

أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٨﴾ أَفَمَنْ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ أَفَأَنْتَ تُنقِذُ
 مَنْ فِي النَّارِ ﴿١٩﴾ لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ عُرفٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا
 عُرفٌ مَّبْنِيَّةٌ لَا تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ
 الْمِيعَادَ ﴿٢٠﴾

Say, "I have been ordered to worship Allah, making my submission exclusive to Him. [11] And I have been ordered to be the first of those who submit." [12] Say, "if I were to disobey my Lord, I fear the punishment of a great day." [13] Say, "It is Allah whom I worship, making my submission exclusive to Him. [14] So, worship what you wish other than Him." Say, "Indeed, the losers are those who (will) lose their selves and their people on the Day of Judgment. Beware, that is really the obvious loss." [15] For them there are canopies of fire on top of them and canopies (of fire) underneath them. That is the thing against which Allah frightens His servants. 'So, O servants of Mine, fear Me.' [16] And those who abstain from worshipping the Taghut and turn fervently to Allah, for them there is good news. So, give the good news to My servants [17] who listen to what is said, then, follow the best of it. Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and those are the ones who possess understanding. [18] So tell Me about the one for whom the word of punishment is destined, - is it you, then, who would save someone who is already in the Fire? [19] But, for those who fear their Lord, there are chambers with chambers on top of them built ready, with rivers running from underneath them. This is a promise of Allah. Allah does not go back on the promise. [20]

Commentary

In the Tafsīr of verses 17 and 18: 'فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادَ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ' (So, give the good news to My servants who listen to what is said, then, follow the best of it. Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and those are the ones who possess understanding), there are several views expressed by learned commentators. One of these is what Ibn Kathīr has opted for. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavī has also gone by it. According to this view, the word:

القول (*al-qawl*: what is said) used here means Qur'ān, the Word of Allah, or it means the Qur'ān inclusive of the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ - and all of it is but the best. Therefore, the obvious dictate of the occasion was to say: يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَهُ (who listen to what is said, then, follow it). But, that is not how it was said, instead, the word: أَحْسَنَ (*aḥsan*) was added which indicates that these people did not follow the Qur'ān and the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with any lack of discernment as is the way of some common people who hear something from someone and start following it without any inquiry, deliberation or insight. In fact, these are believers who have followed the Word of Allah and the teachings of His Rasūl after having found it true and best. As a result, towards the end of the verse, they have been praised as being: أُولُو الْأَبْصَارِ (*ulu-l-al-bab*) that is, the people of understanding, (the wise, the farsighted, and the discerning ones). Another example of this appears in the Qur'ān itself when Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام is being addressed about the Torah in the following words: فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ يَأْخُذُوا بِأَحْسَنِهَا (So hold it firm, and ask your people to hold on to the best things in it - Al-A'rāf, 7:145). Here too, the word: أَحْسَنَ (*aḥsan*) means the entire Torah and its injunctions. Similarly, in the verses cited above, 'listening to the word' means 'listening to the Qur'ān' and 'following the best' means 'following the entire Qur'ān' which has been referred to as: أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ (*aḥsan al-Ḥadīth*: the best thing said). In connection with this very Tafsīr - that 'al-qawl' should be taken to mean the Qur'ān particularly - some elders have also said that in the Qur'ān as well there are many injunctions that have degrees of حَسَنَ (*ḥasan*: good) and أَحْسَنَ (*aḥsan*: better, best). For example, retaliation and pardon are both permissible, but pardon is better and more graceful: وَأَنْ تَصْبِرُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ (and that you be patient is better for you - An-Nisā' - 4:25). There are many things in which the Qur'ān gives one the choice to take to what one likes without any apprehension of sin, but, on occasions, it has also pinpointed one of these as being the best and most graceful thing to do, for example: وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى (And it is closer to taqwa that you forgive - Al-Baqarah, 2:237). There are many things in which concession has been granted, but opting for the way of courage and determination has still been called better and more graceful. Thus, the verse comes to mean that these people listen to the injunctions of the Qur'ān - those relating to concession (*rukhsah*) as well as those relating to the courageous determination (*'aẓimah*) - but elect to follow the course of determination instead of

concession. And in everything where they have a choice between two things, one being good and the other, better, then, invariably they elect to do what is better.

Then, there are many commentators who take '*al-qawl*' at this place to mean what is said by common people that includes things about *tauḥīd*, *shirk*, *kufr*, *Islām*, *ḥaqq* and *bāṭil*, even about the refinements of truth as good, better, weightier and outweighed. If we were to follow this Tafsīr, the verse would mean that, as far as listening is concerned, these people do listen to what everyone has to say - be they disbelievers or believer, be it truth or falsehood, good or bad, everything - but, when it comes to following, they follow only that which is the best. Thus, they follow *tauḥīd*, not *shirk*; *ḥaqq* (truth), not *bāṭil* (falsehood), and if they have to choose between the degrees of *ḥaqq*, they follow that which is better and weightier. Therefore, these people were credited with two attributes: (1) Firstly, by virtue of: هَدَيْتَهُمُ اللَّهُ (Allah has guided them - 39:18), therefore, they do not go astray after having listened to so many different things. (2) Secondly, by the compliment of: أُولَئِكَ هُمُ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ (and they are the ones who possess understanding - 39:18), that is, they are sensible people, and their good sense, insight and discernment helps them draw the line between good and bad, true and false. Thus, when such people have the ability to distinguish between good and better and when it comes to opting for one of the two, they would opt for the better.

Therefore, it has been said that this verse was revealed about Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn 'Amr Ibn Nufayl, Sayyidnā Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī and Sayyidnā Salmān al-Farīsī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ اجمعين. Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn 'Amru Ibn Nufayl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ used to hate shirk and idol worship even during the days of Jāhiliyyah. The other two Ṣaḥābah, Sayyidnā Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī and Sayyidnā Salmān al-Farīsī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ اجمعين listened to people of different religions, to the mushriks, the Jews and the Christians, and saw their ways of life, and it was only then that they embraced Islam and, finding the teachings of the Qur'ān as the best, they preferred them. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 21 - 23

لَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنْبِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ

يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ، ثُمَّ يَهِيْجُ فَتْرَهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ حُطَامًا ۗ إِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢١﴾ أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ ۗ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقٰسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتٰبًا مُّتَشٰبِهًا مَّثٰنِي ۗ تَتَّقَشَعْرُ مِنْهُ جُلُودَ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ۗ ثُمَّ تَلِيْنُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ ذٰلِكَ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ يَهْدِيْ بِهِ مَن يَشَآءُ ۗ وَمَن يُضَلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِن هَادٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

Have you not seen that Allah sent down water from the sky, then made it penetrate into the earth (and gush forth) in the form of springs? Then He brings forth with it the crops of different colors, and afterwards they wither, and you see them turned yellow, then He makes them chaff. Surely in that there is a lesson for the people of understanding. [21] So I ask about a person whose heart Allah has opened up for Islam, and consequently he proceeds in a light from his Lord. (Can he be equal to the one whose heart is hardened?) So, woe to those whose hearts are too hard to remember Allah. Those are wandering in open error. [22] Allah has sent down the best discourse, a book containing subjects resembling each other, mentioned again and again, shivered from which are the skins of those who have awe of their Lord. Then, their skins and their hearts become soft enough to tend to the remembrance of Allah. This is the Guidance of Allah with which He brings to the right path whomsoever He wills. As for the one whom Allah lets go astray, for him there is no one to guide. [23]

Commentary

The word: يَنْبِيعُ (*yanābi*) in verse 21: فَسَلَكَهُ يَنْبِيعٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ (made it penetrate into the earth [and gush forth] in the form of springs) is the plural form of: يَنْبُوعٌ (*yanbu*) which means springs that gush out from the soil. The sense is that the act of sending down water from the sky is by itself a great blessing, but also crucial was the arrangement to conserve it underground. But for this arrangement to save this blessing of water, its

users would have derived benefit from it only at the time of rains, or for a few days following it. Although, on water depends their life, and it is the kind of need one cannot stay free from, even for a day. Therefore, Allah Ta'ālā did not consider it sufficient to just send down this blessing, instead, made elaborate and very unique arrangements for its conservation. Some of it gets deposited in ditches, ponds, tanks and reservoirs. Then a huge supply is turned into ice and made to sit on mountain peaks and its ridges, an arrangement that takes care of the danger of water going bad. Then ice melts and water travels through veins in the mountains until it reaches the land and gushes out in the form of streams, all over, on its own, without any human input, and finally finds its way through the land in the form of rivulets and rivers. Rest of the water keeps flowing underground which can be retrieved by digging a well almost anywhere.

Details of this water supply system as they appear in the noble Qur'ān have been given in the commentary of Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn under the verse: (then We lodged it in the earth, and of course, We are able to take it away - Al-Mu'minun, 23:18). (Please see Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume VI, under 23:18, pages 311 to 313).

Later in verse 21, it was said: مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ (the crops of different colours). At the time the crops grow and ripen, colors keep changing from one to the other. Since these colors change, therefore, the word: مُخْتَلِفًا (*mukhtalifan*), in terms of its grammatical analysis, has been used in the form of: حال (*ḥāl*: state, circumstantial condition) which denotes change.

In the last sentence of verse 21, it was said: إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ (Surely, in that, there is a lesson for the people of understanding), that is, in this process - when water is sent down, is conserved, is made available to human beings to grow all sorts of crops and trees the colors of which change following which they turn yellow and dry making grains separate from chaff - there is a great lesson for people of understanding, because they provide the proof of the infinite power and wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā. These are visible signs that could lead human beings to discover the reality behind their own creation, and that in turn, could become the means through which one succeeds in recognizing his or her own creator and master.

In the first sentence of verse 22, it was said: أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ، لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ (So I ask about a person whose heart Allah has opened up for Islam, and consequently he proceeds in a light from his Lord.). The word: شَرَحَ (*sharḥ*) literally means to open, enlarge or extend. The expression: شرح الصدر (*sharḥ-uṣ-ṣadr*) means the capacity or capability of the heart (to receive and accommodate input). The sense is that one's heart is capable of learning lessons and receiving benefits by deliberating into Divine signs of creation in the heavens and the earth, particularly so by deliberating in his own creation. Similar is the case with other signs of Allah revealed in the form of scriptures and injunctions. One's heart also has to have the ability to deliberate in them and be benefited by them. In contrast, there is a heart that is straightened or hardened. The statement in a verse of the Qur'an: يَجْعَلُ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا (He makes his heart narrow, much too narrow - Al-Anām, 6:125) and the one in the next verse at this place: "لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ" woe to those whose hearts are too hard to remember Allah - 39:23" has appeared in contrast to this very 'sharḥ-uṣ-ṣadr' (a heart opened to acceptance of truth and at ease with it).

According to a narration from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه, when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم recited this verse: أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ (Is it not that, a person for whom Allah opens up his heart...), we asked him about the meaning of 'sharḥ-us-sadr'. He said, "when the light of *'imān* (faith) enters the human heart, it enhances its capacity (which makes the comprehension and implementation of Divine commandments easy on the person concerned)." We submitted, *'yā rasūlallāh*, what is the sign of it (that is, of 'sharḥ-uṣ-ṣadr')? Then, he said:

الانابة الى دارالخلود والتجافي عن دارالغرور والتأهب للموت قبل نزوله.

رواه الحاكم في المستدرک والبيهقي في شعب الايمان. (روح المعاني)

"Longing passionately for the eternal home, and seeking refuge from the deceptive abode, and preparing for death before its arrival." - Reported by al-Ḥākim in al-Mustadrak and al-Baihaqī in Shu'ab-ul-'imān (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

The verse under study has been initiated as headed by an interrogative particle: أَفَمَنْ (*afaman*). The sense it carries can be explained by saying: 'Can a person whose heart has been opened up for Islam - and he is on the light coming from his Lord, that is, does everything under it - and another person with a hardened heart be equal?' The contrasting

part relating to the hardened heart has been mentioned in the next verse with a warning of woeful punishment attached to it.

In this verse (22), it was said: *فَوَيْلٌ لِلْكَافِرِينَ لِقُلُوبِهِمْ قَلْبًا حَصِيصًا* (woe to those whose hearts are too hard to remember Allah). The word: *قَاسِيَةٌ* (*al-qāsiyah*) is a derivation from: *قَسَاوَتْ* (*qasawah*) which means to be hard-hearted, having no mercy for anyone, and also the one who remains totally unaffected by the need to remember Allah and follow His injunctions.

Verse 23 opens with the words: *اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِي* (Allah has sent down the best discourse, a book containing subjects resembling each other, mentioned again and again,). In the verse previous to it, the state of the faithful servants of Allah was mentioned as: *يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ* (who listen to what is said, then, follow the best of it - 39:18). Here, in the verse under study (23), we have been told that the whole Qur'ān is '*aḥsan-ul-ḥadīth*,' the best of what is said. The word: *حَدِيثٌ* (*Ḥadīth*) literally means the speech or account that is related. The outcome of calling Qur'ān, '*aḥsan-ul-ḥadīth*,' is that, out of everything human beings say or relate, the Qur'ān remains the most eloquent. Onwards from here, some attributes of the Qur'ān have been mentioned: (1) It is: *كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا* (a book containing subjects resembling each other). At this place, the word: *مُتَشَابِهٌ* (*mutashabih*) means resembling each other or mutually corresponding, that is, the subjects dealt with in the Qur'ān are related to each other, and are similar. So much so that one verse gets to be explained or confirmed by another verse. This 'word' is free of contradiction and conflict. (2) The second attribute is: *مَثَانِي* (*mathani*) which is the plural form of: *مَثْنِي* (*mathna*) which means repeated. The sense is that a subject is taken up repeatedly in the Qur'ān to help make it settle down in one's mind. (3) As for the third attribute, it was described in very eloquent words by saying: *تَقشَعْرُ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ* (shivered from which are the skins of those who have awe of their Lord.) that is, 'so overwhelmed and apprehensive the God-fearing become before the greatness of Allah that they, when reciting the Qur'ān, are gripped with such an state of awe that it makes their hair stand on end.' (4) The fourth attribute has been identified as: *ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ* (Then, their skins and their hearts become soft enough to tend to the remembrance of Allah.), that is, the recitation of the Qur'ān affects them in two ways. First, as said immediately above, when they hear the warnings of

punishment, it makes their hair stand on end. Then they listen to the verses promising mercy and forgiveness which takes them to a state when their bodies and hearts turn tenderized, mellowed in the remembrance of Allah. Sayyidah Asmā' bint Abī Bakr ؓ says that this used to be the common emotional state of the noble Ṣaḥābah - when the Qur'ān was recited before them, tear would be rolling down their eyes, and the hair would be standing on end. (Qurṭubī)

It has been narrated by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "A servant over whose body hair would stand on end due to the fear of Allah, then, Allah Ta'ālā forbids the Fire from ever touching his body. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 24 - 28

أَفَمَنْ يَتَّقِي بِوَجْهِهِ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ط وَقِيلَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ
 ذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَاتَّبَهُمُ
 الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَأَذَاقَهُمُ اللَّهُ الْخِزْيَ فِي
 الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلِعَذَابِ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾
 وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ
 ﴿٢٧﴾ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرَ ذِي عِوَجٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

Tell Me about the one who tries to save himself from the worst punishment with his face on the Day of Doom, (whether he is equal to the one who is not liable to any punishment.) And it will be said to the wrongdoers, "Have a taste of what you used to earn." [24] Those before them had also rejected (the messengers) and consequently, the punishment came upon them in a way that they had never imagined. [25] Then Allah made them taste disgrace in the worldly life, and of course the punishment of the Hereafter is much greater. Only if they knew! [26] And We have cited for people all sorts of examples in this Qur'ān, so that they may receive the message [27] through an Arabic Qur'ān that has no digression (from the truth), so that they may be God-fearing. [28]

Commentary

Verse 24: *أَفَمَنْ يَتَّقِي بِوَجْهِهِ* (Tell Me about the one who tries to save himself from the worst punishment with his face ...) carries a description of the terrifying scenario of Jahannam. If one faces something hurtful in his mortal life, he tries to fight it off by using his hands and feet as defensive shields to protect his face. But, refuge with Allah, the people of Jahannam will not be able to use even their hands and feet to defend themselves. The punishment that comes will fall directly on their faces. Even if he wished to ward off the punishment in defense, he would have no option but to use his very face as the shield, because he would have been thrown in Jahannam with his hands and feet tied. We seek refuge with Allah from such a fate.

Out of the authorities of Tafsīr, 'Atā' and Ibn Zayd said that a person condemned to Jahannam will have his hands and feet tied before being dragged in there. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 29 - 35

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلًا فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ مُتَشَكِّسُونَ وَرَجُلًا سَلَمًا
 لِرَجُلٍ ۖ هَلْ يَسْتَوِينَ مَثَلًا ۖ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۖ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ
 ﴿٢٩﴾ إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عِنْدَ
 رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَذَّبَ
 بِالصِّدْقِ إِذْ جَاءَهُ ۗ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالَّذِي
 جَاءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ لَهُمْ مَا
 يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ لِيُكَفِّرَ اللَّهُ
 عَنْهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ الَّذِي كَانُوا
 يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

Allah has given an example: There is a (slave) man owned by some partners quarrelling with each other, and (on the other hand,) there is a man solely owned by a single man. Can they be equal in comparison? Praise

be to Allah! (The truth stands established). But, most of them do not know. [29] Verily, you are to die and they are to die. [30] After that, on the Day of Doom, you will surely place your disputes before your Lord. [31]

So, who is more unjust than him who forges a lie against Allah and rejects the truth when it reached him? Is it not that in Jahannam (hell) there is an abode for the disbelievers? [32] As for the one who has come with the truth and believed it to be true, then such people are the ones who are God-fearing. [33] For them, with their Lord, there is what they wish. That is the reward of those who are good in deeds, [34] so that Allah wipes out from them the worst deeds they did, and gives their reward to them for the best of what they used to do. [35]

Commentary

In verse 30, it was said: إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ (Verily, you are to die and they are to die). The word: مَيِّتٌ (*mayyit*) with a doubling sound on the letter: الياء (*al-yā'*) denotes someone who will die in the future and مَيِّتٌ (*mait*) with the letter *al-yā'* remaining quiescent, someone who has died. In this verse, the address is to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and it is being said to him that he too is to die and so are his friends and foes, who will also die. The objective behind the statement is to alert and persuade everyone to be concerned about the Hereafter and be ready to do everything necessary to achieve this goal. Then, as an inter-related side of the subject, the purpose is also to make it very clear that the Holy Prophet ﷺ too, despite being the most sublime among the creation and the foremost among prophets, is not exempted from death, so that people would not differ about this matter after his passing away from this mortal world (from al-Qurṭubī).

Justice in the court of Resurrection: The form in which the right of the oppressed will be retrieved from the oppressor.

In verse 31, it was said: ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ (After that, on the Day of Doom, you will surely place your disputes before your Lord.). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ says that the word: إِنَّكُمْ (*innakum*: surely you...) at this place includes - believers, disbelievers, Muslims - all of them, oppressor or oppressed. All of them will submit their cases in the court of their Lord, and He will have the right of the oppressed paid back by the oppressor whether a disbeliever, or believer. And the form in which

these rights will be paid back will be what has mentioned in a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that appears in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī. According to this, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'a person who has a right of someone due against him should either pay it off, or have it forgiven right here in this world and become halal, that is, stand absolved of any responsibility on that count. The reason is that there are not going to be any currencies of dirhams and dinars (or any others found in the mortal world) in the universe of the Hereafter. If the oppressor has some good deeds in his account, then, these deeds will be taken from him to the measure of the oppression he did, and will be given to the oppressed. And in case he has no good deeds with him, bad deeds and sins of the oppressed will be taken from him and put into the account of the oppressor.

And there is a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim according to which the Holy Prophet ﷺ on a certain day asked his noble Sahabah, "Do you know who a pauper is?" The Sahabah said, '*yā rasūlallāh*, as for us, a pauper is one who has neither cash nor things needed (to run one's life).' He said, "The real pauper in my Ummah is a person who will come to the Day of Judgment with lots of good deeds, prayers, fasts, zakah and things like that, but such would the record (of his dealings with others) that he (in his mortal life) would have hurled invectives on someone, leveled false accusation against someone, devoured someone's property by unfair means, had someone killed, beaten or harassed. All those so oppressed will take their plaint before Allah, and the good deeds of the oppressor will be distributed over the oppressed. After that, when no good deeds are left, and the claims of the oppressed still remain to be settled, then, the sins of the oppressed will be passed on to the oppressor, and he will be thrown into the Jahannam. [Hence, this person despite having everything, ended up being a pauper on the Day of Judgment - he is what a real pauper is!]

And Ṭabarānī, citing a trustworthy authority, has reported from Sayyidnā Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "The first case presented in the court of Allah will be that of man and his wife and, by God, the tongue will be silent there, instead, hands and feet of the woman will bear witness as to blames she used to impute to her husband. Similarly, the hands and feet of the man will bear witness as to

how he used to cause pain to his wife. After that, servants will be brought before their respective masters, and redress will be provided for their complaints. After that, people from common markets with whom one had one or the other dealing will be presented, and if one of them has been subjected to some injustice, his right will be duly vacated.'

All deeds will be given against oppressions and infringement of rights, but one's 'imān (faith) will not be given

After having reported all Ḥadīth narrations cited above, it has been said in Tafsīr Maḏharī that the thing mentioned about giving the deeds of the oppressor in settlement of the rights of the oppressed means deeds other than 'imān (faith). The reason is that all oppressions and injustices are acts of sin. They are not *kufr* or disbelief. And the punishment of sinful deeds will be limited as against 'imān (faith) which is a limitless deed. Its reward too is limitless, that is, living in Jannah forever - even though, it may happen after having gone through the punishment of sins and staying in Jahannam for a certain period of time. The outcome is, when the good deeds of the oppressor - with the exception of 'imān (faith) - will finish once given to the oppressed to the last deed leaving nothing behind but 'imān, then, this 'imān will not be taken away from him forcibly. Instead, the rights of the oppressed will be paid back by putting the sins of the oppressed in the account of the oppressor. As a result, this person will, after he has undergone the punishment of his sins, will finally enter the Jannah, and then this state of his will be everlasting. The author of Tafsīr Maḏharī says that Imām al-Baihaqī has also said so.

In verse 32, it was said: كَذَّبَ بِالصِّدْقِ (rejects the truth) while in verse 33, it was said: الَّذِي جَاءَ بِالصِّدْقِ (As for the one who has come with the truth): At both these places, the word: الصِّدْقِ (*aṣ-ṣidq*: the truth) means teachings brought by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, whether it be the Qur'ān, or be other teachings of aḥādīth in addition to the Qur'ān. And the expression: صَدَّقَ بِهِ (*ṣaddaqa bihi*: and believed it to be true - 39:33) includes all believers who have testified to it.

Verses 36 - 41

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ ۗ وَيُخَوِّفُونَكَ بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُضِلٍّ ۗ

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِعَزِيزٍ ذِي انْتِقَامٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ ط قُلْ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ
 أَرَادَنِيَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ هُنَّ كَاشِفَاتُ ضُرِّهِ أَوْ أَرَادَنِي بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ
 مُمْسِكَتُ رَحْمَتِهِ ط قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ
 ﴿٣٨﴾ قُلْ يَقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ ۚ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ
 ﴿٣٩﴾ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ إِنَّا
 أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ
 ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهِ ۚ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿٤١﴾

Is Allah not sufficient for (the protection of) His slave?
 And they are frightening you of those (false gods whom
 they worship) other than Him. And whomsoever Allah
 would let go astray, for him there is no one to guide. [36]
 And whomsoever Allah gives guidance, for him there is
 no one to misguide. Is it not that Allah is Mighty,
 Powerful to avenge? [37] And if you ask them as to who
 created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly
 say, "Allah." Say, "Then, tell me about those whom you
 invoke other than Allah, if Allah intends to cause some
 harm to me, are they (able) to remove the harm caused
 by Him? Or if He intends to bless me with mercy, are
 they (able) to hold back His mercy (from me)?" Say,
 "Allah is sufficient for me. In Him trust those who
 (rightly) trust (in someone)." [38] Say, "O my people, do
 at your place (what you are doing). I am to do (what I
 have been ordered to do). Very soon, you will come to
 know [39] as to who will be visited by a punishment
 that will disgrace him, and upon whom a lasting
 punishment will befall. [40] We have sent down to you
 the Book for the people with the truth. So, whoever
 follows the guidance, it is for his own good, and
 whoever goes astray, he will go astray only to his
 detriment - and you are not responsible for them. [41]

Commentary

In the first verse (36), it was said: أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ (Is Allah not sufficient for (the protection of) His slave?). This verse was revealed in the

background of an event. The disbelievers had threatened the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Ṣaḥābah by saying that, should they act irreverently against their idols, they would never escape the curse of these idols, something very lethal to face. In reply, they were told: Is Allah not sufficient for His slave?

Therefore, some commentators have taken: عَبْدَهُ (*‘abdāhu*: His slave) here to mean a particular slave of Allah, that is, the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānavī, a summary of whose Tafsīr appears in the original edition of Ma‘āriful-Qur‘ān, has also opted for this very Tafsīr. Then there are other commentators who have taken ‘abd or slave in its general sense. Another *qira‘ah* (rendition) of this verse as: عَبَادَهُ (*‘ibādihī*: His slaves) supports this position. And as for the subject itself, it is, after all, general in the sense that Allah Ta‘ālā is sufficient for everyone among His slaves.

A lesson, and a good counsel

In verse 36, it was said: وَيُخَوِّفُونَكَ بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ (And they are frightening you of those [false gods whom they worship] other than Him.), that is, 'the disbelievers frighten you with the displeasure of their false objects of worship'. Readers of this verse generally tend to pass by it thinking that it is talking about a particular event that relates to the threats of disbelievers and to the blessed person of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, hence they would not exert enough to find out the guidance that it has for us. Although, it is an open fact that anyone who threatens a Muslim on the ground that, should he not do such and such haram act or sin, his superiors at whose mercy he is, will be displeased with him, and may even hurt him is also included under this verse, even if the person giving a threat is a Muslim, and the person he is being threatened of is also no one else but a Muslim, virtually Muslims on both sides. And these are terrible times for all. This happens all over the world, in most jobs they do. They have to face a dilemma. Are they willing and ready to contravene the Divine laws (they are bound with)? Or else, are they prepared to become targets of the wrath and retribution of their superior officers? This verse gives a guideline good enough for all of them: Is Allah Ta‘ālā not sufficient to protect you? Here you are. You make a resolve that you will abstain from committing sins exclusively for the sake of Allah. Then you simply do not care about any officer, any authority asking you to act

counter to Divine laws. If you do just that, the help and support of Allah Ta'ālā shall be with you. The worst that can happen is that you may lose that job. So, what? Allah Ta'ālā will make some other arrangement for your sustenance. And for that matter, it is typical of a believer that he himself keeps trying to find a suitable job elsewhere after which he is placed in a position of leaving it immediately.

Verses 42 - 45

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فِيمِمْسِكَ
الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۗ إِنَّ فِي
ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ ۗ قُلْ
أُولَٰئِكَ كَانُوا لَآيْمِلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ
جَمِيعًا ۗ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ
اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِينَ
مِنْ دُونِهِ إِذَاهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

Allah fully takes away the souls (of the people) at the time of their death, and (of) those who do not die, in their sleep. Then He withholds those on whom He had decreed death, and sends the others back upto an appointed term. Surely, in this, there are signs for a people who ponder. [42] Is it that they have adopted intercessors out of those (whom they invoke) other than Allah? Say, "(Do you take them as intercessors) even though they have no power at all, nor do they understand?" [43] Say, "Intercession belongs entirely to Allah. [44] And when Allah is mentioned alone, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter are filled with disgust, and when those (whom they worship) other than Him are mentioned, they become happy forthwith. [45]

Commentary

The time to sleep and the time to die: How is the soul exacted and what is the difference between the two

In verse 42, it was said: اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا (Allah

fully takes away the souls [of the people] at the time of their death, and [of] those who do not die, in their sleep.). The word: تَوَفَّى (*tawaffa*) literally means to receive, to take back, exact. In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has stated very clearly and emphatically that the spirits or souls (*arwah*) of living beings are under the free will and discretionary dispensation of Allah Ta'ālā at all times and under all conditions. He can seize, exact and take them back at will. And there is at least one manifestation of this absolutely autonomous dispensation that every living being sees and feels everyday when, once asleep, the *rūḥ* (spirit, soul) of a person is, so to say, taken away from the body, then, returned on rising from sleep, and ultimately, one such time is bound to come when this ruh stands seized, absolutely and conclusively, following which, this will never be returned.

According to Tafsīr Maḥzarī, the sense of 'taking the *rūḥ* away' is to sever its connection with the human body. There are occasions when it is totally severed, both outwardly and inwardly. This is what death is. Then, there are occasions when it is severed only outwardly while it remains active inwardly, the effect of which is that it is only the sense and volitional movement - being obvious signs of life - that are severed, however, the connection of *rūḥ* with the body remains active inwardly. Under this arrangement, one breathes and stays alive, however, the form it takes is that the human spirit (*rūḥ*) is made to turn its attention to a (panoramic) study of the universe of images ('Alam-ul-mithal), and whereby it is made to pass into a state of forgetfulness and suspension away from this universe, so that one can become fully at rest. And then, at times, even this inward connection is severed because of which the life of the body goes extinct, totally.

In the verse cited above, the word: يَتَوَفَّى (*yatawaffa*) in the sense of 'takes in full' (*qabḍ*) is used by way of 'umum-ul- majāz which covers both meanings. This difference of ruh (spirit, soul) being taken away both in death and sleep delineated earlier also finds support in a saying of Sayyidnā 'Alī عليه السلام. He said that, at the time of sleep, the *rūḥ* of a person goes away from his body, but a beam or ray of *rūḥ* stays behind in the body due to which one remains alive - and it is through this 'beamed' connection that one sees a dream. Then this dream, in the event that it has been seen in the state the attention of the ruh was raptly turned towards the universe of images, is a true dream. But, if it was seen in a

state when the *rūḥ* was returning back to the body, then, it becomes polluted with Satanic inputs, and that dream no more remains a true dream. And he also said that the *rūḥ* that comes out of the body of a person during the state of sleep returns to the body when one wakes up within a time that is much less than an eye would take to wink.

Verses 46 - 52

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ عَلِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَ الشَّهَادَةِ اَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ
 بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِى مَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَوْ اَنَّ لِلَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مَا
 فِى الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهٖ مِنْ سُوْءِ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ط
 وَبَدَا لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَمْ يَكُوْنُوْا يَحْتَسِبُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ
 مَا كَسَبُوْا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَاِذَا مَسَّ الْاِنْسَانَ
 ضُرٌّ دَعَا نٰرَتَهُ اِذَا حُوْلِنَتْ نِعْمَةٌ مِّنَّا لَقَالَ اِنَّمَا اُوْتِيْتُهُ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ ط بَلْ هِيَ
 فِتْنَةٌ وَّلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَدْ قَالَهَا الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَمَا
 اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَاَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ مَا كَسَبُوْا ط
 وَالَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْ هٰؤُلَاءِ سَيُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ مَا كَسَبُوْا وَمَا هُمْ
 بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ط
 اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾

Say, "O Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Knower of the unseen and the seen, you will judge between Your servants in that about which they used to differ. [46] And were the wrongdoers to own all that is on earth, and even twice as much, they would surely seek to ransom themselves with it against the evil punishment on the Day of Judgment. And there will appear to them from Allah what they have never imagined. [47] And unveiled to them will be the evils of what they used to earn; and encircled they will be by what they used to ridicule. [48]

And when man is visited by a trouble, he prays to Us, but when, after that, We favor him with some blessing from

Us, he says, "This is given to me because of (my) knowledge." No, but this is a trial, yet most of them do not know. [49] The same was said by those before them, but what they used to earn was of no avail to them, [50] and they were overtaken by the evils of what they had earned; and the wrongdoers from these (infidels too) will be overtaken by the evils of what they have earned- and they are not (able) to escape. [51] Do they not know that it is Allah who extends provision for whomsoever He wills, and straitens (it for whomsoever He wills). Surely in that, there are signs for a people who believe. [52]

In verse 46, it was said: قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ (Say, "O Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth...). According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abd-ur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf رضي الله عنه appearing in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, he says, "I asked Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها as to what it was from which the Holy Prophet ﷺ began his nightly prayer (*tahajjūd*)? She said, 'When he rose for the *ṣalāh* of *tahajjūd*, he used to recite this prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ جِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَائِيلَ وَإِسْرَافِيلَ، فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَلِيمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ، اهْدِنِي لِمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِكَ إِنَّكَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

O Allah, Lord of Jabra'īl and Mika'īl and Israfa'īl, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen, you will judge between Your servants in that about which they used to differ.. Guide me, with Your will, to the truth in which people have disputes, for You are the One who guides whomsoever He wills to the straight path.

A prayer that is answered

Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr رضي الله عنه says that he knows a verse of the noble Qur'ān after reciting which the prayer one makes is answered. Then he pointed out to this very verse that begins with the words: اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ (O Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth... to the end of verse 39:46) - (al-Qurtubī)

In verse 47, it was said: وَبَدَأَ لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَحْتَسِبُونَ (And there will appear to them from Allah what they have never imagined.) The famous *tabi'ī*, Sufyān Thawrī recited this verse and said, 'Ruined are those who did good deeds only to pretend their piety before people. (He repeated this sentence twice) This verse is about them. They did good deeds in their mortal life to impress people, who took them to be good people. Even they

themselves used to deceive themselves by thinking that these deeds will become a source of salvation for them in the Hereafter. But, as these were never performed with unalloyed sincerity (*'ikhhlāṣ*), they deserve no reward in the sight of Allah. So, once they are in the life after death, the punishment would come upon them suddenly against their expectation.' (Qurṭubī)

An important instruction concerning '*mushajarāt*' (disagreements among Ṣaḥābah)

Someone asked Rabi' Ibn-ul-Khaitham about the *shahādah* (martyrdom) of Sayyidnā Ḥusain عليه السلام. He sighed and recited the verse (46): قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عِلْمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ (O Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen, You will judge between Your servants...) and said, 'whenever you have a doubt in your heart about the mutual difference of the noble Ṣaḥābah, do recite this verse.' Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī reports this statement and then says: This teaches us the best etiquette in regard to this issue, and is something one should always bear in mind.

Verses 53 - 61

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ اَسْرَفُوْا عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوْا مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ ۗ
 اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا ۗ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَاٰنِيْبُوْا
 اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ وَاَسْلِمُوْا لَهٗ ۗ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمْ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصِرُوْنَ
 ﴿٥٤﴾ وَاَتَّبِعُوْا اَحْسَنَ مَا اُنزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمْ
 الْعَذَابُ بَغْتَةً وَّاَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ اَنْ تَقُوْلَ نَفْسٌ يٰحَسْرَتٰى عَلٰى
 مَا فَرَطْتُ فِىْ جَنْبِ اللّٰهِ وَاِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السَّخِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ اَوْ تَقُوْلَ
 لَوْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ هَدٰىنِىْ لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ اَوْ تَقُوْلَ حِيْنَ تَرٰى
 الْعَذَابَ لَوْ اَنَّ لِىْ كَرَّةً فَاكُوْنُ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ بَلٰى
 قَدْ جَآءَتْكَ اٰيٰتِىْ فَكَذَّبْتَ بِهَا وَاَسْتَكْبَرْتَ وَاَنْتَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ
 ﴿٥٩﴾ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ تَرٰى الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا عَلٰى اللّٰهِ وُجُوْهُهُمْ مُّسْوَدَّةٌ ۗ

أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَيُنَجِّي اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا
بِمَفَازَتِهِمْ لَا يَمَسُّهُمُ السُّوءُ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

Say (on My behalf), "O servants of Mine who have acted recklessly against their own selves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Surely, Allah will forgive all sins. Surely, He is the One who is the Most-Forgiving, the Very-Merciful. [53] Turn passionately towards your Lord, and submit to Him before the punishment comes to you, after which you will not be helped. [54] And follow the best of what has been sent down to you from your Lord before the punishment comes to you suddenly when you do not even expect, [55] lest someone should say, "Pity on me, because I fell short in respect of (observing the rights of) Allah and in fact, I was one of those who mocked", [56] or, (lest) someone should say, "If Allah were to show me the way, I would have surely been among those who fear Allah", [57] or, (lest) someone should say when he sees the punishment, "O that I had a chance to return, so that I may become one of those who are good in deeds." [58] Why not? My verses had reached you, but you called them untrue, and waxed proud, and became of those who disbelieved. [59] And on the Day of Judgment, you will see those who had forged lies against Allah (in a state) that their faces are turned black. Is it not that in Jahannam there is an abode for the arrogant? [60] And Allah will save the God-fearing (from Jahannam), with utmost success granted to them, so as no evil will touch them, nor will they grieve. [61]

Commentary

Verse 53 opens with the words: قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا (O servants of Mine who have acted recklessly against their own selves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Surely, Allah will forgive all sins.). Taba'ī, Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr reports from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that there were some people who had killed a lot of people unjustly and had committed a lot of shameful acts. They came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and submitted before him, "The religion you invite us to is, no doubt, very good, but we have a problem. We think about all those major sins we have already committed. Now if we were to become Muslims, do you hope that our repentance will be accepted?' Thereupon, Allah Ta'ālā revealed this verse to the Holy

Prophet ﷺ - reported by al-Bukhārī in that sense (al-Qurṭubī).

Therefore, the outcome of the subject taken up in the verse comes to be that, well before death arrives, the repentance made from sins, no matter how serious, even from *kufr* (disbelief) and *shirk* (ascribing of partners to Allah), gets to be accepted. And by virtue of a genuine taubah (repentance), all sins will be forgiven, therefore, no one should lose hope in the mercy of Allah.

Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه said that, out of all verses of the Qur’ān, this verse brings the strongest message of hope for sinners. But, Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه said that the strongest such verse is: **إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُوٌّ مَغْفِرَةٌ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ظُلْمِهِمْ** (And surely, your Lord is the lord of forgiveness for the people against their wrongdoings - Ar-Ra’d, 13:6)

In verse 55, it was said: **وَاتَّبِعُوا أَحْسَنَ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ** (and follow the best of what has been sent down to you). The second phrase: **أَحْسَنَ مَا أُنزِلَ** (the best of what has been sent down) means the Qur’ān, and the whole Qur’ān is but ahsan, the best - and the Qur’ān can be called: احسن و اكمل (best) also in the sense that out of all scriptures - Torah, Injīl, Zabūr - revealed from Allah Ta’ālā, the Qur’ān is the best and the most perfect. (Qurṭubī)

The next three verses (56-58), beginning from: **أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ يُحْسِرْتَنِي** (Pity on me, because I fell short in respect of Allah... 39:56) and concluding on: **مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ** (...become one of those who are good in deed - 39:58), have elaborated and emphasized the subject of the three verses earlier to it (53-55), that no sinner of any description should despair of the mercy of Allah, for should he repent, Allah will forgive all his past sins. But through the use of the expression: **أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ** (lest someone should say) at the head of the three verses: 56, 57 and 58, it was reminded that the time of taubah has a deadline - it has to be well before death. If someone were to think of making his taubah after death on the Day of Judgment, or is simply filled with remorse over what awful things he had done to himself, then, that will bring him no benefit.

In this context, it has been mentioned that some disbelievers, on the Day of Judgment, would express different wishes, regretting what they had done. Someone will be filled with remorse as to why did he have to fall short in obeying the commands of Allah Ta’ālā. Then, there will be that odd person even at a place like that who would love to wriggle out of

the impasse blaming his destiny for his misconduct by saying - 'Had Allah Ta'ālā given me the necessary guidance, I too would have been one of those who feared Him, but since He gave me no guidance, there was nothing I could do about it.' Still someone else would wish: 'Would that I were to be sent back into the world to become an observing believer, obeying the commandments of Allah at its best.' But, that will be a time when no wish and no remorse of any kind will work.

These three different wishes could belong to different people, and it is also possible that these three wishes could have come, one after the other, from a single group of disbelievers, because, with the last saying which mentions the wish to be sent back to this world, it has been said in the verse that it will come to pass after they had seen the punishment. This obviously suggests that the first two sayings belong to a time before they saw the punishment, that is, it will be on the very first day of Qiyāmah that they will remember the shortcomings of their deeds and say: *يَحْسِرْتَنِي* عَلَى مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ (Pity on me, because I fell short in respect of Allah ...39:56). Later, as an excuse, they will say that they were helpless, and had Allah guided them, they too would have become obedient and fearing, but when He Himself gave them no guidance, they were hardly at fault. After that, when they see the punishment, they would wish to be sent back into the world. In these three verses, Allah Ta'ālā has made it very clear that the forgiveness and mercy of Allah is very extensive. But, it can be won only when one repents before death. Therefore, Allah was alerting them right there against the possibility that they start to show remorse after death, and indulge in these redundant wishes in the Hereafter.

In verse 59, it was said: *بَلَىٰ فَدَجَاءَ نَكَ الْبِئْسَىٰ فَكَذَّبَتْ بِهَا* (Why not? My verses had reached you, but you called them untrue, and waxed proud, and became of those who disbelieved...). In this verse, what the disbelievers said in: (If Allah were to show me the way, I would have surely been among those who fear Allah", - 39:57) has been answered. The outcome of this verse is that Allah had already given the necessary guidance, fully and conclusively. He had sent His books, verses and signs. Therefore, their claim that Allah gave them no guidance was absurd. Of course, once He had given the guidance, Allah never forced anyone to be good and obedient. In fact, every servant of His was given the choice to take to

either the way of the truth or the way of the false. This was a test for the maker of the choice. On this depended his or her success or failure. Whoever took to the way of error by one's own free will, choice and volition, he or she is, himself or herself, responsible for it.

Verses 62 - 67

اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قُلْ أَغَيَّرَ اللَّهُ تَأْمُرُونِي أَعْبُدُ أَيُّهَا الْجَاهِلُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾
وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكَ ۚ لَئِن أُشْرِكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ
عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾ بَلِ اللَّهُ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِنَ
الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ ۗ وَالْأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا قَبْضَتُهُ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ بِيَمِينِهِ ۗ سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا
يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

Allah is Creator of everything, and He is the Guardian over everything. [62] To Him belong the keys to the heavens and the earth. As for those who have rejected the verses of Allah, it is they who are the losers. [63] Say, "Is it, then, someone other than Allah that you ask me to worship, O ignorant people?" [64] And it has already been revealed to you and to those before you (that): If you associate (partners with Allah), your deeds shall be rendered useless, and you shall be among the losers. [65] On the contrary, it is Allah whom you should worship; and be among the grateful. [66] And they did not hold Allah in His true esteem. And the whole earth will be in a single grip of His hand on the Day of Doom, and the heavens (will be) rolled up on his right hand. Pure is He, far too high from what they ascribe to Him. [67]

Commentary

The word: مَقَالِيدُ (*maqālīd*) in: لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ (To Him belong the keys to the heavens and the earth.- 39:63) is the plural form of: مَقْلَادٌ

(*miqlād*) or: مِفْلِيدُ (*miqlid*) meaning a key. It has been said that this word has really been Arabicized from the Persian language. In Persian, a key is called کلید (*kalid*). When Arabicized, it became: اقلید (*iqlid*) with its plural being: مَقَالِيدُ (*maqālid*) (Rūḥ-ul-Maʿānī). Having keys in one's hand denotes ownership, possession and the ability to dispense at will. Therefore, the sense of the verse is that the keys to whatever treasures lie hidden in the heavens and the earth are in the hands of Allah and He alone is the custodian and the dispenser in that it is He who gives whenever He wills to whomever He wills and as much as He wills - and would just not give to anyone He so wills.

And in some narrations of Ḥadīth, the third kalimah, that is: سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ (Pure is Allah and Praised is Allah and there is no god worthy of worship but Allah and Allah is Great and there is no strength and there is no power except from Allah, the High, the Great) has been called: مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ('the keys to the heavens and the earth' - 39:63). The outcome is: One who recites this kalimah, mornings and evenings, is blessed by Allah Taʿālā from the treasures of the heavens and the earth. Ibn-ul-Jawzi has declared these narrations to be: موضوع (mawduʿ: fabricated, forged;). But, other Ḥadīth experts have rated these as weak ضعيف (*ḍaʿif*) *aḥādīth* that can be relied upon in the matter of the merits of good deeds. (Rūḥ-ul-Maʿānī)

In the last verse (67), it was said: وَالْأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا قَبْضَتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ بِيَمِينِهِ (and the whole earth will be in a single grip of His hand on the Day of Doom and the heavens, rolled up on His right hand). The earth being in the hand-grip of Allah Taʿālā and the heavens being rolled up on His right hand appears here, in the view of the early forbears of Islam, in its real sense. But, the subject of the verse falls in the category of al-mutashabihat (of hidden meaning) the reality of which is not known to anyone except Allah Taʿālā. For people in general, even trying to find out its reality is forbidden. Hence, the thing to do is no more but to believe that whatever Allah Taʿālā means thereby is true and correct. And since the apparent words of this verse seem to suggest grasp, grip or a hand holding something ('qabdah', mutthi, handful) as well as the presence of a right hand that are parts of a body while Allah Taʿālā is pure and free from body and physicality. To this, towards the end of the verse, a hint was released: Do not take these words on the analogy of your body limbs.

Allah Ta'ālā is free from these: *سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ* (Pure is He, far too high from what they ascribe to Him - 39:67).

Later day scholars, taking this verse to be metaphorical, explain it by saying that having something grasped in hand and having something in the right hand is an allusion to having something under full possession and control - and it is this perfect possession and control that is meant here. And Allah, He is pure and high - He knows best.

Verses 68 - 75

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا مَنْ
 شَاءَ اللّٰهُ ۗ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيْهِ اٰخَرٰى فَاِذَا هُمْ قِيٰمٌ يَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَاَشْرَقَتْ
 الْاَرْضُ نُوْرًا رَّبَّهَآ وَوُضِعَ الْكِتٰبُ وَجِآءَ بِالْبٰنِيْنَ وَالشُّهَدَآءِ
 وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَوُقِيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ
 مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَسِيقَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا اِلَى
 جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا ۗ حَتّٰى اِذَا جَآءَ وَهَآ فَفَتِحَتْ اَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا
 اَلَمْ يٰٓاَتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ يَتْلُوْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنذِرُوْنَكُمْ لِقَآءِ
 يَوْمِكُمْ هٰذَا ۗ قَالُوْا بَلٰى وَلٰكِنْ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ عَلٰى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ
 ﴿٧١﴾ قِيْلَ ادْخُلُوْا اَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۗ فَبِئْسَ مَثْوٰى
 الْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَسِيقَ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ اِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا ۗ حَتّٰى
 اِذَا جَآءَ وَهَآ وَفُتِحَتْ اَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ
 فَادْخُلُوْهَا خٰلِدِيْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَقَالُوْا الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِىْ صَدَقْنَا وَعَدَهُ
 وَاَوْرَثَنَا الْاَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّأُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَآءُ ۗ فَنِعْمَ اَجْرُ الْعٰمِلِيْنَ
 ﴿٧٤﴾ وَتَرٰى الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ حَآفِيْنَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ
 رَبِّهِمْ ۗ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيْلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾

And Horn (*sūr*) will be blown, and all those in the

heavens and all those in the earth will faint, except the one whom Allah wills (otherwise). Thereafter, it will be blown once again, and suddenly they will stand up, looking around. [68] And the earth will shine with the light of its Lord, and the book (of everyone's deeds) will be placed, and the prophets and the witnesses will be brought, and matters will be decided between them with truth, and they will not be wronged. [69] And everyone will be paid in full for what he did - and He knows best as to what they do. [70] And those who disbelieved will be driven towards the Jahannam in groups, until when they reach it, its gates will be opened, and its keepers will say to them, "Did messengers from among you not come to you reciting to you the verses of your Lord, and warning you about the meeting of this day of yours?" They will say, "Yes (they did), but the word of punishment had become certain against those who disbelieved." [71] It will be said, "Enter the gates of Jahannam to live in there forever. So, how evil is the dwelling-place of the arrogant! [72] And those who used to fear their Lord will be led towards the Jannah in groups, until when they reach it, while its gates will be (already) opened (for them), and its keepers will say to them, "salamun-'alaikum (peace be on you). How good are you. So, enter it to live here forever." [73] And they will say, "alhamdulillah: Praise belongs to Allah who made His promise come true for us, and made us inherit the territory, so as we can dwell anywhere we wish in Jannah. So, excellent is the reward of those who did (good) deeds. [74] And you will see the angels ringed around the Throne proclaiming the purity of their Lord, along with His praise, and matters will stand settled between them rightfully, and it will be said: "*alḥamdulillahi-rabbil'alamīn*: Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds." [75]

Commentary

In verse 68, it was said: فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ : "and all those in the heavens and all those in the earth will faint, except the one whom Allah wills." The word: صَعِقَ (*sa'iqā*) literally means to swoon, faint or fall unconscious, and the sense is that they all will become unconscious first, then die, and those who had already died, their spirits will become unconscious (as in Bayān ul-Qur'ān under the commentary on Sūrah An-Naml and in Ibn Kathīr likewise).

The last part of the verse: *إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ*: "except those whom Allah wills [otherwise]" needs to be explained. Included here, according to the narrations of ad-durr-ul-manthur, there are four angels - Jibra'īl, Mika'īl, Israfil and 'Izra'īl (the angel of death) - and as in some narrations, the angels bearing the Throne are also included therein. That they have been so exempted means that the effect of the blowing of the *sūr* will not cause death to them. But, later on, they too will meet their death. And no one, except the one and single Being of *Allah subḥānahu wā ta'ālā*, will remain alive at that time. Ibn Kathīr has also opted for this view, and has said that, even out of all of them, the angel of death will be the last to die. Another verse similar to this has appeared in Sūrah An-Naml also where instead of the word: *صَعَوْ* (*sa'iqā*: faint), the word used is: *فَزِعَ* (*fazi'a*: frightened). Some details about it have been given there as well. (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume VI, please see under commentary on Sūrah An-Naml, 27:87).

In verse 69, it was said: *وَجَاءَءَ بِالنَّبِيِّنَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ* (and the prophets and the witnesses will be brought,) It means that, at the time of reckoning on the plains of Resurrection, present there will be all prophets as well as all other witnesses. The prophets themselves will also be among the witnesses as said in the Qur'ān: *جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ* (We shall bring a witness from every community - An-Nisā', 4:41). And angels too will be among the witnesses, as in the Qur'ān: *مَعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ* (with each someone [meaning an angel] to drive and someone [meaning an angel] to bear witness - Qāf, 50:21) where the identity of the driver and the witness has been clearly established as being the angels (Tafsīr Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur). And among the witnesses, there will be the followers of the prophet of Islam as in the Qur'ān: *لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ* (and [so that] you become witnesses to [other] people - Al-Ḥajj, 22:78). And, for that matter, even one's own body limbs will appear as witnesses as said in the Qur'ān: *تُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ* (their hands will speak to Us and their feet will bear witness - Yā Sīn, 36:65).

In verse 74, it was said: *نَتَّبِعُوا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ* (we can dwell anywhere we wish in Jannah). The sense is that, apart from their own special dwelling places, the people of Jannah will be allowed to visit others there and take pleasure trips around. Ṭabarani, Abū Nu'aym and Diya', have reported, through a chain rated as '*ḥasan*', from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها that someone came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said to him, '*yā rasūlallāh*, I

love you so much that I keep thinking of you even when I go back home and I remain uncomfortable and impatient until I return to you. But, when I remember my death and remember your death, then, it occurs to me that you will be in the higher stations of Jannah and even if I reach there somehow, it is certain that I shall be on a level much below it. My worry is: How am I going to see you?' The Holy Prophet ﷺ heard what he said, but he remained silent until came the angel, Jibra'īl with the following verse:

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ
وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا

And those who obey Allah and the Messenger are with those whom Allah has blessed, namely, the prophets, the *Ṣiddiqin*,¹ the *Shuhada'*,² and the righteous - and what a good company they are. - an-Nisā', 4:69.

In this verse, it was clearly stated that Muslims who obey Allah and the Messenger would invariably be with the prophets and those others mentioned therein. Then, from the verse under study we also come to understand that they will be allowed to visit higher stations of Jannah. May Allah Ta'ālā, in His mercy, make us join up with them in Jannah.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Az-Zumar
Ends here

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1. Ṣiddiq, lexically means 'very truthful'. In the Islamic terminology, it normally refers to those Companions of a prophet who excel all others in their submission to Allah and His Messenger. They enjoy the highest status of piety after the Prophets, like Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه. (back)
 2. Shuhada (pl. of Shāhīd) means the persons who sacrificed their lives in the way of Allah. The word has not been translated here by the word 'martyr' which sometimes is taken as an equivalent of Shahid, because the word 'martyr' is also applied for the persons killed in ethnic or racial wars while they may not be termed as 'Shuhada' in the Islamic terminology

Sūrah Al-Mu'min

(The Believer) or

Sūrah Ghāfir

(The Forgiver)

Sūrah Al-Mu'min is Makkī, and it has 85 verses and 9 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 9

حَمْدٌ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٢﴾ غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ
وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطُّوْلِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَهٌ يَبْتَغِي
الْمُصِيبُ ﴿٣﴾ مَا يُجَادِلُ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَا يَغْرُرُكَ
تَقْلُبُهُمْ فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿٤﴾ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَالْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ
بَعْدِهِمْ وَهَمَّتْ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ بِرَسُولِهِمْ لِيَأْخُذُوهُ وَجَادَلُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ
لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ فَأَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ ﴿٥﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ
حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ﴿٦﴾
الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ
وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ
رَّحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ

الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٧﴾ رَبَّنَا وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدْتَهُمْ وَمَنْ صَلَحَ
 مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّتِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٨﴾
 وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ ۗ وَمَنْ تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهُ ۗ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ
 الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٩﴾

Hā Mīm. [1] This is revelation of the Book from Allah, the Mighty, the All-Knowing, [2] the One who forgives sins and accepts repentance, the One who is severe in punishment, the One who is the source of all power. There is no god but He. To Him is the ultimate return (of all). [3] No one quarrels about the verses of Allah, except those who disbelieve. So, their (prosperous) movements in the cities should not deceive you. [4] Before these, the people of Nūḥ and the groups after them had rejected (the messengers). And every group intended to seize their messenger, and raised disputes on the basis of falsehood, so that they might refute the truth with it, hence I seized them. So, how was My punishment? [5] And similarly, the word of your Lord has become due against those who disbelieve, that they are the people of the Fire. [6]

Those who are bearing the Throne and those who are around it pronounce the purity of your Lord alongwith His praise, and believe in Him, and pray for the forgiveness of those who believe: "Our Lord, Your mercy and knowledge comprehends everything, so forgive those who repent and follow Your way, and save them from the punishment of the Fire. [7] And, our Lord, admit them to the eternal gardens of Jannah that You have promised for them, and (admit) those as well who did good from among their fathers and wives and children. You, only You, are the Mighty, the Wise, [8] and save them from evils (of punishment). And whomsoever you save from evils that day, it is surely because you bless him with mercy. And that is the great achievement indeed. [9]

Commentary

Sūrah Al-Mu'min: Characteristics and Merits

From here (40) to Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf (46) starts a series of seven Sūrahs that begin with the isolated letters: حَم (Hā Mīm). These are called: آل حَم

(‘Āl Ḥā Mīm) or حواميم (*ḥawāmīm*). Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه said, آل حَم (‘Āl Ḥā Mīm) is: ديباج القرآن (*dibāj-ul- Qur‘ān*): Dibāj, in Arabic, is the cloth of pure silk, and here it signifies embellishment. Mis‘ar Ibn Kidām says, 'These are called: عرائس (*‘arā’is*: brides).' Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه said, 'Every thing has an essence. The essence of the Qur‘ān lies in آل حَم (‘Āl Ḥā Mīm)' or said, حواميم (*ḥawāmīm*). All these reports appear in Faḍā’il-ul-Qur‘ān by the great scholar, Abū ‘Ubaid Qasim Ibn Sallam.

And Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh (Ibn Mas‘ūd) رضي الله عنه said that the example of the Qur‘ān is similar to that of a person who started out to look for a place where he and his family could live. Here, he finds some green open land and is pleased with it. Then, he moves ahead, and finds gardens and settling places far more verdant and growth-prone. He says, 'I was wondering about the greenery produced by rains that I saw first, but these are more wonderful'. Then, it would be said to him, 'The first all green layout is like the Qur‘ān in general, and the gardens and lodges are like آل حَم (‘Āl Ḥā Mīm) from out of the Qur‘ān.' Therefore, Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه said, 'As for me, when I, during the recitation of the Qur‘ān, arrive at: آل حَم (‘Āl Ḥā Mīm), it is as if I am enjoying myself.'

Protection against everything unwelcome

Al-Bazzār, quoting his own chains of authority in his Musnad, reports from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "A person who has recited the ‘Ayah of Kursiyy and the first three verses (1-3) of Sūrah Al-Mu’min up to: إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ (*ilaihil-masir*: To Him is the return) early during the day, he (or she) will, on that day, remain safe from everything bad and painful.' It has also been reported by Tirmidhi, though, one of the reporting links in the chain of authority is doubtful. (Ibn Kathīr, page 69, volume 4)

Protection against an enemy

There appears a narration from Sayyidnā Muhallab Ibn Abī Ṣafrah رضي الله عنه in Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī through a chain rated as 'Ṣaḥīḥ' in which he said, 'it was reported to me by a person who had himself heard the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم saying (on the occasion of some Jihad concerning a night vigil) that 'should you be attacked at the time of night, you recite: حَم لَا يُنْصَرُونَ (Ḥā Mīm la yunṣarun) which means reciting حَم (Ḥā Mīm) and praying that the enemy does not succeed. Then there are some narrations in which this formulation appears as: حَم لَا يُنْصَرُوا (Ḥā Mīm la yunṣaru -

without the letter: نون (nun) at the end) the outcome of which is that, 'should you say: حَمَّ (Ḥā Mīm), the enemy will not succeed.' From this we learn that حَمَّ (Ḥā Mīm) serves as a fortress against the enemy. (Ibn Kathīr)

A strange event

Thābit Bunanī says, 'I was with Sayyidnā Muṣ'ab Ibn Zubayr رضي الله عنه in a certain section of the city of Kufah. I walked into a garden to make two *raka'āt* of *ṣalāh* there. Before I would start my *ṣalāh*, I recited the verses of Ḥā Mīm Al-Mu'min (40:1-3) up to: إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ (*ilaihil-maṣīr*: To Him is the return). Of a sudden, I saw a man in Yemeni attire astride a white mule standing behind me. This man said to me, 'when you say: غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ (ghafiridh-dhanbi: Forgiver of sins), with it, you should pray: يَا غَافِرَ الذَّنْبِ (yā ghafiradh-dhanbi, *ighfirli*: O Forgiver of sins, forgive me). And when you say: قَابِلِ التَّوْبِ (qabilit-tawbi: Acceptor of repentance), you should pray: يَا قَابِلَ التَّوْبِ أَقْبَلْ تَوْبِي (yā qabilata-tawbi, *iqbal tawbati*: O Acceptor of repentance, accept my repentance). After that, when you say: شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ (*shadidil-‘iqābi*: Severe in punishment), you should pray: يَا شَدِيدَ الْعِقَابِ لَا تُعَاقِبْنِي (yā shadidal-‘iqābi, *la tu‘aqibni*: O Allah, severe in punishment, please do not punish me). And when you say: ذِي الطَّوْلِ (*dhiṭ-ṭawli*: Source of all power), you should pray: يَا ذَا الطَّوْلِ طُلُّ عَلَيَّ بِخَيْرٍ (yā dhaṭ-ṭawli, *tul ‘alaiyya bikhayr*: O source of power, bestow the best on me).

Thābit Bunani says, 'After having heard this good counsel from him, when I looked back at him, there was no one there. Looking for him, I went to the gate of the garden. I asked people there if they had seen a person in Yemeni attire passing through here. Everyone said that they had not seen anyone like that.' In another narration from Thabit Bunani, it has also been said that people think this person was Sayyidnā Ilyās عليه السلام while it has not been mentioned in the other. (Ibn Kathīr)

The effect of these verses in reforming people, and a great directive of Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه

Ibn Kathīr has reported on the authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim that there was a man of strong and dignified bearing among the Syrians who used to visit Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه. When he did not show up for a longer than usual period of time, Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه inquired about him. People said, 'yā amiral-mu'minīn, please do not ask about him. He has become a drunkard. Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه called his scribe and dictated a letter to him in which he said:

من عمر بن الخطاب الى فلان بن فلان. سلام عليك فاني احمد اليك الله الذي لا اله الا هو غافر الذنب و قابل التوب شديد العقاب ذى الطول لا اله الا هو اليه المصير.

"From 'Umar son of al-Khattāb to --- son of ---. salamun 'alaik, peace on you. After that, I praise Allah before you, other than whom there is no god worthy of worship. He is the One who forgives sins and accepts repentance, the One who is severe in punishment, the One who is the source of all power. There is no god but He. To Him is the ultimate return (of all)."

Then he turned toward those around him and said, 'Let us all join in to pray for him that Allah Ta'ālā reverses his heart and accepts his repentance.' Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه had instructed the messenger who was to deliver his letter that he was not to hand over the letter to the person addressed until such time that he became sober, and that he was not to hand over the letter to anyone other than the person intended to receive it. So, when this person received this letter, he read it repeatedly and thoughtfully while realizing that it carried a warning of punishment against him with a concurrent promise of forgiveness for him. Then he started weeping. Finally, he stopped drinking and made such a firm taubah that he never touched it again.

When Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه learnt about the effective manifestation of these words, he said to people around, 'In such matters, you too should do the same. When some brother falls into some slip of conduct, think of ways to bring him back to his normal and better self. Prompt him to turn to Allah, to place his trust in Him, to rely on His mercy. Pray to Allah for him, pray that he is enabled to repent and make his taubah. And do not become an accomplice of Satan against him (that is, if you chide him or infuriate him and thereby estrange him from his religion, then, you would actually be helping the Satan). (Ibn Kathīr)

A warning

For people who work for the betterment of Allah's creation and serve in the field of tabligh and da'wah, this verse offers great guidance. Here is a person you would love to become a better person. First, you yourself pray for him. Then, use soft ways to bring him towards that betterment. Do not be aggressive towards him, for it would do no good to him, in fact, it would amount to helping the Satan, for he would push him onto more

ways of error.

Explanation of Verses

Some commentators have said that: حَم (Ḥā Mīm) is the name of Allah Ta'ālā. But, in the sight of early authorities, these isolated letters (*al-ḥuruf-ul-muqatta'āt*) are all from the category of: متشابهات (*mutashabihat*: of hidden meaning). Their meanings are known to Allah Ta'ālā alone - or, that they are a secret between Allah Ta'ālā and the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The expression: غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ (*ghāfiridh-dhanb*) in verse 3: غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ literally means the one who puts a cover on sins (in the sense that they are no more seen or known by anyone), and: قَابِلِ التَّوْبِ (*qābilit-tawb*) means: He who accepts taubah or repentance. These two expressions appear separately, though the sense of both appears to be almost the same. The reason is that by saying: غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ (*ghāfiridh-dhanb*), the purpose is to indicate that Allah Ta'ālā does already possess the standing authority and power to forgive the sin of a servant even without taubah - while forgiving those who repent is yet another attribute of Allah. (Maẓharī)

The word: طَوْل (*ṭawl*) which follows immediately in: ذِي الطَّوْلِ (*dhit-ṭawl*) literally means vastness and being need-free. Then, it could also mean power or favor. (Maẓharī)

In verse 4, it was said: مَا يُجَادِلُ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا (No one quarrels about the verses of Allah, except those who disbelieve.). This verse declares quarreling in the matter of the Qur'ān an act of *kufr* (disbelief). And the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: إِنَّ جِدَالَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ كُفْرٌ (Surely, quarreling (*jidāl*) in the Qur'ān is *kufr*.) (Reported by al-Baghawī, al-Baihaqī in *ash-Shu'ab* from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ; and reported by Abū Dāwūd and al-Ḥākim who has rated it as 'Ṣaḥīḥ- Maẓharī)

It appears in Ḥadīth that, on a certain day, the Holy Prophet ﷺ heard two persons quarreling about some verse of the Qur'ān. He got angry, and came out with his blessed face showing the signs of anger. He said, 'communities before you were ruined because they had started quarreling in the matter of the Book of Allah.' (Reported by Muslim from 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn Shu'aib - Maẓharī)

This *جِدَال* (*jidāl*) declared as: *كُفْر* (*kufr*) by the Qur'ān, and Ḥadīth, means throwing taunts, passing sarcastic remarks, engineering disputes over self-invented and absurd doubts, or to give such meaning of a verse of the Qur'ān as is counter to other verses of the Qur'ān and to the binding textual imperatives of Sunnah - something that amounts to alteration in the Qur'ān. Otherwise, any honest inquiry about something ambiguous or vague, or trying to find a solution of a difficult word or expression, or to mutually investigate and discuss possibilities while deducing injunctions and rulings from the text of some verse are things not included under this *jidāl*, in fact, it is an act of *thawāb* (reward) in its own place (al-Qāḍī al-Baidawī, Qurṭubī and Maḥzarī).

In the last sentence of verse 4, it was said: *فَلَا يَغُرُّكَ تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِي الْبِلَادِ* (So, their [prosperous] movements in the cities should not deceive you.). The *kuffar* (disbelievers) from the tribe of Quraish used to travel to Yemen during winter and to Syria in summer with their trading caravans. They were held in esteem all over Arabia because of their services to Baytullah at Makkah, therefore, they remained safe during their travels and profited from their commercial ventures. This was the backbone of their wealth and territorial power. That this state of affairs with them kept continuing despite the challenge from Islam and the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a matter of pride for them - 'Had we been the culprits in the sight of Allah, all these blessings would have been taken away from us!' This situation could have made even some Muslims easy victims of doubt. Therefore, in this verse, it was said that Allah Ta'ālā had granted them a temporary respite in His wisdom and under His expedient consideration. So, let Muslims not be deceived by this leash given to them. Once this period of respite is over, they are going to be visited by a punishment, and this territorial power of theirs is going to be taken away from them. This started from the Battle of Badr, and up to the Conquest of Makkah, the foreboding manifested itself fully and conclusively within a span of six years.

In verse 7, it was said: *الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ* (Those who are bearing the Throne and those who are around it). The present count of angels who bear the Throne (*'arsh*) is four and, on the day of Qiyāmah (the Day of Judgment), they will be eight, and only Allah knows the number of angels around the *'arsh*. Some Ḥadīth narrations give the number of

their rows that reaches several hundred thousands. They are called: كَرُوبِي (karrubi, [Heb. Kerubh or kerub], plural: [Eng. Cherubin, or Cherubim, Heb. Cherubim]). They are angels close to Allah. In this verse, it has been said that all these angels close to Allah pray for all believers, particularly those who repent from their sins and follow the Shari'ah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Either Allah Ta'ālā has appointed them to perform this task, or their nature is such that they keep praying for the good servants of Allah. Therefore, Sayyidnā Mutarrif Ibn 'Abdullāh Ibn Shikhkhir said that out of all servants of Allah, the angels of Allah are the foremost among those who wish well for believers. Firstly, they pray for them. They implore Allah to forgive them, to save them from the punishment of Jahannam and to admit them to the everlasting gardens of Jannah. Along with it, they also pray for: (... those as well who did good from among their fathers and wives and children. - 40:8), that is, also admit anyone from among their fathers and forefathers, and their wives, and their children - who meet the criterion of goodness that makes them deserving of forgiveness, a criterion that requires that they should have departed from the mortal world while adhering to their 'imān or faith - yes, admit them too with the same believers into the Jannah.

This tells us that one's 'imān or faith is the basic condition of salvation (*najah*). After 'imān come other good deeds. The relatives of Muslim believers - fathers, grandfathers or wives and children - even if they are ranked lower than them, such is the munificence of Allah Ta'ālā that He would, in deference to them, also let the relatives of a lesser rank be along with them in Jannah, so that their happiness becomes total and complete as it has been said in another verse of the Qur'ān appearing elsewhere: ... (We will join their children with them - At-Ṭur, 52:21).

Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr has said, 'When a believer goes to Jannah, he will ask about his father, son, brother and others, and would want to know where they are. He will be told that their deeds were not like yours (therefore, they will not be there). He will say, 'whatever good I did (was not for me alone), in fact, it was for me and them both.' Then, the command will come, 'admit them too into the Jannah.' (Ibn Kathīr)

After having reported this Ḥadīth narration in Tafsīr Mazḥarī, the author said, 'this *'mawquf*' (a Ḥadīth mawquf or restricted tradition from

a Companion who does not connect it to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has the same authority and force as 'marfu' (a Ḥadīth *marfu'* is a tradition attributed to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and is explicit on the point that 'doing good' that is held as a pre-condition for having this privilege means 'Imān' or adhering to the true faith.

Verses 10 - 12

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنَادُونَ لَمَقْتُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ مَقْتِكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ فَتَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتْنَا أَنْتَيْنِ وَآحْيَيْتَنَا أَنْتَيْنِ فَأَعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَى خُرُوجٍ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ ﴿١١﴾ ذَلِكُمْ بِأَنَّهُ إِذِ ادْعَى اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ تُؤْمِنُوا ۗ فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ ﴿١٢﴾

Those who disbelieve will be addressed (by a voice saying): "The hatred of Allah (for you), when you were invited to the true faith and you refused, used to be greater than your hatred for yourselves (today when you are hating your own selves out of remorse). [10] They will say, "Our Lord, You gave us death twice and You gave us life twice. Now we confess our sins. So, is there any way to come out of here?" [11] (The reply will be, "No.) This is because whenever Allah alone was invoked, you used to disbelieve, and if partners were associated with Him, you used to believe. Now the decision lies with Allah, the High, the Great." [12]

Verses 13 - 22

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُم آيَاتِهِ وَيُنزِلُ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ رِزْقًا وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ ﴿١٣﴾ فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ ۚ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ ﴿١٥﴾ يَوْمَ هُمْ بَرْزُورُونَ ۖ لَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ ۗ لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾

الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ۗ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ
 الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٧﴾ وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْأَزْفَةِ إِذِ الْقُلُوبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ
 كَظْمِئِنَّ ۗ مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ يُطَاعُ ﴿١٨﴾ ۗ يَعْلَمُ
 خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ ﴿١٩﴾ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَقْضِي بِالْحَقِّ ۗ
 وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَقْضُونَ بِشَيْءٍ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ
 الْبَصِيرُ ﴿٢٠﴾ ۗ أَوْلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
 الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۗ كَانُوا هُمْ أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَآثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 فَاخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَاقٍ ﴿٢١﴾ ۗ ذَلِكَ
 بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَكَفَرُوا فَاخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّهُ
 قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٢﴾

It is He who shows you His signs and sends down provision for you from the sky; and no one takes lesson but the one who turns to Him. [3] So, worship Allah, making your submission exclusive for Him, even though the disbelievers dislike. [14] He is High in stations, the Owner of the Throne. He sends the spirit down, under His command, on whomever He wills from among His servants, so that he warns of the Day of Encounter - [15] the day they will come in open view. Nothing about them will remain hidden from Allah: To whom belongs the kingdom today? To Allah alone, the One, the All-Dominant. [16] Today, everyone will be recompensed for what one earned. There is no injustice today. Surely, Allah is swift in reckoning. [17] And warn them of the Day of approaching horror, when hearts will jump up into the throats, (and they will be) choked. There will be neither a friend, for the unjust, nor an intercessor to be listened to. [18] He knows the treachery of the eyes and whatever is concealed by the hearts. [19] And He will give His judgment with truth. And those whom they invoke beside Him cannot judge anything. Surely, it is Allah who is Hearing, Seeing. [20] Have they not traveled through the earth and seen how was the fate of those who used to be before them? They were stronger

than these in power and in traces left on the earth, but Allah seized them because of their sins. And there was no one to save them from Allah. [21] That was because messengers used to come to them with clear signs, but they disbelieved. Then, Allah seized them. Surely, He is Strong, severe in punishment. [22]

Commentary

The word: رُفِعَ الدَّرَجَاتِ (*darajāt*, translated above as 'stations') in: (He is High in stations - 40:15) has been taken by some commentators as meaning 'attributes.' If so, the sense of the expression would be that His attributes of perfection are most exalted. Ibn Kathīr has relied on the words as they appear outwardly and has said that it refers to the most exalted 'arsh' (throne) for it comprehends all land masses and heavens and is located above them for it like a roof as in Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij: مِنَ اللَّهِ ذِي الْمَعَارِجِ تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ (From Allah, the Lord of the stairways to whom ascend the angels and spirit, in a day the length of which is fifty thousand years - 70:3,4).

According to some further investigation into this verse by Ibn Kathīr, it should be borne in mind that this measure of fifty thousand years is a description of the travel distance from the seventh level of the earth up to the 'arsh, and this is what has been declared as the preferred position by a majority of earlier and later scholars. He has also said that according to many scholars, 'arsh is made of a red ruby the diameter of which is so big as would take a travel distance of fifty thousand years to cover. Similarly, its height would take an identical travel distance to cover. Then there are commentators who have said that رُفِعَ الدَّرَجَاتِ (*rafi'u-d-darajāt*) appears in the sense of رَافِعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ (*rāfi'u-d-darajāt*: that is, the One who elevates others in ranks), that is, Allah Ta'ālā is the one who elevates the ranks of believers who have His fear in their hearts as borne by verses of the Qur'ān, such as: نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَّن نَّشَاءُ (We raise in ranks whom We will - Al-An'ām, 6:83) and هُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ (They are of various ranks with Allah - 'Al-Imrān, 3:163).

The word: بَارِزُونَ (*barizun*) in verse 16: يَوْمَهُمْ بَارِزُونَ لَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ (the day they will come in open view) refers to what would happen on the day of Resurrection when its land surface will be turned into a single level without any mountains, caves, trees or buildings that could obstruct the view. Therefore, everyone will be in an open expanse, open to view.

In the concluding sentence of the same verse, it was said: **لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ** (To whom belongs the kingdom today?). This statement has appeared in this verse after **يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ** (a day of encounter) and **يَوْمَ هُمْ بَارِزُونَ** (the day they will come in open view) and it is obvious that 'the day of encounter' and 'the day of gathering together' will materialize after the second Horn has been blown. Similarly, the event of 'the day they will come in open view' will also materialize after the second Horn has been blown, and a new venue in the form of a level surface will be put in place, a place with no natural or man-made object obstructing the view. After that, now that this statement: **لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ** (To whom belongs the kingdom today?) has been introduced, it only shows that this statement of Allah Ta'ālā will be made after everyone has been raised again by virtue of the blowing of the second Horn. Al-Qurṭubī has presented a Ḥadīth in support with reference to Naḥḥas. This Ḥadīth has been reported by Abū Wa'il from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه. According to this Ḥadīth, all human beings will be assembled together on a clear surface, a surface on which no sin would have been committed by anyone. At that time, a herald will be commanded to herald: **لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ** (To whom belongs the kingdom today?). Thereupon, the entire creation, believer or disbeliever, will respond saying: **لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ** (To Allah alone, the One, the All-Dominant.). As for the believers, they will be more than pleased to say so, for this would be part of their belief. As for the disbelievers, they will confess to it sadly and helplessly.

But, some other narrations show that this statement will be made by Allah Ta'ālā Himself when the entire creation will lie annihilated after the blowing of the first Horn, and when even specially close ones, the angels - Jibra'īl, Mika'īl, Israfil and the angel of death - will also meet death, and no one except the One Being of Allah *subḥānahu wa ta'ālā* will remain, that will be the time He will say: **لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ** (To whom belongs the kingdom today?). Since there will be no one to answer at that time, He will Himself answer: **لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ** (To Allah alone, the One, the All-Dominant.). Sage Hasan al-Basri has said: In this situation, the entity asking the question and the entity responding to it is no other but the entity of one and only Allah. Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b al-Qurāī also says this. It is supported by the Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah and Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه in which it is said, 'On the Day of Judgment, Allah Ta'ālā will -

with all earth surfaces rolled up in His left hand and all heavens rolled up in His right hand - say: "انا الملك ابن الجبارون ابن المتكبرون" (I am the owner of the kingdom. Where are the tyrants? Where are the arrogant?). In Tafsir Ad-Durr-ul- Manthūr where, after reporting both narrations of this nature, it has been said that it is possible that this statement is made twice, the first being at the time of the annihilation of the existing universe following the first blowing of the Horn, and the second at the time the entire creation has been brought back to life following the second blowing of the Horn. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi has said in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān that the Tafsir of the noble Qur'ān does not hinge on declaring it as made twice only, instead, it is also possible that the cited verse is mentioning the event that will come to pass after the first blowing of the Horn, but it has been referred to here (while mentioning the events after the second blowing) as a reminder of what happened before. Allah knows best.

In verse 19, it was said: يَعْلمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ (He knows the treachery of the eyes), in other words, eyes that betray the trust. It means the action of a person who would, secretly and surreptitiously, cast a glance over something haram and impermissible for him or her, for example, casts a glance at a non-maḥram person with sexual desire, and takes it away in the event someone was around, or casts a glance in a manner that is not noticed by others. All these things are open before Allah Ta'ālā.

Verses 23 - 46

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٣﴾ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ
 وَقَارُونَ فَقَالُوا سِحْرٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا
 قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا أَبْنَاءَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ، وَاسْتَحْيُوا نِسَاءَهُمْ وَمَا كَيْدُ
 الْكٰفِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلٰلٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذُرِّيَّتِي أَقْتُلْ مُوسَىٰ
 وَلْيَدْعُ رَبَّهُ، إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَ دِينَكُمْ أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 الْفَسَادَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ
 لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ

يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ يَكْ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ ۚ وَإِنْ يَكْ صَادِقًا يُصِبْكُمْ
بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٢٨﴾
يَقُومُ لَكُمْ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ظَهْرَيْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنَا مِنْ بَأْسِ
اللَّهِ إِنْ جَاءَنَا ۗ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَرَىٰ وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَّا
سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِثْلَ
يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ ﴿٣٠﴾ مِثْلَ دَابِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ
بَعْدِهِمْ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِلْعِبَادِ ﴿٣١﴾ وَيَقُومُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ
يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ ﴿٣٢﴾ يَوْمَ تَوَلَّوْنَ مُدْبِرِينَ ۚ مَا لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ ۚ
وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِنْ
قَبْلِ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِي شَكِّ مِمَّا جَاءَكُمْ بِهِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا هَلَكَ
قُلْتُمْ لَنْ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رَسُولًا ۗ كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ
هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُرْتَابٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ ۗ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَنٍ
أَتَهُمْ ۗ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۗ كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ قَلْبٍ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا هُمْنُ ابْنِ لِي
صَرْحًا لَعَلِّي أَبْلُغُ الْأَسْبَابَ ﴿٣٦﴾ ۗ أَسْبَابَ السَّمَوَاتِ فَاطَّلَعَ إِلَىٰ إِلَهِ
مُوسَىٰ وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ كَاذِبًا ۗ وَكَذَلِكَ زَيْنَ لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءَ عَمَلِهِ وَصَدَّ
عَنِ السَّبِيلِ ۗ وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ إِلَّا فِي تَبَابٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ
يَقُومُ اتَّبِعُونِ أَهْدِيكُمْ سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿٣٨﴾ يَقُومُ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ
الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ ۚ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ ﴿٣٩﴾ ۗ مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً
فَلَا يُجْزَىٰ إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا ۚ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِمَّنْ ذَكَرَ وَأُنْتَهَىٰ وَهُوَ

مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٤٠﴾
 وَيَقَوْمٌ مَالِيٌّ أَدْعُواكُمْ إِلَى النَّجْوَةِ وَتَدْعُونَنِي إِلَى النَّارِ ﴿٤١﴾
 تَدْعُونَنِي لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْرِكَ بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَأَنَا أَدْعُوكُمْ
 إِلَى الْعَزِيزِ الْغَفَّارِ ﴿٤٢﴾ لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّمَا تَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ
 فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنْ مَرَدَّنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ هُمْ
 أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَسَتَذْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأَفْوِضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى
 اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَوَقَّعَهُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتٍ مَا مَكَرُوا
 وَحَاقَ بِالْفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٥﴾ النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا
 وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ
 ﴿٤٦﴾

And We did send Mūsā with Our signs and a manifest proof [23] to the Pharaoh and Hamān and Qarūn, but they said, "He is a sorcerer, a liar." [24] And when he brought them the truth from Us, they said, "Kill the sons of those who have accepted faith with him, and spare the lives of their women." And the plot of the disbelievers is nothing but a failure. [25] And the Pharaoh said, "Let me kill Mūsā, and let him call his Lord. I am afraid that he will change your religion or that he will cause havoc to appear in the land." [26] And Mūsā said, "I have sought protection of my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant man who does not believe in the day of reckoning." [27] And said a believing man from the House of the Pharaoh who had kept his faith secret, "Would you kill a man because he says - 'Allah is my Lord' - while he has come to you with clear signs from your Lord? And if he is a liar, then, his lie will fall back on himself, and if he is truthful, some of that (punishment) of which he warns you will afflict you. Indeed, Allah does not give guidance to anyone who is transgressor, a liar. [28] O my people, the kingdom is yours today, while you are dominant on the land. But, who is going to help us against the punishment of Allah, if it comes upon us?" Pharaoh said, " I do not give

you an opinion unless I myself believe it to be correct, and I do not direct you to anything but to the right way." [29] And said he who had believed, "I fear for you something like a day of the (disbelieving) groups (of the past) , [30] like the fate of the people of Nūḥ and 'Ad and Thamud and those who were after them - and Allah does not intend to do any injustice to His servants. [31] And O my people, I fear for you a day when people will call one another, [32] a day when you will turn back on your heels, having no one to save you from Allah - but, whomever Allah lets go astray, for him there is no one to guide. [33] And Yusuf had already come to you earlier with clear signs, but you remained in suspicion about what he brought to you - until when he died, you said, 'Allah will never send a messenger after him.' That is how Allah lets him go astray who crosses limits and lives in doubt, - [34] those who quarrel in the matter of the verses of Allah without any authority having reached them. It is terribly hateful with Allah and with those who believe. That is how Allah stamps a seal on the entire heart of an arrogant tyrant." [35] And the Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) said, "O Haman, make a tower for me, perhaps I could reach the ways- [36] - the ways to the heavens, and peek towards the God of Mūsā. And I do think that he is a liar." And that is how his evil deeds were made attractive to Fir'aun, and (how) he was held back from the way. And the evil design of the Fir'aun was (to end) in nothing but ruin. [37] And said he who had believed, "O my people, follow me, I will show you the path of guidance. [38] O my people, this life of the world is only a (momentary) benefit, while the Hereafter is, indeed, the place of permanent living. [39] The one who does something evil will not be punished but in its equal proportion, but the one who does a righteous deed, be he male or female, while he is a believer, then, such people will enter the Jannah where they will be provided with bounties beyond reckoning. [40] And O my people, what is wrong with me that I call you to salvation and you call me to the Fire? You invite me to reject my belief in Allah and ascribe to Him partners about whom I have no knowledge, while I invite you to (Him who is) the Mighty, the Most-Forgiving. [42] It is obvious that those (gods) to whom you are inviting me are not worth calling, neither in this world nor in the world to come, and that we have to return back to Allah, and that the

transgressors are indeed the people of the Fire. [43] Soon you will remember what I am saying to you. And I entrust my matter with Allah. Surely, Allah has all (His) servants in sight." [44] Then Allah saved him from the evils of what they designed, and the House of the Pharaoh was encircled by an evil punishment. [45] It is the Fire before which they are presented morning and evening. And on the day when the Hour (of final judgment) will take place, (the order will be released,): "Admit the family of the Pharaoh into the most severe punishment." [46]

Commentary

Frequent references were made earlier in the text to the warnings given to deniers of pure monotheism and prophethood which brought more opposition and hostility from disbelievers. Naturally, this situation made the Holy Prophet ﷺ sad. It was to comfort him that, in nearly two sections cited above, mentioned there is the story of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Pharaoh. In this story, there is a lengthy dialogue between the Pharaoh, his people and a righteous elder who, despite being a scion of the House of the Pharaoh, had believed in the faith of Sayyidnā Mūsā after having seen the miracles shown at his hands - but, had kept his faith secret until that time. Once this dialogue took place, his faith stood declared automatically and conclusively.

Out of early Tafsir authorities, Muqātil, Suddiyy and Ḥasan have said that he was a cousin of the Pharaoh and was the same person who, at the time they were talking in the court of Pharaoh about killing Sayyidnā Mūsā in retaliation against the killing of the Copt, had come running from the far side of the city and apprised Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام of the danger and advised him to go out of Egypt. This event has been mentioned in Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ: وَجَاءَ رَجُلٌ مِّنْ أَقْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْعَى (And there came a man running, from the farthest part of the city. - Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:20)

The name of this believing member of the House of the Pharaoh has been given as Ḥabīb in some sources. But, the truth of the matter is that Ḥabīb is the name of the person who has been mentioned in Sūrah Yā Sīn (36:20). The name of this person is شمعان (Sham'ān). *Suhaili* considers this name as most correct. Others say that his name is Ḥizqil. Tha'labi has reported the same name from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās عليه السلام.

In a Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'Of some صدّيقين (ṣiddiqīn: the truthful ones), there is Ḥabīb *najjār* (carpenter) whose incident appears in Sūrah Yā Sīn; the other is the believer from the House of Pharaoh; the third, Abū Bakr (Sayyidnā Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddiq رضي الله عنه), and he is the foremost among them.' (Qurṭubī)

In verse 28, it was said: يَكْتُمُ اِيْمَانَهُ (who had kept his faith secret). This tells us that a person who does not declare his *'imān* (faith) before people, yet remains staunch in his faith by heart, then, this person is a believer. But, it stands proved from clear textual authority (of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth) that, for *'imān* to be acceptable, the simple certitude of the heart is not enough, instead, it is subject to the condition of a verbal confession and declaration. Unless the person concerned declares it verbally, he or she will not be regarded as a believer. However, making this verbal declaration before people publicly is not necessary. The only reason why it is needed is that unless people come to know about the person's *'imān*, they would remain unable to interact with him or her in the same way as they do with Muslims. (Qurṭubī)

Earlier in the verse, by saying: مُؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ (a believing man from the House of the Pharaoh), it is virtually demonstrated that the believer, in his ensuing dialogue with Pharaoh and his people, invited them toward truth and faith as well as restrained them from killing Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام.

In verse 32, it was said: يَقَوْمٍ اِنِّيْ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (O my people, I fear for you a day when people will call one another.). The last word: تناد (tanād) with a kasrah on the letter: دال (dāl) is an abbreviated form of the word: تَنَادَى (tanādī) which means calling each other. The day of Qiyāmah (the Day of Doom, or Judgment) was called: يَوْمُ التَّنَادِ (yowm-ut-tanād) for the reason that this horrendous day would be reverberating with countless calls and cries. According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "When comes the day of Qiyāmah, an announcer from Allah will proclaim: 'Let the adversaries of Allah stand'. It would mean people who rejected taqdir or predestination. And then, the people of Jannah will call out to the people of Jahannam, and the people of Jahannam will call out to the people of Jannah, and the people of the A'rāf (Heights) will call out to both, all saying things about themselves. And at that time, names will be announced, names of the lucky and the

unlucky, alongwith their parentage. It will be like an announcement of results indicating that such and such person named is fortunate and successful, and that the probability of any misfortune for him or her stands eliminated - and that such and such person has turned out to be unfortunate, and that the probability of any good fortune for him or her stands eliminated." (Reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim in As-Sunnah - Mazḥarī)

And it has been reported from Sayyidnā Abū Ḥāzim Al-A'raj رضي الله عنه that he used to address his own self saying, "O A'raj, when comes the call on the day of Qiyāmah: 'Let those who committed such and such sins stand' - you would be standing with them; and when comes the call: 'Let those who committed such and such sins stand', you would be standing with them too; and when comes the call: 'Let those who committed such and such sins', you would be standing with them too - and I believe, every time a sin is announced, you would have to stand with them (because you have all sorts of sins in store with you!)" - Reported by Abū Nu'aym - Mazḥarī.

In verse 33, it was said: *يَوْمَ تَوَلُّونَ مُدْبِرِينَ* (a day when you will turn back on your heels,). In the summary of *tafsīr* from Bayān-ul-Qur'ān of Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavi (forming a part of the original Urdu edition of Ma'āriful-Qur'ān), it has been said with reference to Imām al-Baghawi that this is a description of the state in which culprits will be taken from the locale of reckoning out to the Jahannam. The outcome is that all calls and announcements mentioned in the explanation of '*yowm-ut-tanād*' ('a day when people will call one another') would have been made and, after that, these people will be made to detour from the locale of reckoning on to their final destination towards the Jahannam.

And according to some commentators, this reflects the state that will prevail in the world at the time of the first blowing of the Horn, that is, when the Horn will be blown the first time, the earth will crack open, and they will start running here and there but there will be angels on every outlet, and there will be no way of escape. In the view of these commentators, this *يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ* (*yowm-ut-tanād*) too means the time of the first blowing of the Horn, for here too there will be calls and cries coming from all corners. This view finds it support from another *قِرَاءَاتٍ* (*qirā'ah*: rendition) of this verse reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and Ḍaḥḥāk who used to recite the words: *يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ* (*yowm-ut-tanād*) with a *tashdid* (double sound) on the last letter: *دال* (*dāl*) which is a derivation

from the infinitive: نَدَّ (*nadd*) meaning to run away. Hence, according to this Tafsīr, يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ will mean 'the day of running' and the expression: تَوَلُّونَ مُدْبِرِينَ (you will turn back on your heels - 33) will become its explanation.

There is a lengthy Ḥadīth in Tafsīr Maḥzarī. It has been reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه with reference to Ibn Jarīr, Musnad Abū Ya'la, al-Baihaqī, Musnad 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid and others. It mentions three soundings of the Horn on the day of Qiyāmah. The first blowing of the Horn will cause consternation, the second, unconsciousness and the third, resurrection. The sonic outburst causing consternation will make the entire creation panic, then, this very outburst will become long enough to make everyone unconscious following which everyone will die. Generally, the combination of these two sonic outbursts has been called the first blowing of the Horn for the obvious reason that a single blowing will bring forth two manifestations, first - panic, then - swoon or unconsciousness. In this Ḥadīth too, it has been mentioned that, at the time of the blowing causing consternation, people would be running around in panic: وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَقُولُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (And that is what Allah says the day of myriad calls is) which tells us that, in this verse, the statement: يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ (*yowm-ut-tanād*) means people running around in panic at the time of the first blowing of the Horn. And Allah is Pure and High who knows best.

In verse 35, it was said: كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ قَلْبٍ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارًا (That is how Allah stamps a seal on the entire heart of an arrogant tyrant), that is, the way the hearts of Pharaoh and Haman remained unaffected by the good counsel of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and the believer from the House of Pharaoh, similarly, Allah Ta'ālā cancels out or puts a seal on the heart of every such person who is arrogant and tyrannical (someone proud and arrogant, someone unjust and oppressive). When this happens, the effect is that the light of faith does not enter that heart, and one is rendered unable to distinguish between good and bad. In one *qirā'ah*: rendition of the Qur'ān), the words for 'arrogant' and 'tyrant' have been identified as attributes of the heart for the reason that the heart is the reservoir of all morals and deeds. Every deed, good or bad, is born in the heart. Therefore, it has been said in Ḥadīth that there is a piece of flesh (heart) in the human body which, when it works right, it makes the whole body work right, and when it goes bad, it makes the whole body go bad.

(Qurtubī)

The word: *صَرَحَ* (*ṣarḥ*) in verse 36: وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا هَامَانَ ابْنِ لِي صَرْحًا (And the Pharaoh said, "O Haman, make a tower for me,) means a structure that rises high. An outward look at this statement suggests that the Pharaoh ordered his minister, Haman to build a structure that rises high into the sky close enough for him to go up, peek in and have a glimpse of God. If this wild thought, not imaginable even in the case of a man of very ordinary commonsense, really comes from Pharaoh, the sole master of the kingdom of Egypt, then, it is an evidence of his unbelievable folly - and if the minister carried out his orders, then, the apple did not fall far from the tree, as the king, so the courtier! Since no one expects any head of the state to go that wild in his imagination, therefore, some commentators have said that this much he too knew that, no matter how high a structure is made for him, he still cannot reach the skies (by that mode of ascent). But, he did that only to impress or confuse his people. Then, we have no sound and strong report to prove whether or not such a palatial high structure was ever raised. However, al-Qurtubī reports that this building was constructed, but once it reached its higher levels, it collapsed.

My respected father, Maulānā Muḥammad Yāsīn, a dear disciple of Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb, the first principal of the famous Darul-'Uloom of Deoband in India has reported his learned teacher saying, 'For this lofty palace to collapse, it is not necessary that it be hit by some Divine punishment. The fact is that the height of every building depends on the capability of its foundation to bear weight. No matter how deep the foundation is laid, it cannot go deeper than a certain limit. Now, when levels after levels were added to this building, it was inevitable that, once it exceeded the capability of its foundation to bear additional weight, it must collapse.' This provides another proof of the folly of Pharaoh and Haman. Allah knows best.

In verse 44, it was said: فَسَتَذَكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأَفَوَضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ (Soon you will remember what I am saying to you. And I entrust my matter with Allah. Surely, Allah has all (His) servants in sight.). This is what the believer from the House of Pharaoh said at the end of his address to his people inviting them to accept the message of truth. Here, it was said that, should they not listen to him within that point of time,

there would come a time when the punishment would seize them, and they would remember what he had told them. But, the remembrance of that particular time will be useless. And when by virtue of this lengthy dialogue, advice and invitation, the *'imān* or faith of this believer from the House of Pharaoh stood disclosed before these people, he realized that they might bring some harm to him, therefore, he said that he was leaving his case to rest with Allah, for He is the guardian and protector of His servants. Early tafsir authority, Muqatil says: When the people of the Pharaoh, as he had apprehended, went after him, he escaped towards the mountains and they could not catch him.

This has been mentioned in verse 45 in the following words: **فَوَقَّاهُ اللَّهُ** (Then Allah saved him from the evils of what they designed, and the House of the Pharaoh was encircled by an evil punishment.), that is, Allah Ta'ālā saved the believer from the harm the people of Pharaoh planned to bring to him, but they themselves were seized by a severe punishment. First of all, Allah Ta'ālā, in His mercy, saved the believer belonging to the House of Pharaoh right here in this world from the aggressive designs of the people of the Pharaoh against him, the details of which have not been mentioned in the Qur'an. But, the words of the Qur'an seem to say simply that the people of the Pharaoh had made many plans to hurt and kill him, and when the people of Pharaoh were drowned, Allah Ta'ālā saved this believing servant of Allah along with Sayyidnā Mūsā **عليه السلام**. As for salvation in the Hereafter, it is fairly obvious.

In the last verse cited here, it was said: **النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ** (It is the Fire before which they are presented morning and evening. And on the day when the Hour (of final judgment) will take place, (the order will be released,): "Admit the family of the Pharaoh into the most severe punishment." - 46). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd **رضي الله عنه** explained this verse by saying, "Spirits of people from the House of Pharaoh are presented before the Jahannam in the form of black birds, twice every day, morning and evening, and by pointing out to the Jahannam, it is said to them: This is your abode." (Reported by 'Abd-ur-Razzāq and Ibn Abī Ḥātim - Mazharī)

And according to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar **رضي الله عنه** appearing in the two Ṣaḥīḥs of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the Holy Prophet

ﷺ said, (the meaning of which is): "When one of you dies (and is in the universe of *barzakh*, the post-death ~ pre-resurrection state) he is shown, morning and evening, the place he is to reach after the reckoning of the Day of Judgment. And this place is shown to him everyday, and he is told that he has to reach there finally. If this person is from among the people of Jannah, then, Jannah will be shown to him as his place. And if he is from among the people of Jahannam, then, Jahannam will be shown to him as his place."

Punishment in graves

This verse is a proof of punishment in graves. Uninterrupted reports of aḥādīth and the consensus (*ijma'*) of the Muslim Ummah confirm it. This humble writer has put together all such material, along with relevant verses from the Qur'an, in a regular treatise entitled: السبر بعذاب القبر *Aṣ-ṣabr bi'adhabi-l-qabr*. This treatise has been published in Arabic as part of *Aḥkām-ul-Qur'an*.

Verses 47 - 50

وَأذِيتَحَاجُّونَ فِي النَّارِ فَيَقُولُ الضُّعَفَاءُ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُغْنُونَ عَنَّا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ النَّارِ ﴿٤٧﴾ قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَالُوا أَوْلَمْ نَكُ تَأْتِيكُمْ رُسُلُكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَالُوا فادْعُوا مَا دَعَوُا الْكٰفِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

And (worth remembering is the time) when they (the infidels) will argue with each other in the Fire. So, the weak will say to those who were arrogant, "Surely, we used to be your followers, would you, then, stand for us in (suffering at least a) part of the (punishment of) Fire?" [47] Those who were arrogant will say, "We all are in it. Allah has already passed the judgment between (His) servants. [48] And those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Jahannam, "Pray to your Lord to lighten the punishment for us some day." [49] They will say, "Had

your messengers not been coming to you with open signs?" They will say, "Of course, (they had come)." They (the keepers) will say, "Then, you pray" - and praying of disbelievers (in the Hereafter) is no more than straying off the track. [50]

Verses 51 - 60

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ ﴿٥١﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْهُدَى وَأَوْرَثْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ ﴿٥٣﴾ هُدًى وَذِكْرَى لِأُولَى الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ﴿٥٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَنٍ أَتَيْتَهُمْ إِنْ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ إِلَّا كِبْرٌ مَا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيهِ ۖ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَخَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرَ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيءُ ۗ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَأْتِيَةٌ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

Surely, We do help Our messengers and those who believe in the worldly life, as well as on the day in which witnesses will stand (to give their testimony)- [51] a day when the apology of the unjust will bring them no benefit, and on them shall be the curse, and for them will be the evil abode. [52] And We gave Guidance to Mūsā, while We made the children of Isra'il inherit the Book - [53] as a guide and advice for people of understanding. [54] So, be patient – surely the promise

of Allah is true - and seek forgiveness for your sins, and proclaim the purity and praise of your Lord in the afternoon and at dawn. [55] Surely, those who quarrel in the matter of the verses of Allah without any authority having reached them, there is nothing in their hearts but pride of greatness that they are not (able) to reach. So, seek refuge with Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. [56] Certainly, the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of human beings, but most human beings do not know. [57] And the blind one and the sighted one are not equal, and those who believed and did good deeds and the evil ones are not (equal) either. Little you learn! [58] Certainly, the Hour is bound to come. There is no doubt in it, but most of the people do not believe. [59] And your Lord has said, "Call Me, I will respond to you. Definitely those who show arrogance against worshipping Me shall enter Jahannam, disgraced. [60]

Commentary

In the opening statement of verse 51, it was said: **إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي** **الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا** (Surely, We do help Our messengers and those who believe in the worldly life, 40:51). This verse carries the promise of Allah Ta'ālā that He would keep helping His messengers and believers, both in the present world and in the Hereafter. It is obvious that this help is intended to be against adversaries and enemies. That it so happened in the case of most prophets **عليهم السلام**, peace be on them all, is clear enough. But, there were prophets **عليهم السلام**, such as, Sayyidnā Yaḥyā, Zakariyyā and Shu'aib **عليهم السلام**, who were either martyred by enemies or had to abandon their home country and migrate to some other place - as was the case with Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm **عليه السلام** and the last of the prophets, Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa **ﷺ**. There may be some doubt about that.

Ibn Kathīr has, with reference to Ibn Jarīr, answered this possible doubt by saying that, in this verse, **نصرت** (*nuṣrah*: help) means: **انتصار** (*intiṣār*: victory) or subduing of the enemy in retaliation - whether it happens at their hands while they are alive, or after their death. This meaning applies to all prophets and believers without any exception. History bears witness as to how those who killed their prophets **عليهم السلام** were later on subjected to terrible punishments and the disgrace that followed. Upon those who killed Sayyidnā Yaḥyā, Zakariyyā and Shu'aib **عليهم السلام**, their enemies were set who showed no mercy while disgracing