

reported by Ibn Kathīr). In short, Aḥādīth that say that some deeds cause age to increase mean increase in the barakah or bliss of age.

In the next verse: *وَمِنْ كُلِّ تَاكُلُونَ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُونَ جَلِيَّةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا* (And from each, you eat fresh meat, and derive ornaments that you wear - 35:12), it is being said that one gets fresh meat, that is, fish to eat from both waters, sweet or brackish. In this verse, by alluding to fish as meat, the hint released is that fish is meat, already halal by itself. One does not have to slaughter it. This is contrary to the case of the animals found on land. Unless one slaughters them with the name of Allah, they do not become halal. Fish does not have this condition. It is meat, ready to eat. And the word: *جَلِيَّةً* (*hilyah*) means ornament and refers to pearls. The verse tells us that the way pearls are found in brackish waters, they are also found in sweet waters, something contrary to the general belief, since it is well known that pearls are harvested from the brackish water of the seas. However, the reality is what is evident from the words of the Qur'ān that they form in both - yes, much less in sweet waters and far more in the brackish waters of the sea. That they are found in seas excessively contributed to the popular belief that pearls come only from brackish waters.

By using the masculine form in the last word: *تَلْبَسُونَهَا* (*talbasunaha*: that you wear), a hint is being released that the use of pearls is permissible for men as well - contrary to gold and silver, the use of which as an ornament is not permissible for men. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

In the last verse: *إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دُعَاءَكُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ سَمِعُوا مَا اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ* (If you call them, they do not hear your call, and even if they were to hear, they would not respond to you. - 35:14). To explain, it can be said that if you call those idols or some prophets or angels you take as god and worship them asking them to help you in distress, they will, first of all, be unable to listen to you because idols do not have the ability to listen. Though, prophets and angels have this ability, yet they are not present everywhere nor do they hear that which is said by everybody. Further on, it was said that, should they, as a matter of supposition, be able to listen, as in the case of angels and prophets, still, they would not fulfill your request, because they themselves have no control over it, and cannot intercede with Allah on behalf of anyone without His permission.

reported by Ibn Kathīr). In short, Aḥādīth that say that some deeds cause age to increase mean increase in the barakah or bliss of age.

In the next verse: *وَمِنْ كُلِّ تَاكُلُونَ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُونَ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا* (And from each, you eat fresh meat, and derive ornaments that you wear - 35:12), it is being said that one gets fresh meat, that is, fish to eat from both waters, sweet or brackish. In this verse, by alluding to fish as meat, the hint released is that fish is meat, already halal by itself. One does not have to slaughter it. This is contrary to the case of the animals found on land. Unless one slaughters them with the name of Allah, they do not become halal. Fish does not have this condition. It is meat, ready to eat. And the word: *حِلْيَةً* (*hilyah*) means ornament and refers to pearls. The verse tells us that the way pearls are found in brackish waters, they are also found in sweet waters, something contrary to the general belief, since it is well known that pearls are harvested from the brackish water of the seas. However, the reality is what is evident from the words of the Qur'ān that they form in both - yes, much less in sweet waters and far more in the brackish waters of the sea. That they are found in seas excessively contributed to the popular belief that pearls come only from brackish waters.

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The issue of the ability of the dead to hear (سمع الموتي: sama‘-ul-mawtā) has appeared earlier. The present verse neither confirms nor rejects it. Arguments and proofs relating to this issue are different. They have already been mentioned in details under the commentary on Sūrah Ar-Rūm [30] (Ma‘arif-ul-Qur‘ān, Volume VI).

Verses 15 - 26

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿١٥﴾ إِنْ يَشَاءُ يُدْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى ۗ وَإِنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ إِلَىٰ حِمْلِهَا لَا يُحْمَلْ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ ۗ إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۗ وَمَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَتَزَكَّىٰ لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ ﴿١٩﴾ وَلَا الظُّلُمَاتُ وَلَا النُّورُ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَا الظِّلُّ وَلَا الْحَرُورُ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا الْأَمْوَاتُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّنْ فِي الْقُبُورِ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنْ أَنْتَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۗ وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۗ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَبِالزُّبُرِ وَبِالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿٢٦﴾

O men, you are the ones who need Allah, and Allah is the Need-Free, the Ever-Praised. [15] If He so wills, He can do away with you and bring a new creation. [16] And for Allah, that is not something difficult. [17] And no bearer will bear the burden of any other person. And if a person carrying a heavy load calls (someone) to (share) his load, nothing from it shall be carried (by the latter), even though he be a near of kin. You can

warn only those who fear their Lord unseen and establish salah. And whoever gets purified gets purified for his own benefit. And to Allah is the final return. [18] And the blind and the sighted are not equal, [19] nor darkness and light, [20] nor shade and heat of the sun. [21] And the living and the dead are not alike. Allah makes hear whomsoever He wills. And you cannot make hear those who are in the graves. [22] You are but a warner. [23] Surely We have sent you with truth as a bearer of good news and as a warner, and there was no community without a warner having passed among them. [24] And if they reject you, (it is not something new, because) those before them have (also) rejected (messengers). Their messengers came to them with clear proofs and with scriptures and with the enlightening book. [25] Then I seized those who disbelieved. So, how was My censure ! [26]

Commentary

Verse 18: وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى (And no bearer will bear the burden of any other person) means that, on the Day of Judgment, no one will be able to bear the burden of another person's sins. Everyone will have to bear his or her burden. As for what appears in Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt (29:13): **أَتَقَالَهُمْ** **أَتَقَالًا مَعَ أَتْقَالِهِمْ**, which means that people who make others go astray will not only bear the burden of going astray personally, but will also bear the burden of having made others go astray. it does not mean that they will somehow lighten the burden of those they had caused to go astray. Instead, their burden will weigh on them as it was in its own place and because of the crime of those who made people go astray, being twofold, their burden too will become twofold, one: that of being astray and two: that of making others go astray. Therefore, there is no contradiction in these two verses. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Explaining this verse, Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah رضي الله عنه said: On that Day, a father would say to his son, 'You know how affectionate a father I was to you?' He will say, 'yes, your favors to me are countless. You have certainly faced many a hardship for me during the life of the world.' Then, the father will say, 'son, today I need you. Give me some of your good deeds, so that I can have my salvation.' The son will say, 'father, the return you asked for is not much, but what can I do? If I were to give that to you, I shall be facing the same situation that you are facing now,

therefore, I am sorry, I cannot help you.' Then, he will say the same thing to his wife, 'I sacrificed everything for you during the life of the world. Today, I need a few of your good deeds. Please give these to me.' The wife will give him the same answer as was given by the son.

Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah رضي الله عنه said that this is what the verse: لَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى (And no bearer will bear the burden of any other) means. Then he said that the noble Qur'an has taken up this subject in several of its verses. At one place, it has said: لَا يَجْزِي وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَلَدِهِ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ جَارٌ عَنْ وَالِدِهِ شَيْئًا that is, on that Day, neither a father would be able to have his son be spared from the punishment, nor would a son be able to do that for his father (31:33). The essential sense is that no one will save another person by carrying the burden of his sins over one's own shoulders. However, the matter of intercession (*shafa'ah*) is different. Similarly, in another verse, it was said: يَوْمَ يَغْرُرُ الْمُرءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ (80:34,35). The purpose of running is no other but that he would be in fear, lest these people try to pass on the burden of their sins on him or come up with a request for some of his good deeds. (Ibn Kathīr)

At the beginning of the verse: وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَنَ فِي الْقُبُورِ (And you cannot make hear those who are in the graves - 22.), disbelievers have been likened to the dead and believers, to the living. In congruence to this, the expression: مَنَ فِي الْقُبُورِ (those in the graves) here means the disbelievers. The sense is that 'the way you cannot make the dead hear you, you can also not make these living disbelievers hear you.'

This verse has itself clarified it that, at this place, making someone hear means the kind of listening that is going to be useful, effective and beneficial. Otherwise, the effort to make disbelievers listen, in the absolute sense, has remained an exercise in futility since ever. It has even been a matter of common observation that a call was beamed at them, and they did listen to it. Therefore, the verse means that 'the way you cannot bring the dead to the right path by making them hear the Divine Word because they have shifted from the avenue of deeds in the world to the arena of recompense in the Hereafter where, even if they confess to their faith, it will not be deemed as trustworthy, similar to that is the condition of the disbelievers. This proves that the negation of making the dead hear referred to in this verse means a particular listening that is

beneficial, something because of which the listener forsakes the false and takes to the true. From this presentation, it becomes clear that the present verse has nothing to do with the issue of the ability of the dead to hear. Whether or not the dead hear the living is a different issue in its own place. A detailed discussion about it has appeared in the commentary on Sūrah Ar-Rūm and Sūrah An-Naml (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume VI).

Verses 27 - 28

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً ۖ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُخْتَلِفًا
 أَلْوَانَهَا ۗ وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيْضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا
 وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالذَّوَابِّ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ
 أَلْوَانُهُ، كَذَلِكَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ
 غَفُورٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

Did you not see that Allah has sent down water from the sky? Then We brought forth with it fruits having different colors. And among the mountains there are tracks, white and red-- of different colors, and (others) utterly black. [27] And among humans and beasts and cattle, there are those having different colors as well. Only those of His slaves fear Allah who are knowledgeable. Surely Allah is Mighty, Forgiving. [28]

Commentary

Sequence of the Verses

Some early commentators have said that these verses return to the subject of Tauḥīd, Oneness of Allah or pure monotheism supported by proofs of Divine power and mastery in nature. Some others have said that described in the previous verses were different states of people along with examples, such as: وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ وَلَا الظُّلُمَةُ وَلَا النُّورُ وَلَا الظِّلُّ وَلَا الْحَرُورُ (And the blind and the sighted are not equal, (35:19) nor darkness and light, nor shade and heat of the sun - 35:20). What is being said here further clarifies that mutual difference in Divine creations is something inherent. It exists even in organic and inorganic substances, in fact, it is present not only in shapes and colors, but in traits and temperaments as well.

A subtle grammatical point

The Holy Qur'ān has mentioned different colors of fruits at the first place in Verse 27, and of the mountains at the second place. But the grammatic style is different in both places. With regard to fruits the difference of colors is mentioned by an adverbial phrase (translated above as 'having different cobblers', while in the case of mountains, it has been expressed by an adjectival phrase (translated above as 'of different cobblers'. According to the Arabic grammar, an adjective normally refers to the permanent quality of a thing, while an adverb may refer to a quality or condition that is subject to change. Keeping this in view, there may be a hint here to the effect that the difference of colors in fruits does not remain constant in a single state, rather keeps changing after brief intervals. On the contrary, there are the colors of human beings and other life forms. These are generally fast and abiding, and do not change.

And in case of mountains, used there was the word: جُدَدٌ (*judad*). This is the plural form of: جُدَّةٌ (*juddah*) the well-recognized meaning of which is that of a mini pathway also known as: جَادَةٌ (*jadah*). Some respected elders have taken *juddah* in the sense of a tract, patch or segment that, in both situations, denotes parts of the mountains being different in colors. Out of these, white was mentioned first while black, last. In between, along with the mention of red, the expression: مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ (of different colors) was introduced. This could be releasing a hint that, in reality, the colors in this world are no more than two - white and black. The rest of the colors in the spectrum emerge by compounding different degrees of white and black.

The place where the word: كَذَلِكَ (*kadhalik*: translated above by the words, 'as well') appears in verse 28 just before: كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ (Only those of His slaves fear Allah who are knowledgeable), but in the translation above it has been separated from the next verse by a full stop, because this is the place of a stop (*waqf*) according to the consensus of the majority of commentators and scholars. As such, it is a sign denoting that this word is related to the previous subject, that is, the creation of all that exists in categories and kinds and different colors is a very special sign of the power and wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā.

Then there are narrations that suggest that this word is related to the

next sentence. If this interpretation is adopted, the full stop would be appropriate after the words, 'having different colors, and the word 'kadhalika' should be translated as 'similarly' in which case, it would mean that 'the way fruits, mountains, human beings and other life forms are marked out by different colors, similarly, there are different degrees among people who have the awe or fear of Allah in their hearts. Someone may have achieved its highest degree. Others may have arrived at what is less than that. Then, the whole thing depends on knowledge. Whoever has a certain degree of knowledge will have a corresponding degree of the awe or fear of Allah. (Rūḥ-ul-Maʿānī)

In previous verses, it was said: **إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ يُخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ** (18) This is to give solace to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which means, 'when you warn people and convey the message of Allah to them, only those who have the awe of Allah without having seen Him get the maximum benefit out of it.' In symmetry with this, the present verse: **إِنَّمَا يُخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ** (Only those of His slaves fear Allah who are knowledgeable - 35:28) has mentioned people about whom it can be said that they have the awe of Allah and fear Him as is His due. Then, there is another parallelism here. Mentioned earlier were disbelievers and deniers along with the different states they were submerged in. In the present verse, what has been put forth is the opposite of it. The verse talks about the men of Allah (the auliya' of Allah) particularly. The word: **إِنَّمَا** (*innama*) is used in the Arabic language to describe *ḥaṣr* or exclusiveness. Therefore, this sentence obviously means that only the 'Ulama' (the knowing, the learned, the initiated) fear Allah or have the genuine awe of Allah. But Tafsīr authority, Ibn 'Atiyyah and others said that the way **إِنَّمَا** (*innama*) is employed to show exclusiveness, it is also used to describe the singularity of something, and the later is what is meant here - that fearing Allah and remaining in awe of Him is a specially incumbent attribute of the 'Ulama'. It does not necessarily imply that those other than them have no such fear and awe in them. (Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ, Abū Ḥayyān)

And the word: **عُلَمَاءُ** ('Ulama') in the verse means people who have due knowledge of the being and attributes of Allah Taʿālā and who have the fact of His power and control, and His favors and blessings, on what He has created, always in sight. In the terminology of the Qurʾān, no one is considered to be an '*alim* simply by virtue of knowing the Arabic

language, grammar and rhetoric unless he has acquired the knowledge and understanding of the attributes of Allah Ta'ālā in the manner stated above.

Explaining this verse, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: 'Alim is a person who fears Allah in private and in public, and likes what Allah likes him to do, and hates what is detestable in the sight of Allah.

And Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه said:

لَيْسَ الْعِلْمُ بِكَثْرَةِ الْحَدِيثِ وَلَكِنَّ الْعِلْمَ عَنْ كَثْرَةِ الْخَشْيَةِ

Memorizing many aḥādīth (or, talking a lot) is no 'ilm (knowledge). Instead, (real) knowledge comes when one has the awe and fear of Allah with it.

In short, the degree of the fear of Allah one has shall go on to make him an 'Alim of that very degree. And Aḥmad Ibn Ṣaliḥ al-Miṣrī said: Fear of Allah cannot be recognized on the basis of someone's prolific reporting of events or abundance of knowledge, in fact, it is identified through one's adherence to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet. (Ibn Kathīr)

Shaykh Shahabuddīn as-Suhrawardī رحمه الله تعالى said: This verse clearly indicates that a person who has no fear of Allah is no 'alim. (Maḥzarī) This is confirmed by the sayings of the early forbears of Islam (Salaf).

Sayyidnā Rabi' Ibn Anas رضي الله عنه said:

مَنْ لَمْ يَخْشَ فَلَيْسَ بِعَالِمٍ

One who does not fear Allah is not an 'alim.

And early commentator, Mujāhid said:

إِنَّمَا الْعَالِمُ مَنْ خَشِيَ اللَّهَ

Only he who fears Allah is the (real) 'alim.

Someone asked Sa'd Ibn Ibrāhīm: Who knows Divine Law at its best in the city of Madīnah? He said: أَتَقَاهُمْ لِرَبِّهِ (He who is the most fearing of his Lord).

And Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtada رضي الله عنه defined a Faqīh (master of Islamic jurisprudence) by saying:

إِنَّ الْفَقِيهَ حَقَّ الْفَقِيهَ مَنْ لَمْ يَغْنَطِ النَّاسَ مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ وَلَمْ يَرْخِصْ لَهُمْ فِي مَعَاصِي اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَلَمْ يَدْعُ الْقُرْآنَ رَغْبَةً عَنْهُ إِلَى غَيْرِهِ أَنَّهُ لَأَخَيْرَ فِي عِبَادَةٍ لَأَعْلَمَ فِيهَا وَلَا عِلْمَ لَأَفْهَمَ فِيهِ وَلَا قِرَاءَةَ لَأَتَدَبَّرَ فِيهِ (قرطبي)

A Faqih, perfect as he must be, is he who would not make people lose hope in the mercy of Allah, nor leave them free to indulge in acts of disobedience to Him, nor give them the guarantee of remaining safe from the punishment of Allah, nor forsake the Qur'an by indulging in pursuits other than it. (And he said): Verily, there is no good in an act of worship that is without knowledge, and there is no good in a knowledge that is without understanding, and there is no recitation (Qira'ah of the Qur'an) without deliberation in it. (Qurṭubī)

The clarifications appearing above also help remove the doubt about many 'Ulama' who do not seem to have the kind of awe and fear of Allah required of them. These clarifications tell us that, in the sight of Allah, the bland knowledge of Arabic is not what 'ilm is, and certainly, the one who is proficient in it is not an 'Alim. Anyone who does not have the fear of Allah in his heart is simply not an 'Alim in the terminology of the Qur'an. However, at times, awe and fear of Allah are rooted in one's creed and reason because of which one adheres to the injunctions of the Shari'ah as a matter of obligation. Then, there are occasions when this awe and fear of Allah become the very state of one's existence and rise to the degree of a firmly ingrained asset whereby the readiness to follow the Shari'ah becomes a natural reflex. The first degree of the awe and fear of Allah is mandatory and, for an 'Alim, necessary. The second degree is certainly superior and sublime, but not necessary. (Bayān ul-Qur'an)

Verses 29 - 37

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرِجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَنْ تَبُورَ ﴿٢٩﴾ لِيُؤْفِقَهُمْ أَجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣١﴾
ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ۖ فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ

وَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ إِذِنَ اللَّهُ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ
 الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٣٢﴾ ۖ جَنَّتٌ عَدْنٌ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ
 مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤًا ۖ وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ ۖ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
 الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ ۖ الَّذِي أَحَلَّنَا
 دَارَ الْمُقَامَةِ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ لَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا نُصَبٌ وَلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا لُغُوبٌ
 ﴿٣٥﴾ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ لَا يُقْضَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَمُوتُوا وَلَا
 يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِهَا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي كُلَّ كَافِرٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ ۖ وَهُمْ
 يَصْطَرِّحُونَ فِيهَا ۗ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا
 نَعْمَلُ ۗ أَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُم مَّا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ ۗ
 فَذُوقُوا فَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

Surely those who recite Allah's Book and have established salah and have spent, from what We have provided them, secretly and openly,--- they hope for a trade that will never crash, [29] so that He pays them their rewards in full, and gives them more out of His grace. Surely He is Most-Forgiving, Very- Appreciative. [30] And the Book We have revealed to you is the Truth, confirming what was (revealed) before it. Surely Allah , in respect of His slaves, is All-Aware, All-Seeing. [31] Then We conveyed the Book as an heritage to those of Our slaves whom We chose. Then, some of them are those who wrong their own selves, and some of them are mediocre, and some of them are those who outpace (others) in righteous deeds with Allah's permission. That is the great bounty, [32] gardens of eternity they enter. They will be ornamented with bracelets of gold and with pearls, and their dress therein will be (of) silk. [33] And they will say, " Praise be to Allah who has removed all sorrow from us. Surely our Lord is Most-Forgiving, Very-Appreciative, [34] who, out of His grace, has made us land at a home of eternal living where neither we are touched by weariness, nor are we touched by boredom." [35] And those who disbelieve, for them shall be the fire of Jahannam; neither they will be

sentenced to death, so that they die, nor will its torment be lightened for them. It is in this way that We punish every infidel. [36] And they will be crying therein, " Our Lord, take us out from here, and we will act righteously, not in the way we have been doing before." (Allah will say to them,) " Did We not give you an age in your life in which lesson could have been learnt by the one who wished to take lesson? And (furthermore) the warner had (also) come to you. So, have a taste, because the wrongdoers will have no supporter. [37]

Commentary

Mentioned earlier, in verse 28, there was a quality of true 'Ulama' who acknowledge Allah. This quality related to the heart. It was to have Allah's awe in the heart. In the first of the present verses (29), some those qualities of the same blessed people, the *awliya'* or men of Allah, are mentioned that find expression through outward parts of the body. Out of these, the first quality is the tilawah (recitation) of the Qur'ān. This denotes the people who recite the Book of Allah constantly. The use of the aorist tense (*mudari'*) in: يَتْلُونَ (*yatluna*: they recite) releases a hint in this direction. Then, there are other elders who have taken: يَتْلُونَ (*yatluna*) at this place in its literal sense, that is, they follow the Qur'ān in deed. But, the first Tafsīr is weightier, even though, it also stands determined from the context that recitation can be trustworthy only when it brings forth actions in accordance with the Qur'ān. But, the word: تِلَاوَات (tilawah or recitation) used here appears in its recognized sense. Similarly, Mutarrif Ibn 'Abdullāh Ibn Shikhkhir رحمه الله تعالى said: هَذِهِ آيَةُ الْقُرْآنِ (This verse is for al-qurra'), the phoneticians of the Qur'ān, who make the recitation of the Qur'ān their special activity of life.

The second quality they have is the establishing of Ṣalah and the third is the spending of their wealth in the way of Allah. When the text says 'secretly and openly', it indicates that it is often better to spend secretly in order to stay safe from *riya'* (show off) in acts of worship. But, there are occasions when religious considerations require that it should be done openly, as in the case of congregational prayers for which the command is to call adhan from minarets and perform salah openly with the highest possible attendance. Similarly, there are occasions when it is necessary to let spending in the way of Allah be open in order to persuade others to do the same. Muslim jurists have laid out details in the matter of

salah and spending in the way of Allah. According to them, when it is fard (obligatory), Wājib (necessary) or sunnah mu'akkadah (emphasized sunnah), doing this openly is better. Other than this, when doing *nafl* salah, it is better to do it privately. Similarly, in instances when spending one's wealth is Farḍ or Wājib, such as, the obligatory Zakāh or sadaqatul-fitr or qurbani, spending openly on these is better and worthy of more merit. As for the rest of voluntary charities (Ṣadaqatun-nāfilah), spending these secretly carries more merit and grace.

From people who carry these three qualities in their person, that is, they recite the Qur'ān constantly, establish salah as due and spend in the way of Allah cheerfully, it is also expected that they would not simply stop at Farḍ and Wājib spending, rather, would also be contributing to voluntary charities. Identified next, there is yet another attribute of theirs: يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّن تَبُورَ (they hope for a trade that will never crash,). The expression: لَّن تَبُورَ (*lan tabur*) is a derivation from: بَوَارَ (*bawar*) which means to go waste. The verse means that believers having these attributes hope to go in a trade that never runs into a loss. The very word: يَرْجُونَ (*yarjun*: hope) indicates that a believer has no room for certainty in any good deed done by him or her in this mortal world. No one can say it will definitely bring forgiveness to them and that they will get its reward for sure - because, no matter how good one is in deeds, one simply cannot fulfill the right of reverence and worship Allah Ta'ālā has on His servants. Therefore, forgiveness for one and all will not be possible without the grace of Allah Ta'ālā, as has been clearly stated in a Ḥadīth. In addition to that, with the doing of everything good, one should not neglect the danger of some secret trick of Satan or one's own self getting mixed up with so many good deeds because of which they do not remain acceptable. Or, on occasions, along with a good deed, some bad deed gets to be committed which in turn stops the good deed from being accepted. Therefore, by introducing the word: يَرْجُونَ (*yarjun*: hope) in the verse, it was pointed out that even after having become particular with all possible good deeds, no one has the right to become sure of his or her salvation and of high ranks that follow in its wake. The most one can do is hope. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Good deeds likened with trade

In this verse, good deeds mentioned above have been likened to a

trading activity - as it was done in another verse where Faith and Jihād in the way of Allah have been expressed as trade or business deal:

هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ. تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ

O those who believe, shall I tell you about a trade that saves you from a painful punishment? (It is that) you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and carry out Jihād in His way with your riches and your lives - Aṣ-Ṣaff, 61:10).

It has been characterized as trade in the sense that a trader invests his capital and time in some venture only when he hopes that by doing so, his capital will increase and he will profit by it. But, every trading activity in this world is hemmed with the probability of loss along with the hope of profit. In the present verse, by adding the word: لَنْ تَبُورَ (lan tabur) to trade, it was pointed out that in this deal made for the sake of the benefits of the Hereafter, there was no probability of a loss. Then, the good people of Allah who take pains to do what is good and right do not go about running a business as businesses are commonly run. Instead of that, they hope to engage in a trading activity that never suffers a loss. As for the mention of the stance of hope on the part of such people, it serves as a delicate hint in the direction that Allah Ta'ālā is the noblest of the noble and the most generous of the generous, so He will not sever the hope of the hopeful, instead, would fulfill it. In fact, in the next sentence, it was also said that their hope is limited to receiving only a full return of their deed, but Allah Ta'ālā would, in His infinite mercy, bestow on them much more, far more than they would have ever hoped: يُؤْتِيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ (so that He pays them their rewards in full, and gives them more out of His grace - 30). The word: يُؤْتِيهِمْ (liyuwaffiahum: so that He pays them in full) is connected with: لَنْ تَبُورَ (lan tabur: has no loss), that is, this trade of theirs not only that it admits of no loss, but that it will also bring their return and reward in full, and in addition to that, Allah Ta'ālā will bless them, out of His grace, with much more, rather, far beyond their fondest hopes of returns.

Included within this grace and increase is the promise of Allah Ta'ālā that He rewards the deed of a believer multiplied many times, the lowest denominator of which could be ten times of the deed, and the highest could reach seven hundred times, even higher than that. Then, also

included in this grace is the acceptance of their intercession on behalf of sinners - as it appears in a Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه where he has reported the explanation of this grace from the Holy Prophet ﷺ: 'These people will intercede on behalf of anyone who had done some favor to them during the life of the mortal world. Then, despite being deserving of the punishment of Jahannam, such people will stand delivered of it by virtue of their intercession.' (Tafsīr Maẓharī with reference to Ibn Abī Ḥatim) (And it is obvious that intercession will be possible only for the people of faith. No one will be allowed to intercede on behalf of a disbeliever) Similarly, the foremost part of this grace is that they will have an opportunity to see Allah Ta'ālā

The word: ثُمَّ (*thumma*: Then) in verse 32: ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا (Then We conveyed the Book as an heritage to those of Our slaves whom We chose.) serves as a conjunction to denote that the two things mentioned before and after it, despite having common characteristic, are marked by precedence and succession. What comes first has precedence, and that which comes after, succeeds. In addition to that, on some occasions, this precedence and succession takes effect in terms of time while, on some others, in terms of rank and degree. In this verse, the word: ثُمَّ (*thumma*: Then) is عطف (*atf*: Conjunctive particle) connected to the word: أَوْحَيْنَا (*awḥaina*: We revealed). It means: This Book, that is, the Qur'ān which is nothing but the truth, and confirms all earlier Scriptures, We first sent to you as a revelation. After that, We made those We chose out of Our servants inherit the Book. The earlier and later of it, or the precedence and succession of it in terms of rank and degree is already very obvious in the sense that the sending of the Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet ﷺ through the medium of wahy (revelation) has precedence in rank and degree. Then, its bestowal on the community of Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ takes effect in succession to it. And if making the Muslim ummah the inheritor of the Qur'ān is taken to mean that he ﷺ, rather than leave behind his legacy in the form of wealth and lands, left behind the Book of Allah as his legacy or inheritance - as borne by Ḥadīth: 'Prophets do not leave coins of gold and silver as inheritance: They leave (true) knowledge as their legacy.' Or, "'Ulama' are inheritors of prophets" - then, in those terms, this precedence and succession could also reflect a time frame in the sense that 'We have blessed you with this

Book. After that, you passed it on to your ummah as its inheritor.' To make someone inherit something means to bestow it on someone, give it as legacy, gift. This act of bestowal when expressed as inheritance points out to the fact that the way an inheritor gets his or her share from the inheritance without he or she having done anything to acquire it, similarly, this wealth of the noble Qur'ān has been given as a gift to these chosen servant without any effort on their part.

A peculiarity of the Muslim Community, and that of its 'Ulama'

According to the majority of commentators, the sentence: *الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا* (those of Our slaves whom We chose) in verse 32, means the ummah (community) of Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ, its 'Ulama' - directly, and others, through the 'Ulama'. Reporting a Tafsīr of this verse from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭalḥah has said: The expression: *الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا* (those whom We chose) means the the ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. These are the people Allah Ta'ālā has made the inheritors of every Book He has revealed (that is, the Qur'ān, as being the Book that confirms and preserves all previous Scriptures, encompasses the contents of all revealed Books. Being its inheritor amounts to inheriting all revealed Books). Then he (Ibn 'Abbās) said: *فَظَالِمُهُمْ يُغْفَرُ لَهُ، وَمُقْتَصِدُهُمْ يُحَاسَبُ* *حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا وَسَاقِطُهُمْ يُدْخَلُ الْجَنَّةَ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ* that is, even the unjust one from among them will be forgiven, and those who pursue a middle course among them will pass through a reckoning that is easy, while those who excel in good deeds will enter Jannah without reckoning. (Ibn Kathīr)

The word: *اصْطَفَيْنَا* (istafaina: We chose) used in this verse shows the great honor bestowed upon the Muslim ummah, because this word: *اصْطَفَاءً* (*istifa'*: to choose) has frequently appeared for prophets in the Holy Qur'ān as in: *اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ* (Allah chooses messengers from the angels and from men. - al-Ḥajj, 22:75) and in: *إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ* (Verily, Allah has chosen Ādam and Nūḥ and the House of Ibrāhīm and the House of 'Imrān over the worlds - Al-'Imrān, 3:33). In the verse under study, Allah Ta'ālā has put the Muslim ummah in line with the chosen ones, the prophets and the angels, although the degrees of such choice vary. The choice of prophets and angels occupies a higher degree, while the choice of the Muslim ummah, one that is posterior.

Three kinds of the Muslim ummah

The sentence: *فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ* (Then, some of

them are those who wrong their own selves, and some of them are mediocre, and some of them are those who outpace (others) in righteous deeds with Allah's permission - 35:32) is virtually an explanation of the first sentence of the verse. In other words, it means that 'there are three kinds of Our servants We have chosen and have made them inherit the Qur'ān: (1) The unjust (2) The moderate (3) The excellent.

Imām Ibn Kathīr has explained these three kinds by saying: The one who wrong himself means a person who falls short in fulfilling some obligatory duties, and goes on to commit some of what is forbidden as well. And the one who follows the middle course is a person who fulfills all legally binding obligations and avoids everything forbidden, but on occasions, leaves out what has been recommended and falls into what is reprehensible. And excellent is the one who goes ahead of everyone in good deeds, fulfills all obligatory and recommended duties and avoids everything declared forbidden or considered reprehensible and goes on to leave what is allowed to him because of his devotion to acts of worship or because of some doubt in its lawfulness.

This is what Ibn Kathīr has said. Other commentators have reported many more sayings while explaining these three kinds. Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī mentions forty-three sayings with reference to at-Tahrir. But, on deliberation, the outcome of most is the same as stated with reference to Ibn Kathīr.

A doubt and its answer

The explanation given above proves that الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا (those whom We chose) means the Muslim ummah that has three kinds and that its first kind - the unjust - is also included among the chosen servants of Allah. Taking this probability to be obviously remote, some people have said that this kind of people (who have wronged themselves) is excluded from the definition of: الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا (We chose) and from the Muslim ummah. But, it already stands proved from many authentic aḥādīth that each one of these three kinds relate to Muslim ummah and are not excluded from the characteristic of: الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا (We chose). In fact, this is the ultimate merit of the believing servants of the Muslim ummah that even those who are somewhat wanting in the matter of deeds are also sharers in this supreme distinction. At this place, Ibn Kathīr has put together all those Ḥadīth narrations, some of which are being cited below:

According to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said about these three kinds of: *الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا* (those We chose): 'They rank alike and alike they are in Jannah, all of them.' The expression 'being in one rank' means that all of them will be forgiven and all of them will go to Jannah - not that there will be no variance among them in terms of their ranks.

Then, there is a Ḥadīth reported from Sayyidnā Abū-d- Darda' رضي الله عنه which is supported by several chains of authorities. Ibn Kathīr has documented all of them. One of these has been reported by Ibn Jarir from Sayyidnā Abū Thabit رضي الله عنه who, when he went to the Masjid one of those days, found Sayyidnā Abū-d- Darda' رضي الله عنه already sitting there. Sayyidnā Abū Thabit went close, sat down by his side and started making a prayer: *اللَّهُمَّ اِنْسُ وَحْشَتِيْ وَارْحَمْ غُرْبَتِيْ وَيَسِّرْ لِيْ جَلِيْسًا صَالِحًا* ('O Allah, mollify the loneliness and anxiety of my heart, and have mercy on me in my state of homelessness, and make it easy on me by (sending) a good companion'). (At this point, it is worth recalling that the great emphasis was placed by the early forbears of Islam on the quest for a good companion. They took this need to be an important objective in life and considered it to be a cure of all anxieties, so much so that they would raise their hands of prayer before Allah and ask Him that they be blessed with one). When Sayyidnā Abū-d- Darda' رضي الله عنه heard this prayer, he said, 'If you are honest in your prayer (for a companion), then, I am more fortunate than you (in the sense that Allah blessed me with a good companion like yourself, on the spot, without asking). Then, he said, 'I relate to you a Ḥadīth I have heard from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. But, since the time I heard it, I did not have the occasion to relate it before anyone. Here is the Ḥadīth: He mentioned this verse: *ثُمَّ اَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفَيْنَا* (Then We conveyed the Book as an heritage to those of Our slaves whom We chose - 32). Then, he said, 'As for those who race ahead of others in the matter of good deeds, out of the three kinds, they will go to Jannah without reckoning. And those who are in the middle will face an accounting that will be easy on them. And the unjust, the ones who fall short in deeds and are prone to slip into sins, will be overwhelmed with remorse at this juncture. After that, they too will be asked to enter Jannah and all their sorrows will stand removed from them.' It finds mention in the next verse: *وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ اَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ* (" Praise be to Allah who has removed all sorrow from us. Surely our Lord

is Most-Forgiving, Very-Appreciative,").

And at-Ṭabarānī reports from Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'وَكُلُّهُمْ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ' It means that each of the three kinds will be from this very Ummah of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

Abū Dāwūd at-Ṭayalisi reports from ‘Uqbah Ibn Ṣahban Hana’i that he asked the Tafsīr of this verse from Ummul-Mu’minin, Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها. She said, "My son, all these three kinds are to go to Paradise. Out of these, those who were ahead of everyone in good deeds were people who passed away during the period of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He himself testified that they are to go to Jannah. And those who took the middle course are people who followed the former as their role models to the extent that they joined up with them. As for those who have been unjust to themselves, they are people like me and you!"

Certainly great was the modesty of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها that she counted herself too as part of the third kind, that is, among those who are unjust to themselves - although, according to very clear statements in sound and authentic aḥādīth, she ranks high among the very first and foremost people (as-sabiqun al-awwalun) of early Islam.

And Ibn Jarīr has reported from Muḥammad Ibn-ul- Ḥanafiyyah رحمه الله تعالى who said, "This ummah is a community of people blessed with the mercy of Allah so en masse that even the unjust one in it stands forgiven, and the one of the middle course is in Jannah and the one way ahead in good deeds enjoys high ranks with Allah.'

And Sayyidnā Muḥammad Ibn ‘Alī al-Bāqir رضي الله عنه, while explaining: ظَالِمٌ الَّذِي خَلَطَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا (ظالم لنفسه) (*ẓālim linafsihī*: who wrong himself), said: مَعْنَى: 'أَنَّ مَنْ خَلَطَ بَيْنَ خَيْرٍ وَشَرٍّ فَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ' meaning: 'a person who mixes good and bad deeds.'

The great merit of the ‘Ulama’ of the Muslim ummah

In this verse, Allah Ta‘ālā has said that He has made a particular people to become inheritors of His Book, people who are chosen and honored ones from among His servants. Then, it is also obvious that ‘Ulama’ are the direct inheritors of the knowledge relating to the Book of Allah and the mission of prophets, as it has also been stated in the Ḥadīth: الْعُلَمَاءُ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ ('Ulama’ inherit [the legacy of] prophets). In sum,

people who have been so blessed by Allah Ta'ālā that they engage in the pursuit of the fields of knowledge relating to the Qur'ān and Sunnah with unalloyed sincerity is, in itself, a sign of their being men of Allah worthy of the task. This is as it has been supported by a narration of Sayyidnā Tha'labah Ibn al-Hakam رضي الله عنه that reports the Holy Prophet ﷺ to have said, 'Allah Ta'ālā will address the 'Ulama' of the Muslim community on the Day of Judgment and say, "I had placed My knowledge and wisdom in your chests, for I had intended to forgive you irrespective of the nature of your actual deeds." (From the earlier presentation, it is already established that a person who has no awe and fear of Allah is simply not counted as one of the 'Ulama'. Therefore, this address will be to people for whom the awe and fear of Allah has become their natural reflex. Hence, it would be virtually impossible for them to indulge in sins carelessly. Yes, on occasions, they too could slip or make a mistake under the dictates of human temperament. This very aspect was alluded to in the Ḥadīth mentioned above where it was said - no matter the nature of your deeds, forgiveness is destined for you).

All these narrations have been taken from Ibn Kathīr. The last Ḥadīth reported from Sayyidnā Tha'labah رضي الله عنه has also been reported by at-Tabarani with all chains of authority cited by him being reliable. (Tafsīr Mazharī) And in Tafsīr Mazharī, the subject of the same Ḥadīth has been reported from Abū 'Umar San'ani with reference to Ibn 'Asakir. Similarly, according to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'On the Day of Resurrection (*al-maḥshar*), Allah Ta'ālā will gather all His servants together. Then, He will assemble the 'Ulama' from among them at a prominent place and will say to them:

إِنِّي لَمْ أَضِعْ عِلْمِي فِيكُمْ إِلَّا لَعَلَّمِي بِكُمْ وَلَمْ أَضِعْ عِلْمِي فِيكُمْ لِأَعَذِّبْكُمْ إِنِطَلَّفُوا قَدْ غَفَرْتُ لَكُمْ

I had placed My *ilm* in you since I knew you (that you will fulfill the due rights of this *ilm*, the knowledge given to you) and I had not placed My *ilm* in you so that I punish you. Go, I have forgiven you - Mazharī.

Special Note

In this verse, mentioned first was the category of the unjust, then of those following the middle course, and finally, of those who are ahead in good deeds. The reason for this order may, perhaps, be that the number of

those unjust to them selves is larger, those following the middle course are less than them and those ahead in good deeds happen to be less than the later. Thus, those whose number was large were made to appear first.

A close look at the last sentence of verse 32 and the statement in verse 33: **ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ جَنَّتٌ عَدْنٌ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُحَلَّلُونَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤًا وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ** (That is the great bounty, gardens of eternity they enter. They will be ornamented with bracelets of gold and with pearls, and their dress therein will be (of) silk. - 35:32,33) shows that in the beginning of verse 32, Allah Ta'ālā has pointed out to three kinds of His chosen servants following which it was said: **ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ** : That is, 'this counting of all these three among His chosen servants is the great bounty.' Next comes the statement relating to their recompense - that they will go to Jannah, that they will be given bracelets of gold and ornaments of pearls to wear and that their dress shall be of silk.

For men, in this mortal world, it is haram to wear ornaments of gold, and dresses made of silk too. To compensate, they will have these in Jannah. Let there be no doubt about it, something like: Ornaments are for women, not for men in whose case these do not suit. The reason is simple. Taking the conditions prevailing in the 'Akhīrah (Hereafter) and Jannah (Paradise) on the analogy of conditions prevailing in the mortal world is unreasonable, even dumb.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, 'Crowns on the heads of the people of Jannah will be studded with pearls. Light emitted by the smallest of its pearls will fill the entire horizon from the East to the West.' (Reported by at-Tirmidhī and al-Ḥakīm, who has authenticated it, and by al-Baihaqī - from Maḥzarī)

Imām al-Qurṭubī said: Commentators explain that every inmate of Jannah will have bracelets to wear on their hands - of gold, silver, and pearls. About this celestial bracelet, a verse mentions 'of silver' (76:21) while others, 'of gold' (18:31; 22:23; 35:33; 43:53). The present explanation brings both verses in correspondence.

A person who will use utensils of gold and silver and dresses of silk will remain deprived of these in Jannah

Sayyidnā Hudhaifah رضي الله عنه says that he heard the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم saying, 'Do not wear dresses of silk and do not drink water in utensils of

gold and silver, nor use plates made of these in eating food - because, these things are for disbelievers in this world and for you, in the Hereafter.' (al-Bukhari and Muslim)

And Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'Any male who wore a dress made of silk in this world will not wear it in the Hereafter' (al-Bukhari and Muslim). And a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه says, 'A male who wears a dress made of silk in this world will remain deprived of it in the Hereafter, even if he were to go to Jannah.' (Maḏharī)

The next verse (34): وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ (And they will say, "Praise be to Allah who has removed all sorrow from us.") tells us about what the people of Paradise will say when they enter Jannah. What does 'sorrow' mean at this place? Leading commentators have given various explanations about it. However, the truth of the matter is that all sorrows stand included therein. In this world, one may become a king or a prophet or a saint, yet no one can escape it:

دریں دنیا کے بے غم نباشد.....☆.....وگر باشد بنی آدم نباشد

In this world, no one is free of sorrow
And if one is, one is not a human being.

In this world of our experience, no one good or bad can get away from one or the other concern, anxiety or sorrow. Therefore, people of wisdom call this world a home of sorrows. The sorrow the removal of which this verse mentions includes all these mortal states of concern. The second concern is that of the Day of Judgment and Resurrection. The third concern is that of Reckoning of Deeds, and the fourth, that of the punishment of Jahannam. From the people of Jannah, Allah Ta'ālā will remove all these concerns, anxieties and sorrows.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'For the people who uphold the Kalimah of la ilaha il-lal-lah (there is no God but Allah), there is no fear and loneliness at the time of death, nor in the grave, nor when they rise again on the Day of Resurrection - as if I am virtually seeing them rise from their respective graves saying: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ (Praise be to Allah who has removed all sorrow from us.)'. (Reported by at-Ṭabarānī, Maḏharī)

At this point, let us refer back to the Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Abū-D-Dardā رضي الله عنه that has appeared a little earlier. There it has been stated that it will be said by the unjust, those who have wronged their own selves. This is because they would initially face great anxiety on the plains of Resurrection but, finally, when they are asked to enter Paradise, it will stand removed. This statement does not contradict the Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه appearing immediately above. Again, the reason is that the person who has wronged himself would have an additional sorrow on his hands, more serious than that of others, on the plains of the Resurrection as well - something that will stand removed at the time of one's entry into the Paradise. In short, this is a statement that will be made by all people of Jannah, no matter to which kind they belong, to the ones who have been ahead of all in good deeds, or to those who have followed the middle course, or to those who have been unjust to their own selves. But, the thought of everyone's roster of sorrows being separate from each other is not too far out.

Imām Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ said: It is the typical state of a believer that he never remains free of concerns while in this world. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said that the world is a prison for the believer. This is the reason why it appears in the accounts of the lives of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his great Ṣaḥabah that these blessed souls used to look sad fairly often.

In verse 35: **الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ دَارَ الْمَقَامَةِ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۖ لَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا نُصَبٌ وَلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا لُغُوبٌ** (who, out of His grace, has made us land at a home of eternal living where neither we are touched by weariness, nor are we touched by boredom."), some characteristics of Jannah have been described: (1) That it is an eternal home with no danger of any lapse of time, or expulsion from there at any time. (2) That no one will face any sorrow while there. (3) That no one there will experience the least fatigue or boredom, as it happens in the mortal world where one needs to sleep after work. Life in Jannah will be free from this too. This subject also finds mention in some narrations of Ḥadīth. (Maḏharī)

When the people in Jahannam will plead with their Lord that they be delivered from its punishment, so that they could do good deeds then, and not do the bad ones they did earlier, at that time they will be told: **أَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُمْ مَا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ وَحَاءَ كُمْ النَّذِيرُ** ("Did We not give you an age in your life in which lesson could have been learnt by the one who wished to take

lesson - 37) Sayyidnā 'Alī Ibn Ḥusain Zain ul-'Abidīn عليه السلام said, "It means the age of seventeen years." And Qatadah رحمه الله تعالى gave the age as eighteen years, meaning thereby the age of puberty. And the difference of seventeen and eighteen is possible in determining the age of puberty, as someone may reach puberty at the age of seventeen and someone else at, eighteen. In the Shari'ah, the age of puberty is the first line of demarcation after having crossed which a person is Divinely blessed with enough reason, so that one can understand what is good or bad in his or her case. Therefore, this address will be to disbelievers at large irrespective of their ages being long or short. However, the one who had a long lease of life, yet did not come to his senses, saw all sorts of physical proofs scattered around and heard the teachings of the prophets, still did not recognize the truth - so then, this one will be more blameworthy.

In short, the person who saw nothing beyond the age of puberty, he too was given enough power of discrimination by nature that he could have used to distinguish between the true and the false. When he failed to do that, he too is deserving of censure and punishment. But, the person who was given long years to live, the warning of Allah stood served against him in a more conclusive degree. Then, if he could still not shake off his disbelief and disobedience, he would be more deserving of punishment and blame.

Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtada عليه السلام said, 'The age whereupon Allah Ta'ālā has asked His sinning servants to beware is that of sixty years.' Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās عليه السلام, according to one narration, has given it as forty years while, according to another narration, as sixty. He has said that this is the age when the argument and warrant of Allah stands served conclusively on an erring person who, then, is left with no room for making excuses. Ibn Kathīr has given preference to the second Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās عليه السلام.

From the presentation made above, it is clear that there is no contradiction in the narrations pointing out to the age of seventeen / eighteen and sixty. Though, someone at the age of seventeen/eighteen is able to distinguish between the true and the false. Therefore, one has been obligated with precepts of the Shari'ah from this benchmark this very age of puberty. But, the age of sixty is such a long period of time that, should one still fail to recognize the truth, there remains no room for

making any more excuses. Against such a person, the argument of Allah stands firmly established. Therefore, the aggregate ages of people in this blessed ummah are destined to be between sixty and seventy years - as said in Ḥadīth:

أَعْمَارُ أُمَّتِي مَا بَيْنَ السِّتِينَ إِلَى السَّبْعِينَ وَأَقْلَهُمْ مَن يَجُوزُ ذَلِكَ

The ages of my ummah will be in between sixty and seventy and there will be few of those who will exceed that - reported by al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, Ibn Kathīr.

Towards the end of the verse (37), it was said: وَجَاءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ (And (furthermore) the warner had (also) come to you.). Given here is a hint that Allah Ta'ālā gives one from the age one attains puberty enough ability to rationalize and recognize at least his or her creator and master and then goes on to live a life the purpose of which is to seek His pleasure. To do only this much, human reason alone would have been sufficient. But, Allah Ta'ālā did not leave it simply at that. In fact, He sent His special people called: نَذِيرٌ (*nadhīr*) to help them reason it out. This word is usually translated as 'one who warns' or 'warner' in English (the later, though, not formally admissible in the language, but is still used in the absence of a suitable equivalent). In fact, a *nadhīr* is a person who, by virtue of his mercy and compassion, asks his people to stay away from things that are likely to bring harm to them or cause their total ruination as a people and tries to instill the fear of such things in their hearts, lest it actually happens. In terms of its well-recognized meaning, it refers to the noble prophets عليهما السلام, and to the 'Ulama' who carry out their mission as their deputies. The outcome of the verse is: 'We gave them reason to recognize the true from the false. Along with it, We also sent Our prophets who would guide them on the path of truth and keep them safe from the false.'

And it has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, 'Krimah رضي الله عنه and Imām Ja'far Bāqir that *nadhīr* means the gray hair of the old age. When they flare up, they give a message to human beings: Here comes the time to go! This statement too is not contradictory to the first one for gray hair might as well serve as the standard bearers of warning along with Anbiya' and 'Ulama'.

And the truth of the matter is that all conditions faced by human

beings after their age of puberty and all minor and major changes that take place in their persons and in that they are surrounded with are, all of them, heralds of warning for human beings.

Verse 38 - 41

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ غَيْبِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٣٨﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلْقًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا مَقْتًا وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرُهُمْ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٣٩﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ شُرَكَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ أَمْ آتَيْنَهُمْ كِتَابًا فَهُمْ عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْهُ بَلْ إِنْ يَعِدُ الظَّالِمُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿٤٠﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُمَسِّكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَزُولَا وَلَئِنْ زَالَتَا إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ﴿٤١﴾

Surely Allah is the Knower of the unseen in the heavens and the earth. Indeed He fully knows what lies in the hearts. [38]

He is the One who has made you successors (of the past generations) in the earth. So the one who becomes infidel, his infidelity will go against himself. And their infidelity adds nothing to the infidels but anger with their Lord, and their infidelity adds nothing to the infidels but loss. [39] Say, "Tell me about your (presumed) co-gods whom you invoke beside Allah. Show me that part of the earth that they have created, or do they have a share in the (creation) of the heavens? " Or have We given them a book so that they are upon a clear proof from it? No, but the wrongdoers promise one another nothing but delusion. [40] Undoubtedly, Allah holds back the heavens and the earth from leaving their existing state, and if they were to leave, there is none who can hold them back, except Him. Surely He is Forbearing, Most-Forgiving. [41]

Commentary

The word: خَلَائِفَ (khalā'if) in verse 39: هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ (He is the One who has made you successors (of the past generations) in the earth.) is the plural of: خَلِيفَةٌ (khalifah) which means deputy or vice-regent. The general sense is that Allah Ta'ālā has let human beings have lands and houses that keep passing on from one to the other. In this phenomena, there is a great lesson - turn to Allah. Then, the statement could also be taken to have been addressed to the ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying, 'After past communities, We made you take their place with authority to make life better around you, so it is your duty that you learn your lesson from what happened to people earlier than you, and hence you, on your part, do not while away precious moments of your life in negligence.'

In the expression: إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُمَسِّكُ السَّمَوَاتِ (Undoubtedly, Allah holds back the heavens and the earth - 35:41), the 'holding' of the heavens or the skies does not mean that their movement was stopped. Instead, it means holding them from moving askance - as the word: أَنْ تَزُولَا (an tazula: from leaving their existing state,) bears it out. Therefore, in this verse, there exists no supporting evidence on either side as to the skies move or they are static.

Verses 42 - 45

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ لَّيَكُونُنَّ أَهْدَىٰ مِنْ
 إِحْدَى الْأُمَمِ ۗ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ مَّا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا ﴿٤٢﴾ ۖ اِسْتَكْبَارًا
 فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَكْرًا لِّسِيءٍ ۗ وَلَا يَحِيقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئُ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ ۗ
 فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا سُنَّتَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۗ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ۗ
 وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٤٣﴾ ۖ أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَكَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً ۗ
 وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعْجِزَهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّهٗ
 كَانَ عَلِيمًا قَدِيرًا ﴿٤٤﴾ ۖ وَلَوْ يُوَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا مَا تَرَكَ

عَلَى ظَهْرِهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ؕ فَإِذَا جَاءَ
 أَجْلُهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ بَصِيرًا ﴿٤٥﴾

And they had sworn forceful oaths that if a warner would come to them, they would be more receptive to guidance than any other community. But when a warner came to them, it added nothing to them but aversion, [42] because of their showing arrogance in the land and plotting of evil. And the evil plot envelops none but its own people (who make it). So, they are looking for nothing but the (divine) practice with the earlier people. So you will never find in Allah's practice any change, and you will never find in Allah's practice any diversion. [43] Did they not travel in the land and see how was the end of those before them ? And they were stronger than these in power. And Allah is not such that something in the heavens or the earth can frustrate Him. Surely He is All-Knowing, All-Powerful. [44] And if Allah were to take mankind to task for what they did, He would have not left a living creature on its back, but He delays them upto an appointed time. So when their time will come, then Allah is the One who will see His slaves. [45]

Commentary

The word: *لَا يَحِيطُ* (*lā yahīṭu*) in verse 43: *وَلَا يَحِيطُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئُ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ* (And the evil plot envelops none but its own people (who make it) carries the sense of: *لَا يُحِيطُ* (*lā yuḥīṭu*: does not surround) or: *لَا يُصِيبُ* (*lā uṣīb*: does not afflict). Thus, it comes to mean that the curse of making an evil plan falls on none but the one who makes it. In other words, a person who wishes evil for others, he himself falls a victim to it.

A doubt may arise at this point. It is commonly seen in this worldly life that someone with an evil plan gets away with it and the loss intended for anyone stands inflicted on him. The answer to this has been given by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanavi by saying that the pain or loss inflicted on such a person was a loss limited to this mortal world, while the loss to be the fate of the maker of such evil plan in the Hereafter was not only heavier, but was more lasting too. So, if compared, his worldly loss amounts to nothing.

There is another answer given by some elders who say that there are

occasions when the curse of contriving against someone innocent or inflicting injustice on him, more than often, falls on the person causing it, right here in this world as well. Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi said: There are three things the doer of which does not remain safe against its curse and punishment even in this world. These are: (1) Causing harm or pain to some innocent person by engineering evil against him. (2) Inflicting any injustice. (3) Breaking of pledge. (Ibn Kathīr) Particularly so, when things like that are done against a person who is helpless or does not have the power to avenge or elects to endure despite having that power. Experience bears out that no one who does things like that has ever remained unaffected by the curse of injustice thus inflicted even in this world. Hence, the outcome will be that the element of restriction (Ḥasr) visible here appears in terms of a majority rule and not in any absolute sense. Allah knows best.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Faṭīr
Ends here

Sūrah Yā Sīn

Sūrah Yā Sīn was revealed at Makkī and it has 83 verses and 5 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 12

يَسَّ ﴿١﴾ وَالْقُرْآنَ الْحَكِيمَ ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٣﴾ عَلَى
صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ تَنْزِيلَ الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٥﴾ لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أُنذِرَ
أَبَاؤُهُمْ فَهُمْ غَافِلُونَ ﴿٦﴾ لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى أَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِيْ أَعْنَاقِهِمْ أَغْلَالًا فَهِيَ إِلَى الْأَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ
مُقْمَحُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا
فَأَعْيَنَيْتَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَبْصُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ
تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ وَخَشِيَ
الرَّحْمٰنَ الْغَيْبَ ۗ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِمَغْفِرَةٍ وَأَجْرٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿١١﴾ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِ
الْمَوْتَىٰ وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَرَهُمْ ۗ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ
مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾

Yā Sīn [1] By the Qur'ān, that is full of wisdom, [2] You are truly one of the messengers, [3] on a straight path

1. Today, when I am beginning the *Tafsir* of Sūrah Yā Sīn, this is the ninth day of the month of Ṣafar. On the same day in the Hijrah year 1355, my respected father, Maulānā Muḥammad Yāsīn, may Allah have mercy on him, had died. His association with the name of this Sūrah and the date of his death revived fond memories of him. Generous readers are requested to pray for the forgiveness of this humble writer and his parents, and should someone have the heart to recite Sūrah Yā Sīn and pray for the transmittal of its *thawāb* to them, then, *Subḥānallah*, it will be so nice of them. - the author.

[4], (this Qur'ān being) a revelation from the All-Mighty, the Very-Merciful, [5] so that you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, and hence, they are unaware. [6] The word has indeed come true about most of them, so they will not believe. [7] Surely We have placed iron collars on their necks, so they are reaching upto their chins, and their heads are forced to remain upraised. [8] And We have placed a barrier in front of them and a barrier behind them, and (thus) they are encircled by Us ; so they do not see. [9] And it is all equal for them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. [10] You can (usefully) warn only the one who follows the advice and fears the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful) unseen. So give him the good news of forgiveness and of a noble reward. [11] Surely We will give new life to the dead, and We are recording whatever (deeds) they send ahead and whatever effects they leave behind. And every thing is fully computed by Us in a manifest source-book. [12]

Commentary

The Merits of Sūrah Yā Sīn

Sayyidnā Ma'qil Ibn Yasār رضي الله عنه narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: يَسَّ قَلْبَ الْقُرْآنِ (Sūrah Yā Sīn is the heart of the Qur'ān) and some words of this Ḥadīth tell us that a person who recites Sūrah Yā Sīn exclusively for the sake of Allah and the 'Aakhirah is forgiven, and that it should be recited over the dead among us (reported by Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd and an-Nasā'ī and Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Ḥakim and others - as in Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī and al-Maḥzarī).

Imām al-Ghazzālī said that one reason for calling Sūrah Yā Sīn the heart of the Qur'ān could be that, in this Sūrah, themes relating to the Day of Judgment and the Resurrection have appeared with particular details and eloquent presentation. Then, out of the principles of faith, there is the belief in the Hereafter, something on which depends the soundness of human deeds. The fear of the Hereafter makes one ready for good deeds and this is what stops one from indulging in desires that are impermissible and things that are unlawful. So, the way soundness of the body depends on the soundness of the heart, similarly the soundness of the faith ('Imān) depends on the concern for the Hereafter (Rūḥ). And the way Yā Sīn is a well recognized name of this Sūrah, it is named in a Ḥadīth also as 'Aẓīmah (reported by Abū Naṣr as-Sajazī from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah

(رضى الله عنها). And according to another Ḥadīth the name of this Sūrah has appeared in Torah as مُعَمَّة (Mu'immah), that is, a Sūrah that universalizes its blessings in worldly life and in the Hereafter for its readers, and the name of its reader has been given as Ash-Sharīf, and it was said that his intercession on the Day of Judgment will be accepted for a number of people that would exceed the number of people in the tribe of Rabi'ah (reported by Sa'īd Ibn Manṣūr and al-Baihaqī from Ḥassan Ibn 'Atiyyah) and in some narrations, its name has also been cited as: مُدَافِعَةٌ.. (mudāfi'ah) that is, it removes misfortunes from its readers, while some others mention it by the name قَاضِيَةٌ (Qāḍiyah) that is, the caretaker of needs (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī).

And narration of Sayyidnā Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī ؓ says: The reciting of Sūrah Yā Sīn near a dying person makes the ordeal of death easy on him (reported by ad-Dailami and Ibn Hibban - Maḥzarī).

And Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Zubayr ؓ said: Whoever puts Sūrah Yā Sīn ahead of his need, his need is fulfilled (reported by al-Mahamili in his 'Amali - Maḥzarī)

And Yaḥyā Ibn Kathīr said: Whoever recites Sūrah Yā Sīn in the morning will remain happy until evening and whoever recites it in the evening will be happy until morning and he said that this thing was confided to him by a person who had experienced it (reported by Ibn al-Faris - Maḥzarī).

Yā Sīn (يس): According to the well-known position concerning this word, it is one of the 'isolated letters' (*al-ḥurūf-ul-muqatta'āt*) the knowledge of which rests with Allah alone. Hower, Ibn-ul- 'Arabi has reported that Imām Mālik has said that it is one of the names of Allah. And a narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ also says that it is one of the Divine Names. And according to another narration, this is a word from the Ethiopian language that means: 'O human person' and denotes the person of the noble Prophet ﷺ. And, it is gathered from a saying of Sayyidnā Ibn Jubayr ؓ that the word: Yā Sīn is the name of the noble Prophet ﷺ. It appears in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī that giving the Holy Prophet ﷺ a name composed of these two elegant letters - Yā and Sīn - has great secrets behind it.

About Giving someone the name: يَسَّ (Yā Sīn: written as Yāsīn):

Imām Mālik does not like to name a person as Yāsīn for the reason that, according to him, it is one of the Divine Names and its exact meaning remains unknown. Therefore, it is possible that it may have some meaning that is exclusive to Allah Ta'ālā, and nobody is allowed to have that name, for example: الرَّازِقُ (*al-khāliq*: The Creator), رَازِقُ (*ar-rāziq*: The Provider-Sustainer) and other names of this nature. Still, if this word is written with a script that reads: يَسَّ (Yasin), it is permissible to give that name to a human being, because the Qur'ān says: سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ آلِ يَسِينَ (Peace on Ilyāsīn or Āl Yāsīn) (Ibn al-'Arabi). The well recognized rendering (*qira'ah*) of this verse is: إِلْيَاسِينَ (*ilyasin*) but, in some renderings, it also appears as: آلِ يَاسِينَ (*āl-yāsīn*).

The word: آبَاء (fathers) in verse 6: لِنُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أُنذِرَ آبَاؤُهُمْ (so that you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned) means the Arabs. The sense is that no warner, that is, a prophet, has come to their ancestors since a long time, the reference being to the ones nearer among them. Since the coming of their patriarch, Sayyidnā Ibrahim عليه السلام and with him, Sayyidnā Ismā'il عليه السلام, no prophet had appeared among the Arabs for several centuries, even though, the work of calling people to the true faith with warnings and glad tidings kept going on as mentioned in the verse of the Qur'ān: وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ (and there was no community without a warner having passed among them - 35:24) also confirms the same truth - that Divine mercy has never kept any nation or community deprived of the essential call and warning at any time and in any region. But, it is obvious that teachings of prophets when communicated by their deputies do not bring about the same effect as it is witnessed when the prophets do it in person. Therefore, in the present verse, it was said about the Arabs that no warner came to them. As 'a fall out of this situation, there was no regular system of education in Arabia where people could learn and teach which was why they came to be called: أُمِّيَّةٌ (*ummiyyun*: the unlettered ones).

Verses 7 and 8: لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَىٰ أَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِيهِ أَغْلَالًا (The word has indeed come true about most of them, so they will not believe. Surely We have placed iron collars on their necks, so they are reaching up to their chins, and their heads are forced to remain upraised.) mean that Allah Ta'ālā has already placed before human beings two alternate ways

of life - the way of kufr (disbelief) and 'Imān (faith) and the way of Jannah (Paradise) and Jahannam (the Hell) - and to give direction and substance to this call of faith, He also sent prophets and Books. In fact, He went further ahead by giving human beings the choice to first identify what is good or bad for one and then take to either of the two ways. Now if there is that unfortunate person who does neither think, nor ponders over proofs spread throughout nature, nor listens to the call of the prophets, nor deliberates in the Book of Allah, then, once this person has made a choice and has taken to a way thus chosen, Allah Ta'ālā assembles for him everything he needs to achieve that end. One who embraces the wont of disbelief, for him the supply of things and circumstances that would increase his disbelief never run short. This is what has been expressed as: لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَىٰ أَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (7) which means that against most of these people, because of their choice of the evil, the decisive verdict of Allah - that they are not going to believe - already stands pronounced.

Given next is a similitude of their condition by saying that they look like people whose necks have been shackled in a manner that causes their faces and eyes stay upraised rendering them totally unable to see their way on the ground. If so, it is obvious that one cannot remain safe against the likelihood of falling down into some ditch or abyss.

Then comes another similitude. It was said that it is like a wall having been placed as a barrier all around someone. Thus surrounded, this person becomes unaware of what is going on outside. Similarly, these infidels are surrounded by their ignorance and, on top of it, by their hostility and doggedness. Under these conditions, it is as if the truth present elsewhere simply does not reach them.

Imām Rāzī has said that there are two kinds of barriers against perception. One barrier is of the kind that prevents one from seeing even himself. The second barrier is the inability to see one's surrounding. For the disbelievers, both kinds of barriers against seeing the truth were present. Therefore, the first example is that of the first barrier, that is, one who cannot bend his neck to lower his eyes cannot see even his own self or the state in which he exists. Then the second example is that of the second barrier that stops one from seeing his surrounding. (Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī)

The majority of commentators have declared the present verse to be a similitude of their disbelief and hostility only. And some commentators, on the basis of some narrations, have taken it to be the description of an event, that is, Abū Jahl and some others, bent on killing or hurting the Holy Prophet ﷺ, lunged towards him but Allah Ta'ālā cast curtain over their eyes. Thus, rendered helpless, they went back. Many similar events have been reported in books of Tafsir, such as, Ibn Kathīr, Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, al-Qurṭubī, Maḥzarī and others. But, most of these are weak narrations. The Tafsir of the verse cannot be based on such sources.

In verse 12, by saying: *وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَارَهُمْ* (and We are recording whatever (deeds) they send ahead and whatever effects they leave behind.), the doing of deeds has been equated with 'sending ahead' to point out that good or bad deeds done in the mortal world have not gone the way of all flesh right here. Instead of that, these were their wherewithal, their baggage that has gone ahead of them to their destination in the next world that they have to confront. Now, if these deeds were good, they will make them look handsome in Paradise, and if they were bad, the embers of Hell will be their fate. The real purpose of 'recording' these deeds is to keep them preserved. Writing too is a means of doing that, so that there remain no probability of error, forgetfulness, increase or decrease.

The effects of deeds are also recorded like the deeds themselves

The terse statement: *وَأَثَارَهُمْ* (*wa 'atharahum*: and their effects) in Verse 12 means that the way deeds done by them are written, so are their effects too. The word: *آثار* (*'athār*: traces, or effects) denotes fruits, outcomes and consequences that show up later and keep surviving. For example, someone helped people learn their religion, told them about its injunctions or wrote a book for to enable them to get the best out of their faith, or instituted some sort of endowment that turned out to be beneficial for people after him and, for that matter, did something that brought benefit to common Muslims, then, as far as the effects of this good deed remain, and as long as they bring fruits, they all will continue to be written in his Book of Deeds. Similar is the case of bad deeds, the evil fruits and effects of which continue to remain in the world. For example, someone instituted oppressive laws, or institutions that tend to corrupt the human deeds and morals, or made people follow the way of

error and evil, then, as far as and as long as the evil outcomes of his deed keep taking shape, these will continue to be recorded in his Book of Deeds - as it has been said by the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself while explaining this verse. Narrates Sayyidnā Jarir Ibn 'Abdullāh al-Bajali رضى الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ سَنَّ سُنَّةً حَسَنَةً فَلَهُ أَجْرُهَا وَأَجْرُ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يُنْقَصَ مِنْ أَجْرِهِمْ شَيْئًا وَمَنْ سَنَّ سُنَّةً سَيِّئَةً كَانَ عَلَيْهِ وِزْرُهَا وَوِزْرُ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ لَا يُنْقَصُ مِنْ أَوْزَارِهِمْ شَيْئًا، ثُمَّ تَلَا وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَأَثَرَهُمْ، (ابن كثير عن ابن ابي حاتم)

"Whoever started a good practice, he will have its reward, and the reward of whoever acts in accordance with it after him, without the least decrease in the reward of others acting upon it. And whoever started a bad practice, on him shall be its sin along with the sin of whoever acts in accordance with it after him, without the least decrease in the sins of others acting upon it" - Ibn Kathīr from Ibn Abī Ḥatim.

The word: آثار (*āthār*: traces or effects) is also used in the sense of footprints. As in Ḥadīth, when one walks to the Masjid, one good deed is recorded at every step he takes. Some Ḥadīth narrations seem to indicate that the word: آثار (*āthār*: traces) appearing in this verse refers to these very footprints. The way the reward of Ṣalāh is written down, similarly, on every step taken while going for Ṣalāh, one good deed is recorded. At this stage in his Tafsīr, Ibn Kathīr has put together all narrations that mention that there were many people in Madīnah whose homes were at some distance from the Prophet's Masjid. They thought of setting up their homes closer to the Masjid. The Holy Prophet ﷺ told them not to do that. He advised them: Live where you do. When you walk in from afar, do not take this time to have been wasted. The more your steps, the more shall be your reward.

There could be a possible doubt here in that the present Sūrah is Makkī, while the event mentioned in these Ḥadīth belongs to Madīnah. This could be answered by saying that the verse might as well be in its general sense - that is, the traces of deeds are also written - and that this verse may have been revealed in Makkah. But thereafter, when this event came to pass in Madīnah, he mentioned this verse in support. Then he counted footprints too within the effects and traces the writing of which has been mentioned in this verse of the Qur'ān. This way the

apparent contradiction between these two explanations also stands removed (as explicated and preferred by Ibn Kathīr).

Verses 13 - 32

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلًا أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ إِذْ جَاءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ إِذْ
 أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمُ
 مُّرْسَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ قَالُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا وَمَا أَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمَنُ مِنْ
 شَيْءٍ ۚ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمُ
 لَمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَلْغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَا
 بِكُمْ ۚ لَكِن لَّمْ تَنْتَهُوا لِنَرْجَمَنَّكُمْ وَلَيَمَسَّنَّكُم مِّنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾
 قَالُوا طَائِرُكُم مَّعَكُمْ ۗ أَلَنْ ذَكَّرْتُمْ ۗ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾
 وَجَاءَ مِنْ أَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ يَسْعَى قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ
 ﴿٢٠﴾ اتَّبِعُوا مَنْ لَا يَسْئَلُكُمْ أَجْرًا وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا لِيَ لَا
 أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ءَأَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً إِنْ
 يُرِدُنِ الرَّحْمَنُ بُضْرًا لَّا تُغْنِ عَنِّي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُنْقِذُونِ ﴿٢٣﴾
 إِنِّي إِذَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنِّي آمَنُتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمَعُونِ ﴿٢٥﴾
 قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ ۗ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ بِمَا غَفَر لِي رَبِّي
 وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ
 جُنْدٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا كُنَّا مُنْزِلِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِنْ كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً
 وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ خَمِدُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ يَحْسُرَةَ عَلَى الْعِبَادَةِ مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِّنْ
 رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنَ
 الْقُرُونِ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِنْ كُلُّ لَمَّا جَمِيعٌ لَّدَيْنَا
 مُخَضَّرُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

And cite to them the example of the People of the Town, when the messengers came to it, [13] when We sent to them two (apostles), and they rejected them both, so We supported them with a third one. So they said, "We are sent to you." [14] They (The people of the Town) said, "You are no more than human beings like us, and the Raḥmān has not sent down any thing. You are but telling a lie." [15] They (the messengers) said," Our Lord knows that we are undoubtedly sent to you. [16] And our obligation is no more than to convey the message clearly." [17] They (the People of the Town) said," We take you as a bad omen for us. If you do not desist, we will certainly stone you, and you will be subjected to a painful punishment from us. [18] They said, "Your bad omen is with yourselves. (Do you take it as bad omen) if you are given a good counsel? Rather, you are a people who cross all limits." [19] And there came a man rushing from the farthest part of the city. He said, " O my people, follow the messengers. [20] Follow those who do not claim any reward from you, and they are on the right path. [21] And what excuse do I have if I do not worship the One who has created me and to whom you will be returned? [22] Shall I adopt those gods besides Him that if the Raḥmān intends to do harm to me, their intercession cannot help me in the least, nor can they come to my rescue? [23] In that case, I will be in open error indeed. [24] Undoubtedly I have believed in your Lord; so listen to me." [25] (Thereafter when his people killed him,) it was said to him, " Enter the Paradise". He said," Would that my people knew [26] how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honored ones!" [27] And We did not send down to his people any army from the heavens after him, nor were We (in need) to send down. [28] It was no more than a single Cry, and in no time they were extinguished. [29]

Alas for the slaves (of Allah)! No messenger came to them, but they have been mocking at him. [30] Did they not see how many generations We have destroyed before them who will not come back to them? [31] And all of them are but to be assembled together (and) to be arraigned before Us. [32]

Commentary

The expression: *وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ* (And cite to them the example of the People of the Town) is generally

used to prove something by giving the example of a similar thing. The following event has been narrated by the Holy Qur'ān to alert people against disbelievers who rejected the very notion of there being a prophet or messenger.

The town in which this event took place

The Qur'ān does not tell us the name of this town. In historical narrations, Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq has reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, Ka'b Aḥbār and Wāhib Ibn Munabbih that it was the town of Anṭākiyah (Antioch) and majority of commentators have opted for it. Abū Ḥayyān and Ibn Kathīr have said that no statement counter to it has been reported from any of the commentators. According to details given in Mu'jīm-ul-Buldān, Anṭākiyah is a well-known town of Syria, famous for its verdant growth and stability. Its fort and its protective wall around the town are considered ideal. The town has many churches with inlay work in gold and silver. This is a coastal town. During the Islamic period, it was conquered by the famous Ṣaḥābī Sayyidnā Abū 'Ubaydah Ibn Jarrah رضي الله عنه. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, the author of Mu'jīm-ul-Buldān has also written that the grave of Ḥabīb Najjār (whose story appears a little later in this verse) is a known site in Anṭākiyah. People from far and near come to visit it. From this clear statement from him also, it seems likely that the town mentioned in this verse is this very town of Anṭākiyah.

Ibn Kathīr has written that Anṭākiyah is one of the four major towns which have been deemed to be the centers of the Christian faith, that is, al-Quds, (Jerusalem), Rumiyyah (Rome), Iskandariyyah (Alexandria) and Anṭākiyah (Antioch). And he also said that Anṭākiyah is the first city that embraced the faith brought by Sayyidnā 'Īsā al-Masīḥ عليه السلام. It is on this very ground that Ibn Kathīr is reluctant in accepting that the town mentioned in this verse could be the famous town of Anṭākiyah - because, according to the explicit statement of the Qur'ān, this was a town of disbelievers who refused to accept any prophet or messenger. And according to historical accounts, they were idolaters and polytheists. If so, how can Anṭākiyah, that was foremost in welcoming and embracing the faith of Sayyidnā 'Īsā al-Masīḥ عليه السلام, be the town referred to here?

In addition to that, it is also proved from the cited verses of the Qur'ān that this whole town was hit by a punishment that left no one alive. No such event about the town of Anṭākiyah - that all its inhabitants had

simultaneously died at some time - has been reported in history. Therefore, according to Ibn Kathīr, either the town mentioned in this verse is some town other than Anṭākiyah, or that it is some other town bearing the same name of Anṭākiyah which is not the famous town of Anṭākiyah.

Though, the author of Faṭḥ-ul-Mannan has also given answers to the doubts expressed by Ibn Kathīr, however, the easiest way out has been offered by Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānavī in Tafsīr Bayān-ul-Qur’ān. To understand the subject of these verses of the Qur’ān, he says, it is not necessary to determine the location of this town, and since the noble Qur’ān has kept it ambiguous, there is just no need to exert so much effort to determine it. The famous saying of the early forbears of Islam that: أَبْهَمُوا مَا أَبْهَمَهُ اللَّهُ (Leave ambiguous that which Allah has left ambiguous) also requires nothing but this.

In the next sentence of verse 13: إِذْجَاءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا ۖ إِنَّا إِلَيْكُم مَّرْسَلُونَ (when the messengers came to it... - 13). The text has briefly mentioned the coming of messengers to the town. The number of the messengers sent has been identified in verse 14: إِذْجَاءَهَا هَا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُم مَّرْسَلُونَ (when We sent to them two (apostles), and they rejected them both, so We supported them with a third one. So they said, "We are sent to you".) This shows that three messengers were sent to the said town. First came two, the people of the town rejected them and refused to listen to them. Then Allah Ta‘ālā strengthened them by sending the third messenger. After that, all three addressed the people of the town, telling them that they had been sent to guide them to the straight path.

What does 'messenger' mean? Who were these people?

In the Qur’ān, the word: رسول (rasul: messenger) and: مرسل (mursal: sent) is generally used for a prophet or apostle of Allah. In this verse, Allah Ta‘ālā has attributed their sending to Himself. This too indicates that they are prophets who have been sent to accomplish some mission. This is what Ibn Ishāq reports from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, Ka‘b Aḥbār رضي الله عنه and Wahb Ibn Munabbih. According to the reports, these three elders mentioned as the ones sent to this town were the prophets of Allah. Their names as given in this narration are Ṣādiq, Ṣadūq and Shalūm, while in another narration, the name of the third appears as Sham‘ūn. (Ibn Kathīr)

And it has been reported from Sayyidnā Qatādah رضي الله عنه that the word: *مُرْسَلُونَ* (*mursalūn*: sent ones) has not been used here in its technical sense, instead, it appears in the sense of a bearer of message, and the three elders who were sent to this town were no prophets themselves, rather, were from among the disciples of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام and were sent for the guidance of this town under his order (Ibn Kathīr). And since their sender, Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام was a messenger of Allah, therefore, in a way, his sending was indirectly the sending of Allah Ta'ālā. Hence, his sending has been attributed to Allah Ta'ālā. Out of the commentators, Ibn Kathīr has opted for the first saying while al-Qurṭubī and others have gone by the second. From the apparent sense of the text of the Qur'an too, it is generally gathered that these blessed souls were prophets of Allah. Allah knows best.

The word: *تَطِيرُ* (*taṭayyur*) in verse 18: *قَالُوا إِنَّا تَطِيرُنَا بِكُمْ* (We take you as a bad omen for us.) means the seeing of an evil omen in someone or taking someone to be wretched. It is being said here that the people of this town did not listen to these blessed souls sent to them and chided them as being wretched or carriers of misfortune. It appears in some narrations that a famine had overtaken this town, because the people of the town had curtly turned down the good counsel of the messengers. That is why the people of the town called them wretched, or may be they were hurt in some other way. So, as is the common habit of disbelievers, they would hasten to attribute any distress that afflicts them to prophets and the righteous who are nothing but their guides and benefactors. Hence, in this case too, they lost no time and attributed their own wretchedness to these blessed elders. This happens to be similar to what has been said in the Qur'an about the people of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام: *فَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوا لَنَا السَّلَاطَةُ* (So when something good come to them they said, "This is our right". And if they suffered from something evil, they ascribed it as an ill omen to Mūsā and those with him - 7:131). Similarly, the people of Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام said to him: *تَطِيرُنَا بِكَ وَبِمَنْ مَعَكَ* (They said, "we regard you and those with you as a sign of bad omen". - 27:47).

The sense of the statement: *قَالُوا طَائِرُكُمْ مَعَكُمْ* (They said, "Your bad omen is with yourselves - 19) is that misfortune is an outcome of your own

deeds.' The word: طَائِرٌ (*ṭa'ir*) essentially denotes bad omen or misfortune and, on occasions, it is also used to refer to the effects of misfortune, that is, wretchedness. Here, this is what it means. (Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī)

In verse 20, it was said: وَجَاءَ مِنْ أَقْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ يَسْعَى (And there came a man rushing from the farthest part of the city.) In the first verse (13), the place where this incident transpired was expressed as: الْقَرْيَةَ (al-qaryah: town) which, according to the Arabic lexical usage, does not signify a small village, instead, it means a habitation in the absolute sense. It may be a small habitation or a big city. Now, in this verse, this place has been identified as: الْمَدِينَةَ (al-madīnah), a name used only for a big city. From here, we learn that the habitation where this event took place was some big city. Hence, this too supports the saying where it has been identified as Anṭākiyah. The expression: أَقْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ (*aqṣal-madīnah*: farthest part of the city) means outskirts of the city. The word: يَسْعَى (*yas'ā*: rushing) in the phrase: رَجُلٌ يَسْعَى has been derived from: سَعَى، يَسْعَى (run) which means to walk in a running gait. Therefore, the expression would mean that a man came running from the farthest part of the city. Then, there are occasions when this word is also used in the sense of walking with concern, poise and sense of purpose to be accomplished - which may not include running - as in Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah: فَاسْعُوا إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ (*fas 'aw ilā dhikril-lāh*: hasten for the remembrance of Allah (Khuṭbah and Ṣalāh of Jumu'ah) - 62:9). Here, this very sense is intended.

The event relating to the person coming from the farthest part of the city

The noble Qur'ān has left this too as ambiguous. It does not mention his name, nor does it say who he was. As part of historical narrations, Ibn Ishaq has reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Ka'b al-Aḥbār And Wahb Ibn Munabbih that the name of this person was Ḥabīb. There are different sayings about his profession. The most famous is the one that says that he was a carpenter. (Ibn Kathīr).

Other historical narrations reported by commentators at this stage tell us that this person too was initially an idolater. He happened to meet the two messengers who came to this town the first time. It was either as a result of their teachings or, as it appears in some narrations, by seeing extraordinary working of wonders at their hands, his heart was lit with faith. He repented from past idolatry, embraced Islam and retired to a

cave devoting to worship. When he got the news that the people of the city have rejected the teachings of these messengers, have become hostile to them and were threatening to kill them, he came to his people prompted by the mixed objectives of his concern for their good as well as the safety of the messengers. He advised them to follow these messengers and declared that he himself had become a believer: *إِنِّي آمَنْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمَعُونِ* (I have believed in your Lord; so listen to me.- 25). The addressee here could be his own people where calling Allah Ta'ālā their Lord was to express a reality - though, they did not accept it. Then, it could also be that this address is to the messengers and the purpose of saying: *فَاسْمَعُونِ* (listen to me) may be that they should hear what he was saying and bear witness before Allah that he was a believer.

Verse 26 states: *قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ* (it was said to him, " Enter the Paradise". He said, "Would that my people knew how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honored ones!" - 26, 27), that is, it was said to the person who had come from the farthest part of the city to prompt people to believe in the messengers, "Enter Paradise."

It is obvious that this address was communicated through some angel who told him to go into the Paradise. In fact, the essential sense of asking him to enter Paradise is to give him the good news that his place in Paradise is a settled matter which would translate into reality at its appointed time after going through the process of Resurrection. (Qurṭubī)

And the possibility that he was shown his place in Paradise at that very point of time is not so remote. In addition to that, there is the post-death and pre-resurrection state known as *barzakh*. In this state of *Barzakh* too, people bound to go to Paradise are treated well with provision of comfort from Paradise. Therefore, the arrival of such people in the state of *Barzakh* is, in a way, virtual entry into Paradise.

By the words, "Enter Paradise" a hint is released to suggest that this person was martyred - because, entering Paradise or being enabled to perceive the traces of Paradise can come about only after death.

In historical narratives, it has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and early Tafsīr authorities, Muqātil and Mujāhid that this person was Ḥabīb Ibn Ismā'īl an-Najjār and he is among people who had

believed in our noble Prophet ﷺ six hundred years before he actually appeared - as it has been reported about the great *tubba'* (line of kings in Yemen) that he had come to believe in him much before he was born by reading the prophesies of his coming given in past scriptures. The third respected elder who believed in him before he was ordained and gave his call as prophet is Waraqah Ibn Nawfal who has been mentioned in the Ḥadīth of the Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī as part of the events that relate to the initial descent of Waḥy (revelation). This too is a singularity of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that these three persons had believed in him before his birth and ordainment. This did not come to pass in the case of any other messenger or prophet.

According to the report of Wahb Ibn Munabbih, this person was a leper. He lived in a house at the farthest gate of the city. For seventy years, he kept praying to his assumed gods that he be delivered from his ailment. By chance, these messengers entered the city of Anṭākiyah from that very gate. When he met them the first time, they advised him to shun idolatry and invited him to turn to the worship of Allah Ta'ālā for all his needs. He asked them if they had any proof for the correctness of their assertion. When they answered in affirmative, he told them about the disease of leprosy he suffered from and asked them if they could remove it from him. They said, 'We shall pray to our Lord. He will make you healthy.' He said, 'How strange of you to say that. Here I am, praying to my gods for the past seventy years, yet nothing has happened. How can your Lord change my condition in a single day?' They said, 'Our Lord is powerful over everything, while those you have taken as gods have no reality. They can neither bring benefit to anyone nor can they cause loss.' After hearing what they said, this person believed and those blessed souls prayed for him. Allah Ta'ālā blessed him with perfect health, leaving no traces of the disease he suffered from. Now, his faith became firm, and he promised to himself that he would spend the half of what he will earn in a day in the way of Allah. When he heard that people of the city were mobbing the messengers, he came running, tried to explain that the messengers were true, and that he himself was a believer. The result was that his people charged at them in fury. It appears in the narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ that with their kicks and blows they martyred them. According to some other narrations, they threw rocks at

them. As for him, even at a time such as this, when he was being beaten mercilessly, he kept saying: رَبِّ اهْدِ قَوْمِي (My Lord, show my people the right way).

It is mentioned in some narrations that these people martyred the three messengers as well. But, no authentic narration mentions specifically as to what happened to them. Probably, they were not killed. (Qurtūbī)

Since this man of piety laid down his life valiantly in the way of Allah, he was blessed with honor as said in Verses 26 and 27: قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ("He said, 'Would that my people knew how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honored ones!"). He was asked to enter Paradise. When he saw the supreme rewards and blessings of Paradise, he remembered his people and wished that if his people could know how generously he was rewarded and what honors were bestowed on him in return for believing in the messengers, perhaps, they too would have believed. This is the wish expressed in this verse.

The prophetic method of *da'wah* (preaching) : Significant guidance for message bearers of Islam

The way the three messengers sent to this habitation addressed polytheists and disbelievers, the way these blessed souls responded to their harsh remarks and threats, and similarly, the way in which Ḥabīb Najjār, who had believed as a result of the Da'wah of these messengers, addressed his people is something worth repeated consideration, for it has great lessons for everyone who is serving the cause of religious preaching and public welfare.

In response to the honest call and advice of these messengers, the polytheists had said three things:

1. You are human beings like us. Why should we do what you ask us to do?
2. Allah, the Raḥmān has not sent any message and book to anyone.
3. You are plain liars.

Just think about it. What sort of reply would this hard talk deserve? Particularly so, when it was in answer to words of selfless good counsel?

But, imagine what these messengers said. They said no more than: رَبَّنَا يَعْلَمُ رَبَّنَا يَعْلَمُ (Our Lord knows that we have been sent to you). And they said: مَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَلْغُ الْمُبِينُ (Our obligation is no more than to convey the message clearly.) which amounts to saying, 'We had a duty to do. This we have done. We have spoken plainly and clearly making the message of Allah clear to you. From this point onwards, the choice is yours - you may or may not accept it.' Nothing in their speech has any reflection of the heated remarks made by their addressees. Indeed, their reply is kind and reflecting goodwill for them.

After that, these people became more aggressive. They said, "We take you as a bad omen for us. If you do not desist, we will certainly stone you, and you will be subjected to a painful punishment from us. (36:18) The answer that they deserved was: 'You yourself are the wretched ones and this is because of the nemesis of your own deeds.' But, these messengers said it briefly without alluding to their wretchedness openly and directly. In fact, they said: طَأْتِرُكُمْ مَعَكُمْ (Your bad omen is with your selves). Then, they returned to the same soft approach and said: إِنْ دُكِّرْتُمْ (Do you take it as bad omen] if you are given a good counsel? which amounts to saying: Would you just think about it? Have we done anything against you? What we have done here is no more than give you some good counsel in your interest. Yes, they did make the gravest of their remark when they said: بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ (Rather, you are a people who cross all limits.") which amounted to saying that their remarks were out of context, not limited to what was being said.

That was a dialogue featuring these messengers. Now, let us turn to what a neo-believer who responded to the invitation of these messengers has to say to his people. He started by telling his people two things, and then invited them to listen to the messengers and accept their good counsel. The first thing he said was: Just imagine, here are these people coming to you from a far place only to give you some good counsel. They are taking care of themselves while bearing by the hardships of travel to and stay at a place that is not their home, yet they are not asking you for anything in return. This is something unusual, and by itself invites an honest person to think. These are selfless people. Why not listen to them? Why not give it a little thought? The second thing is about what they are saying. And what they are saying is reasonable, pure and simple, just

and right. If not this, what else could guide anyone to the true path? After that, since the purpose was to warn his people against their error and straying, it was said: You have forsaken your Creator who is powerful over everything and, in His place, you have taken to gods you have carved out yourself, assuming that they will give you what you need. Why does it not occur to you that they, on their own, can do nothing for you, nor do they have any access to Allah by virtue of which they could ask Him to do what you need to be done?

It will be noticed that Ḥabīb Najjār did not attribute all these things to them, rather, gave it the form of attributing it to his own self, something like saying, 'If I were to do so, it would really be a grave error' and he said: وَمَا لِي لَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي (And what excuse do I have if I do not worship the One who has created me...). This he said so that the adversary might not be enraged, rather, should think about it with a cool mind. After that, when his people remained unmoved by his soft pleas, even threatened to kill him, even then, he uttered no word of curse against them, rather, surrendered his life saying nothing but: رَبِّ اهْدِ قَوْمِي (My Lord, show my people the right way). Far too strange is what happened after this oppressed martyr saw the blessings and rewards given to him by Allah in the Paradise. Even at that time, he remembered nobody but his own unjust people and, still filled with goodwill for them, he wished that somehow his people were to know how generously he was welcomed in Paradise - may be, they would abandon their ways of disbelief and started sharing the blessings of Paradise with him! Subḥānallāh, the love and concern for the creatures of Allah run through their blood despite that they are treated unjustly. This is one thing that has changed the destinies of nations, taking them out of the darkness of disbelief and error, and blessing them with a station that even angels envy them.

In our time, *da'wah* workers have generally abandoned this prophetic way, therefore, their call and communication have lost effectiveness. Betraying anger and making damaging comments against the adversary are supposed to be master strokes in lectures and sermons while, in reality, such tactics push the adversary to more hardened stances of doggedness and hostility. O Allah make us follow the way of prophets and bless us with the good fortune of doing what you like and are pleased with.

In verses 28 and 29, it was said: وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ جُنْدٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا كُنَّا مُنْزِلِينَ إِنَّ كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَأَذَاهُمْ خَامِدُونَ (And We did not send down to his people any army from the heavens after him, nor were We (in need) to send down. It was no more than a single Cry, and in no time they were extinguished.)

Mentioned here is the Divine punishment that descended upon the people who had rejected the messengers and had beaten up Ḥabīb Najjār until he died a martyr. And regarding the sending of punishment, it was said that Allah did not have to send an army of angels to seize these people - nor was it the way of Allah to send such an army, because just a single angel of Allah is enough to destroy the greatest, mightiest and the bravest of nations. Why would he need to send an army of angels? After that, given there was a crisp description of the punishment coming upon them - it was just a single shrill Cry of the angel, and there they were, all extinguished under its sonic sweep. It appears in Ḥadīth narrations that the archangel, Jibra'il al-'amin, holding the two sides of the city gate, came up with a hard and horrendous Cry, the shock from which proved unbearable for any living soul, and they all succumbed to sudden death.

The state of their dying has been expressed through the word: خَامِدُونَ (*khāmidūn*) by the Qur'ān. The words: خَامِدًا (*khāmada*) and خُمُودٌ (*khumud*) are used to mean the extinguishing or dying of fire. The life of the living depends on energy. When this energy is not there, what remains is death. So, '*khāmidun*' means extinguished, gone extinct, put off.

Verses 33 - 44

وَآيَةٌ لَهُمُ الْأَرْضُ الْمَيِّتَةُ ۚ أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا فَمِنْهُ
يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا جَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ وَفَجْرْنَا فِيهَا
مِنَ الْعُيُونِ ﴿٣٤﴾ لِيَأْكُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ ۚ وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۗ أَفَلَا
يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ
وَمِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَآيَةٌ لَهُمُ اللَّيْلُ ۚ نَسْلَخُ مِنْهُ

النَّهَارَ فَادَاهُمْ مُظْلِمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ ﴿٣٩﴾ لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَإِيَّةَ لَهُمْ أَنَا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ فِي الْفُلِّ الْمَشْحُونِ ﴿٤١﴾ وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مِثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَإِنْ نَشَأْ نُغْرِقْهُمْ فَلَا صَرِيخَ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنقَدُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَمَتَاعًا إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

And a sign for them is the dead land. We gave it life and brought forth grain from it; so from it they eat. [33] And We have placed gardens of date-palms and grapes and caused springs to gush forth therein, [34] so that they may eat fruits thereof, while it was not made by their hands. Would they not then offer gratitude? [35] Pure (from every fault) is the One who has created all the pairs of whatever the earth grows, and of the humans themselves, and of that which they do not know. [36]

And a sign for them is the night. We strip the (cover of) day from it, and they are suddenly in darkness. [37] And the sun is quickly proceeding towards its resting place. That is the designing of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing. [38] And for the moon, We have appointed measured phases, until it turned (pale, curved and fine) like an old branch of date-palm. [39] Neither it is for the sun to overtake the moon, nor can the night outpace the day. And each one is floating in an orbit. [40] And a sign for them is that We boarded their children at the loaded ship, [41] and created for them things similar to it on which they ride. [42] And if We so will, We can drown them; then no one will respond to their cry, nor will they be rescued, [43] unless there be mercy from Us, and (unless) We let them enjoy for a while. [44]

Commentary

Most of the subjects taken up in Sūrah Yā Sīn related to signs of Divine power and the rewards and favors bestowed on human beings. These have been harnessed to prove that there is a life hereafter and that

people need to be firm in their belief in being raised again and having to face the Day of Judgment. In the verse cited above, the Divine signs pointed to are, on one hand, clear proofs of His perfect power, while on the other, they serve as mirrors of particular rewards and favors of Allah Ta'ālā bestowed on human beings and the rest of creatures. In this, lie unusual lessons of wisdom.

In the first verse (33), the land on which we live has been cited as an example. It is there, all the time, before everyone., It is physically seen, when rain come down from the sky and pour water over the dry land, that it is revived by the rain which makes it, so to say, live again. The outcome starts showing up in the form of vegetation, trees and their fruits. Mentioned thereafter were streams that were made to run below the land and on its surface in order to help the trees grow and survive. It was said: *لِيَأْكُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ* (so that they may eat fruits thereof). In other words, the purpose of harnessing the entire range of the natural forces of winds, clouds and the land is that people get to eat their fruits. All these things can be observed by seeing with one's own eyes. And everyone knows how to do that. Onwards from here, human beings were alerted to something for which this whole universal system was put into place.

Growth of vegetation is not an act of man

It was said: *وَمَا عَمَلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ* (*wa mā 'amilathu aiydīhim*: while it was not made by their hands). The majority of commentators have taken the letter: *مَا* (*mā*) in this verse for negation which means that 'it was not made by their hands. According to this interpretation, this sentence has a ring of warning given to heedless man: Just think about your job and the labor you put in it. What is your true share in the great blossoming of fruits? Of course, you put the seed in the land, water it, let the earth be soft so that delicate buds sprout without being obstructed by something. But, making a whole tree grow from that tiny seed, having leaves and branches shoot out from it and then commission it to produce all sorts of fruits is something totally different. What is your contribution in all these things?

This is the unshared domain of the one who is absolutely powerful, wise and knowing, and this can only be an act of God. Therefore, human beings are duty-bound to derive benefit out of these things, yet they should never forget the Creator and master of whatever there is. Parallel

to this, there is a verse of Sūrah Waqī'ah where it was said: أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَّا تَحْرُغُونَ (Well, tell Me about that (seed) which you sow: Is it you who grow it, or are We the One who grows? - 56:63-64). The outcome is: 'Even though human beings do not share in the making of these fruits in any way, yet it was Our grace that We created them, made them the owners of the whole range, as well as taught them the ways of eating and deriving other benefits out of these.'

The particular difference between human and animal food

Ibn Jarīr and some other commentators have not taken the letter (ما) *mā* in: وَمَا عَمِلْتُمْ (wa mā 'amilath) for negation, rather have read it as a relative pronoun in the sense of: الَّذِي (al-ladhī: that which). In that case, this part of verse 35 would come to mean that all these things have been created, so that they eat fruits therefrom, and also eat that which human hands make, produce or process out of these vegetations and fruits. For example, desserts made from fruit, chutneys and pickles, and the extracts of oil from some fruits are the outcome of human effort and processing. This would come to mean that these fruits created by nature are firstly made edible without any functional human input, then Allah Ta'ālā has given man the ingenuity to prepare all sorts of delicious and useful things from each single kind of fruit.

Thus, creating fruit and giving man the expertise to compound fruit with other ingredients and turn it into a variety of tasteful and useful edibles is yet another blessing from Allah. After having reported this Tafsir of Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr has said that this Tafsir is supported by the phonetic rendering (Qirā'ah) of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه as well because, the word: مِمَّا (mimmā) takes the place of: مَا (mā) in his qirā'ah, that is: مِمَّا عَمِلْتُمْ أَيَدِيهِمْ (mimmā 'amilathu aidīhim: from that which their hands have processed).

Going into a little detail, it can be said that animals too eat vegetation and fruits. Some eat meat. Some others eat soil. But, they all feed on simples. The grass eater eats grass only. The meat eater eats meat only. Preparing different kinds of food by combining a variety of ingredients whereby the addition of salt, chilies, sugar and the sour makes food turn into tens of kinds happens to be the singularity of human beings alone. They alone have been given the ability to put different edibles together and come out with a meal tasting different from the other. This is

ingenious. The preparation of meat with salt and seasonings and fruits with sweeteners is a culinary art Allah Ta'ālā has taught human beings to use to their advantage. The text, after recounting the substance and design of these great Divine blessings in these verses, concludes by saying: أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ (afala yashkurun: Would they not then offer gratitude?) which means that even after having seen all these things how is it possible from a reasonable person that he does not be grateful to Allah? Onwards from here, after having mentioned land produce and climate, human beings and animals have been included in the spectrum whereby there appears yet another sign of the absolute Power: سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ الْاَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْاَرْضُ وَمِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ (Pure is the One who has created all the pairs of whatever the earth grows, and of the humans themselves, and of that which they do not know. - 36:36). Here, the word: اَزْوَاجَ (azwāj) is the plural form of: زَوْجَ (zawj) and means pairs. A pair is two things of the same kind and refers to a couple, or a match of the other. For example, a married man and woman is a pair; hence, each one of them is the zawj of the other. Similarly, males and females of animals are pairs. In the botanical kingdom, many trees have been found as having males and females among them. Date palms and Papaya are common examples. Others may also be like these as is the case with all trees bearing fruits and flowers in which, according to modern scientific information, procreation has been identified. In the same way, it is not improbable if the same arrangement of male and female exists in solids, minerals and other elements of creation, though in a manner not discovered as yet - towards which the text points out in: مِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ (mimmā lā ya lamūn: and from that which they do not know - 36). Generally, commentators refer to: اَزْوَاجَ (azwāj: pairs) as categories and kinds because the way male and female are called pairs, similarly, two contrasting things are also referred to as pairs, like chill and heat, land and water, sorrow and happiness, health and sickness, then, within each of these, many further degrees, categories and kinds come up in terms of high, low and the average. Similarly, there are many categories and kinds in human beings and animals in terms of color, form, language and way of life. The word: اَزْوَاجَ (azwāj: pairs) is inclusive of all these categories and kinds. In the present verse (36), mentioned first is: مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْاَرْضُ (all the pairs of whatever the earth grows,) - These are the categories and kinds of vegetation. After that, in: مِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ (and of the humans themselves,) mentioned there are

the categories and kinds of human selves as such. And after that, in: *مِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ* (and from that which they do not know) included there are thousands of such creations as have not yet unfolded before human beings. Allah Ta'ālā alone knows how many categories and kinds of living forms, vegetation and minerals exist under the layers of the earth and in rivers and in mountains.

In verse 37, it was said: *وَآيَةٌ لَهُمْ اللَّيْلُ نَسَلَخُ مِنْهُ النَّهَارَ* (And a sign for them is the night. We strip the [cover of] day from it, and they are suddenly in darkness.). After having described the signs of Divine power in what was created on the earth, the text mentions cosmic creations. The word: *سَلَخَ* (salkh) literally means to skin. If the skin from an animal or the cover from things is removed, the thing inside becomes obvious. Allah Ta'ālā has, in this similitude, pointed out that the real element in this world is darkness. Light is transitory, for it spreads over the earth through planets and stars. In a predetermined system, at a fixed time, this light that is spread over the darkness of the world is removed from on top. What remains is darkness. This, in common parlance, is called night.

In verse 38, it was said: *وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ* (And the sun is quickly proceeding towards its resting place. That is the designing of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing. 36:38). The word: *مُسْتَقَرٌّ* (*mustaqarr*) is used to denote place of rest as well as time of rest, that is, it could be time-oriented and, space-oriented too. Then, this word is also employed in the sense of the end or destination of a course or journey - even if another journey begins immediately after it without any break or stillness (as mentioned by Ibn Kathīr).

Some respected commentators have taken the word: *مُسْتَقَرٌّ* (*mustaqarr*) at this place as a time-oriented destination, that is, when the sun reaches the end of its movement already determined - and that time is the Day of Doom (the Qiyāmah). In the light of this Tafsir, the verse would mean that the sun is moving on its orbit supported by such a precise and perfect system that does never betray the difference of even a minute or second. Thousands of years have passed over this orbit. But, all this is not everlasting. There is a particular point in time and space for it. When that is arrived at, this solar system and the movement will stop, end - and that is the Day of Qiyāmah. This Tafsir has been reported from Qatādah رحمته الله (Ibn Kathīr).