

Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt

(The Scatterers)

This Sūrah was revealed in Makkah. It contains 60 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 23

وَالذَّرِيَّتِ ذُرُورًا ﴿١﴾ فَالْحَمَلِمْتِ وَقَرًا ﴿٢﴾ فَالْجَرِيَّتِ يُسْرًا ﴿٣﴾
فَالْمُقْسِمِمْتِ أَمْرًا ﴿٤﴾ إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٍ ﴿٥﴾ وَإِنَّ الدِّينَ لَوَاقِعٌ
﴿٦﴾ وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُكِ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ ﴿٨﴾
يُؤْفِكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ أَفِكَ ﴿٩﴾ قُتِلَ الْخَرِصُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي عَمْرَةٍ
سَاهُونَ ﴿١١﴾ يَسْأَلُونَ أَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴿١٢﴾ يَوْمَ هُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ
يُفْتَنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ ذُوقُوا فَتَنَتَكُمْ ط هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾
إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّةٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿١٥﴾ اخِذِينَ مَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ ط إِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُّحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ
﴿١٧﴾ وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ
وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿١٩﴾ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ ط
أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَوَرَبِّ
السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ لَحَقٌّ مِّثْلَ مَا أَنَّكُمْ تَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

(I swear) by those (winds) that scatter dust, [1] then by those (clouds) that bear loads, [2] then by those (boats) that sail with ease, [3] then by those (angels) who distribute things, [4] whatever you are being promised is surely true, [5] and Recompensing (of deeds) is sure to happen. [6] By the sky, having paths, [7] you are (involved) in a contradictory statement. [8] Turned away from this (Qur'ān) is the one who is turned away (totally from the Truth.) [9] Death upon those who make conjectures (against the true faith), [10] those who are drowned in ignorance, forgetful! [11] They ask, "When shall be the Day of Recompense?" [12] (It will be) the Day when they will be heated on the Fire, [13] (and it will be said to them,) "Taste (the punishment of) your mischief. This is what you have been asking to be brought sooner." [14] The God-fearing (on the other hand) will be in gardens and springs, [15] receiving what their Lord will have given to them. Indeed, prior to this, they were good in their deeds. [16] They used to sleep little in the night, [17] and in the hours before dawn, they used to pray for forgiveness, [18] and in their wealth, there was a right for the one who asks and the one who is deprived. [19]

And in the earth, there are signs for those who (seek truth to) believe, [20] and in your own selves! So, do you not perceive? [21] And in the heavens, there is your sustenance and all that you have been promised. [22] So, by the Lord of the heavens and the earth, it (the Day of Recompense) is a reality, as sure as that you speak. [23]

Affirmation of After-Life

The subject-matter of Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt, like its predecessor Sūrah Qāf, is mainly the Hereafter, Resurrection, Reckoning, Judgement, and Allah's reward and punishment. The first few verses contain an oath from Allah that the promise of Resurrection is true, and shall come to pass. In these verses Allah swears an oath by four phenomena, as follows:

وَالذَّرِيَّتِ ذُرْوًا . فَالْحَمَلِ وَقُرًا . فَالْجَرِيَّتِ يُسْرًا . فَالْمُقَيَّبِتِ أَمْرًا .

(I swear) by those (winds) that scatter dust, then by those (clouds) that bear loads, then by those (boats) that sail with ease, then by those (angels) who distribute things, (51:1-4)

There is a Ḥadīth whose attribution to the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been held by Ibn Kathīr as *ḍa'īf* [weak], but it is also reported as a saying of

Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه and 'Alī رضي الله عنه. It explains these four things as follows: The expression Dhāriyāt [scatterers] refers to the wind that blows up dust; the expression *ḥāmilāt-i-wiqrān* literally denotes burden-bearers and contextually refers to the clouds that carry the burden of water or rain; the expression *jāriyāt-i-yusran* refers to the ships that sail smoothly and with ease in the water; and the expression *muqassimāt-i-amran* refers to the angels who distribute to all creatures their sustenance and water, and different kinds of difficulties and comfort as determined by Allah's orders and decrees (Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī and Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr quote these narrations both as *marfū'* and *mawqūf*).

(By the sky, having paths, you are (involved) in a contradictory statement - 51:7-8) *Ḥubuk* is the plural *ḥabīkah* and primarily denotes thin irregular lines or streaks on fabrics when woven. They resemble tracks and pathways; therefore pathways are also referred to as *ḥubuk* in Arabic. Most interpreters take this to be the meaning in this context. Some scholars say that the 'tracks' refer to pathways used by the angels for entrance and exit. Others say that the tracks or paths of heaven are those orbits of planets and stars that are visible in the sky.

As the streaks of the woven fabric is its beauty, some scholars tend to interpret the verse as 'By the heaven full of beauty, grace, magnificence and perfection'.

Differing Beliefs of the Pagans

إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ (you are [involved] in a contradictory statement... 51:8) Verse [7] was an oath and this verse is the statement for which oath is sworn. Apparently, the verse addresses the pagans of Makkah who assigned contradictory attributes to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, calling him at different times a madman, a sorcerer, a poet and other discordant names. According to another possible interpretation, the verse addresses the entire humankind - Muslims as well as non-believers. Thus 'contradictory statement' would mean that a sector believed in the Holy Prophet ﷺ and accepted him; and another sector rejected him and opposed him (Maḥzarī).

يُؤْفِكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ أُفِكَ (Turned away from this (Qur'ān) is the one who is turned away.....51:9). The word *'ufik* literally denotes to turn away. The pronoun in *'anhu* has two possibilities: [1] it could be referring to Qur'ān and Rasūl. In this case, the verse would mean that only that person turns

away from the Qur'ān who has been destined to be deprived of their guidance. And [2] the pronoun could be referring to the 'contradictory statement' in which case the meaning would be: he who turns away from the truth because of your discordant thoughts, is the one deprived of truth.

قُتِلَ الْخَرَّصُونَ (Death upon those who make conjectures - 51:10). The expression *kharrāṣūn* is the plural of *kharrāṣ* which means one who estimates or say things by conjecture. In this context the word refers to those stubborn and obstinate infidels who, without any reason or evidence, say discordant things about the Messenger ﷺ. Thus it would not be out of turn to interpret *kharrāṣūn* as *kadhdhābūn*, meaning 'the great liars' as they are condemned, denounced, cursed and imprecated (Mazharī) in this statement. After the mention of infidels, several verses that follow describe the qualities of the righteous people and the pleasant consequences of their righteousness.

Remaining Awake at Night for Voluntary Prayers

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ (They used to sleep little in the night,... 51:17). The imperfect verb *yahja'un* is derived from the infinitive *hujū'* which means to sleep at night. The verse describes the quality of the righteous believers is that they spend their nights in voluntary worship of Allah. They sleep little at night and remain awake during the greater part of it. Ibn Jarīr preferred this interpretation. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى said: "The righteous perform voluntary night prayers, and do not sleep during the night except a little." Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah رحمه الله تعالى, Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى and other leading scholars of Tafsīr have taken the particle *mā* in the sense of negation, that is, grammatically they treat it as *mā nāfiyah* or negative particle, meaning they spend a little part of every night awake, and not sleeping. They would worship Allah and perform voluntary prayers every night, even during a small part of the night. From this point of view, it includes all those people who pray to Allah during any part of the night - whether in the beginning, or in the middle, or at the end of it. Therefore, Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik رحمه الله تعالى and 'Abul-'Āliyah said: "They used to pray between Maghrib and 'Ishā'." Imām Abū Ja'far Baqir said that this includes those people who do not sleep before 'Ishā' prayer (Ibn Kathīr).

Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى reports from Aḥnaf Ibn Qais who used to say: "When I compared my deeds with those of the inmates of Paradise, I

found that they are a people who occupy a very high, lofty and elevated status; and they are a people whose deeds are incomparable and our deeds cannot match theirs, because they sleep little at nights and worship much. When I compared my deeds with those of the inmates of Hell , I found that they give the lie to Allah and His Holy Prophet ﷺ and are sceptical about the Hereafter [from which Allah has protected us]. Therefore, in comparison, our deeds match neither with those of the real inmates of Paradise, nor [praise be to Allah] with those of the inmates of Hell. Thus we learn that from the viewpoint of action, our position is what the Qur'an describes: خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا ...'(They had mixed a good deed with another that was evil. - 9:102) Thus the best person amongst us is the one who would at least remain within the boundaries of this class of people."

'Abd-ur-raḥmān Ibn Zaid Ibn Aslam ؓ says that a member of the tribe Banū Tamīm said to my father: "O Abū 'Usāmah, we do not find that quality in us which Allah mentions in describing the righteous, that is, كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ "They used to sleep little in the night," because our position is quite the contrary: قَلِيلًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا نَقُومُ 'We are very little awake at night to worship Allah'. My father replied:

طوبى لمن رقد اذا نعس واتقى الله اذا استيقظ

'Good tidings for him who sleeps away when he feels sleepy and exercises righteousness when he is awake, that is, does not do any work that is contrary to Shari'ah."

In other words, acceptance in the sight of Allah is not necessarily restricted to protracted waking hours at night for worship. If a person is impelled to sleep, and does not remain awake for long, but abstains from any sinful activities when awake, he is also worthy of felicitation.

'Abdullāh Ibn Salām ؓ reports from the Holy Prophet ﷺ who said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَطْعِمُوا الطَّعَامَ وَصَلُّوا الأَرْحَامَ وَأَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ وَصَلُّوا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ . (ابن كثير)

"O people, feed people, do good to kith and kin, greet each other with *salām*, pray at night while people are asleep, and you will enter Paradise in peace." (Ibn Kathīr)

Merits of Seeking Forgiveness in the hours before dawn

وبالأسحارهم يستغفرون (and in the hours before dawn, they used to pray for

forgiveness..., 51:18) The word *ashār* is the plural of *sahar*, and it refers to the latter sixth part of the night. This verse speaks of the significance of seeking forgiveness in the latter part of the night. Another verse [3:17] also speaks of the significance of seeking forgiveness at the last hours of the night thus: وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ (...and who seek forgiveness in pre-dawn hours. - 3:17) It is confirmed in the Ṣaḥīḥ collections as well as others, from several Companions, that the Messenger of Allah said:

"Allah, the Most High, descends each night to the lowest heaven when the last third of the night remains. He says: 'Is there anyone who is repenting, so that I may accept his repentance? Is there anyone seeking forgiveness, so that I may forgive him? Is there anyone asking of Me, so that I may grant him his request?'

Here it may be noted that in this verse Allah is describing the pre-dawn prayer of forgiveness of those righteous ones who, according to the preceding verse, are preoccupied for the major part of the night with the worship of Allah and sleep very little. Thus there seems to be no link between their previous description and their description of asking for forgiveness in this verse, because forgiveness is sought when there are sins. People who spent the entire night in worshipping Allah - what does it mean to seek forgiveness of sins? The answer to this question is that these people have the true appreciation of Allah's majesty, dignity and splendour, and they realise that there are shortcomings in their night-long worship. Therefore they seek Allah's forgiveness for failing to perform His worship as due. (Maḥzarī)

Special Guidance for Philanthropists

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ (and in their wealth, there was a right for the one who asks and the one who is deprived...51:19) The word *sā'il* means the poor or needy who begs others, that is, he expresses his needs to people who help him. The word *maḥrūm* also refers to a poor or needy, but who cannot express his needs from a sense of self-respect or a feeling of shame, and thus is deprived of people's help. In this verse another quality of the believers and the righteous is mentioned, that is, their quality of spending in charity in Allah's way. When spending, they do not only give to those who ask for help, but they also make it their responsibility to find out who are needy ones and do not disclose their needs to others.

The purpose of the verse is to show that the believers and the righteous do not only perform bodily worship, such as prayers and remaining awake at night, but they also play a major role in performing pecuniary worship, in that besides helping the people who beg they also look for, and help, those who out of self-respect do not express their needs to anyone. When mentioning this pecuniary worship, the expression used by the Qur'an is the following, "وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ" and in their wealth, there was a right". It means that when they meet the needs of the poor, they do not deem it a favour shown to them, but they appreciate that the poor have a 'right' in the wealth Allah has blessed them with, and fulfilling one's right is not a favour; it is rather a duty and responsibility that one has to discharge.

Allah's Signs on the Earth and in Mankind

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ (And in the earth, there are signs for those who [seek truth to] believe,... 51:20). In the preceding verses in the first instance a description of the infidels and rejecters and their evil fate was given. As against those who flounder in the welter of wrong beliefs and evil deeds and deny the possibility of the Day of Judgement, the qualities of the believers and the righteous were subsequently given, and their elevated position was described. Now once again attention is drawn to those who deny the possibility of Judgement Day. They are invited to ponder on the signs of Allah on earth that testify to the might of the Creator and His boundless power, and thus the skeptics are advised to desist from denying the Judgement Day. In this way the statement is connected to the preceding statement in verse [8] "You are involved in contradictory statement."

Tafsīr Mazharī is of the view that this verse too describes the quality of the believers and the righteous. The word *mūqinīn* (those who have certainty of faith) refers to the same God-fearing people mentioned in an earlier verse. The sense is that these people keep pondering on the divine signs spread on earth and in their own beings, and it increases their belief. In another verse they are described as *وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ* "...and ponder on the creation of the heavens and the earth..." (3:191)

Allah's signs on earth include what Allah has placed on the earth, the various plants, animals, valleys, mountains, deserts, rivers and oceans. He also created mankind with different languages, colours, intentions and abilities, and a variety among them, differences in the power of

understanding and comprehension, their deeds, and ultimately earning happiness or misery. Allah put every organ in their bodies in its rightful place where they most need it to be. Thus Allah says: *وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ، أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ* (... and in your own selves! So, do you not perceive?51:21). Out of the innumerable signs of Allah's power which are present everywhere in the universe, including the heavenly and celestial beings and creatures, only those signs are referred to here which are available on earth, because they are very close to man's experience, and he resides and moves about among them. The present verse now speaks of man himself. Man is required to ponder on his own body, its limbs and organs. Every single part of the body testifies to the boundless Wisdom of Allah, and it will make him realize that his small being represents and encompasses almost all the divine signs that are scattered in the vast universe. That is why man is termed as 'the universe in miniature', because all types of creation are present in his existence. If a man thinks of all phases he has passed through right from his birth till his death, he may perceive the power of Allah Ta'ālā as if he discerns Him clearly.

The Development of the Sperm and Embryo in the Womb

Human microscopic sperm and egg is an amazing phenomenon. It is made up of foodstuff and tenuous particles from various parts of the world. If the sperm establishes itself in the mother's womb, then more material is added to it, and it changes into a red clot. It then changes and becomes a shapeless lump of flesh, like a piece of meat with no form or shape. Then out of this shapeless lump bones are fashioned; then the bones are clothed with flesh; and it starts to take on a form and shape, developing a head, arms, chest, stomach, thighs, legs, feet and all its members. A wonderful brain is placed under its skull in whose complicated layers lie all mental abilities. Thus equipping it, Allah sends an angel to it who breathes the soul into it. After the completion of its creation, it is brought into this world where he develops from infancy to full adulthood to old age. Then he gradually progresses from zero level of knowledge and consciousness to an intelligent, rational and active being. The human forms and shapes are so different that no two faces are identical in millions and billions of people even in a small area. Furthermore, there are differences in their temperaments, dispositions and habits. There is unity in this diversity. All this is the marvel of the perfect power of Allah who has neither partners nor rivals: *فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ* "So blessed is Allah, the Best Creator!"(23:14)

Man experiences all this not from outside himself, but within himself, day and night. Only a person who is absolutely blind and senseless will ever deny the existence of Allah. Therefore, at the conclusion of the verse, the Qur'an poses the rhetorical question: أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ "So, do you not perceive?" (21) A person need not be very intelligent to understand the facts of life. If his sight is intact, he can arrive at the right conclusion.

وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ (And in the heavens, there is your sustenance and all that you have been promised.... 51:22). The plain and simple interpretation of this is that 'in heaven' here means what has been written in the Preserved Tablet (*Al-Lauh-ul-Mahfūz*). It is clear that man's sustenance, what has been promised to him and whatever its consequences will be - are all preserved in the Preserved Tablet. Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd Khudrī رضي الله عنه reports that the Holy Messenger ﷺ said: "Even if someone tries to avoid and run away from his designated sustenance, he will not succeed, because his sustenance will pursue him just as he cannot run away from his death". (Qurṭubī) Some scholars say that 'sustenance' here signifies "rain". In this case 'heaven' will not refer to the body, arch or vault of the sky. It refers to anything that hangs overhead and covers things in its shade, including the celestial atmosphere and clouds from where the rain falls. The expression 'all that you have been promised' refers to Paradise and its delights. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

إِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْتُمْ تَنْطَفُونَ (...it [the Day of Recompense] is a reality, as sure as that you speak....51:23). It means that all of the matters relating to Judgement, Resurrection and Recompense that they have been promised shall certainly occur. Therefore, it is the truth, there being no doubt about it, so they should not doubt its coming, just as they do not doubt that they can speak. There are five physical sensations of perception: sight, hearing, tasting, feeling and smelling. Here 'speaking' has been singled out probably because the faculty of speech is the only one where there can be no trace of deception or illusion, whereas the other sensations, on account of ailments, can get contorted. Differences in hearing and seeing are known. In sickness the sensation of tasting gets reversed or distorted in some other way. Sometimes sweet things taste bitter and bitter things taste sweet. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 24 - 46

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ

فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا ۖ قَالَ سَلَامٌ ۖ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَرَاغَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ فَجَاءَ
بِعِجْلٍ سَمِينٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَأَوْجَسَ
مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً ۖ قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ ۖ وَبَشَّرُوهُ بِغُلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَأَقْبَلَتْ
أَمْرَاتُهُ فِي صَرَّةٍ فَصَكَّتْ وَجْهَهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالُوا
كَذَلِكَ ۗ قَالَ رَبُّكَ ۖ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٠﴾ قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ
أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾
لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّن طِينٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ مُّسَوَّمَةً عِندَ رَبِّكَ
لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مَن كَانَ فِيهَا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَمَا
وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِّنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا فِيهَا آيَةً لِلَّذِينَ
يَخَافُونَ الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَفِي مُوسَىٰ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ
بِسُلْطَنِ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَتَوَلَّىٰ بُرْكَانِهِ وَقَالَ سِحْرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ ﴿٣٩﴾
فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَفِي عَادٍ إِذْ
أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ ﴿٤١﴾ مَا تَدْرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ آتَتْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا
جَعَلَتْهُ كَالرَّمِيمِ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَفِي ثَمُودَ إِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَمَتَّعُوا حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ
﴿٤٣﴾ فَعْتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّعِقَةُ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾
فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مِنْ قِيَامٍ وَمَا كَانُوا مُتْتَصِرِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِّن
قَبْلُ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

Has there come to you the story of the honoured guests of Ibrāhīm? [24] When they entered unto him and said, "We greet you with *salām*." He said, "*salām* on you." (And he said to himself,) "(They are) unknown people." [25] Then he slipped off to his home, and fetched a fattened calf. [26] So he brought it close to them (to eat, but being angels, they refrained.) He said, "Would you not eat?" [27] So he felt some fear in his heart. They said, "Be

not scared." And they gave him the good news of (the birth of) a knowledgeable boy. [28] So his wife came forward with a clamour and slapped her own face and said, "(How can I have a child when I am) a barren old woman?" [29] They said, "This is how your Lord has said. Surely, He is All-Wise, All-Knowing." [30] He (Ibrāhīm) said (to the angels), "Then, what is your mission O messengers?" [31] They said, "We are sent to a guilty people, [32] so that we may send down upon them stones of clay, [33] marked, with your Lord, for the transgressors." [34] So, We let the believers who were there to come out (from danger), [35] but We did not find in it any Muslims, except one house. [36] And We left in this (event) a sign (of deterrence) for those who fear the painful punishment. [37] And (We left a similar sign) in (the story of) Mūsā, when We sent him to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) with a clear proof. [38] So he turned away along with his chiefs and said, " (Mūsā is) a magician or a madman!" [39] So We seized him and his army, and cast them into the sea, as he was the one who came up with culpable behaviour. [40] And (a similar sign was left) in (the story of) 'Ād, when We sent upon them the wind that was barren (from any benefit); [41] it spared nothing it came upon, but rendered it like a stuff smashed by decay. [42] And (a similar sign was left) in (the story of) Thamūd, when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a while." [43] Then they rebelled against the command of your Lord; so the thunderbolt (of divine punishment) seized them, while they were looking on. [44] Then they were neither able to stand upright, nor could they defend themselves. [45] And (We have destroyed) the people of Nūḥ before; indeed they were a sinful people. [46]

Comforting the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا ط قَالَ سَلَامٌ ("We greet you with *salām*." He said, "Salām on you." 51:25). The angels greeted him with *salāman* in the accusative case, whereas Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ responded to the greeting in the nominative case thus: *salāmun*. The nominative case in Arabic is a nominal sentence which carries the sense of greater strength, continuity and persistence. The Qur'ānic injunction is that 'when you are greeted with a salutation, greet one better than it...', so Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm

ﷺ, the Friend of Allah chose a better reply, implementing Allah's command: reciprocating the greeting with the term *salāmun* is stronger than the greeting using the term *salāman*.

قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ ("[They are] unknown people..." 51:25). The word *munkar*, the letter [m] carrying *ḍammah* and the letter [k] carrying *fath* means "unknown". As sin or sinful work is unknown in Islām, it is also referred to as *munkar*. The angels came to Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ in the image of handsome young wonderfully graceful men; therefore he could not recognize them. He thought to himself that these are strangers and said to himself 'They are unknown to me'. Or it is possible that he might have mentioned this to the guests in the form of a question and the purpose might have been to find out who they were.

رَاغٍ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ (Then he slipped off to his home - 51:26). *Rāgha* is derived from *rawgh* which means to slip out quietly. In other words, Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ discreetly went in the house in haste to arrange for meal for his guests, so that they do not sense it. Otherwise they would have stopped him.

Rules of Entertaining Guests

Ibn Kathīr says that this verse indicates proper manners for entertaining guests: Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ, the host, did not first mention that he would make food for them. He slipped out quietly, and brought the food to his guests quickly, while they were unaware that it was being prepared for them. Rather, he discreetly had it prepared and placed before them. He prepared the best kind of food he had, a young, fat roasted calf. Moreover, he did not place the food far from them and invite them to come close to it to eat. Rather, he placed it close to them فَعَرَّبَهُ 'brought it close to them' and refrained from ordering them to eat. Instead he invited them politely, kindly and cordially to partake thus أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ 'Would you not eat?' This statement in the form of a question is similar to one of us saying to a guest, 'Would you kindly partake of it - even if you are not hungry, at least for my sake?'

فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً (So he felt some fear in his heart...51:28). When the guests did not eat the food, the Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ conceived fear of them. In those days it was the custom of the noble people to entertain the guests who were expected to accept the hospitality of the host. If they

did not, the host would become apprehensive that there is some danger afoot - probably they are enemies who came to cause some kind of trouble for them. In those days, even the rogues and wrongdoers had the noble quality that they would not cause any harm to anyone whose food they had eaten. Hence refusing to eat was a sign of hostility or danger.

فَأَقْبَلَتِ امْرَأَتُهُ فِي صَرَوةٍ (So his wife came forward with a clamour,...51:29). The word *sharrāh* means vociferation or clamour or most vehement clamour of crying. *Sharīr* is the sound of a pen when it is writing. When Sayyidah Sārah رضى الله عنها heard that the angels were giving good news to her husband Ibrāhīm عليه السلام of the birth of a son, she thought that this news was as good to her as it was to her husband, for the son would be theirs, and therefore, they both were getting some good news. As a result, she involuntarily screamed loudly, she struck herself upon her forehead as women do when confronted with an amazing thing and said: and slapped her own face and said, "عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ" "A barren old woman?" meaning 'How can I give birth while I am an old woman? And even when I was young I was barren and could not have children.' The angels replied that Allah has power over all things and therefore this would happen even so: "This is how your Lord has said." Thus when Holy Prophet Ishāq عليه السلام was born, Sayyidah Sārah رضى الله عنها was ninety-nine years old and Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was one hundred years old. (Qurṭubī)

When, in the course of the conversation, Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام discovered that the guests were angels, he asked them what was their mission and they replied that they had been sent to the people of Lūṭ عليه السلام to destroy them as a punishment for their unspeakable crime. They would be stoned to death, but not with large stones. Small pebbles of baked clay would be sent down upon them: "مُسَوَّمَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ" "marked, with your Lord, for the transgressors."... 51:34), that is, pebbles conspicuously marked by Allah. Some scholars say that each stone bore the name of the person with which he was to be destroyed, and if he ran in any particular direction, he was pursued by the same stone. Other verses say that these people were destroyed by Jibra'il's عليه السلام turning their territory upside down. The two descriptions of the punishment are not mutually contradictory: Probably, the stoning incident took place first, and then the earth was turned upside down.

After the mention of the people of Lūṭ عليه السلام, the people of Mūsā عليه السلام,

Fir'aun and others are taken up briefly. When Mūsā عليه السلام delivered the message of truth to Fir'aun, the latter reacted thus: فَتَوَلَّىٰ بِرُكْنِهِ (So he turned away along with his chiefs,...51:39) The original word used for 'his chiefs' is *rukn* which means power. Here it is used to refer to his army and chiefs of his government. In the story of Lūṭ عليه السلام he has been mentioned saying, أَوَاوَيْتُ إِلَىٰ رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ (or that I had the backing of a strong group' The word *rukn* is used there in the same sense. (See Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 4/p. 658, 661: '...or that I had the backing of some strong group...')

After this, the stories of the people of 'Ād, Thamūd and Nūh عليه السلام are told. These stories were narrated many times before.

Verses 47 - 55

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَالْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمُهَيِّدُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَفِرُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ ط إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ ط إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥١﴾ كَذَلِكَ مَا آتَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا قَالُوا سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ ﴿٥٢﴾ أَتَوَاصَوْا بِهِ ط بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِمَلُومٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَذَكَرْ فَإِنَّ الدِّكْرَىٰ تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

And the sky was built by Us with might, and indeed, We are the One who expands. [47] And the earth was spread by Us as a floor; so excellent Spreader are We. [48] And from every thing We have created (a pair of) two kinds, so that you may receive advice. [49] So flee to Allah. Indeed I am a plain warner sent by Him for you. [50] And do not make up any other god along with Allah. Indeed I am a plain warner sent by Him for you. [51] In similar way, no messenger came to those before them, but they said, "(He is) a magician or a madman." [52] Have they handed down (this saying) to each other as a legacy? No, but they are a rebellious people. [53] So, turn away from them, for you are not blamed. [54] And

keep reminding, because reminding benefits the believers. [55]

Proofs of Allah's Oneness abound in the Creation of the Heavens and Earth

The preceding verses mentioned the reality of the Hereafter and the Judgement Day, and the punishment of those who denied the reality. The present set of verses reaffirm the perfect power of Allah, reminding us about the reality of the Day of Resurrection and allaying the doubt and suspicion of those who deny the reality. It proves the oneness of Allah and reiterates emphatically to believe in the Messenger ﷺ.

بَنَيْنَهَا بِأَيْدِيَنَا وَمَا لَنَا لِمُؤْسَعُونَ (And the sky was built by Us with might, and indeed, We are the One who expands.... 51:47). The word *aidin*, according to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, means strength or power in this context.

فَقَرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ (So flee to Allah....51:50). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said: "It means: Flee from your sins and take shelter in Allah for repentance." Abū Bakr Warrāq and Junaid Baghdādī رحمهما الله تعالى said that the base self of man and the devil invite him to commit sins, and they deceive him. He needs to take refuge in Allah who will protect him against their evil. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 56 - 60

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾ مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ
وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُونِ ﴿٥٧﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ ﴿٥٨﴾
فَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُنُوبًا مِثْلَ ذُنُوبِ أَصْحَابِهِمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾
فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ يَوْمِهِمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

And I did not create the Jinns and the human beings except that they should worship Me. [56] I do not want any sustenance from them, nor do I want them to feed Me. [57] In fact, Allah is the All-Sustainer, Possessor of power, the Strong. [58] So, those who did wrong deserve a share (in the punishment) like the share of their companions. So, they should not ask Me to hasten on. [59] Woe, then, to those who disbelieve because of the Day of

theirs that they are promised (for punishment). [60]

The Purpose of Jinn's and Mankind's creation

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (And I did not create the Jinns and the human beings except that they should worship Me."...51:56). This apparently may raise two questions: [1] If Allah has created a creature for a particular task, and it is His will that it should perform that task, rationally it is impossible for it to deviate from that task, because doing anything contrary to the will of Allah is inconceivable. [2] The purpose of *jinn's* and man's creation has been restricted to the worship of Allah whereas there are many other underlying reasons and benefits in their creation.

Scholars have made different approaches to solve these problems. Some say that this verse pertains to the believers only, that is, only believing *jinn* and believing mankind are created for worship and for no other task. It is obvious that the believers are more or less steadfast to worship. This is the view of Ḍaḥḥāk, Sufyān Thawrī and others. According to one version of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, the word *mu'minīn* does occur in the verse thus: 'وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ' 'And I have not created the believing *jinn* and mankind except that they should worship Me'. This version supports the view that the verse is only in connection with the believers.

Another answer to the question, given by Moulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī رحمه الله تعالى, is that: Allah has commanded all to worship, but at the same time He has equipped them with free will. Some of them exercised their God-given free will correctly and chose to worship Him, but others used their God-given free will incorrectly and deviated from worshipping Him. This is what Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه has said, as quoted by Baghawī. Tafsīr Mazharī gives a plain and simple explication of this verse: Allah has equipped every *jinn* and man with the innate capacity to worship. Some use the capacity rightly and succeed, while others employ it wrongly in sinning and fulfilling their base emotions, and thus destroy it. The Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يَهُودَانِهِ أَوْ نَجْرَانِهِ أَوْ يَمَجْسَانِهِ

"Every child is born according to the *fitrah* but his parents [cause him to deviate from the unadulterated propensity] and

turn him into a Jew or a Christian or a Magian."

According to the majority of the scholars, *fitrah* here refers to the religion of Islam. Just as this Tradition tells us that every man is born with the natural capacity for Islam and true faith, but his parents adulterate and destroy that capacity, and put him on to the ways of disbelief, in the same way the phrase 'except that they should worship Me' could mean that every member of jinn and mankind has the natural, inborn capacity to worship. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

Answer to the second question is that bringing any creation into being for the purpose of worship does not necessarily imply that they are unfit for other functions of life.

مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ (I do not want any sustenance from them, nor do I want them to feed Me...51:57). It means that by creating *jinn* and mankind, Allah does not stand in need of them, so that they will have to produce sustenance for Him or for themselves or for any of His other creations or that they earn to feed Him. This has been stated according to the general trend of people. The most affluent of men buys a slave and spends on him not for nothing, but he has an underlying purpose: He expects the slaves to work for him, help him in his tasks, fulfil his needs and earn livelihood for his master. Allah is immaculate, pure and above all these things. In creating human beings, He does not profit or benefit anything.

The word ذُنُوبٍ *dhanūb* in verse 59 is with *fath* on the letter [dh] which means a large bucket that is kept at the common wells of a locality for the purpose of drawing and filling water. A turn is designated for each of the persons using the large common bucket to draw out water from the well, so that he is conveniently able to fill it in his own private bucket in his turn. Thus the word here is employed in the sense of turn, share or portion. Hence it is translated above as follows: "So, those who did wrong deserve a share (in the punishment) like the share of their companions." The verse purports to warn the disbelievers that the past communities were given an opportunity to work. When each of these communities did not take advantage of the opportunity in their respective time and persisted in their evil course, they were punished and destroyed. Likewise, the present pagans of Makkah are designated a time and opportunity. If

they do not take advantage of the allocated time and opportunity and persist in their paganism, they will be punished in this world; otherwise the punishment of the Hereafter is most certain. They will thus meet with a fate similar to that of the opponents of former Prophets. Like them they will come to a sad end. This verse, in which the word *dhanūban* occurs, indicates that they will receive their due share of the torment, and it will surely come in due time; so they should not ask for it to be hastened on or rushed to them.

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt
Ends here

Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr

(The Mount)

Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr was revealed in Makkah It has 49 Verses and 2 Sections.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 28

وَالطُّورِ ﴿١﴾ وَكِتَابٍ مَّسْطُورٍ ﴿٢﴾ فِي رَقٍّ مَّنشُورٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَالْبَيْتِ
 الْمَعْمُورِ ﴿٤﴾ وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ ﴿٥﴾ وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّ
 عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ ﴿٧﴾ مَّالَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ ﴿٨﴾ يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَورًا
 ﴿٩﴾ وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا ﴿١٠﴾ فَوَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١١﴾
 الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ يَوْمَ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَىٰ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ دَعَا
 ﴿١٣﴾ هَذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ أَفَسِحْرٌ هَذَا أَمْ أَنْتُمْ
 لَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ إِصْلَوْهَا فَاصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوا ۗ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ
 إِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّةٍ وَنَعِيمٍ
 ﴿١٧﴾ فَكِهِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ ۗ وَوَقَّاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ
 ﴿١٨﴾ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ مُتَكِينِينَ عَلَىٰ
 سُرُرٍ مَّصْفُوفَةٍ ۗ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ

عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۝ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ ﴿٢١﴾ وَأَمَدَدْنَاهُمْ
بِفَاكِهَةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ يَتَنَزَّعُونَ فِيهَا كَأَسَا لَا لَعْوُ
فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْتِيهِمْ ۝ وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤُ
مَكْنُونٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا
كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَدْنَا عَذَابَ
السَّمُومِ ﴿٢٧﴾ إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ ۝ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٨﴾

By the mount of Ṭūr, [1] and by a book, written [2] on an unrolled scroll, [3] and by the Populated House (Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr), [4] and by the roof, raised high, [5] and by the sea, filled up with fire, [6] the punishment of your Lord is sure to fall. [7] There is nothing to push it back, [8] the Day when the sky will tremble, a horrible trembling, [9] and the mountains will move about, a terrible movement. [10] So, woe to those who reject (the true faith), [11] who are indulged in vain talk, playing (with truth), [12] the Day they will be pushed to the Fire forcefully, [13] (and it will be said to them,) "This is the Fire you used to deny. [14] Is it then magic, or do you not see? [15] Enter it. Now, whether you act patient or impatient, it is all the same for you; you are merely rewarded for what you used to do." [16] Of course, the God-fearing will be in gardens and bliss, [17] enjoying what their Lord will give to them, and their Lord will save them from the punishment of Hell. [18] (It will be said to them,) "Eat and drink pleasantly because of what you used to do, [19] relaxing on lined up couches". And We will marry them with big-eyed houris. [20] And those who believed and their children followed them in belief, We will join their children with them, and will not curtail (the reward of) any of their deeds at all. Every person will be pledged for what he earned. [21] And We will give them a lot of what they desire from fruits and meat. [22] They will snatch from one another (in a friendly manner) a glass (of wine) in which there is neither an absurd talk, nor something leading to sin. [23] And they will be frequented by the serving boys of their own, (neat and clean) as if they were hidden pearls. [24] And they will advance to one another, asking (about each other). [25] They will say, "Indeed we were

afraid (of Allah's punishment) when we were amidst of our family, [26] but Allah did favour to us and saved us from the torment of Fire's scorching breath. [27] We used to pray to Him before. He is surely the Most-Kind, the Very-Merciful. [28]

Commentary

وَالطُّورِ (By the Mount Ṭūr,...52:1) The word Ṭūr in Hebrew means a mountain that has trees [as opposed to *jabal* a mountain that does not have trees {Trn.}]. Here Ṭūr stands for mount Sinai which is situated in the land of Madyan where the Holy Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام had the honour of Allah's speaking to him. Some reports narrate that there are four mountains of Paradise in this world, and one of them is Ṭūr (Qurtubī). Swearing an oath by Ṭūr carries a special significance and honour of the mount. It also signifies that certain injunctions have been revealed by Allah for people to follow. Compliance with them is obligatory.

وَكِتَابٍ مَّسْطُورٍ فِي رَقٍّ مَّنشُورٍ (and by a book, written on an unrolled scroll....52:2-3) The word *raqq* means fine parchment or fine piece of skin, used for the purpose of writing on it. It is, therefore, usually translated as paper. Here it could be referring to man's account-book of deeds or, according to some of the scholars, it stands for the Qur'an. (Qurtubī)

Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr

وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ (and by the Populated House [Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr],...52:4) *Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr* is the *Ka'bah* in the heaven meant for the angels' service and is parallel to the *Ka'bah* on earth. According to a Tradition in Ṣaḥīḥain that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said about his Ascension to the seventh heaven: "Then, I was taken to *Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr*. It is visited every day by seventy thousand angels who will not come back to visit it again " because every day other new angels take their turn to visit it. (Ibn Kathīr)

Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr is the *Ka'bah* of the angels who reside in the seventh heaven. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached the seventh heaven on the Night of Ascension, he saw Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام reclining with his back on *Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr*. It was Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام who built the *Ka'bah* on earth, and thus the reward is compatible with his action in that Allah Ta'ālā has blessed him with a special connection with *Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr* (Ibn Kathīr).

وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ (and by the sea, filled up with fire...52:6) The word *baḥr* means sea and the passive participle *masjūr* is derived from *sajr* which is used in several different senses, one of which is to kindle with fire. Some of the commentators interpret the participle in this sense here, that is, by the sea which will be kindled with fire on the Day of Resurrection, just as Allah said in another verse وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ "And when the seas will be kindled with fire". In other words, it will be kindled with fire and become a raging fire surrounding the people in the plain of hashr. This was reported by Sayyidnā Sa'id Ibn Musayyab from Sayyidnā 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib ؓ. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, and 'Ubaidullāh Ibn 'Umar ؓ also report likewise. (Ibn Kathīr)

A Jewish person asked Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ 'where is the Hell?'. He replied 'the sea'. The Jew, who was the scholar of the previous scriptures, confirmed this. (Qurṭubī) Sayyidnā Qatādah ؓ and others interpreted the phrase to mean 'filled sea'. Ibn Jarīr رحمه الله تعالى preferred this interpretation (Ibn Kathīr). ' This is the interpretation adopted by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī رحمه الله تعالى.

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ مَّا لَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ (the punishment of your Lord is sure to fall. There is nothing to push it back,...52:7-8) Verses 1-6 constituted swearing of an oath, and the present verse is *jawab-ul-qasam* or the fact for which the oath is sworn, assuring that the torment of Allah will come to pass, and none will be able to avert it.

The Incident of Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ

Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ one day recited Sūrah Ṭūr. When he came to these verses, he heaved a cool sigh after which he fell ill for about twenty days. During his illness the people would visit him, not knowing what caused his illness. (Ibn Kathīr)

Sayyidnā Jubair Ibn Muṭ'im ؓ says that before embracing Islam, he once went to the holy city of Madinah to negotiate regarding the prisoners of the battle of Badr. When he arrived there, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was reciting Sūrah Ṭūr in Maghrib *ṣalāh* and his voice could be heard outside the mosque. When he recited verses [7] and [8]: 'The punishment of your Lord is sure to fall. There is nothing to push it back,' He suddenly felt that his heart would burst through fear. He instantly embraced Islam. He felt at the time that he would not be able to move unless the torment would descend on him. (Qurṭubī)

يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا (...the Day when the sky will tremble, a horrible trembling, ...52:9) The lexicographical denotation of the word *mawr* is violent shaking, or movement caused by unrest. This verse describes the violent movement of the heavens on the Day of Resurrection.

The Believing Children of the Righteous will benefit from their relationship with their Believing Parents in Paradise

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ (And those who believed and their children followed them in belief, We will join their children with them,... 52:21) Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbas رضي الله عنه reports from the Holy Prophet ﷺ who said:

"Verily, Allah elevates the ranks of the believers' children to the rank of their parents, even though the latter do not deserve the same rank as their parents deserve, so that the eyes of the parents are comforted." (Ḥākīm, al-Baihaqī in his Sunan, al-Bazzār, Abū Nu'aim in al-Ḥilyah, ibn-Jarīr and ibn-Abī Ḥātim as quoted by Mazharī [Tr.]

It is recorded in Ṭabarānī that Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله تعالى عنه reports "Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said, [and I think he reports this from the Holy Prophet ﷺ]:

"When a person enters Paradise, he will inquire about his parents, and wife and children [as to where they are]. He will be told that they have not attained your grade. [Therefore, their place is elsewhere in Paradise]. The person will say: 'O Lord! I had worked not only for myself, but for all of them.' Allah will command that they all be kept together with him in the same rank of Paradise." (Ibn Kathīr)

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn-Kathīr, having quoted all these Traditions, says that it is certainly Allah's grace and favour that He grants the children this blessing because of the righteous deeds of their parents. He also grants His favour to parents on account of their children's praying Allah for them. Imām Aḥmad has recorded that Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه has reported the following statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

"Verily, Allah shall elevate the grade of a righteous servant in Paradise, who will ask: 'O Lord! How did I earn this?' Allah will reply: 'Through your son's invoking Me to forgive you.'" (ibn-Kathīr says that this Tradition has an authentic chain of transmitters, but was not recorded in Ṣaḥīḥain this way. However there is a corroborating narration (*shāhid*) for it in

Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairah. [Tr.]

وَمَا أَلْتَنَّهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ (...and will not curtail (the reward of) any of their deeds at all...52:21) The past perfect verb *alatna* is the first person plural of *alāta* which literally means to decrease, to reduce or to diminish (Qurṭubī). The verse means that for upgrading the children of the believers who died in the state of true faith, no part of the reward of their parents will be diminished for them to make up for the children's deeds. In fact, this equalization will take place as a result of Allah's grace.

Allah's Fairness to Sinners

كُلُّ امْرِيٍّ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ (Every person will be pledged for what he earned.) After Allah mentioned His favour of elevating the children to the ranks of their parents, even though the deeds of the former did not qualify them, He affirmed His fairness in that, He does not punish anyone for the sins of others. Therefore, every person will be responsible for his actions. No sins committed by others shall ever be added to one's load, even if committed by his parents or children. (Ibn Kathīr)

Verses 29 - 49

فَذَكِّرْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ
شَاعِرٌ تَتَّبِصُ بِهِ رَيْبَ الْمُنُونِ ﴿٣٠﴾ قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ
الْمُتَرَبِّصِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَحْلَامُهُمْ بِهَذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاعُونَ
﴿٣٢﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقْوَاهُ ۚ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِثْلَهُ
إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ
﴿٣٥﴾ أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ۚ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ
خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ هُمُ الْمَصْيطِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ فِيهِ ۚ
فَلْيَأْتِ مُسْتَمِعُهُمْ بِسُلْطَنِ مُبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمْ الْبَنُونَ
﴿٣٩﴾ أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَغْرَمٍ مُثْقَلُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ
الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ۗ فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمْ

الْمَكِيدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ ۞ أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ ۗ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ
 ﴿٤٣﴾ ۞ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَّرْكُومٌ
 ﴿٤٤﴾ ۞ فَذَرَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ ۞ يَوْمَ
 لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ ۞ وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ
 ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ ۞ وَاصْبِرْ
 لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ ﴿٤٨﴾ ۞
 وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ ﴿٤٩﴾ ۞

So keep reminding (them), because by the grace of your Lord, you are neither a soothsayer, nor a madman. [29] Do they rather say, "He is a poet for whom we are awaiting the accident of death."? [30] Say, "Wait! I am waiting with you, too." [31] Do their intellects direct them to (say) this, or are they a rebellious people? [32] Do they rather say, "He has forged it (the Qur'an.)"? No, but they do not believe. [33] So, let them bring a discourse like this, if they are truthful. [34] Is it that they are created by none, or are they themselves the creators? [35] Or have they created the heavens and the earth? No, but they are sure of nothing. [36] Or do they have the treasures of your Lord, or have they acquired control (over them)?¹ [37] Or have they a stairway (to the heavens) by means of which they listen (to the divine decrees)? If so, their listener must bring a clear proof.² [38] Is it that He has daughters and you have sons? [39] Or is it that you (O prophet) ask them for a

- (1) This is an answer to one of the objections frequently raised by the disbelievers of Makkah against the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They used to ask why he was chosen for messengership, and not one of the outstanding chiefs of the tribe. The answer given in this verse is that the selection of prophets is the exclusive prerogative of Allah. He has the treasures of knowledge, and it is He who decides to whom they should be given. The attitude of those who raise objections against His decision is tantamount to claiming that the disposal of these treasures should have been in their hands, and they should have the decisive power to select prophets. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)
- (2) It means that their arguments against Islam having failed on rational grounds, the only possibility was that they had a direct link with Allah whereby they have ensured that their faith was true, but no one could bring any proof of having such a link with Allah. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

fee, and therefore they are burdened with a debt? [40] Or have they the knowledge of the Unseen, and they are recording it? [41] Or do they intend to conspire (against the prophet)? Then the disbelievers themselves shall be the victim of the conspiracy. [42] Or do they have a god other than Allah? Pure is Allah from what they associate with Him. [43] And even if they see a piece falling down from the sky, they would say, "It is a cumulated cloud." [44]³ So, leave them until they face their Day in which they will be struck by a thunderbolt, [45] the Day their planning will not avail them in the least, nor will they be helped. [46] And for those who did wrong there is another punishment before that,⁴ but most of them do not know. [47] And (O prophet) be patient about the decision of your Lord, because you are before Our Eyes. And proclaim the purity of your Lord along with His praise when you stand (in Prayer), [48] And, in parts of night too, proclaim His purity, and at setting of the stars. [49]

Commentary

فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا (...you are before Our Eyes....) The hostility of the enemies towards, and their opposition to, and rejection of the Holy Prophet ﷺ depressed him. At the conclusion of the chapter, the Qur'an says 'You are before Our eyes', that is, under Our care and We shall protect you from every evil. Do not be anxious about it. On another occasion, the Qur'an says, وَاللَّهُ يَعْصُمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ 'And Allah shall protect you from the people'.

Then the verse goes on to say, وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ (And proclaim the purity of your Lord along with His praise when you stand [in Prayer]... 48). To proclaim the purity and praise of Allah is the real purpose of life, and also the real cure of every calamity. Thus the Qur'an enjoins it upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ. 'When you stand' could mean to stand up for the *Ṣalāh* or to arise or get up from sleep or bed. The latter meaning is

{3} This points out to the demand of the pagans of Makkah that they would not believe in the Holy Holy Prophet ﷺ unless he brings some pieces of the sky falling down from above. (See 17:92 and 26:187 in the Qur'an) The answer given is that even if Allah fulfils this absurd demand, they would still not believe and would seek other excuses like claiming that the mass they are seeing is nothing but a cloud. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

{4} It refers to the punishments faced by the disbelievers right in this world, like famines and the deterrent defeat in the battle of Badr. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani).

preferred by Ibn Jarīr. This view is supported by the Tradition recorded in the Musnad of Imām Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal on the authority of Sayyidnā ‘Ubadah Ibn Samit رضي الله عنه who reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever gets up at night and recites:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ،
سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

"There is no God except Allah. He is One without partners. For Him is the kingdom and all praise is due to Him. He has power over all things. Glory be to Allah and all praise is due to Allah, and there is no God except Allah, and Allah is the Greatest. There is neither might nor power except with Allah."

Then, if he intends to pray, and performs prayer after ablution, the prayers will be accepted. (Ibn Kathīr)

Kaffārat-ul-Majlis : A recitation at the end of a meeting that expiates sins

Sayyidnā Mujāhid, Abūl Aḥwaṣ and other leading authorities on Tafsīr have interpreted "when you stand" in this verse to mean that when a person wants to stand from a gathering or a meeting, he should recite: سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ 'I proclaim Your Purity, O Allah, along with Your praise'. Sayyidnā ‘Aṭā’ Ibn Abī Rabāḥ, interpreting this verse, has said:

"When you stand from a gathering, proclaim the purity and praise of Allah. If you have done any good work, your good work will be increased and enhanced. If you had done any bad deed, these words of proclamation will serve as an expiation and atonement".

On the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

"Whoever sits in a gathering in which he speaks idle excessively, but says before he stands up to depart that gathering, سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ (I proclaim Your Purity, O Allah, along with Your praise, I testify that there is no God except You, I seek Your forgiveness, I repent to You.) Allah will forgive him what he has said in that gathering".

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ (And, in parts of night too, proclaim His purity, and at setting of the stars...52:49) 'Proclaiming the purity of the Lord in parts of

night' includes Maghrib and 'Isha' prayers, as well as the general *tasbīhāt* (proclamation of the purity of the Lord). The concluding part of this verse; "وَأَدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ" ...and at setting of the stars" refers to the *Fajr* prayer and the *tasbīhāt* recited at that time. (Ibn Kathīr)

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr
Ends here

Sūrah An-Najm

(The Star)

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 62 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 18

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ﴿١﴾ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ
عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ﴿٣﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ
﴿٥﴾ ذُو مِرَّةٍ ۖ فَاسْتَوَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ دَنَىٰ
فَتَدَلَّىٰ ﴿٨﴾ فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا
أُوْحَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾ مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ ﴿١١﴾ أَفَتُمْرُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ
﴿١٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ عِنْدَهَا
جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿١٥﴾ إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ ﴿١٦﴾ مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ
وَمَا طَغَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾ لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ ﴿١٨﴾

By the star when it goes down to set, [1] your companion (the Holy Prophet ﷺ) has neither missed the way, nor did he deviate. [2] And he does not speak out of (his own) desire. [3] It is not but revelation revealed (to him). [4] It is taught to him by one (angel) of strong faculties, [5] one of vigour. So he stood poised, [6] while he was on the upper horizon. [7] Then he drew near, and came down, [8] so as he was at a distance between two bows (joined together), rather even nearer. [9] Thus He (Allah) revealed to His slave what He

revealed. [10] The heart did not err in what he saw. [11] Do you quarrel with him in what he sees? [12] And indeed he saw him another time [13] by *sidrat-ul-muntaha* (the lote-tree in the upper realm), [14] near which there is *Jannat-ul-ma'wa* (the Paradise of Abode), [15] when the lote-tree was covered by that which covered it. [16] The eye neither went wrong, nor did exceed the limit. [17] He has indeed seen a part of the biggest signs of your Lord. [18]

Characteristics of Sūrah An-Najm

Sūrah An-Najm is the first chapter that the Holy Prophet ﷺ proclaimed in Makkah ('Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ has transmitted it - as in Qurtubī) and this is the first Sūrah in which a verse of *sajdah* (prostration) is revealed. The Holy Prophet ﷺ recited it and prostrated. A strange thing happened on this occasion: When the Holy Prophet ﷺ finished reciting the Sūrah before a mixed gathering of Muslims and disbelievers, and, along with his followers, he prostrated himself on the ground. The disbelievers too prostrated, except one proud and arrogant man (regarding whose name there is a difference of opinion (Tr.)) who took a handful of soil and, having applied it on his forehead, said, 'this is enough'. 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ [the transmitter of the Tradition] said that he saw this man lying dead in the state of disbelief [*kufr*]. (Bukhārī, Muslim and other compilers of Sunan - Ibn-Kathīr [condensed])

At the outset of this Sūrah, the truth of the Qur'ānic revelation and of the Divine claim is sought to be established. In a very exquisite and forceful style, it is stated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a true Messenger of Allah, and there is no room for any doubt about this.

Allah Swears that the Messenger is True

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ (By the star when it goes down to set,.... 53:1) The word *najm* means a star, and as a common noun every star is referred to as *najm*, and in that case the plural is *nujum*. There are however occasions when *najm* specifically refers to *thurayyā*. In this case it is used as a proper noun and it signifies "the Pleiades" which is a loose cluster of many (hundred) stars, (six of which are visible to ordinary sight). In this context, some scholars, taking the word as a proper noun, interpret *najm* as *thurayyā*. Farrā' and Ḥasan Baṣrī prefer the first interpretation, and take the word as a common noun (Qurtubī). This is the interpretation that

is adopted in the translation.

The verb *hawā* means to fall or plunge. When stars fall, they set. In this verse Allah swears an oath to show that the Messenger is true, and his words are a revelation from Allah, in which there is no room for any doubt. In Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt it has been explained in detail that the Creator, for various wise reasons, swears by whatever He wills among His creation, but His created beings only swear by the Creator. They are not allowed to swear by anything else. Here Allah has sworn an oath by the stars. Probably, the underlying wisdom in this is that as the Arabs are used to determine the course and direction of, and are guided in their travels by the movements of the stars in the sandy waste of Arabia, so they would now be led to the goal and end of their spiritual journey by the star *par excellence*, that is, by the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَى (your companion [the Holy Prophet ﷺ] has neither missed the way, nor did he deviate. [53:2] Verse [1] was *qasam* or oath and verse [2] is *jawāb-ul-qasam* or the subject for which oath is sworn. The verse means that the path towards which the Holy Prophet ﷺ is calling the people is the perfectly straight path leading to the desired goal of Allah's good pleasure. He is following the right guidance and has not deviated from the path of righteousness.

The Reason for Describing the Holy Prophet ﷺ as 'your companion'

The Qur'ān on this occasion, when referring to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, does not refer to him by his blessed name or refer to him as a Messenger or a Holy Prophet. In fact, it refers to him as *Ṣāhibukum* or "your companion". In this there seems to be a subtle rebuke to the pagans of Makkah, telling them in effect that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not an outsider, nor a stranger to them. He was their constant companion. He was born amongst them, he spent his childhood amongst them, and he grew up as a youth amongst them. He has lived amongst them a whole life-time, and they had always looked upon him as a paragon of honesty, integrity and truthfulness calling him "امين" (The Honest One). But now – after his claim of Prophethood – they dare impute to him such a heinous sin as forging lies against Allah. A man who withheld himself from telling lies about men, how could he possibly forge lies against Allah? How inconsistent is their attitude?

The Holy Prophet's Words are a Revelation from Allah

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ (And he does not speak out of (his own) desire. It is not but revelation revealed [to him]...53:3-4) The verses tell us that it is absolutely impossible for the Messenger ﷺ to forge lies and impute them to Allah. Nothing he utters is of his own wish or desire. He only conveys to the people what he was commanded to convey, in its entirety, without additions or deletions. An analysis of the various Traditions in Bukhārī indicates that there are many categories or types of *wahy* [inspiration or revelation]. Type one is that in which the wordings and the meaning are both directly from Allah. This is called Qur'ān. Type two is the one in which only the meaning comes from Allah, and the Messenger ﷺ expresses the meaning in his own words. This is called Ḥadīth or Sunnah [Tradition]. The subject of Ḥadīth, which comes from Allah, sometimes lays down injunctions or rules of conduct in clear and express terms, and at other times it establishes a general principle from which the Messenger ﷺ derives laws on the basis of *ijtihād* or analogy, and promulgates them. In this there does exist the possibility of mistake of judgement. But it is the characteristic of the Messenger ﷺ and other Prophets ﷺ that if they commit any error of judgement, Allah sends down a revelation to amend it, so that they do not unwittingly persist in their mistaken *ijtihād*. Unlike other scholars of *ijtihād*, who can persist in their erroneous conclusions. However, their error is not only forgiven, but they also receive one reward for exerting their utmost effort in comprehending the rule of religion to the fullest extent, as authentic and well-known Traditions bear testimony to this fact.

The foregoing discussion also allays the following doubt: It seems, according to the above verses, that the Messenger ﷺ does not speak of his own desire, but whatever he conveys to the people is a revelation from Allah. It follows from this that he does not exercise independent reasoning in any matter whatsoever, whereas authentic Traditions show otherwise. There are incidents recorded that at the beginning, he promulgated one law, but, later on, revelation descended and the law was changed. This is an indication that the earlier law was not the law of Allah, but it was based on his *ijtihād*. The foregoing paragraph already responded to this objection: The second type of revelation establishes a general principle of law from which the Messenger ﷺ derives laws on the basis of *ijtihād*, and

promulgates them. Because the general principle has descended from Allah, all the laws are said to be the revelation from Allah. Allah knows best!

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى (It is taught to him by one [angel] of strong faculties,... 53:5) From here upto the eighteenth verse, لَقَدْ رَأَى آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى the subject-matter is the revelation from Allah. It has been established that the Qur'an is a record of verbal revelation vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. There is no room for doubt about the fact that it is the very Words of Allah. It was sent down in such a way that no possibility of confusion or error ever existed.

Divergent Interpretation of the Verses of Najm

Regarding these verses of Sūrah Najm, two divergent interpretations of the leading commentators are reported. The summary of one interpretation is that all these verses relate to the incident of Mi'rāj (Ascension of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to the heavens). As a result, words and phrases like شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى *shadīd-ul-quwā* (One of strong faculties), *dhū mirrah* (one of vigour) فَاسْتَوَى *fastawā* (he stood poised), and دَنَى فَتَدَلَّى *danā fatadallā* (then he drew near, and came down,) are all qualities and actions of Allah. (It means that Allah Ta'ālā has taught the Holy Prophet ﷺ directly without any media, and that he came close to Him. The Qur'an further speaks of Vision [*ru'yah*] and Witnessing [*mushāhadah*]. They too have been taken to mean the Vision and Witnessing of Allah. Among the noble Companions, Sayyidnā Anas and Ibn 'Abbās ؓ have adopted this interpretation. In Tafsīr Maḥzarī too this interpretation has been given preference. Many noble Companions, *tabi'īn* [Companions' pupils] and other leading commentators, however, take these verses to refer to the event when the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw the noble angel Jibra'īl ؑ in his original shape. According to them, شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى *shadīd-ul-quwā* (one of strong faculties), and other qualities and acts mentioned in these verses are the qualities of Jibra'īl ؑ. There are many factors in support of this interpretation. Historically, Sūrah An-Najm is one of the very early Sūrahs and, according to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ, this is the first Sūrah the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited in public in the Sacred city of Makkah. Obviously, the incident of Mi'rāj took place much later. This argument, however, may be debatable. But the stronger proof in favor of the second interpretation is that in a tradition recorded in the Musnad of

Aḥmad, the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself interprets these verses that they relate to seeing the noble Jibra'īl عليه السلام

عَنِ الشَّعْبِيِّ عَنْ مَسْرُوقٍ قَالَ كُنْتُ عِنْدَ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا فَقُلْتُ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ يَقُولُ (وَلَقَدْ رَأَهُ بِالْأَفُقِ الْمُبِينِ، وَلَقَدْ رَأَهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى) فَقَالَتْ أَنَا أَوَّلُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْهَا فَقَالَ إِنَّمَا ذَاكَ جِبْرَائِيلُ لَمْ يَرَهُ فِي صُورَتِهِ الَّتِي خُلِقَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا مَرَّتَيْنِ رَأَهُ مُنْهَبِطًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ سَادًّا عِظَمَ خَلْقِهِ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ، أَخْرَجَاهُ فِي الصَّحِيحِينَ مِنْ حَدِيثِ الشَّعْبِيِّ. (ابن كثير)

Masrūq reports from Sha'bi رحمه الله تعالى: Masrūq ﷺ said: "One day I was sitting with Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها and I asked her. 'Did not Allah say (وَلَقَدْ رَأَهُ بِالْأَفُقِ الْمُبِينِ، وَلَقَدْ رَأَهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى) 'And indeed he saw him in the clear horizon' and 'Indeed he saw him another time' she replied: 'I was the first among the Ummah to ask the Holy Prophet ﷺ about it.' He said: 'That was Jibra'īl. He only saw him twice in his actual and real figure. He saw Jibra'īl descend from heaven to earth, and he was so huge that he covered the entire horizon between the sky and the earth." (Ibn-Kathīr)

The wordings of this narration in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim are almost the same as recorded above. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Hajar, in the chapter of Tafsīr of Faṭḥ-ul-Bārī, has narrated this tradition on the authority of Ibn Marduwayh in the following words:

أَنَا أَوَّلُ مَنْ سَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ هَذَا، فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَلْ رَأَيْتَ رَبَّكَ؟ فَقَالَ: لَا، إِنَّمَا رَأَيْتُ جِبْرَائِيلَ مُنْهَبِطًا. (فتح الباری، ص ٤٩٣ ج ٨)

Ṣiddīqah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها says: "I asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about It, and I said, 'Did you see your Lord?' He replied, 'No: I saw Jibra'īl descending.'" (Faṭḥ-ul-Bārī vol, 8/p, 493)

Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī records that Shaibani asked Sayyidnā Zirr about the meaning of the verses فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى فَأَوْحَى إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَى (so as he was at a distance between two bows (joined together), rather even nearer. Thus He [Allah] revealed to His slave what He revealed - 53:9,10) He replied that 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه narrated to us that Muḥammad ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام having six hundred wings. Ibn Jarīr, with his own chain of transmitters, reports that Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه, interpreting the verse 11: مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى ("The heart did not err in what he saw") says that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام clad

in *rafrāf* [green] garment filling the entire space between heaven and earth.

Ibn Kathīr's Findings

Ibn Kathīr has quoted all these narrations in his Tafsīr and said that in all the above-quoted verses perception and proximity refer to seeing and being close to Jibra'īl عليه السلام. From among the noble Companions, this is the view of the Mother of the Faithful Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها and of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Dharr Ghifārī, Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه and others. This is why Ibn Kathīr says:

Vision and proximity in these verses refer to seeing and being close to Jibra'īl عليه السلام when the Holy Prophet ﷺ had seen him for the first time in his original shape. Then he saw him for the second time on the night of Mi'rāj near *Sidrat-ul-Muntaha* (Lote-tree of the Uppermost Boundary). He saw him the first time at the very beginning of his Prophethood when Jibra'īl عليه السلام descended with the very first installment of revelation, and delivered to him Sūrah Iqra'. After that, there was an interval which caused terrible grief and [spiritual] depression. As a result, time and again, the thought crossed his mind that he should go to the top of the mountain and fall from there and give his life away. Whenever such a situation arose, Jibra'īl عليه السلام called out to him invisibly from the air: 'O Muḥammad! You are Allah's Messenger; you are true; and I am Jibra'īl.' The voice would calm his heart, and recompose it. Whenever such a thought crossed his mind, Jibra'īl عليه السلام would comfort him by his voice. But the comforting and consoling were always invisible. One day Jibra'īl عليه السلام was in an open field at Baṭḥā' in his original shape with six hundred wings which had covered the entire horizon. Then Jibra'īl عليه السلام came close to Allah's Messenger, and delivered the Divine revelation to him. On that occasion, the reality of the greatness of Jibra'īl عليه السلام and his majestic value in the sight of Allah became manifest to Allah's Messenger ﷺ.

In short, Imām Ibn Kathīr himself, on the basis of the statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself and the views of the blessed Companions, preferred this interpretation of the above verses of Sūrah An-Najm, that

is, it refers to seeing Jibra'īl عليه السلام and being close to him. This was the Holy Prophet's ﷺ first experience of seeing Jibra'īl عليه السلام in this world on the horizon of Makkah. Some of the versions narrate that when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw him in his actual and real shape for the first time, he became unconscious. Then Jibra'īl عليه السلام came very close to him in the shape of a human being [and he regained consciousness].

The second incident of Holy Prophet's ﷺ seeing Jibra'īl عليه السلام is mentioned in Verse 13 and 14 of this Sūrah in the following words: وَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزَلَهُ أُخْرَىٰ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ (And indeed he saw him another time [13] by *sidrat-ul-muntaha* (the lote-tree in the upper realm), [14]). This verse mentions that the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام for the second time, and this happened on the Night of Ascension (Mi'raj). On the basis of reasons stated above, the commentators generally adopt this interpretation. Ibn Kathīr's arguments have just been put forward. Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān, Imām Rāzī and others normally prefer this interpretation. My mentor Maulānā Ashraf Alī has also preferred this interpretation, the summary of which is that the earlier verses of Sūrah An-Najm which makes mention of *ru'yah* (seeing) does not refer to having a Vision of Allah, but of Jibra'īl عليه السلام. Nawawī, in his commentary on Muslim, and Ḥāfiẓ in Faṭḥ-ul-Bārī also have preferred this interpretation.

ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ (one of vigour. So he stood poised, while he was on the upper horizon...53:6-7] The word *mirrah* means 'strength' or 'vigour'. This is another quality of Jibra'īl عليه السلام, in that he is no weakling, but strong, mighty in power and firm, so that it may not be suspected that the devil may intercept the angel carrying the Divine revelation and snatch it away from him. Jibra'īl عليه السلام is so mighty in power and strength that the devil dare not come anywhere near him. The word *استوى* *istawā* means to be or become straight or to level. The verse means that when he saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام the first time, the latter was descending from the heaven. Having descended, he sat or settled straight on the highest part of the horizon. *Ufuq* [horizon] is qualified by *a'lā* [the highest part or uppermost] and it signifies that Jibra'īl عليه السلام was shown on the uppermost horizon, [so that he could be seen clearly] because the lower part of the horizon which seems to be adjacent to the earth is normally hidden from the sight [as a result he would not have been visible to the Holy Prophet ﷺ].

ثُمَّ دَنَى فَتَدَلَّى (Then he drew near, and came down,... 53:8). The word *danā* means to draw near and *tadalla* means to hang or to come down. The verse means that Jibra'īl عليه السلام drew near by coming down.

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى (so as he was at a distance between two bows (joined together), rather even nearer....53:9). The noun *qāb* refers to the distance between the curved handle of a bow and the tight chord that releases arrows. This distance is estimated about the length of one hand. The expression *qāba qawsain* is based on an ancient Arab custom, according to which when two persons pledged themselves to firm friendship, each one of them would turn the wooden part of their bows towards themselves, but they would turn the chord part towards the other. In this way when the chords of their bows were joined together, this used to be regarded as the proclamation of proximity, love and affection at the time of which the distance between the two persons would be two bows' length - approximately the length of two arms or one cubit. The expression *aw adnā* ('rather even nearer') signifies that the relationship of closeness was no ordinary one, it in fact was more intimate than could be conceived. The reason for the mention of such intimacy with Jibra'īl عليه السلام in the above verses is to confirm that the revelation which he delivered is indubitably and truly from Allah, and he heard it with absolute accuracy in every detail: There is no room for any doubt in this. This closeness and intimacy further allays the suspicion that the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have not recognized Jibra'īl عليه السلام and that the devil might interfere.

فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ (Thus He [Allah] revealed to His slave what He revealed... 53:10) The subject pronoun understood in the past perfect verb *awḥā* (He revealed) refers to Allah, and so does the pronoun in '*abdiḥī*' (His slave), and the verse means: Allah revealed to His servant Muḥammad ﷺ whatever He revealed through the medium of Jibra'īl عليه السلام by attaching him so intimately to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

An Academic Problem and its Solution

Here an apparent problem arises which at best can be described as academic, because it does not relate to a real situation. According to an overwhelming consensus of the *Mufasssirīn* and *Muḥaddithīn*, all the pronouns in the above verses refer to Jibra'īl عليه السلام. Likewise, all the pronouns in the sentences from *فَأَسْتَوَىٰ fastawā* to *فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى fa kāna qāba qawsaini aw adnā* refer to him. The forthcoming verses,

according to consensus of the commentators, also speak of Jibra'īl عليه السلام. Therefore, referring the intervening pronouns of *awhā* and 'abdihi' is contrary to the context and causes *intishār-uḍ-ḍamā'ir* (inconsistency of the pronouns).

Our honourable mentor Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Anwar Shah Kashmirī رحمه الله تعالى has responded to this problem thus: There is neither any contextual confusion here, nor any pronominal ambiguity. In point of fact, early part of Sūrah An-Najm in verse [4] it was mentioned إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ (It is not but revelation revealed [to him]...4)'. Now in verse [10] أَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ (So He [Allah] revealed to His servant whatever He revealed.) the same theme is continued, reinforced and consolidated in this way: Obviously, the One who sends down revelation is Allah Ta'ālā and none else. However, there is a medium through whom the revelation is delivered to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Verse [4] may be treated as a preamble to the theme of revelation. Verses [5-9] describe the strong qualities and other characteristics of the medium of revelation Jibra'īl عليه السلام. Verse [10] is thus the complement or epilogue to the preamble. In this verse there cannot be *intishār-uḍ-ḍamā'ir* because the antecedents of the pronouns in verse 10 cannot possibly be anyone but Allah. Thus the antecedent of these pronouns was determined from the very outset. In the phrase *māawḥā* 'whatever He revealed' is obscure or vague. *Mā* [whatever] is sometimes used to denote honour, surprise, magnificence, grandeur, splendor, opulence or for emphasis. Here it is employed to indicate 'the majestic or glorious status of revelation'.

It is learnt from a Ḥadīth recorded in chapter [1] of the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, that the revelation which was sent down at this time was the initial verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir [Chapter 74]. Allah knows best!

Thus marked by thematic and structural coherence, the Qur'an confirms that it is an absolutely true and veritable words of Allah. This may be compared to the Muhaddithins' study of Ḥadīth. In order to verify the authenticity of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ they trace in full the chains of authorities from themselves [that is, the last of the authorities] to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In these verses Allah sets up the chain of authorities: [1] Allah is the *Mūḥī*, that is, He is the Ultimate Source from where the revelation originates; and [2] Jibra'īl عليه السلام is the transmitting authority between Allah and the Messenger of Allah. The

above verses describe Jibra'īl عليه السلام as magnificent in status and mighty in power: This confirms his honesty and integrity as the transmitting authority.

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى (The heart did not err in what he saw....53:11) *Fu'ād* means heart, and the verse means whatever the eyes saw, the heart did not err in its grasping. This erring in the verse is described as *kidhb* [lying]. In other words, the heart did not lie in connection with the perceived objects. It did not err or slip up. In the phrase *mā ra'ā* 'what he saw', the Qur'ān does not specify what it saw. The blessed Companions and their followers, and the leading authorities on Tafsīr hold two divergent views as was discussed in detail earlier: [1] The phrase means it [the Holy Prophet's ﷺ heart] saw Allah (and this is the view of Ibn 'Abbās); and [2] others (like Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah, Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Hurairah and Abū Dharr Ghifārī رضي الله عنه) express the view that the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام in his original shape. The Arabic verb *ra'ā* originally means to see with physical eyes, and after having seen with physical eyes the heart grasps and comprehends. Thus the Holy Prophet ﷺ first saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام with his physical eyes, and then grasped and comprehended him with his heart. Therefore, there is no need to take the word *ru'yah* in the figurative or metaphorical sense of *ru'yah qalbiyah* [to see with the heart] as did Al-Qurṭubī.

One more question remains: In this verse *idrāk* [grasping, comprehending, discerning, cognizing and perceiving] has been attributed to the heart, whereas according to most famous philosophers, it is related to 'aql [the intellect] or the soul endowed with the faculty of speech. Answer to this question is that many verses of the Qur'ān show that the real centre of *idrāk* is the heart. Therefore, sometimes the word 'qalb (heart) is used for 'aql (intellect), as for example the word *qalb* (plural: *qulūb*) in the following verses bear ample testimony to this fact: لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا (for him who has a heart - 50:37) and لَّهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا (they have hearts with which they do not comprehend' - (7:179). *Qalb* (heart) here refers to 'aql (intellect) because heart is the centre of intellectual activities.

وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى، عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى (And indeed he saw him another time by *sidrat-ul-muntahā* [the lote-tree in the upper realm]...53:13-14). Here too there are two views regarding the antecedent of the pronoun *hu* (him):

[1] that it refers to seeing Allah; or [2] that it refers to seeing Jibra'īl (جبرائيل). The adverb نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى *nazlatan 'ukhrā* [another time or at another descent], according to overwhelming majority, this *nuzūl* refers to the second descent of Jibra'īl (جبرائيل). The first vision was experienced in this world on the uppermost horizon of Makkah. The second vision was experienced on the seventh heaven near the Lote-Tree of the Uppermost Realm. Obviously, the Holy Prophet ﷺ went up to the seventh heaven on the Night of Mi'rāj. Thus it is possible to determine the approximate time of the second experience, which took place on that occasion. The word *sidrah* literally denotes lote-tree and *mundaha* means the place of *intihā* [end]. Thus *sidrat-ul-muntahā* is the Lote-Tree on the seventh heaven under the Throne of the Gracious Allah. According to a narration in Muslim, the Tree is on the sixth heaven. Reconciliation is possible between the two apparently conflicting versions in that its root is on the sixth heaven and its branches are spread on the seventh heaven (Qurtubī). Generally the access of angels ends at this point, and therefore, it is called *mundahā* (the end). Some Traditions inform us that the Divine injunctions first descend from the Divine Throne to the *sidrat-ul-muntahā* which are handed over to the relevant angels. Similarly, angels going up from the earth to the heaven with Books of Deeds etc. convey them to this point. Then there may be some other way for their presentation to Allah Almighty. This subject is reported from 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) as recorded by Imām Aḥmad in his Musnad.

عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى (near which there is *Jannat-ul-ma'wā* [the Paradize of Abode],... 53:15) The word *ma'wā* means 'abode' and a place where one resides or reposes comfortably. The *Jannah* (Paradize) is called *مَأْوَى ma'wa* because this is man's original abode. This is where 'Ādam and Ḥawwa' عليهما السلام were created; from here they were sent down to the earth; and this is where the people of Paradise will be sent back to reside permanently.

The Present Locale of Paradise and Hell

This verse verifies that Paradise exists at the present moment, as is the belief of the overwhelming majority of the Ummah. They believe that Paradise and Hell have been created and are already in existence. This verse pointed out that the location of Paradise is on the seventh heaven under the Divine Throne. In other words, the seventh heaven is, as though, the floor of Paradise and its roof is the Divine Throne. The

location of Hell is not explicitly stated anywhere in the Qur'ān or Prophetic Traditions. Some scholars of the Qur'ān deduce from the verse [6] of Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ (and by the sea, filled up with fire,) that Hell is situated beneath the sea in the deep recesses of the earth which are presently hidden under some heavy covering. On the Day of Resurrection, it will be split asunder, and the sea will be kindled, thus turning the entire ocean into a raging and blazing fire.

Many European excavators and explorers of the current age made attempts to dig into the ground in order to build roads so as to travel around from place to place for many long years. For this task, they invented the largest and most sophisticated machinery. Various groups of scientists and experts exerted efforts in this direction. The most successful group was the one who by means of various types of machinery was able to dig six miles deep into the recesses of the earth, but beyond that they came across immovable rocks which frustrated them. They attempted to excavate in another place and dug for six miles and again came across unshakeable rocks beyond which they could not dig. In this way they experimented in many places and came to the conclusion that beyond the depth of six miles into the recesses of the earth there is a rocky covering on the entire earth at that level where no machinery can penetrate. The earth covers thousands of miles in diameter but despite advances and strides made in sciences they could have access only to the depth of six miles. Beyond that point they acknowledged the existence of impenetrable rocky covering and abandoned their attempts. This scientific experiment to excavate and explore supports the notion that the entire earth is covered with adamantine rocks, and access beyond them is not possible. If any authentic narration proves the location of Hell in this rocky covering, it should not come as a surprise. Allah knows best!

إِذْ يَعْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَعْشَى (when the lote-tree was covered by that which covered it...53:16) Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim records a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ who said: "Golden butterflies were at that time falling on *sidrat-ul-muntahā* from all sides, and it seemed as if it was specially decorated for that occasion in honour of the most revered guest, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ."

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى (The eye neither went wrong, nor did exceed the limit...53:17) The verb *zāgha* is derived from the infinitive *zaigh* which

denotes to become crooked or go astray. *Ṭaghā* is derived from *ṭughyān* which means to transgress or exceed the limit. The two expressions purport to say that in whatever the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw, his eyes did not err or slip up. This verse allays the suspicion that sometimes human sight errs or slips up, especially when some wonderful or unusually marvelous thing is seen. In response to this suspicion the Qur'ān uses two expressions because there are two ways in which human sight can go awry: [1] not looking at the object directly that one was supposed to see, and turning the eye to some other side. *Mā zāgha* (neither went wrong) negates this situation. The Holy Prophet's ﷺ sight did not swerve or turn right or left, and thus did not miss the intended object. He saw exactly what was meant for him to see. [2] looking at the desired object, but at the same time looking at other objects also. In this situation too there is sometimes the fear of losing sight of the main object and causing confusion. *Mā ṭaghā* (nor did it exceed the limit) in the verse is used to remove this doubt that the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have looked at other things in addition to what he was ordained to see.

Scholars who interpret the preceding verses as referring to the vision of Jibrā'il عليه السلام explain this verse to mean that the eye of the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not err in seeing him. This had to be clarified because Jibrā'il عليه السلام is the transmitting medium. If the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not see him clearly and recognize him, the revelation would not be beyond doubt.

Scholars who interpreted the preceding verses as speaking of Allah's Vision interpret this verse too in the same vein that the eyes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not err or slip up in the Vision of Allah. This verse further clarifies that the Vision was with the physical eyes, not only with the eyes of the heart.

Another Approach to Interpreting the Preceding Verses: A Useful Analysis

Our venerable mentor Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Anwar Shah Kashmirī رحمه الله تعالى was a typical example of the Traditionalists who preceded him. He no doubt was a symbol of Allah and His proof on earth. His grasp of knowledge and Islamic sciences was without a doubt an exact replica of the leading authorities on the sciences of Prophetic Tradition like Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar and Dhahabī. His *Mushkilāt-ul-Qur'ān* is an invaluable treasure trove of the profoundest study of Islamic knowledge

and sciences. The noble Companions and their followers, and subsequently the scholars of Tafsīr and Ḥadīth have interpreted the verses of Sūrah An-Najm differently which gave rise to some scholarly questions. *Mushkilāt-ul-Qur'ān* interprets the verses in such a way that most of the different views have been reconciled.

Then when my another mentor Shaikh-ul-Islam Maulānā Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī رحمه الله تعالى wrote his *Fath-ul-Mulhim*, the commentary of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, he came across the description of the Holy Prophet's nocturnal journey of *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* with reference to the verses of Sūrah An-Najm. In view of the complexity of the problem, he requested the venerable Allāmah Anwar Shah رحمه الله تعالى to write the interpretation and made it a part of his *Fath-ul-Mulhim*, and adopted it in his *fawā'id-ul-Qur'ān*. In this way this research is the unanimous outcome of the two of my most distinguished teachers and mentors. Before reading on, it is necessary to keep in mind a few principal points which are recognized by almost all the scholars and leading authorities: [1] the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Jibra'il عليه السلام twice in his original shape. The vision on both the occasions is mentioned in this chapter. We were able to determine that the second vision took place on the seventh heaven near *sidrat-ul-muntahā*. Obviously, this happened on the Night of *Mi'rāj*. In this way, we know the time and locale of the vision. The locale and time of the first vision cannot be determined by these verses, but they can be determined by the following narration of Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, chapter entitled: 'How the revelation started':

قال وهو يحدث عن فترة الوحي فقال في حديثه بينا انا امشي اذ سمعت صوتا من السماء فرفعت بصري فاذا الملك الذي جاءني بحراء جالس على كرسي بين السماء والارض فرعبت منه فرجعت فقلت زملوني فانزل الله تعالى يا ايها المدثر قم فأنذر (الى قوله) والرجز فاهجر فحمى الوحي وتتابع.

Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh رضي الله عنه said, speaking of the temporary break in revelation, [the Holy Prophet] said in his narrative: "Whilst I was walking along, I heard a voice from heaven and I raised up my eyes, and lo! The Angel that had appeared to me in [the cave of] *Hira'* was sitting on a chair [suspended] between heaven and earth, and I was struck with awe on account of him and I returned and said, 'Wrap me up, Wrap me up,' then Allah sent down [74: 1-5] يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ، وَرَبِّكَ فَكْبِّرْ. وَرَبَّابِكَ فَطَهِّرْ وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ. O you, enveloped in a mantle, stand up and warn, and pronounce

the greatness of your Lord, and purify your clothes, and keep away from filth, "Then revelation became copious and came in succession."

This narration indicates that the first occasion on which the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام in his original shape was in the course of temporary break in revelation in Makkah when he was walking along in the city of Makkah. This confirms that the first incident took place before Mi'rāj on this earth in Makkah, and the second incident took place on the seventh heaven on the Night of Mi'rāj.

Another point on which all concur is that the initial verses of Sūrah An-Najm, at least from verse [13] to verse [18], all relate to the incident of Mi'rāj.

In view of the foregoing points, the venerable mentor, Maulana Sayyid Muḥammad Anwar Shah Kashmiri رحمه الله تعالى has interpreted the initial verses of Sūrah An-Najm in the following way:

The Qur'ān, according to its normal style, has mentioned two incidents in the initial verses of Sūrah An-Najm. One incident relates to seeing Jibra'īl عليه السلام in his original shape in Makkah when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was going somewhere when there was a temporary break in revelation. This incident took place before the incident of Isra' and Mi'rāj. The second incident relates to the night of Mi'rāj. Here it is mentioned that he saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام in his original shape together with some of the other greatest, wonderful, marvelous and glorious signs of Allah, and the possibility cannot be ruled out that these signs included the Vision of Allah Ta'ala Himself.

The main theme of the initial verses of Sūrah An-Najm is to confirm the prophethood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and to remove doubts about the authenticity of his revelation. Thus swearing an oath by the stars, Allah says that there are neither any voluntary nor involuntary errors in his instructions to the Ummah, nor does he say anything out of his own selfish desires. He only transmits to the people what he was commanded to convey, in its totality without additions or omissions. Jibra'īl عليه السلام was the transmitting agent, therefore his special characteristics and high position have been described in several verses. Another reason for giving a greater account of this Angel is probably

because the pagans of Makkah were not aware of this Angel, though they were aware of the Angels Isrāfīl and Mikā'il. At any event, having described the imposing and majestic qualities of Jibra'il عليه السلام in full, attention is drawn to the main theme of revelation. 'فَاَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ' 'So He [Allah] revealed to His servant whatever He revealed.' (verse 10). Up to this point there are ten verses, in the course of verifying the authenticity of revelation and messenger-ship, Jibra'il's عليه السلام qualities have been portrayed. If we analyze Jibra'il's عليه السلام qualities, it will be seen that they apply to the Angel directly and candidly. If we say that the qualities apply to Allah - as did some of the commentators - they can hardly apply to Him without a labored interpretation. For example, phrases like 'شَدِيدُ الْقُرَىٰ' 'one of strong faculties', 'ذُو مِرَّةٍ' 'one of vigour', 'ثُمَّ دَنَىٰ' 'Then he drew near, and came down, فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ' 'so as he was at a distance between two bows, rather even nearer.' can, though, be applied to Allah, but not without labored interpretation. However, they do apply appropriately to Jibra'il عليه السلام without any far-fetched interpretation. Therefore, with regard to the initial verses - in which there is reference to 'vision', 'closeness' and 'proximity'- it seems more appropriate to refer them to the 'vision' of Jibra'il عليه السلام.

However, from verse [11] 'مَا كَذَّبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ' 'The heart did not err in what he saw' to verse [18] 'لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ' 'He has indeed seen a part of the biggest signs of your Lord.' describes the incidents of Isrā' and Mi'rāj. Though in this passage too the vision of Jibra'il عليه السلام is mentioned, yet it is a part of 'many great signs' The possibility cannot be ruled out that the phrase 'greatest Signs' includes the 'ru'yat' (vision) of Allah' which is supported by authentic Traditions and the views of noble Companions and their followers, which cannot be overlooked or ignored. Verse [11] 'مَا كَذَّبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ' "The heart did not err in what he saw", means that what the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw with his eyes his blessed heart confirmed that he saw correctly, with no mistakes. 'Mā kadhaba' describes this situation and the particle 'Ma' [whatever] is general, referring to the vision of Jibra'il عليه السلام and whatever else he saw on the Night of Mi'rāj and above all the Vision of Allah Himself. This is supported by verse [12] 'أَفْتَمَّأَ رُؤُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ' 'Do you quarrel with him in what he sees?' This verse addresses pagans of Makkah that they should not dispute or be sceptical about what he saw [in the past] or will see in the future. Everything he

saw was the veritable truth and whatever he will see in the future will be a veritable reality. This verse did not say قَدْ رَأَى [...*qad ra'ā*] '...he saw' [using the past perfect tense] but rather عَلَى مَا يَرَى [*'alā mā yara*] which may be translated as '...will see' [using the future tense] which indicates that he will see him on the Night of Mi'rāj. Thus verse [13] وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى 'And indeed he saw him another time' is explicit on the point. This verse too has two possible interpretations: [1] he saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام; and [2] he saw Allah. That he saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام is perfectly obvious to any scholar. But there may be a hint to the fact that he saw Allah also, because seeing requires proximity and closeness to Allah, and the verse 14 عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى 'by *sidrat-ul-muntahā* (the lote-tree in the upper realm) indicates this closeness, meaning when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was near *sidrat-ul-muntahā* and had reached a high stage of nearness to Allah, he saw Him. The Tradition cited below supports the notion of the Vision of Allah:

وَأَتَيْتُ سِدْرَةَ الْمُنْتَهَى فَعَشَيْتُنِي ضَبَابَةً خَرَرْتُ لَهَا سَاجِدًا وَهَذِهِ الضَّبَابَةُ هِيَ الظُّلُّ
مِنَ الْعَمَامِ الَّتِي يَأْتِي فِيهَا اللَّهُ وَيَتَجَلَّى.

'When I reached *sidrat-ul-muntahā*, I was overshadowed by something like the cloud and I fell prostrate for it. On the Day of Resurrection, there will be something like clouds overshadowing in which His Majestic Descent will manifest.'

Likewise, verse [53:17] مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى (The eye neither went wrong, nor did exceed the limit.) includes both possibilities - vision of Jibra'īl عليه السلام and Vision of Allah - and it further proves that the this vision took place in the state of wakefulness with his physical eyes [that is, it was not a dream experience].

In sum, verses that relate to the Night of Mi'rāj and contain words pertaining to 'seeing' carry the equal possibility of seeing Jibra'īl عليه السلام and seeing Allah Ta'ālā Himself. Other scholars too have interpreted them as the Vision of Allah. The Qur'ānic words have possibility to be interpreted in that way.

The Question of the Beatific Vision of the Creator

All Companions, their immediate followers and overwhelming majority of the Ummah concur that the inmates of Paradise and the believers in general will see Allah. Authentic Traditions bear ample testimony to this

fact and verity. They indicate that the Vision and Witnessing of Allah is not impossible. However, human sight cannot bear to see Him in this mundane world, because the capacity of the eyes is not powerful enough. Thus nobody can see Allah in this world. Regarding the Hereafter, the Qur'an says

فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ

"You were heedless of this. Now We have removed your veil from you; so your sight today is sharp." [50:22]

Venerable Imām Mālik رَحِمَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى says that it is not possible for any human being to see Allah in this world, because his sight is perishable, and Allah is Eternal. In the Hereafter, man will be given non-perishable sight, as a result nothing will prevent it from the seeing Allah. Venerable Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ says something similarly. A narration recorded in Muslim in the following words makes the point explicit:

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنكُمْ لَنْ تَرَوْا رَبَّكُمْ حَتَّى تَمُوتُوا

"And know that you shall never see your Lord, until you die"
(Fath-ul-Bārī: vol 8/p. 493)

This indicates the possibility that if the Holy Prophet ﷺ is equipped with extraordinarily powerful faculty of sight, he should be able to see Allah in this world too on a special occasion. But on the Night of Ascension he was called in the most distinguishable manner from this world to see and witness the heavens, Paradise and Hell, and other great Signs of Allah and manifestation of His power. On this occasion, the Vision of Allah is an exception to the general rule, because he is out of the mundane world. The possibility of the Vision of Allah has thus been confirmed and verified.

So far we have proved that the possibility does exist, but the question is whether it really occurred. In this matter, the Traditions vary, and the Qur'anic verses are interpretable in two possible ways. Therefore, this question was always debatable among the Companions, their followers and leading authorities on religion. Ibn-Kathīr says that under the interpretation of these verses Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ verifies that the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Allah and a group of righteous predecessors have followed him. Other groups of Companions and their followers have

differed from this viewpoint. He further adduced the evidences of both the groups.

Likewise, Hāfiẓ رحمه الله تعالى in Fath-ul-Bārī [vol 8/p.494] under the Tafsīr of Sūrah An-Najm has cited the differences of the Companions and their followers and then quoted some such statements which reconcile the divergent views. He further says that Qurtūbī in his work *muḥḥim* prefers to observe silence in the matter and not to decide either way, because this question does not concern our practical life so that we have to choose a particular direction. The question concerns our belief system, in which case incontestable evidence is required. In any matter which cannot be proved incontestably, the rule is to observe silence. This author believes that this is the most sound and circumspect approach to the issue. Therefore, the arguments of the two groups have not been cited. Allah, the Pure and the Exalted, knows best!

Verses 19 - 28

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَنُوءَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَلَكُمُ
الذَّكْرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ ﴿٢١﴾ تِلْكَ إِذًا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا
أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ مَّا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ ۗ إِنْ
يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ ۚ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
الْهُدَىٰ ﴿٢٣﴾ أَمْ لِلإِنسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّىٰ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَلِللَّهِ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْأُولَىٰ
﴿٢٥﴾ وَكَمْ مِنْ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ لَا تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا مِنْ
بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَىٰ ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْآخِرَةِ لَيَسْمُونُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْإِنثَىٰ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ
عِلْمٍ ۗ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ ۚ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا ﴿٢٨﴾

Have you ever considered about the (idols of) *Lāt* and '*Uzzā*, [19] and about the other, the third, the *Manāt*,? [20] Is it that you have males and He (Allah) has females? [21] If so, it is a totally unjust division. [22] These are nothing but names you and your fathers have

invented; Allah has sent down no authority attached to them. They are following nothing but conjecture and what their own souls desire, while guidance from their Lord has surely reached them. [23] Is it that man gets whatever he wishes? [24] (No,) because to Allah alone belongs the (good of) the Hereafter and the former life (of this world). [25] And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession cannot benefit (any one) at all, but after Allah allows (it) for whomsoever He wills and pleases. [26] Those who do not believe in the Hereafter name the angels after the names of the females. [27] And they do not have knowledge about it. They follow nothing but conjecture, and conjecture is of no use in (the matter of) Truth. [28]

Refuting Idolatry

The preceding verses declared the Glory of Allah, His Majesty and Dignity. They further confirmed and verified in the fullest details the Prophet-hood and messenger-ship of Muḥammad ﷺ, and the preservation of his revelation. The present two verses imply a subtle rebuke to the Makkan pagans. The purport of the verses is to say to them that without any proof, instead of adoring such a Mighty and Powerful Creator and Lord, they stoop so low as to worship gods made of wood and stone. They allege that the angels are the daughters of God. According to other narratives, they also alleged that these idols are the daughters of God.

Pagans of Arabia had countless idols that they worshipped. However, there were three of them that were most popular, and they were worshipped by strong and powerful tribes of Arabia. The three idols were Lāt, 'Uzzā and Manāt. Lāt was the idol of the tribe of Thaḳīf or of the residents of Ṭā'if, 'Uzzā was the idol of Quraish, and Manāt was the idol of Banū Hilāl. They built houses for their idols to resemble the Ka'bah. After the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ demolished them. (Qurtubī)

قِسْمَةً ضَيْبِي (If so, it is a totally unjust division.... 53:22)" *Dīzā* means to act or behave unjustly or to defraud one of one's right or due. Therefore, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه interprets the phrase as unjust or unfair division.

Various Types of Zann

إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ ۗ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا (and conjecture is of no use in [the

matter of] Truth.... 53:28) The Arabic word *Zann* is used in several different senses, and one of them is baseless thoughts. This is the sense in which it is employed in the verse, because baseless thoughts were the cause of idolatry. And the verse purports to remove the cause. *Zann* is also used as the antonym of *yaqīn*. *Yaqīn* refers to assured or definitive knowledge about something that really exists, not the figment of someone's imagination. In this case, there is no room for any doubt or suspicion, as for instance knowledge gained from the Qur'ān and Prophetic Traditions uninterruptedly reported by an indefinite number of people or by such a large number that it is impossible that they should agree upon falsehood. As opposed to this certain knowledge, *zann* is sometime used for the knowledge that is based on a proof, and not on baseless thoughts, but the proof is not so certain as may rule out other possibilities, as for example, injunctions based on general narratives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The first type of injunctions is referred to as *qaṭ'iyyāt* or *yaqīniyyāt* and the second type is referred to as *ẓanniyyāt*. This type of *Zann* is recognized by Sharī'ah. There is ample evidence in Qur'ān and Sunnah of its recognition. The entire Ummah concurs that it is obligatory to act upon it. The above verse when denouncing *zann*, refers to the first type of *zann* which connotes baseless thoughts. Thus there is no contradiction.

Verses 29 - 32

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّى ۖ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿٢٩﴾
 ذَلِكَ مَبْلُغُهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ
 وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ اهْتَدَى ﴿٣٠﴾ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 لَا لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا
 بِالْحُسْنَى ﴿٣١﴾ ۗ الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَثِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشِ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ ۗ
 إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ۗ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ
 أَنْتُمْ أَجْنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ ۗ فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ۗ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ
 اتَّقَى ﴿٣٢﴾

So, turn away from him who turns away from Our advice, and seeks nothing but (pleasure of) the worldly life. [29] That is the limit of their excess in knowledge. Indeed only your Lord knows well about the one who has gone astray from his way, and He knows well about the one who has adopted the right path. [30] And to Allah belongs whatever there is in the heavens and whatever there is in the earth, so that He gives punishment to evil-doers for what they did and rewards those who did good for their good deed, [31] those who abstain from the major sins and from shameful acts, except minor involvements. Indeed your Lord is One of extensive forgiveness. He knows you more than anyone else (from a time) when He created you from the earth and when you were embryos in the wombs of your mothers. So, do not claim purity (from faults) for yourselves. He knows best who is God-fearing. [32]

Necessity of turning away from the Misguided People

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّى لَا عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا. ذَلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ (So, turn away from him who turns away from Our advice, and seeks nothing but (pleasure of) the worldly life.... 53:29-30)

A Special Warning

The Qur'an here describes the condition of those unbelievers who denied the Hereafter and the Day of Judgement. Regretfully, nowadays the Muslims have characterized themselves by the same condition as a result of Western education and material needs and desires. All our attempts to make progress in the fields of various branches of knowledge, sciences and arts pivot on, or revolve around, economics. They do not think even by mistake about *ma'ādiyyāt* (matters relating to the Life Hereinafter). We believe in the Holy Prophet ﷺ and hope for his intercession. But Allah commands the Holy Prophet ﷺ to withdraw from the people of misguidance and shun them. We seek refuge in Allah from such misguidance!

Allah Forgives the Small Faults, *Al-Lamam*

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْأَثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ (those who abstain from the major sins and from shameful acts, except minor involvements....53:32) The preceding verse praises those who follow the right guidance of Allah and do good deeds. In the present verse, it is stated that the good-doers are those who avoid major sins and, especially immoral sins and shameful

deeds. There is one exception made by the expression *lamam* [which will be elaborated upon later]. It means that they sometimes do commit minor sins [*lamam*] but that does not exclude them from the category of being *muḥsinīn* [good-doers].

The Companions and their followers interpret the word *لَمَّم* *lamam* in two different ways:

[1] Some commentators are of the view that it refers to small faults and minor errors which in Sūrah An-Nisā' has been described as *sayyi'at*:
 "إِنْ تَحْتَبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ
 out of what you have been forbidden from We shall write off your minor sins - 4:31". Ibn-Kathīr has reported this from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās and Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه;

[2] Some other scholars have held that *lamam* means, a sin that a person commits incidentally and then repents. After repentance, he never repeats it. Ibn Kathīr has reported a narration from Ibn Jarīr, first through Sayyidnā Mujāhid, and again through Sayyidnā 'Aṭā', from Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, and through Hasan Basri from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه. The gist of that narration too is that even if a person were to commit a major sin incidentally and repents, he will not be excluded from the ranks of the God-fearing people. Verse [135] of Sūrah 'Al-'Imrān:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاجِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرَ
 الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ .

And those who, when they happen to commit a shameful act or wrong themselves, remember Allah, then, seek forgiveness for their sins - and who is there to forgive sins except Allah? - and do not persist in what they have done, knowingly. [3:135]

It should be noted that overwhelming majority of scholars concur that if a person persists in a minor sin and continues to do it in a determined way so that it becomes a habit, it will no longer be a minor sin, but will turn into a major sin. Therefore, Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī has explained the word *lamam* as those small sins in which the doer does not persist.

Definition of Major and Minor Sins

This subject is taken up in full detail in Sūrah An-Nisā' in this book Vol. 2/pp404-410, under verse [31] "إِنْ تَحْتَبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ [31] "If you abstain

from major [sins] out of what you have been forbidden from, We shall write off your minor sins..." , [q.v.].

هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ أجنةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ (He knows you more than anyone else [from a time] when He created you from the earth and when you were embryos in the wombs of your mothers...53:32) The word *ajinnatun* is the plural of *janīn* which means embryo or foetus. This verse purports to say that man does not have knowledge of himself as much as Allah knows him. When he went through the various phases of his creation in his mother's womb, he did not have any knowledge or sense. But his Creator knows fully well how wisely He was creating him. Thus he is made aware of his inability and lack of sufficient knowledge. Having said this, he is further made aware of the fact that any good he does is not his personal accomplishment. The ultimate source of his achievement is Allah: It is Allah who has given him limbs, organs and other parts of the body to perform the righteous deeds; it is He who has equipped him with the ability to move his limbs; then He has created the urge, will and determination to perform righteous actions. Hence, not even the greatest righteous, pious and God-fearing person has the right to pride upon his works and behave arrogantly. Besides, no one yet knows what the end result of his activities will be. Yet the end result is the most important factor in our life. Therefore, pride and arrogance is meaningless.

The concluding part of the verse puts it thus:

فَلَا تَزْكُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ط هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ

So, do not claim purity [from faults] for your selves. He knows best who is God-fearing... (53:32).

In other words, the merit of a person lies not only in his outer actions, but in *taqwā* in one's heart and in his inner moral excellence and uprightness which endures till his death. Only Allah knows who is perfect in this quality.

Sayyidah Zainab bint Abī Salamah رضى الله عنها was named by her parents as *Barrah* which means 'righteous or upright'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the concluding part of this verse فَلَا تَزْكُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ (Do not claim purity for your selves.) and suggested the name be changed. Therefore, they changed her name to 'Zainab'. Imām Aḥmad records on the authority of 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Abī Bakrah رضى الله عنه that a person praised

another person in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He stopped him and said "If you have to praise a person, then say, 'according to my knowledge the person appears to be upright and God-fearing اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَلَا أَزْكِي عَلَى اللَّهِ and I cannot say that he is so in the sight of Allah as well'.

Verses 33 - 62

أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي تَوَلَّى ﴿٣٣﴾ وَأَعْطَى قَلِيلًا وَأَكْلَى ﴿٣٤﴾ أَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ
الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ يَرَى ﴿٣٥﴾ أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَى ﴿٣٦﴾
وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى ﴿٣٧﴾ أَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى ﴿٣٨﴾ وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ
لِلنَّاسِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى ﴿٣٩﴾ وَأَنْ سَعِيهِ سَوْفَ يُرَى ﴿٤٠﴾ ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ
الْجَزَاءَ الْآوْفَى ﴿٤١﴾ وَأَنْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَى ﴿٤٢﴾ وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ
أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَى ﴿٤٣﴾ وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَمَاتَ وَأَحْيَا ﴿٤٤﴾ وَأَنَّهُ خَلَقَ
الرُّوحَ الْجَبِينِ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى ﴿٤٥﴾ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ إِذَا تُمْنَى ﴿٤٦﴾ وَأَنْ عَلَيْهِ
النَّشْأَةُ الْآخِرَى ﴿٤٨﴾ وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَغْنَى وَأَقْنَى وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشُّعْرَى
﴿٤٩﴾ وَأَنَّهُ أَهْلَكَ عَادًا الْأُولَى ﴿٥٠﴾ وَثَمُودًا فَمَا أَبْقَى ﴿٥١﴾ وَقَوْمَ
نُوحٍ مِّنْ قَبْلُ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَظْلَمَ وَأَطْعَى ﴿٥٢﴾ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ
أَهْوَى ﴿٥٣﴾ فَغَشَّهَا مَا غَشَّى ﴿٥٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكَ تَمَارَى ﴿٥٥﴾
هَذَا نَذِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّذْرِ الْأُولَى ﴿٥٦﴾ أَزِفَتِ الْأَرْفَةُ ﴿٥٧﴾ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ كَاشِفَةٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ أَفَمِنُ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ تَعَجِبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾
وَتَضْحَكُونَ وَلَا تَبْكُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَأَنْتُمْ سَمِدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ فَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ
وَاعْبُدُوا ﴿٦٢﴾ سجد

Did you see the one who turned away, [33] and gave a little, and stopped? [34] Does he have knowledge of the Unseen whereby he sees (what he believes)? [35] Has he not been told of what was (revealed) in the scriptures of Mūsā [36] and of Ibrāhīm who fulfilled (his covenant)?

[37] (It was) that no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of the other, [38] and that a man does not deserve but (the reward of) his own effort, [39] and that his effort will soon be seen, [40] then he will be recompensed for it in full, [41] and that to your Lord is the end (of every one), [42] and that He is the One who makes (one) laugh and makes (him) weep, [43] and that He is the One who gives death and gives life, [44] and that He creates the pairs, male and female, [45] from a sperm-drop when it is poured (into a womb), [46] and that the second creation is undertaken by Him, [47] and that He is the One who gives wealth and preserves (it), [48] and that He is the One who is the Lord of Sirius (the star worshipped by pagans), [49] and that He has destroyed the earlier 'Ad, [49] and Thamūd, so spared none, [51] and (destroyed) the people of Nuḥ even before. Surely they were more unjust and more rebellious. [52] And He destroyed the overturned towns (of the people of Lūṭ) also, [53] so covered they were by that which covered. [54] Then, concerning which of your Lord's bounties would you remain in doubt? [55] This (Holy Prophet) is a warner from the (genus of the) previous warners. [56] The Imminent (Hour) has approached. [57] There is no one, beside Allah, to remove it. [58] Do you then wonder at this discourse, [59] and laugh (at it), and not weep, [60] while you are engaged in vain play? [61] Now, fall down in prostration and worship (Allah). [62]

Background of Revelation

Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr reports from Ibn Jarir that a person embraced Islam and one of his friends rebuked him for having abandoned his forefather's religion. He responded that he fears Allah's chastisement. The friend told him to make a certain payment to him, and he will take upon himself his punishment of the Hereafter. Thus he [the new Muslim] will be spared from the chastisement, and consequently he made the payment to him. The friend demanded more payment. After a scuffle, he made the additional payment to him, and for the balance a document was drawn up with signatures of witnesses. That person, according to Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, was Walīd Ibn Mughīrah who was inclined towards Islam. But his friend reproached him and took the responsibility of punishment upon his own shoulders.

أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي تَوَلَّى (Did you see the one who turned away,... 53:33) The

word *tawalla* literally means 'to turn the face away', and it connotes in this context a person who turns away from Allah's obedience.

وَأَعْطَى قَلِيلًا وَأَكْدَى (and gave a little, and stopped? ...53:34) The word *akda* is derived from *kudyah* which refers to a hard or stony piece of ground or clod that appears in the course of digging a well or a trench. As a result, the digger cannot dig any further. Thus the meaning of the verse is that at first he gave a little, then he stopped giving. In view of the incident narrated under the heading of "Background of Revelation", the meaning is quite clear. [For the person in that incident paid a little amount and then stopped payment.] Apart from this meaning, Sayyidnā Mujāhid, Sa'īd Ibn Jubair, 'Ikrimah, Qatādah and others interpret this word to imply that a person spent a little in Allah's way, then stopped it; or at first he was somewhat inclined towards Allah's obedience, and he obeyed Him for a while, and then gave it up [vide Ibn Kathīr].

أَعْنَدَهُ، عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ يَرَى (Does he have knowledge of the Unseen whereby he sees [what he believes]?...53:35) According to the story recounted in connection with the occasion of revelation, the verse means: The person who embraced Islam and later abandoned it because his friend assured him that he would bear the punishment in the Hereafter on his behalf, and spare him the pain. The fool believed him and took for granted the assurance given to him. Does he have the knowledge of the Unseen, so that he is able to see that the chastisement he deserves for disbelief will be taken over for sure by his friend? This is wholly a make-believe situation. He neither has the knowledge of the Unseen, nor can he take on the punishment of somebody else and save him. Apart from the story recounted in connection with the occasion of revelation, the verse would mean: Does this person, who stopped giving for fear of poverty and ended his acts of charity have knowledge of the Unseen and thus knows that if he does not stop spending, his wealth will go away? No. This is absolutely false. Such a person has neither the knowledge of the Unseen so that he is able to see that if he goes on spending, his wealth will be depleted and not replenished. He stopped spending in charity for righteous causes, and did not keep relations with kith and kin because of his miserliness, being stingy and out of fear of poverty. The Qur'an makes plain in [34:39]

مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهُ ۖ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

And whatever thing you spend, He replaces it. And He is the best of the sustainers. [34:39]