

Sūrah Al-Hāqqah

This Sūrah is Makki. It contains 52 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 52

الْحَاقَّةُ ﴿١﴾ مَا الْحَاقَّةُ ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا أُذْرِكُ مَا الْحَاقَّةُ ﴿٣﴾ كَذَّبَتْ
 ثَمُودُ وَعَادٌ بِالْقَارِعَةِ ﴿٤﴾ فَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِالطَّاغِيَةِ ﴿٥﴾ وَأَمَّا
 عَادٌ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ ﴿٦﴾ سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ
 وَثَمْنِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ ۖ حُسُومًا فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ فِيهَا صَرْعَى ۗ كَانَهُمْ أَعْجَازُ
 نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ ﴿٧﴾ فَهَلْ تَرَى لَهُمْ مِّنْ بَاقِيَةٍ ﴿٨﴾ وَجَاءَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَنْ
 قَبْلَهُ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةُ بِالْخَاطِئَةِ ﴿٩﴾ فَعَصُوا رَسُولَ رَبِّهِمْ فَاخَذَهُمْ
 آخِذَةٌ رَّابِيَةٌ ﴿١٠﴾ إِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَا الْمَاءُ حَمَلْنَاكُمْ فِي الْجَارِيَةِ ﴿١١﴾
 لِنَجْعَلَهَا لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً وَتَعِيهَا أَذُنٌ ۖ وَأَعْيَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾ فَاذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ
 نَفْخَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾ وَحُمِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ فَدُكَّتَا دَكَّةً وَاحِدَةً
 ﴿١٤﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ﴿١٥﴾ وَانْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَهِيَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
 وَاهِيَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾ وَالْمَلَكُ عَلَى أَرْجَائِهَا ۗ وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ
 يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمْنِيَةٌ ﴿١٧﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَى مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ ﴿١٨﴾
 فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَيَقُولُ هَؤُلَاءِ مِثْلُ مَا كُنْتُ بِنِيَّةٍ ﴿١٩﴾ إِنِّي

ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي مُلِئٌ حَسَابِيَهُ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَهُوَ فِي عَيْشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ﴿٢١﴾ فِي جَنَّةٍ
 عَالِيَةٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ قُطُوفُهَا دَانِيَةٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ كُلُّوا وَأَشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا ۚ بِمَا أَسْلَفْتُمْ
 فِي الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ ۖ فَيَقُولُ
 يَلَيَّتَنِي لِمَ أُوتِيَ كِتَابِيَهُ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَمْ أَدْرِمَا حَسَابِيَهُ ﴿٢٦﴾ يَلَيَّتَهَا كَانَتْ
 الْقَاضِيَةَ ﴿٢٧﴾ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيَهُ ﴿٢٨﴾ هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيَهُ ﴿٢٩﴾
 خُدُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ ﴿٣٠﴾ ثُمَّ الْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ ﴿٣١﴾ ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا
 سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ ﴿٣٢﴾ إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٣٣﴾
 وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَلَيْسَ لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هُنَا حَمِيمٌ
 ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَا طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ لَا يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا الْخِطِئُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾
 فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصَرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَا لَا تُبْصَرُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ
 رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَمَاهُوَ يَقُولُ شَاعِرٍ ۖ قَلِيلًا مَّا تُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَ
 لَا يَقُولُ كَاهِنٍ ۖ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَدَّكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَلَمِينَ
 ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضُ الْأَقَاوِيلِ ﴿٤٤﴾ لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ
 ﴿٤٥﴾ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ ۖ فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ
 ﴿٤٧﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَتَذِكْرَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَإِنَّا لَنَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مِنْكُمْ مُّكَذِّبِينَ
 ﴿٤٩﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَحَسْرَةٌ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٥١﴾
 فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٥٢﴾

The Imminent Happening! [1] What is the Imminent Happening? [2] And what can let you know what the Imminent happening is? [3] Thamūd and ‘Ad had denied (the happening of) the Shocking Event (the Day of Judgment). [4] As for Thamūd, they were destroyed by that (dreadful cry) which exceeded all limits. [5] And as for ‘Ad, they were destroyed by a violent windstorm [6] that He imposed on them for seven nights and eight consecutive days, so you could see them thrown on the

ground, as if they were trunks of hollow palm-trees. [7] So, do you see any remnant of them? [8] And Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) and those before him and the overthrown towns came up with evil. [9] And they disobeyed the messenger of their Lord, so He seized them with an extremely severe seizure. [10] When the water overflowed (in the Deluge of Nūḥ ﷺ), We let you (O mankind,) board the floating ship, [11] so that We make it for you a reminder, and so that a preserving ear may preserve it. [12] Then, when the Trumpet will be blown for the first time, [13] and the earth and the mountains will be lifted and crushed into pieces with a single blow, [14] then on that Day the Happening will happen, [15] and the sky will burst apart, while it will have become frail on that day. [16] And the angels will be on its borders. And on that Day, the Throne of your Lord will be carried above them by eight (angels). [17] On that day, you will be brought forward in a way that no secret of yours will remain secret. [18] Now, as for him who is given his book in his right hand, he will say (to his colleagues), "Come here, read my book. [19] I was sure that I would encounter my reckoning." [20] So he will be in a well-pleasing life [21] in a lofty garden, [22] the fruits of which will be close at hand. [23] (It will be said to such people,) "Eat and drink with pleasure, as a reward for what you did in advance during past days." [24] As for him who will be given his book in his left hand, he will say, " Oh, would that I had not been given my book, [25] and I had never known what my account is! [26] Oh, would that it (death) had been the end of the matter! [27] My wealth has not been of any use to me. [28] My power has gone from me for good." [29] (Then it will be said to angels,) "Seize him, then put a collar around his neck, [30] then, in the blazing fire let him burn. [31] Thereafter, fasten him with a chain the measure of which is seventy hands." [32] Indeed, he did not believe in Almighty Allah, [33] and did not persuade (others) to feed the needy. [34] So, he has no friend here today, [35] nor any food except from that which flows from wounds when washing, [36] which is eaten by none but the sinners. [37]

I swear by what you see, [38] and what you do not see, [39] it is surely the speech of a noble Messenger, (that he conveys from Allah). [40] and it is not the speech of a poet, (but) little you believe, [41] nor is it the speech of a soothsayer, (but) little you heed to the advice. [42] It is

a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. [43] And had he forged some statements in Our name, [44] We would have certainly seized him by the right hand, [45] and then severed his life-artery, [46] so no one from you would have been an impediment against it. [47] And it is a Reminder for the God-fearing. [48] And, of course, We know that among you there are deniers. [49] And surely, it is an anguish for the disbelievers. [50] And it is surely an absolute truth. [51] So, pronounce the purity of the name of your magnificent Lord. [52]

Commentary

This Sūrah is almost wholly devoted to the subject of inevitability of the Resurrection, its horrors, the punishment of unbelievers and the reward of believers. The Day of Judgement is variously referred to in the Qur'ān, and in this Sūrah we encounter the following three names: الْحَاقَّةُ *Al-Ḥāqqah* 'Imminent Happening', الْقَارِعَةُ *Al-Qāri'ah* 'Shocking Event' and الْوَاقِعَةُ *Al-Wāqī'ah* 'Happening'.

The word الْحَاقَّةُ *Al-ḥāqqah* means an 'established fact, or inevitable event, reality or truth'. The word *Al-ḥāqqah* also means 'Something that provide evidence that something is true.' It can be applied to the Day of Judgement in both senses of the word, because in the first sense the Day of Judgement itself is an established truth, and its occurrence is a certainty. And in the other sense the Day of Judgement will prove to the believers the reality of Paradise and to the unbelievers the reality of Hell. This name of the Day of Judgement is followed by two questions regarding it. The questions have been put to make the readers realise how horrifying the experience would be - beyond normal experience or even imagination.

The word الْقَارِعَةُ *Al-Qāri'ah*, literally, means 'rumbling'. The Day of Judgement is so called because there will be rumbling sound which will cause agitation or terror in the hearts of people, and will dreadfully destroy the heavenly and earthly bodies and scatter them apart.

The word الطَّغْيَةُ *At-Ṭāghiyah* is derived from *ṭughyān* which means 'to exceed the limit', signifying an extremely severe punishment, that is, 'it would be such high pitched sound which would exceed the limit of any of the sounds of the mortal world, and the human heart or brain would not be able to bear'. When Thamūd exceeded the limit in denying the Day of

Judgement, they were destroyed by that dreadful cry which exceeded all limits. It was a combination of most high pitched sound of thunderbolt together with a flash of lightning that struck them which rent their hearts.

The phrase رِيحٍ صَرَصِرٍ (*rīḥin ṣarṣarin*) (in verse 6) refers to a violent windstorm which is also severely cold.

سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَتَمَنِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ (seven nights and eight consecutive days'... 69:7). According to some of the narratives, the punishment of windstorm started on Wednesday morning, and lasted till the following Wednesday evening. In this way, it makes up eight days and seven nights.

The word *ḥusūman* (in verse 7) is the plural of *ḥāsīm* and means 'cutting them off entirely' or 'causing them to perish completely'.

The word مُوتَفِكَتٍ *mu'tafikāt* (in verse 9) means 'adjacent to one another'. The towns of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, Sodom and Gomorrah, are so called because they were adjacent to each other or because when the punishment overtook the disbelievers and criminals [overthrowing their towns], they were all jumbled up.¹

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ نَفْخَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ (Then, when the Trumpet will be blown for the first time...69:13). Tirmidhī records a Ḥadīth on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه that *ṣūr* 'trumpet' is a horn-like object which will be blown on Doomsday.

نَفْخَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ('for the first time...69:13). It means that it will be a sudden and a single continuing sound that will last until all die. The texts of Qur'ān and Sunnah show that the trumpet will be blown twice on the Day of Judgement. The first trumpet is called *naḥkhat-uṣ-ṣa'aq* 'the trumpet of swoon', in connection with which the Qur'ān says:

فَصَبَقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

And all those in the heavens and all those in the earth will faint... [39:68]

With this trumpet all angels residing in the heavens and all Jinns and human beings and animals residing on earth will become unconscious

(1) Another possible meaning of *mu'tafikāt* is 'overthrown' as mentioned by several exegetes. The translation in the text is based on this meaning.

and fall to the ground. Whilst they are in the state of unconsciousness, they will die. The second trumpet is called *nafkhat-ul-ba'th* 'trumpet of Resurrection'. The word *ba'th* means 'to rise'. With this trumpet all the dead will rise from death and stand up. The Qur'ān describes this situation thus:

ثُمَّ نَفَخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَىٰ فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ

Thereafter, it will be blown once again, and suddenly they will stand up, looking around. [39:68]

In other words, then the trumpet will be blown a second time and at once they will be standing upright looking on.

According to some narratives, a third 'trumpet' will also be blown before the two trumpets, which is referred to as *nafkhat-ul-faza'* ('the trumpet of fright or panic). By a careful analysis of all the narratives and texts, it appears that the first trumpet in its initial stage is *nafkhat-ul-faza'* and in its final stage it will become *ṣa'aaq* 'the trumpet of swoon or death'. [Maḏharī]

وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَنِيَّةٌ (...And on that Day, the Throne of your Lord will be carried above them by eight [angels]....69:17). In other words, on the day of Judgement, eight angels will bear the Throne of the Raḥmān above their heads. According to some of the Prophetic narratives, before the Judgement Day this task will be carried out by four angels. On the Judgement Day, four more angels will be added to carry out the task.

As to what is the Throne of the Raḥmān, what is its reality, its form and shape, how the angels carry it - are transcendental matters and are all beyond human intellect. Allah is beyond time, space and matter, and therefore we are not permitted to pursue these matters pertaining to Him to determine its exact meaning. The noble Companions, their pupils and the righteous elders took the attitude that they simply believed in all transcendental matters and never questioned about them. Whatever Allah means by them is the Truth. Their nature and reality are unknown.

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَىٰ مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ (On that day, you will be brought forward in a way that no secret of yours will remain secret...69:18). In other words, on the Day of Judgement people will be exposed - no concealed act they did will stay concealed. Nothing is concealed from Divine knowledge and

sight even today. The Plain of Gathering has been particularly mentioned in this connection probably because the entire ground will be levelled out as a plain surface. There will be no caves nor mountains, no buildings nor houses nor barriers of any trees. These are the things behind which people normally hide in the mortal world. On the Day of Judgement, none of these things will be available and there will be no possibility of hiding.

هَآؤُمْ أَقْرَأُ وَآ كِتَابِيَهٗ (Come here, read my book... 69:19). The word *hā'umu*, literally means, "come" but, idiomatically, it is used in the sense of the plural imperative verb *khudhū* "take". In other words, one who is given his record book in his right hand, he will be elated and, looking at the people around him, will say 'Here, take my account book and read it!'

هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيَهٗ (My power has gone from me for good...69:29). The word *sultān*, literally, yields the sense of 'power or overpowering'. Therefore, a government or state is referred to as *saltānah* and a ruler is referred to as *sultān*. In other words, when people gain power and political ascendancy in the world, they become proud, hold sway over other people, perpetrate injustices and commit atrocities. But in the Hereafter all that will vanish and be lost, and the unjust and proud rulers will have no army to obey or support them. They will be miserable and helpless creatures who will not be able to defend themselves.

The word *sultān* also stands for 'authority, proof or argument' in which case it would mean : 'Today I have no argument in favour of protecting myself against punishment'.

خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ (Seize him, then put a collar around his neck... 69:30). This instruction will be given to the angels to seize the guilty one and truss him up by putting a collar around his neck - though, however, the wordings of the verse do not mention who will seize and who will truss him up. Narratives indicate that when this order will be issued, everything, like submissive and obedient servants, will rush to apprehend him.

ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ (Thereafter, make him enter into a chain, the measure of which is seventy hands....69:32). The phrase 'make him enter into a chain' could be interpreted metaphorically as 'bind him in a chain' but it could be taken in its primary sense, that is, to pierce the chain through one side of the body, so that it could come out from the

other side of it like a string is passed through a pearl or the bead of a rosary. Traditional narratives seem to support the primary sense. [Mazhari]

فَلَيْسَ لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هَهُنَا حَمِيمٌ وَلَا لَطْعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِينٍ (So, he has no friend here today, nor any food except from that which flows from wounds when washing...69:35-36). The word *ḥamīm* means 'a sincere or bosom friend'. The word *ghislīn* with 'gh' bearing the *kasrah* [= i] refers to the water with which the pus and blood of the wounds of the inmates of Hell will be washed. The verses signify that on the Day of Resurrection he will have no friend that will support him or save him from punishment, nor will he have anything to eat except the filthy water with which pus exuding from the wound of the inmates of Hell might have been washed. The words 'nor any food' mean that they will not have any delectable food to eat. This statement does not negate things like *ghislīn* which are distasteful and reprehensible. Therefore, it does not contradict another verse which states that the inmates of Hell will eat *zaqqūm*.

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُونَ. وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُونَ (I swear by what you see, and what you do not see....69:38-39). This comprehends the entire body of creation. Some say 'what you do not see' refers to the Being of Allah Ta'ālā and His attributes. Others say 'what you see' refers to things of the mortal world, and 'what you do not see,' refers to things of the Hereafter. [Mazhari] And Allah, the Pure and Exalted, Knows best!

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ ﴿٤٤﴾ لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ ﴿٤٥﴾ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ
الْوَتِينَ ^{زصل} ﴿٤٦﴾

And had he forged some statements in Our name, We would have certainly seized him by the right hand, and then severed his life-artery,... (69:44-46)

The word *taqawwul* means 'to forge, fabricate or concoct' and the word *watīn* refers to 'aorta or life-artery'. This is the main artery that carries blood from the heart to other parts of the body. Once this artery is cut off, death occurs instantly.

The foregoing verses refute the outrageous thoughts of the disbelievers. They used to accuse the Prophet ﷺ of being a poet and a soothsayer. They said that the Qur'an was the word of a poet or the word of a soothsayer. The Qur'an denounces their argument - it is not the word

of a poet nor the word of a soothsayer; it is a revelation from Allah to His Messenger. In other words, in verses [37-38] it was claimed that all visible and invisible things prove that the Prophet ﷺ is Allah's true Messenger and that the Qur'ān is Allah's revealed Word and not the imaginary flight of a poet's mind or the wild conjectures of a diviner. In this and the preceding three verses another invincible argument is given in support of his claim. The argument is to the effect that if the Prophet ﷺ had been a forger of lies against Allah, Allah's strong hand would have seized him by the throat and cut off his life-artery and he would have certainly met with a violent death. The invincible argument is put forward in a strong language - assuming the impossible - to make the ignorant realise the worst-case scenario. The expression 'right hand' is used probably because when a convicted criminal is to be executed, the executioner stands in front facing the condemned person. The executioner's left hand faces the guilty person's right hand. The executioner holds the condemned person with his left hand and attacks him with his right hand.

A Cautionary Note

This verse refers to a theoretical situation relating to the Apostle of Allah ﷺ in particular that lest, God forbid, if he were to concoct a word and impute it to Allah, this is the way he would have been dealt with. A hypothetical situation is a possible situation, not an actual situation. Thus this does not necessarily set down a universal principle that any and every impostor, who lays claim to prophethood, would be destroyed as a matter of general rule. History records that many impostors laid claim to prophethood, but no such destructive punishment was ever imposed on them.

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ 'So, pronounce the purity of the name of your magnificent Lord. [69:52]'. It was shown in the preceding verses that Allah's Messenger never speak from his own whims and fancies. He only conveys pure revelation revealed to him by Allah. The Divine Word is a reminder and an admonition for the God-conscious people. Allah knows that despite knowing the absolutely incontestable truth many people will continue to reject it. Consequently, it will be a source of eternal remorse, disappointment and punishment in the Hereafter for the disbelievers. In the end, Allah says:

وَإِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ 'And it is surely an absolute truth. [69:51]'. In other words,

the Qur'an is undeniably the Truth of Certainty. There is no room for any doubt or suspicion in it.

Finally, Allah addresses the Prophet ﷺ to say:

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ 'So, pronounce the purity of the name of your magnificent Lord.' [69:52]. This signifies that the Prophet ﷺ should not pay any heed to the criticisms of the obdurate disbelievers nor should he feel distressed. He should rather pronounce the purity of Allah's name. This will relieve his distress and grief. On another occasion, the Qur'an says:

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ 'And We know that your heart feels distressed for what they say. [15:97]. So, proclaim the purity, and glory of your Lord and be among those who prostrate. [98]' The Prophet ﷺ is advised not to pay any attention to the disbelievers talking nonsense. The best remedy for his distress and grief is to glorify Allah, praise Him and prostrate before Him.

Abū Dāwūd records a narration from Sayyidnā 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir Juhanī رضي الله عنه that when the verse. فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ 'So, pronounce the purity of the name of your magnificent Lord. [52]' was revealed, the Prophet ﷺ instructed this *tasbīḥ* to be reserved for the posture of *rukū'* and when the verse سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى 'Pronounce the purity of the name of your most Exalted Lord. [87:1]' was revealed, he instructed this *tasbīḥ* to be reserved for the posture of *sajdah*. Therefore, by common consent of the *Ummah* these *tasbīḥāt* are recited in *rukū'* and *sajdah* respectively. According to overwhelming majority, it is *Sunnah* to recite them and repeat them thrice. Some scholars say it is obligatory.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ḥāqqah
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij

(The Stairways)

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 44 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 44

سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ ﴿١﴾ لِلْكَافِرِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَافِعٌ ﴿٢﴾ مِنَ اللَّهِ
ذِي الْمَعَارِجِ ﴿٣﴾ تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ
خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيلًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا
﴿٦﴾ وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا ﴿٧﴾ يَوْمَ تَكُونُ السَّمَاءُ كَالْمُهْلِ ﴿٨﴾ وَتَكُونُ
الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَا يَسْأَلُ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمًا ﴿١٠﴾ يُبْصِرُونَهُمْ ط
يَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِ لَوْ يَفْتَدِي مِنْ عَذَابٍ يَوْمِئِذٍ بِبَنِيهِ ﴿١١﴾ وَصَاحِبِتهِ
وَآخِيهِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَفَصِيلَتِهِ الَّتِي تُؤَيِّه ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا لَا تُمْ
يُنَجِّيهِ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا لَأَطْلَى ﴿١٥﴾ نَزَّاعَةً لِّلشَّوْىِ ﴿١٦﴾ تَدْعُوا مَنْ
أَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿١٧﴾ وَجَمَعَ فَأَوْعَى ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا
﴿١٩﴾ إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا ﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا ﴿٢١﴾ إِلَّا
الْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
يُصَدِّقُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ

﴿٢٧﴾ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَأْمُونٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَفْوَجِهِمْ
 حَافِظُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَرْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ
 مَلُومِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَمَنِ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعُدُونَ ﴿٣١﴾
 وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَتِهِمْ
 قَائِمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ
 فِي جَنَّةٍ مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَمَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قِبَلَكَ مُهْطِعِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾
 عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ عِزِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَيُطْمَعُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ
 يُدْخَلَ جَنَّةَ نَعِيمٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ كَلَّا ۗ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِمَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَلَا
 أُقْسِمُ بِرَبِّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ إِنَّا لَقَادِرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ خَيْرًا
 مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ فَذَرُّهُمْ يُخَوْضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ
 يُلْقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوْعَدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ يَوْمَ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ
 سِرَاعًا كَانَهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصْبٍ يُؤْفَضُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهُقُهُمْ
 ذِلَّةٌ ۗ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

A demanding person has asked for the punishment that is going to befall [1] the disbelievers, for which there is no one to avert [2] from Allah, the Lord of the stairways [3] to whom ascend the angels and the Spirit, in a day the length of which is fifty thousand years. [4] So, observe patience, a good patience. [5] They see it far off. [6] and We see it near. [7] (This punishment will befall) on the Day when the sky will be like dregs of oil, [8] and the mountains will be like dyed wool, [9] and no friend will ask about any friend, [10] (though) they will be made to see each other. A guilty person will desire that he may ransom himself from the torment of that day even by his sons, [11] and his wife and his brother, [12] and his kindred that sheltered him, [13] and all those on earth, then he may redeem himself. [14] By no means! It is the flaming fire [15] that will pull out the skin of the scalp. [16] It will call him who had turned his back and fled away (from the Truth,) [17] and accumulated

(wealth) and hoarded (it). [18]

Indeed man is created weak in courage, [19] very upset when touched by evil, [20] and very niggard when visited by good (fortune), [21] except the performers of *ṣalāh*, [22] who are regular in their *ṣalāh*, [23] and those in whose riches there is a specified right [24] for the one who asks and the one who is deprived, [25] and those who believe in the Day of Judgment as true, [26] and those who are fearful of the torment of their Lord - [27] - Indeed the torment of their Lord is not something to be fearless from. [28] and those who guard their private parts, [29] except from their wives and those (slave-girls) owned by their hands, because they are not to be blamed, [30] but the one who seeks (sexual gratification) beyond that, then such people are the transgressors, [31] and those who are careful about their trusts and covenants, [32] and those who are upright in their testimonies, [33] and those who take due care of their *ṣalāh*. [34] Those will be honored in gardens (of Jannah). [35]

So what has happened to those who disbelieve that they are rushing towards you [36] from the right and from the left, in groups? [37] Does every one of them aspire to be admitted to the garden of bliss? * [38] By no means! We have created them from what they know. [39]** So, I swear by the Lord of the points of sunrise and those of sunset, We are powerful [40] to bring those better than them in their place, and We are not to be frustrated. [41] So, leave them involved in pastime and play until they encounter their Day which they are promised, [42]__ the Day they will come out of the graves quickly, as if they were rushing toward idols, [43] with their eyes downcast, enveloped by ignominy. That is the Day which they were being promised. [44]

*. The disbelievers used to come to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in groups mocking at the Muslims, and denying the Islamic beliefs, including Resurrection. But at the same time, they used to claim, in ironical style, that they would enter the Paradise, and enjoy its bliss. This verse refers to this attitude of the disbelievers.

** Since their pretended aspiration to enter Paradise was merely a mockery, and in fact they intended to deny Resurrection, their denial is refuted in this verse by saying that admittedly Allah has created them from a lifeless drop of semen, as they knew it well, and a drop of semen is more difficult to be transformed into a perfect human being. If Allah has power to make it a living man, how easy it is for Him to give life to a dead body! Still, they do not believe in Resurrection. Then, how can they enter Paradise?

Commentary

سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ (A demanding person has asked for the punishment that is going to befall....70:1). The Arabic word *suwāl* / *su'āl* means to 'ask a question'. The word is used in more than one sense: [1] It could mean to inquire about something. In this sense, the Arabic word is followed by the preposition 'an' [about]; and [2] It is used in the sense of 'request'. In this sense, the word is followed by the preposition 'bi' [for] as in this instance.

Nasā'ī transmits a narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that this demanding person was Naḍr Ibn Ḥārith. In rejecting the Qur'ān and the Prophet ﷺ, he daringly demanded:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ تَنْزِلْنَا بِعَذَابٍ
الْيُسْرِ .

'O Allah, if this be indeed the truth [revealed] from You, then, rain down upon us stones from the heavens, or bring upon us a painful punishment. [8:32]

The result of this demand was that Naḍr Ibn Ḥārith was killed by Muslims in the Battle of Badr. (Maḥzarī, citing the narration of Ibn Abī Ḥātim). The Qur'ān, further setting down the factual position of the demanded punishment, says that the punishment is inevitable and will most certainly occur in this world or in the Hereafter or in both the worlds. It cannot be averted. The impending punishment is from Allah, the Lord of the stairways. The last statement is also the proof of the preceding statement, in that the punishment is from the Lord of the Ascending Steps. It is not possible for anyone to avert it.

The word *ma'ārij* is the plural of *mi'rāj* or *mi'raj*. It means a 'ladder or a staircase, having steps for reaching high places. The Divine attribute given in this verse as '*dhīl-ma'ārij*' [Lord of the stairways] means that He is the Lord of high degrees. This is the interpretation given by Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ؓ. Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ says that these stairways or higher rungs are seven heavens one above another, and '*dhīl-ma'ārij*' means '*dhīs-samāwāt*', that is to say, *mālik-us-samāwāt* [Lord of the heavens].

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ (to whom ascend the angels and the Spirit ...70:4). In other words, the angels and Jibra'īl ؑ ascend these levels which are one on top of the other. Although the word 'angels' include 'Jibra'īl ؑ',

his name is singled out specifically on account of his special honour.

(in a day the length of which is fifty thousand years.. ...70:4). This statement, grammatically, is connected to an understood verb, which is *yaqa‘u* [will occur]. The sense is that the inevitable punishment mentioned earlier will occur on a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years. Sayyidnā Abū Sa‘īd Khudrī ؓ narrates that the blessed Companions asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the length of the day that measures fifty thousand years. He replied: "I swear by the Being in Whose control is my life! The day for the believers will be lighter and less than the time during which they would perform an obligatory *ṣalāh*." (Transmitted by Aḥmad, Abū Ya‘lā, Ibn Ḥibbān, Baihaqī through a 'ḥasan' chain of narrators - Maḥzarī)

And the following *Ḥadīth* is reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ:

يكون على المؤمنين كمقدار ما بين الظهر والعصر اخرجہ الحاکم والبيهقى
مرفوعاً وموقوفاً. (مظہری)

"The time on this day for the believers will be like that between 'aṣr and maghrib". (This *Ḥadīth* is reported both in *marfū‘* and *mauqūf* ways, that is, in some versions, this is the statement of Abū Hurairah ؓ himself, while in others it is attributed by him to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.)

These *aḥādīth* indicate that the length of fifty thousand years is a 'relative term'. In relation to unbelievers the day would be as long as five thousand years, and in relation to the believers it would be as short as the time between 'aṣr and maghrib or even shorter.

The Length of the Day of Judgement - A thousand years or Fifty Thousand Years? An Analysis

According to the above verse, the measure of the Day of Judgement is fifty thousand years but, according to the following verse of Sūrah As-Sajdah, the length of the day is mentioned as one thousand years:

يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا
تَعُدُّونَ.

He manages (every) matter from the sky to the earth, then it (every matter) will ascend to Him in a day the measure of

which is a thousand years according to the way you count. [32:5]

Apparently, there seems to be a discrepancy between the two verses. The narratives cited earlier resolve this apparent contradiction. Length and shortness of time are relative concepts. It will be different according to different groups and their varying conditions. Relative to the entire body of die-hard unbelievers, it will measure fifty thousand years, and relative to the entire body of righteous believers, the day will be made so easy that it will seem easier than a person performing *ṣalāh* in this world. In between the two bodies of believers and unbelievers there may be some groups of unbelievers for whom the day will seem to be one thousand years. It is also relative to varying psychological conditions that a person might be experiencing. If a person is feeling upset or is experiencing excruciating pain, time will hardly seem to move for him. An hour sometimes seems like more than a day or even more than a week. When a person, on the other hand, is in comfort and peace, the longest time will seem the shortest.

Mazharī has interpreted verse [5] of Sūrah As-Sajdah differently. He says that the day of a thousand years mentioned here refers to one of the days of the phenomenal world. Jibra'il عليه السلام and other angels with him descend from the heavens to the earth and then ascend from the earth to the heavens. This is such a long journey that if man were to undertake it, it would take him a thousand years. Authentic *aḥādīth* report that the journey from heavens to earth takes five hundred years and the journey back from earth to the heaven takes another five hundred years, totalling a thousand years according to human travelling. Assuming man were to conquer this distance, a return journey would take him a thousand years between heavens and earth and back, although the angels cover this distance in a very short time. In short, verse [5] of Sūrah As-Sajdah refers to a day of the phenomenal world while the verse of Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij refers to the Day of Judgement which will be very much longer than the days of this world, the length and shortness of which will be experienced differently by different people according to their conditions. And Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا. وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا (They see it far off, and We see it near....70:6-7). In this context, the expressions 'far off' and 'near' do not refer to time or space, but 'far off' in terms of possibility and occurrence. The verse

purports to describe that the pagans see the occurrence of Resurrection as impossible, and Allah sees its occurrence not only possible, but a certain reality.

وَلَا يَسْتَلْ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمًا. يُبْصِرُونَهُمْ (and no friend will ask about any friend, (though) they will be made to see each other...70:10,11). The word *ḥamīm* means a 'sincere friend'. The context describes the horrors of the Day of Resurrection. On that Day, no bosom friend will inquire about his friend - let alone helping him. This is not because they will not be able to see each other. The Divine power, in fact, will make them see each other. Every person will be in a state of 'each for himself'. No person will be able to pay heed to the comfort or discomfort, pleasure or pain of others.

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا لَأُظَى. نَزَاعَةٌ لِّلشَّوَى (By no means! It is the flaming fire, that will pull out the skin of the scalp...70:15,16). The pronoun of *innahā* (it) refers to 'Fire' and the word *lazā* means 'the flaming fire'. The word *shawā* is the plural of *shawāh* and it refers to 'the scalp or the skin of the human head, and also the skin of the hands and the legs'. The verse describes that the Fire of Hell would be a raging blaze that will pull out the skin of the scalp.

تَدْعُوا مَنْ أَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلَّى. وَجَمَعَ قَاوَعَى (It will call him who had turned his back and fled away (from the truth.) and accumulated (wealth) and hoarded (it)...70:17,18). The phrase 'accumulated wealth' signifies 'wealth accumulated by unlawful means' and the phrase 'hoarded it' signifies 'not fulfilling the pecuniary obligations as imposed by the Sharī'ah', as is confirmed by authentic *aḥādīth*.

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا (Indeed man is created weak in courage...70:19). The *halū'*, literally, means 'one who is greedy, impatient, lacking courage'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says that the word *halū'* in the verse refers to a 'person who is greedy about unlawful wealth'. Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه says that the word refers to a 'miserly person'. Muqatil says that it refers to a 'person who is impatient and miserly'. All meanings attached assigned to this word are near-synonyms. The word *halū'* comprehends all these meanings. The verses that follow elaborate on the meaning of this word. In the meantime a doubt might arise here which needs to be disposed of. If it is objected that, according to this verse of the Holy Qur'ān, man is created weak in courage, in other words, it is man's nature

or his natural weakness, to be impatient, greedy and miserly - then it is not his fault, and why is he declared 'guilty'? This doubt may be allayed thus: Allah has created human nature such that it has the innate capacity to do good as well as evil. He has endowed him with intellect and intelligence. He has raised His Prophets with His Message and sent down His Books clearly stating the consequences of every action chosen by his free will. He has the right to choose between good and bad. Man, in this sense, will be declared 'guilty', and consequently punished on account of freely choosing to do the wrong deed, not on account of his inborn capacity. This interpretation is confirmed by the following verses that speak only of actions of choice.

إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا . وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا (very upset when touched by evil, and very niggard when visited by good (fortune)...70:20-21). This verse describes the fickle nature of man. When bad things happen to him he becomes desperate and upset, and loses patience. When good things come to him, such as wealth and comfort, he becomes begrudging and miserly in spending his wealth for good causes. 'Impatience', in this context, signifies 'that which is outside the limits of Shari'ah'. 'Niggard', in this context, signifies 'failing to fulfill pecuniary obligations imposed by the Shari'ah' as explained previously. The verses that follow make an exception of the righteous believers to the characteristics of the general body of human beings. This exception starts from *إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ* (except the performers of *ṣalāh*...70:22) and ends at *عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ* (regular in their *ṣalāh*.... 70:23)

The first exception is expressed with the words 'the performers of *ṣalāh*' [22]. Obviously, it means the believers, but referring to them as 'performers of *ṣalāh*' indicates that '*ṣalāh*' is the greatest sign and the essential characteristic of a believer. In fact, the only people worthy of the name 'believers' are 'the performers of *ṣalāh*'. The following verses describe the qualities of the performers of *ṣalāh*.

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ (who are regular in their *ṣalāh*...70:23). This means that the entire *ṣalāh* needs to be performed with due concentration. Imām Baghawī, on the basis of his own chain of narrators, transmits a narration on the authority of Abūl-Khair that they asked Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir رضي الله عنه about the meaning of this verse (23) whether it implies that they perform their *ṣalāh* constantly and always

without any break or non-stop, he replied that is not its meaning. It means they, from the outset to the end, perform it with due concentration - without an intentional deviation This is similar to the verse 2 of Sūrah Mu'minūn:

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ

'who are concentrative in their *ṣalāh* [23:2]'

Thus Verse 23 describes the quality of *Khushū'* ('humbleness) while Verse 34 وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ (and those who take due care of their *ṣalāh*) speaks of those who regularly offer it on its due time and take care of its general etiquette. Thus it may not be surmised that the subject-matter has been repeated. The qualities of the righteous believers given in forthcoming verses are almost the same as those given in Sūrah Al- Mu'minūn.

Rates of *Zakāh* are Specified by Allah

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ (and those in whose riches there is a specified right...70:24). This verse shows that the quantifications of *Zakāh* have been fixed by Allah. The details are recorded in authentic *aḥādīth*. These quantifications, whether relating to the *niṣāb* (the minimum limit on which *Zakāh* is payable) or to the rate of payment, being fixed by Allah Ta'ālā cannot be changed by anyone at any time.

فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعُدُونَ (but the one who seeks [sexual gratification] beyond that, then such people are the transgressors...70:31). The preceding verse permitted to have sex with their wives and with slave-girls who are lawfully in their possession. The current verse prohibits sexual gratification beyond this limit. This verse also excludes women who, according to Shari'ah, fall within the prohibited degree. Similarly, *Mut'ah* (hiring a woman for a temporary period for the purpose of enjoying sex with her) is not a marriage according to Shari'ah, therefore, it is also included in the meaning of this verse.

Masturbation is Forbidden

According to most jurists, masturbation falls under the generality of verse [31], hence forbidden. Ibn Juraij says that he asked Sayyidnā 'Aṭā' رضي الله عنه about it and the latter replied that it is *makrūh* (reprehensible), adding that he heard that on the Plain of Ḥashr some people will come

whose hands will be pregnant. He feels these will be the people who used to satisfy their sexual lust with their hands. Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه says that Allah punished a nation who used to fondle with their private parts with their hands. A *Ḥadīth* reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said:

ملعون من نكح يده

"Cursed is he who marries his hand."

The chain of authorities of this *Ḥadīth* is weak. [Maḥzarī].

Rights of Allah and Rights of Human beings both are included in Trust Obligations

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رِعُونَ (and those who are careful about their trusts and covenants...70:32). The word *amānāt* is the plural of *amānah* 'trust and covenant' as in:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمْتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا

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

The use of plural number indicates that *amānah* does not only refer to 'that which people might deposit with a trustee for safe-keeping' but it also refers to 'all obligatory rights that are necessary to fulfill'. Breach of trusts and covenants is dishonesty. Trust obligations include all Divine rights, such as *ṣalāh*, *ṣiyām*, *ḥajj* and *Zakāh*, as well as all human rights, such as rights that Allah has imposed between human beings, or human beings themselves might have entered into binding contracts and covenants. Fulfilment of them is obligatory. Failure to comply with their terms and conditions would amount to breach, or dishonesty. [Maḥzarī, condensed].

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَاتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ (...and those who are upright in their testimonies, [70:33]'. The word *shahādāt* is the plural of *shahādah*. The use of plural number in this verse too indicates that there are many types and categories of 'testimony', and it is necessary to stand firm by one's testimony of any type. This includes testifying to the faith of Islam, Divine existence and His Oneness, and testifying that Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ is His Final Messenger. It is obligatory to testify to the crescent of Ramaḍān, if one has seen it. Giving a true and accurate

account of Shari'ah matters as expert witness, and in all judicial hearings is also implied. Everyone is duty-bound to offer the testimony when summoned. It is prohibited to add or omit any part thereof. According to this verse, it is obligatory to bear testimony, to be upright in it and stand firm by it.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij
Ends here

Sūrah Nūh

(Noah)

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 28 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 28

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرْ قَوْمَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
 أَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ قَالَ يَقَوْمِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ
 وَأَطِيعُوا أَوْصِيَاءَهُمْ يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُخَخِّرْكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۗ
 إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ ۗ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي
 دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا ﴿٥﴾ فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَائِي إِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿٦﴾
 وَإِنِّي كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوا أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ
 وَاسْتَعْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصْرُوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّي
 دَعَوْتُهُمْ جِهَارًا ﴿٨﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْلَنْتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا ﴿٩﴾
 فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴿١٠﴾ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 مِدْرَارًا ﴿١١﴾ وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ
 لَّكُمْ أَنْهَارًا ﴿١٢﴾ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ
 أَطْوَارًا ﴿١٤﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ﴿١٥﴾
 وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَاللَّهُ

أَنْبَتَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ إِخْرَاجًا
 ﴿١٨﴾ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا ﴿١٩﴾ لَتَسْلُكُوا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا
 فِجَاجًا ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِي وَاتَّبَعُوا مَنْ لَمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالَهُ
 وَوَلَدَهُ إِلَّا هَسَارًا ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَكْرُوهًا مُكْرًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَقَالُوا لَا تَذَرُنَّ
 آلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا ۚ وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا
 ﴿٢٣﴾ وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا ۗ وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَالًا ﴿٢٤﴾ مِمَّا
 خَطَبْتَهُمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأَدْخَلُوا نَارًا ۚ فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
 أَنْصَارًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دِيَارًا
 ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّكَ إِنْ تَذَرَهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا
 ﴿٢٧﴾ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَنْ دَخَلَ بَيْتِيَ مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
 وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۗ وَلَا تَذَرِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا تَبَارًا ﴿٢٨﴾

We sent Nūḥ to his people saying (to him), "Warn your people before a painful punishment comes to them." [1] He said, "O my people, I am a plain warner for you [2] to say that you must worship Allah, and fear Him, and obey me, [3] and Allah will forgive you your sins, and will defer you to an appointed term. Indeed when Allah's term comes, it is not deferred, if you only know!" [4] He said, "My Lord, I have called my people night and day, [5] but my call did not cause them to progress but in running away. [6] And whenever I called them, so that You forgive them, they put their fingers into their ears, and wrapped their clothes around themselves, and grew obstinate, and waxed proud in extreme arrogance. [7] Then I called them loudly, [8] then I spoke to them in public and spoke to them in private. [9] So I said, "Pray to your Lord for your forgiveness, Indeed He is Very-Forgiving, [10] and (if you do so,) He will cause the heavens to rain upon you in abundance, [11] and will help you with riches and sons, and will cause gardens to grow for you, and cause rivers to flow for you. [12] What has happened to you that you do not appreciate Majesty of Allah, [13] while He has created you in different phases? [14] Did you not see how

Allah has created seven heavens one upon another, [15] and has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a lamp? [16] And Allah has caused you to grow out of the earth a perfect growth, [17] then He will send you back into it, and will bring you forth once again. [18] And Allah has made the earth a spread for you, [19] so that you may go about its broad ways." [20]

And said Nuḥ, "My Lord, they disobeyed me, and followed him whose wealth and children added nothing to him but loss, [21] and they devised an enormous plan, [22] and said, "Never forsake your gods, and never forsake *Wadd*, nor *Suwā'*, nor *yaghūth* and *Ya'ūq* and *Nasr*. [23] And they have led many astray. And (O my Lord,) let not the wrongdoers progress in anything but deviation from the right path." [24] Because of their sins, they were drowned, and then admitted into the Fire. So they found no helpers for them besides Allah. [25] And said Nuḥ, "My Lord, do not leave on earth even a single inhabitant from the disbelievers (surviving). [26] If You leave them (surviving), they will lead Your slaves astray, and will beget none but a sinful disbeliever. [27] My Lord, grant pardon to me, and to my parents, and to everyone who enters my home as a believer, and to all the believing men and believing women, and do not increase the wrongdoers but in ruin. [28]

Commentary

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ (and Allah will forgive you your sins, __ 71:4). The particle *mīn* is often used to indicate division into parts, that is, to refer to only a part of an amount, group or number. If it is taken in that sense here, it would signify that by embracing the faith only those sins would be forgiven which pertains to the Divine rights because violation of human rights would be forgiven only when the believer fulfills the human rights which he has violated [such as pecuniary obligations] and if they cannot be fulfilled [such as hurting somebody physically or verbally], then the person who has been so hurt must first be requested to forgive. The *ḥadīth* which reports that by embracing the faith all sins are forgiven must be understood in the light of the foregoing explanation. In other words, the *ḥadīth* has the same conditions attached to it as the verse under comment, that is, violation of the rights of the human beings is not forgiven except upon fulfillment of those rights or seeking forgiveness from the victims of that violation. Other scholars of Tafsīr

interpret the particle *min* as *zā'idah*, (having no meaning, and added only because of usage). In this way, it signifies that all their sins would be forgiven. However, on the basis of other texts, this general expression is subject to the conditions mentioned above.

وَيُؤَخِّرْكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى (and will defer you to an appointed term. __ 71:4). The word *ajal* means 'term' or 'period' and the word *musammā* means 'appointed'. The verse purports to say that if they embrace the faith, Allah will defer them until a specified time and will not destroy them before their appointed time in this world. On the other hand, if they do not embrace the faith, it is likely that they might be punished and destroyed before their appointed term. In other words, when the Divine decree of punishment is in active operation, it cannot be deferred. This indicates that at times the appointed term or life span has a condition attached to it. If a particular person fulfills the attached condition, his life span, for instance, will be eighty years; and if he did not fulfill the condition, he will meet his death at the age of seventy years. If a person is ungrateful to Allah, his life span will decrease; and if he is grateful to Him, his life span will increase. Authentic *aḥādīth* report that maintaining family ties and obedience to parents increase the life span. In short, the verse is proof of the fact that obedience to Allah, righteousness and maintaining the family ties truly increase the life span of a person.

Fluctuation in Man's Life Span

Mazharī explains in his commentary that there are two categories of Predestination. One of them is termed *taqdīr mubram* 'Final and Definitive Destiny' and the other is termed *taqdīr mu'allaq* 'Conditional Destiny'. The former is defined as the decisive and unalterable Destiny that is never changed; and the latter is defined as the Decree to which is attached a condition. It would be recorded in the Preserved Tablet as conditional statements thus: If a person obeys Allah, then his life span will be extended to, for example, seventy years. 'If he disobeys Him, then he will die at the age of fifty years.' The latter category is alterable. The Qur'an mentions both the types of Destiny thus:

يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

Allah wipes off what He wills and affirms (what He wills). And with Him is the Mother Book. [13:39]

The term 'Mother Book' refers to that Book in which is recorded the 'Final Destiny' and Allah is fully aware of whether or not the condition that is recorded in 'Conditional Destiny' will be fulfilled. The 'Final Destiny' is the exclusive domain of Divine knowledge. Recorded there are the decisions, and commands that issue forth as the final outcome after the conditions of deeds have been fulfilled or supplication has been answered. Therefore, that is totally free of obliteration and assertion and addition and deletion.

Sayyidnā Salmān al-Fārisī رضي الله عنه has reported Allah's Messenger ﷺ as saying:

لا يرد القضاء إلا الدعاء ولا يزيد في العمر إلا البرّ رواه الترمذی (مظهري)

"Nothing but supplication averts the decree, and nothing but good treatment of parents increases life span." [Transmitted by Tirmidhī, as quoted by Maḥzarī]

The word *al-birr* means 'to treat parents kindly'. The purport of the *ḥadīth* is to show that on account of these deeds the 'Conditional Destiny' can be changed. In short, the verse under comment says: *أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى* (and will defer you to an appointed term ... 71:4).

The deferment is contingent upon embracing the faith. This describes the 'Conditional Destiny' about their life span, the knowledge of which probably was given to Nūḥ عليه السلام. As a result, he explained to his people that they are given respite till their full term during which, if they embraced the faith, Allah will not destroy them by worldly punishment. If they failed to embrace the faith, Allah will destroy them in this world before their appointed term. In addition, they will suffer eternal perdition of the Hereafter. It further shows that death is inevitable when the time specified by Allah in the final destiny arrives, even if they embrace the faith. Death in any case is inescapable. Allah has, in His consummate wisdom, not made this world immortal. It must, of necessity, perish. Faith and obedience, on the one hand, and infidelity and sinning, on the other, do not make any difference. The fragment of the verse that reads:

إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ (Indeed when Allah's term comes, it is not deferred ... 71:4) refers to this immutable destiny.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that Nūḥ عليه السلام was commissioned as a

Prophet at the age of forty years and, according to the explicit text of the Qur'ān, he lived for nine hundred and fifty years. During this long life, he neither gave up his attempt at reform nor did he lose hope. His nation persecuted him but he exercised patience.

On the authority of Ḍaḥḥāk's رضي الله عنه narration, Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that Nūḥ's عليه السلام people would beat him up until he falls. They would then wrap him up in a blanket and put him into a house, thinking that he was dead. When he comes to his senses the next day, he would call them towards Allah and preach to them. Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq narrates from 'Ubaid Ibn 'Amr Laithī that according to a report he has received, when his nation would throttle him, he would fall faint and when he recovered from his fainting, he would pray for them, thus:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِقَوْمِي أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

"O Allah, forgive my people because they do not know."

When the first generation of Nūḥ عليه السلام failed him, he still held out hope that their children might embrace the faith, but that generation too passed away without faith. Expecting that the third generation might embrace the faith, he continued with his arduous task of preaching the truth, but that generation too frustrated him. Miraculously, Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام was granted a long life [950 years] but the different generations of his people did not have such long lives.

Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام preached to his people day and night and spoke to them in public and in private, individually and collectively. He reminded them of the great favours and gifts that Allah had bestowed upon them, and the great blessings that await them in Paradise if they chose the path of rectitude. He also preached to them that if they embraced the faith and acted righteously, the doors of comfort, prosperity, welfare and well-being will open up for them in this world as well. He drew their attention to the manifestation of Allah's perfect power. But they did not pay heed. On the other hand, Allah informed Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام through revelation that none of his people were going to embrace the faith except for those who have already done so, describing it thus:

أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ إِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ آمَنَ

'And it was revealed to Nūḥ that none of your people would ever

believe except those who have already believed__ [11:36]

He warned them of the evil consequences of rejection of the Divine Message. But all his preaching and warning, his sympathy with and solicitude for, their well-being only met with ridicule, opposition and abuse; and instead of following one whose heart was full of love for them, they chose to follow those leaders who led them to destruction. Prophet Nuḥ's ﷺ exhortations and preaching of a whole lifetime proved a voice in the wilderness, generation after generation passed away, every coming generation proved to be worse and more wicked than the previous generation. So, he prayed to Allah to ruin and destroy the enemies of the Truth. As a result, the prayer was answered and the entire nation was drowned and destroyed except for the believers who were asked to embark upon the ark. Prophet Nuḥ ﷺ invited them to believe in, and pray to Allah, to seek His pardon for their past sins and explained to them the worldly advantage of this:

يُرْسِلُ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا. وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ

(and He will cause the heavens to rain upon you in abundance, and will help you with riches and sons,71:11-12)

Most scholars have deduced from this verse that, by repenting and asking for pardon of sins, Allah sends down rain in abundance according to the need of time; no famine occurs; and through the blessings of praying for pardon of sins, Allah will reinforce people with more wealth and children. Occasionally, the consummate wisdom of Allah [which is unfathomable] wills the contrary situation. Generally, however, the Divine custom with people is to alleviate calamities if they repent, pray for pardon and give up sins. Versions of *aḥādīth* confirm this.

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا. وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا

(Did you not see how Allah has created seven heavens one upon another, and has made the moon a light therein?71:15-16)

These verses are adduced as proof positive of Divine Oneness and His power. He has created seven heavens, one on top of the other, and placed the moon as a light in them. The prepositional phrase in the verse apparently indicates that the moon is placed in the body of the heavens. The subject is fully discussed in Sūrah Al-Furqān under the following verse:

تَبْرَكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُنِيرًا ﴿٦١﴾

Glorious is the One who made stellar formations in the sky and placed therein a lamp (sun) and a bright moon. [25:61]

Complaining about his people, Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام said:

وَمَكُرُوا مَكْرًا كَبِيرًا (and they devised an enormous plan....71:22). In other words, they hatched a mighty plot. They rejected the message and persecuted Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام. In addition, they let loose hooligans and hoodlums on him. They agreed that they will not abandon their gods, especially the five major idols whose names appear in the following verse:

لَا تَدْرُونَ وِدًّا وَلَا سُوعَا وَلَا يُعُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا (and never forsake Wadd, nor *Suwā'*, nor *yaghūth* and *Ya'ūq* and *Nasr*....71:23). Imām Baghawī reports that these five were in fact righteous servants Allah who lived in the intervening period between Prophets 'Ādam and Nūḥ عليهما السلام. There were many people who held them in high regard and followed their footsteps. Even after their death, they followed their footsteps and complied with Divine injunctions. A while later, Satan misled them. He put it to them that if they make pictures of their righteous elders and place them in front, their worship would be perfect and they would attain the quality of humility and humbleness. Those people fell into the Satanic trap and carved statues of them and placed them in their temples. When they saw the statues of their elders, their memories were refreshed and experienced a special feeling. That generation gradually died and a new generation came up. Satan played another trick with them. He imparted to them that the object of worship of their elders were statues and idols. They fell for this trick and worshipped them. This is the beginning of idol-worship or idolatry. People of Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام gradually got steeped in idolatry. They had many idols, the five mentioned in the verse under comment being the most popular because of the deep love they had for them.

وَلَا تَرِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلًّا (...let not the wrongdoers progress in anything but deviation from the right path....71:24). This is the supplication of Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام against his people. It may not be surmised that the duty and obligation of a Prophetic office is to guide the people, but here Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام is praying for increase in his people's misguidance. Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام did not invoke this curse out of despair or impatience. In fact, he

invoked it when, after doing full justice to his mission for many centuries, his people chose the path of deviation, rebellion, disbelief and obstinacy and persisted in it until they had reached a point of no return, of which Allah informed him thus, 'And it was revealed to Nūḥ that none of your people would ever believe except those who have already believed__ [11:36]'. This situation made it clear to him that his people would definitely and certainly die in the state of disbelief. So he prayed for their final destiny to overtake them sooner and destroy them.

مِمَّا خَطَبْتَهُمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأَدْخِلُوا نَارًا، فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْصَارًا (Because of their sins they were drowned, and then admitted into the Fire. So they found no helpers for them besides Allah....71:25). The 'sins' referred to here are unpardonable sins of 'kufr and shirk'. They were drowned in water and emerged in fire, an opposing punishment which is not impossible for Divine power. Obviously, the 'fire' mentioned in the verse does not refer to the fire of Hell, but refers to the fire in the realm of 'Barzakh' (the existence between the worldly life and the life of the Hereafter). The Qur'an speaks of the fire in the realm of 'Barzakh'. It is evident that Sayyidnā Nūḥ's ﷺ people will be punished in Hell-Fire in the Hereafter after resurrection and accounting for their deeds.

Qur'an Confirms Punishment in the Grave

The verse under comment confirms that people will be punished in the realm of *Barzakh*, usually referring to the period of stay in the grave. This further proves that, since the evil-doers will be punished in the grave, the righteous believers will also be rewarded and blessed with favours. Authentic and successively transmitted *aḥādīth* report about the reward and punishment in the grave so abundantly and clearly that its reality cannot be denied or rejected. Therefore, there is a total agreement of the Ummah on this issue; and belief in it is the symbol of *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Nūḥ
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Jinn

(The Jinns)

This Sūrah is Makki. It contains 28 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 28

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا
عَجَبًا ﴿١﴾ يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ ۗ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا ﴿٢﴾
وَأَنَّهُ تَعَلَّى جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا ﴿٣﴾ وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ
سَفِيهُنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ شَطَطًا ﴿٤﴾ وَأَنَا ظَنَنَّا أَن لَّنْ نَقُولَ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ
عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ﴿٥﴾ وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنْسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ
الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا ﴿٦﴾ وَأَنَّهُمْ ظَنُّوا كَمَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَن لَّنْ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ
أَحَدًا ﴿٧﴾ وَأَنَا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَهَا مِْلَيْتُ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا
وَشُهْبًا ﴿٨﴾ وَأَنَا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ ۗ فَمَنْ يَسْمَعِ الْآنَ
يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَّصَدًا ﴿٩﴾ وَأَنَا لَآنَدْرِي أَشَرُّ أَرِيدُ بِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ
أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَأَنَا مِنَّا الصَّٰلِحُونَ ۗ وَمِنَّا دُونَ ذَلِكَ ۗ
كُنَّا طَرَائِقُ قَدَدًا ﴿١١﴾ وَأَنَا ظَنَنَّا أَن لَّنْ نَعْجِزَ اللَّهَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَكِن
نُعْجِزُهُ هَرَبًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَأَنَا لَمَّا سَمِعْنَا الْهُدَىٰ آمَنَّا بِهِ ۗ فَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِرَبِّهِ
فَلَا يَخَافُ بَخْسًا وَلَا رَهَقًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَأَنَا مِنَّا الْمُسْلِمُونَ ۗ وَمِنَّا

الْقَسِطُونَ ۖ فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ فَأُولَئِكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا ﴿١٤﴾ وَأَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ
 فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَأَنْ لَّوِ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ
 لَأَسْقَيْنَهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا ﴿١٦﴾ لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ۖ وَمَنْ يُعْرِضْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ
 يَسْأَلْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا ﴿١٧﴾ وَأَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ
 أَحَدًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَأَنَّهُ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ كَادُوا يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا
 ۗ ﴿١٩﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُوا رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٠﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ
 لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا ﴿٢١﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي لَنْ يُجِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ ۚ وَلَنْ
 أُجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿٢٢﴾ إِلَّا بَلَاغًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِسَالَاتِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ
 اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا ﴿٢٣﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا
 مَا يُوعَدُونَ فَيَسْئَعُهُمْ مَنْ أَضَعَفَ نَاصِرًا وَأَقَلُّ عَدَدًا ﴿٢٤﴾ قُلْ إِنْ
 أَدْرَىٰ أَقْرَبُ مَا تُوعَدُونَ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ رَبِّي أَمَدًا ﴿٢٥﴾ غَلِمْ الْغَيْبِ
 فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٦﴾ إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ
 يَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾ لِيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا
 رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا ﴿٢٨﴾

Say, "It has been revealed to me that a group from Jinn has listened (to the Qur'an), and said (to their people), 'Indeed we have heard an amazing Recital (Qur'an) [1] that guides to the right way, so we have believed in it, and we will never associate a partner with our Lord.' [2] and (then the Jinns started talking to each other) that exalted is the Glory of our Lord; He has taken neither a wife, nor a son, [3] and that the fools among us used to attribute to Allah extremely wrong things, [4] and that we thought that the humans and the Jinn would never tell a lie about Allah, (therefore, we had followed them in *shirk* under this impression), [5] and that some people from human beings used to seek refuge with some people of the Jinn, and thus they increased them (the Jinns) in arrogance, [6] and that they (humans)

thought as you (O Jinns) thought that Allah would never resurrect anyone, [7] and that we sought (to reach) the sky, but we found it filled with stern guards and flames, [8] and that we used to sit at places therein to listen; but if one will (try to) listen now, he will find a flame in ambush for him, [9] and that we do not know whether it is a bad end that is intended for those on earth, or their Lord has intended for them a right thing, [10] and that some of us are (already) righteous, and some of us are otherwise, and we were on different ways. [11] And that we have now believed that we can never frustrate Allah on the earth, nor can we baffle Him by escape, [12] and that when we heard the Guiding Discourse, we believed in it; so if one believes in his Lord, he will have no fear of either any curtailment (in his reward) or any excess (in his punishment), [13] and that some of us are Muslims, and some of us are unjust; so those who submitted to Islam have found out the right path, [14] As for the unjust, they have become firewood for Hell." [15]

"(And it is also revealed to me) that if they (the people of Makkah) had stood firm on the (right) way, We would have supplied water to them in abundance, [16] so that We test them thereby; and if one turns away from the remembrance of his Lord, He will thrust him into a severe torment, [17] and that *masājids* (mosques) belong to Allah; so, do not invoke anyone along with Allah, [18] and that when Allah's slave stood invoking Him, they almost rushed on him in crowds." [19]

Say, "I invoke my Lord, and do not associate with Him anyone." [20] Say, "I possess no power to cause you any harm or bring you to a right way." [21] Say, "No one can ever save me from Allah, and I can never find a refuge save with Him. [22] However, (I have been given mandate) to convey (commands) from Allah, and His messages. And the one who disobeys Allah and His Messenger, for him there is the fire of Hell, wherein they will live forever. [23] (And the disbelievers will continue to deny the truth and mock at it) until when they will see what they are promised, they will know whose supporters are weaker, and whose numbers are less. [24] Say, "I do not know whether that which you are promised is near, or my Lord has appointed for it a distant term. [25] (He is the) Knower of the Unseen. So He does not let anyone know His Unseen, [26] except a

messenger whom He chooses (to inform through revelation), and then He appoints (angels as) watching guards before him and behind him, (so that devils may not tamper with the divine revelation,) [27] so that He knows that they (angels) have conveyed the messages of their Lord. And He has encompassed all that is with them, and has comprehensive knowledge of every thing by numbers. [28]

Commentary

Preliminary Remarks

It seems necessary to know a few facts before the start of the study of the Sūrah, which are as follows:

Fact [1]

Before the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the devils used to go up to the heavens and eavesdrop on the conversations of the angels. After his advent, they were pelted with a piercing flame if they attempted to go up and eavesdrop. It is mentioned in Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf that a group of jinn went up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ to investigate the reason for this new phenomenon.

Fact [2]

It was customary in the Days of Ignorance that when people halted in a jungle or valley in the course of a journey, they uttered the following words:

اعوذ بعزیز هذا الوادی من شر سفهاء قومه

"I seek refuge in the leader of this valley from the foolish mischief-makers of his nation" --

believing that the leader of the valley (a Jinn) would protect them.

Fact [3]

A terrible famine held Makkah in its grip for several years as a result of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ prayer.

Fact [4]

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ called the pagans towards Islam, they opposed him tooth and nail. The first two incidents are taken from Tafsīr Durr Manthūr and the last two incidents are taken from Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr.

نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ (...a group from Jinn....72:1). The word *nafar* is used for a

group consisting of three to ten people. The Jinn referred to here are said to be a group of nine Jinns from a place called Naṣībīn.

Reality of Jinn

Jinn is one of the Divine creatures. They have body and soul. They, like human beings, have intellect and senses, but they are hidden from human eyes. This species of creation is called 'Jinn' because it literally means 'hidden' or 'invisible'. They, like human beings, are created from the four primal elements: dust, water, air and fire, but the element of fire predominates in them, whereas in man the element of dust predominates. They, like human beings, are males and females; and they, like human beings, marry and procreate. Apparently, the word *shaiṭān* [pl. *shayāṭīn*] 'Satan' refers to the 'arrogant mischief-making Jinn'. The existence of Jinn and angels is established by conclusive and incontestable evidence in the Qur'ān and Sunnah, the denial or rejection of which amounts to disbelieving the Qur'ān. [Tafsīr Mazhārī].

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ Say, (It has been revealed to me....72:1). This shows that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not see the group of Jinn who heard him recite the Qur'ān. Allah informed him by the revelation of Sūrah Al-Jinn.

Circumstances of Revelation

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ narrates, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, of Muslim, and in Tirmidhī and other collections, that Allah's Messenger ﷺ did not by deliberate design make the Jinn listen to the Qur'ān, nor did he see them. The true story is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, with his Companions, was going to the marketplace of 'Ukāẓ. This incident took place at a time when the devils were barred from going to the skies and eavesdropping on the conversations of the angels by being pelted with piercing flames. When the Jinn realised that they were no longer free to eavesdrop, they discussed among themselves that the incident could not be coincidental. There must be a genuine reason for that. So they divided themselves into groups and each group went in different direction to investigate the cause of the new phenomenon. One of the groups arrived at a place called Nakhlah in Tihāmah where Ḥijāz is situated. At that juncture, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was leading the Ṣaḥābah in Fajr *ṣalāh* and the Jinn had the opportunity to hear the Qur'ān. When this group of Jinn heard the Qur'ān, they listened to it very attentively and concluded on oath that it was the Qur'ān that prevented them from eavesdropping in the heavens. Then they returned to their fellow Jinns and recounted to

them the entire episode, which is mentioned in the following verse:

فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا (...and said [to their people], 'Indeed we have heard an amazing Recital [Qur'an]...72:1). Allah informed His Messenger about the entire incident of the Jinn in the verses under discussion.

Abū Ṭālib's Death and the Holy Prophet's Journey to Ṭā'if

Most commentators say that after the death of Abū Ṭālib the Holy Prophet ﷺ felt lonely, having no friend or supporter in Makkah. So, he undertook a journey to Ṭā'if where he approached Banū Thaḳīf for assistance against the hostility and persecution of his people. According to Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq's narration, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ arrived in Ṭā'if, he approached the three brothers of Banū Thaḳīf. They were recognized as the leaders and honorable members of the tribe. The three brothers were 'Umair's sons, their names being 'Abd Yālil, Sa'ūd and Ḥabīb. They had a Quraishite lady in their house. Allah's Messenger ﷺ invited them to the call of Islam and mentioned about his people's hostility and persecution and asked for help. But they responded very harshly and did not speak to him about anything.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ saw that these three people were the most respected leaders of Banū Thaḳīf, from whom he expected a favourable response, but he was disappointed. He said to them that if they did not wish to help him, they should at least keep his arrival and request for help confidential and not tell his people; because if they came to know about it, they would persecute him even more harshly. But the oppressors did not concede to this either. On the contrary, they let loose on him foolish hooligans, slaves and hoodlums, so that they may revile him and make violent noises in public places against him. When they made violent noises, more hoodlums and young violent criminal elements joined in. In order to save himself from the mischief of the hooligans and hoodlums, the Holy Prophet ﷺ took refuge in a vineyard which belonged to two brothers, namely 'Utbah and Shaibah. The brothers themselves were in the vineyard at the time. The hooligans and hoodlums left him and went back. The two brothers were watching him, and they also watched how violently the foolish people behaved towards him. Just then the Quraishite lady, who was in the house of the oppressors, came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He complained to her how her in-laws persecuted him.

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ felt a bit settled in the vineyard, he prayed to Allah. The wordings of the supplication are unusual and on no other

occasion such wordings are recorded:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَشْكُو إِلَيْكَ ضَعْفَ قُوَّتِي وَقِلَّةَ حِيلَتِي وَهَوَانِي عَلَى النَّاسِ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ وَأَنْتَ رَبُّ الْمُسْتَضْعِفِينَ فَأَنْتَ رَبِّي إِلَى مَنْ تَكَلَّمْتُ إِلَى بَعِيدٍ يَتَهَجَّمُنِي أَوْ إِلَى عَدُوِّ مَلَكَتَهُ أَمْرِي إِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ سَاحِطًا عَلَيَّ فَلَا أُبَالِي وَلَكِنَّ عَافِيَتَكَ هِيَ أَوْسَعُ لِي. أَعُوذُ بِنُورِ وَجْهِكَ الَّذِي أَشْرَقَتْ لَهُ الظُّلُمَاتُ وَصَلَحَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ مِنْ أَنْ تُنْزِلَ لِي غَضَبَكَ لَكَ الْعُتْبَى حَتَّى تَرْضَى وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِكَ. (مظهري باختصار)

"O Allah, I complain to you the weakness of my strength and the shortage of my options, and lack of respect for me in the sight of people. You are the Most Merciful of all, and You are the Cherisher and Sustainer of the weaklings. You are my Cherisher. To whom are You handing me over? - to a stranger who would attack me? Or to an enemy whom You have given control over me (so that he may do as he wishes)? If You are not angry with me, I do not care. Your caring about me is better (which I pray for). I seek refuge in the light of Your blessed Being which dispels all darkness and on the foundation of which all matters related to this world and the next world are set aright. If You send down Your wrath on us, our task is to exert ourselves until we gain Your good pleasure. And there is neither strength nor power except through You." [condensed from Mazhari].

When Rabī'ah's sons 'Utbah and Shaibah saw this, they felt compassion for him in their heart. They called one of their Christian slaves, 'Addās by name, and asked him to break a bunch of grapes, place it in a plate and give it to that person and ask him to eat. Complying with the instructions, 'Addās kept the plate of grapes in front of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He recited *bismil-lah* 'In the name of Allah' and stretched his hand towards it. 'Addās was watching all this and said: By Allah! this speech [referring to the formula of *basmalah*] is not used by the inhabitants of this city. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him as to where he was from and what his religion was. He replied that he was a Christian and hailed from Nineveh. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him that this means 'you are from the village of Yūnus Ibn Mattā العنينة. He asked: "What do you know about Yūnus Ibn Mattā." The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "He was my brother. He was Allah's Prophet. I too am Allah's Prophet." At this, 'Addās fell to the Holy Prophet's ﷺ feet. He kissed the blessed head of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his hands and legs. 'Utbah and Shaibah watched the whole incident. One of them said to the other: "I

hope he has not set our slave awry." When 'Addas returned to them, they asked him: "What has happened? You were kissing his hands and feet?" He replied: "My masters, at this time there is no person better than he on the face of the earth. He has taught me something which none other than a Prophet can teach." They said: "You miserable wretch, may it not happen that this man turns you away from your religion, because your religion in any case is better than his." When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was completely despaired of Thaḳīf's assistance, he returned from Ṭā'if to Makkah. On his way back, he halted at Nakhlah and towards the latter part of the night he performed *ṣalāt-ut-tahajjud*. The delegation of Jinns of Naṣībīn of Yemen had also gone there. They heard the Qur'ān and embraced the faith. They went back to their people and recounted to them the whole incident which Allah has mentioned in the verses under comment. [Mazharī]

A Jinn Companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

Ibn Jauzī, in his book *Ṣifat-uṣ-Ṣafwah*, through his own chain of authorities, reports from Sahl Ibn 'Abdullāh ؓ that he saw an old Jinn, in a place, who was performing *ṣalāh* in the direction of Ka'bah. He was wearing a woolen cloak that looked beautiful on him and in which he looked graceful. After he completed his prayer, Sayyidnā Sahl ؓ greeted him. Replying to his greeting, he said: 'You seem to be admiring the beauty of this cloak. This cloak is on my body for seven hundred years. I have met Holy Prophet 'Īsā ؑ in this cloak, and in the same cloak I met Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and I am from among those Jinns about whom Sūrah Al-Jinn was revealed.' According to the Ḥadīth narratives that recount the incident of the 'Night of Jinn', (i.e. the night in which the Jinns visited the Holy Prophet ﷺ Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ was with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ met the Jinns in a valley near Makkah for the specific purpose of inviting them to the call of Islam and making them hear the Qur'ān by deliberate design. Apparently, this incident occurred after the incident mentioned in Sūrah Al-Jinn. 'Allāmah Khafājī has said that reliable Aḥādīth confirm that the Jinn delegations met the Holy Prophet ﷺ six times. Thus there is no contradiction between the two versions of the incident, because they are two separate incidents. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was not even aware of the incident of the Jinn's coming to him and listening to the Qur'ān that is

mentioned in Sūrah Jinn. He only learnt about it later through revelation. This incident happened at Nakhlah on his way back from Ṭā'if. The other narratives from which we gather that the Holy Prophet ﷺ met the Jinn by deliberate design in a valley near the city of Makkah to preach to them and make them hear the Qur'ān - is a separate incident which took place after that.

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَلَّىٰ جَدُّ رَبِّنَا (and [then the Jinns started talking to each other] that exalted is the Glory of our Lord;...72:3). The word *jadd* means 'majesty/glory' used for Allah. Instead of saying '*jadduhū*' with a third person pronoun referring to Allah, the attributive name '*rabb*' 'Lord' is expressly retained which indicates the exalted position of Allah. The Being who is the Cherisher and sustainer of His creation must, of necessity, occupy the lofty position. Commentators have discussed the grammatical conjunctive construction '*wa annahū*' at length in this verse. It might be of no interest to the general readers.

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَفْقُولُ سَفِيهُنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ شَطَطًا ﴿٤﴾ وَأَنَا ظَنَنَّا أَنَّ لَنْ قُقُولَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ
عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ﴿٥﴾

...and that the fools among us used to attribute to Allah extremely wrong things, and that we thought that the humans and the Jinn would never tell a lie about Allah, [therefore, we had followed them in shirk under this impression]. (72:5)

The word *shataṭ* means 'vile words, extravagant or exorbitant or enormous lies'. The word also means 'to transgress or act wrongfully, unjustly or exceed the legitimate bounds'. The believers from amongst Jinn used to put forward their excuse for being involved in disbelief and idolatry thus: The foolish people from amongst their nation uttered vile slander against Allah, whilst they did not think it possible for a human being or a Jinn to impute a lie to Allah. They were thus far caught up in the foolish people's vile words and committed *kufr* and *shirk*, but they had now heard the Qur'ān and the reality had later opened up.

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنْسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا ﴿٦﴾

(...and that some people from human beings used to seek refuge with some peoples of the Jinn, and thus they increased them (the Jinns) in arrogance, [72:6])

This verse describes the situation that it was customary for people in the Days of Ignorance that when they halted in a valley in the course of a

journey, they sought refuge in the Jinn leader of that valley from the foolish mischief-makers of his nation believing that the leader of the valley will protect them. This made the Jinn think that they are better than human beings. That is why, they seek refuge in their leader but this increased the wickedness of the Jinn.

Rāfi' Ibn 'Umair's ﷺ Islam on account of the Jinn

Mazharī cites in his Tafsīr that it is reported in *Hawātif-ul-Jinn* through his chain of narrators on the authority of Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ﷺ that the Holy Prophet's ﷺ Companion Rāfi' Ibn 'Umair ﷺ recounts an incident of his embracing the Islamic faith, thus:

'One night I was travelling in a desert. Suddenly I was overcome by sleep. So, I alighted from my camel, and before I went off to sleep I uttered the following formula in keeping with the custom of my people:

أني أعوذ بعظيم هذا الوادي من الجنّ

"I seek refuge in the leader of the Jinn of this valley from the foolish mischief-makers of his nation."

I saw in my dream that there is a sword in a person's hand who wants to place it on my camel's chest. I woke up in a shock and looked around in all directions, but found nothing. So, I said to myself that this was some Satanic nightmare. It was not a true dream and fell back into deep sleep and became completely oblivious to my surrounding. I experienced the same dream again. I got up and looked all around the camel, but found nothing. This time, however, I found the camel shivering. I went back to my place and slept away and saw the same dream. I awoke and found my camel tossing about restlessly. Then I saw a youngster in whose hand was a weapon. This was the same person whom I had seen attacking the camel the first time. I saw he was holding the hand of an old man who is stopping him from attacking the camel. Just then three wild zebras appeared. The old man said to the youngster, 'Choose any one of these zebras, and let go this man's camel.' The youngster took one of the zebras and took leave. The old man then looked at me and said, 'You fool, when you seek refuge in a valley, and you fear any danger from the jinn or devils, recite thus:'

اعوذ بالله ربّ محمد من هول هذا الوادي

"I seek refuge in Allah, the Lord of Muḥammad, from the

horrors of this valley. Do not seek refuge in any Jinn because that time is gone when human beings used to seek refuge in Jinn."

I asked him who that person was. He replied that he was the Arabian Holy Prophet ﷺ, neither eastern nor western. He was raised with his Prophetic mission on a Monday. I asked him where he lived. He replied that he lived in Yathrib which is an area where dates grow abundantly. As soon as the morning dawned, I set for Madīnah and urged my mount to move faster and faster until I reached Madīnah. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw me, he recounted to me the entire episode before I could tell him anything. He invited me to the call of Islam and I embraced the Islamic faith.

Having narrated this story, Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه said that the following verse was revealed in this connection. **وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنسِ** وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ (and that some people from human beings used to seek refuge with some people of the Jinn.....72:6)

وَأَنَا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلْتَأَةً بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ (...and that we sought [to reach] the sky, but we found it filled with stern guards and flames....72:8). The word *sama'* is used in two different senses: 'sky' as well as 'cloud'. It would appear that here the word is used in the latter sense.

The Jinn Used to Go only up to the Clouds to Eavesdrop, Not to the Sky

The Jinn and the devils used to go up to the sky means that they used to go to the 'clouds', take up positions there to sit and eavesdrop. The proof of this is found in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها who reports:

سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول ان الملائكة تنزل في العنان و هو السحاب فتذكر الامر الذي قضى في السماء فتسترق الشياطين السمع فتسمعه فتتوجه الى الكهفان فيكذبون معها مائة كذبة من عند انفسهم (از مظهرى).

" I have heard the Messenger of Allah say that the angels descended in the '*anan* of *sama'*' meaning the 'cloud'. There they discussed the decisions Allah has issued in the sky. The devils listened to their private conversations without them knowing about it and passed the information to the soothsayers, mixing it with a hundred lies from their side." [Mazharī].

A narration is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī on the authority of

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه and in Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه to the following effect:

When Allah issues an order in the sky, the angels flap their wings in readiness to obey the order. When the issuance of the order is over, they discuss among themselves. The devils eavesdrop on this discussion, and pass the information to the soothsayers, admixing it with many lies.

This Ḥadīth apparently contradicts the narration of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها but in actual fact, there is no conflict between the two narratives. This narrative does not prove that the devils go inside the sky to eavesdrop. Probably, when the order is issued in the first instance by Allah, it filters down to the angels from the upper level to the lower level, until the angels come down to the cloud where they discuss it. The devils steal the information from here as mentioned by Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها [Mazhari].

At any rate, before the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the Jinn and devils had free access to the heavenly information. They used to position themselves in the cloud and eavesdrop on the conversations of the angels and pass the information to the soothsayers. At the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, there arose the need to protect the heavenly revelation. As a result, the access of devils to the upper region was stopped in such a way that if a devil attempted to go up, he would be repelled by piercing flames. This was the new phenomenon that excited the curiosity of the devils and Jinn and, dividing themselves into groups, they went to the east and to the west to investigate. One of the groups arrived at a place called Nakhlah where its members heard the Qur'ān and embraced the faith of Islam as mentioned in Sūrah Al-Jinn.

Meteors Existed Since the Inception of Time, but were not Used to Repel the Devils before the Advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It happened only after his Advent

A doubt that may arise here is that the existence of Meteors, which in common parlance are called *inqiḍāḍ-ul-kaukab* the 'falling stars', is not a new phenomenon. This verse, however, indicates that they showed up to repel the devils as if they are new-age phenomena of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In response, it may be stated that there is no denying that the meteors did exist since the inception of time and space before the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and that there is no contradiction between what

humanity experienced since the beginning of the world, scientific explanations and the Qur'ānic statement. Philosophers and scientists explain that the meteors may originate from the earth or stars or disintegrating planets, and wander in space at enormous speeds and fall to the earth. Some fiery matter may arise from the surface of the earth and heat up at some point, or the speed of the meteors makes them glow and burn, or a flame emits from a star - and this may have habitually continued ever since. These flames, however, were not used to serve a particular purpose before the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ; they were merely a natural phenomena. After the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, meteoric flames were used to serve the purpose of shooting the devils if they attempted to go up and listen furtively the conversation of the angels. See also Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 5/pp 303-305, under [15:17-18].

وَأَنَّا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدَ بِمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا (and that we do not know whether it is a bad end that is intended for those on earth, or their Lord has intended for them a right thing,...72:10). The Jinn and devils were barred from having access to heavenly news. In this case it would be a punishment for the inhabitants of the earth. However, if Allah intends them to be rightly guided, He has barred the Jinn and Satan from having access to the heaven, so that they do not interfere with Divine revelation. Therefore, they expressed their reservations about this to the effect that they had no idea as to whether it was a bad end that was intended for the inhabitants of the earth or whether Allah intended them to be rightly guided.

فَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِرَبِّهِ فَلَا يَخَافُ بَخْسًا وَلَا رَهَقًا (...so if one believes in his Lord, he will have no fear of either any curtailment [in his reward] or any excess [in his punishment]...72:13). The word *bakhs*, with *bā'* carrying *fatha* and *khā'* carrying *sukūn*, means 'to reduce the right' and the word *rahaq* means 'disgrace'. In other words, anyone who believes in Allah need fear neither curtailment in the reward of his good deeds, nor disgrace by excess in his punishment in the Hereafter.

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا (...and that *masājīd* (mosques) belong to Allah; so, do not invoke anyone along with Allah....72:18). The word *masājīd* is the plural of *masjid*. Here the word, could be taken in its popular sense, that is, mosques or places of worship dedicated for the performance of prayers. In this case, it would mean that all mosques belong to Allah, dedicated to His sole worship and therefore we are not

and every *summum genus* [genus of genera] of His creation. This is a specialized attribute of Allah. He does not divulge His Unseen to anyone indiscriminately, so that he may store and retrieve the secrets of the unknown world as and when he wishes.

The purport of the verse under comment is to affirm the totality of Allah's knowledge of the Unseen so that He alone is fully aware of every particle of His creation, and to negate such total knowledge of the Unseen for anyone other than Allah. It was possible that an unintelligent person might surmise that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not have any knowledge of the Unseen - so, how can he be a Messenger? Allah reveals to a Messenger thousands of secrets of the Unseen. Anyone to whom no revelation comes down cannot be a Prophet or a Messenger. Thus the following verse makes an exception:

إِلَّا مَنْ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾

(...except a messenger whom He chooses [to inform through revelation], and then He appoints [angels as] watching guards before him and behind him, [so that devils may not tamper with the divine revelation,].... 72:27)

Difference between 'Knowledge of the Unseen' and 'Reports of the Unseen Events'

The exception made here is the response to the doubt raised by unintelligent people. The negation of the total knowledge of the Unseen does not necessarily entail absolute negation of every unknown secret. For the office of *risālah*, a Messenger needs a certain amount of knowledge of unseen things which Allah grants him through revelation. When Allah sends down the revelation to His Holy Prophet ﷺ, He sends it down under His special protection, and is completely secure against being distorted or tampered with by devils. First of all, the word *rasūl* [Messenger] determines the type of knowledge granted to a Prophet or a Messenger. Evidently, it is the knowledge of the sacred laws and injunctions in its totality, and of the unseen events according to the exigency of time. The next statement states the heavily protected manner in which the unseen knowledge is granted. It is sent down through angels around whom are posted other angels as sentinels. This explanation clarifies the point that the exceptive sentence that affirms the unseen knowledge granted to a Holy Prophet ﷺ and a Messenger is a specialized unseen knowledge which is essential and relevant to the

proper functioning of a Prophetic office.

Technically, this 'exception', in Arabic grammar, is referred to as *istithnā' munqatī'* which may be defined as the exceptive sentence in which the exception is severed from, or wholly different in kind from, the general description given before. In this sense, whilst the basic sentence negated total Unseen Knowledge in general terms for anyone besides Allah, the exceptive sentence does not affirm it. It merely affirms specialized acquaintance with some reports of the unseen events which the Qur'an frequently describes as *anbā'ul ghaib*, thus, for instance:

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ

'These are some reports from the unseen [events] which We reveal to you. [11:49]'

Some unintelligent people do not grasp the distinction between 'Knowledge of the Unseen' and 'reports of the unseen events'. As a result, they attempt to prove 'total knowledge of the Unseen' for the Prophets of Allah, especially for the Last Prophet ﷺ. They believe that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, like Allah, is omniscient - having knowledge of every particle of the universe. This is clearly *shirk* - assigning to the Holy Prophet ﷺ the status of Godhead, God forbid! If any person discloses a secret to a friend of his, of which no one else has that piece of knowledge or information, such a friend cannot be described as omniscient. Likewise, Allah has granted thousands of pieces of information of the unseen world through revelation to His Holy Prophets ﷺ, but it is not true to say that they are omniscient. The ignorant laity do not understand the difference between the concepts. When they are told that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not omniscient, they understand this statement to imply that the Holy Prophet ﷺ [God forbid!] did not have any information about anything unseen. No believer in the world ever holds such a belief, nor can he ever do so because if anyone does so the whole structure of *nubuwwah* and *risālah* would come crumbling down. It is not possible for any believer to behave in this way.

The concluding part of the last verse says:

وَاحْصِي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا (...and has comprehensive knowledge of every thing by numbers....72:28). In other words, Allah alone encompasses the perfect knowledge of everything and keeps a meticulous count of it. He has the knowledge of the exact number of particles in the mountains. He has the

knowledge of the exact number of drops in all the oceans of the world. He has the knowledge of the exact number of drops in every rain. He alone has the knowledge of the exact number of leaves on all the trees in the world. Thus it is made clear that the totality of the knowledge of the Unseen is reserved exclusively for Allah, so that there should be no misunderstanding about the above 'exception' clause.

The question of the Unseen Knowledge is fully discussed under [27:65]

قُلْ لَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Say, "No one in the heavens and the earth has the knowledge of the Unseen except Allah." [27:65]

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Jinn
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Muzzammil

(The Wrapped up one)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 20 verses and 2 Sections.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1-20

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُزَّمِّلُ ﴿١﴾ قُمْ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٢﴾ نِّصْفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا ﴿٣﴾
 أَوْزِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا ﴿٤﴾ إِنَّا سَنُلْقِيْ عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا
 ثَقِيلًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأً وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّ لَكَ فِي
 النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا ﴿٧﴾ وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا ﴿٨﴾
 رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا ﴿٩﴾ وَاصْبِرْ
 عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَذَرْنِي وَالْمُكَذِّبِينَ
 أُولِي النَّعْمَةِ وَمَهِّلْهُمْ قَلِيلًا ﴿١١﴾ إِنَّ لَدَيْنَا أَنْكَالًا وَجَحِيمًا ﴿١٢﴾
 وَطَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣﴾ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ
 وَكَانَتْ الْجِبَالُ كَثِيبًا مَّهِيلًا ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا ۖ
 شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا ﴿١٥﴾ فَعَصَىٰ فِرْعَوْنُ
 الرَّسُولَ فَاخَذْنَاهُ أَخَذًا وَبَيًّا ﴿١٦﴾ فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُونَ إِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا
 يَجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيبًا ﴿١٧﴾ ۝ السَّمَاءُ مُنْفَطِرٌ بِهِ ۗ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَفْعُولًا

﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ ۖ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٩﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ تَقُومُ أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ ثُلُثِي اللَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهُ وَثُلُثَهُ وَطَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ مَعَكَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُقَدِّرُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۗ عَلِمَ أَنْ لَّنْ نَّحْصُوهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ ۗ عَلِمَ أَنْ سَيَكُونُ مِنْكُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ ۚ وَآخَرُونَ يَضْرِبُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَبْتَغُونَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَآخَرُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ ۚ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاقْرَأُوا اللَّهَ قُرْآنًا حَسَنًا ۗ وَمَا تَقَدَّمُوا لِنَفْسِكُمْ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ وَأَعْظَمَ أَجْرًا ۗ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

O you wrapped up in clothes,* [1] stand at night (for prayer) except a little [2] half of it, or make it a little less, [3] or make it a little more; and recite the Qur'an clearly with *tartil* (in a distinct and measured tone). [4] We are going to send down to you a weighty discourse. [5] Truly, rising by night (for prayer of *tahajjud*) is the most effective way to subdue (one's self) and to make speech more upright. [6] Surely, in daytime, you have a lengthy work to do. [7] And remember the name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion. [8] He is the Lord of the East and the West; there is no god but He; so take Him for (your) Guardian. [9] And bear patiently what they say, and part with them in a beautiful manner. [10] And leave Me (to deal) with the deniers, the people of luxury, and give them respite for a while. [11] Surely with Us are fetters and

* The Holy Prophet ﷺ is addressed in this verse with reference to a particular style of wrapping himself in his clothes. The first event of this kind occurred when the Holy Prophet ﷺ received first revelation in the cave of Ḥirā'. Being his first experience, he felt it very hard, and was caught by a shivery cold, and once he reached home, he asked his blessed wife Khadijah رضي الله عنها to wrap him in a blanket which she did. Some narrations have reported another event: When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was accused, by the pagans of Makkah, of being a magician who separated between friends, he felt aggrieved, and wrapped himself in his clothes out of grief. Addressing him with reference to these events is a loving style adopted by Allah Ta'ala to console him. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

flaming fire, [12] and food that chokes, and a painful punishment, [13] on the Day when the earth and the mountains will quake, and the mountains will turn into a slipping heap of sand. [14] We have sent to you a messenger, as a witness over you, just as We sent a messenger to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). [15] Then, Fir'aun disobeyed the messenger; so We seized him with a severe seizure. [16] So, if you disbelieve, how will you save yourself from a day that will turn the small boys into grey-headed old men, [17] whereby the sky will burst apart. His promise has to be fulfilled. [18] Indeed, this is a reminder; so let anyone who so wishes, adopt a way to his Lord. [19]

Your Lord knows that you stand (in prayer) for nearly two thirds of the night, and (at times) for half of it, and (at times) for one third of it, and (so do) a group of those who are with you. And Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you cannot do it regularly, therefore He turned to you in mercy. Now, recite as much of the Qur'ān as is easy (for you). He knows that some of you may be sick, and others travelling in the land, seeking the grace of Allah, and yet others fighting in Allah's way. Therefore, recite as much of it as is easy. And establish *ṣalāh*, and pay *zakāh*, and advance to Allah a goodly loan. And whatever good you will send ahead for your own selves, you will find it with Allah much better in condition, and much greater in reward. And seek forgiveness from Allah. Indeed Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [20]

Commentary

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَزْمَلُ 'O you wrapped up in clothes [73:1]'. The word *muzzammil* literally means 'one wrapped up in clothes' and its near-synonym '*muddaththir*' comes in the next Sūrah. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is addressed in this verse with reference to a particular style of wrapping himself in his clothes. The first event of this kind occurred when the Holy Prophet ﷺ received first revelation in the cave of Ḥirā'. Being his first experience, he felt it very hard, and was caught by a shivery cold, and once he reached home, he asked his blessed wife Khadījah رضى الله عنها to wrap him in a blanket which she did. A detailed account of this event is reported by Bukhārī in the very first chapter of his book. Then the revelation stopped for some time. Speaking of this temporary break in the revelation [termed as *fatrat-ul-wahy*], Sayyidnā Jabir رضى الله عنه reports that the

Messenger of Allah ﷺ said in his narrative:

"Whilst I was walking along, I heard a voice from heaven and I raised up my eyes. Lo! The Angel that had appeared to me in Ḥirā' was sitting on a chair between heaven and earth, and I was struck with awe on account of him and returned home and said, Wrap me up, wrap me up [*zammilūnī, zammilūnī*]. Then Allah revealed the first five verses of Sūrah Al-Muddththir (chapter 74)." [Bukhārī and Muslim]

According to this narrative, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is affectionately addressed as 'O you, enveloped in a mantle,' whereas in this Sūrah he is addressed as 'O you wrapped up in clothes'. Both forms of address are used affectionately and endearingly to console him. The latter title of address '*muzzammil*' as it appears in this Sūrah could probably be connected to another incident (referred to in the footnote) but it, nonetheless, shows deep love and affection for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]. Having addressed him with this special title, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is told in the following verses that praying to Allah in the stillness of night [*ṣalāt-ut-tahajjud*] will prepare him for the heavy task entrusted to him. Some details of the night-prayer have also been set out.

Injunctions Pertaining to *Ṣalāt-ut-Tahajjud* and its Abrogation

Reading into the titles *muzzammil* and *muddaththir* a consensus of scholarly opinion assigns the revelation of this Surah to the earliest period when the five daily prayers had not become obligatory. They were prescribed on the night of Holy Prophet's ﷺ Ascent to heavens. [*mi'rāj*].

Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى says, on the basis of *Ahadith* reported by Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah Ṣiddiqah رضي الله عنها and others, that 'night-prayer' was compulsory for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the entire Muslim community until the five prayers were not prescribed.

This verse not only prescribes the night-prayer but it also prescribes to stand up in prayer from at least one quarter of the night, because the verse under comment basically commanded to stand up all night to pray except a little portion of it.

Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى says, on the basis of narration of *Aḥādīth*, that the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the noble Companions رضي الله عنهم, in compliance with this command, spent the major portion of the night in *tahajjud*, so

much so that their feet would swell and this exertion caused hardship and difficulty to them. This situation continued for a year. After that, towards the end of the Sūrah, the following injunction was revealed:

فَاقْرَأْهُ وَمَا تيسَّرَ مِنْهُ

'...Therefore, recite as much of it as is easy__[73:20]

It repealed the obligation of staying up for a long time, and granted them concession and permission to stay up for prayer as much as they could easily manage. This is transmitted by Abū Dāwūd and Nasa'ī on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه says that when the five prescribed prayers became obligatory on the night of *mi'rāj*, the obligatory nature of *tahajjud* was abrogated. It was, however, retained as *sunnah*, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ performed it most regularly. Most of the blessed Companions رضى الله عنهم were regular with their *tahajjud* as well. [Mazharī] Let us now analyze the wordings of the verses.

فَمِ اللَّيْلِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا 'stand at night (for prayer) except a little__[73:2]'. The word *al-lail* with the definite article 'al' connotes 'the entire night', signifying that he should stay up the whole night for prayer except a little portion of it. As the word 'little' is indefinite, the verse further clarifies:

أَوْزِدْ عَلَيْهِ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا 'half of it, or make it a little less, [3] or أَوْزِدْ عَلَيْهِ make it a little more [73:4]'. This is explicative of the exception 'except a little'. A question may be raised here that 'a little' cannot be 'half'. The answer is that the earlier portion of the night is spent in the prayer at *maghrib* and '*ishā'*'. 'Half' then refers to the half of the rest of the night. Its total in relation to the whole night amounts to 'a little'. The verse permits to reduce it a little less than half and it also permits to add to it a little more than half. Thus it was compulsory to stay up at least for a little over one fourth of a night for prayer.

وَرَتَّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا '...and recite the Qur'ān clearly with *tartīl* (in a distinct and measured tone). [73:4]'. The word *tartīl*, according to Imām Rāghib as explicated in *al-Mufradāt*, originally means 'to put together and arrange well the component parts of a word and speech and make it distinct'. The purport of the verse is to say that the Qur'ān must not be recited in haste, but in a leisurely manner, distinctly, deliberately and in well-measured tone. At the same time, it is necessary to reflect on its meaning and

message. [Maẓharī]. The clause *wa rattil* is grammatically conjoined to *qumil lail* and signifies what is required to be done in tahajjud prayer. Although it comprises many components like *tasbīḥ*, *rukū'* (bowing), *sujud* (prostration) and so on, the verse indicates that the basic component of prayer is recitation of the Qur'ān. The authentic Traditions bear testimony to the fact that the *tahajjud* prayer of the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be prolonged very much. The noble Companions and their pupils followed the same pattern.

Ruling [1]

The verse under comment clarifies that the recitation of the Qur'ān is required to be with *tartīl* [distinct recitation in well-measured tone]. The Holy Prophet's ﷺ recitation fulfilled the requirements of *tartīl*. Some people inquired from Sayyidah 'Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها about the Holy Prophet's ﷺ recitation of Qur'ān in night-prayers. She emulated his recitation in which every single letter was clear and distinct. [Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Nasa'ī - as quoted by Maẓharī].

Ruling [2]

Tartīl includes slow rhythmic recitation and beautification of the voice while reciting. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Allah does not listen to any recitation as much as he listens to the recitation of a Prophet who recites with a beautiful voice." [Maẓharī].

Sayyidnā 'Alqamah ؓ saw a person reciting with a beautiful voice and he exclaimed:

لقد رتل القرآن فداه ابى وأمى

"He has recited the Qur'an with *tartīl*: May my parents be sacrificed to him!" [Qurṭubī].

In short, *tartīl* basically signifies that the letters and the words must be pronounced clearly and distinctly that will help understanding the Qur'ān, and paying due care to its meaning. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى reports that Allah's Messenger ﷺ passed by a person who was reciting a verse of the Qur'ān and weeping. He said to the people, 'Have you heard of the command of Allah' *وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلاً* '...and recite the Qur'ān clearly with *tartīl* (in a distinct and measured tone). [73:4]?' This is *tartīl* which this person is doing. [Qurṭubī]

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا ('We are going to send down to you a weighty discourse... 73:5') The word *thaqīl* means 'heavy' and the phrase 'weighty discourse' refers to the Qur'ān, because the Qur'ānic teachings of lawful and unlawful are permanently binding and carrying them out is the weightiest task for human nature, except those for whom Allah makes it easier. According to oft-quoted *Aḥādīth*, whenever a revelation descended upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he went into a trance and felt a peculiar sensation, so that even on an extremely cold day drops of sweat fell from his forehead, and he felt his body has become heavier. The Qur'ānic revelation being 'a weighty discourse', his paroxysm was due to this sensation. If the Holy Prophet ﷺ received revelation while he was on his riding animal, it would begin to move the bottom of its neck intensely. [Bukhārī and others].

The verse under comment prescribes *tahajjud* prayer on man, so that he may become accustomed to the difficulty of waking at night. This is a struggle against excess sleep and comfort of the carnal self. This exercise will make it easier to abide by the injunctions contained in the 'weighty discourse', that is, the Holy Qur'ān.

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ ('Truly, rising by night [for prayer of *tahajjud*] is the most effective way to subdue (one's self) and to make speech more upright.... 73:6). The word *nāshi'ah*, on the grammatical measure of *'āfiyah*, is an infinitive noun which signifies 'to rise by night for prayer'. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها said that *nāshi'at-ul-lail* means 'to rise by night for night-prayer after sleeping'. According to this definition, *nāshi'at-ul-lail* refers to *tahajjud* prayer. Furthermore, the word *tahajjud* itself, literally, means 'to sleep at night and then wake up to perform the prayer'. Ibn Kaisān رحمه الله تعالى has said that prayer at the later part of the night is called *nāshi'at-ul-lail*. Ibn Zaid رحمه الله تعالى says that performing prayer at any part of the night is *nāshi'at-ul-lail*. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى says that any prayer after the 'Ishā' prayer is *nāshi'at-ul-lail*. Ibn Abī Mulaikah رحمه الله تعالى says that he asked Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Zubair رضي الله عنهما about the meaning of *nāshi'at-ul-lail*, they replied as follows: الأيل كلها ناشئة (The entire night is *nāshi'ah*." - Maḥzarī)

There is no conflict in these interpretations. The point is that the terms *nāshi'ah* of the night and *qiyām* of the night are general, and may refer to any hour of night. Thus the two terms apply equally to

performing night-prayer in any part of the night, especially the one performed after 'Ishā' prayer as explained by Sayyidnā Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى. However, the constant practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, that of the overwhelming majority of the Companions and their pupils, and that of the righteous predecessors of the 'Ummah was that they performed this prayer in the later part of the night after waking from sleep, and therefore it is more virtuous, more meritorious and attracts more blessings. Performing any *nafl* [voluntary] prayer after 'Ishā' prayer fulfills the *sunnah* requirement of *nashi'ah* of the night and *qiyām* of the night.

هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأً (...is the most effective way to subdue (one's self) and to make speech more upright... 73:6). The word *waṭ'an*, with the letter *waw* carrying *fathḥ* [=a], is an infinitive which means 'to subdue' or 'to suppress'. Given this meaning, the sense is that this time of night helps one to suppress his evil desires and keep them under control. This meaning is adopted by Maulānā Ashraf Alī Thānawī رحمه الله تعالى, and the translation of the text is based on this interpretation. In another *qirā'ah* (version), however, the word is pronounced '*wiṭā'an*'. It is an infinitive that means 'to conform'. On another occasion in the Qur'ān, we come across the following verse wherein a verb derived from this root is contained. The word in that verse is used in the same sense, thus:

لِيُؤَاطِفُوا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ

'...so that they may conform (only) to the number of what Allah has sanctified - [9:37]'

Leading authorities on Tafsīr, like Ibn Zaid and Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهما, have interpreted the word in the same sense here. Ibn Zaid رضي الله عنه said that getting up in the night for prayer is the most effective means of making the heart, eye, ear and tongue to mutually correspond and conform. Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said that the phrase means that during this time there is the closest degree of conformity and harmony between the ear and the heart. This is because there is no noise at the time of night when most people are asleep and one will not be disturbed as one is during the daytime. At night time when the tongue recites the Qur'ān, the ears will be conducive to listening to the recitation with due concentration, and the heart will be conducive to understanding and considering its meaning and message .

وَاقْوَمُ قِيَالًا (And to make speech more upright - 73:6) The word *aqwām* means 'more upright'. The verse signifies that the recitation of the Qur'an is more upright and concentrated, because during the night there are no noises and commotion to distract the heart or the mind.

In sum, the purport of the verse is to put forward the wisdom underlying the injunction of the 'night-prayer' for the common people. The preceding verse put forward its wisdom for the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِيْ عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيْلًا

'We are going to send down to you a weighty discourse.[73:5]'

The 'weighty discourse' was concerned specifically with the Holy Prophet ﷺ as it was revealed to him. But for common people, Night-Prayer has two characteristics: [1] bringing harmony between the heart and the tongue; and [2] peace of mind - making it easier to recite the Qur'an.

إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيْلًا (Surely, in daytime, you have a lengthy work to do... 73:7). The word *sabḥun*, literally means, 'to flow, walk or move about' from which we also get the sense 'of swimming in the water' because when a swimmer swims in the water, he moves about in it freely without any obstruction. Here the word signifies 'long chain of engagements in the day' which refers to multifarious duties to be performed with alacrity, such as educating the people, preaching to them, reforming humanity, performing domestic chores, discharging social responsibilities and moving about to many other tasks and obligations .

The current verse explicates the third point of wisdom as to why night-prayer was enjoined. This relates both to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the general body of the Muslim community. During the day the Holy Prophet ﷺ as well as other people have a long chain of engagements for which they disperse and move about as explained in the foregoing paragraph. As a result, it is difficult for them to concentrate on their worshipping activity. The night should be reserved for this purpose. A person should sleep according to his need and perform his night-prayer as well.

A Special Note

Jurists have said that the verse under comment confirms that scholars