

And a verse from Sūrah Az-Zumar in the Holy Qur'an also supports it, that is, the word: مُسْتَقَرٌّ (*mustaqarr*) means a time-oriented destination or abode and refers to the Day of Qiyāmah. The words of the verse of Sūrah az-Zumar are:

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ يُكَوِّرُ اللَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ النَّهَارَ عَلَى اللَّيْلِ
وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى

He created the heavens and the earth in His wisdom. He wraps the night over the day and He wraps the day over the night, and He has put the Sun and the Moon under His command, each one of them moving for an appointed term. (39:5)

The statement in this verse is nearly the same as given in the present verse of Sūrah Yā Sīn. Firstly, the alternation of the night and the day has been described through a similitude in terms of common perception - Allah Ta'ālā puts the cover of night over the day and that of day over the night. Thus, the night and the day have been likened to two covers. The cover of the night is draped over the day and it is night, and the cover of the day is draped over the night and it is day. After that, it was said that the sun and the moon are both subjugated before Allah Ta'ālā and are subservient to His command. Each is moving up to an appointed term. The words used in the text are: أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى (*ajalim-musammā*) meaning fixed term, and the verse means that the movement of both the sun and the moon is not everlasting. When it reaches a certain fixed term, that is, the Day of Qiyāmah, this movement shall stand terminated. In the present verse of Sūrah Yā Sīn too, the word: مُسْتَقَرٌّ (*mustaqarr*) quite obviously means this very fixed or appointed term, that is, a time-oriented point of arrival, destination or abode. In the light of this Tafsir, neither does the sense of the verse present any difficulty, nor is there any objection in terms of astronomy and mathematics.

And some respected commentators have taken it to mean a spatial destination or abode as based on the following Ḥadīth reported in the Ṣaḥīḥs of al-Bukhārī and Muslim and others from several Ṣaḥābah and chains of authority.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī رضي الله عنه, once he was present in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ at the time of sunset. Addressing him, he said, "Abū Dharr, do you know where the sun sets?" Sayyidnā Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه says that he submitted: "Allah and His

Messenger know best." Thereupon, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, " The sun keeps on moving until when it reaches beneath the 'Arsh (the Throne) it makes *sajdah* (*sujūd* or prostration)." After that, he said, "This is what 'mustaqarr' means in this verse: وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا (And the sun is quickly proceeding towards its resting place.).

In a narration, again from Sayyidnā Abū Dharr, there appear the additional words to the effect: "I asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ the explanation of: وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا (And the sun is quickly proceeding towards its resting place.). He said: مُسْتَقَرُّهَا تَحْتَ الْعَرْشِ (mustaqarruha that al-'Arsh: Its resting place is under the 'Arsh). Al-Bukhārī has reported this narration at several place and, with the exception of Ibn Mājah, this narration is present in all Six Books.

And there is a Ḥadīth bearing on the same subject reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه as well. It has some additions to the effect that, every day, when the sun reaches beneath the 'Arsh, it performs a *Sajdah* and seeks permission for the next orbit. After the permission, it starts the next orbit - until, there will come that day when it will not have the permission to start the next orbit. Instead, it will be commanded to go back towards where it had come from. In other words, it would be asked to go beneath the earth from the side of the West, then, return from the same side of the West and rise from the West. The day it happens, it will be the sign of the Day of Qiyāmah being absolutely close and, thereafter the doors of 'iman and *taubah* (repentance) will be closed. That will be a time when the *taubah* (repentance) of anyone sunk in sin or the *taubah* of anyone soaked in shirk and kufr will not be accepted (Ibn Kathīr with reference to 'Abd-ur- Razzaq).

The prostration of the sun: A look into the phenomenon of the sun performing *sajdah* (prostration) beneath the 'Arsh

From these narrations of Ḥadīth, we learn that *mustaqarr* means a spatial destination, that is, a place where one orbit of the movement of the sun stands completed - and they also tell us that this place is beneath the 'Arsh. Hence, the verse would mean that, every day, the sun moves towards a particular destination, and once it has reached there, it performs *sajdah* before Allah Ta'ālā and seeks His permission for the next orbit. Once the permission is given, it begins the next orbit.

But, when seen outwardly, several strong difficulties arise on the

basis of principles laid down by experiments, observations and astronomy.

1. The state of the 'Arsh of Raḥmān (generally referred to as the Divine Throne) as understood from the Qur'ān and Sunnah is that it surrounds all that we know as the masses of land and expanses of the sky. All these masses and expanses along with planets and stars, without any exception, are enclosed within the 'Arsh - and the 'Arsh of Raḥmān holds this entire cosmic universe inside itself. If seen from this angle, the sun is, in all conditions and at all times, simply under the 'Arsh. What, then, would be the sense of going beneath the 'Arsh after it sets?

2. It is common observation that the sun, after it sets at some place, does rise elsewhere. Therefore, its rising and setting is an ongoing phenomenon. What then is the meaning of going beneath the 'Arsh after setting and doing Sajdah?

3. From the apparent sense of the Ḥadīth mentioned above, we learn that the sun, after having reached its destination (mustaqarr), pauses within which it offers Sajdah before Allah and seeks the permission for the next orbit - although, there being no break in the movement of the sun at any time is an open observation. And since this rising and setting of the sun keeps taking place all the time in terms of different locations, therefore, this pause should also be there all the time as a result of which the sun should not have any movement any time.

Such difficulties are related not only to astronomy, but also to observations and experiences that cannot be bypassed. Technically, the daily movement of the sun under the arrangement of the celestial sphere and its being positioned in the fourth heaven is a theoretical assumption of Ptolemy that was refuted by Pythagoras. Modern knowledge has confirmed the error in 'the theory of Ptolemy and also brought the soundness of the theory of Pythagoras to the level of certitude. Then there are the space flights in our time and the spectacle of human access to the moon that makes at least this much certain that all planets are in the lower space of the sky, not inside. The verse of the Qur'ān: **وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ** (And each one is floating in an orbit. - Yā Sīn, 36:40) which is to appear a little later also confirms this view. Since this view is also suggestive of the daily rising and setting as being from the movement of the earth and not from the movement of the sun, another technical

difficulty is added to the understanding of the aforementioned Ḥadīth.

To understand its answer, it must be borne in mind that to the extent the explanation of the cited verse is concerned, no difficulty out of the doubts and difficulties mentioned above relates to the Qur'ān. The sense it carries is no more than that Allah Ta'ālā has commissioned the sun to move in such an organized and steady way that it keeps moving continuously in a single state towards its destination (mustaqarr). If, this destination is taken to mean a time-oriented destination - that is, the Day of Qiyāmah - as in the Tafsir of Qatādah, then, it would mean that this movement of the sun shall continue in a single state right through the last Day of Qiyāmah - and shall terminate on that very Day. And if it were to be taken as a spatial destination, even then, its destination can be said as being the point in the orbit of the sun, the point from which the sun started its movement at the time of the initial creation. When it reaches that point, one orbit through a day and night stands completed, for this very point is the end of its journey and, once it reaches there, the next orbit begins. As for the precise determination of where lies that point from which this magnificent orbit of the sun started in eternity, the noble Qur'ān does not throw human beings into unnecessary debates of this nature, something that does not bring them any benefit, neither in this world nor in the world-to-come. This is an inquiry of this very nature. Therefore, the Qur'ān has bypassed it and drawn attention to the essential purpose. That purpose is to put particular aspects of the most perfect power and wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā into clear focus. It was said that the sun is the largest and the brightest sphere of this universe. That too did neither come into existence automatically, nor does it move on its own, nor can it sustain. In its present movement through days and nights all the time, it moves under the permission and will of Allah Ta'ālā.

Any doubt, out of the doubts mentioned above, does not apply to what has been said in the cited verse. However, all these doubts and difficulties in comprehension do arise from the Ḥadīth statement about the sun that soon after its setting, it goes beneath the 'Arsh, performs *sajdah* and seeks permission to start the next orbit. And this debate sprung up in relation to this verse for the reason that, in some words of the Ḥadīth, reference has been made to this verse. Answers to these doubts given by experts of Ḥadīth and commentators of the Qur'ān differ. From the apparent

connotation of the words there, it is generally gathered that this *sajdah* of the sun takes effect only once in a day-night span after its setting. Respected writers, who have taken the Ḥadīth in terms of its apparent sense, have laid down three probabilities concerning the setting: (1) That it may refer to the setting in the main part of populated areas, that is, of a place the setting of the sun whereat holds good for its setting for the majority of the population of the world; (2) that it be the setting of the Equator; or (3) the setting on the horizon of Madīnah. Thus, the difficulty that the setting and rising of the sun is a phenomenon which keeps manifesting itself all the time, every moment, does not remain there, because this Ḥadīth is talking about the setting of a particular horizon. But, the clear-cut and cloudless rejoinder seems to be that which my teacher, 'Allamāh Shabbīr Aḥmad Usmanī has given in his treatise: سُجُودُ الشَّمْسِ (Sujudu'sh-Shams: The Prostration of the Sun) which finds support in the statements of several leading commentators.

Before one proceeds to understand the presentation, it is useful to first understand a matter of principle about prophetic teachings and interpretations. The noble prophets, may peace be upon them, and the Scriptures they bring incessantly invite the entire Divine creation to ponder over whatever has been created in the heavens and the earth, and it is from these that they build their argument to prove the existence of Allah Ta'ālā, His Oneness, Knowledge and Power. But, deliberation in these things is desirable, according to Shari'ah, only to the extent of its relevance to one's worldly and social requirement or religious and other worldly need. Beyond that, the great mass of the creation of Allah is not thrown into the senseless concern of digging into bland philosophical hair splitting and the ultimate reality of things. The reason is that, first of all, the real and perfect knowledge of the ultimate reality of things is something scientists and philosophers have themselves been unable to find out, despite having spent their entire lives in the pursuit - not to say much about the poor masses. Let us suppose, even if this could be acquired somehow, yet it fulfills no religious need, nor does it help to acquire something materially sound and worthwhile, what is the sense of indulging in this unnecessary and wasteful debate? Obviously, nothing but a waste of wonderful years of life and a waste of precious wealth!

It should be borne in mind that the argument of the Qur'ān and the

noble Prophets through the creations in the heavens and the earth and the major changes that occur therein is limited to the extent that could be rationalized by every human beings by virtue of bare observation and elementary deliberation. Technical refinements of philosophy and mathematics that can be resolved by experts in the field alone are not the material on which an argument of this nature is based, nor are people invited to deliberate in these. The reason is simple. Believing in Allah Ta'ālā and acting in accordance with His message is the duty of every human being - learned or illiterate, man or woman, urbanite or villager, dweller of some mountain or island. Therefore, prophetic teachings are synchronized with the level of perception, reason and understanding of common people that need no technical expertise.

Take the example of knowing the times of Ṣalāh, fixing the orientation to Qiblah, and knowing the months, years and dates. The knowledge of all these things can also be acquired through mathematical computations. But, the Sharī'ah of Islam has, rather than rely on high-tech mathematical calculations to determine any of these things, placed reliance on common observations. Months and years and their dates were set in accordance with the lunar calendar. The basis of determining whether the new moon has or has not appeared was declared to be physical observation alone, the seeing of the new moon. The days of fasting and the Ḥajj were fixed on that very basis. When some people asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the secret behind the waning, waxing and disappearing of the moon and then its rising again, the answer to it was given by the Qur'an on his behalf: *قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ* (Say: They are indicative of time for the people, and of the Ḥajj - Al-Baqarah, 2:189). In other words, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked to tell people that all those changes occurring in the life of the moon are there so that they could find out when the month begins and ends and then find out its dates and determine the days of the Ḥajj. This answer served them with a warning against their unnecessary and ineffectual question, because no business of theirs, in this world or in the next, hinges on finding the reality behind it. Therefore, they were supposed to ask only about something that related to either their worldly or other worldly need.

After these initial remarks, let us give a little thought to the essential matter before us. Is it not that, in the cited verses, Allah Ta'ālā has, after

having mentioned some manifestations of His perfect power and infinite wisdom, invited human beings to believe? Of these, mentioned first was the land that is before us all the time: *وَآيَةٌ لَهُمُ الْأَرْضُ* (And a sign for them is the land.- 33). Then, mention was made of how rains made it come alive and the growth of trees and other produce became possible - something everyone sees and knows: *أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا* (We gave it life and brought forth grain from it.- 33). Mentioned first after that was the daily alternation of the night and day: *وَآيَةٌ لَهُمُ اللَّيْلُ* (And a sign for them is the night) Mentioned thereafter were planets and stars. Out of these, about the sun 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.- 38). Think about it. The purpose here is to tell that the sun is not moving on its own, not of its volition or power. Instead, it is moving in subservience to the One who is Mighty and Knowing, and moving under the predetermined system originated by an entity with great power and knowledge. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, close to the time of one sunset, had alerted Sayyidnā Abū Dharr al-Ghiffārī ؓ to the reality behind it during a question answer interlude with him. He has told him that the sun, at the time of its setting, performs a Sajdah before Allah Ta'ālā beneath the 'Arsh and seeks the permission to start the next orbit. When it has the permission, it moves as usual and rises from the east in the morning. Its outcome is no more than that the atmosphere of the world goes through a new transformation at the time of the setting and rising of the sun, something that depends on the sun. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, took this moment as suitable to teach human beings their essential lesson that they should not take the sun to be an independent entity moving of its own volition and power. It moves only under the permission and will of Allah Ta'ālā. Every time it rises and every time it sets has to be with His permission, for it is subservient to His permission. This very act of moving under the command of Allah Ta'ālā has been declared to be its *sajdah*, the act of prostration before its creator. The reason is that a Sajdah made by anything happens to be appropriate to its state of being as the Qur'an has itself clearly said: *كُلُّ قَدِّ عَلِيمٍ صَلَوَاتُهُ وَتَسْبِيحُهُ* : "Everything [in the creation of Allah] already knows its Ṣalāh [mode of worship] and its *tasbih* [mode of Divine glorification" - An-Nūr, 24:41]. It means that the entire creation of Allah is engaged in worshipping and glorifying Allah, but each has its own separate way of doing it that has

already been taught to it just like human beings who have been told how to do their Ṣalāh and Tasbīḥ. Therefore, taking the *sajdah* of the sun to mean that it can take effect only when it places its forehead on some floor like a human being would not be correct.

And when it stands clarified from the statements of the Qur'ān and Sunnah that the Divine Throne, the 'Arsh of the Raḥmān, surrounds all heavens and stars and surfaces, it is already obvious that the sun is nowhere but under the 'Arsh, at all times and at every place. And when experience bears out that the time the sun is setting at one place, it is also rising at another. Therefore, no moment of the sun is free of either rising or setting. Thus, the being of the sun under the 'Arsh is also perennial under all states and so is its setting and rising. Therefore, the outcome of the subject mentioned in the Ḥadīth is that the sun, in its entire orbit, remains in the state of prostration (Sajdah) before Allah under the 'Arsh, that is, it moves under His permission and command. And this cycle will stay activated right through the proximity of the last day of the Qiyāmah until comes the time for the emergence of the sign that the Qiyāmah is very close. When this happens, the sun will, rather than start its next orbit, be commanded to turn back - and then, it will rise from the west. At that time, the door of *taubah* (repentance) will be closed and no declaration of faith (Īmān) or repentance (Taubah) from anyone shall remain acceptable at that hour.

In short, this particularity of the setting of the sun, its passing under the 'Arsh, the making of prostration there and the incidence of seeking permission for the next orbit mentioned in the narration being studied is simply a similitude in consonance with the mores of effective prophetic teaching and in terms of common perception. Neither does it make it necessary that it performs Sajdah on some land surface like a human being, nor does it make it necessary that there be some pause in the movement of the sun at the time of making a *sajdah*, nor does it mean that it goes to some particular place doing only one *sajdah* during a day and night, and nor that it goes beneath the 'Arsh after setting only. But, at this time of great alternation, when people are seeing that the sun is receding away from them, what has been done is that they have been appraised of the truth of what is happening in the manner of a similitude while the reality is that this whole thing is happening because of the sun

moving beneath the 'Arsh in subservience to the Divine command - the sun does not have any capability or power of its own. So, the way, at this time, the people of Madīnah were convinced that the sun would now make its *sajdah* and seek permission for the next orbit, similarly, the message was relayed onwards to every place where the sun would be setting and everyone there would stand advised of the lesson thereof. Thus, the truth of the matter turns out to be that the sun at every moment while moving on its orbit keeps offering *sajdah* before Allah Ta'ālā and keeps seeking permission to move ahead - and it needs no pause or break to make Sajdah or seek permission.

Following this submission, there remains no doubt concerning the Ḥadīth quoted, neither in terms of observations, nor in terms of the rules of astronomy, nor in the light of the position taken by Ptolemy or Pythagoras - though, the latter has found support in newer investigation. In either case, there remains no doubt or difficulty in the comprehension of the said Ḥadīth.

As for the question about the sun making Sajdah and seeking permission to start the next orbit as mentioned in the Ḥadīth, where it is stressed that doing all this required life, awareness and reason. The sun and the moon are devoid of life and consciousness. How could these actions issue forth from them? An answer to this has already appeared under the verse of the Qur'ān: *وَأَنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ* (And there is not a single thing that does not extol His purity and praise - Al-'Isrā', 17:44). (For commentary, please see Ma'ariful Qur'ān, English, Vol. V, pp. 506-510). There it was said that things we take to be devoid of life, sense and consciousness do have a special share of spirit, life, sense and consciousness. However, their life, sense and consciousness are insignificant as compared with humans and animals, so insignificant that these cannot be perceived commonly. But, there is no proof for its absence either, neither in the revealed law, nor in reason while the noble Qur'ān, in the verse cited above, has proved their being possessors of the elements of life, reason and consciousness, something also recognized in new investigations: *وَاللَّهُ سَبَّحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى أَعْلَمُ* And Allah who is pure and High knows best.

Special Note

From these clarifications of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, it is established that both the sun and the moon are in motion, moving for a fixed term.

This refutes the theory that the sun has no movement at all. The findings of the latest research have also refuted this presumption.

The text now turns to: وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَّرْنَا مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ (And for the moon, We have appointed measured phases, until it turned [pale, curved and fine] like an old branch of date-palm.- 36:39). The dried bough of a date tree that gets bent like a bow is called: عُرْجُونٌ (*urjūn*).

The stages of the moon

The word: مَنَازِلَ (*manāzil*) is the plural of: مَنَزِلٌ (*manzil*) and denotes the place one arrives at. Allah Ta'ālā has bound the movement of the sun and the moon both with particular points, each of which is known as a Manzil or stage. Since the moon completes its orbit in one month, therefore, it has thirty or twenty-nine stages. But, as the moon disappears at least for a day during every month, therefore, its stages are generally taken to be twenty-eight. Astronomers have given these stages particular names in congruence with the stars that are found in the frontal proximity of these stages. Even during the days of Arabs of Jāhiliyyah, stages were determined by these very names. The Holy Qur'ān is far above these technical names. What it means to communicate are only the distances the moon traverses during particular days.

Relevant details have appeared in the commentary on Sūrah Yūnus. It can be seen in Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, English, Volume IV, pages: 515-520. In this verse of Sūrah Yūnus 10:5, the stages of the sun and the moon both have been mentioned: جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَّرَهُ مَنَازِلَ: "[He is the One who] has made the sun a glow and the moon a light, and determined for it the stages - 10:5". The only difference is that the stages of the moon are identified through observation, while the stages of the sun are calculated mathematically. By saying: حَتَّىٰ عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ (until it turned [pale, curved and fine] like an old branch of date-palm.- 36:39), described there is the state of the moon towards the end of the month when it recedes from the stage of the full moon to the extent that it transforms into the shape of a dried old bough bent like a bow. It is in consonance with the Arab surrounding that it has been likened to a dried bough of the date tree that assumes the shape of a crescent.

In verse 40, it was said: وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ (And each one is floating in an orbit - 40). Literally, the word: فَلَكٌ (*falak*) does not mean the sky.

Instead, it means the orbit in which some star moves. This verse has also appeared earlier in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' (21:33). It tells us that the moon is not contained within some sky as presumed by the astronomical theory of Ptolemy. Instead, it moves in a particular orbit in the space lower than it. Then, there are recent investigations as well as the human access to the moon that have made it certain.

In verse 41 and 42, it was said: *وَايَةٌ لَهُمْ أَنَّا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ فِي الْفُلِكِ الْمَشْحُونِ وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِن مِّثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ* (And a sign for them is that We boarded their children at the loaded ship, and created for them things similar to it on which they ride.). Mentioned earlier to these verses were manifestations of Divine power and wisdom in what was created on the earth and in the heavens in that order. In the present verses, Divine power over the sea and its adjuncts has been mentioned. It was said that Allah Ta'ālā has made heavily laden boats and ships capable of sailing on the surface of the waters and reach distant places without getting drowned in route. Then, it was said in the verse that "We boarded their children at the loaded ship" - although, those who embarked the Ark were these very people. Perhaps, children were mentioned for the reason that one's children and family place a great burden of responsibility on parents, particularly when unable to move around. Thus, the sense of the verse is to emphasize that it is not only they who were riding the boat, but there also were young children and aged men and women and their belongings with them. The boat carried both, people and their things. In the verse following immediately (42), it was said: *وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِن مِّثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ* (and created for them things similar to it on which they ride.- 36:42). It means that human beings have not only been provided with boats and ships that serve as rides for themselves and carry their things, but Allah has also created other rides like the boat. From this, people of Arabia have taken it to mean the ride of camels as habitually familiar to them, particularly so, because the camel is a carrier of things. It takes heavy loads across countries, therefore, the Arab called camels: The Boat of the Land.

No wonder if the Qur'ān is alluding to the aeroplane!

But, it is obvious that the Qur'ān has not specifically named a camel or some other particular mode of conveyance at this place. This includes every such means of transportation that carries people and their baggage, accompanied or unaccompanied, right up to their desired destination. It

our time, the invention of aeroplanes has made it amply clear that aeroplanes are the greatest substantiation of the Qur'ānic statement: مِنْ مِّثْلِهِ (mim-mithlihī: things similar to it). Then, its similarity with boat or ship is strongly supportive of it, because the way the ship of the sea sails on the surface of the water, and the mass of water does not make it drown, similarly, the airplane sails or flies over the bed of air and it does not throw it down. No wonder if the Qur'ān may have left the statement: مِنْ مِّثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ (mim-mithlihī mā yarkabūn: things similar to it that they ride) ambiguous, so that all modes of conveyance and transportation that continue to be invented right through the last Day of Qiyāmah get to be included therein. And Allah knows best.

Verses 45 - 47

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّقُوا مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَمَا خَلْفَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْطَعِمُ مَنْ لَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ اطْعَمَهُ ۗ إِنَّ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٤٧﴾

And (they pay no heed) when it is said to them, " Save yourselves from that (punishment) which is before you (in this world) and that which will come after you (die), so that you may receive mercy". [45] And there comes to them no sign from the signs of your Lord, but they turn averse to it. [46] And when it is said to them, " Spend (to the needy) from the provision Allah has given to you", the disbelievers say to the believers, " Shall we feed those whom Allah could have fed , if Allah so willed ? You are but in the open error." [47]

Commentary

In the previous verses, through a description of Divine manifestations of power and wisdom in the creation of the heavens and the earth, people were invited to recognize their creator and believe that He alone is worthy of worship and, on the acceptance of this invitation, a promise of everlasting blessings was made along with a warning of severe

punishment on its rejection. In the present verses and in the verses following these, there is a description of the disbelieving people of Makkah who were their direct addressees and who remained unmoved and unaffected either when persuaded to do something reward worthy, or when warned against some likely punishment.

In this connection, two dialogues between believers and disbelievers have been narrated. Believers invite them to fear the punishment of Allah that can come before them even in this mortal world while, after their death, it has to come to them in the Hereafter after all. If they, it is said to them, were to believe in fear of this punishment, it would be better for them. But, the disbelievers show their aversion despite having heard all that. This aversion of theirs has not been expressly mentioned here in the words of the Qur'ān, because the 'I'rād' or aversion mentioned in the next verse automatically proves their aversion here too. And in accordance with the rule of syntax, the apodosis or principal clause of the condition: إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ (idhā qīla lahum: When it is said to them) remains elided. The word of the next verse (46) bear witness to this elision, that is, whenever a verse or sign from their Lord comes to them, they show nothing but their aversion to it. (And that is why the words "they pay no heed" are added in brackets in the translation of this verse above.)

The wisdom behind some people receiving their sustenance indirectly

In the second dialogue, believers exhort the disbelievers to help the poor and needy and feed the hungry and prompt them to give to the destitute from what Allah had given to them. In their sarcastic response, the disbelievers say: You say that Allah is the provider and sustainer of the entire creation, yet He did not give them anything. Why should we? As for your words of advice to us that we should provide for them, this is nothing but that you have gone astray. Do you want to make us their Razzāq: Provider? These disbelievers too confessed that Allah Ta'ālā was the Provider as in the Qur'ān: وَلَقَدْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا لِيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ (And if you ask them "as to who sends down water from the sky, then revives the land with it, they will certainly say, "Allah". - Al-'Ankabūt, 29:63)

This tells us that they too regarded Allah Ta'ālā as the ultimate Razzāq or Provider, but when in confrontation with believers, they

sarcastically remarked: When Allah is the Razzāq, the Provider, let Him provide for them too - why should we? This was as if these dim-witted people thought that giving in the way of Allah and providing for the poor was contrary to Allah's attribute in being the Master-Provider of all sustenance! They just did not understand that as the absolute Giver and Provider, He has His own wise law operating in this world. By giving to one person, He makes that person a conduit for others and thus gives them indirectly - although, he is perfectly and certainly capable of having everyone's sustenance delivered personally and directly, as is the case with animals and insects where everyone in that kingdom receives sustenance directly. There is no one rich and no one, poor. No one gives to anyone. Everyone dines from nature's own food spread. But, human beings are different. It is to make their system of social living just and to inculcate in them the spirit of mutual help and cooperation, that He makes some of them the medium of delivering sustenance to some others, so that the one who spends gets its reward, and the one who receives becomes grateful to the giver. The reason is that this whole phenomenon of mutual human cooperation and help on which depends the entire functional order of the world can survive only when one person needs the other. A poor person needs the money a rich person has, and a rich person needs the labor of a poor person. Neither of the two is free of the need for the other - and a little reflection would reveal that nobody is doing a favor to anybody. Whatever a person gives to the other person gives, in the ultimate analysis, in one's own interest and for one's own good.

Now, there remains the question: On which basis, did the believers ask the disbelievers to spend in the way of Allah, particularly when they simply did not have the very faith in Allah and, as the jurists maintain, they were no addressees of the subsidiary injunctions of the Shari'ah? The answer to that is clear. When the believers said that, they had no intention to have disbelievers implement some religious injunction, it was said on the basis of the accepted norm of human good will, sympathy and gentleness.

Verses 48-68

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ مَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا

will say, " Woe to us! Who has raised us from our sleeping place? " This is what the Rahman had promised, and the messengers had told the truth. [52] It will be no more than a single Cry, and in no time they will all be arraigned before Us. [53] Then, nobody will be subjected to injustice in the least, and you will not be recompensed but for what you used to do. [54] The people of the Paradise are engaged today in (their) activities, happily enjoying (them). [55] They and their spouses are in pleasant shades, reclining on couches.

[56] For them there are fruits, and for them there is whatever they ask for. [57] "Salam"(Peace upon you) is the word (they receive) from Merciful Lord. [57] "And get apart (from the believers) today O the guilty ones. [58] Did I not direct you, O children of 'Adam, that you must not worship the Satan, (because) he is an open enemy for you, [60] and that you must worship Me, (because) this is the straight path? [61] And he had misguided lot many people from among you. So, did you not have sense? [62] (Now) this is the Jahannam of which you were consistently warned. [63] Enter it today , because you have been persistently denying (the truth)." [64] Today We will set a seal on their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us, and their legs will bear witness about what they used to do. [65] And had We willed, We would have wiped out their eyes, and they would have been racing towards the way, but how would they see? [66] And had we willed, We would have disfigured them at their places, and they would have not been able to move , nor would they return. [67] And whomsoever We give long life, we reverse him in creation. So, do they not have sense? [68]

Commentary

مَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً (They are looking for nothing but for a single Cry that will seize them - 36:49). The question of the disbelievers quoted here is the one they used to ask the Muslims by way of mockery, and the real purpose was to deny the Day of Judgment. It was not asked for finding out the truth, nor as a serious effort to reach the reality. It was simply a way of taunting the Muslims and making fun of them. And even if it were for finding out the true nature of the event, then, the mercy of the Lord of the universe requires that the full and precise knowledge of the year and day of the coming of Qiyāmah should not be given to anyone, so much so that it was not given even to any one from among His noble prophets and

messengers. Even if this question asked by these dimwit people was no more than a fact-finding exercise on their part, it was patently absurd. Therefore, rather than tell them, in response, the time when Qiyāmah will come, they were admonished. They were told that reasonable people, once they become aware of something that is bound to come in all certainty, should start making necessary preparations ahead of it, and not go about wasting precious time in trying to find out its precise hour and day. Common sense required that, once they had heard the foreboding of Qiyāmah, they should have believed and did what it takes to achieve success in that life to come. But, so entangled they are in their heedlessness that they virtually seem to be waiting for nothing short of the time when the day of Qiyāmah comes before them - and then, they would think about it. Therefore, it was said that these people were waiting for the Qiyāmah - while, Qiyāmah will have a scenario of its own, for it would be just one terrible sound of the Horn (Ṣūr) that will seize everyone all of a sudden in a way that people will be busy in their businesses settling their disputes and they all, in this very condition, will lie dead.

It appears in Ḥadīth that two men will be engaged in their activity of buying and selling cloth. Stretched before them will be the yardage of the cloth pieces while, of a sudden, Qiyāmah will come - and they would be unable to complete their deal of cloth. Then, there will be someone else busy plastering his water tank who will fall dead in the same state (reported by Abū Nu'aym from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه - al-Qurtubī).

In verse 50, it was said: *فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ تَوْصِيَةً وَلَا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ يَرْجِعُونَ* (So they will not be able to make a bequest, nor will they return to their household.), that is, people who are gathered there will not have the respite to make a will among themselves to do something on their behalf, and those who are still outside their houses will not find the respite even to go into their houses. They will lie dead in the very state in which they would be at that time. This is a description of the first blowing of the Horn of the day of Qiyāmah as a result of which the entire gamut of the earth and heavens will be destroyed.

After that, it was said: *وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَأَذَاهُمْ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُنْسَلُونَ* (And the Horn will be blown, and suddenly they will be rushing from their graves towards their Lord. (36:51). Here, the word: *أَجْدَاثُ* (*ajdāth*) is the plural

form of: جَدَتْ (*jadath*) which means a grave. And: يَنْسِلُونَ (*yansilūn*) is a derivation from: نَسَلان (*nasalān*) which means to walk swiftly as it appears in another verse: يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا (they will come out of their graves in haste - Al-Ma'ārij, 71:43). As for what is said in another verse: فَأَذَاهُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ (and suddenly, they will stand up, looking around - Az-Zumar, 39:68), it is not contrary to that, for first came the instant of standing up in wonder and then came the act of racing toward the plains of the Resurrection. There is no contradiction in between these two. Then, as it is already proved from the verses of the Qur'ān that the angels will call them to come to the plains of the Resurrection, it becomes clear that the presence of disbelievers on the plain of the Resurrection will not be out of their pleasure, rather, it would be out of compulsion whereby the call of the angels will prompt them to come hastening toward it.

In verse 52, it was said: قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا مَنْ بَعَثَنَا مِنْ مَرْقَدِنَا (They will say, "Woe to us! Who has raised us from our sleeping place?"). Though the disbelievers were already having their punishment in their graves with no sign of any relief, yet this punishment will appear as nothing when compared with the punishing circumstances of the day of Qiyāmah, therefore, they will cry out as to why they had to be taken out of their graves, for it would have been better if they had stayed right there. A response to this will come from either the angels or the common believers.

This response appears immediately next in verse 52: هَذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ (This is what the Raḥmān had promised, and the messengers had told the truth.) - to which they paid no attention. At this place, a choice has been made in using the word: رَحْمَن (Raḥmān: The Most Merciful) out of the many attributes of Allah. It serves as an indicator - as for Him, He had already made elaborate arrangements, in His mercy, that you remain safe from this punishment, and that His act of alerting you in advance through His promise and through His Books and Prophets was, in fact, but a dictate of His attribute of mercy.

Then, in verse 55, it was said: إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغْلٍ فَاكِهُِونَ (The people of the Paradise are engaged today in (their) activities, happily enjoying [them]) - 36:55). After having mentioned the worries of the people of Jahannam, described here is the state of the people of Paradise on the day of Qiyāmah that they will be enjoying themselves. The word: فَاكِهُِونَ (*fākihūn*) is the plural form of: فَاكِهٌ (*fākih*). It signifies happiness of the

heart as well as happiness out of one's surroundings. As for the expression: فِي شُغْلٍ (*fī shugul*) appearing before it, it could also mean that they will be totally unaffected by the misfortunes afflicting the people of Jahannam (as said by some commentators).

And then it is also possible that, at this place, this expression: فِي شُغْلٍ (*fī shugul*) has been added to remove the thought - when, in Jannah, there will be no religious duty like obligatory or necessary worship, nor the job of earning one's livelihood, would this lack of activity not leave one uptight or bored? - hence, it was said that their enjoyment itself will be their principal activity, and the question of any boredom simply does not arise.

Next, in verse 56, it was said: هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ (They and their spouses...). The word: أَزْوَاجٌ (*azwāj*) as used here includes the Ḥūr of Jannah as well as wives of the mortal world.

The word: يَدْعُونَ (*yadda'ūn*) appearing in verse 57: وَ لَهُمْ مَا يَدْعُونَ (*walahum mā yadda'ūn*) is a derivation from: دَعْوَى (*da'wah*) which means to call, that is, the thing the people of Jannah will call or wish to have, will come to them. The Qur'ān has not used the word: يَسْتَلْتُونَ (*yas'alūn*: they ask) at this place, because having something after having asked for it is also a sort of exertion, something the Jannah will be free from, in fact, it will be a place where everything needed will be ready and present.

In verse 58, it was said: وَأَمْتَارُوا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ (And get apart (from the believers) today O the guilty ones.- 36:58) On the plains of the Resurrection, initially when people rise from their graves, they will be scattered all mixed up as said in the Qur'ān: كَانَهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُنْتَشِرٌ (*kaannahum jarādum-muntashir*: as if they are scattered locusts - Al-Qamar, 54:7). But, later on, group by group, they will be separated in terms of their deeds - disbelievers at one place and the believers, at another, and sinners at one place and the righteous and the accepted, at another - as it has been stated elsewhere: وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ رُوِّجَتْ (And when the persons will be divided into pairs- at-Takwir, 81:7) In the said verse, this same distinction to be made has been described.

In verse 60, it was said: أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَبْنَىٰ أَدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ (Did I not direct you, O children of 'Ādam, that you must not worship the Satan, (because) he is an open enemy for you,- 36:60). In other words, this would be said on

the day of Qiyāmah to all human beings, (even to the Jinn). But, the question remains that the disbelievers did not generally worship the Satan. They worshipped idols or other things. Therefore, how does this blame fall on them? The answer is that submitting before some entity in the absolute sense and to obey that entity in word and deed in everything and under all conditions is nothing but worship. Since these people always followed Satanic teachings, therefore, they were called the worshipers of the Satan - as said in Ḥadīth that a person who, driven by love for money or spouse, starts doing everything that would increase wealth or please the spouse, even at the cost of the displeasure of Allah, is an obedient servant of the silver coin and the obedient servant of the spouse ('Abd-ud-dirham, 'Abd-uz-zawjah).

In verse 65, it was said: **الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ** (Today We will set a seal on their mouths). On the day of Resurrection, when comes the time to account for deeds, everyone will be free to offer any excuse one has. But, Mushriks, the practitioners of shirk, those who associate partners in the pristine divinity of Allah Ta'ālā, will declare on oaths that they never had anything to do with *shirk* and *kufr*: **وَاللَّهِ رَبَّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ** (By Allah, our Lord, we ascribed no partners to Allah - Al-An'am, 6:23).

And some of them will also say that they were free of whatever the angels had written down in their book of deeds. At that time, Allah Ta'ālā will put a seal on their mouths, so that they would not speak. Then, He will give power of speech to their own body parts, the hands and the feet, who will testify to all their deeds as court witnesses against them. As for the present verse, it mentions the speaking of hands and feet only. In another verse, mentioned there is the speaking of one's ear, eye and skin: **شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَأَبْصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُودُهُمْ** (their ears and their eyes and their skins will testify against them - 41:20). As for what has been said at one place: **تَشْهَدُ أَلْسِنُهُمْ** (and their tongues will testify against them - An-Nūr, 24:24), it is not contrary to 'putting a seal on their mouths' because putting a seal means that they will be unable to say anything out of their own volition. Their tongue will speak counter to their personal choice and will testify to the truth.

As for the question how these parts of the body would acquire power of speech, the Qur'an has already answered that by saying: **أَنْطَقْنَا اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْطَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ** (Why did you testify against us? - 41:20) that is, these parts of

the body will say that Allah, who has given power of speech to all things endowed with the ability to speak, has also enabled us to speak.

In the last of the verses cited above, it was said: وَمَنْ نُعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ (And whomsoever We give long life, we reverse him in creation. Do they then not have sense?). The word: نُعَمِّرْ (nu'ammir: We give a long life) in this verse has been derived from: تَعْمِيرٌ (ta'mīr) which means to prolong years of life. And the word: نُنَكِّسْهُ (nunakkishū) is a derivation from: تَنْكِيْسٌ (tankīs) which means to reverse, invert or turn upside down. In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has described yet another manifestation of His perfect power and eloquent wisdom in that every living being lies under the free will of Allah Ta'ālā all the time. The process of nature is going on. The thing started from a lifeless drop. Wrapped with three layers of darkness in the womb of the mother, that which came to be was this essence of the universe, and a small world in its own right. Countless was the number of most delicate mechanisms that were embedded into its life form. Then it was made to come alive with the infusion of the spirit. After having been nourished and grown for nine months inside the womb of the mother, a perfect human being came into this world. Of course, perfect it was, but the body it had was weak. Nature took care of that by placing in the breast of the mother food that would suit an infant's physical requirement. This gave it the gradual supply of needed energy. From that time to the time of youth, passed many stages and then came a strong body at its total bloom. Then came claims of the power thus acquired and rose the desire to defeat every conceivable adversary.

But, that was not the end. When the creator and master of this new aspirant into the world decided otherwise, all these strengths started waning. Even the decline was not sudden. It took time. There were countless stages. Finally, came the fag end of the years of life. Once there, just imagine, has this person not reached back into the stage of one's childhood. Habits started changing. Reflexes became different. Things that used to be the dearest started appearing hateful. What was comfort once turned into suffering. This is what the Qur'an calls "tankīs," that is, being turned upside down. One trusts what one sees with one's own eyes and what one hears with one's own ears in the life of this world. This too does not remain trustworthy during the later years of old age. Clearly understanding what is being said becomes difficult because one becomes

hard of hearing. The same thing happens to the sense of sight that becomes weak. One cannot see well enough. The classical Arab poet, al-Mutanabbi has said:

ومن صحب الدنيا طويلا تفلّبت.....☆.....على عينه حتى يرى صدقها كذبا

And for one who lives long in the world, it will turn upside down right before his eyes to the extent that what he saw as truth will start appearing to be a lie.

Not only that this major change in man's frame of existence is a standing manifestation of the unique power of Allah Ta'ālā, it is also a great favor to him. Is it not that all strengths the supreme Creator has placed in the living presence of man are, in reality, the God-given functional devices issued to him with the clarification that they were neither his property nor were they everlasting and that, finally, they will be taken back from him. This obviously required that, once came the time of such take over, all such strengths should have been taken back simultaneously. But, the most merciful and sublime Lord has not elected to do that. Instead, He has allowed that these strengths be taken back in installments that too are prominently long and spaced apart. Thus, these are taken back gradually, bit by bit, so that one gets alerted and starts getting ready to embark on the ultimate journey of the Hereafter. And Allah knows best.

Verses 69 - 75

وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ ۗ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْآنٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٦٩﴾
 لِيُنذِرَ مَنْ كَانَ حَيًّا وَيَحِقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا
 خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِمَّا عَمِلَتْ أَيْدِينَا أَنْعَامًا فَهُمْ لَهَا مَالِكُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَذَلَّلْنَاهَا
 لَهُمْ فَمِنْهَا رَكُوبُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ
 وَمَشَارِبٌ ۗ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لَعَلَّهُمْ
 يَنْصُرُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَهُمْ ۗ وَهُمْ لَهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُحَضَّرُونَ

And We did not teach him (the Holy Prophet) poetry, and it is not proper for him. It is nothing (of that sort) but (it is) an advice and a readable book that explains (the truth), [69] so that it warns him who is alive (to listen to the truth), and so that the word may prove true against the disbelievers. [70] Did they not see that We have created for them cattle, among things made (directly) by Our hands, then they are their owners? [71] And We have brought them under their control, so as some of them are their means of transport, and some of them they eat. [72] And for them there are (other) benefits in them and things to drink. So, would they not be grateful? [73] And they have adopted other gods than Allah, so that they may be helped (by them). [74] They cannot help them, rather they (the disbelievers themselves) are (like) an army brought forth for (protecting) them (the so-called co-gods) [75]

Commentary

In the first verse cited here, it was said: وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ (And We did not teach him poetry and it is not proper for him.) Since the deniers of the appearance of a prophet and messenger with a mission could not deny the unique effectiveness of the Qur'ān and its ability to move hearts that was a matter of common experience, therefore, they invented convenient excuses. At times, they would call this Divine Word, some magic and the Holy Prophet ﷺ, a magician. Then, on other occasions, they would say that this Word was poetry and he was a poet. By saying that, they wanted to prove that this unique effectiveness did not come out of the Divine Word as such, instead, they were either words of magic or sorcery that made an impression on hearts, or it is poetic speech for that too affects hearts.

In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā said that He did not teach His prophet the art of poetry, nor was it appropriate to his station and saying that he was a poet, is false and wrong.

Here, we have a question. Is it not that Arabs are a people who have poetry in their blood? Even their women and children would compose impromptu lines of poetry. They knew poetry and its reality. How could they say that the Qur'ān was poetry and the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a poet? On what basis could this be because neither is the Qur'ān restricted by the compulsion of poetic meter, nor of *radīf* (the unchanging word that

appears at the end of the hemistich) and *qāfiyah* (the changing rhymed word that appears before the *radīf*) anywhere in the text? Not even someone who is pathetically ignorant of the mores of poetry would think of calling this poetry.

To answer this, it can be said that, essentially, poetry is composed of self-structured imaginary subjects, whether in poetry or prose. By calling the Qur'ān, poetry and the Holy Prophet ﷺ, a poet their purpose was to tell him that the Divine Word he claims to have brought, is no more than imaginary tales. Or, may be, they called him a poet in terms of the well recognized meaning of poetry with a certain congruity in mind, that is, the effect produced by the Qur'ān is similar to the effect produced by poetic compositions.

Quoting his own chain of authority, Imām Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ has reported that someone asked Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها if the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to recite some verse of poetry once in a while. To that, she said, "No, however, he once did recite a verse of Ibn Ṭarfah:

ستدى لك الايام ما كنت جاهلاً.....☆..... ويأتيك بالاخبار من لم تزود

"The time will reveal to you that which you did not know, and the news will be brought to you by one whom you did not appointed to do so.

But the holy Prophet ﷺ recited this as: وزن شعري in a manner that broke the poetic measure. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ submitted, 'Yā Rasūlallah, this verse is not like that.' He said, 'I am not a poet, nor is poetry appropriate for me.'

Ibn Kathīr has reported this narration in his Tafsīr, and at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasa'ī and Imām Aḥmad have also reported it. This tells us that he simply did not consider reciting verses of poetry composed by others as appropriate for him. That he would compose it himself was unthinkable. As for some sentences having the resonance of poetic measure reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself, they did not issue forth from him with the intention of composing formal poetry. They were casual, and should some one or two lines issue forth from a person that fall into poetic measure, these do not make him a poet. But, from this natural condition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that was based on great considerations of wisdom, it does not become necessary that poetry should be taken as blameworthy

in any absolute sense - as explained under the details of injunctions relating to poetry in our commentary on verse 224 of Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā' (26) appearing at its end in Volume VI of Ma'āriful-Qur'an, English. Those interested may see it there.

In verse 71, it was said: *أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِمَّا عَمِلَتْ أَيْدِينَا أَنْعَامًا فَهُمْ لَهَا مَالِكُونَ* (Did they not see that We have created for them cattle, among things made (directly) by Our hands, then they are their owners?). Along with the mention of the Divine novelty and beneficence in the creation of the cattle in this verse, yet another great favor of Allah Ta'ālā has been identified. It has been said that man has played no role in the creation of these cattle. Allah Ta'ālā made them, exclusively, by His own hands, so to say. Then, He not only let human beings benefit from these cattle with His permission, but also made them their owners, so that they could dispose them off in any manner they chose - use them to their advantage or sell them off and use the money thus acquired.

Gift of God - not capital or labor - is the real wisdom behind the ownership of things

In our day, debate is still going on between various economic theories as to the basis of production of things and their ownership. Is it wealth, or is it labor? The votaries of the capitalist economic system declare capital and wealth as its basis. The protagonists of the socialist and communist system support labor as the real reason or justification behind production of things and their ownership. This decree of the Qur'an tells us that none of these two has any role to play in the creation of things and their ownership. The creation of anything does not rest in the possession or control of human beings. That is an act of Allah Ta'ālā, directly. Then, reason demands that the one who creates something should also be its owner. Therefore, when it comes to things of this world, the essential and real ownership is that of Allah Ta'ālā. The ownership of human beings in anything whatsoever can take effect only when Allah Ta'ālā passes it on to them in His mercy. Allah Ta'ālā has already revealed the law of the proof and transfer of ownership through his prophets. Counter to this law, no one can become the owner of anything.

In verse 72: *وَدَلَّلْنَاهَا لَهُمْ* (And We have brought them under their control), yet another favor and blessing has been pointed to. If one were to look at the camel, horse, elephant, ox and other animals, it will be

realized that they are seemingly far stronger than human beings. Man is weak as compared to them - as a result of which, it should have not been possible for him to tame and control them. But, Allah Ta'ālā had it arranged in His own way. The way He created these animals and gifted them to human beings, in the same way, He made these free animals naturally subservient to man. A boy reins a strong horse and rides on its back to anywhere he likes to go. This thing too is no achievement of man. This comes from Allah Ta'ālā as His grace, a blessing that is given to man without asking.

In the last verse cited above (75), it was said: وَهُمْ لَهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُّحَضَّرُونَ (rather they are an army brought forth for them). One sense of this verse is to take the word: جُنْدٌ (army) in the text to mean an opponent or adversary and take the verse to mean that the things they have made their objects of worship in the mortal world will turn against them on the Day of Judgment and also bear witness against them.

And according to a Tafsir reported from Ḥasan and Qatādah رَحْمَهُمُ اللَّهُ, it means that these people had taken to idols as gods in the hope that they would help them. But, the reality on the ground proved to be that they were already incapable of helping them. As a result, the very people who used to worship them as their servants and soldiers are now guarding them to the extent that they would take their side and fight against anyone who opposes them (al-Qurtūbī). The translation given in the text (with brackets) is based on this interpretation.

Verses 76 - 83

فَلَا يَحْزَنُكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرِ
الْإِنْسَانَ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَضَرَبَ لَنَا
مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ ﴿٧٨﴾ قُلْ
يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۖ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٩﴾ الَّذِي
جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ مِنْهُ تُوقَدُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾
أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَدِيرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ ۗ

بَلَىٰ ۗ وَهُوَ الْخَلْقُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٨١﴾ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ،
 كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ
 تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

So, their remarks must not grieve you. Surely We know what they conceal and what they disclose. [76] And did man not see that We have created him from a drop of semen? Then suddenly he stood as an open adversary (to Us). [77] And he has set up an argument about Us and forgot his creation. He said, "Who will give life to the bones when they are decayed?" [78] Say, "These will be revived by the same One who had created them for the first time, and who is fully aware about every creation, [79] – the One who created for you fire from the green tree, and in no time you kindle from it." [80] Is it that the One who has created the heavens and the earth has no power to create ones like them? Why not? And He is the Supreme Creator, the All-Knowing. [81] His practice, when He intends to do something, is no more than He says, "Be", and it comes to be. [82] So, pure (from every fault) is the One in whose hand is the dominion of all things. And towards Him you are to be returned. [83]

Commentary

The last five verses of Sūrah Yā Sīn were revealed in the background of a particular event. This event has been attributed to Ubayy Ibn Khalaf in some narrations, and to 'Āṣ ibn Wā'il in some others. And there is no improbability in that such an event came to pass with both of them. The first narration was reported by al-Baihaqī in Shu'abul-'Imān, and the other reported by Ibn Abī Hāatim from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says that 'Āṣ Ibn Wā'il picked up a bone from the sandy and pebble-strewn valley of Makkah and after breaking it with his hands rubbed it into a handful of bone meal and then said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, "Will Allah revive this bone you are seeing in my hands?" The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Yes, Allah Ta'ālā will put you to death, then bring you back to life and then He will put you in Hell." (Ibn Kathīr)

The expression: خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ (an open adversary) in verse 77 means that this man was created from a lowly drop, yet he has the audacity to

challenge Allah, and refuse to accept His power. In verse 78, it was said: ضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا (And he has set up an argument about Us). Here, the expression refers to the event described above, that is, while smashing and rubbing the bone into bone meal, its revival was considered improbable. After that, it was said: وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ (and forgot his own creation). It means while he was giving that example, he forgot the example of his own creation as to how he himself was created by infusing life in a lowly, impure and lifeless drop - a bland anatomy of his creation indeed. Had he not forgotten his real genetic origin, he would have never come up with such examples and would have never dared saying no to Divine power.

In verse 80, it was said: جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا (the One who created for you fire from the green tree). Two trees used to be well known in 'Arabia - Markh (Cynanchum Vinimale) and 'Afār. The Arabs were accustomed to cutting two twigs from these two trees as they did with *siwāk* or *miswāk*. These twigs would be solid, green, and full of fresh water inside. By rubbing one on the other, it worked like firestone. They could strike fire out of these. This is what has been alluded to in striking fire out of the green tree. (Qurṭubī) And if we were to consider the ultimate fate of trees, every green tree that flourishes initially, then, later on, once dried, it becomes a source of fuel and fire. Seen from this angle, every tree can be meant here - as seems to be the sense in the following verse of the noble Qur'an: أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ النَّارَ الَّتِي تُورُونَ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْشَأْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَا أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنشِئُونَ (Now tell Me about the fire you kindle: Is it you who have originated its tree, are We the Orginator? - 56:71, 72).

But, in the present verse, since the quality of the 'shajar' or tree has also been mentioned as being 'akhdar' or green, therefore, here it seems that meant here are those particular trees that used to be a source of fire despite being green and moisturized.

In verse 82, it was said: إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ، كُنْ فَيَكُونُ (His practice, when He intends to do something, is no more than He says, "Be", and it comes to be.). In other words, the verse means that when Allah Ta'ālā intends to create something, He has no need to follow the way things are made by human beings who have to collect raw materials, assemble technicians and work for a certain period of time until the thing is ready. His way, to use an understatement, is different. Whenever, He intends to create something, for Him it is sufficient to give the command: "Be." Right

then, the thing so commanded comes into existence. From this, it does not necessarily follow that the creation of everything should invariably be instant. Instead, when the creation of something instantly under the dictate of the wisdom of the Creator is expedient, it stands created on the beam without any gradual mode or respite. And when the creation of something is decreed to be appropriate only as gradual due to some wise consideration, it comes into existence gradually - whether it is destined to be created along with a particular gradual mode in the very first decree, or it is addressed with a separate command of '*kun*' or 'be' at each gradual stage. وَاللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ؛ وَتَعَالَىٰ أَعْلَمُ. (And Allah, the Pure, the High knows best).

Alḥamdulillāh

The Commentary on

Sūrah Yā Sīn

Ends here

Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaffāt

Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaffāt is Makki and it has 182 verses and 5 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1- 10

وَالصَّفَّاتِ صَفًّا ﴿١﴾ فَالزَّجْرَاتِ زَجْرًا ﴿٢﴾ فَالتَّلِيَّتِ ذِكْرًا ﴿٣﴾ إِنَّ
 إِلَهُكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ ﴿٤﴾ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَرَبُّ
 الْمَشَارِقِ ﴿٥﴾ اِنَّا زَيْنًا السَّمٰءِ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةِ الْكَوَاكِبِ ﴿٦﴾
 وَحِفْظًا مِّنْ كُلِّ شَيْطٰنٍ مَّارِدٍ ﴿٧﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ اِلَى الْمَلٰٓئِكِ الْاَعْلٰى
 وَيُقَدَّفُونَ مِّنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ ﴿٨﴾ دُحُوْرًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ وَّاصِبٌ ﴿٩﴾
 اِلَّا مَنْ خَطِفَ الْخَطْفَةَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ ﴿١٠﴾

(I swear) by those who stand in rows, [1] then by those who prevent firmly [2], then by those who recite the *dhikr*, [3] surely your God is but One, [4] the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, and Lord of the points of the sunrise. [5] Verily, We have decorated the nearest sky with an adornment, the stars, [6] and (have made them) a security against every rebellious shaitan (satan). [7] They cannot listen to the Upper Realm and are hit from every side [8] to be driven off, and for them there is a lasting punishment, [9] however, if one snatches a little bit, he is pursued by a bright flame. [10]

Commentary

Subjects of the Sūrah

This Sūrah is Makki, that is, it was revealed in Makkah

al-Mukarramah. Like other Makkī Sūrahs, matters of faith have been taken up as its essential subject. In it, beliefs about Divine Oneness, the mission of messengers and the certain eventuality of the Hereafter have been fortified with proofs presented in various ways. As a corollary, a refutation of the beliefs of Mushriks as well as the scenes of Paradise and Hell also appear in the Sūrah. After providing rational support for beliefs that formed part of the call of the noble prophets عليهم السلام and after removing doubts and objections raised by disbelievers, the Sūrah describes how Allah Ta'ālā dealt with those who embraced these beliefs in the past and what was the fate of those who opted to take the road to denial and disbelief? Accordingly, in that wise, events relating to Sayyidnā Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, Hārūn, Ilyās, Lūṭ and Yūnus عليهم السلام have been mentioned, briefly at some places and in details at others.

The Mushriks of Makkah used to call angels: Daughters of God. Towards the end, this belief has been refuted in details and an overall view of the Sūrah seems to indicate that the refutation of this particular kind of *shirk* (ascribing partners to the Divinity of Allah by declaring angels to be the daughters of God) has been kept in marked sight. Therefore, the Sūrah has been initiated with an oath taken in the name of angels combined with a declaration of the attributes of their servitude. *والله سبحانه اعلم* (And Allah, who is Pure, knows best).

Tauḥīd: The Oneness of Allah is the first subject

The Sūrah has been initiated by a description of the belief in Tauḥīd, the Oneness of Allah and the real purpose of the first four verses is to state: *إِنَّ إِلَهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ* (surely your God is but One - 37:4). But, before this is asserted, three oaths are sworn ahead of it. A simple literal translation of these oaths is given below: "(I swear) by those who stand in rows, [1] then by those who prevent firmly [2], then by those who recite the *dhikr*.

Who are these people identified as "those who stand in rows," then, "those who prevent firmly" and then, "those who recite the *dhikr*?" There is no clarification in the words of the noble Qur'ān about it. Therefore, different views have been expressed to explain it. Some respected commentators say that these refer to living warriors who come out to wage Jihad in the way of Allah and who stand in rows after rows, so that they prevent the aggression of the forces of the false, and even when they file in readiness for combat, even then, they remain engaged in *dhikr*,

tasbih and the recitation of the Qur'ān as well.

Some others have said that they mean the performers of prayers who stand in rows in the Masjid and prevent Satanic thoughts denying access to them by means of a total concentration on dhikr and the recitation of the Qur'ān (Tafsīr Kabīr and Qurṭubī). Other than these, there are some explanations that do not bear much congruity with the actual words of the Qur'ān.

But, the Tafsīr or explanation which found the widest acceptance with the majority of commentators was that the reference here is to angels, and given here are three attributes credited to them:

1. The first attribute is: **الصُّفَّتِ صَفًّا** (those who stand in rows). This expression comes from the word: **صَفَّ** (*şaff*) and it means 'to align some group on a straight line' (Qurṭubī). Thus, it means precisely as it has been translated above.

That the angels stand in the formation of rows has also been mentioned later in this very Sūrah: **وَأَنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصُّفُّونَ** (and We, surely We are those who stand in rows - 37:165). When are these rows formed? In answer to that, some respected commentators - such as, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Qatādah - have said that angels are always standing in their rows in space awaiting the command of their Lord, and when it comes, they carry it out (Maḥzarī). Some others particularize it with the time of worship, that is, when the angels are engaged in *'ibādah*, dhikr and tasbih (worship, remembrance and glorification of Allah), they are in a row formation (Tafsīr Kabīr).

Discipline is desirable in Islam

From this verse, we learn that doing everything in an organized and disciplined manner and giving due consideration to order and skill in whatever we do is something expected of us and is certainly liked by Allah Ta'ālā. It is obvious that the two objectives of the worship of Allah Ta'ālā and the implementation of His command might have as well been achieved if the angels, rather than form rows, could have assembled in the form of a disorganized mob. But, instead of being subjected to something so haphazard, they were given the taufiq or ability to make rows. Then, by mentioning this very attribute first out of their good attributes in this verse, it was pointed out that Allah Ta'ālā likes this style

of propriety very much.

The importance of making rows come straight and right in Ṣalāh

So this is not for angels only. Human beings too have been induced to and bound with the need to make their rows straight and right during 'ibādah'. According to a narration of Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn Samurah رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him and those with him, "Why do you not align yourself in perfect rows (while offering Ṣalāh) as do the angels before their Lord?" The Ṣaḥābah asked, 'How do the angels form their rows before their Lord?' He said, "They complete the rows and stand compactly (that is, leave no gap in between the row)." (Tafsīr Maḥḥarī)

So many *aḥādīth* stressing on the need to make rows complete and keep them straight in Ṣalāh have appeared that they could fill an independent treatise on the subject. Sayyidnā Abū Mas'ūd al-Badrī رضي الله عنه says that the Holy Prophet ﷺ would touch our shoulders with his blessed hand during Ṣalāh and say, "Stand straight, do not step ahead or fall behind, other wise, it will cause dissension to creep up in your hearts." (Jam' al-Fawa'id, with reference to Muslim and an-Nasā'ī, p. 91, v.1)

2. The second attribute of the angels has been described as: *فَالزَّجْرَاتِ زَجْرًا* (*fazzajirāti zajran*: those who prevent firmly). This word has been derived from *زَجْر* (*zajr*) which means to hold in check, block, prevent or restrain, also to drive back, repel or reprimand. Maulana Thanavi has translated it in the sense of those who place an impregnable check - which comprehends every possible sense of the word. Now, what is that against which the angels place their check? In view of the context of the Holy Qur'an, most commentators have answered it by saying that the enforcing of check at this place means the act of angels through which they stop the satans from reaching the higher levels, and a detailed description of which is going to appear a little later in the Qur'an itself.

3. The third attribute is: *فَالذِّكْرَاتِ ذِكْرًا* (*fattaliati dhikran*) that is, these angels are those who recite the 'dhikr'. The core sense of 'dhikr' is 'word of good counsel' as well as 'the remembrance of Allah.' In the first instance, it would mean that these angels are those who recite everything Allah Ta'ālā has revealed as word of good counsel through Scriptures. And this recitation could be as a means of earning *barakah* and also as an act of 'ibādah'. Then, it is also possible that it means the angels who

bring wahy (revelation) to the prophets, since they recite these Scriptures carrying good counsel before the prophets عليهم السلام and thus they convey the message of Allah to them. And in the second instance, if '*dhikr*' were to be taken to mean the remembrance of Allah, then, it would mean that they keep busy reciting those words, words that prove their commitment to the glory and sanctity of Allah.

At this place, by mentioning these three attributes of angels, the noble Qur'ān has put together all essential qualities of ideal servitude. To sum up: (1) Stand in perfect linear formation for '*ibādah*', (2) preventing rebellious forces from disobedience to Allah and (3) to recite the good counsel and commandments of Allah in person as well as to communicate to others. It is obvious that no act of servitude can remain devoid of these three departments. Hence, the sense of all four verse (37:1-4) turns out to be: 'By the angels who imbibe in them all ideal attributes of servitude, your true Lord is but One.'

Why has the statement been sworn by the angels?

The reason why angels have been sworn by in the Sūrah particularly - as already submitted - lies in the central theme of this Sūrah. It aims at refuting the peculiar kind of shirk (ascribing of partners in the pure divinity of Allah) based on which the people of Makkah used to call angels the daughters of Allah. Accordingly, at the very beginning of the Sūrah, by swearing in the name of the angels, described there were their unique attributes that demonstrated their perfect servitude. In other words, the sense is that should you ponder over these angelic attributes of servitude, they will themselves become a witness before you that their relationship with Allah Ta'ālā is not that of a father and daughter, instead, it is that of servants and the Master.

Injunctions about sworn statement of Allah Ta'ālā: Three questions and their answers

In the noble Qur'ān, there are statement in which Allah Ta'ālā has sworn in various ways in order to lay emphasis on many matters of principles relating to faith and its articles. At some places, it is that of His own Being while, at other places, it is that of particular things out of what He has created. This raises many questions. Therefore, it has become a detailed issue in the science of the Tafsīr (exegesis) of the noble Qur'ān. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Qiyyim has written a regular book on the subject entitled النبيان

at-Tibyan fi Aqşam-il- Qur'ān. 'Allāmah as-Suyūṭī has, in his book الاتقان al-Itqān on the principle of Tafsīr has discussed it in details in the sixty-seventh category of discussions. Some necessary components are being given here:

Question One: When Allah Ta'ālā makes a sworn statement, a question naturally arises: Is it not that Allah Ta'ālā is the most need free of all? Why would he need to strengthen His statement with an oath in order to make someone believe?

Abulqasim al-Qushairi has answered to this question by saying that Allah needs not to swear before anyone, but His compassion towards His servants invited Him to do so in the hope that they, after hearing such a sworn statement made by Allah Ta'ālā, may tend to accept the truth and save themselves from the punishment. When an Arab bedouin heard the verse *وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ. فَوَرَبِّ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْوَعْدِ* (And in heaven is your provision, and that you are promised, it is surely true as that you have speech - 51:22-23) where Allah Ta'ālā has sworn by 'the Lord of the heavens and the earth', he remarked, "Who has annoyed the Almighty to make Him swear an oath?"

In short, as said earlier, this is something necessitated by Divine compassion for His creation. Is it not that we have with us a recognized method of settling disagreements and differences? A witness is presented to support a claim. If there is no witness, a sworn statement is offered. Similarly, Allah Ta'ālā has elected to go by this familiar way of human beings in their interest. On occasions, He has laid stress on the subject by using the word: شَهَادَاتٍ (witness) as in: *شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ* (Allah bears witness that there is no god but He - And [so do] the angels and the men of knowledge - 'Al-Imrān, 3:18). Then, there are occasions when words of oath have been used as in: *إِنِّي وَرَبِّي إِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْوَعْدِ* (Yes, by my Lord, it is true - Yūnus, 10:53).

Question Two: When it comes to taking an oath, it is usually done in the name of someone comparatively higher, bigger or more significant. But, how is it that Allah Ta'ālā has sworn by things in His creation that are inferior to Him in all conceivable respects?

It can be answered by saying that there simply is, nor can there be, any being or entity greater than Allah Ta'ālā. When so, it is obvious that

the oath of Allah Ta'ālā cannot be like that of the common creation. Therefore, on occasions, Allah *subḥānahu wa Ta'ālā* has sworn by His own pristine Being as in: *إِي وَرَبِّي* (Yes, by my Lord - 10:53). Then, there are seven places in the Qur'ān where oaths are sworn by Allah Himself. Then there are other places where oaths are sworn by Divine acts or attributes and the Qur'ān itself, for example: *وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا، وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا، وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا* (And by the sky, and One who built it, and by the earth, and the One who spread it, and by the soul, and who made it well - ash-Shams, 91:5-7). And most of such oaths relate to the objects of creation that, being the means of recognition of Allah, do but revert back to Allah Himself as the ultimate source of all creation. (as mentioned by Ibn-ul-Qayyim)

Out of the things in creation that have been sworn by, at places, the purpose is to highlight the sublimity of that particular thing, as is the case with an oath by the blessed life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the Holy Qur'ān by saying: *لَعَمْرُكَ إِنَّهُمْ لَفِي سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ* (By your life [O prophet], they are wandering blindly in their intoxication [misguidance] - al-Ḥijr, 15:72). Ibn Marduwayh reports the saying of Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that Allah Ta'ālā has not created anyone or anything in this world more sublime and esteemed than the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself, and it is for this reason that no oath by the person of any prophet or messenger appears anywhere in the entire Qur'ān. The only such oath being by the blessed life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ appears in the verse mentioned here. Similarly, the two oaths in: *وَالطُّورِ* (By the Mount - at-Ṭūr, 52:1) and *وَكِتَابٍ مُّسْتُورٍ* (By the Written Book - at-Ṭūr, 52:2) appear there to highlight the greatness of the two objects sworn by.

And on occasions, a certain created object has been sworn by for the reason that it yields a lot of benefits as in: *وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرِّبْوَنَ* (By the fig, and the olive - at-Tīn, 95:1). And there are other occasions where some created object has been sworn by for the reason that its creation is the manifestation of the great power of Allah Ta'ālā, and an important source of getting to know the Master-Creator of the universe. And in most cases, the thing sworn by does have some role to play in proving the subject stressed with the force of an oath. This unveils itself with a little deliberation wherever it occurs.

Question Three: For human beings in general, the well-known rule of the Shari'ah is that swearing by anyone other than Allah Ta'ālā is not

permissible. This poses a question: Is it not that the statements sworn by Allah Ta'ālā in the name of His own created objects go on to prove that a statement sworn in the name of someone other than Allah will also become permissible for others as well? This has been answered by Ḥasan al-Baṣrī by saying:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَقْسِمُ بِمَا شَاءَ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ وَلَيْسَ لِأَحَدٍ أَنْ يَقْسِمَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

(رواه ابن ابي حاتم از مظہری)

Surely, Allah Ta'ālā has the right to swear by whatever of His creation He wills, but it is not for anyone else to swear by anyone other than Allah (reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, as in Maḥzarī).

Here, the core sense is that taking one's own self on the analogy of the most-exalted Allah is wrong and false. Once the Divine Law has prohibited swearing by anyone other than Allah in the case of human beings at large, any effort to counter argue on the basis of what He elects to do on His own, simply cannot be anything but false.

Explanation of verses

Turning to the explanation of the verses cited above, we see that the statement: معبود برحق (Verily, your God is but One - 4) has been placed at the end of the first three verses in which oaths by angels are sworn. Though, during the course of these oaths, mentioned therein are particular attributes of angels that, if deliberated upon even in a modest measure, would turn out to be nothing short of initial proofs of the belief in Tauḥīd, the Oneness of Allah. But , in the six verses that follow next, a standing proof of Tauḥīd has also been supplied.

It was said: رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَرَبُّ الْمَشَارِقِ (the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, and Lord of the points of the sunrise. - 37:5). Now, a Being to whom goes the credit of having created and sustained such a mind-boggling range of creations has to be the One most deserving of ownership. And this entire universe is a positive proof of His existence and Oneness. The word: الْمَشَارِقِ (*al-mashāriq*) as used here is the plural form of مَشْرِقٍ *mashriq* or East. Since, the sun rises from a new point every day of the year, therefore, its orientations in the East are many, and it is on this basis that the plural form has been employed here.

In the next verse, it was said: إِنَّا زَيْنًا السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا بِرِيَّةٍ الْكَوَاكِبِ (Verily, We

have decorated the nearest sky with an adornment, the stars, - 37:6). Here, the expression: *السَّمَاءُ الدُّنْيَا* (*as-sama'ud-dunyā*: the nearest sky) means the closest sky. The sense is that Allah Ta'ālā has made this sky closest to the world look good through the glittering presence of stars. Now, it is not necessary that these stars are located precisely within the sky. In fact, even if they are detached from it, even then, should they be looked at from the earth, they appear to be on the sky - and keep imparting a glow to it. What is being said here is no more but that this star spangled sky is an open proof of the fact that it did not come into existence on its own, instead, it has been created by its creator. And why a Being that can bring such enormous things into existence would need any partner and sharer in His creation? In addition to that, when even the disbelievers find it a settled matter that Allah Ta'ālā is the creator of all heavenly bodies, would it not be injustice that, despite His being the Creator and Master, someone or something else be taken as the object of worship? As for the problem of stars being part of the sky or being separate from it in the light of the Qur'ān as well as that of the coherence of astronomy with the noble Qur'ān, these have been taken up in detail in the commentary on Sūrah al-Ḥijr (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume V, Verses 15:16, page 302)

In the last four verses, (37:7-10): *وَحِفْظًا مِّنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّارِدٍ (الى قوله تعالى) فَاتَّبَعَهُ؛* *شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ* and [have made them] a security against every rebellious shaitan [satan]. They cannot listen to the Upper Realm and are hit from every side, to be driven off, and for them there is a lasting punishment, (however, if one snatches a little bit, he is pursued by a bright flame - 37:10). It has been said that stars have yet another benefit besides being a decoration of the sky. Through these, wicked Satans are restrained from approaching the higher levels to eavesdrop. They do that to gather whatever news of the unseen they can gather by reaching the fringes of the sky. But, they are denied the opportunity to listen to what angels say to each other. If some Satan picks up even a part of their conversation, and tries to decamp with it, he is hit by a blazing flame, so that he remains unable to pass on this information to his devotees among soothsayers in the world. It is this blazing flame that has been called: *شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ* (*shihāb thāqib*: meteor).

Some details about meteors have appeared in Sūrah al-Ḥijr

(Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, volume V. 15:17,18, pages 303-305). At this place, it should be borne in mind that early Greek scientists believed in meteors being terrestrial substance that rose up with vapors and would burn up when it reached the fire zone. But, the words of the Qur'ān, as they appear here, seem to suggest that a meteor is not some terrestrial substance, rather, is something generated only in the upper atmosphere. At this stage, earlier commentators have been saying all along that the Greek assumption about meteors - that it was some terrestrial substance - was no more than a conjecture. Therefore, this cannot be used to raise an objection against the Qur'ān. As for the other possibility - that some terrestrial substance rises up and ignites itself in the upper atmosphere - that too offers no contradiction with the Qur'ān.

But, once we are in the age of modern scientific discoveries, the question has been put to rest. Astronomers tell us that meteors (*shihāb thāqib*) are small pieces from countless stars, generally of the size of large bricks. They stay in space. One of their groups is known as '*asadiyyah*', (Leo, or Lion, out of the signs of Zodiac). It keeps revolving around the sun on its path through the imaginary belt in the heavens. One orbit by it is completed in thirty-three years. Light is emitted in these pieces because of their speed and abrasion against heavenly bodies. These pieces fall mostly during the nights of August 10 and November 27. Then, during the nights of April 20, October 18 and November 28, and on the nights of December 6, 9 and 13, their fallings tapers off. (Tafsīr al-Jawahir by Ṭaṭṭawī, page 15, volume 8).

This investigative approach of modern science corresponds to the Qur'ānic description. Yes, as for people who take the phenomena of satans being hit by meteors beyond conception, the late Tantawi has offered a good advice for them in his Tafsīr al-Jawahir. He has said:

"Our forebears and scholars also took it with a heavy heart that the noble Qur'ān would say something counter to contemporary astronomy of their time. But, the commentators of the Qur'ān did not compromise their position. They did not agree to accept their thinking and surrender the position of the Qur'ān. Instead of doing something like that, they bypassed their philosophical assumptions and continued to stay with the Qur'ān. After the passage of some time, it became automatically established that the early Greeks were wrong in their assumptions. Now, if we

were to acknowledge that these stars hit, hurt and burn satans, what is there to stop us from doing so? Thus, here we are in our time embracing this statement of the Qur'ān as true. And we are faithfully waiting for the future (when science will also confirm it)." - al-Jawahir, page 14, volume 8.

The Real Objective

At this place, by mentioning the skies, the stars and the meteors, two objectives have been achieved. The first real objective is to assert the Oneness of Allah who has, all by Himself, created and managed a universal system so magnificent and, therefore, He alone is worthy of being worshipped as well. Then, there is the second objective whereby the false notion of those who take satans as their objects of worship has been refuted by telling them that they are the most accursed of the creation, and have nothing to do with the supreme station of godhead.

In addition to that, also refuted here is the objection of those who used to degrade the Divine revelation (*wahy*) sent to the Holy Prophet ﷺ as the predictions of the soothsayers. These verses clearly indicate that the noble Qur'ān rejects the soothsayers for the sum-total of their information is what they receive through the satans. And the Qur'ān says that the satans do not have access to the higher echelons. They cannot bring back the true information out of what remains in the realm of the Unseen (*alghayb*). When the Qur'ān states this as its creed relating to soothsaying, how can it become soothsaying as such? Thus, these verses carry clear hints to the subject of Allah's Oneness and the veracity of the mission of the prophet. Later on, through the example of these very cosmic creations, the belief in the Hereafter has been proved.

Verses 11 - 18

فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ أَهْمُ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ مَنِ خَلَقْنَا ۖ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ
لَّازِبٍ ﴿١١﴾ بَلْ عَجِبْتَ وَيَسْخَرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِذَا ذُكِّرُوا لَا يَذْكُرُونَ
﴿١٣﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَوْا آيَةً يَسْتَسْخَرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَقَالُوا إِن هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ
مُبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾ ۚ إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا ۗ إِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿١٦﴾
أَوَابًا ۗ وَإِنَّا لَأَوْلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ قُلْ نَعَمْ وَأَنْتُمْ دَاخِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

Now ask them, "Are they stronger in the formation of their bodies, or those (other beings) We have created?" Certainly, We did create them from sticky clay. [11] But you wonder (at their denial), and they mock (at the idea of an Hereafter). [12] And when any advice is given to them, they pay no heed to it. [13] And when they see a sign, they make fun of it, [14] and say, "This is nothing but an open magic. [15] Is it when we have died and become dust and bones, that we shall be raised again, [16] and even our fathers of a foretime?" [17] Say, "Yes - and you shall be disgraced (too)!" [18]

Commentary

After having proved the belief in the Oneness of Allah, described in the present eight verses is the belief in the 'Ākhirah or Hereafter along with an answer to doubts entertained by disbelievers about it. First of all, a rational proof has been given in support of the possibility of human resurrection in the very initial verse cited above. In gist, it refers to the huge heavenly bodies of the universe mentioned in previous verses, and points out to the obvious weakness of human beings as compared to them. Now when disbelievers do recognize that such great objects of creation as angels, Moon, stars, Sun and the meteors, were created by Allah Ta'ālā through His infinite power, how could it become difficult for Him to make a weak creation like human beings die and then come alive once again? It is being said that the way they were fashioned in the beginning with sticky clay followed by a blowing of spirit in them, similarly, when they will have died and become dust, even then, Allah Ta'ālā will give them life once again.

As for the statement: (Certainly, We did create them from sticky clay - 37:11), either it means that their forefather, Sayyidnā Adam عليه السلام, was created with clay, or it is also possible that it means every human being. Therefore, if seen with a little deliberation, water-based clay is the essence of every human being cyclically. Human creation is from sperm, sperm from blood and blood from food. The essence of food, no matter in which form, is vegetation and vegetation comes from the combination of clay and water.

Anyway, the first verse (11) provides a rational proof of the belief in the 'Ākhirah or Hereafter. This has been posed in the form of a question beamed right at them: Who is more difficult in the process of creation?

You? Or, are the many objects of creation We have mentioned more difficult to create? Therefore, no elaborate explanation was considered necessary. It was deemed sufficient to allude to it through a hint by saying - 'Certainly, We did create them with sticky clay.'

After that, in the five verses that follow it, described there is the reaction the disbelievers show on hearing the proofs in support of the Hereafter. The proofs of the belief in the Hereafter presented before disbelievers were of two kinds: (1) Rational proofs as given in the first verse. (2) Reported proofs, that is, they were shown miracles in support of the veracity of the mission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as prophet and messenger of Allah asserting that he was, as such, from Allah and a prophet of Allah can never lie. He receives the authority of what he says from the heavens. And when he is telling us that the last day of Qiyāmah will come, there will be a Resurrection and human beings will account for their deeds, then, this information given by him is definitely true, and it must be accepted as true.

As for the reaction of disbelievers on rational proofs, it was said: **بَلْ عَجِبْتَ وَيَسْخَرُونَ. وَإِذَا دُكِّرُوا لَا يَذْكُرُونَ** (But you wonder [at their denial], and they mock [at the idea of an Hereafter]. And when any advice is given to them, they pay no heed to it. - 12,13). Given here first is the stance of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who wonders as to how could these people, after having such clear proofs before them, still remain reluctant to accept the truth while these people, on the contrary, indulge in making fun of the proofs and beliefs presented by him before them. In fact, no amount of advice and counsel given to them works. They are just averse to any understanding.

As for reported proofs, their reaction is: **وَإِذَا رَأَوْا آيَةً يَسْتَسْخِرُونَ** (And when they see a sign, they make a fun of it - 37:14). It means if they see a miracle that confirms the veracity of his prophethood, and the belief in 'Ākhirah ultimately, they ridicule even something so serious and dismiss it by saying that it was nothing but clear magic. Why would they so scoff and jeer? Did they have some basis, some argument in support?

They did and it was: **إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا ءَأَنَا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ أَوْ آبَاءُونا الْأَوَّلُونَ** (Is it when we have died and become dust and bones, that we shall be raised again, and even our fathers of a foretime?"- 16,17). In other words, the problem of comprehension that confronted them was as to how in the

world could they - once they and their forefathers had become dust and bones - be brought back to life all over again. They were really not willing to admit any proof in this matter, neither that of reason nor that of miracle. Allah Ta'ālā has chosen to answer their question in a single sentence at the end in the words: قُلْ نَعَمْ وَأَنْتُمْ دَاخِرُونَ (Say, "Yes - and you shall be disgraced (too)!" - 37:18)

Outwardly, this is a dismissive answer, as is usually given to rigid people. But, a little deliberation would reveal that it happens to be a full-fledged argument as well. Imām Rāzī has explained it in Tafsīr Kabīr. He says: By the rational proof of resurrection given earlier, it already stands established that the rising of human beings once again after death is not something impossible. Then, the rule is that the physical happening of anything rationally possible can be proved on the authority of the statement of someone who is harbinger of nothing but the truth. So, once this much is settled that rising again is possible, then, should some true prophet of Allah simply say thereafter: 'Yes, you shall definitely rise again,' this will be an absolute proof that the said event is bound to happen.

The proof of the miracles of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

The word: آية ('āyatan) in verse 14: وَإِذَا رَأَوْا آيَةً (And when they see a sign) literally means 'sign' and at this place it means 'miracle.' Hence, this verse proves that Allah Ta'ālā had given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ some other miracles as well in addition to that of the noble Qur'ān - which refutes those who take the miracles of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as effects of physical causes, and thereby claim that no miracle, other than that of the Qur'ān, was shown at the blessed hands of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In this verse (14), Allah Ta'ālā has clearly said: وَإِذَا رَأَوْا آيَةً يَسْتَسْخِرُونَ (And when they see a sign, they make fun of it). Some people who deny miracles say that, at this place, the word: آية ('āyat) does not mean مُعْجَزَةٌ ('mu'jizah) or miracle, instead, it means rational arguments. But, this approach is patently wrong in view of what is said in the next verse that follows immediately: وَقَالُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ (and they say, "this is nothing but an open magic - 37:15). It is obvious that declaring an evidence and argument to be open magic does not make any sense. They could have said something like this only when they had seen a miracle.

Some deniers of miracles also say that the word: آية ('āyat) means ayat

or verses of the Qur'ān, as it is these verses that the disbelievers declare as magic. But, the word: رَأَوْا (*rā aw*: they see) of the noble Qur'ān is flatly contradicting this assertion. The verses of the Qur'ān were not seen. Instead, they were heard. Hence, wherever Qur'ānic verses have been mentioned in the noble Qur'ān, the words used there are those of hearing, not of seeing. And place after place in the Qur'ān, the word: آية (*āyat*) has appeared in the sense of *mu'jizah* or miracle. For instance, while reporting the demand of the Pharaoh from Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام it was said:

إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ بِآيَةٍ فَأْتِ بِهَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

If you have come with a sign bring it out, if you are one of the truthful (7:106).

In response, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام had shown the miracle of his staff turning into a serpent. As for the verses of the Qur'ān where it has been mentioned that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not accede to their demand for a miracle, the fact is that miracles had been repeatedly shown thereby, but they used to ask for an ever-new miracle of their choice almost everyday. It was in response to such demands for miracles that they were turned down. It was done for the reason that a prophet of Allah shows miracles at the will and command of Allah Ta'ālā. If anyone still refuses to accept the true message conveyed by him, then, coming up with a new miracle everyday is counter to the dignity of the prophet, as well as counter to the will of Allah Ta'ālā.

In addition to that, it has been the customary practice of Allah Ta'ālā that, once some people were granted the miracle they had asked for - and they still failed to believe - then, they were destroyed through a mass punishment. But, in view of the intended survival of the community of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and with the objective of keeping it safe from any mass punishment, no such miracle on demand was shown before it.

Verses 19 - 26

فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فَإِذَا هُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَقَالُوا يَوْمَئِذٍ هَذَا
يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴿٢٠﴾ هَذَا يَوْمُ الْفُضْلِ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَكْدِبُونَ ﴿٢١﴾
أَحْشَرُوا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ مِنْ

دُونَ اللَّهِ فَأَهْدُوهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَقِفُوهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ
 مَسْتُؤَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنصُرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ بَلْ هُمْ الْيَوْمَ
 مُسْتَسْلِمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

So, it will be only a single (castigating) Call, and all of a sudden they will begin to see. [19] And they will be saying, "Woe to us; this is the Day of Retribution." [20] (It will be said to them,) This is the Day of Judgment that you used to deny. [21] Muster all those who were unjust, and their fellows, and whatever they used to worship [22] other than Allah, and show them the way to Jahannam, [23] and make them stop (for a while) - they are to be questioned: [24]" What has happened to you that you do not help each other?" [25] On the contrary, all of them today are totally submissive . [26]

Commentary

After having shown the possibility and proof of 'Ākhirah or Hereafter, Allah Ta'ālā has described some events relating to Resurrection in these verses.

Given in the first verse (19) is the mode in which the dead will rise again. It was said: فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ: (So, it will be only a single [castigating] Call and all of a sudden they will begin to see - 37:19). The word: زَجْرَةٌ (*Zajrah*) is a noun derived from زَجْرٌ (*zajr*), and it is used to carry many meanings in the Arabic language. Out of these, one meaning is: 'To utter such sounds which, when heard by cattle, would motivate them to rise and get moving.' Here, it means the second Ṣūr (Horn or Trumpet) that will be blown by the angel, Sayyidnā Isrāfīl عليه السلام. Hence, it has been expressed as '*zajrah*' for the reason that the way some sounds are produced to prompt cattle to rise and get moving, very similarly, this Ṣūr will be blown to make the dead rise. (Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī)

Though Allah Ta'ālā is, in His infinite power, inherently capable of making the dead rise again without having the Ṣūr blown, yet this Ṣūr will be blown in order to highlight the awe of the Resurrection (Tafsīr Kabīr). Its effect on the disbelievers has been identified as: فَإِذَا هُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ (and all of a sudden they will begin to see - 37:19), that is, the way they could see in the mortal world, in the same way, they would be able to see there.

Some other commentators have explained it by saying that, overtaken by wonder, they will start looking at each other. (Qurṭubī)

In verse 22, it was said: *أَحْشُرُوا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ* (Muster all those who were unjust, and their fellows). Here, the text has used the word: *أَزْوَاجٌ* (*azwāj*) for cohorts, fellow travelers, or people of the same persuasion - a word literally meaning 'pair'. Then, this word is very commonly used in the sense of spouses. That is why some commentators have said that it means wives of the Mushriks who were also Mushriks. But, in the sight of most commentators, the word: *أَزْوَاجٌ* (*azwāj*) at this place means nothing but people of the same persuasion, and it also finds support in a saying of Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه. Imām al-Baihaqī, 'Abd-ur-Razzāq and others have reported this saying of Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه under their explanation of this verse. They have said that the word: *أَزْوَاجُهُمْ* (*azwājuhūm*) in the text means 'other people like them.' Thus, (while mustering the unjust), huddled together there will be the people of the same interest, fornicators with other fornicators and drunkards with other drunkards. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī and Mazharī)

In addition to that, by saying: *وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ* (and whatever they used to worship - 37:22), it was expressly laid out that, along with the Mushriks, all those false objects and entities like idols and satans they used to worship and equate with Allah as His associates in the life of the world will all be mustered together - so that, at that time, the helplessness of these false objects of worship could be demonstrated publicly.

After that, a command will go forth to angels: *فَاهْدُوهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيمِ* (and show them the way to Jahannam - 37:23). When the angels will take them away, and reach close to the Bridge of Sirat, they will be commanded: *فَقُوهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ مَسْئُولُونَ* (make them stop - they are to be questioned - 37:24). Thereupon, at this place, they will be questioned about their beliefs and deeds - that have been mentioned in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth at many places.

Verses 27 - 40

وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ
تَاتُونَنَا عَنِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالُوا بَلْ لَمْ تَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَا

كَانَ لَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ ؕ بَلْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا طٰغِيْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَحَقَّ
 عَلَيْنَا قَوْلُ رَبِّنَا ؕ اِنَّا لَذٰٓئِقُوْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ فَاَعْوَبْنٰكُمْ اِنَّا كُنَّا غٰوِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾
 فَاِنَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِى الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَفْعَلُ
 بِالْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا اِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ۙ
 يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّا لَتٰرِكُوْا الْيٰهِنَا لِشَاعِرٍ مَّجْنُوْنٍ
 ﴿٣٦﴾ بَلْ جَآءَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ اِنَّكُمْ لَذٰٓئِقُوْا
 الْعَذَابِ الْاَلِيْمِ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَا تُجْزَوْنَ اِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِلَّا
 عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلِصِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾

And some of them (the followers of their chiefs) will turn to others (the chiefs), asking questions from one another. [27] They (the followers) will say, "You were the ones who used to come to (mislead) us forcefully." [28] They (the chiefs) will say, "On the contrary, you yourselves were no believers. [29] And we had no authority over you at all, but you yourselves were a transgressing people. [30] So, the word of our Lord has come true against us. Indeed, we have to taste (the punishment). [31] We did misguide you, (because) we were ourselves erroneous". [32] So, this day, they will be sharers in the punishment. [33] This is how we deal with the criminals. [34] They were those to whom when it was said: 'there is no god but Allah', they waxed proud, [35] and used to say, "Are we really to leave our gods because of an insane poet?" [36] No, he has come with the truth and has confirmed all the messengers (of Allah). [37] Surely you have to taste the painful punishment- [38] And you will be recompensed for nothing but for what you used to do - [39] unlike the chosen servants of Allah. [40]

Commentary

When the leading elders among disbelievers who had misled their common adherents appear before their followers on the plains of resurrection, they would, rather than help each other, start arguing among themselves. The present verses carry a sampling of the same

mutual argumentation between the contesting parties as well as the sad end they will have to face. Two things are noteworthy here:

1. The word: يمين (Yamīn) in: إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَأْتُونَنَا عَنِ الْيَمِينِ (You were the ones who used to come to [mislead] us forcefully.- 37:28) may have several meanings. One possible meaning of the expression: عَنِ الْيَمِينِ ('ani 'l-yamīn) is 'powerfully' or 'forcefully'. The translation given in the text above is based on this meaning, which seems to be fairly clear and cloudless. In addition to that, 'yamin' is also used to mean oath. Some commentators have explained it as: 'you came to us with oaths,' that is, 'you made us believe on oath that our creed is correct and the teaching of the messenger of Allah is, God forbid, false.' In terms of the words of the Qur'ān, both these explanations are possible and acceptable comfortably.

2. From verse 33: فَإِنَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ (So, this day, they will be sharers in the punishment.), we learn that should a certain person invite someone else to participate in what is impermissible and use his clout to coax him into sin, then, he will certainly incur the punishment of so inviting that person to sin. But, a person who accepts his invitation of his volition and choice, he too cannot be absolved from the sin of his deed. He cannot appear in the Hereafter and get away by saying that he was made to go astray by this or that person. Yes, if he has not committed sin by his volition and choice, instead, has done so under coercion, just to save his life, then, insha'Allah, it is hoped that he will be forgiven.

Verses 41 - 61

أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ رِزْقٌ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿٤١﴾ فَوَاكِهَ ج وَهُمْ مُكْرَمُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ فِي
 جَنَّةِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٤٣﴾ عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِكَأْسٍ
 مِّنْ مَّعِينٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ بِيضَاءَ لَدَدَةٍ لِّلشَّرِبِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ لَافِيهَا غَوْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ
 عَنْهَا يُنزَفُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَعِنْدَهُمْ قَصْرَاتُ الْطَّرْفِ عِينٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ كَانَهُنَّ
 بَيْضٌ مَّكْنُونٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَاَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾
 قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ إِنِّي كَانَ لِي قَرِينٌ ﴿٥١﴾ يَقُولُ أَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ

الْمُصَدِّقِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ ءَ إِذَا مِنَّا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا ءَ إِنَّا لَمَدِينُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾
 قَالَ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُطَّلِعُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَاطَّلَعَ فَرَأَاهُ فِي سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٥٥﴾
 قَالَ تَاللَّهِ إِنَّ كِدَّتْ لَتُرْدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَلَوْلَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّي لَكُنْتُ مِنَ
 الْمُحْضَرِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ أَفَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَيِّتِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ إِلَّا مَوْتَتَنَا الْأُولَى وَمَا
 نَحْنُ بِمُعَدَّبِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾ لِمِثْلِ هَذَا
 فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعَمَلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

Those are the people for whom there is a known provision, [41] the fruits; and they will be honored [42] in Gardens of Bliss [43] facing each other on couches. [44] They will be served with a cup from a flowing drink, [45] white, delicious for those who drink. [46] There will be no headache therein, nor will they be intoxicated with it, [47] and by their side there will be females restricting their gazes (to their husbands), having pretty big eyes, [48] as if they were eggs hidden (under feathers protected from pollution). [49] Then they will turn to each other asking questions mutually, [50] A speaker from them will say, " I had a companion [51] who used to say (to me), 'Are you one of those who believe? [52] Is it when we have died and become dust and bones? Is it true that we are going to be recompensed [for our deeds]?' " [53] He (the speaker) will say (to other people in Paradise) "Would you like to have a look (to Jahannam to find out what happened to that companion of mine)?" [54] So he looked - and he saw him in the middle of Jahannam. [55] He said, "By Allah, you were going almost to ruin me. But for the favour of my Lord, I would have been among those produced for punishment." [57] (Then the speaker will address the other people of Paradise in delight and wonder, saying, "Are we not then to die anymore [58] beyond our first death, nor are we going to be punished? [59] This is, indeed, the great success. [60] For this kind (of achievement), all workers must work. [61]

Commentary

After having described the condition of the people of Jahannam (Hell), the verses cited above have mentioned the condition of the people

of Jannah (Paradise). This description is in two parts. The initial ten verses describe the comforts the people of Jannah will be blessed with. After that, the verses that follow take up an event relating to a particular inmate of Jannah which has lessons of guidance. Out of what has been said in the first ten verses, a few things are worth mentioning. These are as follows:

1. It was said in the first verse (41): *أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ رِزْقٌ مَّعْلُومٌ* (Those are the people for whom there is a known provision,). Commentators explain it variously. (1) Some say that it refers to the detailed description of the provisions of Paradise mentioned in different Sūrahs of the Qur'ān. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has elected to go by this very Tafsīr. (2) Others have said that 'known provision' means that its timings are determined and known, that is, it will be bestowed punctually all mornings and evenings as indicated in another verse (*بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا*): 'and for them there is their provision in it, morning and evening' - Maryam, 19:62) where the words: *صَبِيحٌ وَعِشَاءٌ* (morning and evening) have been explicitly mentioned. (3) Then, there is a third Tafsīr as well. According to this explanation, 'known provision' means that this provision will be certain and everlasting - unlike the world of our experience where no one can say with any degree of certainty what and how much of that provision he or she is going to get; nor does anyone know how long his provision will remain available to him or her. Every human heart is all the time under the fear that the blessings he has may disappear in future- may be, comes a tomorrow and they are no more there. Jannah will be free of this danger. Instead, the provision of Paradise will be certain and everlasting, both. (Qurtubī, and others)

2. By saying: *فَوَاكِهُ* (*fawākih*: fruits - 42) immediately after, the Qur'ān has itself explained '*rizq*' (provision) - that it will comprise fruits. The word: *فَوَاكِهُ* explained (*fawākih*) is the plural form of: *فَاكِهَةٌ* (*fākihah*) and it denotes everything eaten for the taste and not to remove hunger. It is conveniently translated as fruit since it is eaten for the taste. Otherwise, the sense of *fākihah* is much wider than that of fruit. Imām Rāzī has culled the subtle point from this very word that the cuisine offered in Jannah will be for the taste of it, and not for removing hunger. The reason is that in Jannah there is nothing one would really need. Once there, one would need no food or energy-giving intake in order to sustain

life or preserve health. Yes, there will be wish. The fulfillment of wish will bring the pleasure of satiation - and that would be the objective of all blessings of Paradise. (Tafsīr Kabīr, page 98. v.7)

3. Then, by saying: وَهُمْ مُكْرَمُونَ (*wa hum mukramūn*: and they will be honored), it was given to understand that this provision will be presented to the people of Jannah with full protocol of hospitality and honor, for an absence of it would render even the most delicious offering remain without relish. From here, we also learn that the right of a guest is not fulfilled simply by feeding him or her. In fact, the warmth of hospitality and the according of honor to a guest is also included under his or her rights.

4. After that, it was said: عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ (*‘alā sururim-mutaqabilīn*: facing each other on couches. - 37:44). This is a portrayal of the state in which the people of Jannah will be sitting - no backs against each other. How would that seating arrangement turn out to be in practice? That only Allah knows best. Some commentators say that the circuit of the seating arrangement would be so extensive that no one will need to sit with one's back towards anyone, and Allah Ta‘ālā will bless the people of Jannah with such power of sight, audition and speech that they would be able to comfortably converse with people sitting at varying distances. Then, there are some other commentators who have also said that these couches, thrones or settees will be revolving - readily zooming towards whomsoever one wishes to talk to. And Allah knows best.

5. The word: لَذَّةٌ appearing in verse 46: لَذَّةٌ لِّلشَّارِبِينَ (*ladhdhatil-ishshāribīn*: delicious for those who drink) is essentially a verbal noun which means 'to be tasteful'. Therefore, some commentators have said that, at this place, the adjunct (*mudaf*) stands elided. Initially, it was: ذَاتِ لَذَّةٍ (*dhati ladhdhatin*: having taste). But, there is no need for this labored approach. First of all, even if '*ladhdhah*' is taken to mean nothing but a verbal noun is frequently used in the sense of *ismul-fā'il*. In that case, it would mean that it would be 'a taste personified' for those who drink. In addition to that, there is another adjectival form of: لَذَّةٌ : *ladhdhatun* besides لَذِيذٌ : *ladhidhun* - that is, لَذٌّ : *ladhdhun*. It is possible that the word: لَذَّةٌ : *ladhdhatun* used here may be a feminine form of the same لَذٌّ : *ladhdhun* (Tafsīr Qurṭubī). In this case, it would mean: 'delicious for those who drink.'

6. The word: *غَوْلٌ* (*ghaul*) in verse 47: *لَا فِيهَا غَوْلٌ* (*lā fihā ghawlūn*) has been explained variously as 'headache' or 'abdominal pain' or 'smell or corruption' or 'muddling of reason'. The fact is that the word: *غَوْلٌ* (*ghaul*) is used to convey all these meanings, while Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Jarīr says that '*ghaul*' appears here in the sense of bane, trouble or unwelcome consequences which makes it mean that the drink offered in Jannah will have no such evil consequences as are found in wines consumed in the mortal world - no hangovers of headache, stomach pain, bad breath or loss of reason. (Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr).

7. In verse 48, it was said: *فَصَرَّتْ عَيْنَهُنَّ الطَّرْفَ* (restricting their gazes). This is an attribute of the hurs or houris of Jannah - wide eyes with lowered gaze. It means that except for the mates to whom Allah Ta'ālā gives them in marital bond, they will not raise their eyes to cast a look at any other male. 'Allamah Ibn-ul-Jauzi reports: These women will tell their spouses, 'By the honor of our Lord, I see no one better than you in this Jannah. Praised be Allah who made me your spouse and made you, mine.'

'Allāmah Ibn-ul-Jauzī has given yet another sense of 'those with lowered gaze' when he says that they will cause the gaze of their spouses remain lowered. In other words, they will be so beautiful and so faithful that their spouses would simply not have a wish to look at anyone else. (Tafsīr Zad-ul-Masīr, pages 57, 58, volume 8)

8. In verse 48: *كَانَهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكْنُونٌ* (as if they were hidden eggs). As obvious, the hurs of Jannah have been likened to hidden eggs in this verse. The simile was popularly recognized among the people of Arabia. The egg hidden under feathers remains safe from the pollution, therefore it is always neat and clean. Moreover, its color is yellowish white, which was deemed by the Arabs as the most attractive color for women. Then there are other commentators who say that this simile does not relate to eggs as such, instead, the simile relates to the membrane hidden in the egg, and the sense is that the skin of those women will be as soft as the membrane of the eggs. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī) Allah knows best.

An inmate of Jannah and his disbelieving acquaintance

After having described the general condition of the people of Jannah, one of them has been mentioned particularly. Once he has settled down with other inmates of Jannah, he will recall a disbelieving acquaintance

who denied the possibility of the Hereafter during his mortal life. Then, with the permission of Allah Ta‘ālā, he will be given an opportunity to talk to him by peeping into the Jahannam. The identity of this man has not been given in the Qur‘ān. Therefore, it cannot be said with any degree of certainty as to who this person could be. Still, some commentators have opined that the name of the believer was Yahudah and the name of his disbelieving acquaintance was Maṭrus, and they were the same two comrades mentioned earlier in the verse of Sūrah al-Kahf: ... *وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ...* (And give them an example. There were two men... - 18:32). (Tafsīr Maḥzarī)

And to determine the identity of this person, ‘Allāmah as-Suyūṭī has reported yet another event from several tabi‘in that there were two partners in a business. They earned eight thousand dinars out of it, and took four thousand dinars each. One partner spent one thousand dinars from his share to buy a land. The other partner was a pious man. He prayed: 'O Allah, this person has bought a plot of land for one thousand dinars. I buy a plot of land from You in Jannah against one thousand dinars' - and gave away one thousand dinars in Ṣadaqah (charity). Then, his partner-friend spent another one thousand dinars and made a house for himself. Then, the pious man said, 'O Allah, this man has made a house for himself by spending one thousand dinars. I buy a house in Jannah against one thousand dinars' - and, having said that, he gave away another one thousand dinars in Ṣadaqah. After that, his partner-friend married a woman and spent one thousand dinars over her. Then, he said: 'O Allah, this man has married a woman, and has spent one thousand dinars over her. I propose to one of the women in Jannah and offer this modest sum of one thousand dinars' - and, having said that, he gave away yet another one thousand dinars in Ṣadaqah. Finally, when his partner-friend bought some attendants and things by spending one thousand dinars, the pious partner, once again, gave out one thousand dinars in Ṣadaqah and prayed to Allah that he be blessed with attendants and things of Jannah against it.

After that, this believing servant of Allah was caught in some dire need, and he thought of his former partner hoping that he would be good enough to help him. So, he told him about his need. His former partner asked him, 'What became of your share of money?' In answer, he told him