

Tafheemul Quran in Colors Arabic English 010 Yunus

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يُونُسُ Yunus

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from Ayat 98, in which there is a reference to Prophet *Yunus* (Jonah). The name, as usual, is symbolical and does not indicate that the Surah deals with the story of Prophet Jonah.

Period of Revelation

We learn from traditions, and this is supported by the contents of the Surah itself, that this entire Surah was revealed at Makkah. But there are some people who are of the opinion, that some of its verses were revealed at Al-

Madinah. This is, however, a superficial view. The continuity of the theme clearly shows that this does not comprise isolated verses or discourses that were revealed at different times and on different occasions. On the contrary, it is, from the beginning to the end, a closely connected discourse which must have been revealed at one sitting. Besides this, the nature of its theme is itself a clear proof that the Surah belongs to the Makkan period.

Time of Revelation

We have no tradition in regard to the time of its revelation, but its subject matter gives clear indication that it must have been revealed during the last stage of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) residence at Makkah. For the mode of the discourse suggests that at the time of its revelation, the antagonism of the opponents of the Message had become so intense that they could not tolerate even the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers among themselves, and that things had come to such a pass as to leave no hope that they would ever understand and accept the Message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This indicates that the last stage of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life among these people had come, and the final warning like the one in this Surah had to be given. These characteristics of the discourse are clear proof that it was revealed during the last stage of the movement at Makkah. Another thing that determines more specifically the order of the Surahs of the last stage at Makkah is the mention (or absence) of some open or covert hint about *Hijrat* (emigration) from Makkah. As this Surah does not contain

any hint whatsoever about this, it is a proof that it preceded those Surahs which contain it.

Now that we have specified the time of its revelation, there is no need of repeating its historical background because that has already been stated in Surahs Al-Maidah and Al-Anaam.

Subject

This discourse deals with the invitation to the message, admonition and warning. In the very introductory verses, the invitation has been extended like this:

The people consider it a strange thing that this message is being conveyed by a human being and charge him with sorcery, whereas there is nothing strange in it nor has it any connection with sorcery or sooth saying. It simply informs you of two realities. First, Allah, Who has created the universe and manages it is, in fact, your Master and Lord, and He alone is entitled to your worship. The second reality is that after the life in this world, there will be another life in the next world, where you shall have to render full account of the life of this world and be rewarded or punished according to whether you adopted the righteous attitude as required by Him after acknowledging Him as your Masters or acted against His will. Both of these realities, which the Messenger (peace be upon him) is presenting before you, are realities in themselves whether you acknowledge them as such or not. He is inviting you to accept these and regulate your lives in accordance with them. If you accept these, you will have a very blessed end, otherwise you shall meet with evil

consequences.

Topics

After the introduction, the following topics have been dealt with in an appropriate order:

1. Proofs of the doctrines of *Tauhid*, providence and life-after-death have been given by such arguments as may satisfy the minds and hearts of those who listen to the message without prejudice and bigotry with the sole intention of safeguarding themselves against deviation and its evil results and not for the sake of seeking opportunities for useless discussions.

2. Those misunderstandings which were (and always are) hindering people from accepting the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter, have been removed and they have been warned to guard against those negligence that stand in their way.

3. Those doubts have been removed and answers to those objections given which were being raised about the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the message brought by him.

4. Graphic descriptions of the life in the Hereafter have been presented in order to warn the people beforehand so that they should mend their ways here and be not sorry afterwards for their conduct in this world.

5. They have been admonished and warned that the life in this world is really a test and a trial, and that the time allowed for it is only up to the last moment of the earthly life, and that this is the only opportunity that shall be given to them for accepting the message and achieving success in

the test. Therefore, they should make the best use of the opportunity that has been provided for them by the appointment of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) for their guidance and obtain the true knowledge of the reality from the Quran that is being sent down to him. Otherwise, they shall be remorseful forever and ever.

6. Their attention has been drawn to some of their acts of manifest ignorance and deviation which were the direct result of discarding divine guidance from their lives.

In this connection, the story of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) has been related in brief and that of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) in detail in order to impress four things on the minds:

First, as your behavior towards Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is like that of the peoples of Prophets Noah and Moses (peace be upon them) towards them, you should know it for certain that you shall also meet with the same consequences which they met with. Secondly, you should not be deluded into believing by the helpless and weak condition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers, you are witnessing today, that it will always remain like this. You should know that the same All-Powerful Allah Who supported Prophets Moses and Aaron (peace be upon them) is supporting them and that He changes the circumstances in such a sudden and thorough manner that none can foresee it. Thirdly, if you do not make use of the term that has been granted to you by Allah and mend your ways now, and postpone this to the last moment like Pharaoh, your repentance shall not be

accepted. Lastly the followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) have been reassured that they should not lose heart because of the severity of the circumstances created by their opponents, especially at the time when they themselves were in an utterly helpless condition. They have also been given instructions as to how they should carry on their mission under those harsh conditions. Moreover, they have been warned to be on their guard against the kind of behavior which was adopted by the Israelites, when they were rescued by Allah from the tyranny of the People of Pharaoh.

7. At the end of the Surah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been commanded to make a declaration to this effect: This is the creed and this is the rule of conduct that has been prescribed for me by Allah. No change can be made at all in this. He who will accept this will do so for his own good and the one will reject this will do so at his own peril.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. Alif. Lam. Ra. These are verses of the Book, full of wisdom. *1

الرَّ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ

*1 This introductory verse contains a subtle answer to those foolish people who presumed that the discourses, which the Messenger (peace be upon him) was presenting as the Quran, were nothing more than eloquent speeches, poetic lofty thoughts, and some predictions like those of the soothsayers. They are being warned that the Quran is not what they supposed it to be but this is the Book of wisdom,

and that if they did not pay due attention to it, they would deprive themselves of wisdom.

2. Is it for mankind astonishing that We have revealed to a man from among them, that: “Warn mankind and give good tidings to those who believed that they shall have a true status with their Lord.” *2 The disbelievers said: “Indeed, this is an evident sorcerer.” *3

أَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى
رَجُلٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَنْ أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ وَ
بَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ
صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ط قَالَ الْكٰفِرُونَ
إِنَّ هٰذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

*2 This question has been posed to impress on them that if they considered the matter coolly, they themselves would come to the conclusion that:

(a) There is nothing strange in appointing a man to warn his fellow men of the consequences of neglecting the Message. For it is obvious that a man, and not a jinn nor an angel nor any other being, was the proper messenger for human beings.

(b) There is nothing strange in it that the Creator and Lord of mankind should make arrangements for the guidance of erring human beings; nay, it would have been strange if He had made no such arrangements, and

(c) There is nothing strange in this that real honor and success should come to those who accept the guidance and not to those who reject it.

*3 They dubbed him “evident sorcerer” but did not consider whether the epithet appropriately applied to him

or not. It is obvious that the mere fact that he was moving the hearts and influencing the minds of the believers with his eloquence was not a sufficient proof that he was using magic to achieve this object. And it is not difficult at all to distinguish rhetoric of a Messenger from that of an sorcerer for these are quite distinct from each other in their nature, in the objectives for which they are used and in the effect they produce on the lives of the believers. The irresponsible sorcerer does not care at all whether what he utters is correct, just and righteous because his only object is to influence the hearts of the hearers in order to achieve his own unlawful ends. That is why he does not hesitate at all to utter any false, exaggerated or unjust thing, if it serves his purpose. For his only aim is to produce an emotional effect in order to deceive the people by using an artificially ornamented and exaggerated language rather than to state things of wisdom. As a result of this, his talk is contradictory, imbalanced and unsystematic. As his sole object is self-interest, he abuses his rhetoric for exploitation, or for sowing seeds of discord or for setting one party against the other. Therefore, the sorcerer fails to produce any high moral effects on the lives of the people or to imbue them with any righteous thoughts or to urge them to noble deeds or to bring about any healthy change in their lives; nay, as a result of his magic the people begin to exhibit even worse qualities than they did before.

Thus it is implied that by the application of this criterion, the charge of the unbelievers that “This man is a manifest sorcerer” is refuted, for it means to say to them: You

yourselves are witnessing that the talk of this person is wise, systematic, balanced, right and just. Every word he utters is well-thought out and everything he says is most valuable and precious. His eloquence aims at nothing but reform of the people. There is not the least tinge of personal, family, national or any other worldly interest in his talk. His only intention and desire is to warn the people of the consequences of their negligence and to invite them to the way of their own good. Then consider the effects of his eloquence and you will find that they are quite different from those produced by the rhetoric of the enchanters. The lives of all those who have been influenced by him have been so reformed that they have become models of high moral character and excellent conduct. Therefore, you should consider the matter and decide for yourselves whether he is an enchanter or a prophet.

3. Indeed, your Lord is Allah, He who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He established Himself upon the Throne, managing all affairs.*⁴ There is not any intercessor except after His permission.*⁵ That is Allah, your Lord, so worship Him.*⁶ Will you then not take heed.*⁷

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

*⁴ This is to impress the fact that after creating the universe, Allah has not cut off connection with it, but has

sat Himself upon His Throne and is practically directing and conducting and governing each and every part of it. The foolish people think that after creating the universe, Allah has left it to itself or to others to exploit it as they will. But the Quran refutes this and says that Allah Himself is governing His entire creation and He has kept all the powers and the reins of government in His own hands and whatever is taking place in each and every part of the universe is happening with His command or permission. In short, He is not only the Creator but also the Ruler, Designer and Supporter of the universe, which is working in accordance with His will. (See also E.Ns 40, 41 of Surah Al-Aaaraaf).

*5 This is to emphasize the other side of the matter. He is All-Powerful and there is none who dare make even a recommendation to Him about anything, not to speak of interfering with His management of affairs so as to cause any change in His decrees or in the making or marring of anyone's fate. The most one can do is to make a supplication to Him but it all depends on His will to grant or reject it. There is none so powerful in His Kingdom as to have his own way in anything or to get his recommendations through anyhow.

*6 After stating the bare fact that Allah alone is the Lord, people are being told the kind of conduct that fact demands from them. That is, when Allah alone is your Lord, you should worship Him alone. In this connection, it should also be noted that just as the Arabic word *Rabb* implies three things namely Providence, Supremacy and Sovereignty,

likewise the Arabic word *ibadat* also contains three corresponding implications.

(1) **Worship:** As Allah is his sole Providence, man should show his gratitude to Him by worshiping Him alone. He should pray and supplicate to Him and bow his head in reverence to Him and none else.

(2) **Servitude:** As Allah is the only Supreme Being, man should behave like His servant and slave and should not adopt the attitude of independence towards Him nor should he subject himself to the mental or practical servitude of anyone else.

(3) **Obedience:** As Allah is his sole Sovereign, man should obey His commands, and follow His law, and he should neither become his own sovereign nor should he acknowledge anyone else as his sovereign.

*7 That is, will you not then understand the implications of the reality that has been expounded? Will you not open your eyes and see the misunderstandings which have been misleading you into wrong ways opposed to Reality? Will you persist in them?

4. To Him is your return all together. *8 The promise of Allah in truth. Indeed, He begins the creation, then He repeats it, *9 that He may reward those who believed and did righteous deeds in justice. And those who disbelieved, for them is a

إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا
إِنَّهُ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ لِيَجْزِيَ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْقِسْطِ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ

drink of scalding water and painful punishment for what they used to disbelieve. *10

وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ

***8** This is the second basic principle of the teachings of every prophet; “You shall have to return to your Lord and render an account of all you did in this world.” The first principle has been stated in the preceding verse: Allah alone is your Lord: therefore worship only Him.

***9** This sentence contains both a statement and its proof. The statement is, “Allah will again bring to life all human beings,” and the proof is, “This is as easy for Allah as it was to create them the first time.” The one who acknowledges that Allah has originated all creation (and who can deny this except those atheists who accepted the absurd theory of “creation without a creator” merely to get a plea for discarding the religion of the Christian clergy?) cannot consider this as impossible or irrational.

***10** The reason why Allah will again bring the whole mankind to life is to reward the believers and to punish the disbelievers. After showing that this is possible to raise the dead, it is stated that it is absolutely necessary to fulfill the demands of common sense and justice, for full justice cannot be done without this. Common sense and justice demand that those who believe and do righteous deeds should be given their full rewards, and those who disbelieve and reject the truth and do evil deeds, should be duly punished. As every sensible and just person knows that this demand of justice is not fulfilled in its entirety, and cannot be fulfilled, in this world. It is absolutely essential that the

entire mankind should again be brought to life for this purpose. (See also E.N. 30, Surah Al-Aaraf and E.N. 105, Surah Hud).

5. It is He who made the sun a radiance and the moon a light, and measured out for it stages, that you may know the number of the years, and the reckoning (of dates). Allah did not create this but in truth. He explains in detail the revelations for people who have knowledge.

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَ
القَمَرَ نُورًا وَ قَدَّرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا
عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَ الْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللهُ
ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

6. Indeed, in the alternation of the night and the day, and what has created Allah in the heavens and the earth, are indeed signs for a people who fear. *11

إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَ النَّهَارِ وَ مَا
خَلَقَ اللهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ
لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

*11 This is the third argument in proof of the doctrine of the life in the Hereafter. It is based on Allah's manifestations in the heavens and on the earth. The greatest and most manifest of these are the sun the moon and the alternation of the night and day, for these are ever present before each and every human being. All these clearly show that the Creator of this great and vast universe is not a child who has made all this for mere fun and will break it up when he is satiated with it. These manifestations of His are a clear proof of the fact that the

Creator is All-Wise, for there is a system, a wisdom, a design and a serious object in each and every particle of His creation. These seem, as it were, to say: When you yourselves learn from the signs and manifestations of His wisdom that He is All-Wise, how can you, then, expect that He will not call man to account after granting him common sense, moral feelings, independent responsibility and authority to exploit His endless resources, and that He will not reward those who make the right use of these and punish those who abuse them?

Thus, it has become obvious that in Ayats 4-6, three arguments have been given in their logical order to present the doctrine of the Hereafter:

(1) The fact of the origination of life in this world is a proof that life in the next world is also possible.

(2) There must be life in the Hereafter, because it is essential for the recompense of the deeds that one does, and of the use or abuse one makes of the moral responsibilities that have been entrusted to man. Therefore, it is the demand of common sense and justice that there must be another world in which one should bear the consequences of his deeds, for this is not possible in this world.

(3) When common sense and justice demand that there must be life in the Hereafter, this need will surely be satisfied, for the Creator of man and the universe is All-Wise, and it cannot be conceived that the All-Wise will not satisfy the demands of common sense and justice.

A serious thinking will show that these are the only possible arguments for the proof of the life in the Hereafter and

these suffice, too. After this the only thing that might be demanded in this connection is that it should be actually demonstrated before man to convince him that this thing is possible, necessary and demanded by the Wisdom of Allah. But it is obvious that this will not be done in this world for this is for the trial of man and not for recompense, and Allah wills to test whether man believes in the Hereafter without seeing it, merely by his reasoning on the right lines. Besides this, the words, “He explains in detail the signs for a people who have knowledge” and “Are indeed signs for a people who fear Allah” are worthy of serious consideration. These words imply this: Allah has in His wisdom spread such signs in each and every manifestation of His as clearly point to the realities that are hidden behind them; but only those people can reach to those realities, who (a) free themselves from the prejudices of ignorance and acquire knowledge from the sources with which Allah has provided man for this purpose, and (b) have the intention of avoiding wrong ways and following the right way.

7. Indeed, those who do not expect the meeting with Us, and are content with the life of the world, and are satisfied with it. And those who are of Our signs, neglectful.

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

8. Those, their abode is the Fire because of what they used to earn. *12

أُولَٰئِكَ مَا لَهُمْ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨﴾

***12** This passage also contains a statement and its proof. The statement is that those who reject the doctrine of the Hereafter shall inevitably go to Hell and its proof is that those who reject or pay no heed to this, commit such evil deeds as deserve nothing less than the fire of Hell. The fact which is supported by the experience of thousands of years, is that those who do not consider themselves responsible and accountable to God in the Hereafter, go astray into wrong ways for lack of any control over themselves, and commit immoralities and fill God's earth with tyranny, chaos and filth and thus merit Hell. This is inevitable. If a man leads his life on the presumption that there is no other life, he will have no fear that he shall have to render a full account of all his deeds in this world. Therefore his sole aim in this life will be to win, by hook or by crook, prosperity, happiness, fame and power in this world. Naturally these materialistic attitudes make people heedless of the signs of Allah and mislead them into wrong ways that lead to Hell. The above argument for the doctrine of the Hereafter is in its nature different from the previous three arguments. This is based on the knowledge gained by human experience while the former were based on rational reasoning. Though here only a hint has been given about it, the same has been stated in detail in other places in the Quran. This is the argument in brief: Human beings cannot adopt individually or collectively the right attitude towards life unless the doctrine of accountability to God is deeply embedded in their hearts. The fact that human beings begin to behave erroneously, if and when their belief in this

doctrine disappears or becomes weak, is borne out by a long experience. Had not the creed of the Hereafter been real, its acceptance or rejection would not have produced the results inevitably and continuously for centuries. The fact that the acceptance of a doctrine should have continuously produced right sort of results, and its denial wrong results, is a clear proof that it is real. Though the premises of the above argument and the conclusion drawn from these are clear and closely connected, there are some people who do not agree with this proposition. They argue their point like this. There are many instances of people who deny the Hereafter and base their moral philosophy and their rule of conduct on atheism and materialism, still they possess high moral characters and abstain from every sort of evil. In short, they are virtuous in their affairs and render great services to the people. But a little thinking will show that this is a weak argument. If we probe into the materialistic philosophies and systems, we shall find that all these lack solid foundations for the moral excellence and practical virtuous deeds; therefore they cannot produce those qualities with which the atheists and the materialists are credited. Indeed no such motivating factors exist in those philosophies as may produce the qualities of righteousness, honesty, trust worthiness, justice, compassion, generosity, sacrifice, sympathy, self control, purity, the fulfillment of duties, obligations and pledges and the like. The only alternative to the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter is utilitarianism which might become the basis for a practical moral system, for all the other

philosophies are merely hypothetical and impracticable. It is quite obvious that the motivating power of utilitarianism is very limited because it is incapable of carrying a person farther than utility itself. Therefore the one who believes in this doctrine will consider a virtue a “virtue” only as long as it is useful to his own person, family, society etc. and will direct all his efforts towards promoting their welfare and happiness and will adhere to moral qualities only as long as they are conducive to his own good or to that of his own people. But he will discard these virtues when he is convinced that these will be harmful. That is why a utilitarian does not believe in absolute morality but adopts truth or falsehood, honesty or dishonesty, faithfulness or treachery, justice or injustice, in short, any virtue or vice that may suit the occasion and be useful for his own interests. Nevertheless, if there be any up-holders of absolute morality from among the disbelievers of Allah and the Hereafter, they could not have gotten these virtues from the doctrine of utilitarianism but from those latent religious influences that might have remained embedded in their hearts without their conscious knowledge. Such a person is, in fact, indebted to religion for his moral excellences, though he may be attributing these to secularism and materialism, for he cannot point out anything, whatsoever, in them that might have motivated those virtues.

9. Indeed, those who believed and did righteous deeds, will guide them their Lord because of their faith. Flowing beneath

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمَانِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِنْ

them are rivers in the
gardens of delight. *13

تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

*13 We should not pass cursorily over this verse and should consider it deeply in the order it has been presented:

(1) Why will they be given Gardens of delight in the life of the Hereafter? This will be because they followed the right way in the life of this world and adopted the right ways in every aspect of life, both as individuals and as a community, and discarded the false and erroneous ways.

(2) How did they obtain at every step, at every turning and at every crossroad the correct criterion of judging between the right and the wrong, the true and the false, the righteous and the erroneous? Then from where did they get the power to remain steadfast on the right way, avoiding scrupulously wrong ways, after getting the right sort of discernment? It was their Lord Who is the real source of everything, Who gave them the guidance and the power of doing good works on every critical occasion.

(3) Why did their Lord give them that guidance and power? He gave them these things because of their faith.

(4) What is that characteristic of the faith which produces the above results? The faith which produces those results does not comprise mere profession but it is that faith which becomes the moving spirit of one's conduct and character and has the power of reforming one's morals and deeds.

In order to illustrate this point, let us consider, in the physical life of man, the case of food that is consumed for nourishment, health, energy and happiness. It is obvious that these results cannot be produced by the mere taking in

of any food, but by that food which is so digested as turns into blood and circulates into every vein to provide energy to every part of the body for its proper functioning. In the same way, in the moral life, guidance, righteous attitude and pure conduct and true success, depend on those right creeds that get deeply embedded in the mind, heart and soul. Otherwise, creeds which are merely professed by the tongue or lie dormant in some corner of the mind and the heart cannot produce such results, for they cannot influence one's conduct, character, way of thinking and attitude towards life for the better. Just as one may eat food and still not obtain those useful results which are produced only if it is digested properly according to the physical laws of God. In the same way, one who professes those right creeds merely with his tongue, but does not make them a part of his mind, heart and soul does not deserve those rewards which are only for those whose deeds correspond to the creeds.

10. Their call therein will be:
“Glory be to You, O Allah.”
And their greeting therein
will be: “Peace.” And the
conclusion of their call will
be that: “Praise to Allah,
Lord of the worlds.” *14

دَعْوَاهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ
 فِيهَا سَلَامٌ وَأَخْرَجَ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنْ الْحَمْدُ
 لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

***14** This is the basic principle of the His teachings; The first principle has been stated that Allah alone is your Lord, therefore worship only Him. “You shall have to return to your Lord and render an account of all you did in

this world.”

11. And if Allah were to hasten^{*15} for mankind evil, just as they seek to hasten good, would have been decreed for them their term. So We leave those who do not expect the meeting with Us, in their transgression wandering blindly.

وَلَوْ يُعَجِّلُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ الشَّرَّ اسْتِعْجَالَهُمْ بِالْخَيْرِ لَقُضِيَ إِلَيْهِمْ أَجْلُهُمْ
فَتَذَرُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١١﴾

*15 After the introductory verses (1-10), the Quran takes up admonition which is the main subject of the Surah. In order to understand this fully we should keep two things in view as its background:

First, a little before its revelation, the continuous horrible famine, which had afflicted Makkah for seven long years and humbled the haughty Quraish, had come to an end. Naturally this had given a blow to idol worship and acted as a stimulus to God worship. For, in their utter helplessness, they had to supplicate to Allah and cry meekly for help. So much so that Abu Sufyan had to approach the Prophet (peace be upon him) with this request: Please pray to Allah to remove this affliction from us. But when the famine was over, and rains began to fall, and prosperity returned, they began to show rebellion and do evil deeds and started their hostile activities against the believers. Thus the hearts that had turned to Allah, again became neglectful of Him. (See Surah An-Nahal, Ayat 113, Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayats 75-77, Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayats 10-16).

Secondly, the Quran answered the question with which they confronted the Prophet (peace be upon him) whenever he warned them of the consequences of rejecting the truth. They would say” You are always threatening us with Allah’s wrath; why doesn’t the divine torment visit us and why is it being delayed?

Keeping the above background in view, Ayats 11-12 may be expanded like this: Allah does not hasten in punishing and seizing the people for their sins as He hastens in showing kindness and compassion to them. Do they, then, want Him to hasten His torment for their rebellions, as He hastened to remove famine in answer to their supplications? As this is not Our Way, We give them time to mend their evil ways in spite of their transgressions and rebellions. We send warning after warning and give them respite until their term comes to an end. Then the law of requital comes into force. In contrast to this, their way is the way of mean and narrow minded people. When affliction comes, they remember Allah, begin to cry and call Him meekly, but forget it all during the time of prosperity. Such bad ways as these are leading them to divine torment.

12. And when touches man affliction, he calls upon Us, reclining on his side, or sitting, or standing. Then when We have removed from him his affliction, he goes his way as though he had not called upon Us

وَ إِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنْبِهِ
أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَائِمًا فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ
ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَأَنْ لَّمْ يَدْعُنَا إِلَى ضُرِّ
مَسَّهُ ۗ كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ مَا كَانُوا

because of the affliction that touched him. Thus it seems fair to the transgressors that which they used to do.

يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

13. And indeed, We have destroyed the generations before you, ^{*16} when they wronged, ^{*17} and came to them their messengers with clear proofs, and they were not such as to believe. Thus do We recompense the people who are criminals.

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونََ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا^{١٦} وَجَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
وَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا^{١٧} كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ
الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

^{*16} The Arabic word *qarn* is commonly used for the people living during the same period. But from the way the Quran has used this word on different occasions, it is evident that by *qarn* is, meant the community which had been invested with power and authority and appointed wholly or partially to the position of leadership of the world. One way in which such a community is destroyed is that it is totally exterminated but there are other forms of its destruction also.

^{*17} Here the word *zulm* has not been used in its commonly known limited sense, but it covers all sorts of sins that are committed, when people transgress the boundaries of Allah's slavery. (Refer to E.N. 49 of Surah Al-Baqarah).

14. Then We appointed you as successors in the land after them, that We might see how you would act. ^{*18}

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

*18 Ayats 13-14 have been pointedly addressed to the Arabs so as to say, “O Prophet (peace be upon him) of Arabia, learn a lesson from the communities that have passed before you. They were given an opportunity for doing good deeds in their time but instead of this they adopted the attitude of transgression and rebellion and rejected the teachings of the Messengers who had been sent for their guidance. As they failed in Our test, We dismissed them from leadership. Now, O people of Arabia, your turn has come and you have replaced them and have gotten the opportunity for doing the same work under the guidance of Our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). You must understand that you are undergoing the same test in which your predecessors have failed. If you do not want to meet with the end they met, you should make the right use of this opportunity by learning a lesson from their end and by avoiding the errors, which became the ultimate cause of their destruction.

15. And when are recited to them Our revelations as clear evidence, say those who do not expect for their meeting with Us, “Bring a Quran other than this, or change it.” *19 Say: “It is not for me that I change it on my own accord. I do not follow but that which is revealed unto me. Indeed, I fear, if I were

وَ إِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ ۗ قَالَ
 الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَرْجُوْنَ لِقَاءَنَا اَنْتَ بِقُرْآنٍ
 غَيْرِ هٰذَا اَوْ بَدَّلْتَهُ ۗ قُلْ مَا يَكُوْنُ لِيْ
 اَنْ اُبَدِّلَهٗ مِنْ تِلْقَآئِيْ نَفْسِيْ ۗ اِنْ اَتَّبِعُ
 اِلَّا مَا يُوحٰى اِلَيَّ ۗ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ اِنْ

to disobey my Lord, the punishment of a great day.”*20

عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

*19 They implied two things when they said these words. First, they meant that what Muhammad (peace be upon him) was presenting as divine revelation was really the product of his own mind but he was ascribing it to Allah merely to make his claim weighty. Secondly, they implied this: If you want to be the leader of your people, present something that may make them prosperous in the world and give up the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter and the moral restrictions you are prescribing in your teaching. And if it is not possible, make some amendments in the Quran so that a compromise may be made between you and us on the principle of give and take so that there should be some scope for our *shirk* in your *Tauhid* and for our self worship and for our salvation in the Hereafter, irrespective of what we do in this world. You should also note it well that we cannot accept your absolute morality: therefore you should make an allowance for our prejudices, our rites and customs, our personal and national interests and our desires. We propose that with mutual agreement we should make a list of those religious demands which should be obligatory on us for the fulfillment of Allah's rights, and beyond that we should be free to conduct our worldly affairs in any way we like. This compromise is necessary because we cannot accept your demand that human life in all its aspects should entirely be led in accordance with the implications of the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter and the regulations of the Islamic code of life.

***20** This is the answer to the two above mentioned demands: I have no authority of making any alterations in this Book for I am not its author but Allah is the One Who is sending it down to me. Therefore there is no question of any compromise about it. If you want to accept its way, you will have to accept it as it is; otherwise you are free to reject it.

16. Say: “If Allah had so willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor He would have made it known to you. So indeed, I have lived amongst you a life time before this. Have you then no sense.” ***21**

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

***21** This is a very strong argument against their accusation that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was himself the author of the Quran but was ascribing it to Allah, and in support of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) claim that it was being sent down to him by Allah, Who was its Author. The argument is this: You yourselves have witnessed the forty years of his life before his appointment to Prophethood. He was born in your own city and passed his boyhood, youth and middle age before your very eyes. He lived among you and had all kinds of relations, social, marital, economic, etc. with you. So much so that no aspect of his life was hidden from you. Did you notice anything in his whole life that might show that he could be the author of this Book? Do you not use your commonsense?

The question posed in the Quran implied two things which

were well known to everyone in Makkah about the Prophet (peace be upon him):

First, during the forty years of his life before Prophethood, he had neither received any education nor training nor sat in any company that should have enabled him to become the author of such a Book as was full of unique things that were unknown to the people around him. No one had ever heard from him anything about the problems that had been dealt with in different Surahs of the Quran. So much so that not even a relative or close friend of his had ever noticed anything in his talk or in anything about him that might have shown any signs of gradual development towards it before he made his great claim to Prophethood when he reached the age of forty. This was a clear proof of the fact that the Quran was not the invention of his own mind and that it must have been sent down to him from outside. For it is impossible for a human being to produce anything like this, all of a sudden and without ever manifesting any signs of its evolution and development in his earlier life. That is why when some intelligent people of Makkah felt the absurdity of this accusation, they began to say that it was some other person who taught these things to him. But this was even more absurd than the first thing because they could not point out specifically a single person in the whole of Arabia, not to say of Makkah, who had the ability of producing such unique things as were contained in the Quran. They also knew that a person of such high caliber could not have remained obscure in some unknown corner for forty years.

The second thing, that had distinguished him during those forty years of his life, was his noble character both from the negative and from the positive aspects. He was never known to have told a single lie or practiced any kind of deceit, forgery, cunning, craftiness and the like in any way whatsoever, On the other hand, all those people with whom he had come into contact in any capacity bore witness to the fact that he had been truthful, honest, and trustworthy without any blemish whatsoever. As an instance, a most well known historical fact may be cited. Only five years before his Prophethood, the Kaabah was damaged by rains. When they were re-building it, a quarrel arose among the different clans of the Quraish as to who should have the honor of setting Hajr-i-Aswad (the Black Stone) in its proper place. Therefore it was agreed that the one who would be the first to enter into the Haram next morning should arbitrate in the quarrel. Next morning the first person who entered the Haram was Muhammad (peace be upon him). At this all the people cried out with joy, he is an absolutely trust worthy man, and we are fully satisfied with him; he is Muhammad (peace be upon him).” This is how Allah had made that large gathering of the Quraish bear witness to the fact that he was “the trustworthy” before appointing him as His Messenger (peace be upon him). Therefore there was no justification for anyone to accuse the man, who had never told a lie nor ever practiced forgery nor craftiness in his whole life, of ascribing falsely to Allah his own literary creation, and claiming categorically and persistently that it was of divine origin.

That is why Allah has asked His Messenger (peace be upon him) to refute their absurd charge by saying, as it were, only this: O my people, use your common sense before making this absurd accusation, for I am not a stranger or a foreigner among you. I have lived a life time of forty years among you before making a claim that I have received revelation from Allah. How can you expect from my past that I would present the Quran to you as Allah's Book, without gaining knowledge from Him and without His command?" (See Surah Al-Qasas, E.N. 109).

17. So who does greater wrong than he who invents against Allah a lie, or denies His revelations. *22 Indeed, will not be successful the criminals. *23

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



*22 That is, if these revelations are not from Allah and I myself compose them and present them as revelations from Him, there can be no greater sinner than I am. On the other hand, if these revelations are truly from Allah and you are falsifying these, then there can be no greater sinner than you.

*23 Some foolish people draw wrong and misleading conclusions from this verse, by a fallacious reasoning. They confine the meanings of *falah* to long life or worldly prosperity or worldly success and argue like this: This verse declares categorically that criminals can never attain success. The converse of this proposition, that is, anyone who is successful cannot be a criminal must also be true.

Hence, if a claimant should live a long life after his claim to Prophethood or prosper in the world or his claim receives a good response in the world from the people, he should be acknowledged as a true prophet. For they argue, if he had been a false prophet he could not have prospered, but would have been killed or starved to death or rendered unsuccessful in his mission, as soon as he had claimed to be a prophet. But even a little thinking will show that this argument is fallacious on the face of it. Firstly, the converse of every proposition is not always true. Secondly, the Quran does not use the word *falah* in this limited sense. Thirdly, Allah deals with the criminals according to His divine law of respite.

Now let us consider the matter in detail. The words “Indeed, the criminals will not be successful”, have not been used, in the context they occur, to prescribe a criterion for judging a true Prophet from a false one, so that if a claimant is successful, he should be accepted, and if he is not, he should be rejected. As a matter of fact, these words have been put in the mouth of the Messenger to make a declaration like this: I know it for certain that the criminals cannot attain (true) success: therefore I cannot commit the crime of making a false claim to Prophethood. But as regards you, I am absolutely sure that you cannot attain true success because you are guilty of falsifying me who is a true Prophet of Allah.

The other thing is that the word *falah* is not used in the limited sense of worldly success, but it has been used to denote the permanent success which never suffers any loss

whatsoever irrespective of the fact whether the claimant gains or does not gain any worldly success in the initial stage. Nay, it is just possible that a false claimant who invites people to misguidance should attain great worldly success and his misguidance might also prosper. This is, however, not success in the terminology of the Quran, but this would be an utter failure. On the other hand, it is also possible that the inviter to the truth should suffer untold afflictions or fall a prey to the persecutions of the transgressors, and leave this world without winning over anyone to the side of the truth, but this will be, in the terminology of the Quran, true success and not a failure.

The other thing that refutes the fallacy of these foolish people is that they do not take into consideration the divine law of respite, according to which the mere fact that a false prophet enjoyed a long prosperous life is not a proof that he was a true prophet. The Quran has made it clear at many places that Allah does not expedite the matter of the punishment of the criminals, but gives them respite to mend their ways; nay, He also lets them loose in their deviation if they abuse that respite and become more corrupt. Sometimes He makes them even more prosperous so that they should fully manifest all the evils they had hidden in their hearts and incur full punishment which they really deserve for their evil deeds. The divine law of respite takes its due course in the case of false prophets as it does in the case of other criminals. And there is no reason why they should be an exception to this. Satan, the greatest of all criminals, has been allowed to practice every kind of

deception up to the Day of Judgment, and there is no mention of any exception to this effect that he will not be allowed to set up a false prophet.

As a last resort, such perverse interpreters of the Quran turn to Ayats 44-47 of Surah Al-Haqqah: If Muhammad had fabricated something himself and ascribed that to Us, We would have seized his hand and cut off his heart's vein. But these cannot serve their purpose, for what they imply is only this: If the true Prophet appointed by Allah were to ascribe any false thing to Allah, he would be seized forthwith. Therefore it is no more than a fallacy to argue from this to the erroneous conclusion that the impostor who is not seized is a true prophet, for this divine principle applies only to a true Prophet and not to an impostor. In order to grasp this point, let us take the instance of the government servants. It is obvious that the rules and regulations which are prescribed for government servants apply only to those who are actually government servants and not to impostors. Those who pretend to be government servants are dealt with according to the criminal code like other criminals and villains and not according to the code of employment. Besides this, the context in which these verses occur clearly shows that these are not laying down any criterion of judging whether a claimant is a true Prophet or an impostor. Moreover, a true Prophet can easily be distinguished from an impostor by his high character, his noble mission and the unique Message he presents. Hence there was no need of setting up such an irrational and unnatural standard of distinguishing a true

Prophet from an impostor.

18. And they worship other than Allah that which neither hurts them nor benefits them, and they say: "These are our intercessors with Allah." Say: "Would you inform Allah of that which He does not know in the heavens, nor in the earth." *24 Glory be to Him, and high exalted above all that they associate.

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ
وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شُفَعَاؤُنَا
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أَتَنْبِئُونَ اللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ
فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ سُبْحٰنَهُ وَ
تَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

*24 This is a fine way of saying that no such intercessors exist as can plead their cases with Allah. For if something is not in the knowledge of Allah, it implies that it does not exist at all, for everything that exists anywhere in the heavens and the earth is in His knowledge.

19. And were not mankind but one community, then they disagreed. *25 And if it had not been for a word that had already gone forth from your Lord, it would have been judged between them in that wherein they disagree. *26

وَ مَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلَّا أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً
فَاخْتَلَفُوا ۗ وَلَوْ لَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ
رَبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

*25 See E.N. 230 of Surah Al-Baqarah and E.N. 24 of Surah Al-Anaam.

*26 The decree that Allah has ordained is that the reality that shall be kept hidden from man's senses in order to test

whether he recognizes this by using his common sense, intelligence, conscience and intuition, and if he does not, he shall be allowed to tread the wrong ways he chooses. That is why their differences about the reality are not being resolved by uncovering it today.

This thing has been stated here to remove a common misunderstanding about the diversity of religions in the world.

At that time, there was a confusion in the minds of the people (and is even today) concerning this. They said: Different people profess different religions, and the followers of each religion claim that their religion alone is the true one. How may then a seeker of truth judge which one of these is the true religion? The answer is: In the beginning all mankind had only one religion, and that was the true religion. Then people strayed away from it and invented different religions of their own with different creeds and ways. Now if you desire that Allah Himself should uncover the truth and present it to you to enable you to decide which religion is the true one, you should know that this will not be done in this life, because you are required to decide this by using your common sense and intelligence. This worldly life is a trial to see whether or not you yourselves recognize the truth by using your common sense and intelligence.

20. And they say: “Why is not sent down to him a sign from his Lord.” *27 Say: “Indeed the unseen is for

وَيَقُولُونَ لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا الْغَيْبُ لِلَّهِ فَانْتَظِرُوا

Allah, so wait you. Indeed, I am with you among those who wait.” *28

إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنتَظِرِينَ

*27 That is, though they demanded a sign as a proof of the fact that he was a true Prophet (peace be upon him) and was presenting true revelations, this was not based on a genuine desire for recognizing and accepting the truth but was merely a pretext for rejecting it. For they had no intention of molding their habits, their morality, their social system, in short, reforming every aspect of their life in accordance with the implications of the acceptance of the Message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). As they did not intend to believe in it, they would say even after seeing a sign: No sign had been shown to them. Obviously, they would not give up that freedom which they were enjoying in following their desires and lusts, by accepting the unseen (the creeds of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter), which would bind them to the absolute moral principles.

*28 That is, I have presented before you what Allah has sent down to me. But what He has not sent down to me is unseen, both for me and for you, and it is entirely with Allah to reveal or not to reveal it. Now if you will not believe unless Allah sends down what He has not sent down, you may wait for it: I, too, shall wait and see whether your persistent demand is or is not satisfied.

21. And when We cause mankind a taste of mercy after adversity had afflicted them. Then, they have some

وَ إِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ بَعْدِ
ضَرَّاءَ مَسَّتْهُمُ إِذَا لَهُم مَّكْرٌ فِي آيَاتِنَا

plotting ^{*29} against Our
revelations. Say: “Allah is
more swift in plotting.”
Surely, Our messengers write
down that which you plot. ^{*30}

قُلِ اللَّهُ أَسْرَعُ مَكْرًا ۗ إِنَّ رُسُلَنَا
يَكْتُبُونَ مَا تَمْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

***29** They practiced deceptions regarding the sign of the famine that had been inflicted on them (Ayats 11, 12). This verse alludes to the same, as if to say, “How dare you demand a sign again, whereas recently the sign of the famine has been shown to you? At that time you invoked the help of your deities but in vain, though you had set them up as intercessors with Allah and believed that offerings to their shrines would prove very effective in removing the famine. But you yourselves learned by the first hand experience that those so called gods possessed no power at all. Therefore when you were convinced that all power belongs to Allah alone, you turned to Him and began to invoke His help. This experience ought to have convinced you of the truth of the Message of Muhammad (peace be upon him) for this was the very fundamental thing which he was teaching. Instead of learning a lesson from this sign, you began to practice deceptions to explain it away, as soon as the famine was over and there had come the blessed rainfall. You invented many explanations (deceptions) concerning the causes of the famine and its subsequent end in order to escape from the doctrine of *Tauhid* and stick to your shirk. The verse is meant to declare that no sign would convince such people as those who had not benefited from the great sign of the famine. Therefore there was no use of

showing any sign to them.

***30** “Allah is more swift in plotting” means this: If you practice deceptions in order to explain away the sign of the famine so that you might find excuses to evade the implications of its acceptance in order to continue your rebellious attitudes. Allah is more swift in carrying out His plans to outdo your deceptive methods. He will leave you free to move in your wrong ways. He will even bestow upon you the worldly prosperity, which will so delude you that you will forget that you were being closely watched. And you will commit evil deeds with apparent immunity and enjoy yourselves to your heart’s content. But His angels will go on keeping a full and complete record of your deeds, which will be presented for your prosecution after your death.

22. He it is who makes you travel through the land and the sea, until when you are in the ships, and they sail with them with a breeze which is pleasing, and they rejoice therein, there comes to them a wind which is stormy, and come upon them the waves from all sides, and they think that they are surrounded therein. They call upon Allah, making pure for Him the faith: “If You deliver us from this, we shall surely be of the thankful.” ***31**

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَجَرَيْنَ
بِهِمْ بِرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَاءَتْهَا
رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ
مَكَانٍ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ بِهِمْ دَعَوُا
اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ لَئِنِ أَنْجَيْتَنَا مِنْ
هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ

***31** The fact that even the most obdurate mushriks and the most hardened atheists who forget Allah when things go well with them, begin to invoke Allah's help when they are pressed hard from all sides and despair of help from any other quarter, is a clear evidence that there is the All Powerful Allah Who is controlling each and every thing in the universe. (Refer to E.N. 29, Surah Al-Anaam).

23. Then when He has delivered them, then, they rebel in the earth without right. O mankind, in fact, your rebellion is against your own selves. Benefits of the life of the world. Then unto Us is your return, then We shall certainly inform you of what you used to do.

فَلَمَّا أَنْجَلَهُمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَبْعُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا بَغَيْتُمْ
عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ
إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَتَنبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُونَ

24. In fact, the example of the life of the world is as water that We send down from the sky, then arises by mingling of it the produce of the earth, which eat men and cattle. Until when has taken the earth on its ornaments and is beautified, and thought its people that they have powers over it, there reaches to it Our command by night

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ
مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخَذَتِ
الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَا
أَنَّهُمْ قَدِرُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَتَاهَا أَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا
أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ

or by day, so We made it a harvest clean mown, as if it had not flourished the day before. Thus do We explain the signs for a people who give thought.

تَغْنُ بِالْأَمْسِ ط كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ
لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. And Allah calls to the abode of peace, *32 and He guides whom He wills to a straight path.

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُوا إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ ط وَيَهْدِي
مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

*32 That is, Allah invites to the way that leads to the abode of peace in the Hereafter. "The abode of peace" here means Paradise, where there will be no fear whatsoever of any loss, calamity, sorrow, pain and trouble.

26. For those who did good is the best (reward) and more.

*33 Neither shall cover their faces darkness, nor ignominy. Those are companions of the Garden. They, in there, shall abide forever.

لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَى وَ زِيَادَةٌ ط وَلَا
يُرْهَقُ وُجُوهُهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَلَا ذِلَّةٌ ط أُولَئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

*33 That is, Allah by His grace will give to those who did good deeds more than their due reward.

27. And those who earned evil deeds, the recompense of an evil deed is the like thereof, *34 and will cover them ignominy. There is none for

وَالَّذِينَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ
بِمِثْلِهَا ط وَتَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ط مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ
اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ ؕ كَانَمَا أُغْشِيَتْ

them from Allah any defender. It will be as if covered are their faces with piece ^{*35} from the night, very dark. Those are the companions of the Fire. They, in there, will abide forever.

وَجُوهُهُمْ قِطَعًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مُظْلِمًا
أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ

***34** That is, in contrast to the additional rewards to the good people, those who earned evil deeds, shall be punished only in proportion to their crimes. (See E.N. 110 of An-Namal).

***35** It shall be that kind of gloom that overspreads the faces of the criminals when they are caught, and they despair all hopes of escape.

28. And the day when We will gather them all together, then We will say to those who ascribed partners: “(Remain in) your places, you and your partners. Then We will separate, one from the other. ^{*36} And will say their partners: “It was not us that you used to worship.”

وَ يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ
لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَ
شُرَكَاءُكُمْ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَ قَالَ
شُرَكَاءُهُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ إِلَّا نَا تَعْبُدُونَ

***36** Some commentators are of the opinion that the original words of the text mean this: We will cut off every kind of connection and relation between them so that they are not able to show any concern for one another. But these meanings are opposed to the Arabic usage, according to

which they mean: We will distinguish them from one another, or We will cause a distinction among them. That is why these have been translated like this: Then We will separate, one from the other. That is, the mushriks and their deities shall stand in front of each other and recognize their mutual and respective positions. The mushriks shall come to know the whole truth about those whom they worshiped and their deities will learn everything about their worshipers.

29. “So sufficient is Allah for a witness between us and you, that indeed We were of your worship unaware.”³⁷

فَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنَنَا وَ بَيْنَكُمْ
 إِنَّ كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغْفِيلِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

*37 That is, their deities, the angels, the jinns, the spirits, the forefathers, the prophets, the saints, the martyrs and all others, whom they had set up as partners with God and rendered those rights to them which belonged to God alone, will dissociate themselves from their worshipers and declare: We did not know at all that you worshiped us, for no reverence, no respect, no honor, no admiration, no regard, no adoration, no homage that you paid to us; no prayer, no supplication, no request, no offering, no gift you presented to us; and no praise, no prostration, no bowing down, no remembrance, no religious service, or ceremony or ritual you made in our name ever reached us.

30. Thereupon, shall experience every soul that which it did in the past, and they will be brought back to

هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُوا كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا أَسْلَفَتْ وَ
 رُدُّوآ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَ ضَلَّ

Allah, their rightful Lord, and lost from them is that which they used to invent lies.

عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

31. Say: “Who provides for you from the sky and the earth, or who owns hearing and sight, and who brings forth the living from the dead, and brings forth the dead from the living, and who disposes the affairs.” They will say: “Allah.” Then say: “Will you not then fear.”

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ
أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَ مَنْ
يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَ يُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ
مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَ مَنْ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ ۖ فَسَيَقُولُونَ
اللَّهُ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

32. Such then is Allah, your Lord in truth. *38 So what else is there, after the truth, except error. How then are you turned away. *39

فَذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ الْحَقُّ فَمَاذَا بَعَدَ
الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلَالُ ۗ فَأَنَّى تُصْرَفُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

***38 That is, as you yourselves admit that Allah alone is your real Provider, Owner and Master, He alone is your true Lord, and, therefore, entitled to your servitude and worship. How have you, then, made others as partners with Him?**

***39 It should be kept in mind that these questions have been posed to the common people: therefore they are not being asked, “How are you turning away?” but “How are you turned away” The passive voice clearly shows that there must be some person (or persons) who was turning**

away the people from the right direction to the wrong one. That is why this appeal is being made to the people: Why are you blindly following those who are misguiding you? Why don't you use your own common sense? When you yourselves admit the truth about Allah, why don't you consider the fact that you are being turned away from Him?

This question has been posed at many places in the Quran to bring home the truth to the common people, but at every place the passive voice has been employed in order to keep back the names of the misguiding ones so that their followers should consider the matter coolly and objectively. This also contains a valuable piece of advice for those engaged in propagation work. By avoiding the names of the misguiding ones, the Quran has taken away a very strong weapon from the hands of those, who could otherwise incite the followers that their revered leaders were being made the target of ridicule and criticism.

33. Thus is proved true the word of your Lord against those who disobeyed. Indeed, they will not believe. *40

كَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا إِنَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

*40 That is, this Word of your Lord has come true that those who have made up their minds that they would not believe in any case would never believe because of their obduracy, even if the truth were to be presented before them with very plain and clear arguments.

34. Say: "Is there of your partners, any who originates

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَبْدُوا الْخَلْقَ

the creation, then repeats it.”

*41 Say: “Allah originates the creation, then He repeats it. How then, are you being turned away.” *42

ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ط قُلِ اللَّهُ يَبْدُوَ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ

يُعِيدُهُ ط فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

*41 It is to be noted that the answers to the questions posed in this and the following verse have been put in the mouth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in contrast to the answers posed in the preceding verses. This is because the mushriks themselves believed, and therefore could not deny, that Allah originated the creation and that their gods had no share in this. But they would not admit that He could or would bring it back, for they could not in that case reject the doctrine of the life-after-death, though it was obvious that the One Who originated the creation could also bring it back again, and not any one of those who had not originated it. That is why the answer has been put in the mouth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he should declare it openly and boldly that Allah originated the creation and could and would bring it back again.

*42 This question has been posed to bring home to them the folly of the doctrine of shirk. The argument is this: When Allah originates the creation and has the power to bring it back again, where do the gods you have set up come in? If you think a little, you yourselves will realize that there is no room for anyone in the universe for any claim or title to your reverence or worship or servitude.

35. Say: “Is there of your partners, any who guides to

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَن يَهْدِي إِلَى

the truth.” Say: “Allah guides to the truth. Is then He, who guides to the truth, *43 more worthy to be followed, or he who guides not except that he is guided. Then, what is with you. How do you judge.”

الْحَقُّ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ أَفَمَنْ
 يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُتَّبَعَ أَمْ لَا
 يَهْدِي إِلَّا أَنْ يُهْدَىٰ فَمَا لَكُمْ
 كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

*43 This is one of the series of questions that have been posed to refute the doctrine of shirk and to establish the doctrine of *Tauhid*. Besides, it is also meant to focus attention on the importance of the guidance to the truth, which is one of the greatest human necessities. For it is obvious that the human needs and requirements are not confined to food, clothes and the like necessities of the physical life nor to its protection from losses, distresses, calamities etc. But one of man’s needs (nay, his greatest need) is to have the knowledge of the right way of life so that he may, on the whole, achieve success in it. It is obvious that in order to be successful in life, man should have the correct knowledge of the use he should make of and the way he should employ his own physical, mental and spiritual powers and capabilities and natural resources. He should also know the nature and the kind of behavior he should adopt towards other human beings (and as a whole, towards the system of the universe in which he has to inevitably live and work), with whom he comes into contact in different capacities. The Quran calls that right way “The Truth” and the guidance that leads to that way, “The

Guidance to the Truth”.

Now let us turn to the question that has been posed in this verse. The Quran asks the mushriks and all those people who reject the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him): Is there any of the partners and gods you have set up besides Allah, who guides you to the truth or can do so? Obviously the answer to this will surely be in the negative for neither of the classes of gods is capable of this: First, let us consider this with regard to those gods and goddesses and living or dead human beings who are worshiped as gods. Though it is true that people turn to them for the fulfillment of their needs or for their protection from calamities in some supernatural way, yet they never turn to them to seek guidance to the truth nor have they themselves ever sent it nor do their devotees ever claim that their deities teach them the principles of morality, sociology, culture, economics, politics, law, justice and the like.

Then there is the case of those who make rules, regulations and laws which others accept and follow. It is true that such persons are accepted and followed as leaders, but the pertinent question is this: Are they the real guides to the truth, or are they capable of becoming guides to it? Does any one of them possess the kind of knowledge that comprehends all those truths that are a prerequisite for formulating right principles for the guidance of human life? Can anyone of them have full vision of the vast field of activities over which the human problems spread? Is there anyone of them who is absolutely free from the weaknesses, prejudices, personal or communal interests, which become

hindrances to the formulation of just laws? If the answers to these questions are in the negative (and obviously no one in his senses can answer otherwise), how can then people with such limitations be expected to be the source of guidance to the truth?

In the light of the above questions, we are able to grasp the signification of the question that has been posed in the Quran: Is there any of the partners you have set up with Allah who can guide you to the truth?

This shows conclusively that Allah alone has the power to satisfy all the human needs and requirements, which may be divided into two categories. First, man stands in need of a provider, a protector, a being to hear and grant his prayers, in short, a permanent support to which he may turn whenever other supports should fail him. The above question inevitably leads to the conclusion that there is no god other than Allah who can fulfill these needs. The other human needs and requirements demand that there should be a guide to lay down such principles for the conduct of human life in its entirety as should be obeyed with perfect confidence and peace of mind. The question posed in Ayat 35 implies that that "Being" can be none other than Allah. Therefore there remains no argument in support of the point that the principles of culture, morality, and politics should be based on shirk or secularism except that one should persist in obduracy and obstinacy.

36. And follow not most of them but conjecture. *44
Indeed, conjecture can be of

وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا إِنَّ الظَّنَّ
لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ

no avail against the truth,
at all. Indeed, Allah is All
Aware of what they do.

بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

*44 It means that neither the authors of religion, nor philosophers, nor law makers based their opinions on knowledge but on mere guesswork and conjecture. Likewise, those who followed these religious or worldly leaders did it on the mere assumption that their authors were great people; therefore they must be right. That was why their forefathers and the common people followed them.

37. And this is not such
Quran as could be produced
by other than Allah. But it is
a confirmation of that which
was before it, and an
explanation of the Book, *45
there is no doubt wherein,
from the Lord of the worlds.

وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ أَنْ يُفْتَرَى مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ
يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

*45 The arguments contained in Ayat 37 may be elaborated like this:

- (1) The Quran confirms that which had been revealed before and presents the same fundamental principles and teachings which were taught by the Prophets who came before Muhammad (peace be upon him). Had he invented the Quran, he would have made additions to the truths of the former books in order to make himself conspicuous.
- (2) The Quran explains in detail and amplifies the fundamental principles and teachings contained in “the

Book”, that is, the Scriptures brought by the former Prophets, and adds more evidence and explanations to it so that it may be better understood and practiced.

38. Or do they say: “He has invented it.” Say: “Then bring forth a surah like it, and call upon whomsoever you can, other than Allah, if you are truthful.” *46

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ ۗ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ

مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتِطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

*46 There is a general misunderstanding that the challenge of the Quran to produce a book, nay, a Surah like this, is in regard to its eloquent, pure and unique literary excellence. This has been the natural result of the way in which discussions have been carried on to prove the miracle of the Quran. But the Quran is far above this that it should claim to be a unique and matchless book because of its excellent diction. There is no doubt at all that it is unique and matchless in this respect also, but the real basis of its claim and challenge, that no human brain is capable of producing a book like this, is its subject matter and teachings. The Quran itself has stated at different places those aspects which are a sure proof of its revelation from Allah and the refutation of the false aspersions that it was a human invention. This has already been explained at appropriate places and will be explained in the succeeding pages. (See E.N. 26, 27 of Surah At-Toor).

39. But they have denied that which they could not

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ وَلَمَّا

comprehend in knowledge, and has not yet come to them its interpretation. Thus did deny those before them. Then see how was the end of the wrong doers. *47

يَاٰهُمْ تَاْوِيْلُهُ كَذٰلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَاَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ

*47 They could declare the Quran as forged on two grounds only, but neither of these existed: First, if they had had a proof that the Book had not been revealed by Allah, but had been forged by someone; secondly, that the truths enunciated in it and the information given in it were false. But no one could say on the basis of true knowledge that the Book had been really forged and then ascribed to God: nor could anyone say that he had peeped behind the curtains of the unseen and discovered that there was not One God (as taught in this Book) but many gods in the heavens: nor could anyone assert on the basis of true knowledge that there were no angels, no revelations and no God, but these were mere fictions that had been invented by some fertile imagination: nor had anyone witnessed by actually visiting the Hereafter that the information about rewards and punishments was utterly wrong. But in spite of the lack of any proof to the contrary; they were challenging the genuineness of the Quran with the boldness and impudence of one who had made a thorough research into the matter and proved it to be false.

40. And among them are those who believe in it, and

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَا

among them are those who do not believe in it. And your Lord is best aware of the corrupters. *48

يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ ۗ وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ



*48 Those who do not believe in the Quran have been called “corrupters” or mischief makers because their rejection is not based on any sound reason but on prejudice and selfishness and because it prevents others from believing in it. “And your Lord is Best Aware” because there is nothing that is hidden from Him. They can deceive the people that they are rejecting the Quran because they are convinced that it is not the Book of God, but they cannot deceive Allah that they are doing this with good intentions for he knows that it is because of their mischief. They are obdurate and obstinate and are suppressing the voice of their consciences and hearts: they deliberately shut their ears and minds against the truth and prefer their worldly interests, their fancies, their lusts and desires to it. That is why they cannot be regarded as innocent sinners, but they are, in fact, the mischief makers.

41. And if they deny you, then say: “For me are my deeds, and for you are your deeds. You are disassociated of what I do, and I am disassociated of what you do.” *49

وَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلكُمْ

عَمَلِكُمْ ۗ أَنْتُمْ بَرِيءُونَ مِمَّا أَعْمَلُ وَ

أَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

*49 This is to say, I don't want to enter into useless discussions and disputes with you on this score. If I am an

impostor, I alone shall bear the consequences for it; and if you are rejecting the truth, you are not doing any harm to me but only to yourselves.

42. And among them are those who listen to you. So can you make hear the deaf, even though they do not apprehend. *50

وَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ
تُصَمِعُ الصَّمَّ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

*50 Though this and the succeeding verse have been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), these are meant to reprove those people who were not paying attention to the Message. For they only heard the sounds of the words he spoke to them, just as the animals hear the sound of the words, but pay no attention to understand what is said to them. This was because they were prejudiced against him and had already decided that they would not acknowledge anything, however, reasonable that may be, if it went against the creeds and ways they had inherited, and against their own desires, lusts, and interests. Likewise those people who live like animals hear the sounds of his words, but pay no attention to their meaning for they are not interested in anything other than eating, drinking and making merry. They are so engaged in and intoxicated with the gratification of their lusts that they never bother to find out whether what they are doing is right or wrong. All such people are deaf to the Message, though they might have ears for other things.

43. And among them are those who look towards you.

وَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ تَهْدِي

So can you guide the blind,
even though they do not see. *51

الْعُمَىٰ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

*51 Here again they may be likened to animals which see with their eyes but cannot perceive anything beyond what appears on the surface. Likewise those people saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions, but did not perceive their pure life for they did not have the true vision to see the wonderful change that was coming in the lives of those who had listened to and accepted the Message. As has been pointed out in E.N. 50, though these verses were addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), they were really meant to reprove and admonish the disbelievers in a subtle manner so as to arouse their dormant faculties of hearing and seeing and open these for the reception and acceptance of the rational and sympathetic Message. In order to understand the wisdom of this indirect method of admonition, let us take the example of two righteous friends. One of them who lived among corrupt people did his very best to convey the righteous message both by precept and by practice. He set the model of the highest moral conduct and character before them, and urged them in a sincere and sympathetic manner to consider their own moral condition, and admonished them in a very sincere and rational manner to make them realize that they were living in a very corrupt moral state, and advised them to adopt the right way of life. But none of them would pay any attention to his admonition nor learn any lesson from his pure life. Suppose his friend came there at that time and said: Why are you giving advice to these deaf people and

showing the way to these blind ones, who have no ears for good things and no eyes for the right way? It is obvious that these words would not have been uttered by way of dissuading the first friend from doing his reform work but for arousing the dormant faculties of the corrupt people by this subtle indirect method.

44. Indeed, Allah does not wrong mankind at all, but mankind wrong themselves.

*52

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ
النَّاسَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

*52 “Allah does not wrong mankind” because He gives them ears to hear, eyes to see and hearts to feel and ponder, and everything that is required to enable them to discriminate between right and wrong, truth and falsehood. But it is “But mankind wrong themselves” by refusing to make the right and proper use of their faculties and by following their lusts and enjoying the things of this world. Naturally this has made their eyes so blind and their ears so deaf and their hearts so dead that they are incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong, good and bad, for their conscience has also become dead.

45. And the day when He will gather them, (they will think) as if they had not stayed but an hour of the day. *53 They will recognize each other. Indeed, ruined will be those who denied the meeting with Allah, and they were not guided. *54

وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُهُمْ كَأَن لَّمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا
سَاعَةً مِّنَ النَّهَارِ يَتَعَارَفُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ قَدْ
خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِإِيقَاعِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانُوا
مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

***53** That is, when they will enter the Hereafter and contrast its eternal life with the transitory life they lived in this world, they will realize that their past life was nothing in comparison with the eternal future life of the Hereafter. Then they will see clearly that it was a big folly to spoil the eternal life for the sake of transitory joys and paltry gains of the world.

***54** They were losers because they forgot that one day they would have to present themselves before Allah and as a result of this disbelief they committed evil deeds.

46. And whether We show you some of that which We promise them, or We cause you to die, still unto Us is their return, then Allah is a witness over what they are doing.

وَ إِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ
نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ
عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. And for every nation is a messenger. ***55** Then when came their messenger, it was judged between them with justice, and they are not wronged. ***56**

وَ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولٌ ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ رَسُولُهُمْ
قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

***55** Here the word *ummat* does not merely mean a nation or a community but includes all those people whom the message of a Messenger reaches after his appointment, even though he may not be alive among them. More than this: as long as his teachings remain intact and within the reach of everyone to ascertain what they really are, all such people will be treated and judged as his *ummat* and their

cases decided with justice in accordance with Ayat 47. According to this standard, all the people of the world are the ummat of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and will remain so, as long as the Quran continues to be published in its original and complete form as today. That is why it has not been said, “There is a Messenger in every ummat” but “There is a Messenger for every ummat.”

*56 That is, when the message of a Messenger reaches a people, they should know that henceforth they are on trial and that no excuse would be accepted that they were ignorant of it. Then judgment is passed on them with scrupulous justice. Those, who accept the message and mend their way in accordance with it, are declared to be worthy of Allah’s blessings, and those who reject it are doomed to a torment that may be inflicted both in this world and in the next world or only in the Hereafter.

48. And they say: “When will be this promise. If you are truthful.”

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾

49. Say: “No power I have for myself to harm, nor to benefit, except that which Allah wills.

قُلْ لَا اَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِيْ ضَرًّا وَّلَا نَفْعًا اِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللّٰهُ لِكُلِّ اُمَّةٍ اَجَلٌۭٓ اِذَا جَآءَ اَجْلُهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَاخِرُوْنَ سَاعَةً وَّلَا

*57 For every nation there is a term. When reaches their term, then neither can they delay an hour, nor can they advance.” *58

يَسْتَقْدِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾

*57 This is to say, I never said that I will sit in judgment on

you and inflict torment on those who do not believe in me. Therefore, I am not in a position to tell when the threat will be made good. As the threat has been held out by Allah, He will pass His judgment on you when He wills, and in whatever way He wills, for everything depends on His will.

*58 That is, Allah passes His judgment on individuals and communities after the expiry of the term that He Himself has set and He alone knows how long it lasts for a community. He is not hasty in giving rewards or punishments. When He sends His Messenger to deliver His Message, He allows sufficient time to each individual and to each community to consider it and ponder over it and mend his (or its) way, during the appointed term. The period of the term may extend to centuries in the case of a community and He knows best how long it should be.

When that term, which is based on justice, expires, and that person or community does not repent of its rebellious conduct, then Allah passes His judgment. When the time of the judgment comes, it is neither advanced nor delayed even by a single hour.

50. Say: “Do you see, if should come to you His punishment by night or by day, what is there that would seek to hasten of it the criminals.”

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُهُ بَيَاتًا أَوْ نَهَارًا مَّاذَا يَسْتَعْجِلُ مِنْهُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

51. Is it then, when it has befallen, you will believe in it. What, now (you believe). And indeed, you have been hastening it on.

أَتَمَّ إِذَا مَا وَقَعَ أَمَنْتُمْ بِهِ الْآنَ وَ قَدْ كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

52. Then it will be said to those who had wronged: “Taste the enduring punishment. You will not be recompensed except for what you used to earn.”

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ
الْحُلْدِ هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. And they ask information of you “Is it true.” Say: “Yes, by my Lord, indeed it is truth. And you can not escape.”

وَ يَسْتَنْبِئُونَكَ أَحَقُّ هُوَ قَوْلٌ إِيَّيْ وَ
رَبِّي إِنَّهُ لَحَقٌّ ۖ وَ مَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ
﴿٥٣﴾

54. And if that each soul who had wronged, had what is on the earth, it would offer as ransom all that, (it will not be accepted). And they will feel remorse when they see the punishment. *59 And it will be judged between them with justice, and they will not be wronged.

وَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ لَأَفْتَدَتْ بِهِ ۖ وَ أَسْرُوا النَّدَامَةَ
لَمَّا رَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ ۖ وَ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ
وَ هُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

*59 “And they will feel remorse”. When all of a sudden, they face the torment on the Day, which they had denied throughout their lives, and on that presumption had gone on doing wrong deeds. Not only this: they will also feel very sorry that they had denied the Messengers and brought baseless charges against them, who had warned them of it. Therefore when they witness it against all their

expectations, they will find the ground slipping from under their feet and will feel utterly helpless and guilty in their minds because of the remembrance of their wrong doings and of the pricking of their conscience. In short, their condition will be that of a gambler, who turns a deaf ear to the counsel of his well wishers and stakes his all on mere speculation and goes bankrupt. But such a person has to blame none but himself only for his sad plight.

55. Is it not, surely to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. Is it not, surely the promise of Allah is true. But most of them do not know.

أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 أَلَا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ
 لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. It is He who gives life and causes death, and to Him you will be returned.

هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. O mankind, indeed there has come to you an advice from your Lord, and a healing for what (diseases) are in the breasts, and a guidance and a mercy for the believers.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ
 رَبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى
 وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

58. Say: "In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy, so in that let them rejoice." It is better than what they accumulate.

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ
 فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. Say: “Have you seen what Allah has sent down for you of provision, *60 then you have made of it unlawful and lawful.” *61 Say: “Has Allah permitted you or, against Allah, you invent a lie.” *62

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ
فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِنْهُ حَرَامًا وَحَلَالًا قُلْ اللَّهُ
أَذِنَ لَكُمْ أَمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَفْتَرُونَ

*60 It has been purposely avoided to translate the Arabic word *rizq* into provisions, for it is liable to create a very serious misunderstanding regarding the implications of this verse. For in this sense *rizq* will be confined to food and eatables only, whereas it is very comprehensive in its meaning and it covers everything that Allah has given to man, food, children, knowledge, law etc. Instances can be cited from the Quran and the traditions in support thereof. Thus it has become, obvious that according to this verse, in Allah’s sight it is wrong and sinful to adopt the attitude of independence towards every kind of *rizq*, including articles of food.

Thus it has become clear that the consequences of this misunderstanding about the meaning of *rizq* are far-reaching. As a result of this limited meaning of *rizq*, it will be sinful only to make the unlawful articles of food lawful and vice versa but it will not be sinful if the people become their own law makers in regards to the social, economic, political and international matters. It is because of this misunderstanding that even some scholars of the Islamic law do not consider it sinful if people do not take guidance from the *Sharia* in regard to matters other than those of

food; whereas in this verse, Allah has taken to task all those people, who arrogate to themselves the right of making lawful or unlawful not only the articles of food but anything that has been made lawful or unlawful by the *Sharia*.

***61** The question has been posed to impress how horrible and rebellious their crime is, as if to say: How dare you make your own regulations contrary to those which Allah has given you, when, in fact, you yourselves are His creation? What do you think about the servant, who claims that he himself has the right to prescribe the limits concerning the things which his master has entrusted to his care, and therefore, there is no need of consulting him? How will you treat your own servant if he were to claim that he had every right to use and spend as he will all that belongs to you? Leave alone the case of that servant who does not acknowledge at all that he has any master, or that he is a servant, and the things that are in his possession are not his but belong to someone else; for the case under discussion does not concern such a villainous usurper. The question has been posed concerning that servant who himself acknowledges that he is a servant of some master and that the things in his possession belong to the master and not to himself. Yet he claims that he has the right to make rules and regulations and set limits for himself regarding the use of those things, and that there is no need for him to consult his master.

***62** This question has been posed to corner the transgressors who arrogate to themselves the right to make rules and regulations in regards to the use they could make

of the things of their Master. It is meant to impress on them that they have placed themselves in an awkward position by arrogating that right without any lawful authority. Their claim would have been valid, if the Master had Himself authorized them to make whatever laws they liked concerning the use of the things entrusted to the servants by Him. The pertinent question is whether they possessed any such authority from the Master, or were putting forward this claim without any delegation of such rights to them. If they had any such warrant they should show it: otherwise they would be guilty of two crimes, rebellion and forgery.

60. And what think those who invent against Allah lies (of their matters) on the Day of Judgement. Indeed, Allah is full of bounty to mankind, but most of them are not grateful. *63

وَمَا ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ
 الْكَذِبَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَدُوٌّ
 فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا
 يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

*63 It is a pity that most of the servants are not grateful to the Master for this great favor that He has given them full instructions about the way they should live in His house, and the use they should make of His things, and the conduct they should adopt, as if to say: If you live in the world according to My instructions, you will win My approval and deserve the greatest rewards, but if you live as rebels, you would incur My wrath and merit a painful chastisement. Nay, instead of showing gratitude for this favor, many of the servants seem to think like this: The

Master ought to have left us in the world without any guidance and secretly watched us to see which of us was living in rebellion against His law, and then punished the criminals. They do not seem to realize that if the Master had put them to this hard test none would have escaped punishment.

61. And you are not in any state, and you do not recite any portion of the Quran, and you do not do any deed, except that We are over you witness when you are engaged therein. And not absent from your Lord is a thing of the weight of an atom on the earth, nor in the heaven, nor smaller than that, nor greater, except it is in a clear Book. *64

وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُوا مِنْهُ
مِنْ قُرْآنٍ وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا
كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُودًا إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ وَمَا
يَعُزِبُ عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ
ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٦١﴾

*64 These things have been mentioned here in order to comfort the Prophet (peace be upon him) and give a warning to his enemies. These are meant to lessen his worry and to strengthen him, as if to say: We see all that you are doing in propagating the Message of the truth with great patience and fortitude, and exerting your utmost to reform mankind. Rest assured that We have not left you alone after entrusting you with this arduous duty. We are not unaware of whatever you are doing for the performance of your mission, and also whatever your enemies are doing to

oppose you. On the other hand, a warning has also been administered to his opponents: Don't remain under the delusion that no one is seeing what you are doing in opposing the Messenger of the truth and the reformer of mankind? We are seeing whatever mischief you are doing and whatever obstacles you are placing in the way of the mission. We are keeping a detailed and accurate record of all these things. Therefore beware that you shall be called upon to render an account of all your doings.

62. Is it not, indeed, the friends of Allah (are those), no fear is upon them nor they shall grieve.

آلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ط

63. Those who believed and used to practice righteousness.

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ط

64. For them are good tidings in the life of the world and in the Hereafter. Shall not change the words of Allah. It is that the supreme success.

لَهُمْ الْبُشْرَى فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ ط لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ط ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ط

65. And let not grieve you their talks. Indeed, honor belongs to Allah entirely. He is the All Hearer, the Knower.

وَ لَا يَحْزُنكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ط هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ط

66. Is it not, surely to Allah belongs whoever is in the

آلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَ مَنْ فِي

heavens and whoever is on the earth. And do not follow those who call upon other than Allah partners. They do not follow but a conjecture, and they are not but merely guessing.

الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ ۗ إِنَّ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَ
إِنَّ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. He it is who made for you the night that you may rest therein, and the day giving light. Indeed, in that are sure signs for a people who listen. *65

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ
وَ النَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

*65 This is a concise statement of a very important subject and requires a detailed explanation. The Quran declares in a few words that all religions other than the revealed one are false because they have been founded on the philosophical research for the primary cause of the origin of the universe. The philosophical research is after all based on guesswork, and is in its very nature incapable of reaching to the truth. The right way of arriving at the truth is to make a study of the signs (e.g. day and night) and of the Message of the Prophets in a dispassionate manner. For this is the only way of discovering the truth. Otherwise, if one follows wrong ways, he shall always arrive at wrong conclusions. Let us now consider several methods that different people have adopted in search of this knowledge:

- The mushriks base their search entirely and solely on superstition.

b. The hermits and ascetics pretend and claim that they acquire that knowledge by means of contemplation and meditation and see the reality by peeping into the hidden. But the fact is that they do not see the reality; it is only a trick of their own imagination. They form a mental image and then concentrate their mind on it and eventually it takes the shape of the so called reality.

c. The philosophers claim to base their research on rationalism but it is really only surmise and guesswork, even though they may give logical arguments and sound reasons in its support.

d. Then there are the scientists: though they follow the scientific method of research in the physical world, they abandon it completely in regards to their investigation into metaphysics and start to follow conjectures, surmises, and guesswork.

Then these groups invariably suffer from prejudices and are not inclined to understand the point of view of those who differ with them, and, therefore, obstinately stick to their own theories.

In this passage (Ayats 66-67), the Quran declares that this way of search after knowledge is basically wrong, as if to say: The real cause of your deviation is that you base your search of reality on mere surmise and guesswork, and then, because of your prejudices, refuse to listen even to reasonable things. The result is that you have not only failed to arrive at the truth but also to judge rightly the revealed religion, presented by the Messengers.

In contrast to the above ways of research, the Quran

presents its own way and asserts that it alone is the correct, rational and scientific way of arriving at the truth. It is this: The prerequisite for research is that you should give up your preconceived prejudices and listen to the Message of those who claim that their information about the reality is based on knowledge and not on surmises, guessworks, meditations and contemplations, abstract deductions etc. Then consider deeply the signs in the universe to which the Quran invites your attention. If these also point to the reality they claim to reveal, then there is no reason why should you deny the truth taught by those Messengers. This is the basis of the philosophy of Islam. What a pity that even the Muslim philosophers have forsaken this way and followed in the footsteps of Plato and Aristotle.

The Quran has inculcated this method at many places and has over and over again presented many a phenomenon as a proof of the reality, and taught the people how to arrive at the right conclusion so as to perceive the reality. Accordingly, in verse 67, the sign of the night and the day has been presented for the deep consideration of the people. The change of day and night is a wonderful sign and clearly points to the Universal Designer and the All-Powerful Ruler; for it takes place by the turning of the earth on its axis and in relation to the sun with mathematical precision. This change is due to the great wisdom of the Designer and has a great purpose behind it because of its innumerable benefits for all that exists on the earth. This points out also to the Providence of the Creator for it demonstrates conclusively that He has made perfect arrangements for the

existence of His creation. Moreover, this also shows that the Universal Designer is One and also that He is not playful but Wise and purposeful. This change also points towards the great reality that He, being the Benefactor and Lord, is worthy of worship and none else. This is because every other being is provided with its requirements by this change of day and night and none provides others; therefore none of them can be the Lord and the Master. In the light of these signs, how can, any other religion, based on mere surmise and guesswork, be considered to be true when it is compared with the revealed religion which is based on such clear signs as these?

68. They say: “Allah has taken a son. *66 Glory be to Him. *67 He is self sufficient. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. *68 You do not have any authority for this, Do you say about Allah that which you do not know.”

قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهُ ۗ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ
لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۗ اِنْ
عِنْدَكُمْ مِّنْ سُلْطٰنٍ بِهٰذَا ۗ اَتَقُوْنَ عَلَىٰ
اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾

*66 In the preceding passage people were taken to task for founding false religions on mere surmise and guesswork. In this passage the Christians and others, who believe that God has begotten a son, have been taken to task for this blasphemy which has no authority other than mere presumption.

*67 The Arabic phrase *Subhan-Allah* is used to express astonishment at something apparently inexplicable. But its

literal meaning is, Allah is All-Pure, and is absolutely free from any defect, blemish and flaw. Here it implies both these things. It expresses astonishment at their blasphemy that Allah has taken a son to Himself, and also refutes it, saying, Allah, being perfect in every way, does not stand in need of a son.

***68** Three things have been put forward to refute their blasphemy:

- (1) Allah is pure and without any defect.
- (2) Allah is Self-sufficient in every way, and
- (3) Allah is the Owner of everything in the heavens and the earth.

Let us now briefly explain how these three things refute that blasphemy.

It is obvious that a son is either sprung from the loins or is adopted. In the first case, such a conception of Allah amounts to this: He is mortal like every other being: therefore He stands in need of a spouse in order to propagate His offspring like other beings. In the second case, it shall have to be presumed that Allah stands in need of a son to inherit His Kingdom in order to make up, to some extent, for the deficiency that is caused by His childlessness. Or that Allah also cherished paternal love like human beings, and therefore, adopted as son one of the millions of His slaves.

Whatever be the case, it is obvious that the blasphemy shall have to be based on such a creed which presumes that Allah suffers from many defects, many weaknesses, many shortcomings and many wants. The Quran refutes all such

blasphemous creeds, saying, He is All-Pure and therefore, is free from all such defects; and by, He is Self-sufficient, the Quran asserts that He does not suffer from any of those weaknesses and wants which impel the mortals to have children. Lastly, it says clearly that all the beings in the heavens and the earth belong to Him and that He has no particular relation with anyone of them so as to make such a one His son or only son or heir apparent. Though it is true that Allah loves some of His slaves more than the others because of their excellences, it does not in any way mean that He raises such a one from the rank of a slave to that of a partner in His Godhead. For, the highest rank He bestows on them is that they are Allah's friends, "Who believe and fear Allah, (and therefore they) shall have no occasion for fear and sorrow. There is nothing but good news for them in this world and in the Hereafter (Ayats 62-63).

69. Say: "Indeed, those who invent against Allah a lie will not be successful."

قُلْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ
الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُونَ ط

70. Little benefit in this world, then to Us will be their return, then We shall make them taste the severe punishment because they used to disbelieve.

مَتَاعٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ
نُذِيقُهُمُ الْعَذَابَ الشَّدِيدَ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَكْفُرُونَ هـ

71. And recite*69 to them the news of Noah, when he said to his people: "O my people,

وَآتِلْ عَلَيْهِمُ نَبَأَ نُوحٍ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ
يَقَوْمِ إِنَّ كَانَ كَبْرَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَقَامِي وَ

if it is hard on you, my staying here and my reminding of the signs of Allah, then in Allah I have put my trust. So resolve upon your course of action and your partners. Then, let not be in your course of action to you any doubt. Then carry it out against me, and do not give me respite.” *70

تَذَكِّرُنِي بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ
فَأَجْمِعُوا أَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا
يَكُنْ أَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقْضُوا
إِلَىٰ وَلَا تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

*69 The story of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) has been related here to serve as a warning to those who were rejecting the Message of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Up to this place, arguments had been presented before them to show the errors of their creeds, thoughts and ways, and impressive appeals had been made to them to adopt the right way. But from here onward they are being warned of the consequences of the attitude they had adopted towards their Messenger and admonished indirectly to learn a lesson from the fate of Prophet Noah's (peace be upon him) people, who had behaved towards their Prophet like the Quraish, the addressees. The Prophet had been pointing out to them in a very befitting manner their errors and deviations, and was trying to correct them. But instead of considering and re-considering these things, they had become his mortal enemies, though he had no self-interest in his Mission and was extending the Message for their good, but they

responded to his arguments with rudeness, abuses and stones. So much so that his very person had become intolerable and unbearable for them. This was because of their prejudices against the right way, which had so blinded them that they could not tolerate even the presence of the one who was following the right way. At this Allah commanded His Messenger (peace be upon him) to recite to them the story of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) so that they might get in it the answer to their misbehavior towards him.

***70** This was a challenge that amounted to this: I am not going to give up my mission at all, whatever you may do against me, for I have my full trust in Allah. (See Ayat 55 of Surah Hud).

72. So if you turn away, then I have not asked you for any payment. My payment is not but upon Allah. And I have been commanded that I become among those who surrender.

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَمَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرٍ
 إِنَّ أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَ أُمِرْتُ أَنْ
 أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾

73. Then they denied him, so We saved him and those with him in the Ark. And We made them inherit, and We drowned those who denied Our signs. See then how was the end of those who were warned.

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَتَبَجَّيْنَاهُ وَ مَنْ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِكِ
 وَ جَعَلْنَاهُمْ خَلِيفَ وَ أَعْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ
 كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
 الْمُتَذَرِّينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

74. Then We sent after him messengers to their people, so they came to them with clear proofs. So they were not such as they would believe in that which they denied before. Thus do We seal over the hearts of those who transgress. *71

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رُسُلًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ
فَجَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا
بِمَا كَذَّبُوا بِهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ كَذَلِكَ نَطْبَعُ
عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

*71 The transgressors whose hearts are sealed are those obstinate and obdurate people who are so hardened against persuasion that they firmly and perversely adhere to the opinion they have once formed erroneously. As they themselves refuse to listen to counsel and admonition, Allah's curse falls on them and they are deprived of the ability of ever coming to the right way.

75. Then We sent after them Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his chiefs with Our signs, *72 so they behaved arrogantly *73 and were a criminal people.

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِم مُّوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ
إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَوَلَّيْنَاهُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا
وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

*72 E. Ns 84-111 about the story of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh, already added to Surah Al-Aaraf, should be kept in view, as the things explained therein will not be repeated here.

*73 "They behaved arrogantly" because of their wealth, power, pomp and show, and considered themselves above subjection to the Message. Therefore they showed

haughtiness instead of surrender and obedience to it.

76. So when there came to them the truth from Us, they said: “Indeed, this is clear sorcery.” *74

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا إِنَّ
هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٧٦﴾

*74 The story of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh is also being related to serve as an object lesson for the Quraish, who were behaving towards Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the same way as Pharaoh and his people had behaved towards Prophet Moses (peace be upon him); for the response to the Message by the Quraish was similar to that of Pharaoh’s people. (Refer to Ayat 2 of this Surah).

In this connection, it will also be worthwhile to note that the mission of Prophets Moses and Aaron (peace be upon them) was not merely to liberate the Israelites from the slavery of Pharaoh, as some people have opined. If we keep in view the context in which the story occurs here, it will be quite clear that they, too, were appointed to pursue the same mission that was entrusted to all the Prophets from Noah to Muhammad (peace be upon them all). The theme of this Surah from its very beginning has been this: Acknowledge Allah alone as your Lord and Deity for He is the Lord of the whole universe. Believe in the life-after-death in which you shall have to present yourselves before Allah and render the account of all you did in this world. Then the Surah makes it clear to those who rejected the message that history bears witness to this that the true success of humanity has always followed the acceptance of

this message. Therefore it admonished them: You should also accept the message which has always been put forward by all the Messengers, and establish your life in its entirety on these articles of faith. For, those who rejected the message were destroyed in the end.

Thus it has become quite clear from the context in which their story occurs, that the main object of the mission of Prophets Moses and Aaron (peace be upon them) was the same as that of all the other Prophets. It is true that one of their objects was also to liberate the Israelites, a Muslim community, from the domination of a kafir community if it persisted in its unbelief. But this had a secondary place in their mission, and was not its main object. The real object has been stated explicitly in Surah An-Naziat, Ayats 17-19, wherein his Lord said to Moses: Go to Pharaoh for he has transgressed the bounds of subjection and say to him, "Are you prepared to reform yourselves and fear your Lord, if I guide you towards Him".

The part played by the two Prophets in liberating the Israelites from Pharaoh's slavery became prominent in history because he and his nobles rejected the message and the Prophets had to rescue their people from their slavery. Accordingly, the Quran gave it the same prominence as in history. But if one does not commit the error of isolating the details of the Quran from its fundamental principles but studies them in the light of these principles, one cannot fall a prey to the misunderstanding that the mere liberation of a community could be the main object of the mission of a Prophet and the propagation of the message its secondary

object only. (See Surah Taha, Ayats 44-52, Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayats 46-56, Surah Al-Muzammil, Ayats 15-16).

77. Moses said: “Do you say about the truth when it has come to you. Is this sorcery. And will not succeed the sorcerers.” *75

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ أَتَقُولُونَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَكُمْ
أَسِحْرٌ هَذَا وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّحَرُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

*75 “And the sorcerers will not succeed” is meaningful for this is the answer to their charge: “Is this a sorcery.” It means this: You have called the signs presented by Moses (peace be upon him) a sorcery on account of its apparent likeness to it. You have not considered the clear and marked distinctions between the characteristics of the Prophets and sorcerers. Otherwise you would never have dared to make such an absurd charge. Have you ever seen a sorcerer go before a tyrant and talk boldly and fearlessly to him as Moses (peace be upon him) did, and admonish him for his deviation and invite him to adopt the way of purity and God-worship? You know that a sorcerer behaves quite differently. He starts with the flattery of the courtiers so that they may obtain for him the permission to show his tricks. After this he goes to the presence of His Majesty and makes obsequious bows and very humbly requests him to see his tricks. Then he prays for his long life and prosperity and begs for his reward. Now, you can judge for yourselves whether the Prophet is a sorcerer or a far greater and far higher personality than even kings and the like.

78. They said: “Have you come to us to turn us away from

قَالُوا أَجِئْنَا لِنَتْلِفَتْنَا عَمَّا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ

that we found upon which our fathers, and may become for you two grandeur in the land. *76 And we are not in you two believers.”

آبَاءَنَا وَتَكُونُ لَكُمْ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

*76 It is obvious that if this demand had been merely for the liberation of the Israelites, there could have been no question of any threat to Pharaoh’s kingdom. The threat was because of the message which demanded subordination to the truth, for it threatened the system which was based on shirk and on which depended the domination of Pharaoh and his chiefs and priests. (See E.N. 66 of Surah Al-Aaraf and E.N. 43 of Surah Al-Momin).

79. And Pharaoh said: “Bring to me every learned sorcerer.”

وَ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ائْتُونِي بِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٧٩﴾

80. So when came the sorcerers, said to them Moses: “Throw down whatever you will throw.”

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَى اأَلْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُلْقُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

81. Then when they had thrown down, Moses said: “That which you have brought is sorcery. *77 Certainly, Allah will make it vain. Certainly, Allah does not amend the work of corrupters.”

فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا قَالَ مُوسَى مَا جِئْتُمْ بِهِ السِّحْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَيَبْطِلُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُصْلِحُ عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

*77 That is, what I showed was not sorcery but sorcery is that which you are showing.

82. And Allah will establish the truth by His words, even if dislike it the criminals.

وَيُحِقُّ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
الْمُجْرِمُونَ

83. So no one believed in Moses, except some youth (offspring)^{*78} among his people,^{*79} because of the fear of Pharaoh and their chiefs, lest they should persecute them. And indeed Pharaoh was a tyrant in the land. And indeed, He was of those who transgressed.^{*80}

فَمَا آمَنَ لِمُوسَى إِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِّنْ قَوْمِهِ
عَلَى خَوْفٍ مِّنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَوَلَدِهِمْ أَن
يَقْتُلَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

*78 Though literally *zurriyyah* means offspring, it has been translated into youths because the Quran has used this word here to point out a specific aspect of the matter. It is this: During that fearful period of persecution only a few young men and women showed the moral courage of acknowledging the Messenger of the truth as their leader and becoming his standard bearers. On the contrary, their fathers, mothers and elders had not the courage to follow him and endanger their worldly interests and even their lives. They not only followed the way of ease and expediency, but also discouraged their youth, saying, “Don’t go near Moses: for you will thus invite trouble both for yourselves and your elders.”
The Quran has mentioned this particular aspect of the

matter because the same was the case of the response to the mission of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In its initial stage, those who came forward were not the elders and the old people but some courageous youth. These first Muslims who were boldly facing persecution and enduring hardships for the sake of Islam were the young people. For instance, Ali-ibn-Abi Talib, Jaafar Tayyar, Zubair, Talhah, Saad bin Abi Waqqas, Musab bin Umair, Abdullah bin Masud, etc. were under twenty years when they embraced Islam. Abdur-Rahman bin Auf, Bilal, Suhail were under thirty years, and Abu Ubaidah-bin-al-Jarrah, Zaid bin Harithah, Uthman bin Affan and Umar Faruq were under thirty-five years. Abu Bakr was no more than 38 when he embraced Islam. Among the early Muslims, there is only one instance of a companion, Ammar bin Yasir, who was of the same age as the Prophet (peace be upon him) and another of Ubaidah bin Harith Muttalabi, who was older than the Prophet (peace be upon him).

***79** Some people have misinterpreted the Arabic words say that all the people of Israel were unbelievers and at first only a few of them believed in the message. But when *amama* is followed by the letter *lam*, it generally means obeying and following. Thus the original words of the text will mean “a few youth from his own people obeyed and followed Moses,” that is, only a few young people from the whole tribe of the Israelites had the courage to accept and acknowledge Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) as their leader and guide and stand by him in his struggle with Pharaoh and his chiefs. The words that follow make it quite

clear that the Israelites refrained from this not because they did not believe in Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) or his message but because they (specially their elders) were afraid of exposing themselves to the persecution of Pharaoh. This state of fear was the result of their moral degeneration. Though all of them racially and religiously belonged to the community of Prophets Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (peace be upon them all) and, therefore, were Muslims, yet slavery of centuries had so much degraded them that they had lost that spirit of Islam which impels one to become the standard bearer of Islam against the domination of unbelief and deviation, or imbues one with the courage to stand by the one who had raised that banner.

The Bible has described their degraded condition at the time of the conflict with Pharaoh in Exodus 5: 20-21: And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: And they said unto them, the Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savior to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us. The Talmud (Selections by H. Polano, page 152) confirms the same: Yea, said the overburdened children of Israel to Moses and Aaron: We are like a lamb which the wolf has carried from its flock, the shepherd strives to take it from him, but between the two the lamb is pulled to pieces; between ye and Pharaoh will we all be killed.

The Quran also refers to this in Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 129: His people answered, we were oppressed before you came and now again we are being oppressed after you have come.

*80 The Arabic word *musrifin* literally means transgressors, or those who are not bound by any limits. They are the people who do not hesitate to employ even the most wicked methods to achieve their object: who practice without any pangs of conscience, cruelty, immorality, barbarism etc. if these serve their purpose, and who cross all limits in pursuit of their desires. In short, they are such people as know no limits to stop at.

84. And Moses said: “O my people, if you have believed in Allah, then in Him put your trust, if you have surrendered.” *81

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يَقَوْمِ إِن كُنْتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ
فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمِينَ

*81 The fact that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) in his address called his people “Muslims” shows that all the people of the community of Israel were Muslims; otherwise he could not say to them, “if you are Muslims”. He meant to urge them to be brave, saying: If you are true Muslims, as you profess to be, do not fear the might of Pharaoh but put your trust in the might of Allah.

85. So they said: *82 “In Allah we put our trust. Our Lord, do not make us a trial *83 for a people who are wrongdoers.”

فَقَالُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا
فِتْنَةً لِّلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

*82 Those, who responded to the appeal of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) were those youth who obeyed and followed him, and not the Israelites, as a community, as is obvious from the context.

*83 The prayer, “Our Lord, do not make us a trial for the

wrongdoing people” is very comprehensive in meaning. Whenever the standard bearers of the truth rise up to establish virtue and eradicate the prevalent evil, they come into conflict with unjust people, who, for one reason or the other, are always on the lookout to find fault with them. First, there are the champions of falsehood, who try their level best to crush down with full force the champions of the truth. Then there are the so called champions of the truth who profess to believe in it but are not prepared to enter into conflict with the powerful government of the time. Therefore they declare it to be a useless and foolish effort, and begin to invent excuses to justify the wrong stand they take in regard to the struggle with falsehood in order to silence the prick of conscience they feel for their criminal attitude of cowardice. Accordingly, they try to prove that it is these standard bearers of the truth who are in the wrong and not them. Lastly, there are the common people, who watch the conflict as bystanders and join forces with those who prove to be more powerful of the two, whether they are the supporters of the truth or of falsehood.

Now let us consider how the champions of the truth are liable to become a cause of trial for these unjust people. If they are crushed down or defeated, the first group declares, we were in the right and not these foolish people: otherwise they could not have been defeated. The second group says, their defeat has proved that they did not make the correct estimate of the circumstances and caused the destruction of valuable lives by coming in conflict with the mighty powers.

Moreover, the Shariat has not made it obligatory on us to expose ourselves to risk, when we are fulfilling the most essential religious duties without any restrictions from the tyrants of the day. As regards to the common people, their criterion of judging the truth is this: Whatever triumphs is truth. Therefore their defeat has proved that the champions of the truth must be in the wrong. Likewise, every mistake and error the champions of the truth commit, every weakness they show in the face of overwhelming odds against them, every moral fault to which anyone of them succumbs, becomes a good excuse for those who intend to stick to falsehood. Consequently, the invitation to the truth becomes dormant for years after their defeat.

Thus it has become quite clear that this prayer of the companions of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was well timed and meaningful: Our Lord, have mercy upon us so that we might not become a cause of trial for the unjust people: protect us from errors, defects and, weaknesses and make our efforts successful in this world so that we may become a source of goodness to Thy creatures and not a source of evil for the unjust people.

86. And save us by Your mercy from the people who disbelieve.

وَنَجِّنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

87. And We inspired to Moses and his brother that: "Appoint for your people in Egypt houses, and make your

وَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ أَنْ تَبَوِّأَ لِقَوْمِكَ مِمَّا بَمِصْرَ بُيُوتًا وَ اجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ

houses qibla, and establish prayer. *84 And give glad tidings to the believers.” *85

قِبْلَةً وَ أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَ بَشِّرِ

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*84 There is a difference of opinion among the commentators in regard to the meaning of this verse. As for me, I have considered deeply its wording and the circumstances under which this was sent down, and have come to the conclusion that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was commanded to build or acquire some houses for the establishment of Salat in congregation This was necessitated because the system of Salat in congregation had been abandoned by the Israelites and the Egyptian Muslims as a result of their persecution by the government, and owing to the weakness of their faith. As this had brought about their disintegration and killed their religious spirit, it was essential to re-establish the system of Salat in congregation, which is indeed the first and foremost thing for the revival of that spirit and the integration of a scattered Muslim community and its powers.

As regards to appointing your houses as qiblah, I am of the opinion that it means: Set apart these houses as common places of worship for offering Salat in congregation and the central places for holding their meetings. That is why it is followed by establishing Salat, which means that they should offer their Salat collectively in congregation instead of individually.

*85 The Arabic word *bashshir* means: Fill them with hope and courage by giving them the good news of success by the

grace of Allah. And they needed that very badly at that time, for they were full of despair, fear and depression.

88. And Moses said: ^{*86} “Our Lord, indeed You have given Pharaoh and his chiefs splendor ^{*87} and wealth ^{*88} in the life of the world. Our Lord, that they may lead astray from Your path. Our Lord, send destruction upon their wealth and put hardness upon their hearts so that they may not believe until they see the painful punishment.” ^{*89}

وَ قَالَ مُوسَى رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ آتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ
وَمَلَآءَهُ زِينَةً وَأَمْوَالًا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
رَبَّنَا لِيُضِلُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِكَ رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْ
عَلَى أَمْوَالِهِمْ وَ اشْدُدْ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلَا
يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٨٨﴾

^{*86} This prayer was offered by Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) during the last period of his stay in Egypt. There was a long interval between this and the events mentioned in the preceding verse which happened during the early days of his mission. The details of this intervening period are available at other places in the Quran.

^{*87} The Arabic word *zeenat* includes the magnificence, grandeur, glory and the apparent brilliance of their culture and civilization which attracted other people towards them with the desire of imitating them.

^{*88} “Wealth”, possessions, resources and means which help the people like Pharaoh to put into practice all their devices and plans, and the lack of which prevents the standard bearers of the truth from carrying out their plans.

***89** As it has already been stated, Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) made this prayer during the last period of his stay in Egypt. When he had shown many signs, one after the other, to Pharaoh and his chiefs and pointed out the way clearly to them, but they had persisted obdurately in their antagonism to the truth. The Prophet begged his Lord to destroy their possessions and harden their hearts. And this was in accordance with the decree of Allah. As they had merited this punishment according to the divine law of retribution, Allah decreed that they should not get the light of faith, which they themselves had extinguished with their persistent disbelief.

89. He said: “Verily, has been accepted the prayer of you both. So keep to the straight path, and follow not the path of those who do not know.” ***90**

قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَتْ دَعْوَتُكُمْ فَأَسْتَقِيمَا وَلَا
تَتَّبِعَنَّ سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

***90** In this verse, Allah has urged Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and his followers to guard against a common misunderstanding that is likely to arise in such cases. It so happens that those people who have no knowledge of the reality and who do not understand the wisdom of Allah’s ways are liable to believe from the apparent success of His rebels that perhaps it is His will that they should dominate in the world. When they witness the failures of the upholders of the truth in their conflict with falsehood in contrast to the splendor and vast possessions of the champions of falsehood, they begin to think that Allah does

not will to help the truth in its conflict with falsehood. Therefore some foolish people further conclude from these wrong suppositions that it is useless to exert for the establishment of the truth. Then they consider it to be the best and most proper thing to rest content with the little religiosity that the sovereignty of falsehood and unbelief allows them. That is why Allah has urged Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and his followers to guard against such a misunderstanding and to carry on the mission entrusted to them with patience under the adverse circumstances.

90. And We led the Children of Israel across the sea. Then pursued them Pharaoh and his hosts in rebellion and enmity. Until, when overtook him the drowning, he said: "I believe that there is no god but Him, believe in whom the Children of Israel, and I am of those who surrender. *91

وَجُوزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَاتَّبَعَهُمْ
فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ بَغْيًا وَعَدُوًّا حَتَّى
إِذَا أَدْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ قَالَ آمَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا
إِلَهَ إِلَّا الَّذِي آمَنْتُ بِهِ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ
وَ أَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

*91 The Bible does not mention this happening but the Talmud says explicitly that when he was drowning he said: Who is like Thee, O Lord, among the gods?

91. What, now (you believe), while indeed, you had disobeyed before, and you were of the corrupters.

أَلَنْ وَ قَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَ كُنْتَ مِنَ
الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

92. So this day, We shall deliver you in your body, *92

فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ

that you may be for those after you a sign. And indeed, many among mankind, of Our signs, are heedless. *93

خَلَفَكَ آيَةً ۗ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ
عَنْ آيَاتِنَا لَعَفْلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

*92 Even today the place, where the dead body of Pharaoh was found floating, is pointed out by the inhabitants of that region. It lies on the western coast of the Sinai Peninsula and is now known by the name of Jabl-i-Firaun (Pharaoh's Mount). There is also near to it a hot spring called Hammam-i-Firaun (Pharaoh's Bath), which is situated at a distance of a few miles from Abu Zenimah, where, they say, Pharaoh's dead body was found lying.

If the Pharaoh who was drowned was Mineptah, who ruled over Egypt when Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was sent to him, his embalmed dead body is still lying in the Cairo Museum. When Sir Grafton E. Smith removed the bandages from his mummy, a layer of salt was found on the body, which was a clear proof that he was drowned in the sea.

*93 That is, We show signs to the people over and over again so that these should serve as warnings and be the means of teaching them lessons, but it is a pity that they do not learn lessons even from such signs as the dead body of Pharaoh.

93. And indeed, We settled the Children of Israel in a dwelling place *94 that was blessed, and We provided them with good things. So

وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مُبَوَّأً صِدْقٍ
وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ۖ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا

they differed not until had
come to them the knowledge.
*95 Indeed, your Lord will
judge between them on the
Day of Resurrection in that
in which they used to differ.

حَتَّىٰ جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي
بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ
يَخْتَلِفُونَ

*94 That is, in Palestine after their exodus from Egypt.
*95 This refers to the dissensions the Israelites had caused
in the divine way and the new religions they had invented.
This verse accuses them of falling into variances, even
though they possessed the divine knowledge, which had
provided them with the criterion of judging between the
right way and the wrong ways. They did this because of
mischief of their hearts in spite of the fact that the right
way had been made clear to them, and its fundamental
principles had been imparted to them and instructions had
been given about its implications and demands and its
boundaries had been distinctly demarcated from those of
the ways of unbelief. Besides, they had been admonished to
follow the path of obedience and guard against the paths of
disobedience, and establish their lives entirely in
accordance with the rules and regulations based on that
knowledge, for they shall have to render an account of all
they did in this life. But in spite of all the instructions that
were given to them, they divided one original religion into
many divergent sects and built different ways on
foundations other than those laid down by Allah.

94. So if you are in doubt
about that which We have

فَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِّمَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ

revealed to you, then ask those who have been reading the Book before you. Certainly, has come to you the truth from your Lord, so never be of those who doubt.

فَسَلِّ الَّذِينَ يَقْرَءُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ
قَبْلِكَ لَقَدْ جَاءَكَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا
تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُتَرَيِّنِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾

95. And do not be of those who deny the revelations of Allah, for then you shall be among the losers. *96

وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِ
اللَّهِ فَتَكُونُوا مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

*96 Though these words were addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), they were meant for those who expressed doubts about his message. As regards to the reference to the people of the Book, it is because they possessed the knowledge of the scriptures, whereas the common people of Arabia lacked this, and were, therefore, strangers to the voice of the Quran. It was also expected that their just and pious scholars would testify that its message was the same as that of the scriptures of the former Prophets.

96. Indeed, those upon whom has been justified *97 the word of your Lord, they will not believe.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّكَ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

*97 Allah's decree that had become applicable to them was this: Allah does not thrust the faith on those who do not seek after the truth: who obstinately and obdurately shut their hearts against it with prejudice: who are so lost in the love of this world that they do not care at all about the

Hereafter.

97. And even if should come to them every sign, until they see the painful punishment.

وَلَوْ جَاءَتْهُمْ كُلُّ آيَةٍ حَتَّىٰ يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ
الْأَلِيمَ ﴿١٧﴾

98. So why not there was a township that believed so benefited it its belief, except the people of Jonah. *98

When they believed, We removed from them the punishment of disgrace in the life of the world, *99 and We gave them worldly comfort for a while. *100

فَلَوْ لَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ آمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا
إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَّا آمَنُوا
كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخُزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَ مَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٨﴾

*98 Though Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) 860-784 B.C. was an Israelite Prophet, he was sent to Iraq for the guidance of the Assyrians, who have been called the people of Jonah for this reason. At that time, Nineveh, a very ancient and famous city, was their capital. Its vast remains are scattered on the left bank of the Tigris, opposite to the city of Mosul, and one of the mounds bears the name of Prophet Jonah. In order to form an estimate of the glory of these people, suffice it to say that the circumference of their capital Nineveh was 60 miles or so.

*99 As regards to the question why the threatened torment was warded off from the people of Jonah as an exception to the divine principle, "Why was there not a (single) township (among those We warned) that believed so its

belief benefited it,” the Quran does not give any details of this, but merely refers to the story at three places. (See Surah Al-Anbia, Ayats 87, 88; Surah As-Sajadah, Ayats 139-148; Surah Al-Qalam, Ayats 48-50). Though the story contained in the Book of Jonah gives some details, these cannot be depended upon because it was neither composed by Prophet Jonah nor it is a revealed Book but was written by some unknown person and then inserted in the Bible. Besides this, it contains some apparently absurd things which cannot be accepted as true. Nevertheless if we consider this deeply in the light of the allusions made in the Quran and details in the Book of Jonah, the explanation given by various commentators of the Quran seems to be correct. Prophet Jonah left the place of his mission without divine permission after warning the people of the torment. Therefore Allah forgave the Assyrians when they repented after seeing some signs of the coming torment. This was in accordance with the divine principles as stated in the Quran. For, according to one of these, Allah does not inflict any torment on any people, till He has the message fully demonstrated to them. As the Prophet did not continue his admonition in accordance with the appointed term and left the place of his mission of his own accord, Allah’s justice did not inflict the chastisement because the legal argument against his people had not been fulfilled. (For further explanation see E.N. 85 of Surah Yaseen).

***100** When the Assyrians believed in the message, they were given a new lease of life. But after some time, they adopted the wrong ways of thought and deed. Prophet

Nahum (720-698 B.C.) warned and admonished them but without any effect. Then Prophet Zephaniah (640-609 B.C.) gave them the last warning that “He will destroy Assyria and will make Nineveh a desolation”, but it also proved in vain. At last in about 612 B.C. Allah made the Medes dominant over them.

The Median king, with the help of the Babylonians, invaded Assyria, and their army was defeated and was besieged within the walls of Nineveh. They put up a stiff resistance for some time but then the floods in the Tigris swept away the city wall and the invaders swarmed into the city and burnt it to ashes along with the surrounding countryside. The Assyrian king set fire to his palace and was himself burnt to death. Thus the Assyrian Empire and its culture came to an end forever. The recent archaeological excavations reveal widespread effects of the fire.

99. And if had willed your Lord, would have believed those on the earth, all of them together. *101 Will you then compel mankind, until they become believers. *102

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى
يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١﴾

*101 This refers to the freedom that Allah has granted to mankind to believe or not to believe in Him. Otherwise He could have very easily created all the people as born believers and obedient servants and there would have been no disbelief and disobedience at all on the earth. Or He could have very easily inspired them to turn towards belief and obedience. But these methods would have defeated the

wisdom that underlies the creation of mankind.

***102** This does not at all mean that the Prophet (peace be upon him) desired to force people to become believers, and that Allah was forbidding him to do this. In fact, the Quran has here adopted the same method of admonishing the people that it has adopted at many other places, that is, though the words have apparently been addressed to the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him), in fact, these have been addressed to the people. The implication is this: "O people! Our Messenger has made the distinction between the guidance and deviation quite clear and plain by argument and pleading. Now, therefore, it is for you to believe or not to believe in the guidance. If you accept that someone should force you to adopt the right way, you should know that this duty has not been assigned to Our Prophet. Had Allah willed this, He could have done it Himself: then there would have been no need of sending any Prophet to you.

100. And it is not for a soul that it would believe except by the permission of Allah. ***103** And He sets uncleanness upon those who will not understand. ***104**

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ
اللَّهِ وَ يَجْعَلُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

***103** This is to emphasize the principle that the bestowal of all these blessings is in the power of Allah alone: therefore none can acquire or bestow on anyone any blessing without the permission of Allah. As faith and guidance are also blessings, they, too, can be acquired only with Allah's

permission; and no one can acquire these without His permission nor bestow these on anyone else even though one should desire to do so. That is why, even if the Prophet had sincerely desired to make people believers forcibly, he could not have done this, for this could be done only with Allah's permission and help.

***104** This points out clearly that the above principle is not applied blindly and irrationally so as to bestow the blessing of faith on or withhold it from anyone without any rhyme or reason, but it works according to a system which is based on wisdom. Allah bestows this on anyone who uses his common sense properly in search of the truth, for Allah provides for such a one the means of attaining it in proportion to the sincerity of his intention and the extent of his exertion and grants him its correct knowledge required for faith. But He throws the filth of ignorance, deviation, wrong thinking and wrong doing on the one who is not a seeker after the truth and does not use his common sense properly because of his prejudices, or does not use it at all in search of the truth. And this is what such people deserve.

101. Say: "Behold all that is in the heavens and the earth." And of no avail will be the signs and the warners to a people who do not believe. ^{*105}

قُلْ انظُرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَ مَا تُعْجِبُ الْآيَاتِ وَالنَّذِيرِ عَنْ قَوْمِ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

***105** This is the answer to the condition that they would believe him to be a true Prophet, if a sign would be shown to them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has been asked

to say to them: There are countless signs in the heaven and the earth, which confirm and testify the message I am giving you. You could have easily recognized them, had you observed and considered them with open eyes and open hearts. But if you lack this urge and desire for the truth, you will not accept and acknowledge it, however wonderful, miraculous and supernatural the sign may be, for you will declare that it was a piece of sorcery like Pharaoh and his chiefs. The fact is that the people, who suffer from this malady, see the truth only when the torment with all its horrors overtakes them, just as Pharaoh came to believe only when he was drowning. But you should note it well that the repentance at the time of punishment is of no avail.

102. Then do they wait for except like the days of those who passed away before them. Say: "Wait then, indeed, I am with you among those who are waiting."

فَهَلْ يَنْتَظِرُونَ إِلَّا مِثْلَ أَيَّامِ الَّذِينَ
خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۗ قُلْ فَانْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي
مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

103. Then We do save Our messengers and those who have believed. Thus, it is incumbent upon Us to save the believers.

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ
حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نُنَجِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

104. Say "O mankind, ^{*106} if you are in doubt of my religion, then I do not worship those whom you worship other than Allah.

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِنْ
رَبِّي فَلَا آعْبُدُ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ

But I worship Allah who causes you to die. *107 And I have been commanded that I should be of the believers.”

اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ أَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ
وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*106 In this concluding portion, the same thing that was stated at the beginning of the discourse, has been reiterated. Therefore it will be worthwhile to keep in view the introductory passage (Ayats 1-10).

*107 The Arabic word *yatawaffa-kum* literally means “gives you death”, but it has been purposely translated into “who causes you to die” in order to convey its real spirit in the content it occurs. It implies this: I worship only that One, who has full power over your life: He has complete authority and power to let you live as long as He wills and cause you to die at any moment He wills. That is why I am fully convinced that I should submit and surrender, worship, serve and obey Him alone.

Now let us consider why of all His characteristics, this quality of Allah was specifically cited here. This was to bring home to the mushriks of Makkah that the doctrine of shirk was absolutely false. For they also believed (and all the mushriks have always believed) that death is entirely in the hands of Allah, the Lord of the universe, and none else has any power over it; so much so that they confessed that even those beings, whom they believed to be partners with God in other qualities and powers of, His, could not avert death even from themselves. Thus the mention of this quality of Allah along with the statement of the doctrine of *Tauhid* has been made to serve as a proof of that creed.

That is, I serve only Him for He alone has the full power over life and death. Why should, then, I serve others who have no power at all over their own lives and deaths, not to mention the lives and deaths of others? The eloquence and force of the statement has been enhanced manifold by saying, “Who gives you death” instead of “Who gives me death”. For this contains the statement of the doctrine, its proof and invitation to it, all the three combined in one concise sentence. Had it been said, “I serve that one Who gives me death” then it would have implied, “I alone should serve Him.” But by saying, “Who gives you death” the implication is: It is not only I, who should serve Him, but you also should serve Him. For it is absolutely wrong to serve any other than Allah, Who alone has such powers.

105. And that direct your face toward the religion, as by nature upright, ^{*108} and must not be of those who associate partners. ^{*109}

وَأَنْ أَقِمَّ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ



^{*108} The force of the Arabic words “direct your face toward the religion” of the text means “dedicate yourself sincerely, exclusively and steadfastly to this faith”, is worth deep consideration. The purpose might have been served by the use of such words as “Adopt this faith” or “Follow this faith”. But Allah considered such expressions as weak and incapable of serving the real purpose, which is implied in the wording of the text. For the literal meaning is “Set your face steadfastly”, which implies: You should steadfastly turn your face in one direction only, without turning it even

slightly to right or left, or backward, and go on marching in the same direction. Though these words were in themselves quite sufficient, the addition of the word made it all the more forceful. For *hanif* is one who turns away from all others and exclusively turns to one direction. Thus what Allah demands is this: Adopt this faith, this way of the worship of Allah and this way of life in such a manner that your worship, subjection, submission, servitude and obedience should be dedicated exclusively to Allah, the Lord of the universe, so that you do not deviate in the least after adopting this way. You should have nothing to do with those ways that you have discarded and that you should not even have a look at the crooked paths that erroneous people follow.

***109** This negative way of forbidding from shirk has been purposely adopted. It implies this: You should not at all be one of those, who set up in any way whatsoever other gods as partners with Allah in His essence, His attributes, His rights and His powers, whether that god be one's own self or another man or a group of men or some spirit or jinn or angel or some material or imaginary being. The demand of *Tauhid* has been made both in the positive form, "Dedicate faith", and in the negative form, "and do not be of those who associate partners (to Allah)." Thus it forbids shirk both in deed and in creed, in individual and in collective life, in places of worship and in education, in courts and in legislative assemblies, in political and in economic activities. Therefore it demands from the worshiper of *Tauhid* to adopt a different way in every aspect of life from the way of

those who adulterate God- worship with ungodly worships, for the former can never be a fellow traveler with those who practice shirk. As such things can never be expected from him, it can never be imagined that he would follow them. Thus it is clear that it cuts at the very root of shirk, both *jali* (open) and *khafi* (hidden). As a matter of fact, shirk in its latter form is even more dangerous and should therefore be avoided most scrupulously. This warning is necessary, as some foolish people consider it to be almost harmless just because it is hidden. The fact is that open shirk is like an avowed enemy who makes an attack in the open and hidden shirk is like an enemy in the guise of a friend. Or the former is like a disease of which the symptoms are quite apparent and the latter like the hidden disease that gradually undermines one's health. Thus it is obvious that when the open shirk comes into conflict with the faith of *Tauhid*, it may be cured. But the one who suffers from the hidden shirk does not realize the threat posed by it and slowly and gradually succumbs to it, while the victim remains quite unaware that his faith is being devoured by the deadly secret enemy.

106. And do not call upon, other than Allah, that which neither benefits you, nor harms you. For if you did, so indeed, you would be then of the wrongdoers.

وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ
وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ فَإِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا مِنْ
الظَّالِمِينَ

107. And if Allah afflicts you with adversity, then there is

وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ

none who can remove it except Him. And if He intends for you good, then there is none who can repel His bounty. He causes to reach it whomever He wills of his slaves. And He is the Oft-Forgiving, Merciful.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِهِ يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ



108. Say “O mankind, indeed, has come to you the truth from your Lord. Then whoever is guided, so in fact, he is guided for his own self. And whoever goes astray, so in fact, he goes astray to his own. And I am not over you a custodian.

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ



109. And follow that which is revealed to you, and be patient until Allah gives judgment. And He is best of the judges.

وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَاصْبِرْ حَتَّىٰ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ

