

and killing them. As for Namrūd (Nimrod), terrible was the punishment that overtook him. And Allah Ta'ālā set the power of Byzantine against the enemies of Sayyidnā 'Isa عليه السلام that defeated and disgraced them. And to him Allah Ta'ālā will give ascendancy over his enemies close to the last day of al-Qiyāmah. As for the enemies of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Allah Ta'ālā had them stand subdued at the hands of Muslims themselves. Their arrogant chiefs were killed. Some were taken prisoners. The rest were rounded up at the time of the conquest of Makkah, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ let them have their freedom. His message spread all over. The faith prevailed. The state of Islam stood established on the entire Arabian Peninsula within the lifetime of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In the later part of verse 51, it was said: *يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الشَّهَادَاتُ* (as well as on the day in which witnesses will stand [to give their testimony]). It means the day of Qiyāmah (Doomsday). Once they are there, Divine help for prophets and believers will show itself specially.

In verse 56, it was said: *إِنَّ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ إِلَّا كِبْرًا مَّا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيهِ* (there is nothing in their hearts but pride of greatness that they are not [able] to reach). It means that people who quarrel in the matter of the verses of Allah without having any valid argument really look forward to rejecting this faith simply because their hearts are filled with pride and arrogance. They would like to stay ahead in the game and are so dim-witted that they have taken for granted that they have this position of strength as a result of their staunch adherence to their faith, and if they were to surrender this stance by becoming Muslims, they will be left without any power and territory of their own. The Qur'an said: *مَّا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيهِ* (they are not [able] to reach), that is, these people will never reach the goals of their assumed pride, greatness and state power without embracing Islam. However, had they embraced Islam, honor and greatness would have followed in their footsteps. (Qurṭubī)

The reality of *du'ā'* (supplication) and its merits, levels and conditions of acceptance

In the last verse cited in this unit, it was said:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ
جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

And your Lord has said, "Call Me, I will respond to you.

Definitely those who show arrogance against worshipping Me shall enter Jahannam, disgraced. - 40:60.

Literally, *du'ā'* means to call, and it is frequently used to call for something needed. On occasions, the *dhikr* of Allah (acts devoted to His remembrance) is also referred to as *du'ā'*. This verse confers a special honor on the large community of the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ when they were ordered to make *du'ā'* with the assurance that it would be answered. And whoever does not make a prayer has been warned of punishment.

Qatādah reports from Ka'b Aḥbār that earlier this used to be peculiar to prophets, as they were the ones who were ordered by Allah Ta'ālā that they should make *du'ā'* and He would answer. Now, it is the distinction of the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ (popularly identified as Ummah Muḥammadiyah) that this order was universalized for his entire Ummah. (Ibn Kathīr)

Explaining this verse, Sayyidnā Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr رضى الله عنه narrated a Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: إِنَّ الدُّعَاءَ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ (Surely, prayer is worship on its own) and then supported it by reciting this verse: إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي (Definitely those who show arrogance against worshipping Me shall enter Jahannam, disgraced.) (reported by Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Abū Dāwūd and others - Ibn Kathīr)

It appears in Tafsir Maḥzarī that, if looked at under the rules of Arabic diction (confining of the predicate to the subject), the Ḥadīth: إِنَّ الدُّعَاءَ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ, could mean: '*du'ā'* is the very name of '*ibādah*' or worship, that is, every *du'ā'* is but '*ibādah*'. Then, by reversing the same rule (confining the subject to the predicate), it could also mean that every act of '*ibādah*' is itself nothing but a *du'ā'*. Both probabilities exist here. And at this place, the meaning is that *du'ā'* (prayer, supplication) and '*ibādah*' (worship, devotion) are, though separate from each other in terms of the literal sense, yet in terms of substantiation, they are unified, as every *du'ā'* is '*ibādah*' and every '*ibādah*' is *du'ā'*. The reason is that '*ibādah*' is the name of the attitude of showing one's utter modesty and abasement before someone, and it is all too obvious that showing one's utter helplessness before someone and extending one's hand before him with the beggar's bowl is a matter of great disgrace - which is the very sense of

'*ibādah*. Similarly, the outcome of every '*ibādah* is also to ask Allah Ta'ālā for forgiveness and Jannah and that He blesses us with a perfect state of well being in this world and in the world to come. Therefore, it appears in a Ḥadīth qudsī (- a Ḥadīth in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ conveys a saying from Allah that is not included in the Qur'ān) that Allah Ta'ālā said: "One who is so engrossed in remembering Me that he does not have even the time to ask for what he needs, I shall give him more than those who ask (by fulfilling his needs without the asking)" (reported by al-Jazri in An-Nihayah) and in a narration appearing in Tirmidhi and Muslim, the words are: من شغله القرآن عن ذكرى ومسئلتى اعطيته افضل ما اعطى السائلين ("One who is so engrossed in the recitation of the Qur'ān that he does not have even the time to ask for what he needs, I shall give him even more than what those who ask ever get"). This tells us that every '*ibādah* brings the same benefit as is the benefit of *du'ā'*.

And in the Ḥadīth of 'Arafat, it appears that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "In 'Arafat, my *du'ā'* and the *du'ā'* of prophets before me is (the saying of): (lā ilaha ilā ilāh wa ḥdē, لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (lā ilaha il-lal-lahu wahdahu la sharika lahu lahul-mulku wa lahul-hamdu wa huwa 'ala kulli shai'in qadir: 'There is no god but Allah who is one. No one shares His godhead . To Him belongs the kingdom and to Him belongs all praise, and He is powerful over everything) (reported by Ibn Abī Shaibah - Mazḥarī).

Here, عِبَادَةٌ (*ibādah*: worship) and ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ (*dhikrullāh*: the *dhikr* or remembrance of Allah) has been called: دُعَاً (*du'ā'*: prayer, supplication).

In this verse under study, those who abandon *du'ā'* in the sense of '*ibādah* the warning of Jahannam given to them is in the eventuality of being too proud, that is, a person who, in his pride, considers himself in no need of making a *du'ā'* and actually abandons it, then, this is a sign of kufr (open infidelity), therefore, the warning of Jahannam became due against him. Otherwise, making of *du'ā'*s, prayers and supplications as such is not fard (obligatory) or wajib (necessary). Leaving it off brings no sin. However, by a consensus of 'ulama', doing so is mustahabb (recommended) and is: افضل (*afḍal*: better, meritworthy) (Mazḥarī) and in accordance with clarifications in *aḥādīth*, it is a source of many a *barakah* (blessing)

Merits of *du'ā'*

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "There is nothing more deserving of regard by Allah Ta'ālā than *du'ā'*" - Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Hakim from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "*du'ā'* is the essence of *'ibādah*" - Tirmidhi from Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Ask Allah Ta'ālā of His grace because Allah Ta'ālā likes being asked, and it is a great act of *'ibādah* that one waits for ease while in hardship" - Tirmidhī from Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily, one who does not pray to Allah in his needs, He becomes angry with him" - Tirmidhī from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه, Ibn Ḥibbān and Ḥākim.

In Tafsīr Mazhari, after having reported all these narrations, it has been said that the warning of Divine wrath on a person who does not make a *du'ā'* is applicable only when this abstention from asking is based on arrogance, and on taking oneself to be need free, as it stands proved from the words of this verse: إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ (Definitely those who show arrogance against worshipping Me shall enter Jahannam, disgraced. 40:60).

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Do not be weary of *du'ā'*, for nobody dies of making *du'ā'*" - Ibn Ḥibbān and Ḥākim from Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "*du'ā'* is a weapon of the believer, a pillar of the faith, and the light of the heavens and the earth" - Ḥākim in al-Mustadrak from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه.

HADITH: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "If the gates of *du'ā'* are opened for someone (actually) the doors of mercy are opened for him, and no *du'ā'* made before Allah Ta'ālā is appreciated more than that in which one asks of *'afiyah* (well-being) from Him" - Tirmidhī and Ḥākim from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه.

The word: عَافِيَةٌ (*'afiyah*) appearing in the Ḥadīth mentioned immediately earlier is a very comprehensive word (usually rendered in

English as 'well-being' meaning a state of being healthy and happy, though somewhat outdated in contemporary usage). Apart from a good life, it includes other things like security from unwelcome happenings, trials and calamities as well as a satisfactory fulfillment of all needs in life.

Ruling:

Making *du'ā'* for committing a sin or for severance of blood relationships is *ḥarām* (forbidden) - and, for that matter, such a *du'ā'* does not get to be accepted with Allah either - as in a Ḥadīth from Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه.

Du'ā' and the promise of acceptance

In this verse, it has been promised that the *du'ā'* a servant makes is accepted. But, on occasions, one also sees that a *du'ā'* was made and it was not accepted. The answer to this appears in a Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه where the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said, "Whatever a Muslim prays for before Allah, He would let him have it - subject to the condition that the *du'ā'* made was not for something sinful or for the severance of relationships that Allah has enjoined to be kept intact. As for the acceptance of *du'ā'*, it takes one of the three forms given here: (1) That one gets exactly what one asked for. (2) That in lieu of what one wanted to have, one was given a certain return or reward of the Hereafter. (3) That one did not, though, get what one wanted, but some hardship or calamity that was due to fall on one stood removed. (Musnad Aḥmad - Maḥzarī)

Conditions of the acceptance of *du'ā'*

As for the present verse, it obviously seems to have no condition, almost to the extent that even being a Muslim is not a condition of *du'ā'*. Allah Ta'ālā accepts the *du'ā'* of a kafir (disbeliever) as well in this world to the extent that the *du'ā'* of Iblis to be allowed to live until the last day of Qiyāmah was accepted. For *du'ā'*, there is no condition of time, nor is there any condition that one must be with *taharah* (state of purity from pollutants) or *wudu* (ablution). But, there are trustworthy *aḥādīth* that identify a few things that preclude the chances of its acceptance. One must abstain from these. It appears in a Ḥadīth from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "...a man having been on a long journey is all disheveled and dust-coated and he stretches his hands upwards for *du'ā'* (saying): 'O my Lord! O my Lord!' while his food is

haram (unlawful), his drink: *ḥarām*, his dress: *ḥarām*, and he himself was brought up on the haram - how then, could his *du'ā'* become worth accepting?" (Reported by Muslim)

Similarly, if we were to say the words of *du'ā'* negligently, heedlessly, without paying any attention, the Ḥadīth says something about that too - that such a *du'ā'* is also not accepted. (Tirmidhī from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه)

Verses 61 - 68

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ لَيْلًا لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهَا وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَانِي تَوْفُكُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ كَذَلِكَ يُؤَفِّكُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا بِاللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ۗ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ ۖ فَتَبَرَّكِ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ۗ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَمَّا جَاءَ نَبِيَّ الْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّي ۖ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تَرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لَتَكُونُوا شُيُوخًا وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُتَوَفَّى مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَتَبْلُغُوا أَجْلًا مُّسَمًّى ۗ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ ۗ فَإِذَا قُضِيَ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٦٨﴾

Allah is the One who made for you the night, so that you may have rest in it, and the day to let you see. Surely, Allah is most kind to the people, but most of the

people do not offer gratitude. [61] This is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of everything. There is no god but He. Then, from where are you being reversed (by your selfish desires)? [62] Similarly reversed were those who used to deny Our verses. [63] Allah is the One who made, for you the earth a place to live, and the sky a roof; and shaped you, and made your shapes so good - and provided you with a lot of good things. That is Allah, your Lord. So, Glorious is Allah, the Lord of the worlds. [64] He is Ever-living. There is no god but He. So worship Him making your submission exclusive for Him. All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. [65]

Say, "I have been ordered not to worship those whom you invoke beside Allah when clear signs from my Lord have (already) come to me, and I have been ordered that I submit to the Lord of the worlds." [66] He is the One who created you from dust, then from a drop of semen, then from a clot. After that, He takes you out as an infant. Then, (He makes you grow) so that you reach your full maturity, and, thereafter, become old - and some of you die earlier - and so that you reach the appointed term, and so that you understand. [67] He is the One who gives life and brings death, and when He decides to do something, He only says to it: "Be" and it comes to be. [68]

Commentary

In the verses cited above, after having presented a few manifestations of Allah's blessings and His perfect power, an invitation to belief in the Oneness of Allah has been extended.

In the first verse (61), it was said: جَعَلَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ لَتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا (Allah is the One who made for you the night, so that you may have rest in it, and the day to let you see.). Just imagine how great a blessing it is that all human beings, even animals, have been naturally tuned to a set time for sleep, and that this time has been, in a manner of saying, virtually switched off in perfect synchronization with the need to sleep. In fact, it was made the part of everyone's psyche that this is the time, the time of night, that would bring a sound sleep. Otherwise, had sleep been in one's own control and had everyone been making one's own program to sleep at different hours, as he or she does to set a timetable for business or personal preferences, it would have left all sleepers deprived of the bliss of

sleep, nor would it have been convenient for those awake to set their own hours of work right. The reason is that human needs are inter-related. Had sleeping hours been different, jobs of the awake connected with the sleeping would have gone topsy-turvy, and the jobs of the sleeping connected with the awake would have fared no better. Also, if only human beings had a set time for sleep - with wild beasts and animals sleeping at some other time - even then, the system of human engagement with work would have gone haywire.

In verse 64, it was said: **وَصَوَّرَكُمُ فَاَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ** (and shaped you, and made your shapes so good -). Allah Ta'ālā has blessed the human person with the most distinct, superior and better-balanced form and shape out of all animals. He was given reason. He was given such hands and feet that he could get together materials to make things for his needs and comfort. Then, his eating and drinking is different, rather far distinct from common animals. They eat or graze or drink directly with their mouth. He uses hands. Common animals eat singles. Some eat meat, others eat grass or leaves, that too in singles. Contrary to that, man eats by combining different things like meat, vegetables, spices, herbs and fruits. He eats by making his food taste good. His culinary creativity knows no bounds when he would take a single fruit from nature, and turn it into all sorts of delicious eatables like pies, fruit cakes, jams, preserves and chutneys. **فتبارك الله احسن الخالقين** (Blessed is Allah, the Best Creator).

Verses 69 - 78

الْمَ تَرَى إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ أَنَّى يُصْرَفُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾
الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِالْكِتَابِ وَبِمَا أَرْسَلْنَا بِهِ رُسُلَنَا فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾
إِذِ الْأَغْلُلُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَالسَّلْسِلُ يُسْحَبُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ فِي
الْحَمِيمِ ۗ ثُمَّ فِي النَّارِ يُسْجَرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ ثُمَّ قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ
تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا بَلْ لَمْ نَكُنْ نَدْعُوا
مِنْ قَبْلُ شَيْئًا كَذَلِكَ يَضِلُّ اللَّهُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾ ذَلِكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ
تَفْرَحُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنتُمْ تَمْرَحُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ أَدْخُلُوا

أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبئسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَاصْبِرْ
 إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ ۖ فَمَا نُزِرْنَاكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ تَتَوَفَّيْنَاكَ فَأَلَيْنَا
 يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ قَصَصْنَا
 عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ لَمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ
 بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۖ فإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قُضِيَ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ
 الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

Have you not seen those who quarrel in the matter of the verses of Allah? From where are they being turned away (by their selfish desires?) [69] - those who rejected the Book and what We sent with Our messengers. So, they will soon come to know. [70] - when shackles will be round their necks, and chains. They will be dragged [71] into the hot water after which they will be thrown in the Fire as a fuel. [72] Then, it will be said to them, "Where are those whom you used to associate (in worship) [73] beside Allah?" They will say, "They are lost to us, rather, we used to invoke nothing at all. This is how Allah makes disbelievers get lost. [74] (It will be said to them,) "This is because you used to rejoice on the earth wrongfully, and because you used to show arrogance. [75] Enter the gates of Jahannam to live in it forever. So, how evil is the abode of the arrogant. [76]

Therefore, be patient. Surely, the promise of Allah is true. Then, whether We show you (in your life) a part of the promise We are making to them, or make you die (before they are punished), in any case they have to be returned to Us. [77] And We had sent messengers before you. Among them there are those whose history We have narrated to you, and of them there are those whose history We did not narrate to you. And it is not up to a messenger that he could come up with a Sign without the permission of Allah. So, when the command of Allah will come, matters will stand decided justly, and on that occasion all adherents of falsehood will turn into losers. [78]

Commentary

In verses 71 and 72, it was said: **بُسْحَبُونَ فِي الْحَمِيمِ ثُمَّ فِي النَّارِ يُسْجَرُونَ** (They

will be dragged [71] into the hot water after which they will be thrown in the Fire as a fuel.). The word: حَمِيمٌ (*al-ḥamīm*) is boiling hot water. The verse seems to suggest that the people of Jahannam will first be put into the hamim, then, into the jahim, that is, the Jahannam. Again, it also seems to suggest that the hamim is somewhere outside the Jahannam. The verse: ثُمَّ إِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ لَإِلَى الْحَمِيمِ (Then, their return is but to the Fire - Aṣ-Ṣaffāt, 37:68) also appears to be suggesting that the hamim is located somewhere outside the Jahannam. The people of Jahannam will be brought here to drink its water, and will then be returned to Jahannam. Then there are some verses of the Qur'ān that suggest that the hamim too is within the jahim or Jahannam as in: هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ يُطَوَّفُونَ بِهَا بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ إِنْ (This is the Jahannam (Hell) that the guilty people deny. They will circle around between it and between hot, boiling water - Ar-Raḥmān, 55:43,44). Here too, it is explicitly said that the hamim is also within the Jahannam.

A little deliberation shows that there is no contradiction between these two things. There will be many strata or sections of Jahannam itself serving as venues of many kinds of punishment. One of these could be that of hamim which could as well be called as being outside the Jahannam because of its separate and distinct location, and since this is also a section of Jahannam itself, therefore, it could also be called the Jahannam. Ibn Kathīr has said that the people of Jahannam, shackled in chains, will sometime be dragged into the hamim and at others, in Jahannam.

In verse 74, it was said: فَالْوَا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا (They will say, "They are lost to us,...), that is, once they reach Jahannam, the disbelievers will say that all those idols and satans they used to worship have disappeared in the sense that they do not see them around, though, they might as well be lying somewhere in a corner of Jahannam, as their being in Jahannam stands proved from other verses of the Qur'ān, for instance: إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ (Surely, you and whatever you worship other than Allah are the fuel for Jahannam - Al-Anbiyā', 21:98)

The word: تَفْرَحُونَ (*tafraḥun*) in verse 75: بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُونَ (This is because you used to rejoice on the earth wrongfully, and because you used to show arrogance.) has been derived from: فَرَحَ (*farah*) which means to be happy while the word: تَمْرَحُونَ (*tamraḥun*) is

from: مَرَح (*marah*) which means to exult unduly or to trample over the rights of others by priding on one's wealth and power. Hence, this kind of marah or undue exultation is absolutely blameworthy and *ḥarām* (unlawful). As for *farah* or mirth, it can be explained by saying that seeking enjoyment out of sinfulness under the intoxication of wealth coupled with the absence of any thought of there being a God is certainly *ḥarām* and impermissible. Meant in this verse is this kind of *farah* - as it also appears in the story of Qārūn (Korah) in the same sense: لَا تَفْرَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِينَ ("Do not exult. Surely, Allah does not like the exultant. - al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:76). There is another degree of *farah* - that one takes good things of life as blessings from Allah Ta'ālā, and expresses his or her joy on having these - this is permissible, in fact, is recommended (*muṣtaḥabb*), and desirable. It is about such *farah* that the Qur'ān has said: فَبَدَّلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا (with these they should rejoice - Yūnus, 10:58). As for *marah*, it is a cause of punishment absolutely, without any restriction. Therefore, no qualifying words were added to it. But, in the case of *farah*, the words: بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ (*bi ghayril-ḥaqq*: wrongfully) are added. It was thus pointed out that jubilating over the undue and the impermissible was forbidden (*ḥarām*) while being pleased with blessings that are rightful and permissible as an expression of gratitude was an act of *'ibādah* (worship of Allah) and *thawāb* (reward from Him).

In verse 77, it was said: فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَأِمَّا يُرِيَنَّكَ (Therefore, be patient. Surely, the promise of Allah is true. Then, whether We show you [in your life] a part of the promise We are making to them, or make you die [before they are punished], in any case they have to be returned to Us). From this verse it appears that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was hopefully waiting for the disbelievers to be punished. Therefore, it was to comfort him that he was asked to be somewhat patient about it. The promise of Allah for them, that they will be punished, will certainly be fulfilled - may be during his lifetime, or after he has departed from the mortal world. Waiting for the disbelievers to be punished apparently seems contrary to the dignity of one who was sent with universal mercy. But, here the matter is different. When the purpose of punishing criminals is to bring comfort to innocent believers who were oppressed, then, the punishment of criminals is not contrary to compassion and mercy. Nobody regards the punishment given to a criminal against the dictate of mercy.

Verses 79 - 85

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾
 وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَلِتَبَلَّغُوا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةً فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا
 وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ ۗ فَآيَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
 تُنْكِرُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
 الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۗ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ قُوَّةً وَآثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 فَمَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ
 بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ
 يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَحَدَهُ، وَكَفَرْنَا
 بِمَا كُنَّا بِهِ مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ فَلَمْ يَكْ يَنْفَعُهُمْ إِيمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا ۗ
 سُنَّتَ اللَّهُ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ، وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكَافِرُونَ
 ﴿٨٥﴾

Allah is the One who made for you the cattle, so that you may ride some of them, and of them you eat. [79] and for you there are (other) benefits in them and so that, (riding) on them, you meet any need you have in your hearts; and on them and on boats you are carried. [80] And He shows you His signs. Then, which of the signs of Allah would you (still) deny? [81] Have they not traveled through the earth and seen how was the fate of those before them? Most of them were more in numbers than these, and superior in vigor and vestiges left on the earth. So then, whatever they used to earn did not work for them at all. [82] And when their messengers came to them with manifest signs, they exulted because of whatever of knowledge they had, and they were encircled by what they used to ridicule. [83] And when they saw Our punishment, they said, "We have (now) come to believe in Allah alone, and We have rejected everything we used to ascribe (to Him) as partners." [84] But, their profession of faith was not (competent) to benefit them, once they had seen Our punishment - a

customary practice of Allah that has been there all along in the matter of His servants - and hence, the disbelievers became the losers. [85]

Commentary

In verse 83, it was said: فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ (they exulted because of whatever of knowledge they had,) that is, when the messengers of Allah Ta'ālā came to these deniers, who were utterly oblivious to their end, with clear arguments in favor of *tauḥīd* (Oneness of Allah) and *'imān* (faith), they took their knowledge to be better and truer than the knowledge brought by prophets, and started rejecting what they said. What was this knowledge with which the disbelievers were exultant to the extent that they would even reject the body of knowledge brought by prophets? It could be some sort of 'compounded ignorance' جهل مركب (*al-jahl-ul-murakkab* whereby an ignorant person, despite his sheer ignorance, believes himself to be knowledgeable). This does not qualify to be 'knowledge' at all. Or, this knowledge of theirs means awareness in the fields of trade, industry and things like that. They really had expertise in these fields according to their time. The noble Qur'ān alludes to this knowledge of theirs in a verse of Sūrah Ar-Rūm in the following words: يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَفْلُونَ (They know something superficial of the worldly life, but of the Hereafter they are negligent.- Ar-Rūm, 30:7) It means that these people do know a good deal about the material life of the world, and also know how to get most benefited by it, but are totally ignorant or heedless of the Hereafter where they have to live for ever, either in bliss or in bane, and both of which are also everlasting. In this verse, even if we were to take this knowledge to be the worldly knowledge only, it would mean 'since these people deny the Day of Judgment and the Hereafter and do not know, or want to know, its everlasting reward and punishment, therefore, they do not see anything beyond their knowledge of the apparent and are quite pleased with it, and as a result do not pay heed to areas of knowledge brought by the noble prophets.' (Maẓharī)

In verse 85, it was said: فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ إِيمَانُهُمْ (But, their profession of faith was not [competent] to benefit them, once they had seen Our punishment), that is, it is after seeing the punishment that these people are confessing to the true faith, but a declaration of faith at this late hour is not acceptable and trustworthy with Allah. It appears in Ḥadīth: يقبل الله قبل العبد ما لم يغرغر (Allah accepts the taubah [repentance] of the servant

before the agony and rattle of death overtakes him). (Ibn Kathīr) Similarly, once Divine punishment has come face to face, no repentance and no declaration of faith made by anyone remains acceptable.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ وَالْتُوبَةَ قَبْلَ الْمَوْتِ وَالْيُسْرَ وَالْمَعَاوَةَ عِنْدَ الْمَوْتِ
وَالْمَغْفِرَةَ وَالرَّحْمَةَ بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ بِبِرْكَةِ إِلِ حَمٍّ وَصَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَى النَّبِيِّ الْكَرِيمِ .

O Allah, we ask of You the obliteration of all sins, and well-being, and repentance before death, and ease and pardon at the time of death, and forgiveness and mercy after death with the barakah of 'Al Ḥā Mīm, and blessings of Allah on the noble prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم .

Alḥamdulillāh

The Commentary on

Sūrah Al-Mu'min

[Ghāfir]

Sūrah Ḥāmīm As-Sajdah

Sūrah Ḥāmīm As-Sajdah is Makkī. It has 54 verses and 6 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 8

حَمِّ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ ﴿٢﴾ كِتٰبٌ فُصِّلَتْ اٰیٰتُهُ قُرْاٰنًا
عَرَبِیًّا لِّقَوْمٍ یَّعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ بِشِیْرًا وَّ نَذِیْرًا ۚ فَاَعْرَضَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهَمُّ
لَا یَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ وَاَقَالُوْا قُلُوْبُنَا فِیْ اَكِنَّةٍ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَا اِلَیْهِ وَفِیْ اٰذَانِنَا
وَقُرْوْمٍۢ بَیْنِنَا وَبَیْنِكَ حِجَابٌ فَاَعْمَلْ اِنَّا عَمِلُوْنَا ﴿٥﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَا اَنَا
بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ یُوْحٰی اِلَیَّ اِنَّمَا الْهُكْمُ لِلّٰهِ وَاَحَدٌ فَاسْتَقِیْمُوْا اِلَیْهِ
وَاسْتَغْفِرُوْهُ ۗ وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِکِیْنَ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِیْنَ لَا یُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوَةَ وَهُمْ
بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ کٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ
اَجْرٌ غَیْرٌ مَّمْنُوْنٍ ﴿٨﴾

Hā Mīm [1] This is a revelation from the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful- [2] a book whose verses are elaborated in the form of an Arabic Qur'an for a people who understand [3], having good news and warning. Yet most of them turned away, so they do not listen. [4] And they say, " Our hearts are [wrapped] in covers against that to which you invite us, and in our ears there is deafness, and between you and us there is a barrier. So, do (in your way). We too are doing (in our own way)". [5] Say, " I am but a human being like you; it is revealed

to me that your god is only One God. So, become straight towards Him, and seek forgiveness from Him, and woe to the Mushriks (those who ascribe partners to Allah) [6] who do not pay *zakāh*; and of the life of the Hereafter, they are deniers." [7] As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them there is a reward that will never be interrupted. [8]

Commentary

The seven Sūrahs that commence with "Ḥā Mīm" are known as "Al Ḥāmīm" or 'Hawamim'. Some more words are added as suffixes in their names to differentiate between them, for example, the 'Ḥā Mīm' of Sūrah Mu'min is called "Ḥā Mīm Al-Mu'in, and 'Ḥā Mīm' of this Sūrah is called 'Ḥā Mīm Sajdah' or 'Ḥā Mīm Fuṣṣilat'. Both the names of this Sūrah are well-known.

The first addressees of this Sūrah are Quraysh of 'Arabia among whom Qur'an was revealed in their own language. They had witnessed the marvel of the Qur'an, and they had also seen innumerable miracles of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. And yet they turned away from the Qur'an. What to say of understanding, they did not even bear to listen to the Qur'an. Eventually, in response to the affectionate advices of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, they declared that they neither understand what he says, nor do their hearts accept it, nor are their ears prepared to listen to it, and that there are double barriers between him and them, so he should carry on with his business and leave them to their own.

This is the meaning of the first five verses of this Sūrah. In these verses, Allah Almighty has specially addressed and advised Quraysh that Qur'an has been revealed in Arabic language, so that you do not have any difficulty in understanding the contents. At the same time three qualities of the Holy Qur'an have been stated.. Firstly it is said, *فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ*. Here, the word '*fuṣṣilat*' is a derivative of *faṣl* which originally means distinguishing the subjects by separating them. So *فُصِّلَتْ* means stating things very clearly by explaining in detail, either by separating them subject - wise in different chapters, or by mentioning them at one place. Different subjects like injunctions of Shari'ah, stories, beliefs, refutation of the people of false beliefs, etc. have been stated separately in the verses of the Holy Qur'an, and each subject has been explained by examples as well. The second and third qualities of the Holy Qur'an have been stated

as that of communicating good news of everlasting happiness to the believers and of warning the non-believers of perpetual scourges.

And after stating these qualities, it is said towards the end of the verse-3, لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ (for a people who understand) which means that the verses of the Holy Qur'an being in Arabic, their being clear and evident and their communicating good news as well as warnings can only benefit those people who intend to ponder over them and understand them. But the Arabs and the Quraysh, despite all this, turned away from the Qur'an, and let alone trying to understand, they did not even bear to listen to the Qur'an. This has been mentioned at the end of verse 4: "Yet most of them turned away, so they do not listen."

An offer by the infidel's of Makkah to the Holy Prophet ﷺ

The infidels of Quraysh, who are the direct addressees of this Sūrah, tried very hard to suppress the propagation of Islam in early days after the revelation of the Qur'an, through the use of physical force, and tried equally hard to intimidate the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and those who believed in him by causing to them all sorts of pains and agonies. But despite their opposition, Islam kept on widening the circle of its adherents, and increasing in strength. At first powerful and valiant persons like Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ؓ entered Islam, then Sayyidnā Hamzah ؓ, one of the accepted leaders of Quraysh, embraced Islam. Now the Quraysh of Makkah started thinking that, instead of intimidation, persuasion and temptation may be more effective in blocking the way for Islam. An incident of this nature has been reproduced by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr from the reports of Musnad of Bazzār, Abū Ya'lā and Baghawī. There are some differences in these reports. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has considered the report of Baghawī to be the nearest to the truth. And then he has reproduced this incident from the book 'Kitāb-us-Sirah' written by Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq and has preferred this version to the other three. Therefore, this incident is being reproduced here in accordance with the report of Ibn Ishāq.

Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq has stated that Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b Qurazī says that this report has reached him from 'Utbah Ibn Rabi'ah who was recognized as one of the foremost leaders of Quraysh. One day he was sitting in Almasjid-ul-Ḥarām with a party of Quraysh, while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sitting alone in a corner on the other side.

‘Utbah asked his people, “If you agree, I would like to talk to Muḥammad ﷺ and offer him some attractions, so that if he accepts them, we give them to him and he, in exchange, would cease to propagate against our religion and faith. This was a time when Sayyidnā Ḥamzah ؓ had become a Muslim, and the number of Muslims was increasing, and they were getting stronger day by day. All of ‘Utbah's men spoke with one voice, and said "O ‘Abul-Walīd (‘Utbah's filial name)! “Do so. Please talk to him”.

‘Utbah got up from his place, and went upto the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said, “O nephew! you know that you are high-born and a noble man of the Quraysh; your family is large, noble and respectable to all of us. But you have put the tribe in a great difficulty. You have given such an invitational call which has created differences among us, has made us fools, has stigmatized our deities and our religion, and declared our forefathers to be infidels. So please listen to me. I am going to present a few things to you, so that you may select any of them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "O ‘Abdul Walīd! go ahead and say what you wish to say; I am listening to you.”

‘Utbah ‘Abul Walīd said, “O nephew! If the purpose of your movement is to collect possessions, we promise to collect so much wealth for you that you would become the wealthiest person of the nation. If the purpose is to become a leader and a ruler, then all of us would accept you as the leader of the whole of Quraysh, and would not do anything without your order. If you want kingdom, then we accept you as our king. And if the case is that some Jinn or Satan comes to you, and compels you to do these things and you are unable to drive him away, then we will have you treated at our expense, because we know that a person prevailed upon by a Satan can be cured by treatments.” ‘Utbah kept on speaking at some length and the Holy Prophet ﷺ kept on listening to him.

At the end, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, “O ‘Abdul Walīd! Have you finished? When he said yes, then the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him, “Now please listen to me.” And ‘Utbah replied, “No doubt, I would listen to you.”

The Holy Prophet ﷺ, instead of saying anything himself started reciting Sūrah Fuṣṣilat (the present Sūrah):

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. حَم. تَنْزِيلٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. كَتَبَ فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْآنًا
عَرَبِيًّا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ.

"With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful." Merciful. Ḥā Mīm. This is a revelation from the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful-- a book whose verses are elaborated in the form of an Arabic Qur'an for a people who understand."

Bazzār and Baghawī narrate that, during the recitation of the verses of this Sūrah, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached this verse:

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صَاعِقَةً مِثْلَ صَاعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَثَمُودَ

"So, if they turn away, then say, " I have warned you of a calamity like the calamity of 'Ad and Thamūd,"(41:13)

'Utbah put his hand on the blessed mouth of Holy Prophet ﷺ, and asked him to have mercy on his lineage and relationship, and not to recite any further for their sake. Ibn Ishāq narrates that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ commenced the recitation of these verses, 'Utbah listened quietly and attentively while supporting his back by his hands, till the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached the verse of Sajdah in this Sūrah and prostrated. Then he addressed 'Utbah, and said to him, "You have heard what you heard, and now you are free to do what you like." 'Utbah got up and started walking towards his party. When they saw him coming, his party members started saying among themselves that, by God, 'Abul Walīd's face has changed - it is not the same as it was when he had gone. When 'Utbah reached them, they asked him, "What is the news you have come with?" He said to them:

إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ قَوْلًا وَاللَّهِ مَا سَمِعْتُ مِثْلَهُ قَطُّ، وَاللَّهِ مَا هُوَ بِالسَّحْرِ وَلَا بِالشَّعْرِ وَلَا
بِالْكِهَانَةِ، يَا مَعْشَرَ قُرَيْشِ اطِيعُونِي وَاجْعَلُونِي لِي، خَلُوتُ بَيْنَ الرَّجُلِ وَبَيْنَ مَا هُوَ فِيهِ
فَاعْتَزَلُونَهُ فَوَاللَّهِ لِيَكُونَ لِقَوْلِهِ الَّذِي سَمِعْتُ نَبَأًا، فَإِنْ تَصَبَّهَ الْعَرَبُ فَقَدْ كَفَيْتُمُوهُ
بِغَيْرِكُمْ، وَإِنْ يَظْهَرُ عَلَى الْعَرَبِ فَمَلِكُهُمْ وَعِزُّهُمْ وَعِزُّكُمْ وَكُنْتُمْ تَسْعِدُونَ النَّاسَ بِهِ

"I heard such a discourse that, by God, I have never heard any discourse like it before; by God, it is neither a sorcerer's enchantment, nor a poet's poetry, nor a wizard incantation (which they obtain from satans). O my tribe of Quraysh! Listen to me, and let me handle this matter. My advice is that you should give up confronting him, and let him go about his business, because this discourse of his is bound to receive

eminence. You should wait and see how the rest of Arabia treats them. If, besides Quraysh, the rest of Arabs defeat them, then your problem is solved without any effort on your part, and if he prevails on the rest of Arabs, then his rule will be your rule, their honor will be your honor, and you will be the luckiest people because of him." (Ibn Kathīr p. 91, vol. 4)

When his Qurayshi companions heard his speech, they said to him "O Abū Walīd! Muḥammad ﷺ has cast an enchanting spell upon you with his words." 'Utbah replied to them, "I have given you my advice, and now it is up to you to do what you like.

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا فِيْ اِكْتَةٍ - (And they say, " Our hearts are [wrapped] in covers against that to which you invite us - 41:5) Here three statements of the infidels of Quraysh are reproduced. Firstly, they said that there was a cover on their hearts against his discourse, and therefore they do not understand what he says. Secondly, that their ears are deaf to listen to his speech. Thirdly, that there are barriers between him and them. The Holy Qur'ān has reproduced this statement of theirs in the context of denouncing it, which indicates that these statements are wrong. But at another place, Qur'ān has also stated their condition to be the same. A verse of Sūrah An'ām states:

وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اِكْتَةً اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ وَفِيْ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا

But We have put coverings on their hearts, so that they do not understand, and heaviness in their ears. - 6:25.

One may doubt that there is a conflict between this verse and that of Sūrah An'ām in this respect. But the answer is that the infidels, by saying the above, meant that they were helpless and excusable, because their hearts were curtained, their ears were leaden and there were barriers between them and him. So how could they listen to him and accept what he said? This is how they proved themselves to be helpless. And when the Holy Qur'ān stated their condition (in Sūrah An'ām) to be the same, it did not consider them to be helpless, rather held them fully capable of hearing and understanding. It is when they refused even to hear, and had no intention of understanding, then as a punishment, heedlessness and ignorance were imposed upon them, but not to the degree that they were deprived of their volition; rather if they had changed their minds even then, their abilities of hearing and

understanding would have been restored fully. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

Prophetic reply to the Denial and Ridicule of Disbelievers

The infidels saying that their hearts were covered and their ears were leaden, etc., was not because they had become deaf and bereft of intellect; rather it was a kind of ridicule and jest that they used to make. But the reply to this offensive ridicule that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was directed to give was not to be offensive in the like manner, but to express his ﷺ humility that he ﷺ is not God, having authority over everything, rather he ﷺ is also a human being; the only difference is that his Lord has given him ﷺ guidance through *wahy*, and has supported him with miracles. It should have resulted in all of them declaring their faith in him. Even now they are advised to turn in worship and obedience to Allah only and to repent and renounce the past sins.

Toward the end of the address, Both the aspects of glad tidings and of warnings of the Qur'ān have been presented to them, making it clear that there are dire consequences for the *mushrikīn* (those who associate partners with Allah) and eternal rewards for the believers. In the context of the evil fate of the Mushriks, one reason for it has been mentioned that these people did not use to pay *Zakāh*. This gives rise to some questions. The first one is that these verses were revealed in Makkah, whereas *Zakāh* was made obligatory in Madīnah. So, how can they be accused of non-payment of *Zakāh* before *Zakāh* was made obligatory?

Ibn Kathīr, in reply to this question, has said that *Zakāh*, in principle, had been obligated alongwith *Ṣalāh* right from the beginning of Islam, as mentioned in Sūrah Muzzammil. However the determination of the *Nisāb* (minimum capital and property for the applicability of *Zakāh*) and the arrangements for its collection were made in Madīnah. Therefore it is not correct to say that *Zakāh* was not obligated in Makkah.

Are Non-Muslims required to follow the practical injunctions of Shari'ah?

The second doubt is that many jurists do not consider Non-muslims to have been asked or required to carry out religious deeds such as *Ṣalāh*, Fasting, *Ḥajj* and *Zakāh*. The direction is that they have to embrace the faith first, and then they are liable to the practical precepts of Shari'ah. According to this view, they are not liable to pay

zakāh. Why then have they been reprimanded for not paying Zakāh in this verse?

It can be said in reply that many of the leading scholars and experts of Islamic jurisprudence are of the view that even the Non-Muslims are required to carry out the obligatory duties of religion; If this view is adopted, there remains no doubt about this verse that has mentioned non-payment of *zakāh* as one of the reasons for their being punished. As for those scholars who do not consider Non-Muslims to have been asked to carry out the obligatory duties, they can say that the real denunciation is not for non-payment of Zakāh, but because this non-payment is due to their disbelief and is a sign of it. Therefore the object of the reprimand is that had they been believers, they would have been strict in paying Zakāh; their fault is their failure to embrace the faith. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān).

The detailed discussion of whether or not the infidels have been asked to follow the practical precepts of Shari'ah may be found in the fifth volume of the author's Arabic book "Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān".

The third question which arises here is that the commandment for Ṣalāh is the most important of all the commandments of Islam which has not been mentioned here, so what is the wisdom behind making a special mention of Zakāh? Qurtubī etc., have said in reply that Quraysh of Arabia were wealthy people, and they were known for their trait of giving alms and charity and helping the poor. But when somebody would become a Muslim, they would deprive him of such financial help and social assistance also. Zakāh has been specially mentioned because the object is to denounce this practice. (Allah knows best)

لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ (For them there is a reward that will never be interrupted.....41:8) The word *mamnūn* used here means something interrupted. The sense is that the reward of those people who are firm in their faith and regular in their good deeds would be continuous and eternal. Some exegetes have explained the intention of the verse that if a Muslim, despite being regular in religious duties, could not perform them at any time due to illness, travel or some other reason, the reward for the good deeds is not cut off. Rather, Allah Almighty orders the angels to keep on crediting those good deeds to his account which he used to carry out regularly in normal conditions, but could not do them due to illness or

some other reason. Aḥādīth on this subject are narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī as reported by Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā Ash‘arī and in Sharḥ-us-Sunnah of Baghawī by Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه and by Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه and in Razīn by Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه (Maḥzarī)

Verses 9 - 12

قُلْ اِنَّكُمْ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْاَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُونَ لَهُ
 اَنْدَادًا ۗ ذٰلِكَ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَجَعَلَ فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَّ مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا
 وَبَرَكَ فِيْهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيْهَا اَقْوَاتَهَا فِيْ اَرْبَعَةِ اَيَّامٍ ۗ سَوَآءٌ لِّلْسَآئِلِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾
 ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى اِلَى السَّمَآءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْاَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا
 اَوْ كَرْهًا ۗ قَالَتَا اَتَيْنَا طَآئِعِيْنَ ﴿١١﴾ فَقَضٰهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ فِيْ
 يَوْمَيْنِ وَاَوْحٰى فِيْ كُلِّ سَمَآءٍ اَمْرًا ۗ وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا
 بِمَصَابِيْحَ ۗ وَحَفُظًا ۗ ذٰلِكَ تَقْدِيْرُ الْعَزِيْزِ الْعَلِيْمِ ﴿١٢﴾

Say, Do you really disbelieve in the One who has created the earth in two days, and ascribe to Him partners? That is the Lord of the worlds. [9] He has placed firm mountains in it (the earth) towering above it, and put blessings in it, and proportioned its foods therein, in four days, equal for those who ask. [10] Then He turned straight to the sky, while it was a smoke, and said to it and to the earth, “Come (to My obedience), both of you, willingly or unwillingly.” Both said, “We come willingly.” [11] So He accomplished them as seven skies in two days, and settled in every sky its (due) thing. And We have decorated the closest sky with lamps, and protected it properly. All this is the determination of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing. [12]

Commentary

The real objective of these eloquent verses is to warn the people who, denying the Oneness of Allah, associate others with Him. With reference to the great creations of Allah Almighty in the form of heavens and the earth, and the wisdom underlying their creation, the Mushriks are

reprimanded that they are so irrational in their beliefs that they believe such a Great and Omni-potent Creator to be in need of having partners in carrying out His divine functions. A reprimanding statement with a similar nature has also appeared in Sūrah Al-Baqarah in the following words:

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ، ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا، ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ ۗ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

"How is it that you deny Allah despite that you were lifeless and He gave you life, then He will make you die, then make you alive again, and then to Him you will be returned? It is He who created for you all that the earth contains; then He turned to the heavens and made them seven skies -- and He is the knower of all things." (Verses 2:28-29)

The order of creation, the number of days in which this creation took place and other details are not given in the verses of Sūrah Al-Baqarah; they are mentioned here in Sūrah Fuṣṣilat.

The order of creation of the skies and the earth, and the Days of Creation

Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānawī has stated in Bayān-ul-Qur’ān that, although the creation of the earth and the skies has been mentioned briefly or in detail at hundreds of places in the Qur’ān, yet the sequence of their creation is probably mentioned in three verses only. One is this verse of Ḥā Mīm Sajdah, the second is the above mentioned verse of Sūrah Al-Baqarah, and the third is the following verse of Sūrah Nāzi‘āt:

ءَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا رَفَعَ سَمَكُهَا فَسَوَّاهَا وَأَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُحَاهَا وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءً هَا وَمَرْعَهَا وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَاهَا

"Are you more difficult to create, or the sky? He has built it, He has raised its height, then made it proper and darkened its night and brought forth its daylight and, after that, He spread out the earth. From it He brought out its water and its meadows, and firmly fixed the mountains."(79:27-32)

During a cursory look into these three verses, one may feel a sort of apparent contradiction between them, because we find from Sūrah Al-Baqarah and Sūrah Ḥā Mīm that the earth was created before the

sky, whereas in Sūrah Nāzi'āt, earth appears to have been created after the sky. Maulānā Thānawī رحمه الله تعالى has stated that after a careful study of all these verses, it appears to him that only the matter of the earth came into existence first, and before it was molded into shape, the matter of sky came into existence in the form of a smoke. After that, the earth was molded into shape with mountains, trees, etc. and then the seven skies were given form out of the floating smoky matter. He hopes that this clarification would explain the harmony between all the verses. Only Allah knows the truth. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān – Sūrah Al-Baqarah, section 3).

Some questions regarding this verse and their answers given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه have been reported in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī. The explanation of this verse given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه is about the same as that given above by Maulānā Thānawī رحمه الله تعالى – the words quoted by Ibn Kathīr are:

وخلق الارض فى يومين ثم خلق السماء ثم استوى الى السماء فسويهن فى يومين اخرين ثم دحى الارض ودحيتها ان اخرج منها الماء والمرعى وخلق الجبال والرمال والجماد والاكمام وما بينهما فى يومين اخرين فذلك قوله تعالى دحها.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has also quoted the following as explanation of this verse given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه with reference to Ibn Jarīr:

“The Jews of Madinah came to see the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and asked him about the creation of the earth and of the skies. The Holy Prophet ﷺ told them that Allah Almighty created the earth on Sunday and Monday, the mountains and the minerals therein on Tuesday, and the trees, water springs, cities, buildings and desolate plains on Wednesday – all this in four days as stated in the verse.

اِنَّكُمْ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْاَرْضَ فِيْ يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُوْنَ لَهُ اٰنْدَادًا ذٰلِكَ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ . وَجَعَلَ فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيْ مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَرَكَ فِيْهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيْهَا اَقْوَاتَهَا فِيْ اَرْبَعَةِ اَيَّامٍ سِوَاَءٍ لِّلسَّآئِلِيْنَ .

Then He created the sky on Thursday. And on Friday, He created the stars, the sun, the moon and the angels. All this was completed on Friday when three hours were still left. All the disasters and troubles that everything is going to face were created in the second hour, and in the third period Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام was created and lodged in Paradise, Iblīs was

commanded to prostrate before Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام and turned out of Paradise when he refused to prostrate. All this was completed till the end of the third hour....(Ibn Kathīr). At the end, Ibn Kathīr says: "This ḥadīth has an element of gharabah" (that is, the contents of this Ḥadīth are not corroborated by other sources)

The commencement of creation took place on Saturday according to a Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه, reported in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim. As per this Ḥadīth, it took seven days for the creation of the earth and skies. But generally the explicit verses of the Qur'ān mention the duration of creation to be six days.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُغُوبٍ

"And We created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and no weariness even touched Us."(50:38)

Because of this, and also because of its (weak) chain of narrators, this Ḥadīth has been held as '*ma'lul*' (defective) by the leading *muḥaddithīn*. Ibn Kathīr رحمه الله تعالى has stated that this Ḥadīth is one of the strange ones of Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim, and then stated that Imām Bukhārī, in his book *Tarikh Kabīr*, has considered this narration to be *ma'lul* (defective). And some scholars have quoted this statement as a saying of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه, narrated by Ka'b Aḥbār, and not as a statement of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, and have said that this is the most correct. (Ibn Kathīr p. 94, vol. 4)

Similarly, other masters of Ḥadīth like Ibn-ul-Madini, Baihaqī, etc. have also considered it to be a statement of Ka'b Aḥbār. (Foot note of *Zād-ul-Masīr* by Ibn-ul-Jauzī, p. 273, vol. 7)

The narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه quoted above from Ibn Jarīr has also an element of *gharabah*, (being against other sources) according to Ibn Kathīr. One reason for its *gharabah* is that in this narration creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام took place alongwith the creation of skies in the last hour of Friday, and the divine order for prostration and the exit of Iblis from the Paradise is also mentioned to have taken place in the same hour. But it is patently clear from the text of many verses of the Qur'ān that creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام took place a long time after the creation of the earth and skies, when the earth

was provided with all the necessities, and it was inhabited by the Jinns and satans (devils). It was after all this that Allah Ta'ālā told the angels that He was going to make a vicegerent on the earth. (Maḏharī)

Briefly, of all the *aḥādīth* wherein the duration, days and sequence of creation of the earth and skies is narrated, no narration is such which can be said to be as absolutely certain as the Qur'ān. Rather, it is very likely that these may be Israelite traditions, not noble *aḥādīth*, as clarified by Ibn Kathīr about the Ḥadīth quoted in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim and Nasā'ī. Therefore conclusions should be drawn from the verses of the Qur'ān only. The one thing found absolutely certain from the verses of the Qur'ān collectively is that the earth, the skies and whatever is inside them were created in six days only. The other thing found from the verses of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm Sajdah is that the creation of the earth, its mountains, trees, etc. took full four days. The third thing found is that the creation of skies took two days – it is not clarified whether it took two full days. There is some indication that two full days were not used and some part of the last day, being Friday, was left unused. It appears from these verses that it took four days for the creation of the earth and the remaining two days for the creation of the skies, the earth having been created first. But the verse of Sūrah Nazi'āt states clearly that the laying out of the earth and its completion took place after the creation of the skies. Therefore the sequence stated above, with reference to Bayān-ul-Qur'ān, that the creation of the earth took place in two stages, is not beyond reason. In the first two days, the earth and the matter for mountains, etc. were created, in the next two days the skies were created, and in the last two days the laying out of the earth and the creation of the mountains, trees rivers, springs etc. was completed. In this way the four days of the creation of the earth were not continuous. As for the sequence mentioned in the present verse of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm Sajdah, it is stated first that the creation of the earth took place in two days: خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ (the One who has created the earth in two days, - 41:9), then after giving a reprimand to the *mushrikīn*, it is stated separately: وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَرَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا (He has placed firm mountains in it [the earth] towering above it, and put blessings in it, and proportioned its foods therein, in four days - 10). It should be remembered that the four days mentioned in this verse are inclusive of the first two days mentioned in verse 9, according to the

consensus of the exegetes. The first two days and the later four days are not separate, otherwise the total period of creation would become eight days which is against the explicit statement of the Qur'ān.

It appears that it would have been more proper at this point if, after mentioning the creation of earth in two days, the creation of mountains etc. were also mentioned in two days, and thus it would have been known that the total number of days taken for the creation of earth was four. But by choosing to state that the number of days including the remainder of the earth's creations totals four, Qur'ān has probably indicated that the four days were not continuous, but in two parts – two days before the creation of the skies, and two days after it. The creation of mountains etc. mentioned in the verse 10, relates to the period after the creation of the skies. And Allah knows best.

وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا (He has placed firm mountains in it (the earth) towering above it,...41:10) The mountains have been created to maintain the earth's balance as has been clarified in many verses of Qur'ān. It was not necessary for this purpose to raise them above the earth's surface and to make them so high – they could have been placed inside the earth also. But in raising them above and making them so high as to keep them away from the reach of human beings and animals, generally, there were thousands, rather innumerable, benefits for the inhabitants of the earth. Hence the words, "towering above it" in this verse point out to this special blessing.

وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سِوَاءَ لِّلسَّائِلِينَ (and proportioned its foods therein, in four days, equal for those who ask.....41:10) اقوات (*Aqwāt*) is plural of *Qūt* قُوت which means food, sustenance, including common necessities of human life. (Abū 'Ubaid – Zād-ul-Masīr by Ibn-ul- Jauzī)

Ḥasan رضي الله عنه and Suddī have said in its explanation that Allah Almighty has predetermined the sustenance and maintenance for the inhabitants of every region according to their need and expedience in the sense that He issued directions that such and such items be produced in such and such qualities in this region of the earth. This predetermination has caused every region of the earth to have characteristics of its own, and different kinds of minerals, different kinds of vegetation, trees and animals have been created according to the needs, nature and preferences

of that zone.

This arrangement results in every region having different products and different dresses – ‘Aṣb in Yemen, Saburi in Sābūr, Ṭayalisah in Ray, wheat in some region, rice and other grains in other regions, cotton in some areas, jute in some others, apples and grapes in some areas, mangos in others; these differences in items accord with the differences in the nature of the different regions. ‘Ikrimah and Ḍaḥḥāk state that these differences in the products in different regions have opened ways for international trade and for mutual cooperation between different regions and countries of the world. No region is independent of other regions for the fulfillment of its needs; mutual wants are the only firm basis for mutual cooperation. ‘Ikrimah has stated that in some areas salt is sold for an equal weight of gold.

In fact, Allah Almighty has made this earth, so to say, such a great store of all necessities such as food, shelter, clothes, etc. of all its inhabitant, including billions and billions of humans and innumerable animals that are to come in this world up to Doomsday. These necessities have been kept inside it, and they will keep on growing and being supplied as needed until the Last Day of this world. All a man has to do is to take the necessities out of the earth according to his need and use them.

Further on, the text states: سَوَاءٌ لِّلسَّأِلِينَ (equal for those who ask -10). Most of the commentators (*mufassirīn*) have related this sentence to the four days. It means that all these great creations took place in exactly four days. Generally ‘four’ does not always mean exactly four – it may be slightly more or slightly less, but the fractions are disregarded in such cases, and it is still called ‘four’. The addition of the word ‘equal’ here in the verse has eliminated this possibility, and clarified that the creation of the earth and the skies and what is placed in them took place in exactly four days. And the word ‘for those who ask’ means those people who asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ regarding the creation of the earth and the skies, as the Jews did according to Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr and Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur. They have been told that all this creation took place in exactly four days. (Ibn Kathīr, Qurtubī, Rūḥ)

And some exegetes Ibn Zayd, etc., have linked the words ‘for those

who ask' with the foregoing sentence 'proportioned its foods therein' and held 'those who ask' to mean the needy people who ask for food. The meaning in this case would be that Allah Almighty has created all these different kinds and species of foods and necessities for the benefit of those who need and seek them, and since needy people usually ask for food, they have been called 'those who ask'. (Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ)

Ibn Kathīr has quoted this explanation and said that it is like the statement of the Qur'ān اٰتٰبِكُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ مَا سَاَلْتُمُوْهُ (And He gave you whatever you asked for. - 14:34) 'you asked for' in this verse means 'you were in need of' even though it has not been asked literally, because Allah Almighty has bestowed those things even to those who did not ask for them.

فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْاَرْضِ اٰتِيْنَا طَوْعًا اَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا اٰتَيْنَا طَائِعِيْنَ (and said to it and to the earth, "Come [to My obedience], both of you, willingly or unwillingly." Both said, "We come willingly." - 41:11) This command addressed to the earth and sky and their compliant and obedient reply, according to some exegetes, is a metaphorical expression for the readiness of the earth and the sky to comply with every order from Allah Almighty. But Ibn 'Aṭīyah and other leading research scholars have stated that this is no metaphor – it is based on reality. Allah Almighty had endowed the earth and the skies with the faculty of intellect and comprehension of the commands addressed to them and also with the power of speaking and replying. Tafsīr Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ, after quoting this explanation, has held it to be the most suitable and the best. Ibn Kathīr, after quoting the above explanation, has also quoted the statement of some exegetes that the earth's reply was given by that portion of the earth on which Baytullah has been constructed and the sky's reply was given by that portion of the sky which is just above the Baytullah, known as Al-Bayt-ul- Ma'mūr.

Verses 13 – 25

فَاِنْ اَعْرَضُوْا فَقُلْ اَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صٰعِقَةً مِّثْلَ صٰعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَثَمُوْدَ ﴿١٣﴾
 اِذْ جَاءَتْهُمْ الرُّسُلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ
 قَالُوْا لَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّنَا لَانْزَلَ مَلٰٓئِكَةً فَاِنَّا بِمَا اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَاَمَّا

عَادُ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوا مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً ۗ
 أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً ۗ وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
 يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحِسَاتٍ
 لِنُذِيقَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَخْزَى
 وَهُمْ لَا يُنصَرُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمَى عَلَى
 الْهُدَى فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ صَاعِقَةُ الْعَذَابِ الْهَوْنِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٧﴾
 وَنَجَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُ أَعْدَاءُ اللَّهِ
 إِلَى النَّارِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا مَا جَاءُوهَا شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ
 سَمْعُهُمْ وَأَبْصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُودُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقَالُوا
 لِمَ جُلُودِهِمْ لَمْ يَشْهَدْتُمْ عَلَيْنَا ۗ قَالُوا أَنْطَقَنَا اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْطَقَ كُلَّ
 شَيْءٍ ۗ وَهُوَ خَلَقَكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ
 تَسْتَتِرُونَ أَنْ يَشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُكُمْ وَلَا جُلُودُكُمْ
 وَلَكِنْ ظَنْنْتُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَعْلَمُ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَذَلِكُمْ
 ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِي ظَنْنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ أَرَدْتُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾
 فَإِنْ يَصْبِرُوا فَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَّهُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ يَسْتَعْتِبُوا فَمَا هُمْ مِنَ الْمُعْتَبِينَ
 ﴿٢٤﴾ وَقَيَّضْنَا لَهُمْ قُرَنَاءَ فَزَيَّنُوا لَهُمْ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ
 وَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ ۗ
 إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

So, if they turn away, then say, "I have warned you of a calamity like the calamity of 'Ad and Thamūd, [13] when the messengers came to them from their front and from their back, saying, "Do not worship anyone but Allah." They said, "Had our Lord (really) willed (to send someone as messenger), He would have sent down angels. So, we are deniers of what you have been sent

with.” [14] As for ‘Ad, they showed arrogance in the land with no right (to do so), and said, “Who is stronger than us in power?” Did they not see that Allah, who created them, is stronger than them in power? And they used to reject Our signs. [15] So, We let loose a wild wind on them in unlucky days to make them taste the humiliating punishment in the present life. And of course, the punishment of the Hereafter will be much more humiliating, and they will not be helped. [16] And as for Thamud, We showed them the way, but they preferred blindness to the guidance. Therefore, they were seized by the bang of the abasing punishment because of what they used to earn. [17] And We saved those who believed and used to be God-fearing. [18] And (remind them of) the day when Allah’s enemies will be mustered towards the Fire. So they will be kept under control, [19] until when they will come to it, their ears and their eyes and their skins will testify against them about what they used to do. [20] And they will say to their skins, “Why did you testify against us?” They (the skins) will say, “We were made to speak by Allah, the One who has made every thing to speak.” And He had created you the first time, and to Him you are going to be returned. [21] And you had not been hiding your selves (when committing sins) because of (the apprehension) that your ears and your eyes and your skins would bear witness against you, but you thought that Allah did not know much of what you did. [22] And this thought of yours that you conceived about your Lord brought you to ruin, and you became among the losers. [23] Now, if they endure patiently, even then the Fire is their abode, and if they seek forgiveness, they are not among those (who could be) forgiven. [24] And We had assigned for them fellows (in the worldly life) who beautified for them what was before them and what was behind them, and thus they believed that whatever they were doing was good. ‘what was before them’ refers to their present acts, while ‘what was behind them’ refers to their past acts. And (thus) the word (of punishment) became due against them along with the communities that passed before them from Jinns and human beings. Surely they were the losers. [25]

Commentary

The basic purpose of these verses is to warn the people of Makkah

that if, even after seeing the manifest proofs of the Oneness of Allah, they do not accept the call of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, they may face a punishment like the earlier people of 'Ād and Thamūd had faced. In this context, a brief account of what happened to these people has been given. The people of Makkah are also reminded that their punishment on the Day of Judgment will be much more severe, and they will not be able to escape it, because even the organs of their body will testify against them. And in this context, some events of that Day are mentioned.

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا (So, We let loose a wild wind on them - 41:16) This is the explanation of what was mentioned as 'calamity of 'Ād and Thamud' in the earlier verse. The Arabic word used in the text is *ṣā'iqaḥ*. It originally means 'something that renders one unconscious. That is why the thunderbolt is also called *ṣā'iqaḥ*, and unforeseen calamity and disaster is also called *ṣā'iqaḥ*. The storm which entrapped the people of 'Ād was also a '*ṣā'iqaḥ*', and has been mentioned in the present verse as 'wild wind' which was a wild tempest of extremely high speed and had piercing sound. (Qurṭubī)

Mentioning the details of this tempest, Daḥḥāk رحمه الله has said that rains had been totally stopped from them by Allah Almighty for three years, and dry tempestuous winds kept on blousing all the time, and for eight days and seven nights, they had continuous extremely severe windstorm. Some narrations have it that this event took place in the end of month of Shawwal, commenced on a Wednesday and kept on till the next Wednesday. Whenever any nation has been subjected to a scourge, it has happened on a Wednesday. (Qurṭubī, Maḥzarī)

Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh رحمه الله has stated that when Allah Almighty wants the welfare of a nation, He orders rain to fall on them, and stops very fast winds from blousing over them, whereas when a nation is to face a misfortune, rain is withheld from them, and strong winds start blousing frequently.

فِي أَيَّامٍ نَّجَسَاتٍ (in unlucky days....41:16). It is established by the principles of Islam and *aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that no day or night is in itself unlucky or ill-omened. The days of the windstorm over the people of 'Ād have been called 'unlucky' because those days had become ill-omened for them due to their misdeeds. It does not necessarily

mean that those days were ill-omened for every body. (Maḏharī and Bayān-ul-Qurʿān). The detailed investigation as to whether anything can be ill-omened by its nature can be seen in the author's book *Aḥkām-ul-Qurʿān* Vol. 5 in Arabic)

فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ (So they will be kept under control....41:19) The original word used in the text is 'Yuzaʿūn' which is derived from *wazʿ* which means 'to stop', 'to prevent'. Most of the learned exegetes have explained it in the sense that when people of Hell, who will be numerous, will be taken forward to the field of hashr and the place of reckoning, the people in the front will be halted for a while, so that the people in the rear also catch up with them. This will be done to avoid indiscipline. (It is this interpretation of the verse on the basis of which it is translated as 'kept under control'.) And some exegetes have translated 'Yuzaʿūn' as 'pushed' which means that they would be driven towards the place of reckoning by being pushed. (Qurṭubī)

وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَرُونَ أَنْ يَشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ (And you had not been hiding your selves [when committing sins] because of [the apprehension] that your ears and your eyes and your skins would bear witness against you,.....41:22) This verse means that if anyone wants to commit a sin or a crime, he may hide it from others, but how can he hide it from his own limbs and organs? When it is known that our ears, eyes, hands, feet, skin and hair are not ours, rather they are witnesses of the state against us, and when they would be questioned about our deeds, they would give true evidence, then there is no way to hide the commitment of a crime or a sin. The only way to avoid the disgrace is to keep away from sin. Although it is not expected from the deniers of Oneness of Allah and of prophethood, that it would enter their minds that their organs and limbs would speak up before Allah Almighty and give evidence against themselves, yet any intelligent person could have understood that it is totally impossible that the One who has created him from a lowly matter, given him ability to hear and see, brought him up and made him young, will not fully know his deeds and state of affairs. But you had thought, against this evident matter, that Allah Almighty had no knowledge of many of your deeds. This false assumption encouraged you to commit 'shirk' and 'kufr'. This is the meaning of Verse 23 where it is said, وَذَلِكُمْ ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِي ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ أَرْدَبِكُمْ "And this thought of yours that you conceived

about your Lord brought you to ruin...”

The Evidence of Man’s Limbs and organs after Resurrection

According to a narration reported in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه says, “One day we were with the Holy Prophet ﷺ when he started laughing. Then he asked us whether we knew why he was laughing. We said that Allah and His Rasūl ﷺ knew best. Then he said “What made me laugh was the dialogue a slave will have with his Lord on the Day of Resurrection. The slave will say, “O my Lord! Did you not give me protection from injustice?” Allah Almighty will say, ‘No doubt, I did.’ Then this slave will say, ‘Since this is so, I would not be satisfied with any evidence in the matter of my accountability, except that some part of my own being stands up as witness.’ Allah Almighty will say, كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ ‘Your own being is enough today to take your account. (17:14)’ Then his mouth will be sealed, and his limbs and organs will be asked to tell about his deeds. Every organ would speak up and give true evidence. After that his mouth will be unsealed, and then he will say to his own organs in displeasure, بُعْدًا لَّكُمْ وَسُخْفًا فَعَنْكُنَّ أَنَا ضِلُّ ‘May you be ruined. May you be destroyed; whatever I had done in the world was only to make you comfortable’, (whereas you have stated to furnish evidence against me.)

And according to another narration by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه, this person’s mouth will be sealed, and his thigh will be called to speak and tell about his deeds. Then his thigh, its flesh and bone will all give evidence of his deeds. (Muslim, Maḏharī)

Sayyidnā Ma‘qil Ibn Yasār رضي الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that every new day calls the humans saying, ‘I am a new day, and I shall be a witness to whatever you do today. So you should do some good deed before I come to an end, in order that I may give evidence, because once I am gone, you will never find me again. Similarly, every night gives the same call.’ (Al-Qurṭubī, with reference to Abū Nu‘aim)

Verses 26 – 29

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَالْغَوَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَلَنْذِيْقَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا ۖ وَلَنْجِزِيَنَّهُمْ

أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ أَعْدَاءِ اللَّهِ النَّارُ ۗ لَهُمْ فِيهَا دَارُ الْخُلْدِ ۗ جَزَاءٌ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا رَبَّنَا أَرِنَا الَّذِينَ أَضَلَّنَا مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ نَجْعَلَهُمَا تَحْتَ أَقْدَامِنَا لِيَكُونَا مِنَ الْأَسْفَلِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

And said those who disbelieved, “Do not listen to this Qur’ān, and make noise during its recitation, so that you may overcome.” [26] So, We will certainly make them taste a severe punishment, and will certainly recompense them for the worst of what they used to do. [27] That is the recompense of the enemies of Allah— the Fire. For them there is the eternal home, as a recompense for their persistent denial of Our verses. [28] And those who disbelieve will say, “Our Lord, show us the two who led us astray, out of the Jinns and the humans, and we will put both of them under our feet, so that they become among the lowest.” [29]

Commentary

لَا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ (Do not listen to this Qur’ān, and make noise during its recitation, - 41:26) When all the efforts of the disbelievers failed in confronting the Holy Qur’ān, they started doing such mischievous acts as mentioned in this verse. Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه has stated that Abū Jahl got his people primed up and ready to make noises whenever Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم recited the Qur’ān, so that people might not find out what he is saying. Some have said that preparations were made to stop people from listening to the Qur’ān by whistling, clapping and by making all sorts of noises during the recitation.

It is Wājib (necessary) to listen quietly while Qur’ān is being recited; It is infidel's way not to remain quiet.

It is learnt from the above verse that making noises with the intention of creating disturbance in the recitation of the Qur’ān is a sign of disbelief. It is also known that to listen quietly to the recitation of the Qur’ān is *wājib* (necessary) and a sign of faith. It has become a usual practice in our days that people put their radios (and cassette players) on where the Holy Qur’ān is recited with loud voice, which can be heard in about every restaurant and place of gathering, while people go about

their business never paying any attention to the Holy Qur'an. This practice presents a picture that was a sign of infidels. May Allah Almighty guide Muslims. They should either avoid the recitation of the Holy Qur'an at such places and on such occasions where people are unable to listen to it, or if they wish to benefit from the blessing of the recitation, they must listen to it quietly and attentively.

Verses 30 – 36

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾
 نَحْنُ أَوْلِيُّكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُى أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ نَزَّلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ
 ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا تَسْتَوِى الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۗ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ
 ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا يُلْقِيهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ۗ وَمَا يُلْقِيهَا إِلَّا ذُو حِظٍّ عَظِيمٍ
 ﴿٣٥﴾ وَإِنَّمَا يَنْزِعَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٦﴾

Surely, those who have declared: “Our Lord is Allah”, then remained steadfast, on them the angels will descend, saying, “Do not fear, and do not grieve; and be happy with the good news of the Jannah that you had been promised. [30] We have been your friends in the worldly life, and (will remain as such) in the Hereafter. And for you here is whatever your souls desire, and for you here is whatever you call for [31] – a gift of welcome from the Most-forgiving, the Very-Merciful”. [32] And who can be better in words than the one who calls towards Allah, and acts righteously and says, “I am one of those who submit themselves (to Allah)”? [33] And good and evil are not equal. Repel (evil) with what is

best, and you will see that the one you had mutual enmity with him will turn as if he were a close friend. [34] And no one is blessed with this (attitude) but those who observe patience, and no one is blessed with this (attitude) but a man of great luck. [35] And should a stroke from Shaitan (Satan) strike you, seek refuge with Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. [36]

Commentary

Those who rejected the Qur'ān, the prophethood and the Oneness of Allah have been addressed from the beginning of the Sūrah. With reference to the signs of Allah's Omnipotence, they are invited to believe in Oneness of Allah. Mentioned thereafter is the evil fate of those who reject the life hereinafter with a detailed account of the punishment of hell in that life. Now the text takes up, henceforth, the conditions of the believing people and of those having perfect faith, their being honored and exalted in this world and in eternity along with some special directions for them. Believers and those having perfect faith are those people who not only stick to the straight path and abide by the revealed laws themselves in their deeds and morals, but also call others towards Allah and care about their reformation. It is in this connection that those who invite others towards Islam are directed to remain patient and to repay evil with goodness.

The sense of being upright

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا (Surely, those who have declared: "Our Lord is Allah", then remained steadfast - 41:30) This verse has mentioned two qualities of these people. One is affirming Allah as their Lord. This refers to their "īmān" (faith). The other quality is of their remaining steadfast which refers to their good deeds. In this way, the verse says that these people combine the true faith with good practice. The word used in the text for this second aspect is *istiqamah* (translated above as being steadfast) which has been taken by Maulānā Thānawī to mean firmness in unshaken faith. This explanation is reported from Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه. The explanation given by Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه is nearly the same, as according to him *istiqamah* means *ikhhlāṣ* (sincerity) in deeds. And Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه has explained *istiqamah* in the following words,

الاستقامة ان تستقيم على الامروا النهي ولا تروغ روغان الثعالب. (مظهرى)

Istiḳamah is that you hold on unwaveringly to all the injunctions of Allah – carry out the good deeds and stay away from prohibitions, and do not seek escape-routes like foxes. (Maḏharī).

That is why scholars have said that *Istiḳāmah* is a small word, but it comprises all the revealed laws of Islam which includes carrying out all the orders of Allah and staying away from all prohibitions and odious things on a permanent basis. It is stated in Tafsīr Kashshaf that a person's declaration that his Lord is Allah can only be true when he believes from the bottom of his heart that he is being brought up by Allah Almighty in all situations and at every step, that he cannot take even one breath without His mercy, and all this demands that one should be so devoted and steadfast in his ways of worship that neither his heart nor his body should deviate even to a hair's breadth from submission to Him like a slave.

That is the reason that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked by Sayyidnā Sufyān Ibn 'Abdullāh Thaḳafi ﷺ to tell him something so comprehensive about Islam that he should not have to ask anybody else afterwards for anything. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him:

قُلْ اٰمَنْتُ بِاللّٰهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَقِمْ (رواه مسلم)

“Say, ‘I have faith in Allah’, and then remain steadfast to it.”

Remaining steadfast apparently means to hold on firmly to the faith and to the good deeds which the faith demands.

Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ and Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ have defined *Istiḳāmah* (Steadfastness) as discharge of obligatory duties, and Ḥasan Baṣrī said that *Istiḳāmah* is to obey Allah in all deeds, and to avoid His disobedience. This tells us that the above quoted description of *Istiḳāmah* given by Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ, is the most comprehensive. The descriptions of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ and Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ also result in the above, because sincerity in deeds has been stressed upon by them alongwith good deeds. (Tafsīr Maḏharī). Jaṣṣāṣ has also adopted the above explanation by quoting Abū 'Āliyah and so has Ibn Jarīr.

تَنْزِيلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ (on them the angels will descend - 41:30). The descent of angels and their address as mentioned in this verse will take place at the

time of one's death according to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, but according to Qatādah, it will take place on the Day of Resurrection at the time of rising from the graves. And according to Waki' Ibn Jarrah, it would happen on three occasions, first at the time of death, secondly in the graves, and thirdly on the Day of Resurrection at the time of rising from graves. And Abū Ḥayyān has opined in Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ that, in fact, angels keep on descending upon Mu'mins (believers) all the time, even in this life, and their effects and blessings are found in the deeds of the believers; but they will be visible on these occasions only, and it is at that time that the voice of angels will be heard.

Abū Nu'aim has reported about Thābit Al-bunānī رضي الله تعالى عنه that while reciting Sūrah Ḥa Mīm Sajdah, when he reached the present verse (on them the angels descend), he said, "According to a Ḥadīth that has reached us, the Mu'min at the time of rising in his grave on the Day of Resurrection, will be met by the two angels who used to be with him in the world, and they will console him not to worry or be afraid, rather be happy with the glad tidings of Paradise, which was being promised to him. These words of the angels will bring serenity to the Mu'min. (Maḥzarī)

لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُنَّ أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ . نَزْلًا مِنْ غَفُورٍ رَحِيمٍ (And for you here is whatever your souls desire, and for you here is whatever you call for. - 41:31,32) In other words, 'all your desires' would be fulfilled whether you request or you don't.' The word used after that is 'nuzulan'¹ meaning hospitality indicates that many the delights provided to you there will be such that even desire had not entered your heart, as happens to a guest, specially of a great personage, that many such things also are presented to him that the guest had not even imagined. (Maḥzarī)

It is stated in a Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that in Paradise, if the desire comes into your heart to eat the flesh of a flying bird you are looking at it, it would immediately fall in front of you completely cooked, ready to eat. Some narrations have it that the bird would not have been touched either by fire or smoke, but would come

1. This which originally means 'a thing prepared by a host to be offered to him soon after his arrival'. That is why it is translated by us above as a 'welcome-gift'. But for the sake of brevity and in general usage, it is generally translated as 'hospitality'. Muhammad Taqi Usmani

down already cooked. (Al-Bazzār, Al-Baihaqī – narrated by Ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ – Mazḥarī)

In another Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that if a Mu‘min in Paradise wishes to have a child born in his house, the conception, delivery, weaning, growing into being an adult – all this would take place in a moment. (Tirmidhī, Baihaqī, etc. – Mazḥarī)

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ (And who can be better in words than the one who calls towards Allah, and acts righteously and says, “I am one of those who submit themselves [to Allah]”? - 33) This is the second aspect of the state of the totally obedient Mu‘mins, that they not only have faith and carry out good deeds themselves, but they also invite others to do the same. The Qur‘ān states that who can say anything better than the one who calls others towards Allah. So we know that the best and most excellent discourse of a man is to call others towards truth. This includes all the ways of calling towards Allah – through the spoken word, through writing or through any other manner. The one who calls *adhān* (call to obligatory prayer) is also included in this category, because he calls others towards prayers. That is why Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها has said that this verse is about mu‘adhdhins (those who proclaim *adhān*), and that the words, ‘and acts righteously’ after this means offering of two *rak‘āt* of prayers between *adhan* and *iqamah*.

It is narrated in a Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the supplication between *adhān* and *Iqamah* is not rejected (Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī – narrated by Sayyidnā Anas ﷺ – Mazḥarī)

The merits and blessings of *adhān* and its reply are very great, as stated in Ṣaḥīḥ *aḥādīth*, provided that the *adhān* is proclaimed purely for Allah, and not for any payment or compensation. These *aḥādīth* have been collected in Tafsīr Mazḥarī.

وَلَا تَسْتَوِى الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ (And good and evil are not equal - 34). The special instructions for those who are engaged in calling others towards Allah commence from here. The gist of these instructions is not to repay evil with evil, but to be patient and to be obliging اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ اَحْسَنُ (Repel (evil) with what is best, - 34) means that the habit of those people who are engaged in calling others towards Allah should be to reply to the evil behavior of the addressees in the best possible manner. No doubt, it is

good not to repay evil with evil and to forgive, but it is much better to do some good to the evil-doer after forgiving him. Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه has said that the instruction in this verse is to be patient with the one who is expressing his anger with you, to be tolerant and forbearing with the one who is being ignorant with you and to forgive the one who has made you suffer. (Maḏharī)

Some narrations have it that someone either abused or reviled Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه who said to him, ‘If what you are saying is true that I am at fault and am bad, then I pray Allah Ta‘ālā to forgive me, and if you have told a lie then may Allah Forgive you. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 37 – 39

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ۚ لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا
لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَإِنِ
اسْتَكْبَرُوا فَالَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُونَ لَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ
لَا يَسْتَمُونَ ^{السجدة} ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَن تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا
عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِي أَحْيَاهَا لُمُحِي الْمَوْتِ ۚ إِنَّهُ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

And among His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Do not make *sajdah* (prostration) to the sun, or to the moon. And make *sajdah* to Allah who has created them, if it is Him whom you worship. [37] Still, if they show arrogance, then those who are with your Lord proclaim His purity night and day, and they do not get weary. [38] And among His signs is that you see the land inactive, Then, once We send down water thereto, it gets excited and swells. Surely, the One who has given life to it is the One who gives life to the dead. No doubt, He is powerful to do everything. [39]

It is Not permissible to prostrate before anyone except Allah Almighty

لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ (Do not make *sajdah* [prostration] to the sun, or to the moon. And make *sajdah* to Allah who

has created them - 37). It is learnt from this verse that prostration is the right of the Creator of the Universe only. The consensus of the Ummah is that to prostrate before any star, human being, etc. is *ḥarām* (forbidden), whether it is for worship, or just as a gesture of respect and reverence. The only difference is that if someone prostrates before anyone other than Allah with intention to worship him, he becomes an infidel, and the one who prostrates simply as a mark of respect and reverence is not called an infidel, but he is guilty of committing a serious haram act and is a sinner.

Prostration of worship for any being other than Allah has never been lawful for any *Ummah* in any Shari'ah of any prophet, because it becomes a practice of *shirk* (polytheism) and *shirk* has never been allowed in any code of shari'ah revealed to any prophet. However, prostration in respect and reverence of anyone (with no intention to worshipping him) had been allowed in the codes of shari'ah revealed to some prophets. All the angels were ordered to prostrate before Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام before he came into this world. It is stated in the Qur'an that the father and brothers of Sayyidnā Yūsuf عليه السلام prostrated before him. But the jurisprudents of this *Ummah* are unanimous on the point that such a prostration was permissible in the earlier codes only, and it stands abrogated in Islam. Prostration for any being other than Allah has been declared absolutely haram (forbidden). Full details of this issue are given in the author's booklet (المقالة المرضية فى حكم سجدة التحية) *Al-maqalat-ul-marḍiyyah, fī Ḥukmi sajdāt-it-taḥiyyah*' in Arabic, and its Urdu translation has also been published.

وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَمُونَ (and they do not get weary. - 38) This is one of the verses called 'Verses of *sajdah*' the recitation of which makes it obligatory to perform *sajdah* (prostration) for the one who recites them and the one who listens to them. This *sajdah* is called *sajdah* of *tilawah*. There is consensus of the *Ummah* on the point that *sajdah* of *tilawah* is *wājib* (obligatory) in this Sūrah, but the scholars differ regarding the exact place where it becomes *wājib*. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn-ul-'Arabi has written in *Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān* that Sayyidnā 'Alī عليه السلام and Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه used to prostrate at the end of the verse 37 i.e. at the end of إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ (if it is Him whom you worship.) Imām Mālīk has adopted this very stance. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, however, used to prostrate at the end of the verse 38 i.e. at the end of لَا يَسْتَمُونَ (and they do not get weary.)

Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه has also advised prostration at this place. Masrūq, Abū ‘Abdur Raḥmān Sulamī, Ibrāhīm Nakha‘ī, Ibn Sīrīn, Qatādah, etc., and most jurists used to prostrate at verse 38, i.e. at the end of the verse 38, *لَا يَسْمُومُونَ*. Imām Abū Bakr Jaṣṣāṣ has said in *Aḥkām-ul-Qur‘ān* that this has been the view of all the leading Ḥanafī scholars. He has further said that in view of the differences, it is on the safer side to prostrate at the end of the verse 38, because even if prostration becomes *wājib* at the end of the verse 37, then the obligation would be discharged if it is performed after the recitation of the verse 38, and if it becomes *wājib* at the verse 38, then, the discharge of obligation (if it is performed after verse 38) is more obvious.

Verses 40 – 46

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا ۗ أَفَمَنْ يُلْقَى فِي النَّارِ خَيْرًا مِّنْ يَّاتِيهِ مِنَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ اِعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ ۖ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٤١﴾ لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ ۗ تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيلَ لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ وَذُو عِقَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَجَمِيًّا لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ ۗ أَءَعْجَمِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ ۗ قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءٌ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقُرْ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ يُنَادُونَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ ۗ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَاخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ ۗ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيبٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ ۗ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۗ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٤٦﴾

Surely those who go crooked about Our signs are not hidden from Us. So, tell me which one is better: the one who is thrown into the Fire, or the one who will come

safely on the Day of Judgment? Do whatever you wish. He is watchful of whatever you do. [40] Surely those who have rejected the advice (the Qur'an) when it came to them (are the ones who go crooked and are not hidden from Us). And surely, it is an unassailable book [41] that cannot be approached by falsehood, neither from its front, nor from its behind — a revelation from the Wise, the Ever-Praised. [42] Nothing is being said to you but what has been said to the messengers before you. Your Lord is certainly the lord of forgiveness and the lord of painful punishment. [43] And had We made it a non-Arabic Qur'an, they would have said, "Why are its verses not clearly explained? Is it a non-Arabic (book) and an Arab (messenger)?"¹ Say, "For those who believe, it is guidance and cure. As for those who do not believe, there is deafness in their ears, and for them it is blindness. Such people are being called from a distant place." [44] And We gave Musa the book, then it was disputed (as well). And but for a word that had already come from your Lord, the matter would have been decided between them. And they are in confounding doubt about it. [45] If someone acts righteously, he does so for the benefit of his own soul, and if someone commits evil, he does so against it. And your Lord is not unjust to His slaves. [46]

Commentary

Description and Rules of *Ilhād* – A particular kind of *kufr*

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا (Surely those who go crooked about Our signs are not hidden from Us....41:40) In the earlier verses, there were warnings, threats and mention of scourge for those who used to openly deny the Oneness of Allah and the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Now a particular kind of denial is being described which is called '*ilhād*'. The lexical meaning of '*ilhād*' is to deviate, to incline towards one side, being

(1). This verse was revealed in answer to an objection raised by some people of Quraish who, according to a report of Sa'īd Ibn Jubair reproduced by Suyūṭi in his *Ad-Durr-ul-Manthur*, had said that some part of the Qur'an should have been in a language other than Arabic, so that its miraculous nature would have been more pronounced in the sense that an Arab prophet would have been reciting verses in a language he did not know. The gist of the answer given in this verse is that there is no end to such absurd objections. Had Allah revealed the Qur'an in some other language, they would have come with another objection that it is not understandable, and that an Arab messenger is not supposed to convey his message in any language other than Arabic.

crooked. In the terminology of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, *'ilhād'* means to deviate from the verse of the Holy Qur'ān. Lexically, this word is applicable to both cases of deviation, be it open denial, or through false interpretation. But, generally, the term of *'ilhād'* is used for a deviation that apparently purports to have faith in the Qur'ān and its verses, but attributes such self-assumed meanings to the Qur'ān that are against the clear and explicit meanings accepted and recognized by the majority of the ummah, and that change the intention of the Qur'ān in its entirety. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has given this very meaning of *'ilhād'* in the explanation of this verse by saying: *الاحاد هو وضع الكلام على غير موضعه* (*'ilhād'* is to use a statement at an irrelevant place). The words, *لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا* "are not hidden from Us" in the present verse 40 indicate that *'ilhād'* was a kind of *'kufr'* that they wanted to hide. So Allah Almighty said that they could not hide their *kufr* (infidelity) from Him.

And this verse has advised clearly that deviation from the verses of the Qur'ān, whether openly in distinct words or by trying to change the injunctions of the Qur'ān through false interpretations, all are *'ilhād'* and *kufr*.

Briefly, *'ilhād'* is a kind of hypocritical *kufr* which in appearance claims and admits to have faith in the Qur'ān and its verses, but fabricates meanings of the verses of the Qur'ān which are against the explicit provisions of the Qur'ān, Sunnah and principles of Islam.

Imām Abū Yūsuf has stated in Kitāb-ul-Kharāj:

كذلك الزنادقة الذين يلحدون وقد كانوا يظهرون الاسلام

"Similar are zindiqs who deviate; and they used to pretend Islam.

This tells us that *zindiq* and *mulhid* (one who practices *'ilhād'*) are one and the same. Both words are used for an infidel who outwardly claims to follow Islam, but in reality refuses to obey the injunctions through distortion in the meaning of the Qur'ān against the explicit and definite meanings accepted by the Ummah as a whole.

Removal of a Misunderstanding:

One of the rules described in books of Islamic theology is that a *muta'awwil* (i.e. the one who adheres to a wrong belief on the pretext of a

different interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah) should not be declared to be a *kāfir* or a Non-Muslim. But if this rule is taken to be so general that no matter how false a pretext one applies to even an absolute and certain injunction, one would, however not become a *kāfir* (infidel), then the inevitable consequence would be that none of the polytheists, idolaters, Jews or Christians should be called Non-Muslims or *Kāfir*, because the pretext of the idolaters is stated in the Qur'an itself:

مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ

“And we do not worship them (the idols) but for the reason that they will bring us closer to Allah.” (39:3)

The pretext was that they do not worship the idols themselves, but as intercessors to take us nearer to Allah Almighty and as such, in reality, they worship Allah. But the Qur'an has declared them to be *kāfir*, despite this pretext. The pretexts of Jews and Christians are very well known, despite they have been called *Kāfir* in the explicit verses of Qur'an and Sunnah. Hence it is established that the rule of not calling a *muta'awwil* as *Kāfir* is not applicable so generally.

Therefore, the scholars and jurists have clarified that the rule mentioned above is subject to a condition that the interpretation in matters relating to the self-evident elements (*Daruriyyat-ud-dīn*) should not be against their definite (*qat'ī*) meanings. Self-evident elements of religion (*Daruriyyat-ud-dīn*) are those injunctions and rules of Islam which are so continuously practiced, established, and well-known that even illiterate and ignorant Muslims are aware of them, such as the obligation of salah five times a day, two *rak'āt* of *ṣalāh* in *fajr* and four *rak'āt* in *zuhr* and fasting during the month of Ramaḍān, all being obligatory duties; similarly the prohibition of *ribā'* (usury), alcoholic drinks, pig, etc. If anyone gives such false interpretations of the verses of the Qur'an pertaining to these matters which perverts their well-known and established meanings accepted by the Muslims throughout the history by way of *tawatur* (uninterrupted), then such a person would, no doubt, by consensus of the 'Ummah, be a *kāfir*, because he is, in reality, denying the teaching of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. And the definition of *'imān* (faith) recognized by the consensus of 'ummah is the following:

تَصَدِيقَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِيمَا عَلِمَ مَجِيئَهُ بِهِ ضَرُورَةً

“To believe in whatever is established to be the teaching of the

Holy Prophet ﷺ in a self-evident manner known not only to scholars, but also to the general public.

Therefore, in comparison, the description of *kufr* would be the denial of any of the things mentioned above.

So the person who changes any injunction pertaining to the self-evident elements of the religion through false explanations or pretexts is actually denying the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Since ignorance of and negligence about religion and its injunctions have reached alarming proportions these days, many people who do not know the principles of Sharī'ah, and whatever information they have about Islam is based on what they have learnt from the Western scholars, have started in our days distorting the teachings of Islam by presenting false interpretations of the Holy Qur'ān and Sunnah. Such people often seek help from the rule mentioned above and claim that these interpretations cannot be held as *kufr*.

Therefore, in view of the serious need of the times, my respected teacher Maulānā Muḥammad Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī رحمه الله تعالى has written a book on this issue, which is published with the title of *Ikfar-ul-mulḥidīn*. It has been proved in this book, on the basis of clarifications of scholars and jurists of every school of thought, that in the self-evident elements of religion (*Daruriyyat-ud-dīn*) nobody's pretext is valid, and such a pretext does not protect one from being *kāfir*. This humble writer has summarized the contents of this book in his Urdu booklet (ایمان اور کفر، قرآن کی روشنی میں) '*Īmān or kufr Qur'ān kī roshnī meyn*'. The gist of the discussion is given in that book from a writing of Shāh 'Abdul-'Azīz Muḥaddīth Dehlawī رحمه الله تعالى in the following way:

He says that false interpretation of the Qur'ān may be of two kinds. One, is an interpretation that goes against the definite, unambiguous texts of the Qur'ān or of the mutawatir *aḥādīth* or of absolute consensus of the *ummah*. This kind of interpretation is *kufr* undoubtedly. The second kind is an interpretation against the texts that are, though clear and semi-certain, are not certain or definite in absolute terms. This kind of false interpretation is not *kufr*, however, it is *fisq* and misguidance. Apart from these two kinds, any interpretation that is based on a possible understanding of the text is the field of the jurists exercising *ijtihād*, and

it carries reward from Allah in any case, as declared by a Ḥadīth.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ ۖ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ
(Surely those who have rejected the advice, when it came to them [are the ones who go crooked and are not hidden from Us]. And surely, it is an unassailable book that cannot be approached by falsehood, neither from its front, nor from its behind. - 41:41,42) Most Exegetes have stated that the ‘advice’ in this verse refers to the Qur’ān, and the sentence “those who have rejected the advice when it came to them” is a complement of the former phrase “those who go crooked about Our verse” and hence, according to Arabic grammar, is subject to the same predicate, and thus the meaning is that these people cannot be hidden from Us, and consequently cannot escape the scourge. Further on is stated that the Qur’ān is protected by Allah. إِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ (And surely, it is an unassailable book) meaning that Allah Almighty holds this Book dear and fully protected; no falsehood can enter this Book. (Narrated by Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه – Maḏharī)

حَلْفِهِ لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ (that cannot be approached by falsehood, neither from its front, nor from its behind.) Qatādah and Suddī have stated that ‘*bāṭil*’ (falsehood) in this verse means Shaiṭān (Satan), and ‘neither from its front, nor from its behind’ means ‘from any side’. To sum up, Satan’s manipulation and contrivance just do not work on this Book; Satan cannot distort this Book by adding something to it, or deleting something from it.

The author of Tafsīr Maḏharī, after quoting this explanation, has added that Satan here includes the satans both from jinn and from humans – neither can carry out any change or distortion in the Qur’ān. Some *Rawafid*¹.

Abū Ḥayyān has stated in Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ that the word *bāṭil* (falsehood) as a word is not specific to Satan; any falsehood or falsifier, whether from Satan or from any other source, cannot succeed in the Qur’ān. Then, referring to Ṭabarī, he has mentioned that this verse means that a disbeliever can neither dare to carry out any change in this

(1) This term is used for the extremists among the Shi’ites who tried to add ten parts (Ajza’) and some tried to add some particular verses, but none could succeed.

Book openly, nor can he distort its meaning through *ilhād* covertly.

The explanation of Tabari is very appropriate here, because there can be only two ways of introducing any distortion or *ilhād* in the Qur'an. First, that any disbeliever tries openly to add something to or delete something from the Qur'an. This has been denoted by the words, 'from its front'. The second way of distortion is that somebody, claiming to have faith, tries to distort the meaning of the Qur'an covertly through false interpretations. This has been referred to by the words, 'nor from its behind'.

The sense, in nut shell, is that this Book is so noble and protected by Allah that nobody has the power to bring any addition, omission or change in its words, nor can one succeed in bringing any change in the injunctions of the Qur'an by distorting its meaning. Whenever any wretched person attempted to do so, he had to face ignominy – The Qur'an remained pure and untouched by his evil plans. As for its protection from open distortion or change, everybody can see that there is no way for anyone to do it, because it is being read and recited throughout the world for the last fourteen centuries, fully memorized by hundreds of thousands of people; if anybody makes even the slightest mistake, the young, the old, the learned scholars, the illiterate – thousands and thousands of Muslims raise their voice for correction. The words 'nor from its behind' in the present verse indicate that the protection of the Qur'an that has been undertaken by Allah Almighty Himself by saying "And We are there to protect it." (15:9) is not limited to its words only; rather Allah Almighty has ensured that its meanings will remain protected as well. Allah Almighty has so safeguarded even the meaning and injunctions of Qur'an through His Messenger ﷺ and his direct disciples, the noble Companions رضي الله عنهم, that if any infidel attempts to distort it through false explanations, thousands of scholars stand up to refute it, and he faces rejection. The fact is that in the verse إِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ (We are there to protect it) the pronoun 'it' points towards the Qur'an and Qur'an is not just the name of words, but is the name of both words and meanings.

It is clearly mentioned in correct *aḥādīth* that a group will always remain among Muslims, till Doomsday, who would expose the distortions of those who commit *ilhād* (false interpretation), and would clarify the correct meaning of the Qur'an. They may hide their *kufr* from the whole

world, but they cannot hide it from Allah Almighty, and since Allah Almighty is aware of their conspiracy, they are bound to face punishment.

ءَ اَعْجَمِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ (Is it a non- Arabic [book] and an Arab [messenger]? - 44) The original word used for non-Arabic in the text is a'jamiyy (with *ḥamza* before the letter 'ain) which is an Arabic term for 'ineloquent speech', while 'ajam' (without *ḥamzah* in its beginning) means any nation other than Arabs. Therefore 'ajamiyy is a person who is non-Arab, even though he may speak eloquently, and a'jamiyy is a person who cannot speak eloquently. (Qurṭubī). The use of the word اَعْجَمِيٌّ a'jamiyy in this verse means that if We had revealed the Qur'ān in any language other than Arabic, then the Quraysh who are the first addressees of the Qur'ān would have complained that they did not understand this Book and would have said wonderingly that the prophet is an 'Arab, but the book is a'jamiyy which is ineloquent.

قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءٌ (Say, "For those who believe, it is guidance and cure. - 44) Two attributes of The noble Qur'ān are stated here. One is that Qur'ān gives guidance – such guidance in all spheres of life as is beneficial and useful for human beings. The second attribute is that the Qur'ān is cure. That it is a cure for spiritual ailments like *kufur*, *shirk*, arrogance, jealousy, greed, etc. is quite obvious, but is also cure for bodily ailments, as has been proved by experience of treating patients through Qur'ānic prayers which has been successful.

أُولَئِكَ يُنَادُونَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ (Such people are being called from a distant place. - 44) This is a similitude. A person who understands what is being said, the Arabs say to him, أَنْتَ تَسْمَعُ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ (you are listening from a near place) and if a person does not understand the discourse, they say to him, أَنْتَ تُنَادَى مِنْ بَعِيدٍ (you are being called from a distant place) (Qurṭubī). The meaning is that since these people do not intend to listen and to understand the directions of the Qur'ān, their ears are almost deaf and their eyes are blind, therefore teaching them the Qur'ānic guidance is like calling someone from such a distant place that the voice does not reach his ears.

Verses 47 – 54

إِلَيْهِ يُرَدُّ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ۗ وَمَا تَخْرُجُ مِنْ ثَمَرَاتٍ مِّنْ أَكْمَامٍ مَّهَا وَمَا

تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنْثَىٰ وَلَا تَضَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ ۗ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ أَيْنَ شُرَكَاءِي ۗ
 قَالُوا أَدْذُكَ لَا مَا مِنَّا مِنْ شَهِيدٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ ۗ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَدْعُونَ
 مِنْ قَبْلُ وَظَنُّوا مَا لَهُمْ مِنَ مَحْيَصٍ ﴿٤٨﴾ ۗ لَا يَسْتَمُ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَاءِ
 الْخَيْرِ ۗ وَإِنَّ مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَنْوَسُ فَنُوطٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ ۗ وَلَكِنَّ أَذْقَهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنَّا
 مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّتَهُ لِيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي ۗ وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً ۗ
 وَلَكِنَّ رُجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْنَىٰ ۗ فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا ۗ وَلَنُدَبِّقْنَهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ﴿٥٠﴾ ۗ وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا
 عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَا بِجَانِبِهِ ۗ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُو دُعَاءٍ
 عَرِيضٍ ﴿٥١﴾ ۗ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ مَنْ
 أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ ۗ سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي
 أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ
 كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٥٣﴾ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْ لِّقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّهُ
 بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ ۗ

To Him alone is referred the knowledge of the Hour (the exact time of Doomsday).¹ And no fruits come out of their sheaths, nor does a female conceive a baby, nor does she deliver it, but with His knowledge. And (remember) the day He will call them (saying), "Where are My partners?" They will say, "We declare to you that no one of us is to testify (that you have partners)." [47] And lost to them will be whatever they used to invoke earlier, and they will realize that they have no

(1) It means that whenever a question is asked about the exact time when the Day of Judgment will come, the answer is to be referred to Allah Ta'ala alone, because no one except Him has the knowledge about it. The next verse has mentioned that Allah's exclusive knowledge is not restricted to the Day of Judgment. He knows every minute event that takes place in this world, like the fruits coming out of their sheaths, and the women conceiving and delivering their babies; nothing happens in this world without His knowledge.

way to escape. [48] And man⁽¹⁾ does not get weary of craving for (all sorts of) good things; and if he is touched by some evil, he is disappointed, devoid of any hope. [49] And if We give him a taste of some mercy from Us after some hardship has touched him, he is sure to say, "This is my right. And I do not think the Hour (Hereafter) is going to occur. And even if I am brought back to my Lord, I will have the best (life) with Him (too)." So, We will let the disbelievers know what they did, and let them taste a stern punishment. [50] And when We bestow Our favour upon man, he avoids (to appreciate it) and keeps himself far aside (from obedience), and when some evil touches him, he is full of broad prayers. [51] Say (to the disbelievers), " Tell me, if it (the Qur'ān) is from Allah, and still you reject it, then who can be more erroneous than him who is (involved) in far reaching schism?" [52] We will show them Our signs in the universe and within their own beings until it will become manifest to them that it is the truth. Is it not enough about your Lord that He is witness to everything? [53] Beware, they are in doubt about meeting their Lord. Beware, He is the One who encompasses everything. [54]

Commentary

فَدُو دُعَاءٍ عَرِيضٍ (he is full of broad prayers - 51.) The nature of an infidel is being stated here that when Allah Almighty bestows upon him the good things: wealth, honor and peace, the infidel gets so involved in them and so intoxicated with them that he becomes even more distant from the true Benefactor, Allah Almighty, and his pride and heedlessness increase even more. But when he faces some distress, then he starts long and lengthy supplications to Allah Almighty. Here the Qur'ān has used the word 'broad' to describe their lengthy supplications, because what is wider will automatically be longer too. That is why, when describing the span of Paradise, Allah Almighty has used the word عَرْضُهَا السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ (a paradise the width of which spans the heavens and the earth - 3: 133)

Lengthy supplications in themselves are praiseworthy and desirable as is proved by authentic *aḥādīth* about the etiquettes of supplication

(1). 'Man' here refers to a man who does not believe in Allah or in His Oneness. The purpose of the verse is to mention some evil effects that disbelief or kufr brings to the nature of a man, that is, he becomes greedy, ungrateful in his good times and totally dismayed in hardships.