will not expel those who are weak from among his flock. If he were to expel those who are destined to meet Allah *Glorified is He* would Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* wish it to be said, in front of Allah, that he had repulsed a people who believed in his message? Of course not.

We know that the True Lord *Glorified is He* holds His messengers accountable. He says, ‘Thus, on Judgment Day We shall most certainly call to account all those unto whom a divine message was sent, and We shall most certainly call to account the message-bearers themselves’ (*al-A’raf*: 6). Therefore, Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* is accountable to his Lord, but the disbelievers of his community are ignorant of this. That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says at the end of the verse, ‘...whereas in you I see people without any awareness (of right and wrong)!’ (*Hud*: 29) This means that they do not understand Nuh’s mission and they do not realise that he will be held accountable by His Lord.

Then, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:



**My people, who could help me against God if I drove  
the faithful away? Will you not take heed? [30]  
(The Quran, *Hud*: 30)**

Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* is clearly revealing to us that he could not face Allah, if he were to expel the weak from among his followers because none shall speak favourably of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* before Allah *Glorified is He* on the Day of Judgment; for on that day, Allah alone shall have absolute dominion and none shall intercede on another's behalf except with His permission, and none can help or give *nasr* (victory) to anyone else if such is not the Will of Allah *Glorified is He* for He is the All-Dominant over all of His creatures.

*Nasr* (victory) occurs by overcoming opponents, but intercession occurs by submission; the True Lord *Glorified is He* does not permit anyone to intercede on behalf of one who has repulsed a believer from the flock of faith.

Nuh's words are a reminder to his people. That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...Will you not, then, keep this in mind?' (*Hud*: 30) meaning that you must not let yourselves be overtaken by forgetfulness.

Just as the True Lord *Glorified is He* mentions the question of remembrance (the practise of which keeps forgetfulness at bay), the True Lord *Glorified is He* also mentions the question of contemplation which is reflection on things to bring about something new by using one's intellect. It is to meditate on the Perfection of the Creator, and to discover those facts which are the landmarks along the path.

Likewise, the True Lord *Glorified is He* encourages us to consider things deeply; meaning that we must not be taken in by the outward appearances of things, rather, we must delve deeply into the truth of matters. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Will they not, then, try to understand this Quran?' (*an-Nisa*': 82) Will they not then explore the treasures hidden in the fabric of the Quran?

The word *tadabur* (contemplation, reflection, or careful consideration) means discovering the meanings behind the verses. People stand at different levels when they contemplate the words of Allah.

‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud *Allah be pleased with him* says about the Quran, *thawwiru al-Quran* meaning delve into the meaning of its verses so that you might find its treasures, and do not just look at the external aspect of the verses, for the wonders of the Quran are endless.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* continues:

وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ  
وَلَا أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ لَن يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي  
أَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

**I am not telling you that I hold God’s treasures, or have any knowledge of what is hidden, or that I am an angel. Nor do I say that God will not grant any good to those who are despised in your eyes: God Himself knows best what is in their souls. If I did this I would be one of the wrongdoers’[31] (The Quran, *Hud*: 31)**

Does Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* refute each reason for which the disbelievers of his community might abstain from faith? If they conceive of faith as requiring wealth, then Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* asserts that he does possess Allah’s treasures, and he does not possess more than they do, and if they ask him to reveal the unseen, this is impossible since knowledge of the unseen rests with Allah *Glorified is He* alone.

Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* also does not claim that he is super-human. He is no more human than they are and does not possess anything that he could use to force them to comply with the demands of faith, whether this is wealth, power, or knowledge of the unseen.

Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* shall not repel the weak under-privileged members of his flock whom the disbelievers look down upon in scorn and contempt because Nuh (Noah) fears being held accountable to Allah were he to close the doors of faith against them. We must pause here and consider the True Lord’s words, ‘And I do not say unto you, “Allah’s treasures are with me, nor (do I say) know the reality which is beyond the reach of human perception, nor (do I say) behold, I am an angel, nor do I say of those whom your eyes hold in contempt, ‘Never will Allah grant them any good...’ (*Hud*: 31).

We notice that the language shifts to *al-ghyba* (third person), for Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* did not address the poor people directly. In other words, he did not say, 'Allah shall never grant you any good because He knows what is in their hearts', and had Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* uttered such a thing he would have been a transgressor.

The letter 'l' (usually used as 'for' or 'to' but in this case 'about') in the word *lilladhin* (of those) indicates that Nuh (Noah) is talking about the helpless and not *to* them directly. The letter 'l' here means 'about'. There are other instances where this has occurred such as when the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...And they say, "This Quran is nothing but a falsehood invented by man!" And finally, they who are bent on denying the truth speak thus of the truth when it comes to them, "This is clearly nothing but spellbinding eloquence!"' (*Saba'*: 43) In this instance, the disbelievers are not speaking *to* the truth; rather, they are speaking *about* the truth.

Thus, Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* demonstrates that if he had expelled these people who are described as 'abject', this would have implied that he was aware of the inner intentions of people's hearts, and Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* knows with absolute certainty, that Allah is the most knowledgeable of what is in people's hearts. Therefore, he refuses to put himself in a position where he is committing an injustice to himself or others.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* then says:

قَالُوا يَنْتُحِقَ قَدْ جَدَلْتَنَا فَأَكْثَرْتَ جِدَالَنَا فَأِنَّا إِنَّمَا  
تَعِدُّنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

**They said, 'Noah! You have argued with us for too long.  
Bring down on us the punishment you threaten us with, if  
you are telling the truth' [32] (The Quran, *Hud*: 32)**

*Jidal* (controversy) is to say something in response to something else, with each party aiming to make the other abandon their point of view based on some proof or doubt; the goal is to refute the other's position. Thus, *jidal* is an argument between two parties, exchanging debate, each attempting to convince the other to change their views. The noun *jidal* is derived from the



verb *jadal* which means to twist together strands of flax or silk or any other similar type of yarn, then to weave a pair of strands together, and continue doing so with every pair of strands around the other until a rope is completed.

A strong man is described in Arabic by the phrase '*maftul al-`adalat*' (a man with twisted muscles) meaning that his muscles are not flabby and weak; rather, they are taut and tightly interconnected.

When you look at the muscular system, you are truly amazed at the power of the True Lord *Glorified is He* who created each muscle in a unique way while allowing it at the same time to coordinate with other muscles to perform the required movement.

For when a human being lifts their head up, they are using more than one muscle, and when using a hand, more than one muscle moves and if the movement of a single muscle stopped, this would prevent the next movement from occurring.

They had told Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* '...You have contended with us in argument, and have (needlessly) prolonged our controversy...' (*Hud*: 32). We know that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* lived for nine-hundred-and-fifty years which means that his contention with them lasted a very long time. An argument is different from a dispute because an argument tries to settle the truth, and a dispute occurs after the truth appears. An argument therefore is required, and the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...and argue with them in the kindest manner...' (*an-Nahl*: 125). The True Lord *Glorified is He* also says, 'Allah has indeed heard the words of her who pleads with you concerning her husband, and complains unto Allah...' (*al-Mujadala*: 1).

Then, argumentation is necessary for reaching the truth, on the condition that it is a quiet discussion, not one where tensions run high or where any violent outbursts ensue.

There is a difference between a civilized exchange of views and a clash of opinions, for in the latter there is no desire to reach the truth, whereas in the former the truth is arrived at; just as when we rub flint against a piece of metal and sparks fly and we perceive the truth. But when deeply entrenched opinions clash, the truth is concealed.

*Mira`* is the disputing argumentation that ensues after the appearance of the truth and the word is taken from *mari ad-dar* which means 'milking' a she-camel or a cow. For when they cause the milk to flow from the udder of a she-camel or a cow, the udder is full and overflowing, and the milk flows down profusely, and when the milking is done, the person who did the work tries to extract the last few drops of milk, it is this last phase that is called *al-maryi*. So, they derived the word *mira`* from this process meaning the thing that follows the truth's appearance.

There is also the word *hijaj* which means trying to find the *huja* i.e. the ultimate proof that would refute the adversary's argument.

Thus, after the disbelievers of Nuh's (Noah's) community got tired of arguing with him, they asked that he bring down the suffering that he had warned them of. They had started finding this punishment slow in coming because Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* had been living among them for nine-hundred-and-fifty years. They said, '...bring upon us, therefore, that with which you do threaten us, if you are a man of truth!' (*Hud: 32*)

Having said this, it is as if they had assumed that the matter of bringing down the punishment or withholding it was within Nuh's (Noah's) capacity. However, this matter is not in Nuh's (Noah's) hands, it is the purview of Allah *Glorified is He*.

That is why Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* warns them:

قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ إِنْ شَاءَ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

**He said, 'It is God who will bring it down, if He wishes, and you will not be able to escape [33] (The Quran, *Hud: 33*)**

The True Lord *Glorified is He* determines the timing and the coming of punishment, and Allah does not rush things simply to satisfy the wishes of his servants.

However, at the same time, they will not be able to prevent Allah *Glorified is He* from carrying out the punishment when its time does come because no power in existence, no matter how adamant, can oppose the Will of Allah *Glorified is He*.

Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* is being quoted as saying:

وَلَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ نَصْحِي إِنْ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أُنْصَحَ لَكُمْ إِنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ  
 أَنْ يُغْوِيَكُمْ هُوَ رَبُّكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

**My advice will be no use to you if God wishes to leave  
 you to your delusions: He is your Lord and to Him you  
 will be returned'[34] (The Quran, *Hud*: 34)**

Here, the meaning is that if Allah *Glorified is He* wants to beguile you and keep you lost in error, you will hardly benefit from my good advice if I wanted to give you advice. The verse has a compound conditional clause.

An example of this in our life is when a school principal expels a student as a punishment for having done something wrong. The school principal might take pity on the student and say, 'If you come back tomorrow, I will accept your apology if you are accompanied by your parent.' The principal's saying, 'if your parent is with you'—is a post-positioned condition, but it should have come in advance.

In the verse which we are now studying, the first condition comes later, but does Allah *Glorified is He* really mislead his servants? Absolutely not; Allah *Glorified is He* guides them. *Ghuwaya* is deviation and going astray from the straight path.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* 'This fellow-man of yours has not gone astray, nor is he deluded.' (*an-Najm*: 2)

Allah *Glorified is He* says of Adam *peace be upon him* when he ate from the forbidden tree, '...And thus did Adam disobey his Lord, and thus did he fall into grievous error.' (*Ta Ha*: 121)

We must not fall into the same error that others fall into, for there are people who take the popular understanding or use of certain terms and apply them to doctrinal ideas; words have more than one meaning. That is why we must take into consideration all the meanings of a given word so that we can apply the meaning that is most appropriate to the context.

For example, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'Yet they were succeeded by generations (of people) who lost all thought of prayer and followed their own lusts; and these will, in time, meet with utter disillusion.' (*Maryam*: 59)

Here, the True Lord's words, '...and these will, in time, meet with utter disillusion.' (*Maryam*: 59), mean that they shall meet their punishment (disillusion in the translation of the verse above) because of their transgression. Thus, the punishment itself was given the same title as the offender.

Also, for example, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'But (remember that an attempt at) requiting evil may, too, become an evil...' (*ash-Shura*: 40). The True Lord *Glorified is He* never wrongs his servants, it is they who wrong themselves. Thus, whatever they receive as punishment is itself given the title of 'sin'. The same applies to the term *ghay* (disillusion) which has the connotation of *ighwa`* (to err and to go astray), and simultaneously means the punishment caused by erring and going astray.

Throughout the Holy Book, the True Lord *Glorified is He* gives numerous examples of *ighwa`*. Adam *peace be upon him* erred from the path by eating from the forbidden tree despite the fact that the True Lord had explicitly warned him not to approach it. In this situation the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...And thus did Adam disobey his Lord, and thus did he fall into grievous error.' (*Ta Ha*: 121)

Of course, what Adam *peace be upon him* had done was due to his human nature, and, Allah *Glorified is He* wanted to inform him that if he went astray, by not abiding by the command of 'do' and 'do not do', he will be exposed to shame and disgrace, represented by exposition of his private parts. Thus, Adam *peace be upon him* gained the experience that would prepare him for receiving Divine Guidance and Divine Revelation.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* tells us that 'Whereupon Satan said: "O my Lord! Since You have thwarted me, I shall indeed make all that is evil on earth seem goodly to them, and shall most certainly beguile them into grievous error.'" (*al-Hijr*: 39) Did Allah *Glorified is He* really trick the devil? The True Lord *Glorified is He* does not trick anyone, but he does leave the choice of either obeying or disobeying open.

Had the True Lord *Glorified is He* created us all as devout believers, He would not have thereby given us a choice in the matter. If man obeys Allah, he earns Allah's reward, and if he errs, it is man's choice, oriented by him towards the bad deeds, even though he can orient it towards the good too.

Then, free will does not necessarily imply that man will go astray, but there is also the possibility that he will be guided to the right way. Man can find the right path as much as missing it.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* then says:

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَيْنَاهُ قُلْ إِنِّي افْتَرَيْتُهُ، فَعَلَىٰ إِجْرَامِي وَأَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

**If [these disbelievers] say, ‘He has made this up,’ say [Muhammad], ‘If I have made this up, I am responsible for my own crime, but I am innocent of the crimes you commit’[35] (The Quran, *Hud*: 35)**

This assertion in the verse comes in the heart of the story of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*. It might be referring to that which Allah *Glorified is He* revealed to Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* or it might be that this is what was said to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

The word *iftira* is an intentional lie that contradicts actual facts.

If you look at all the obligations which the Law of Allah saddles an individual with, you will also find that it imposes these obligations on everybody, and the benefit which you receive in return is truly great, for if the Law orders you not to steal, for instance, this is also protection from others who might steal from you.

So, when you think of the Path of Allah and all its Laws, do not only think of things that you are demanded to do. Notice rather, all that is given back to you in return. This proves that the Path of Allah is not simply human fabrication.

We know that the Law of Allah determines the criteria for establishing social justice, and when the True Lord *Glorified is He* makes a law, it might appear to limit your freedom. The truth is that it provides you with numerous services, and it protects you from being oppressed by others.

In response to their accusations that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had invented the Quran, they were given the choice: either to come up with a similar invented book with the same quality or to let Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* endure the punishment for the

crime of lying. If it turns out that he did not invent it, then they should have assumed the punishment for accusing him of lying.

The style of the first part of the verse precludes the possibility of their innocence by omitting an understood text with the meaning of the words in italics, 'If I have invented it, upon me be this sin, and you are innocent from my crime.' (This is a literary device in Arabic that is called *ihtibak*, which may be like juxtaposition in English). Likewise, the second part of the verse contained a corresponding omission of the understood text with the meaning, 'and if I did not invent it, I am innocent from your crime of accusing me of lying'. This is the style of '*ihtibak*'.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...How often has a small host overcome a great host by Allah's leave...' (*al-Baqara*: 249). The small party is that with a small number of men and military equipment. The larger party is characterized by its abundant numbers and a wealth of military equipment. However, with Allah's help, the small party achieves victory. Thus, the True Lord *Glorified is He* demonstrates that the usual victory is decided by the reasons of physical strength and huge numbers, but with His Will override such reasons and reaches its goal.

That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says in another verse, 'You have already had a sign in the two hosts that met in battle, one host fighting in Allah's cause and the other denying Him...' (*Al-'Imran*: 13).

Allah *Glorified is He* did not mention that the first host is composed of believers, and He also did not mention that the second host fights for the sake of all that is unholy and satanic. This is an example of that literary device known as *ihtibak*.

In the verse that we are currently studying, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...Say O Prophet, "If I have invented it, upon me be this sin, but far be it from me to commit the sin of which you are guilty."' (*Hud*: 35)

It is the True Lord's Will however, that he reveals to us what the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* said when he addressed his people. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Say, "Neither shall you be called to account for whatever we may have become guilty of, nor shall we be called to account for whatever

you are doing.’” (*Saba*: 25) Notice that He did not say, ‘nor shall we be called to account for whatever you may have become guilty of’. Thus, He did not react to their offenses, both oral and actual, by offending them orally in return. The True Lord *Glorified is He* notes that the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* also says, ‘...And, behold, either we (who believe in Him) or you (who deny His oneness) are on the right path, or have clearly gone astray!’ (*Saba*: 24). What the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is employing is a higher standard of debate, one that is consistent with Prophet Muhammad's mercy which is gifted by Allah to the world.

So, after nine-hundred-and-fifty years of arguing back and forth between Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* and his people, the True Lord *Glorified is He* tells him:

وَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ نُوحٍ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ إِلَّا مَن  
 قَدْ ءَامَنَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

**It was revealed to Noah, ‘None of your people will believe, other than those who have already done so, so do not be distressed by, what they do [36] (The Quran, *Hud*: 36)**

In this verse, the word *illa* (except) does not denote an exception; it has the meaning of ‘exclusion’, but it means the mere telling of ‘other than’, i.e. there will be no more who attain to faith other than those who have already attained faith.

There is another example of this and it happens to occur during the discussion of the most cardinal of doctrines. When the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘Had there been in heaven or on earth any deities other than Allah, both would surely have fallen into ruin.’ (*al-Anbiya*: 22) Here, *illa* means other than. If it were to denote the idea of an ‘exception’ this would imply that Allah *Glorified is He* would be one among multiple other deities. Therefore, it is inappropriate to conceive *illa* as denoting the idea of an ‘exception’; rather, in this case it is equivalent to ‘besides’ and ‘other than’. It implies the Oneness of Allah *Glorified is He* and it ascribes all Divinity to Him alone.

The verse that we are now studying asserts that no other members of Nuh’s (Noah’s) community might have attained faith other than the few who

already had; Allah *Glorified is He* had put an end to that case. So, this provides us with the justification of why Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* was encouraged to pray against those who did not attain faith. ‘...O my Lord! Leave not on earth any of those who deny the truth, for behold, if You do leave them, they will always try to lead astray those who worship You, and will give birth to nothing but wickedness and stubborn ingratitude.’ (*Nuh*: 26-27) The justification for Nuh’s (Noah’s) invoking punishment on those disbelievers is that he had called them to faith for a long period of time, and they never responded. In addition, Allah *Glorified is He* told Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* that they would not believe. Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘...Be not, then, distressed by anything that they may do’ (*Hud*: 36). Being distressed means feeling exasperating sadness. Nuh’s (Noah’s) people had disbelieved in Allah, committing the ultimate sin.

Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَأَصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

**Build the Ark under Our [watchful] eyes and with Our inspiration. Do not plead with Me for those who have done evil – they will be drowned’[37] (The Quran, *Hud*: 37)**

Thus, Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* knew about drowning those disbelievers through Allah’s command to build the ark. The command *isna`* (build) in this verse means to make a certain work. This is not the same as ‘craft’ and ‘artistry’. For ‘making’, implies making from scratch, like the cup-maker, or the shoemaker, or the dike-builder or the furniture-maker, whereas a craftsman is he who looks over the knowledge and the process of craftsmanship.

There is also another kind of occupation, which is the profession of the farmer who ploughs the earth, sows the seeds, and waters them for plants to grow. They are called agriculturalists or farmers because agriculture is a direct means of providing and sustaining life essentials.

On the other hand, a maker deals with life needs, developing them, inventing a machine that had not existed before etc. while a craftsman serves and maintains that machine. A merchant however, brings all these together,



being the link between the producer and the consumer; they display products for buying and selling.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says to Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* ‘but build...the ark’ (*Hud*: 37). Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* was to build something new that was made from another existing thing. Nuh (Noah) had previously planted a tree which had lived throughout that long time, and its trunk and branches had become extremely large. Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* began cutting the tree up to build the ark (it is said its dimensions spanned three-hundred arm-lengths, and its width spanned fifty arm-lengths and its height measured thirty arm-lengths). The ark contained three stories to accommodate the believers and the pairs of all animals on earth.

It is known that the tree that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* had planted had become very large indeed since Nuh (Noah) had been preaching his message to his people for a very long time. We also know that the trunk of a tree increases in width every year such that when we cut it down we find that the trunk is composed of numerous concentric circles, each one representing a year in the life of the tree.

Thus, the tree was so large that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* could build the ark. The True Lord *Glorified is He* taught (Noah) *peace be upon him* how to build the ark through revelation and through Divine inspiration. Was it not Allah *Glorified is He* who inspired Dawud (David) *peace be upon him* the industry of metalwork? Indeed, it was. Moreover, Allah *Glorified is He* says that He ordered the mountains as well as the birds to echo Dawud’s invocation, and He also caused metal to become soft and malleable without having to use fire, ‘And indeed, did We grace Dawud (David) with Our favour, “O you mountains! Sing with him the praise of Allah! And [likewise] you birds!” And We softened all sharpness in him and inspired him thus, “Do good deeds lavishly...”’ (*Saba*’: 10-11). Thus, the True Lord *Glorified is He* informed us the metal became soft and malleable without fire by His Will so that Dawud (David) *peace be upon him* could craft large shields that would protect a man’s torso and other vulnerable areas on the body. Indeed, the True Lord *Glorified is He* inspired Dawud (David) *peace be upon him* to build such shields in a remarkable way such that they would extend all the way down to the ankles

and interlace. The armour was interlacing, just like matting is interlacing with each piece of straw strewn with another, and they are all bound together in a way that makes them easy to flatten or roll up. In the same verse the True Lord *Glorified is He* reveals how that precise technique was revealed to Dawud (David) *peace be upon him* 'without stint' (*Saba*': 11).

This means that when you weave the rings of soft metal together to make body armour, you must craft that armour with utmost precision so that it does not fit tightly restricting movement and preventing taking full breaths, and consequently, causing rapid tiredness and inability to continue fighting.

Armour should also not be loose fitting around a warrior's torso lest the size of the shield be a help to the enemy's sword, with the armour itself striking the warrior's chest, and the power of the armour doubling the enemy's sword power. However, the ideal war armour is that enclosing the body without restricting its movement. So, Dawud (David) *peace be upon him* perfected the crafting of those body armours using the precise design revealed to him by the True Lord *Glorified is He*. For, he had built them according to the True Lord's command when He said, 'without stint.' (*Saba*': 11) The Arabic word *qaddir* (without stint) means calculating and designing to perfection.

For those whose profession is to build things, they should know that when the Holy Quran advises on the question of perfecting one's work, it is thereby informing us of the way we must perfect and refine everything we do so that we might take such advice as an illuminating guidance that the work might be virtuous. You see someone who perfects his work while invoking, 'Oh Allah!' as if the primordial state is acknowledging the power of the True Lord *Glorified is He* to bestow man with the capacity for perfection and ingenuity.

As part of his tutelage of Dawud (David) *peace be upon him*, the True Lord *Glorified is He* also says, 'And We taught him how to make garments (of Allah-consciousness) for you, O men...' (*al-Anbiya*': 80). Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* inspires the notion, 'to do like so', into the heart of a messenger or a prophet; and he does so.

When we look at the ancient Egyptian's civilization, we find that all their science and art, including embalming, making and using dyes and sculptures,

were the specialty of the priests who represented the religious authority. These priests never wrote down any of the secrets of these sciences so that no modern researcher has been able to discover them. Thus, we see that the origins of all matters are coming from Allah.

Regarding the story of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*, we find the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘but build, under Our eyes and according to Our inspiration, the ark [that shall save thee and those who follow you]; and do not appeal to Me in behalf of those who are bent on evildoing – for, behold, they are destined to be drowned!’ (*Hud*: 37) The word *a`yunina* (our eyes) means under our protection and our guardianship. To be sure, it denotes a complete protection; full guardianship.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* has already said regarding Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* ‘And so, await in patience your Lord’s judgment, for you are well within Our sight...’ (*at-Tur*: 48).

The True Lord *Glorified is He* also says in the story of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* ‘...and (this) in order that you might be formed under My eye.’ (*Ta Ha*: 39) The True Lord *Glorified is He* rescued Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* from Pharaoh who was killing the children of the People of Israel, and Allah *Glorified is He* planted in the heart of the Pharaoh’s wife a deep love for Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘...And (thus early) I spread My Own love over you...’ (*Ta Ha*: 39) For when he was still a young suckling, Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was cast into the waters and was found by the Pharaoh’s men, but Pharaoh’s wife pleaded for Musa’s (Moses’s) life saying, ‘...A joy to the eye (could this child be) for me and you...’ (*al-Qasas*: 9). Thus, we find the very enemy of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* and his people, is adopting Musa (Moses) and taking him under his wing; it is as if Allah *Glorified is He* is telling them: I will make you nurture the person who will preside over your destruction.

The True Lord's words, ‘but build, under Our eyes and according to Our inspiration, the ark (that shall save thee and those who follow you)...’ (*Hud*: 37). It means that, if you, Nuh (Noah), are set back by an obstacle, We shall inspire you with knowledge by which you can overcome it.

As Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* was busy building the ark, he needed wooden planks, and these had to be tightly bound to each other. Nails had not been invented at that time, so Allah inspired him to bind them together with tightly twisted ropes. This has been done in modern times by one of the explorers of America; he built a ship made from papyrus and tied it all together with strong, tightly twisted ropes.

Regarding the way Nuh's (Noah's) ark was built, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'but him We bore on that (vessel) made of (mere) planks and nails' (*al-Qamar*: 13) meaning that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* had crafted planks of wood and tied them together with tightly twisted ropes such that they did not allow water to penetrate inside the boat.

In our time, this is just like the construction of wood barrels where the craftsman uses rectangular pieces of wood and binds them together using a sturdy frame; and when liquid is poured into them, the wood absorbs it and expands, thus closing the gaps and preventing the liquid from leaking from the barrel because wood is the only material that expands with cold, in contrast to all the other materials which expand with heat.

That is why we find that expert carpenters build their furniture, doors or windows in the temperate months; if they are built in summer, and the wood is shrunken during that time, then when winter comes along, the wood expands and this results in doors and shutters not closing properly; similarly, if they are built in winter while the wood is in an expanded state, summer will come and the wood will shrink, causing doors to malfunction, and making it hard to close window shutters tightly.

Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...and do not appeal to Me in behalf of those who are bent on evildoing – for, behold, they are destined to be drowned!' (11: 37) meaning not to speak to Me regarding the question of forgiveness towards those who wronged themselves by disbelieving for they have committed the ultimate transgression; that is, they rejected the summit of the doctrine which is to believe in Allah *Glorified is He* The One and Only besides Whom there are no partners; that is why they deserve the punishment of drowning.

Thus, did Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* come to know that building of the ark was related to the type of punishment that was to befall those who rejected his message; for he and the believers will be saved, whereas those who disbelieved will be drowned.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* further explains this when He says:

وَيَصْنَعُ الْفُلَّ وَكُلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَأَ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُ  
 قَالَ إِنْ تَسْخَرُونَ مِنَّا فَإِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

**So he began to build the Ark, and whenever leaders of his people passed by, they laughed at him. He said, ‘You may scorn us now, but we will come to scorn you [38] (The Quran, *Hud*: 38)**

The superiors of Nuh’s community used to pass by Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* as he was building the ark and scoff at him. For after having claimed prophethood, he now seems to have reinvented himself as a carpenter. Moreover, they wondered how this ship is supposed to get from Al-Mawsil (a small city in the north of Iraq) to the sea.

Little did they know, as Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* knew, that it would be floodwaters that would carry the ark. We notice in the words of the True Lord *Glorified is He* ‘And so Nuh (Noah) set himself to building the ark...’ (*Hud*: 38) that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* is executing the command that Allah *Glorified is He* has issued to him in the previous verse, ‘but build, under Our eyes and according to Our inspiration, the ark (that shall save thee and those who follow thee), and do not appeal to Me in behalf of those who are bent on evildoing – for, behold, they are destined to be drowned!’ (*Hud*: 38)

Then, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says,

فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُقِيمٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

**You will find out who will receive a humiliating punishment, and on whom a lasting suffering will descend’ [39] (The Quran, *Hud*: 39)**

We notice in the words ‘you will come to know’ (*fasawfa t’lamoon*) that the action which Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* knew about concerned the

flooding and drowning that would to happen in the future because any event has more than one facet, so that if one speaks about the event after it has come to pass, the verb used will be in the past tense; and if one speaks of an event at the same time that it is happening, the verb used will be in the present tense.

And when one speaks about an event for which the time has not yet come, in this case it is necessary to prefix the verb with the letter 's' (in Arabic to indicate the future tense); for example, we would say, '*sa ya 'lamoon*' (will know) about the short-term future. As for the long-term future, we would use the word *fasawfa* (will be knowing). And we know that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* spent many years building the ark. That is why the word *fasawfa* is used to indicate a maximum length of time.

And what is it that they shall come to know? It is punishment and suffering. And who is it that shall suffer this punishment? Is it Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* and his followers or is it the disbelievers from, Nuh's (Noah's) people and the great ones from among his community?

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'But in time you will come to know who it is that (in this world) shall be visited by suffering which will cover him with ignominy...' (*Hud*: 39). Thus, these words confirm Nuh's (Noah's) knowledge of the suffering that is to befall them because they had disbelieved and scoffed at him saying, '...bring upon us, therefore, that with which you do threaten us, if you are a man of truth!' (*Hud*: 32)

And the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...and upon whom long-lasting suffering shall alight (in the life to come)!' (*Hud*: 39) We find that the opposite of the word *yahil* (corresponding 'alight' in the description verse) is 'moving' or 'fleeting'. So, the word *yahil* denotes 'settling' or 'staying' after having descended. For example, to say, '*hal bimakan*' means to arrive and settle at a place; this is opposed to moving away and emigrating from a place. And the word 'long-lasting' (*muqim* in Arabic) means that the suffering that will alight upon them will be permanent or lasting forever.

Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ  
إِلَّا مَن سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَمَا ءَامَنَ مَعَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

**When Our command came, and water gushed up out of the earth, We said, ‘Place on board this Ark a pair of each species, and your own family – except those against whom the sentence has already been passed – and those who have believed,’ though only a few believed with him [40] (The Quran, *Hud*: 40)**

The word *hatta* (till) indicates that the duration elapsed up until an appointed time. The word *amruna* (judgment) refers to the deluge, and the True Lord’s command to Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* that he places on board the ark a pair of every species of animal in addition to his followers, few as they were.

Therefore, in the story of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* there is more than one phase. Allah *Glorified is He* orders Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* ‘...build, under Our eyes and according to Our inspiration, the ark (that shall save thee and those who follow thee).’ (*Hud*: 37) And so Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* busied himself with building the ark, and this process took Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* a long time before Allah ordered the waters to gush forth. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘...and waters gushed forth in torrents over the face of the earth.’ (*Hud*: 40)

The word *fara* (gushed) implies that the waters had reached a boiling point. For water contains air, and the proof of this is that fish can breathe in it, And when we boil water we notice air bubbles rising to the surface, then the boiling water reaches such frenzy that it overflows the container.

And the word *at-tannur* (oven, furnace, not expressly mentioned in the above translation of the Quran verse) indicates the place where bread is baked. When the waters gushed forth out of *at-tannur*, it was the sign for Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* to bring all those whom he wanted to save on board including his followers and all the animals and life facilities at that time. The signal was when the water gushed forth out of the furnace, a place from which water is not expected to flow.

The religious scholars have different opinions when it comes the meaning of *at-tannur* (the furnace). Some have said that it is the place where Adam *peace be upon him* used to bake bread; others said that it is the place where Eve used to do her chores, and others that it is Nuh's (Noah's) home or the home of an old woman. These explanations are neither helpful nor harmful; what is important is that the flooding of the furnace represented a clear sign for Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* and that when this happened it was time that he bring a pair of each kind of animal on board the ark.

When the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'Place on board of this ark one pair of each kind of animal of either sex' (*Hud*: 40), it means that he should place on board the ark a pair of every kind of animal and plant species, so that these survivors can ensure the survival of their respective species. Even pigs were among the animals Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* he brought on board.

And those who say that the prohibition of eating swine goes back to Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* who supposedly did not place on board the ark a pair of this species; this group of scholars did not realise the importance of pigs as animals which eat waste and thus rid the earth of it; for every species has a function; the role of animals is not limited solely to the providing of food for human beings.

And the words, '...one pair of each [kind of animal] of either sex...' (*Hud*: 40), indicate that the word *zawj* (pair) is singular, and the proof of this is, '...Be conscious of your Lord, who has created you out of one living entity, and out of it created its mate...' (*an-Nisa'*: 1). Therefore, the word *zawj* designates an individual entity with its equivalent, a pair of shoes, for example. I say this so that the term *az-zawj* is not understood to mean 'two'. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says in another verse, 'His followers would have it that, in certain cases, any of these four kinds of cattle of either sex is unlawful to man, either of the two sexes of sheep and of goats. Ask them, 'Is it the two males that He has forbidden, or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females may contain? Tell me what you know in this respect, if what you say is true. And likewise they declare as unlawful either of the two sexes of camels and of bovine cattle...' (*al-An'am*: 143-144). When we count the total number we find it is eight, so if the word *zawj* meant 'two' the total number in this verse would be sixteen.



The Holy Quran also shows that the word *zawj* is singular in the following words of the True Lord *Glorified is He* ‘Was he not once a [mere] drop of sperm that had been spilt, and thereafter became a germ-cell – whereupon He created and formed it in accordance with what it was meant to be, and fashioned out of it the two sexes, the male and the female?’ (*al-Qiyama*: 37-39) Thus, a male is a *zawj*, and a female is a *zawj* as well.

Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* continued carrying out the True Lord’s Order, ‘Place on board this Ark a pair of each species, and your own family—except those against whom the sentence has already been passed—and those who have believed,’ though only a few believed with him.’ (*Hud*: 40) It was the True Lord’s Will that life should be preserved on earth by saving all the elements necessary to sustain life; pairs of each kind of creature were placed on the ark. Some historians and exegetes said they lived on board the Ark for two years.

Then the True Lord *the Exalted* says:

وَقَالَ ارْكَبُوا فِيهَا بِسْمِ اللَّهِ مَجْرُدَهَا وَمُرْسُهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾

**He said, ‘Board the Ark. In the name of God it shall sail and anchor. My God is most forgiving and merciful’[41]**  
(The Quran, *Hud*: 41)

This is the last stage of the story of Nuh’s (Noah’s) Ark which began by Allah ordering Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* to build the ark. Throughout its construction, Nuh (Noah) kept trying to guide his people to Allah until he received the sign that marked the beginning of the floods, ‘and the furnace boiled over’ (*Hud*: 40). By Allah’s Command, Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* brought on board the ark a pair of every kind of creature, in addition to his family and the believers. Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* said to those who believed, ‘Embark therein. In the Name of Allah, it shall sail and anchor.’ (*Hud*: 41)

The previous statement was attributed to Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* because he also added the words, ‘My Lord is most forgiving and Merciful’ (*Hud*: 41). Embarking requires that the person doing the act of embarking

places himself on board of something, in a way that makes him on it or above it. This obviously implies that the ship, on which one has embarked, should be in the service of its passengers. It is as if when Allah *the Exalted* commissioned the building of the ark, its purpose was to serve those who would embark on it and be carried by it.

We note here that Allah *the Exalted* says, 'Embark therein' and has not said, 'Embark on it'! The True Lord *Glorified is He* has said it this way to give us an idea of the ark's design; for Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* had built it according to divine inspiration in the best possible form. Its design was far from rudimentary. The ark's passengers did not just ride on top of it. It was designed in a way that enabled them to live inside of it, especially as it was supposed to house every variety of wild beasts, insects, and animals alongside humans. Therefore, it was necessary that the ark's design should consist of multiple levels and floors. The True Lord's Words, 'in the Name of Allah it shall sail and anchor' show that the ark was built to be seaworthy and safe from sinking. It must safely carry its passengers to a place impenetrable by water; a place of high altitude which would allow for the ark to become properly anchored, just as the flood waters allowed the ark to be carried afloat. Thus, the sailing of the ark on water and the end of its journeying and its anchoring was in Allah's Name and with His Permission.

Nuh's words, 'in the Name of Allah it shall sail and anchor' inform us that the ark's course through the water was by Allah's Will. Also, those who were allowed to board the ark did so not by virtue of their personal status, but because they believed in Allah *the Exalted and the Glorious*.

To cite an example relevant to our own lives—and indeed Allah is beyond compare—we find that a judge opens a courts session by saying, 'In the name of the constitution and the law' meaning that he will not be pronouncing judgment from a personal point of view, but in the name of the constitution and the law.

Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* said, 'in the Name of Allah it shall sail and anchor' because the ark was a Command from Allah that was carried out and built by His messenger. That is why the Hadith says, 'every act not begun with the Name of Allah shall remain cut off (from blessings and prosperity; incomplete).'

Before you begin anything, you know that all actions and events require various energies for their execution. For instance, if the action is of a physical nature, it will require physical power. If the action is mental, it will require thought, reflection, and deliberation. If it is an action that involves challenging people in power, it will require courage. If it is an action that aims at purifying souls, it will require clemency and patience. That being said, it is clear that different actions require different approaches. To have the necessary strength, you can say, 'In the Name of the All-Powerful, the All-Able'. To acquire the necessary knowledge, you can say, 'In the Name of the Omniscient'. To find sufficiency, you can say, 'In the Name of the Self-Sufficient Master'. To show clemency and forbearance, you can say, 'In the Name of the Clement, the Forbearing'. And when you need to find courage, you can say, 'In the Name of the Dominant, the Subduer'.

A single action may require seeking out many qualities. In place of all this, you can call on your Lord using His Name Allah and immerse yourself in the blessedness of this Unique Name of the Creator of existence *Glorified is He*. For it is the name indicative and all-inclusive of every Divine Name and Attribute of Absolute Perfection and Glory. Do not be intimidated or shy. Approach every matter with Allah's Name even if you are neglectful of some of His Commandments. The True Lord *the Exalted* is the One Most Merciful and Ever Compassionate.

The True Lord says, relating the words of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* '...My Lord is Most Forgiving and Merciful.' (*Hud*: 41) What is meant by these words is that the believers in Nuh's (Noah's) message were human beings after all. And like most human beings, they did not fulfil all their religious obligations perfectly, as they were not angels. Therefore, the True Lord *Glorified is He* evaluated their faith as a whole, overlooking some of the sins they had committed and not punishing them for them. Herein lies the advantage of uttering the formula: 'In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Ever-Merciful.'

Then the True Lord *the Exalted* continues describing the ark and its passengers:

وَهِيَ تَجْرِي بِهِمْ فِي مَوْجٍ كَالْجِبَالِ وَنَادَى نُوحٌ ابْنَهُ وَكَانَ فِي  
مَعْزِلٍ يَبْنِي أَرْكَبَ مَعَنَا وَلَا تَكُنْ مَعَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

**It sailed with them on waves like mountains, and Noah called out to his son, who stayed behind, ‘Come aboard with us, my son, do not stay with the disbelievers’ [42] (The Quran, *Hud*: 42)**

And so the ark moved on with them, not through a sea that was merely tempestuous, but a sea where the waves were the size of mountains. This suggests that the ark was guided by a higher power that made it impervious to the waves. Then the verse mentions the fatherly love that the situation brought up in Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* towards his son when he called out to him, ‘Come aboard with us, my son, do not stay with the disbelievers.’ (*Hud*: 42) But the son rejected his father’s advice thinking that one of the mountains would keep him safe and dry.

Revealing the son’s intentions, contrary as they were to his father’s demands, the True Lord says:

قَالَ سَاوِيَ إِلَىٰ جِبَلٍ يَْعَصْمُنِي مِنَ الْمَاءِ قَالَ لَا عَاصِمَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمَغْرُوقِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

**But he replied, ‘I will seek refuge on a mountain to save me from the water.’ Noah said, ‘Today there is no refuge from God’s command, except for those on whom He has mercy.’ The waves cut them off from each other and he was among the drowned [43] (The Quran, *Hud*: 43)**

Nuh’s (Noah’s) son thought that he could save himself by taking refuge on a mountain. He assumed that perhaps the high ground would keep him secure from drowning. But Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* knew that no disbeliever shall be safe, and that safety shall only be granted to those upon whom Allah bestowed His Mercy through belief. Thus, the waves came in and separated between Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* and his son who then drowned.

The True Lord *the Glorious and Exalted* wanted to conclude the story of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* by showing the ark coming to rest on the mountain of Judi<sup>(1)</sup>. Some say that the mountain of Judi is situated in the Iraqi city of Mosul. Others say that it is near the city of Kufa. At any rate, the knowledge of the mountain's exact location neither benefits the one who possesses it nor harms the one who is ignorant of it.

Afterwards the True Lord *the Exalted* says:

وَقِيلَ يَا أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَاءَكِ وَكَسَمَاءُ أَفْلَحِي وَغِيصَ الْمَاءُ وَفُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ  
وَاسْتَوَتْ عَلَى الْجُودِيِّ وَقِيلَ بُعْدًا لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

**Then it was said, ‘Earth, swallow up your water, and sky, hold back,’ and the water subsided, the command was fulfilled. The Ark settled on Mount Judi, and it was said, ‘Gone are those evildoing people!’ [44] (The Quran, *Hud*: 44)**

The word *bal* (swallowing) means to cause something to pass through the throat down into the stomach. So, when the Quran mentions such a command as this, ‘O earth, swallow up your water’ (*Hud*: 44), understand that the giver of this order is none other than the One to Whom the earth humbly submits.

Notice that the wording of the verse does not come as, ‘Allah said, “O earth swallow up your water” because the Sayer is indicated by the context even if not explicitly mentioned. The True Lord wants to develop in us the instinct of belief and the insight into its meaning. For no one except Allah can order the earth to swallow up its water.

As for His Command to the sky, ‘O sky, hold back’, it was for it to stop raining. Thus, the True Lord *Glorified is He* brought an end to the flooding that enveloped the earth by stopping its source and ordering the land to absorb the water.

We notice that when it rains, the drainage systems clog up as if there is something that is blocking the water's course. This is because today's cities are surfaced with asphalt that does not absorb the water. That is why we find that the concerned government departments invest all their energies in the

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(1) A mountain near the city of Mosul [*Kalimat Al-Quran*]

repair and maintenance of the city drainage systems to evacuate all the rainwater and city life goes on unhindered.

At this point, I should say that the proper use of water is part and parcel of proper faith. I notice that when some people make their ablutions, they open the water taps fully and use more water than they need to perform their ablutions. We must avoid committing the sin of wasting clean water for no reason. People should try and conserve water, and not to be wasteful with it. When water is available, it has the power of reviving the dead earth. We have a great need for water to reclaim desert lands for agriculture. We must do our part to alleviate the immense pressure that is currently being put on the city's sewage networks. In short, we should make a better and more economical use of Allah's blessings so that we can all enjoy and benefit from them.

The saying of the True Lord, 'O sky, hold back' means desist from sending rain. From this sense derives the word *qal`* which is the sail of small boats. One can say, '*aqla`at al-markib*' (the boat took off) meaning: 'The boat left behind the calm of the shore on which it was beached'.

The True Lord also says, 'and the water subsided'. The passive structure of this part of the verse acknowledges to us that the One Who caused the flood water to sink into the earth was Allah *the Glorious and Exalted*. Then Allah says, 'the Ark settled on Mount Judi'. That is, after the flood receded, the ark rested on the mountain called Judi. The True Lord concludes the blessed verse by saying, 'Away with the evildoing people!', this signifies a total and eternal banishment from Allah until the Day of Resurrection.

Then Nuh's (Noah's) fatherly feelings were awakened once again, as demonstrated by the True Lord's Words:

وَنَادَى نُوحٌ رَبَّهُ، فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي وَإِنَّ وَعْدَكَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

**Noah called out to his Lord, saying, 'My Lord, my son was one of my family, though Your promise is true, and You are the most just of all judges' [45] (The Quran, Hud: 45)**

Now fatherly compassion is commendable, and the True Lord *Glorified is He* fills up the heart of every father with it in proportion to the needs of his

offspring. If this love was not there, no father or mother would ever put up with the hardships of raising children. This situation teaches us the principle that there is no filiation to the prophets without fellowship. We find an example of it in the story of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) who was known as the *Khalil* (beloved, close elect) of Allah) and upon our Prophet Muhammad. Concerning him, the True Lord says, ‘And (remember) when the Lord of Ibrahim (Abraham) tried him with (certain) Commands, which he fulfilled...’ (*al-Baqara*: 124).

That is, Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* fulfilled his Lord’s Commandments to perfection such as when he wanted him to raise the foundations of the Sacred House, he extended them above their original height through contrivance. So he brought forth a stone and stood on it to raise the walls of the *Ka’ba*. Also, Allah *the Exalted* said to him, ‘Verily, I am going to make you a leader (Prophet) of mankind ...’ (*al-Baqara*: 124) because he was faithful to Allah’s Law and was able to fulfil every commandment with utmost precision. Then Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* asked his Lord, ‘and (will you make leaders) of my offspring as well?’ (*al-Baqara*: 124) Whereupon the True Lord *the Exalted* replied, ‘My Covenant does not embrace the wrongdoers.’ (*al-Baqara*: 124)

From this we learn that prophethood has no filiation but must entail discipleship. This fact is also evident in what Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* said after having imbibed the True Lord’s Words, ‘My Covenant does not embrace the wrongdoers,’ (*al-Baqara*: 124), when he asked his Lord *Glorified is He* to endow the city of Mecca and its inhabitants with security and provision, Ibrahim (Abraham) said, ‘My Lord, make this a secure city and provide its people with fruits - whoever of them believes in Allah and the Last Day....’ (*al-Baqara*: 126)

Thus Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* asked Allah to provide for the believers, but the True Lord *the Exalted* pointed out to him that in this situation his request is misplaced. For Allah, being the Lord of all creatures, provides sustenance to both the believers and the disbelievers. As for the obligations of worshipping Allah, these pertain only to the believers. Therefore, the True Lord says, ‘As for those who disbelieve, I will grant them

enjoyment for a short while' (*al-Baqara*: 126). That is, worldly provision is given to both believers and disbelievers—for giving sustenance is one of the acts of Allah's Lordship.

We would also like to add in this respect that fatherly and motherly compassion is always inversely proportional to the need of the children. Thus, if the son or daughter has a strong personality, the fatherly and motherly compassion is relatively diminished. For example, let us suppose there are two brothers; one of whom is well off and can take care of his parents and support them financially, and the other is poor and is unable to support his parents.

We will see that the father and the mother's empathy leans towards the poor son, not towards the one who is well off because fatherly and motherly sympathy is always with the one who is weak, sick or the one who is away. The more need the child has, the more sympathy he draws.

In Nuh's (Noah's) appeal to His Lord, we notice that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* had an excuse for asking that his son be saved along with the others because the True Lord had ordered him to carry on board the ark a pair of every kind of creature in addition to his kindred. So Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* asked that his son be saved because he was a member of his family. He said, 'O my Lord! Verily, my son is of my family! And certainly, Your Promise is true, and you are the Most Just of all judges.' (*Hud*: 45)

Accordingly, Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* had a right to ask as much of Allah, for he was requesting the fulfilment of that which Allah had promised to grant, which was to carry his family with him in the ark to be saved. When Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* said, '...You are the Most Just of all judges...' this was an acknowledgement of the fact the Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* does not make mistakes. That, even if his son had drowned, there was surely wisdom behind it

Allah *the Exalted* then says:



قَالَ يَنْوُحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنِّي أَعْطُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

**God said, ‘Noah, he was not one of your family. What he did was not right. Do not ask Me for things you know nothing about. I am warning you not to be foolish’ [46] (The Quran, *Hud*: 46)**

The True Lord *the Exalted* wants to inform Nuh (Noah) that a prophet’s family does not consist of his biological progeny; rather, it consists of his followers and appliers of Allah’s Message. Thus if Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* were to hold his son to this standard, he would find that he was not a son to him at all.

This reminds us of what our own Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said about Salman Al-Farisi, ‘Salman is a member of our household.’<sup>(1)</sup> Thus, when it comes to prophets, their true family consists of the people who follow them, and not necessarily their biological progeny.

Notice how concise and exact Allah’s Words are when He says, ‘...Surely, he is not of your family’ (*Hud*: 46). Then Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* follows this up with the rationale for such a pronouncement, ‘verily, his work is unrighteous’. It is as if filiation focuses on the work rather than the person of the son. There is no mention here whatsoever of ‘the person’; what is mentioned is ‘work’ and ‘conduct’. Therefore, the ‘actions’ of Nuh’s (Noah’s) son automatically disqualified him from being Nuh’s (Noah’s) son.

We learn that when it comes to prophets, the criterion for determining filiation is not one’s bloodline; rather, it is whether one is a follower or not. The proof of this is the description that the True Lord gives of Nuh (Noah’s) son, ‘verily, his work is unrighteous.’ Were he righteous in his conduct, he would have indeed been considered Nuh’s (Noah’s) son. The True Lord further says, ‘so ask not of me that of which you have no knowledge! I admonish you, lest you be among the ignorant.’ The True Lord hereby asks Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* to consider carefully before asking anything

(1) Narrated by Al-Hakim in his *Mustadrak* (vol. 3, p. 598); this part of the Hadith was narrated on the authority of `Amr ibn `Awf. Al-Muzni, Adh-Dhahabi and Al-`Ajluni noted that its chain of transmission was weak

from his Lord; for the prophets cannot be reproached when their Lord educates and disciplines them.

Then the True Lord says:

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَسْأَلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ  
وَإِلَّا تَغْفِرْ لِي وَتَرْحَمْنِي أَكُن مِّنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

**He said, ‘My Lord, I take refuge with You from asking for things I know nothing about. If You do not forgive me, and have mercy on me, I shall be one of the losers’ [47] (The Quran, Hud: 47)**

Here Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* asked his Lord *the Exalted* to forgive him for what he had said. Nuh (Noah) recognized that he was unable to hold back the urge to ask Allah to save his son. Only the True Lord Himself could cause such an urge to be suppressed in Nuh’s (Noah’s) heart. And that is the highest level of submission to Allah *the Most High*.

Nuh’s (Noah’s) words, ‘I seek refuge in You’ further tell us that when a person takes refuge in some other power, this can only mean that he is unable to overcome the threat he is facing through his own power. Therefore Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* sought that his Lord would protect him from asking about matters beyond his knowledge, and begged for Allah’s Forgiveness and Mercy so as not to be among the lost.

The True Lord then continues:

قِيلَ يٰ نُوحُ اهْبِطْ بِسَلَامٍ مِّنَّا وَبَرَكَاتٍ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّمَّنْ  
مَعَكَ وَأُمَمٌ سَنُمَتِّعُهُمْ ثُمَّ يَمَسُّهُمْ مِنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٤٨﴾

**And it was said, ‘Noah, descend in peace from Us, with blessings on you and on some of the communities that will spring from those who are with you. There will be others We will allow to enjoy life for a time, but then a painful punishment from Us will afflict them’ [48] (The Quran, Hud: 48)**

The saying of the True Lord, ‘disembark in peace from us’ indicates that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* had received orders to disembark and to proceed

with his religious mission on a land containing the elements needed for life, including the pairs of each kind of creature and all the believers that were saved by Allah *the Most High*. As for those who used to scorn Nuh's (Noah's) followers as low and vile, they were drowned.

The saying of the True Lord, 'on you and on some of the communities that will spring from those who are with you' encompasses Nuh's (Noah's) family as well as those who believed in him, and the communities of all the beasts, birds, animals and beasts of burden that were on the ark. This is reference to the primary community of creatures which comprised the human beings and the classes of creatures that were subservient to mankind. This way the necessities of life were provided for the believers. Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* and his folk were free to devote themselves to their religious mission on Earth.

The word *salam* (peace) in the verse 'disembark in peace from Us' denotes security and peace of mind. There were no more disbelievers around to harass Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* or to speak any such words to him like, 'Nuh (Noah)! You have argued with us for too long. Bring down on us the punishment you threaten us with...' (*Hud*: 32).

And he would no longer face accusations of fabricating this message. The only people left with Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* were the believers. They understood well that their deliverance from the flood was due to their adherence to the doctrine which Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* had brought to them on behalf of Allah *the Exalted*. The saying of the True Lord, 'with blessings' means that the True Lord bestows His Blessings on that which is few and little until it becomes many times larger. A thing can be described as *mubarak* (blessed) when, for example, a person brings a meal, intending to serve it to two diners. But then five guests show up and the food suffices for all those present. Therefore, something that is *mubarak* is that which, while seemingly little and modest, can offer the same benefits as that which is large and plentiful.

It was necessary, in this context, to use the word *barakat* (blessings) because all what Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* had saved by placing on the ark—the pairs of each type of creature—these now required the blessings of the True Lord *Glorified is He* to multiply and become sufficient.

‘With blessings on you and on some of the communities that will spring from those who are with you. There will be others We will allow to enjoy life for a time, but then a painful punishment from Us will afflict them.’ (*Hud*: 48) These words are consistent with human nature. The original believers who were saved with Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* were the best; but with the passage of time, forgetfulness and heedlessness crept up on some of them. Then the later generations who arrived on the scene lacked the guidance they needed from upright role models. Then the next generations grew up under conditions that completely cut them off from the Law and Path of Allah.

In this regard, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘The man would have some sleep, and honesty would be taken away from his heart leaving the impression of a faint mark. He would again sleep, and honesty would be taken away from his heart leaving an impression of a blister; as if you rolled down an ember on your foot and it left a vesicle. He would see a swelling with nothing inside.’ The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* then took up a pebble and rolled it over his foot and said, ‘The people would enter into transactions with one another, but there would hardly be any trustworthy persons among them. (And there would be such a paucity of upright, honest people) until it would be said, ‘Among such and such a tribe there is a trustworthy man’, and it would be said of a man, ‘How strong he is, how nice and how wise’, and there is not even a mustard seed of faith in his heart.’<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus, a state of heedlessness and forgetfulness can come over the followers of Allah’s Path. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* also said, ‘Trials and temptations will be presented to the heart like the weaving of a straw mat, straw after straw. Any heart that absorbs (accepts) them will have a black dot left in it and any heart that rejects them will have a white dot left in it. In the end, there will be two types of hearts left: one white like a smooth and white stone with no temptation able to harm it as long as the heavens and earth endure, and another black and turbid, like an overturned vessel, that does not abide by virtue or reject evil except what agrees with its

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(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (7086) and by Muslim in his *Sahih* (143) on the authority of Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman Allah be pleased with him

desire-soaked heart.’<sup>(1)</sup> I seek refuge in Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* from the prospect of our hearts sliding into forgetfulness.

The people that the True Lord is referring to in this noble verse are those who remained with Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* who were the most eminent believers. Yet, some of them would be eventually overwhelmed by heedlessness. Still Allah *Glorified is He* would not withhold from them any of the goods and joys of this world; but in the end, their appointed suffering would befall them.

In such an atmosphere of heedlessness, when a new generation comes forth, it will be influenced twofold: Firstly, by its own heedlessness and forgetfulness, and secondly, by the poor example that has been set by the previous heedless and neglectful generation.

We know that among Nuh’s (Noah’s) progeny were the people of ‘Ad, to whom the True Lord had sent Hud *peace be upon him* and the people of Thamud, to whom Allah had sent their own brother Salih *peace be upon him* and the people of Lut (Lot) *peace be upon him*. All these were some of the communities whose hearts got rusted with heedlessness and forgetfulness.

After this, the True Lord says:

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ  
مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ الْعَقَبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

**These accounts are part of what was beyond your knowledge [Muhammad]. We revealed them to you. Neither you nor your people knew them before now, so be patient: the future belongs to those who are aware of God [49] (The Quran, *Hud*: 49)**

The demonstrative pronoun *tilka* (this) is used to identify something specific to the one addressed. The addressee here is Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and ‘the news’ that is referred to is if Nuh’s (Noah’s) ark and the unseen events that followed. Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was not a contemporary of Nuh (Noah) *peace be*

(1) Narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (vol. 5 pp. 386, 405) and by Muslim in his *Sahih* (104) on the authority of Hudhayfa ibn Al-Yaman Allah be pleased with him.

upon him. Neither he nor his people knew about these events until this Quranic verse was revealed.

Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* never sat with a teacher, nor was it narrated that he ever read anything. Hence, we find verses of the Quran enlightening and informing about the past, such as, 'You (O Muhammad) were not present on the western side of the mountain when We gave Our Command to Musa (Moses)...' (*al-Qasas*: 44) and 'This is a part of the news of the Unseen which We inspire you with (O Muhammad). You were not with them, when they cast lots with their pens as to which of them should be charged with the care of Maryam (Mary); nor were you with them when they disputed.' (*Al-Imran*: 44)

Who taught Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* if he did not study and was not educated by a teacher? It was indeed, Allah *the Exalted* who taught him. Allah *Glorified is He* taught his Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* about the story of Nuh (Noah) to serve him as a lesson and as an example. He would feel sure that Allah's Support of every messenger would be present in every step of his mission, and that Allah would not surrender him over to his enemies or adversaries.

That is the reason why Allah says, 'So be patient (O Muhammad)' because you know now the result of Nuh's (Noah's) patience over the course of nine-hundred fifty years. Then came Allah's Words, '...Surely, the good end is for those who are aware of Allah...' (*Hud*: 49).

After the story of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* comes the story of the people of `Ad. We know that the True Lord *the Exalted* does not send a messenger unless corruption reigns in the land. We can conclude, therefore, that heedlessness crept up back on the scene after Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*. With every new generation being more forgetful and heedless than the last, those who remained were totally unfit to uphold the waning religious beliefs and principles.

Allah *the Exalted* does not send any new messengers unless there is no one among the people who can uphold the Word of Allah. As we know, the decline of belief and practice in the human soul can issue from within. In other words, a person's own soul can persuade him to abandon Allah's Law, but his *nafs al-lawama* (reproaching self) deters him from this by chiding him

and bringing him back to faith. However, if the person's moral consciousness is weak, or altogether absent, then the person has no internal defences against disbelief. In this case, it is the society surrounding him that reprimands him.

Yet, if both the spiritual immunity and social (collective) immunity disappear, then Allah *Glorified is He* must send a new messenger, a new revelation, and a new demonstrative proof. This is what happened after the time of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*. For this reason, the True Lord says:

وَالِىٰٓ عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا قَالَ يٰٓقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۖ إِنَّا أَنۢتُمۡ إِلَّا مُفۢتَرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

**To the 'Ad, We sent their brother, Hud. He said, 'My people, worship God. You have no god other than Him; you are only making up lies [50] (The Quran, *Hud*: 50)**

The True Lord *the Glorious and Exalted* begins the glorious verse by engendering in the people of 'Ad's acceptance, compassion and friendliness towards their messenger, Hud. The True Lord *the Exalted* informed them that he was their brother, and it was impossible for a brother to harbour any ill will towards them. Rather, he was an advisor and a trustworthy messenger. His saying to them, 'O my people' is a further expression of amiability. Then Hud entreated them to worship Allah *the Exalted* alone; for they had taken to worshipping false gods, and this is the ultimate falsehood. It was due to rampant corruption that Allah *the Exalted* says regarding them, '... you are only making up lies...' (*Hud*: 50).

Then Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* mentions *Hud* as saying:

يَقُومُوا لَآ أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِۤ أَجْرًا ۖ إِنَّا نَجْرِيۤ عَلَى الَّذِي فَطَرَنِيۤ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

**I ask no reward from you, my people; my reward comes only from Him who created me. Why do you not use your reason? [51] (The Quran, *Hud*: 51)**

It was as if Hud *peace be upon him* was telling them, 'What is it that you find hard in what I am calling you to. I am bringing you a message from Allah

*the Glorious and Exalted*. No reward do I ask of you for this. It is illogical that I ask you to change your habitual ways, then ask you for money as a reward. I cannot ask you to endure the hardship of changing old habits and, on top of that, ask that you compensate me for my efforts. I will not cause you to go through two difficulties: letting go of habitual patterns of thinking and behaving and paying me for guiding you to do so. Since I am not going to accept any reward from you, then I am not laying upon you any hardships. I do not need to be offered any form of reward, as no can reward me except He Who has sent me to you'. '...my reward rests with none but Him Who brought me into being. Will you not, then, use your reason?' (*Hud*: 51) That is, my reward is due from none but Allah Who created me so that I can deliver this message. The term *al-fitra* (natural disposition) involves man's fundamental make-up.

The True Lord *the Exalted* had prepared Hud *peace be upon him* to be a messenger, and we already know that reward is usually given in return for services rendered. I have previously mentioned the example of the person who buys a house. The buyer pays the seller what the house is worth, and this is called buying and selling. However, when one rents a house, the tenant pays a monthly fee in return for the convenience of living in that house.

Thus when Hud *peace be upon him* said, 'No reward do I ask of you for this (message)', this implies that he deserved a large compensation for bringing them the message that he did. The compensation that you pay for ordinary services provide you with benefit on a temporary basis, By contrast, the benefit that Hud's people will derive from his message is ever-lasting.

This is also the reason why Hud *peace be upon him* left it to Allah to reward him, as He is the Only One capable of giving him his reward in its full value. Certainly, Allah is Capable of anything.

I have previously pointed out that all Allah's messengers uttered this statement, 'No reward do I ask of you for this (message)' except for Ibrahim (Abraham) and Musa (Moses) *peace be upon them*. Ibrahim (Abraham) did not say it because of his father, while Musa (Moses) did not say it because Pharaoh said to him, '...Did we not bring you up as a child among us?' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 18). Therefore, Hud's people should have appreciated the profound blessing in the form of Allah's Doctrine, which Hud brought to them.



Then the True Lord continues with Hud's address to his people:

وَيَقَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ  
مِدْرَارًا وَيَزِدَّكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلَى قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

**My people, ask forgiveness from your Lord, and return to Him. He will send down for you rain in abundance from the sky, and give you extra strength. Do not turn away and be lost in your sins' [52] (The Quran, *Hud*: 52)**

So, we learn that asking for forgiveness involves a confession of negligence and a pledge to cease committing sins; so we say, 'O Allah, forgive us'. When you ask for Allah's Forgiveness, you are thereby reaffirming your sincere commitment to the faith, and are acknowledging that what the True Lord demands of you is a true duty. And, having begged Allah's forgiveness for past sins, a person must not fall into sin again. After such a spiritual turnabout through repentance, the servant must avoid all acts of disobedience and sins.

A human should remember that every blessing he enjoys comes from Allah, and that all the creatures are made subservient to the use of mankind by Allah's Command. We should not allow the monotony of life to make us forget about the Originator and Bestower of all blessings.

The first thing that Allah assigns to a messenger that He sends to mankind is the rectification of the most central of all doctrinal principles, namely, the belief in One Unique God from Whom people should receive the 'Do' and 'Do not do' Commandments.

Thus, Hud's address to his people, the tribe of 'Ad was a call to worship and revere One God, and to abide by His Laws, which does not merely consist of performing the rituals of testifying to Allah's Oneness and Uniqueness, offering prayers, fasting, giving alms and performing *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). To truly worship Allah *the Most High*, one must perform the rituals and acts of worship, along with striving to perfect every action in life in the light of Allah's Path, and not to disassociate religion from one's daily life.

Those who fear the integration of Islam into daily life, ask that we limit religion to its basic rituals. We would tell them: when Islam held a prominent

role in daily life, it conquered the whole world, and defeated two ancient civilizations, the Persians in the East and the Romans in the West. These people were part of powerful, ancient civilizations, who boasted high culture and sophisticated civil codes. Despite this, they were defeated by unlettered Bedouins, led in their faith by an unlettered man sent by Allah *the Exalted*. He was able to topple these regimes and cultures, and uplift the standards of living to the level of intellectual aspirations.

These people, therefore, want to limit Islam to its five pillars with the aim of isolating it from daily life. We would say to these people: No, you cannot reduce the religion to its five pillars. Worship, in its essence, means that there is a worshipper who worships the True Lord, and obeys the Commandments of the worshipped Lord, which are contained in the principles of 'Do' and 'Do not do'. Any matters which are not touched upon by the moral guidelines of 'Do' and of 'Do not Do' are permissible for you to do or refrain from doing. And whether you do such matters or do not do them; either way, the world does not become corrupted.

Accordingly, worship consists of all commandments issued by Allah. So do not try to limit religion to the bare essentials. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* explained to us that the five pillars are the foundations upon which Islam is built, but they do not represent the entirety of Islam. Islam is a structure that rests on certain foundations; that is why we cannot reduce Islam to its foundations alone. Islam consists of every action in daily life. People's actions must conform to Allah's Way, so that life at large can be ordered just as the natural world around us is ordered.

So worship incorporates every action in life. Some have mistakenly conceived of worship as being limited to the religious rituals and acts of worship in terms of juristic classifications, forgetting that the domain of human dealings and translations are also part of religion. When people are upright in their interactions with one another, their own lives become better ordered.

In the current noble verse which we are now contemplating, the True Lord says, 'O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord' (*Hud*: 52). Now to ask for forgiveness implies that sins have been committed in the past; and since this one of the first things that Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* told his people to do,

it means that forgiveness should be asked for having transgressed the laws that were brought down by the messenger who came before him, or for the misdeeds they committed by some derives of instinct. Then he bade them to ‘repent to Him’. Repentance entails a pledge not to commit new sins.

Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* says in the same noble verse, ‘He will send you (from the sky) abundant rain, and add strength to your strength’. One may wonder what is the relevance of begging forgiveness to such a natural phenomenon, We would say that everything in the universe—inanimate objects, plants and animals—have an owner. This owner is Allah Who is All-Capable and All-Powerful. No creature can disobey His Order. He is also capable of causing things to behave contrary to or beyond their own nature. You may see a cloud that is heavy with water and think that it will produce rain, but the True Lord may order it not to rain – if He so wills. Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* also says in another verse, ‘Then, when they saw it as a dense cloud coming towards their valleys, they said, “This is a cloud bringing us rain!” Nay, but it is that (torment) which you were asking to be hastened! A wind wherein is a painful torment!’ (*al-Ahqaf*: 24)

Therefore, do not treat the appearances as being monotonous and repetitive. The Originator of all causes and effects owns and controls them. He does whatever He wills. If you worship Allah in such a way as to incorporate this worship in all actions of life, you will begin enriching the world, and supply yourself with the resources that Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* has hidden in the earth.

Sustenance—as we know—comes from the earth. That is why we must sow the land, so that the seeds can grow stems and trunks which praise Allah’s Glory and bow to Him. Then the True Lord *the Exalted* brings forth the rain, so that the seedlings can nourish themselves from the water that percolates down to them through the earth, and so that we, also, can satisfy our needs with this water.

The word *as-sama`* (sky) connotes all that rises high above you and provides you with shade; as for ‘*as-sama` al-`ulya`*’ (the highest heaven), this is another topic and everything else is below it. Consider the True Lord’s Words, ‘Whosoever thinks Allah will not help him in the present world and the world to come; let him stretch up a rope to heaven, then let him sever it,

and behold whether his guile does away with what enrages him.' (*al-Hajj*: 15) That is, anyone who thinks that Allah *the Exalted* will not grant his messenger victory then let him who makes this claim hang himself from a high place; he will die, and his spite will remain with him.

Concerning the part of the verse that says, 'He will send you (from the sky) abundant rain (*midrar*)', the word *midrar* signifies that which provides copious, unremitting blessings, without causing any harm. Rain that is torrential can cause much damage. Allah had caused great torrents of rain to pour down from the sky in the past. Thus, *midrar* is incessant rain that is always beneficial, and never harmful. That is why, when it rained, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to say, 'O Allah, (let it rain) around us and not on us.'<sup>(1)</sup> So when Allah *Glorified is He* sends steady, beneficial rain, the earth becomes green, and the world becomes populated, which adds to people's strength.

As for those who turn their backs on this guidance, his crimes hurt none but himself because the servant's transgressions always recoil upon him. So, do not think that a servant's wrongdoing is hurtful to anyone but himself. The True Lord says, 'it is the people who are wronging themselves.' (*Yunus*: 44)

Then the True Lord relates the response given by the people of `Ad:

قَالُوا يَا هُودُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِي آلِهَتِنَا  
عَنْ قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

**They replied, 'Hud, you have not brought us any clear evidence.**

**We will not forsake our gods on the strength of your word alone, nor will we believe in you [53] (The Quran, *Hud*: 53)**

Here they are denying that Hud *peace be upon him* brought forth clear evidence or a miraculous sign.

Now the term *bayyinah* is the clear proof or sign that attests to the truthfulness of a messenger. It is true that Hud *peace be upon him* did not, at this point, mention what his miracle was. But they forgot that challenge is the

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(1) Narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih* (897) and Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (933)

essence of a miracle. Nuh's (Noah's) miracle, for example, was the flood, and Ibrahim's (Abraham's) miracle was that the fire cooled down and became peaceful and did not harm him when his people threw him into it.

We notice that the central miracle that defines every prophet is found in Nuh's words, 'My people, if my presence among you and my reminding you of Allah's Signs is too much for you, then I put my trust in Allah. Agree on your course of action, you and your partner-gods— do not be hesitant or secretive about it— then carry out your decision on me and give me no respite.' (*Yunus*: 71) That is, if you decide to be defiant, then here I am; fighting corruption right under your nose, though you are a dominant, powerful, and tyrannical people. Devise the best plot you can, still you can never annihilate the Divine Message. No one can extinguish the light that Allah put in the hands of one of his prophets; and none can remove from the world one of Allah's messenger by killing him. Never has this happened.

Based on this, the clear proof that Hud *peace be upon him* brought was his standing alone before his tyrannical people and exhorting them to abandon their disbelief. He defied all those who were more powerful than he was; for his people had proved themselves to be tyrannical and oppressive. Despite this, they were powerless against him. Just as the disbelievers of Quraysh were unable to defeat our Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

We know that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had brought the ultimate comprehensive miracle, that is the Glorious Quran. The Quran shall remain a miracle until the Day of Judgment. We know that most prophets *peace and blessings be upon them* brought miracles that were of a physical cosmic nature whose term ended as soon as they occurred; and had the Quran not informed us of these miracles we would not have believed in them. These past miracles are like matches whose fire glows bright for a few moments and then burn out. For example, `Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* healed the blind and the lepers by Allah's Will; anyone who witnessed this sign instantly became a believer. But those who did not witness this miracle might not become believers. Similarly, Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* struck the sea with his staff and parted it, and all those who witnessed this miracle became believers. But then those miracles came to an end, whereas the miracle of the Quran is here to stay until the Final Hour.

Any follower of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* can say, before the coming of the Final Hour, that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger and his miraculous sign is the Quran. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had been sent as a messenger to all mankind and no other messenger will come after him. That is why it was necessary that his miracle be of a permanent and lasting nature; and despite this, his people told him, 'We will not believe in you (O Muhammad) until you make a spring gush out of the ground for us, or until you have a garden of date palms and vines, and make rivers pour through them, or make the sky fall on us in pieces, as you claimed will happen or bring Allah and the angels before us face to face.' (*al-Isra'*: 90-92)

All that they asked for were material miracles; hence the following response was given to them, 'Is it not sufficient for them that we have sent down to you the Book (the Quran) which is recited to them?' (*al-'Ankabut*: 51) Despite this they persisted in their denial and rejection of the Truth.

The people of `Ad further said, 'we will not forsake our gods on the strength of your word alone, nor will we believe in you.' They had therefore, deceived themselves by calling these idols 'gods' because the function of a real God is to reveal a doctrine specifying how He should be worshipped. These idols spoke not a word to them and never revealed any such doctrine. Every logical standard invalidates the idea of conceiving these idols as 'gods', so why did these people worship them? They worshipped them because the human instinct calls for the worship of a Supreme Being or Power. But when such Transcendent Power that is to be obeyed and worshipped issues commandments which curb the soul's carnal desires, the soul may find difficulty in submitting to these rules. Whereas, if these deities imposed no prohibitions, restrictions or commands at all, they would be easy to obey and worship for those who deluded themselves into believing in them and in their power to avert harm from, or bring benefit to them.

These, in effect, are the allegations made by all claimants of prophethood or being the Mahdi<sup>(1)</sup> in this age. Any fake prophet claims that he is sent by Allah, and allows free intermixing of men and women, consuming intoxicants,

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(1) This is a reference to those who claim themselves to be the awaited Mahdi (Rightly-Guided One); the *Mahdi* is mentioned in Hadiths narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih*. The Mahdi is foretold to appear at the end of time, contemporaneous with the second coming of `Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him*.

committing obscenities and destructive sins, and calls this a religion. Such false claims to prophecy can be found in movements such as Bahaism<sup>(1)</sup> and Qadianism<sup>(2)</sup> and other similar false belief systems. Their saying, ‘we will not forsake our gods on the strength of your word alone’ means that they would not abandon their gods because of what he said. Their further statement, ‘nor will we believe in you’ means ‘We do not believe you are truthful’.

The Arabic word *aman* can have different meaning depending on the context. It can mean, for instance, ‘to safeguard from fear’ as in the True Lord’s Words, ‘...and has made them safe from fear.’ (*Quraysh*: 4) When it is followed by the Arabic letter *ba`a*, it can denote the idea ‘having faith in’ and ‘believing in’; as in the True Lord’s Words, ‘...all those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and do good—will have their rewards with their Lord...’ (*al-Baqara*: 62). Here *aman* is related to belief in divinity. When it is followed by the Arabic letter *lam*, it denotes the idea of ‘trusting’ and ‘having confidence in’; such as the True Lord’s Words, ‘But none trusted Musa (Moses) except the offspring of his people because of the fear of Pharaoh and his chiefs, lest they should persecute them...’ (*Yunus*: 83). Here it means to ‘trust’ or ‘have faith in’. Then the True Lord *the Exalted* says:

إِنْ تَقُولُ إِلَّا أَعْتَرَكُ بَعْضُ الْهَيْئَةِ بِسُوِّ قَالِ إِنِّي  
أُشْهِدُ اللَّهَ وَأَشْهَدُوا أَنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ

**All we can say is that one of our gods may have inflicted  
some harm on you.’ He said, ‘I call God to witness, and you  
too are my witnesses, that I disown those you set up as  
partners with God [54] (The Quran, *Hud*: 54)**

The particle (*in*) by which this blessed verse opens is conditional after which there usually follows a conditional clause, otherwise it usually connotes a

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- (1) Bahaism: A sect which espouses corrupt beliefs; founded by Al-Mirza Husain `Ali Al-Mazandarani, who was born in the year 1233 of the Islamic calendar and grew up in Tehran. His ideas were a bizarre mixture of Buddhism, Mazdeism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. See (*Haqiqat Al-Babiyyah wal Al-Baha`iyyah*) by Muhsin `Abd Al-Hamid, 1985.
- (2) Qadianism: It was founded by Marza Ghulam Ahmad from Qadian in Lahore, in the province of Punjab, situated between Pakistan and India. He was born in the year 1252 of the Islamic calendar and claimed prophecy. (See *Al-Qadianiyyah – Nash`atha wa Tatawwurha*) by Hassan `Isa – Dar Al-Qalam, Kuwait, 1981.

negation, like when the True Lord *the Exalted* says, ‘...none can be their mothers except those who gave them birth...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 2).

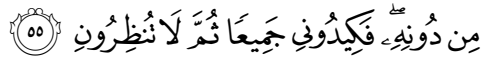
In the verse under discussion, the True Lord says, ‘All we can say (*in-naqulu*) is that one of our gods may have inflicted some harm on you...’ Here the particle (*in*) is interchangeable with the negative particle (*ma*). Thus, the particle (*in*) connotes a negation. On this basis, the meaning of the verse becomes: ‘The only conceivable explanation for your behaviour is that our gods have harmed you because you have disparaged them and invalidated their status as deities, and brought to us a new god of your own invention. In consequence, our gods have afflicted you with harm—namely, insanity—so you started confusing words and talking nonsense’. In the same verse Hud *peace be upon him* responded to them by saying, ‘I call Allah to witness, and you too are my witnesses, that I disown those you set up as partners with Allah.’ Hud *peace be upon him* called Allah to witness because he had confidence that Allah was the One Who sent him and was protecting him and his mind. It is a prophet’s mental power that is responsible for strategizing how best to call people to Allah. It is impossible that Allah *the Exalted* would dispatch a messenger without protecting him.

Similarly, the disbelievers of Quraysh claimed that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was demented; and so, in response, the True Lord *Glorified is He* revealed the following noble verses, ‘You (O Muhammad) are not, by the Grace of your Lord, a madman. And verily, for you (O Muhammad) will be an endless reward. And verily, you (O Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character.’ (*al-Qalam*: 2-4) We know that a demented person has no proper manners, and this clear proof that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was perfectly sane because his manners were exceedingly graceful.

In the verse at hand, Hud *peace and blessings be upon him* called his people to witness and exhorted them to revert to their original, pure state of being and then judge whether he was insane. Hud *peace be upon him* also affirmed that he stood clear of the idols which they worshipped instead of Allah.

Then Hud *peace be upon him* was quoted as saying:





**So plot against me, all of you, and give me  
no respite [55] (The Quran, *Hud*: 55)**

The words *min dunih* (translated in the previous verse as ‘other than Him’) can mean ‘beside Allah’ or ‘instead of Him’, for Hud’s people had worshiped idols besides or instead of Allah *the Exalted*. In the face of this, Hud *peace be upon him* presented them with the challenge of joining all together in plotting against him. He was just one man, and they were a massive tyrannical force. Clearly, if one oppressive multitude of people united and conspired against one person, it is expected that they should defeat him. Yet, Hud *peace be upon him* defied them, telling them to proceed with their evil plots and cunning schemes, and even try to kill him if they wanted; this was the ultimate defiant stance. This defiance is itself a miracle (attesting to his prophethood) because Hud challenged them while knowing that Allah *Glorified is He* would grant him victory.

In the previous verse, Prophet Hud *peace be upon him* confidently uttered, ‘I call Allah to witness’ as Hud could not possibly have raised this challenge haphazardly (without being sure that Allah would support him). No one would jeopardize his life by a single word. Hud *peace be upon him* said, ‘So plot against me, all of you, and give me no respite.’ only because he had, prior to this challenge, taken refuge with a strong support. He had said so with unflinching faith that the True Lord *the Exalted* would enable him to fulfil his word.

Hud *peace be upon him* called Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* to witness, and Allah *the Most High* was the first to have called Himself to witness. The True Lord says, ‘Allah bears witness that there is no god but Him’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 18). The angels and those endowed with knowledge also testified to this<sup>(1)</sup>; and so when Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* testifies that there is no god except Him, this represents a reassuring guarantee that, whenever Allah decrees a matter, He will most surely see that His Will be done. Hud *peace be upon him* called his Lord to witness, and he was confident that He would protect him. The True

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(1) The Lord of Might *the Exalted* says, ‘Allah bears witness that there is no god but Him, as do the angels and those who have knowledge....’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 18)

Lord *the Exalted* could never send a messenger and let a people obstruct him from spreading His Message.

Then the True Lord *the Most High* continues to mention that which Hud *peace be upon him* had uttered:

إِنِّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ رَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ  
بِئَاصْبِهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٦﴾

**I put my trust in God, my Lord and your Lord. There is no moving creature which He does not control. My Lord's way is straight [56] (The Quran, Hud: 56)**

*Hud peace be upon him* thus declared the reality of reliance on Allah, which is entrusting all his affairs to Him. For Allah transcends not only them, and provides sustenance not only for them, but also to all creatures. He is the One who takes every freely moving, living thing on earth by its forelock. The forelock signifies the forepart of the head; it is the lock of hair that grows just above the forehead. To grab a person by his forelock can be a sign of humiliation. The True Lord *the Exalted* says elsewhere in the Quran, 'The criminals will be known by their marks, and they will be seized by their forelocks and their feet.' (*ar-Rahman*: 41) In another verse, the True Lord says, 'Nay! If he ceases not, we will catch him by the forelock.' (*al-'Alaq*: 15)

This provides some insights into the reason why the Tribe of 'Ad did not unleash a group of snakes or a pack of wild dogs against Hud *peace be upon him*. They could never do so, and Hud *peace be upon him* had explained why they would be powerless to harm him when he told them, '...for there is no living creature which He does not hold by its forelock. Verily, straight is my Lord's Way!' (*Hud*: 56)

We notice that Hud *peace be upon him* repeated in their hearing the concept of Allah's Lordship. In the beginning of the noble verse, he said, 'my Lord as well as your Lord' and at the end of it, he said, 'verily, straight is my Lord's Way.' This is because they had an irreverent attitude towards Allah's Lordship over all creation. For this reason, *Hud peace be upon him* said concerning dominion, 'my Lord as well as your Lord', whereas at the

end of the verse, he said, ‘verily, straight is my Lord’s Way!’ That is, the One True God exercises Absolute Justice. Hud *peace be upon him* was talking here only about the True Lord’s Absolute Justice, and mentioned nothing regarding their idols.

The True Lord exercises His Absolute Power with perfect straightness and righteousness in the fullest sense. He is the Possessor of Subjugating and Dominating Power, from which nothing can escape, but despite Allah’s Infinite Power, He never uses it to for injustice.

Then the True Lord says:

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَيْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفُ رَبِّي قَوْمًا  
غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّوهُ شَيْئًا إِنْ رَبِّي عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيفٌ ﴿٥٧﴾

**But if you turn away, then I have conveyed the message  
with which I was sent to you, and my Lord will bring  
along another people in your place. You cannot do Him  
any harm: it is my Lord who protects everything’ [57]  
(The Quran, *Hud*: 57)**

This means that if you turn away, then at least I have fulfilled my responsibility and delivered the message that I was delegated with and you will not be able to cite my lack of effort as an excuse. For the True Lord *Glorified is He* does not punish a people that are ignorant, uninformed of the True Lord, indeed, this is the very reason why He sent me to you.

Or that these words are addressed from Allah *Glorified is He* to Hud *peace be upon him* to explain that if they chose to turn away, then tell them, ‘...I have delivered to you the message with which I was sent unto you, and [that] my Lord may cause another people to take your place...’ (*Hud*: 57). Now the word *al-istikhlaf* means that they are a people that are to replace a previous generation and either it is the case that they are just, and do not stand in opposition to the Laws of Allah nor to Divine Revelations—as did the Tribe of `Ad, or it is the case that they are unjust such those whom the True Lord *Glorified is He* describes in the following verse, ‘Yet they were succeeded by

generations [of people] who lost all [thought of] prayer and followed [but] their own lusts...' (*Maryam*: 59).

The True Lord *Glorified is He* promises '...those of you who have attained to faith and do righteous deeds that, of a certainty, He will cause them to accede to power on Earth, even as He caused [some of] those who lived before them to accede to it...' (*an-Nur*: 55). Thus *al-istikhlaf* implies that those who take the place are either doers of good deeds, or those who disregard the Laws of Allah and follow their carnal desires. In another verse the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'Here you are - those invited to spend in the cause of Allah - but among you are those who withhold [out of greed]. And whoever withholds only withholds [benefit] from himself; and Allah is Free of need, while you are the needy. And if you turn away, He will replace you with another people; then they will not be the likes of you.' (*Muhammad*: 38). Here the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'Whereas you will not harm Him in the least' (*Hud*: 57).

The doctrine that was revealed to the creation by The True Lord *Glorified is He* is to rectify His servants, for Allah *Glorified is He* is the Creator endowed with all the qualities of Fullness and Perfection, and none of His servants can ever hope to 'supplement' His Qualities, nor can any of His servants reduce any of His Qualities. That is why we say to those who are recalcitrant towards Allah with their disbelief, those who are disobedient towards His Path with their sinfulness: You are accustomed to being so insubordinate; either by rejecting Allah altogether—which is the ultimate act of disobedience—or by exhibiting resistance towards Allah's Laws by breaking them. Why, then, are not you insubordinate towards other things, such as sickness? Why does not one of you say, for example, 'I will not fall sick'? Why does not one of you rebel against death? Since you demonstrate such defiance towards matter in which you have a choice, can you rebel against Allah's other incontrovertible Laws?

You will not be able to do so because you will be grabbed by your forelock. If the True Lord *Glorified is He* wished, He could stop the beating of the heart, and you would in no measure be able to make it begin beating

again. That is why Hud *peace be upon him* says, ‘...whereas you will not harm Him in the least. Verily, my Lord watches over all things!’ (*Hud*: 57)

Allah *Glorified is He* is vigilant, watchful over everything in His Creation. Some philosophers posit that Allah created the universe and set up the laws of nature and then left the world to operate independently. To these people we would say: No, for you take into account only the qualities of Allah as the Creator, the fully Capable. But what about the quality of vigilance that watches over every soul like when Allah *Glorified is He* describes Himself to His servants as One Who ‘...neither slumber overtakes Him, nor sleep...’ (*al-Baqara*: 255)? When Allah *Glorified is He* says this, He is reassuring His servants that they might relax and have peace of mind for He is immune to forgetfulness and to sleep. Allah *Glorified is He* is the All-Sustaining.

Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا بَنَيْنَا هُودًا وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ  
بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ

**And so, when Our judgement came to pass, by  
Our grace We saved *Hud* and his fellow believers.  
We saved them from a severe punishment [58]  
(The Quran, *Hud*: 58)**

When you hear the words ‘when our judgment came to pass’ you know that there is an order and it is obeyed, and at the instant when the order is issued, it is executed because it is an order from He Who is capable of execution. In another verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘When the sky is split asunder, obeying its Lord, as in truth it must.’ (*al-Inshiqaq*: 1-2) Therefore, the moment the sky heard the True Lord’s Command, it carried it out.

When the True Lord *Glorified is He* wanted to save Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* from the slaughter which Pharaoh had ordered, Allah *Glorified is He* told Musa’s (Moses’) mother, ‘...when you have cause to fear for him, cast him into the river and have no fear and do not grieve – for We shall restore him to you, and shall make him one of Our message-bearers!’ (*al-Qasas*: 7) How could a mother do that?

Every mother cares for her son. The killing of baby Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was imminent, and throwing him into the sea would spell certain death, but Musa's (Moses') mother trusted the words that Allah had revealed to her and did not hesitate. This shows that she did not assess the situation by ordinary human standards, but she carried out what Allah *Glorified is He* had inspired her to do, and neither doubt nor the devil can challenge this divine inspiration. Then Allah *Glorified is He* gives specific orders to the river itself, '...and thereupon the river will cast him ashore...' (*Ta Ha*: 39). The river welcomed the Lord's order since it was the command of the Almighty, just as it would have carried out the opposite.

In the story of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...when Our judgment came to pass, and waters gushed forth...' (*Hud*: 40). So the flood occurred, and the disbelievers were drowned. Here the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'And so, when Our judgment came to pass...' (*Hud*: 58), meaning, that the judgment that came to pass was the punishment of those who were recalcitrant regarding Hud's message *peace be upon him* and the execution of this punishment occurred in a very special and precise way. A precision which does justice to the Greatness of Allah *Glorified is He* Who issued this judgment. For the violent wind or fatal blow that descended on them was out of their control, a force of nature directed by Allah, but the deniers of the True Lord *Glorified is He* could have gathered closely around Hud *peace be upon him* and his followers, so how would the howl of the winds affect only the ears of the disbelievers sparing the ears of the believers? This was a precision strike, not an all-out assault. The wind's targets had been predetermined. It was just like the pebbles of dried-up clay that were hurled by the swarms of birds on the armies of Abraha al-Habashi, the same stones spared the armies of Quraysh. So they were not destroyed by a plague as some philosophers have claimed.

This is one of the secrets of the True Lord's Greatness—to single out the disbelievers targeted for punishment and to spare the believers. For every force of nature, no matter how powerful, is governed by an even Greater Power.

Al-Mutanabbi<sup>(1)</sup> said<sup>(2)</sup>:

The sun blackens the whiteness of our faces

But does not blacken the whiteness of our beards and our locks [of hair]

And their state would surely be one [and the same] in judgment

If the judge were to be one from this world

Here Al-Mutanabbi speaks of how exposing oneself to the sun can make one's skin turn dark, but will not make one's grey hair dark again. However, if you were to leave any dark coloured object in the sun long enough, its colour would start fading; the result is different in each case even though the actor—that is, the sun—is one and the same. Here the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'And so, when Our judgment came to pass, by Our Grace We saved Hud and those who shared his faith...' (*Hud*: 58). So do not ask how they were saved from that suffering which seemingly affected all things indiscriminately because this is Allah's Mercy. Mercy—as we know—is when harm is prevented from ever affecting a person; as for the act of 'healing', that involves remedying a harm that was already done. That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'Thus step by step, We bestow from on high through this Quran all that gives health [to the spirit] and is a grace unto those who believe [in Us] ...' (*al-Isra'*: 82).

We notice that in this verse the True Lord *Glorified is He* mentions two acts of deliverance. The first act of deliverance was that they were saved from total suffering—from the raging storm winds, from, the mighty blast, from the obliterating calamity and Allah *Glorified is He* says, '...by Our Grace We saved *Hud* and those who shared his faith; and We saved them [too] from severe

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(1) Abu At-Tayeb Ahmad ibn Al-Hussain; a wise poet. He was born in Al-Kufa in a place called 'Kandah' in the year 303 of the Islamic calendar and spent his formative years in Ash-Sham. He claimed to be a prophet (or in Arabic *nabi*) in a village called As-Sammawa (between Al-Kufa and Ash-Sham), which is why he is called Al-Mutanabbi ('claimer to prophet hood'). Then he renounced his claim after being imprisoned. He died in the year 354 of the Islamic calendar at the age of 52.

(2) Even though Al-Mutanabbi was an eloquent poet capable of integrating multiple meanings, he was open to a source of true knowledge out of which hidden meanings can be drawn; this same source leads the mind to the truth of Allah's Oneness.

suffering [in the life to come].’ (*Hud*: 58) The second act of deliverance was that they were spared from the severe suffering of the hereafter, for the suffering in this life on earth, no matter how severe, can last only as long as life itself. As for the suffering of the hereafter, it is one without end. Furthermore, the True Lord *Glorified is He* describes it as being ‘severe’.

Now an object described as being *ghalizh* means it is powerful and harsh, and the suffering is severe insofar as a person’s deeds were severe. That is why when the True Lord *Glorified is He* grants a man sexual rights over a woman through marriage, this union is described as a ‘solemn pledge’. Even though this pledge is utilitarian in nature, it nevertheless involves the principles of virtue and honour. For the man is not given absolute dominion over the woman he marries; the pledge of marriage simply grants the man the right of sexual contact. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘...and she has received a most solemn pledge from you’ (*an-Nisa*: 21).

So Hud *peace be upon him* and his followers’ deliverance from the first punishment foreshadowed their deliverance from the second, more severe suffering.

After this the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَتِلْكَ عَادٌ جَحَدُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَصَوْا رُسُلَهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ﴿٥٩﴾

**These were the 'Ad: they rejected their Lord's signs,  
disobeyed His messengers, and followed the command  
of every obstinate tyrant [59] (The Quran, *Hud*: 59)**

The word *tilka* in this verse refers to the location where the tribe of `Ad lived, for the word is ‘feminine’, and let us also remember that the speaker here is Allah *Glorified is He*. Thus, Allah has distinguished between `Ad—the place, and `Ad —the tribe. Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘... [Who] had rejected their Lord’s messages...’ (*Hud*: 59), for they had disappeared off the face of the earth, but they left certain traces behind. The word `Ad refers either to the place and the location, or to the inhabitants of that location; and so if the word is preceded by the term *tilka*, it then becomes a reference to the village where they lived. To be sure, their houses never rejected Allah’s Message. Therefore, the following words from Allah *the Exalted* follow, ‘... [who] had rejected



their Lord's messages...' (*Hud*: 59). Here, the word *jahad* means to deny something by abrogating evidence. The word *ayat* (verses) —plural of the word *aya* (verse)—denotes the marvellous eye catching phenomena which prompt us into faith and reverent obedience.

Some of Allah's signs are concerned with the doctrine's summit, which is to have faith in The Necessary Being—The Lord of creation, The Wise, The Fully-Capable. Among these signs are those of night and day, the sun and the moon, and the vision of the humble earth and many other premier signs of this sort. There are also signs that substantiate the coming of messengers from Allah *the Exalted* these are the miracles. Other signs contain Allah's rules and regulations which are intended to ensure the continued health of the life of His creation. Now the tribe of 'Ad rejected all these signs. They rejected faith, refused to accept the messenger—though he came with his miracle—and they neglected and abandoned Allah's Path. That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...and rebelled against His apostles...' (*Hud*: 59). Hud *peace be upon him* is the one who was sent by the True Lord *Glorified is He* to the tribe of 'Ad; so is it him that this verse is referring to here? No, because Allah *the Exalted* says, 'And lo, Allah accepted, through the Prophets, this solemn pledge [from the followers of earlier revelation], "If, after all the revelation and the wisdom which I have vouchsafed unto you, there comes to you an apostle confirming the truth already in your possession, you must believe in him and succour him..."' (*Al-Imran*: 81). Therefore, every human community has conveyed a message from their messenger, and this message asks that they believe in the story of every other messenger sent by Allah. The True Lord *Glorified is He* also says, 'The apostle, and the believers with him, believe in what has been bestowed upon him from on high by his Lord; they all believe in Allah, and His angels, and His revelations and His apostles, making no distinction between any of His apostles...' (*al-Baqara*: 285). Thus, they are split up into two groups; for the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...and rebelled against His apostles, and followed the bidding of every arrogant enemy of the truth' (*Hud*: 59) meaning that there are those who follow and those who lead. The expression 'every arrogant enemy of the True Lord' refers to the leaders of communities, the lords of tyranny. As for the second category, it includes

those who follow these oppressors. It is out of His Mercy *Glorified is He* that when speaking about aberrant groups, he differentiates between those who are astray in and of themselves, and those who lead others astray. He who leads others astray has two sins to answer for; the first is his own aberrance from the straight Path, and the second is his responsibility for leading others away from the Path. As for those who followed these people, they have a mitigating excuse because they had been blinded by power and had been forced through tyranny. They did not follow because of deep conviction or clear proof.

Notice how the Quran addresses this issue. When speaking of those who went astray it says, 'And there are among them unlettered people who have no real knowledge of the Book, [following] only wishful beliefs and depending on nothing but conjecture.' (*al-Baqara*: 78) Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* speaks about those who lead others astray, 'Woe, then, unto those who write down, [something which they claim to be] the Book, with their own hands, and then say, "This is from Allah", in order to acquire a trifling gain thereby...' (*al-Baqara*: 79).

Going back to the chapter of *Hud*, the True Lord *Glorified is He* continues:

وَأَنبَعُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَلَا إِنَّ عَادًا كَفَرُوا  
رَبَّهُمْ أَلَا بَعْدَ إِعَادٍ قَوْمُ هُودٍ ﴿٦٠﴾

**They were rejected in this life and so they shall be on the Day of Judgement. Yes, the 'Ad denied their Lord – so away with the 'Ad, the people of Hud! [60] (The Quran, *Hud*: 60)**

Allah's creatures go through three major periods of time: the first is their life on earth, the second is the time between death and the coming of the Day of Judgment—known as *barzakh*, and the third begins when they are resurrected.

The life on earth involves work. In the life of the *barzakh* the reward is—not actually experienced—but merely presented or contemplated. Then during the third life—the life of the hereafter—one enters either heaven or hell. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'How can you refuse to acknowledge Allah, seeing that you were lifeless and He gave you life, and that He will cause you to die and then will bring you again to life, whereupon unto Him you will be

brought back?’ (*al-Baqara*: 28) These are the three periods—life on Earth, the *barzakh* and the resurrection. Each represents a period of time. The Quran describes these periods when it speaks of the suffering of the people of Pharaoh beginning from the moment Allah *Glorified is He* caused the sea to swallow them up, ‘the fire [of the hereafter – that fire] which they had been made to contemplate [in vain], morning and evening; for on the Day when the Last Hour dawns [Allah will say], “Make Pharaoh’s folk enter upon suffering most severe!”’ (*Ghafir*: 46) This verse confirms that during the *barzakh*, the dead shall be made to contemplate the coming reward. As the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘The grave shall feel like either one of the gardens of paradise or like one of the pits of hell.’<sup>(1)</sup> Thus, two time-periods are involved; the period during which they are made to contemplate hellfire, day and night, then the period during which they enter the hellfire.

This confirms that there is such a thing as ‘suffering’ even during the *barzakh* because the disbeliever will be made to see the hellfire into which he will be thrown. He sees the suffering that he is destined to, and then the Hour comes. He will receive his share of suffering. As for the tribe of ‘Ad, Allah *Glorified is He* gave them a foretaste of the suffering in their life on earth, then on the Day of Judgment, He will throw them into the hellfire. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says in the same verse, ‘...Oh, verily, [the tribe of] ‘Ad denied their Lord! Oh, away with the ‘Ad, the people of Hud!’ (*Hud*: 60) As we have previously explained, the term *ala* serves to draw the reader’s attention to the importance of what the speaker is saying, so that the uttered words do not fly over the listener’s inattentive head. The speaker has full rein of the conversation, the listener must not receive his words negligently. Thus, the term *ala* comes as an alarm bell, warning the listener to pay close attention to what is about to be said. Here the subject revolves around the suffering that the tribe of ‘Ad had brought upon themselves, namely, the annihilating winds. Then they experienced the suffering of the *barazkh*, and on the Day of Judgment they shall be received with even more suffering; thus, suffering three-fold.

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(1) Narrated by *At-Tirmidhi* and *At-Tabarani* and narrated in *Al-Kabir* of *Abu Sa’id*. It is also narrated by *At-Tabarani* and narrated in *Al-Kabir* of *Abu Hurayra*. Their chains of transmission are both weak. See also (*Mujma’ Az-Zawa’id*) (3/46) and *Ad-Dilmi’s* (*Musnad Al-Firdaws*) (3/231).

The True Lord *Glorified is He* knows that the listener's (or the reader's) heart might cringe at the amount of suffering through which the tribe of 'Ad goes. That is precisely why the term *ala* is mentioned to make the reader understand that the tribe of 'Ad had rejected their Lord.

Their crime occurred at a specific point in time, and the punishment for that crime has an appointed time. Their rejection of Allah occurred during their life on earth, and since this represents the mother of all crimes, they received their punishment during their time on earth. It is a very risky proposition indeed to delay the punishment until long after the crime has been committed. Do not be foolish and show mercy towards them, for their rejection of Allah is the ultimate doctrinal crime; that is why they will continue to suffer even as they lie waiting in their graves until the Day of Judgment when their full sentence will be carried out. To be sure, it was not Allah's innumerable blessings that they rejected, it was Allah Himself. The True Lord *Glorified is He* did not demand that anyone worship Him before they reach the age of maturity, and He had bestowed upon His creation all kinds of blessings; therefore the punishment they received was fair and they fully deserve it. Hud *peace be upon him* had made it clear to them, 'Behold, I have placed my trust in Allah, [who is] my Lord as well as your Lord: for there is no living creature which He does not hold by its forelock. Verily, straight is my Lord's way!' (*Hud*: 56) Or in other words, the True Lord *Glorified is He* is Just. When you hear about their crimes, you reel with disgust and demand that they receive the harshest possible penalty. That is why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...Oh, verily, [the tribe of] 'Ad denied their Lord! Oh, away with the 'Ad, the people of Hud!' (*Hud*: 60) To curse them once is not enough; you must curse them twice over. One might ask, why does the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...Oh, away with the 'Ad, the people of Hud!' (*Hud*: 60)

We would reply that the True Lord *Glorified is He* says elsewhere in the Quran, 'and that it is He who destroyed the ancient [tribes of] 'Ad' (*an-Najm*: 50). This demonstrates that there are two different tribes of 'Ad. The first tribe of 'Ad, who were a community of people who lived on earth for a while but were then annihilated by Allah, and then there is a second tribe of 'Ad.

Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* says,

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