

where it is mentioned that, while praying to Allah Ta‘ālā, beseeching tearfully and repeatedly is desirable. (Bukhārī and Muslim) Therefore, the denunciation of the infidel is actually not for lengthy supplications, but for his mean disposition that when Allah blesses him with His bounties, he gets intoxicated with arrogance and pride, and when he faces distress, he keeps on praying in a way of wailing and complaining about his difficulties, as is the habit of heedless people; the intent is not to supplicate, but to wail about his misfortunes and to keep on telling the people about it. (Allah knows best)

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ (We will show them Our signs in the universe and within their own beings - 53). The word ‘*Afaq*’ used in the text literally means ‘horizons’ which includes all sides of the whole universe. (That is why it is translated above as ‘universe’) In other words, if one looks at the creatures and creations of the whole universe, big and small, in the skies, on the earth and in between them, they all bear witness not only to the existence of Allah Ta‘ālā, but also to His Knowledge, His all-encompassing authority, and to His being One and unique. If one looks even nearer, at one’s own self, at each organ and limb, at the fine and fragile mechanisms and systems functioning inside him to provide ease and comfort, it simply leaves one wondering. And these fragile mechanisms and systems have been made so durable that they do not wear out even after seventy, eighty year’s use. Look at the springs inside the joints. Had they been made of steel by humans, they would have been rendered unserviceable long ago. Look at the skin of the hands and then lines made thereon that last for the whole life, and yet do not wear out. If a person of even an ordinary intellect ponders over these matters, he is bound to believe that the Creator and Sustainer of all these things is a Being who has limitless knowledge and Authority, and there simply cannot be anyone like Him.¹

Alhamdulillah
the commentary on
Sūrah Ḥāmīm As-Sajdah
ends here.

(1). The words used in the text are, “We will show them Our signs” which indicate that the the signs of Allah’s power and majesty that have been manifested to the mankind so far are not the only signs of Allah. In fact Allah Ta‘ālā will continue to show His signs, both in the universe and in man’s own creation, up to the Day of Judgment. Thus the present verse covers all the new discoveries of science that man is able to reach till the end of the universe.

Sūrah Shūrā

Sūrah Shūrā was revealed in Makkah and has 53 Verses and 5 Sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 9

حَمَّ ﴿١﴾ عَسَقَ ﴿٢﴾ كَذٰلِكَ يُوْحٰى اِلَيْكَ وَاِلَى الَّذِیْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَا
اللّٰهُ الْعَزِیْزُ الْحَكِیْمُ ﴿٣﴾ لَهٗ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِی الْاَرْضِ ط وَهُوَ
الْعَلِیُّ الْعَظِیْمُ ﴿٤﴾ تَكَادُ السَّمٰوٰتُ یَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ
یُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِنَّ وَیَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ لِمَنْ فِی الْاَرْضِ ط اِلَّا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِیْمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَالَّذِیْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ اَوْلِیَآءَ اللّٰهُ حَفِیْظٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ ط وَمَا اَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِیْلِ ﴿٦﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَوْحٰنَا اِلَيْكَ قُرْاٰنًا
عَرَبِیًّا لِتُنذِرَ اُمَّ الْقُرٰى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَتُنذِرَ یَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ لَا رِیْبَ فِیْهِ ط
فَرِیْقٌ فِی الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِیْقٌ فِی السَّعِیْرِ ﴿٧﴾ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ لَجَعَلَهُمْ اُمَّةً
وَاحِدَةً وَّلٰكِنْ یُدْخِلُ مَنْ یَّشَآءُ فِی رَحْمَتِهٖ ط وَالظَّالِمُوْنَ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ
وَلِیٍّ وَّلَا نَصِیْرٍ ﴿٨﴾ اَمْ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ اَوْلِیَآءَ ؕ فَاللّٰهُ هُوَ الْوَلِیُّ
وَهُوَ یُحِی الْمَوْتِی وَهُوَ عَلٰی كُلِّ شَیْءٍ قَدِیْرٌ ﴿٩﴾

Hā Mīm [1] ‘Ayn Sīn Qāf [2]. This is how Allah, the Mighty, the Wise, sends revelation to you and to those who were before you. [3] To him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And He is the

High, the Supreme. [4] The heavens almost burst apart from their above side, and the angels proclaim the purity and praise of their Lord, and pray for the forgiveness of those on the earth. Be aware that Allah is the Most-Forgiving, the Very-Merciful. [5] And those who have adopted patrons instead of Him, Allah is on watch against them, and you are not responsible for them. [6] And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur'ān, so that you may warn the town that is the mother of all towns, and those around it, and warn (them) of the Day of Gathering, about which there is no doubt—(when) one group of people will be in Paradise, and another group in the blazing Fire. [7] And had Allah willed, He would have made all of them a single group; but He admits whomsoever He wills into His mercy. As for the wrongdoers, they have neither a patron nor a helper. [8] Is it that they have adopted patrons instead of Him? So, it is Allah who is the Patron, and He gives life to the dead, and He is Powerful to do every thing. [9]

Commentary

(Hā Mīm 'Ayn Sīn Qāf) Only Allah knows the meaning of these letters. The gist of the first five verses is as follows:

Just as this surah was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ for the ascertainment of the religious principles and for other benefits, similarly Allah Ta'ālā, has been sending other prophets who preceded him. His Magnificence is such that whatever there is in the heavens and in the earth is His. He is the Supreme, the Most Magnificent. Even though some of the people of this world do not recognize and do not admit the greatness of His magnificence, yet the number of the angels in the heavens, who know Him and recognize His greatness, is so large that their load may, quite likely, cause the heavens to burst apart from above. A hadith narrated in Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah states that due to the large number of the angels, such crackling sounds are produced in the heavens as are produced when an excessive load is placed on something. And that is how it should be, because throughout the heavens there is not even a space of four fingers left vacant by angels who are in the state of prostration.

يَنْفَطْرُنَ (burst apart). It has been stated in the above hadith that the load of angels began producing such crackling sounds in the heavens as are produced when excessive load is placed on something. This tells us that angels have weight and this is not beyond reason, because it is

confirmed that angels also have physical bodies, even though very light in weight. And even light bodies add up to a considerable load when they are in huge numbers. (Bayān-ul-Qurān)

These angels in the heavens proclaim the perfection of their Lord and utter His praises. They also ask for forgiveness of the dwellers of this earth who do not give what is due to Allah's greatness, rather indulge in associating others with Him and in infidelity and hence become liable to suffer scourge. Their asking for forgiveness for disbelievers is for a limited period only and is a supplication that some severe worldly scourge may not befall the humans which may destroy all of them; their safety against ordinary punishments of this world and the real scourge of the Hereafter are not included in this supplication. And Allah, the Almighty accepts this supplication, and saves them from the general scourge in this world. It must be understood thoroughly that Allah and Allah alone is the forgiver and Merciful although this forgiveness of infidels is for a limited duration and is limited to this world only.

لِيُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى (So that you may warn the town that is the mother of all towns) – *Umm-ul- Qurā* (mother of all the towns) means the origin and foundation of all habitations and cities which is Makkah. This title has been given to this city because, to Allah Almighty, it is more distinguished and more excellent than all other cities, habitations and the whole earth. Imam Ahmad has narrated in Musnad, with the authority of Sayyidnā 'Adiyy Ibn Ḥamrā' Az-zuhri رضي الله عنه that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at a market of Makkah when he ﷺ was migrating from the city. He was addressing Makkah in the following words:

انك لخير ارض الله واحب ارض الله إلى ولو لا إني أخرجت منك لما خرجت

“To me, you are better and dearer than the whole of Allah's earth; if I had not been expelled from your vicinity, I would never have left it of my own accord.” (At-tirmidhī, An-Nasa'ī, Ibn Mājah – rated as 'ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ' by Tirmidhī)

وَمِنْ حَوْلِهَا – means the suburbs in the neighborhood of Makkah Mukarramah; it could mean the neighboring Arab countries as well as the whole of the earth from east to west.

Verses 10 - 12

وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۗ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبِّي عَلَيْهِ
 تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ﴿١٠﴾ فَأَطْرُسُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ
 مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا ۗ يَذُرُّكُمْ فِيهِ ۗ لَيْسَ
 كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١١﴾ لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۗ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

﴿١٢﴾

And (Say O prophet to your opponents,) "Whatever dispute you have in any matter, its judgment lies with Allah. That One is Allah, the Lord of mine; in Him alone I have placed my trust, and to Him alone I turn (in every matter)." [10] He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you pairs from among yourselves, and pairs from the cattle. He makes you expand in this way. Nothing is like Him. And He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. [11] To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth. He extends provision for whomsoever He wills and straitens (it for whomsoever He wills). Surely He is All-Knowing in respect of every thing. [12]

Commentary

وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ (Whatever dispute you have in any matter, its judgment lies with Allah. - 10) It means that the judgement in all those matters in which you dispute lies with Allah, because the sovereignty belongs to Allah only, as stated in another verse: *إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ* (The Decision belongs to none but Allah - 6:57). The direction in many verses to obey Rasūlullāh ﷺ and in some verses to obey those in authority does not contradict the above, because the orders of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and of the authorities are also, in a way, orders of Allah. If the order has been received through 'wahy' or based upon the clear and definite verses (*nuṣūṣ*) of the Qur'ān and *sunnah*, then its being an order of Allah is obvious. And if the order is an '*ijtihad*' (inference) which in turn is based upon *nusus* of Qur'ān and *sunnah*, then also, in a way, it is an order of Allah. '*Ijtihadāt*' (plural of '*ijtihad*') of the '*mujtahidīn*' of the

ummah (those who are competent to interpret the Qur'an and Sunnah, and infer Islamic laws from them) on this basis, are included in orders of Allah. That is why the learned scholars have declared that the *fatwā* (ruling) given by a 'mufti' (A competent Islamic scholar) is to be taken as a part of the religious law by the common masses who do not have the ability to understand the Qur'an and the sunnah directly.

Verses 13-15

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ ط
كَبِيرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ ط اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمْ
الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ ط وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى
لَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ط وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُورِثُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ
مُرِيبٍ ﴿١٤﴾ فَلِذَلِكَ فَادْعُ ۖ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ
أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ۖ وَقُلْ آمَنْتُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ كِتَابٍ ۖ وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ
بَيْنَكُمْ ط اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ ط لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ ط لِأُحْجَةَ
بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ ط اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا ۖ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٥﴾ ط

He has ordained for you the same religion as He had enjoined upon Nūḥ, and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We had enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Isā by saying, "Establish the religion, and be not divided therein." Arduous for the *mushriks* (polytheists) is that to which you are inviting them. Allah chooses (and pulls) toward Himself anyone He wills, and guides to Himself anyone who turns to Him (to seek guidance). [13] And they were not divided, in jealousy with each other, but after the knowledge had come to them. And had it not been for a word that had come forth earlier from your Lord (and was effective) until a specified time, the matter would have been decided between them. And those who were made to

inherit the Book after them are in confounding doubt about it. [14] So, (O prophet,) towards that (faith) invite (people), and be steadfast as you are commanded, and do not follow their desires, and say, "I believe in whatever book Allah has sent down. And I have been ordered to do justice among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our deeds, and for you, your deeds. There is no argumentation between us and you. Allah will bring us together, and to Him is the final return." [15]

Commentary

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا (He has ordained for you the same religion as He had enjoined upon Nūḥ-- 42:13) Allah Almighty's obvious and material blessings were stated in the previous verses. Stated from here are the inner and spiritual blessings. That is, He has blessed you with that very cogent and infallible religion which has been common between all the prophets ﷺ. Five of the prophets ﷺ have been mentioned in the verse. Sayyidnā Nūḥ ﷺ has been mentioned first, and our Prophet ﷺ in the end, while Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ﷺ in the middle, because he is the father of prophets and was accepted as a prophet even by Arabs, despite their *'kufr'* and *'shirk'*. Sayyidnā Mūsā and 'Īsā ﷺ have been mentioned after him, because their followers were the ones who were present when Qur'ān was being revealed. These five prophets ﷺ are also the ones named in Sūrah Aḥzāb where the covenant of the prophets given to Allah is mentioned, the difference being that the last of the Prophet ﷺ has been mentioned before Sayyidnā Nūḥ ﷺ in Sūrah Aḥzāb, whereas Sayyidnā Nūḥ ﷺ has been mentioned before our Prophet ﷺ in the present surah. Perhaps this is to indicate that although the last of the Prophets ﷺ was born and sent as a prophet after all other prophets, yet he preceded everyone else in the originally destined (*azalī*) distribution of prophethood and messengership. This has been stated in a Ḥadīth: 'I preceded all the other prophets in the original creation and I am last of all the prophets in being sent.' (Reported by Ibn Mājah, Dārimī, from Bahz Ibn Ḥakīm, and rated as *'ḥasan'*—See Mishkāh)

Now the question arises that the very first prophet is Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ, but the mention of prophets ﷺ does not commence with his name. The reason is that Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ was the first prophet to have come in this world, and although he has commonality in principles of

beliefs and important features of faith, yet during his period, no 'kufr' and 'shirk' had appeared in the people. Confrontation with 'kufr' and 'shirk' commenced with Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام, who is the first prophet to have faced such problems which were to be faced by later prophets, and as such Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام has been mentioned first. (Allah knows best).

أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ (Establish the religion, and be not divided therein. - 42:13). – This is an explanation of the preceding sentence which means that the 'dīn' (religion) which is common to all the prophets and in which all are agreed has to be established and maintained; opposing this religion or creating differences in it is not only impermissible, but also liable to a destructive end.

Establishing the Dīn is obligatory Duty and Dissension in it is forbidden

Two orders have been given in this verse – one, 'Establish the religion' and the second, 'Be not divided therein.' which forbids dissension in religion. This sentence is preceded by the word 'an' which has been translated above as, 'by saying'. As such, this is an explanation of the word, 'ordained' occurring in the beginning. Therefore the word 'dīn' (religion) in this verse means the same 'dīn' which has been common between all the prophets, and which calls for adherence to the belief in Oneness of Allah, prophethood, the life after death, and to the principles of worship as *ṣalāh*, fasting, *ḥajj* and *zakāh*; it forbids theft, robbery, adultery, telling of lies, deceit, hurting others without a valid reason, breach of promise – all these have been common injunctions between all divine religions.

On the other hand, It is also proved through an unambiguous verse of the Qur'ān *لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا* (For each of you We have made a way and a method - 5:48) that there are ancillary differences in the details of the revealed laws of different prophets عليهم السلام. In the light of all these facts taken together, it becomes clear that the order of establishing the religion and prohibition of dissension pertains to those divine laws which have been common and consistent in the codes of all the prophets عليهم السلام – It is these injunctions in which creating differences is forbidden.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه states that one day Rasūlullāh ﷺ drew a straight line in front of us, and then drew other small lines on the

right and left of the straight line and said that the lines on the right and left were the ways invented by devils, and each of those ways is controlled by a Shaiṭān (Satan) who incites people to follow that path; and then, pointing towards the straight line, he said وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ (And this my path, straight. So follow it - 6:153.) (Aḥmad, An-Nasa'ī, Dārimī – Maḥzarī)

The straight path in the above simile means the same path of true 'dīn' (religion) which has been common to all the prophets ﷺ creating diversions in it is to create differences which is forbidden and an act of Shaiṭān (Satan). Correct *aḥādīth* strictly forbid creating differences in such injunctions which are unanimously agreed. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said من فارق الجماعة شبرا فقد خلع ربة الاسلام من عنقه (Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd) meaning that the person who moves away even one span from the general body of Muslims has taken out the neck-band of Islamic beliefs from his neck. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has stated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said يَدُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْجَمَاعَةِ (Tirmidhī, with rating as 'hasan') meaning that Allah's hand is upon the general body. Sayyidnā Mu'adh Ibn Jabal ؓ has narrated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said that for humans, Shaiṭān (Satan) is like a wolf after a herd of goats, catching hold of the goat which has strayed away from the herd. Therefore you should stay with the general body, and do not separate yourself. (Aḥmad, as quoted by Tafsīr Maḥzarī)

Differences in the ancillaries between leading *Mujtahidin* is not covered by the dissension forbidden in this verse

It is obvious from the above that differences of opinions between leading '*mujtahidīn*' in ancillary matters where express injunctions are not found in the Qur'ān and *aḥādīth* or where there is an apparent contradiction between the *nusus* of the Qur'ān and *aḥādīth* and where opinions are bound to differ, do not bear any relation to the forbidden dissension. Such differences have been continuing since the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ starting with the noble companions ؓ themselves and are considered to be blessings by the jurists unanimously.

Establishing 'dīn' that has been obligated in this verse means to hold on to the rules of religion steadfastly, not to let any doubt or distrust creep into it and not to give it up in any case. (Qurṭubī)

كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ (Arduous for the *mushriks* (Polytheists) is that to which you are inviting them - 42:13). Addressing the Holy Prophet

ﷻ, the verse says, ‘Your call to the belief in Oneness of Allah, which is the foundation of the true religion, seems very difficult to the polytheists, although it has been proved to be true through the consensus of all the prophets, because they follow their desires and the teachings of the Shaiṭān (Satan), and have therefore strayed from the right path, which is prohibited as mentioned above.

اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ (Allah chooses [and pulls] towards Himself anyone He wills and guides anyone who turns to Him. - 42:13). There are only two ways for one to have the straight path. One is that Allah Almighty himself selects him for the straight path of His religion and moulds his nature and inclinations accordingly, which happens in the case of prophets and His special friends. It is about them that Qur’ān states إِنَّا أَخْلَصْنَهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذُكِّرَى الدَّارِ الْآخِرَةِ (We them chose for a trait of remembering the [eternal] Home [in the Hereafter] - 38:46). The Holy Qur’ān has used the word, ‘*mukhlaṣīn*’ for some particular prophets which means ‘chosen’. This peculiar way of guidance has been mentioned in the first sentence of the present verse which says, “اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ” “Allah chooses [and pulls] towards Himself anyone He wills.” This method of instruction is exceptional and limited. The other method which is general for getting guidance is that when someone turns towards Allah and intends to follow His ‘*dīn*’, then Allah Almighty guides him towards His ‘*dīn*’. This way of guidance is referred to in the second sentence of the verse which says, “...and guides anyone who turns to Him.” وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ

The reason why the *mushrikīn* (polytheists) of Makkah found it difficult to accept the invitation towards the faith in Oneness of Allah is that they did not even have the intention of understanding and following the truth.

وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ (And they were not divided, in jealousy with each other, but after knowledge had come to them - 42:14). Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه has explained that the pronoun ‘they’ in this sentence refers to the Quraysh of Makkah, and thus he has taken the verse to mean that the aversion of the infidels of Quraysh to the straight path was in itself a matter of utter ignorance, but on top of it they did so even after knowledge had been imparted by Allah. Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās has held the coming of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who was the source of all Divine knowledge, to be the imparting of knowledge by Allah. Some scholars,

however, have referred the pronoun 'they' towards the past *ummahs*, and held the meaning to be that the people of the bygone *ummahs* created dissension in the true faith of their respective prophets, and adopted separate ways despite their having received the knowledge of the stright path from then prophets ﷺ.

Be that as it may, the pagans of Makkah and the infidels of the early ages, both demanded that their prophets should also follow the misguidance they themselves had adopted. Therefore the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been addressed in the following verse as follows:

فَلِذَلِكَ فَادُعُ ۖ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ۖ وَقُلْ آمَنْتُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ كِتَابٍ ۖ وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمْ ۖ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ ۖ لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ ۖ لَا حِجَةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۖ اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا ۖ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

“So, (O prophet,) towards that (faith) invite (people), and be steadfast as you are commanded, and do not follow their desires, and say, “I believe in whatever book Allah has sent down. And I have been ordered to do justice among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our deeds, and for you, your deeds. There is no argumentation between us and you. Allah will bring us together, and to Him is the final return.” (42:15)

Hāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has stated that this verse comprises ten sentences, and each sentence carries a specific order. As such, ten types of precepts are stated in this one verse. No other verse in the entire Qur’ān has this peculiarity, except *‘Āyat-ul-kursiyy* which comprises ten types of precepts as well.

The first order فَلَذَلِكَ فَادُعُ (So, O Prophet, towards that faith invite people) means: ‘Although your call towards *‘tauḥīd*’ (Oneness of Allah) sits very heavy on the polytheists, it is no cause for you to give up your invitational call, and you should continue with it.

The second order وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ (and be steadfast as you are commanded) says, ‘You yourself ought to stand firm in the religion towards which you are inviting other people. This firmness has to be in accordance with the command of Allah, that is, to be on the moderate side in your beliefs, deeds, morals, habits and social behavior – there should not be even the slightest inclination towards the extremes of *ifrāt* (overdoing something) or *tafriṭ* (falling short in something). Obviously

such a firmness is not easy. That is why when some noble companions ﷺ pointed out to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that some of hairs have turned grey, he said, “Sūrah Hūd has turned me old.” This very order (of standing firm as commanded) has been given in Sūrah Hūd also in the same very words. (The meaning of standing firm, the difficulties in observing it and its importance are discussed in detail in the commentary on Sūrah Hūd on page 673 of volume 4 of Ma‘āriful Qur‘ān).

The third command وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ (do not follow their desires -) directs the Holy Prophet ﷺ not to be concerned about the opposition of any opponent in his duty of propagation.

The fourth command قُلْ آمَنْتُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ كِتَابٍ (and say “I believe in whatever book Allah has sent down”) is to announce that the Holy Prophet ﷺ believes not only in the Book that has been revealed to him, but he believes in all the former divine books.

The fifth command أُمِرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمْ (I have been ordered to do justice among you) apparently relates to doing justice in the matters of dispute brought to him. But some exegetes have taken the meaning of ‘*adl*’ to be ‘equality’ and thus have taken the sentence to mean that he should treat all the commands of religion equally by believing in all the prophets ﷺ, in all the Books and by obeying all the Divine laws without any exception.

The sixth sentence اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا is ‘Allah is our Lord and you Lord.’ which means that all of us are nourished by Allah.

The seventh sentence لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ (For us are our deeds and for you, your deeds) states that our deeds would be for us only and you would neither gain nor lose due to our deeds, and your deeds would be for you only and we would neither gain nor lose due to your deeds. Some exegetes have stated that this verse was revealed in Makkah before the command for *jihād* with non-muslims was revealed; the verses conveying the command for *jihād* have cancelled this command, because the essence of *jihād* is to subjugate those people by fighting who do not accept the advice and exhortation – not to let them remain in the state of *kufr*. And some exegetes have stated that this command has not been cancelled; what it means is that since the truth has been proved through logical arguments, its non-acceptance can only be due to enmity and obstinacy,

and as such, everybody is responsible for his own deeds . (Qurtubī)

The eight command لَا حِجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُم (there is no argumentations between us and you -) is that since the disbelievers do not accept the truth, despite its having been proved, which demonstrates their enmity, therefore, further discussion is useless and now there would be no more arguments between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the disbelievers.

The ninth sentence اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا (Allah will bring us together -) states that on the Day of Judgment, Allah Almighty would gather all of us together and would requite every deed.

The tenth declaration وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ (and to Him is the final return -) is that all of us would return to Him.

Verses 16 – 18

وَالَّذِينَ يُحَاجُّونَ فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا اسْتُجِيبَ لَهُ حُجَّتُهُمْ دَاحِضَةٌ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ﴿١٦﴾ اللَّهُ الَّذِي
أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيزَانَ ط وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ قَرِيبٌ
﴿١٧﴾ يَسْتَعْجِلُ بِهَا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهَا ۗ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مُشْفِقُونَ
مِنْهَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهَا الْحَقُّ ط إِلَّا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُمَارُونَ فِي السَّاعَةِ لَفِي
ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿١٨﴾

And those who argue about Allah after He has been responded to¹, their argument is void in the sight of their Lord, and upon them is wrath, and for them is a severe punishment. [16] Allah is the One who has sent down the Book with truth, and the Balance as well. And what can let you know? May be, the Hour is near. [17] Those who do not believe in it demand for its coming soon, and those who believe are fearful of it, and know it to be a truth. Be aware that those who dispute concerning the Hour are wandering afar from the right path. [18]

[1]. i.e. after many people responded to the call of His prophets by accepting Islam.

Commentary

In the previous verses, all the people of the whole world had been invited towards the original 'dīn' (religion) common between all the revealed Books and between all the prophets ﷺ, and were advised to be faithful to it and be steadfast in it. But some infidels, who had no intention of listening and accepting, started arguing with the Muslims, even at this invitation. Some narrations have it that some people of the Book, the Jews and the Christians, put forward the argument that our prophet came before yours and our Book was given before yours, hence our religion is superior to yours. And some narrations have it that this very argument was put forward by the infidels of Quraysh, because they called themselves followers of the religion of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام.

The Noble Qur'ān has warned these people that the explanations and proofs in favour of Islam and Qur'ān have been fully provided to you, and your own sensible and fair minded people, having accepted them, have embraced Islam, and now their argumentation is nothing but falsehood and misguidance. If they do not accept it, then divine punishment will visit them. This warning is followed by the statement that the Qur'ān is from Allah and contains comprehensive commandments regarding Allah's rights and the rights of the human beings between one another. This fact is stated in the next sentence, "أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيزَانَ" has sent down the Book with truth and the Balance as well - 17." Here 'the Book' means the Qur'ān, and all the previous revealed Books, and 'truth' means the divine religion mentioned above, and 'the Balance' literally means a weighing balance. Since it is an instrument of weighing one's due and establishing justice, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has taken it to mean 'equity' and 'justice'. Mujāhid رضي الله عنه a leading exegete, has said that here the 'Balance' means full payment of everyone's rights and doing justice. As such the word 'truth' points towards Allah's rights over His servants, and the word مِيزَانَ *mīzān* (Balance) points towards the rights of human beings over one another.

The statement that those who believe are fearful of the Doomsday means the fear generated due to cognizance of the awesome horrifying happenings which will take place on the Doomsday, and also due to cognizance of one's own short comings and wrong-doings. However, sometimes a believer's eagerness to meet his Lord Allah Almighty overcomes that fear, which does not contradict this statement; some dead

ones are proved to have said in their graves that they wish Doomsday would come soon because the glad tidings given by angels that they would be forgiven and treated kindly, had overcome the fear of Doomsday.

Verses 19 - 20

اللَّهُ لَطِيفٌ بِعِبَادِهِ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَهُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ ﴿١٩﴾ مَنْ
 كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ
 الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا ۗ وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

Allah is kind to His slaves. He gives provision to whom He wills. And He is the Strong, the Mighty. [19] Whoever intends (to have) the harvest of the Hereafter, We will increase in his harvest; and whoever intends (to have) the harvest of the world (only), We will give him thereof, while in the Hereafter there is no share for him. [20]

Commentary

اللَّهُ لَطِيفٌ بِعِبَادِهِ (Allah is kind to His slaves - 42:19). The word, *latīf* used in the text has more than one lexical meanings. Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه has translated it here as kind, and Sayyidnā ‘Ikrimah رضي الله عنه has translated it as benefactor.

Muqātil رضي الله عنه has said that Allah Almighty is kind to all His servants, so much so that even the infidels and sinners keep on being showered with His worldly blessings. There are many types and kinds of the divine bounties, graces and favours showered upon His servants. That is why many meanings of the word *latīf* have been stated in the Tafsīr of Qurṭubī, all of which are covered by the words ‘kind’ and ‘benefactor’.

Although Allah Ta‘ālā provides sustenance to all His creatures without any exception – even to those animals on land and in waters whom nobody knows, yet the present verse states that He provides sustenance ‘to whom He wills’. This is better understood from the explanation given in Tafsīr Maḥzarī which says that there are countless types and kinds of sustenance provided by Allah Ta‘ālā; sustenance as necessary is provided to all and sundry, whereas some special kinds of

sustenance are distributed by Him in degrees and quantities determined by His perfect wisdom. Somebody is given more of wealth and goods, somebody is given more of health and strength, somebody is given more of learning and knowledge and somebody is given more of other types and kinds; in this way everybody is dependent on another person and it is this dependence which persuades people to co-operate with and help each other and which is the foundation of human civilization.

Ja'far Ibn Muḥammad رحمه الله تعالى has said that Allah Ta'ālā's kindness to His servants in the matter of sustenance is in two ways. Firstly, He provides food and other necessities to every living being as per his needs, and secondly, He does not provide sustenance for anyone for the whole of his life all at once, rather gives him gradually according to his need, otherwise its preservation would not have been feasible. (Maḥzarī, Qurṭubī)

Note

Shāh 'Abdul Ghani Phūlpūrī رحمه الله تعالى relates from Ḥāji Imdādullah رحمه الله تعالى that anyone who recites the above verse i.e. اللَّهُ لَطِيفٌ بِعِبَادِهِ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَهُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ seventy times every morning regularly, would be preserved from shortage of sustenance and said that experience has shown it to be very effective.

Verses 21 – 23

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَوًا شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنْ بِهِ اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا
كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾
تَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَهُوَ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي رَوْضَاتِ الْجَنَّاتِ ۗ لَهُمْ مَائِشَاءٌ وَنَعْنَعٌ
رَبِّهِمْ ۗ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٢٢﴾ ذَلِكَ الَّذِي يُبَشِّرُ اللَّهَ عِبَادَهُ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ۗ قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا
الْمُؤَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ ۗ وَمَنْ يَقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهُ فِيهَا حُسْنًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

Is it that they have associate-gods who have prescribed for them a religion that is not sanctioned by Allah? And, had it not been for a decisive word, the matter would have been decided between them (here in this world). And of course, for the wrongdoer there is a painful punishment (in the Hereafter). [21] You will see the wrongdoers fearful of what they earned, and (the punishment) it (entails) is sure to befall them. As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, they will be in meadows of the Gardens. For them there is, with their Lord, whatever they wish. That is the great bounty. [22] That is the good news that Allah gives to His slaves who believed and did righteous deeds. Say, "I do not ask you any fee for it, except the love of kinship." And whoever performs a good act, for him We will increase goodness therein. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very Appreciative. [23]

Commentary

قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَى (Say, "I do not ask you any fee for it, except the love of kinship - 42:23). The explanation of this verse that has been adopted by most of the exegetes is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been directed to say the following to the infidels of Quraish, "My real right over all of you is that I am the Messenger of Allah, and you should admit it and obey me for your reformation and betterment; but even if you do not accept my prophethood and messengership, there is still one more right I have over you which you cannot deny; and that is the right of relationship which I have with most of your tribes. You also do not deny the right of relatives and the need of behaving kindly towards them. Therefore, I am not asking you for any compensation for my preaching; all I want is that you should consider my right of being you relative, and refrain from animosity and hostility, irrespective of whether you accept what I am saying or you do not."

Now it is obvious that consideration of the rights of kinship was their own obligation, and could not be taken as compensation for preaching services. Hence the use of the word 'except' in this verse is in its idiomatic sense meaning that although, in reality, it is no compensation, and if you consider it to be so, it is your own mistake. In fact, I do not charge any fee at all. However, I ask you to refrain from the hostile behavior, and to fulfill the rights of kinship which you should do any way.

This explanation of this verse is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim; Mujāhid, Qatādah and a very large group of leading exegetes have also adopted this explanation. All prophets الأنبياء in every age have openly told their people that they never asked any compensation or payment in lieu of the efforts that they were making for their betterment and well-being; Their compensation would be given by Allah Almighty only. This being so, how could the chief of all the prophets الأنبياء, who is the most honoured and exalted of all of them, ask for compensation from his people.

Sa‘īd Ibn Manṣūr, Ibn Sa‘d, ‘Abd Ibn Ḥumaid, Ḥākim and Baihaqī have related an incident of Imām Sha‘bī, which has been certified by Ḥākim to be correct, that Imām Sha‘bī was questioned by people regarding the explanation of this verse, and thereupon he wrote to Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه for the correct explanation. The reply he got was the same as explained above. Those interested may consult Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī for the full text of the reply given by Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه. Some words of his reply are added in the report of Ibn Jarīr which may be found in the same book.

There is, however, another narration reported with a weak chain of reporters, according to which Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه says that when this verse was revealed, people asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ as to who are his kinsfolk, and he replied that Sayyidnā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, Sayyidah Fāṭimah رضي الله عنها and their offspring’s. The authenticity of this narration has been considered weak by Suyūṭī in Ad-Dur-ul-Manthūr and by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar in Takhrīj of the Aḥādīth of Kashshāf. According to this narration, the meaning would be that the only compensation the Holy Prophet ﷺ asks from the ummah for his services is that they should take care of his progeny. Obviously, this proposition does not befit the high stature of prophets الأنبياء, and specially that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Therefore the correct and preferred explanation which is generally favoured by the ummah is the one given above. But the Shi‘ites have not only adopted this doubtful narration, but have also made up a huge stock of baseless presumptions on its basis.

Respect and Love for the Holy Prophet’s ﷺ family and progeny

The explanation given above is to clarify that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not ask his people to respect and love his progeny in exchange of his

services. But it does not mean that the respect and love for the Holy Prophet's ﷺ progeny has no importance. Only an ill-fated, misguided person can think of such a thing. The fact is that one's being a Muslim depends on having reverence and love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ much more than any other person in the whole universe. Naturally, the logical consequence of this reverence and love is to have reverence and love for his close relatives according to the degree of their closeness to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which is obligatory for every Muslim. Since one's children are the closest relations, hence the reverence and love for the children of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is undoubtedly a necessary element of faith. But it does not mean that one should ignore or forget the pure wives رضى الله عنهن اجمعين or other noble Companions ﷺ who had manifold associations, closeness and relationships with the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The gist is that love for the progeny and for the family members of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has never been a matter of controversy in the ummah. It has been taken by the entire ummah unanimously as an essential requirement of faith. Controversies arise when the reverence of others is attacked, otherwise reverence and love for even common descendants of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, known as *sādat*, no matter how distantly related to him, is an honour for a Muslim and is a source of reward in the Hereafter. Since many people started neglecting it, Imām Shāfi'ī رحمه الله تعالى denounced this attitude in a few couplets reproduced below:

ياراكباً قف بالمحصب من منى واهتف بساكن خيفها والناهض
سحراً إذا فاض الحجيج الى منى فيضاً كملتطم الفرات الفاض
إن كان رفضاً حُبُّ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ فليشهد الثقلان انى رافضى

“O rider! Halt near the valley of Muḥaṣṣab in Minā, and when the sea of Ḥajj pilgrims advances in quick waves towards Minā in the morning, announce to every passer-by and inhabitant of the area that if only the love of the progeny of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is *rifd* (extreme Shi'ism), then I ask all the jins and humans of this universe to witness that I am also a *rāfiḍī* (staunch Shi'ah)”

This statement of Imām Shāfi'ī, in fact, is the standpoint of the whole ummah.

Verses 24 - 26

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا فَإِنْ يَشِإِ اللَّهُ يَخْتِمْ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ ط
 وَيَمْحُ اللَّهُ الْبَاطِلَ وَيُحِقُّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ ط إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ
 ﴿٢٤﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَعْفُو عَنِ السَّيِّئَاتِ
 وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَيَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
 وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ط وَالْكَافِرُونَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

Is it that they say, "He has forged a lie against Allah"? So, if Allah wills, He may put a seal on your heart.¹ And Allah blots out falsehood and establishes truth with His words. Surely, He is fully aware of what lies in the hearts. [24] And He is the One who accepts repentance from His slaves, and forgives evil deeds, and knows whatever you do. [25] And He responds to (the prayer of) those who believe and do righteous deeds, and gives them more out of His grace. As for the disbelievers, for them there is a severe punishment. [26]

Commentary

The first verse conveys Allah Almighty's reply to those who held the prophethood and messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to be false, the Qur'an to be wrong and forged. The the reply is based on a divine rule that miracles or events occurring against normal course which cannot be performed by ordinary human beings are created and shown through prophets, by Allah Almighty's Grace, to prove their prophethood, without any discretion of the prophets themselves.

Although some magicians also do perform such magical tricks, but obviously neither the prophets nor the magicians can perform any of these things without Allah Almighty's intent and scheme. He allows the magicians to perform their tricks as a measure of test and trial. However,

1. It means that the miraculous Qur'an recited by the unlettered Prophet ﷺ is in itself a clear proof of its being revealed by Allah Ta'ālā. Allah's practice is such that if a person falsely claims to be a prophet, He does not let him show any miracle. Therefore, had there been, God forbid, something forged by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the Qur'an, Allah would have put a seal on his heart, and he would have never been able to come up with such a miraculous discourse.

to differentiate between magic and miracle and between a magician and a prophet, the rule devised by Him is that no false claimant of prophethood can perform any magical trick successfully; magical tricks can be performed successfully by one until he claims prophethood, but the magic vanishes as soon as one lays a false claim of prophethood.

When Allah Ta‘ālā bestows prophethood and messengership on anyone, He also favours him with miracles and makes those miracles highly visible. Thus He provides physical and decreed proof of his prophethood. And He also confirms him in His Divine Book.

In view of this rule, it should be understood that the Noble Qur‘ān is such a miracle that all the humans and all the jins of this world are unable to produce even one verse comparable to the verse of the Qur‘ān. Their inability to do so was proved in the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and continues till today. Such an open and obvious miracle cannot be accomplished by a false claimant of prophethood. The Holy Prophet’s claim to ‘wahy’ and messengership is, therefore, correct and true, and those who hold it to be incorrect and forged are misguided calumniators.

The deniers and opponents have been advised in the second verse that there is still time to give up and renounce their disbelief and ‘kufr’. Allah is very merciful and Most Beneficent; He accepts the repentance of those who truly repent, and forgives their sins.

The Reality of ‘Taubah’ (Repentance)

The literal meaning of ‘taubah’ is to return and turn to; in religious terminology, giving up and renunciation of any sin is called ‘taubah’. There are three conditions for its being proper and genuine.

One is to give up, immediately, the sin one is involved in. The second is to repent for the past sin, and the third is to determine firmly not to commit it in future. If it pertains to neglect of any obligatory duty (*farḍ*), one has to start observing it or start offering ‘*qaḍā*’ (prescribed compensation). If it relates to the rights of another person and if that right is monetary or material and the concerned person is alive, then the material or money has to be returned to him, unless he agrees to forgo, and if that person is not alive, but his heirs are available, then the material or money has to be returned to the heirs; if the heirs are also not available, then the material or money has to be deposited in the Islamic

public treasury (*bait-ul-māl*) – if there is no public treasury, or it is not managed properly, then the material or money has to be given as alms on his behalf. If the right owed to another person is not monetary or material, for example, if another person has been distressed unduly, or he has been abused or his backbiting has been committed, then he has to be pleased and forgiveness has to be sought and obtained from him or her.

It is important to note that for all kinds of 'taubah', giving up of sin must be for the sake of Allah, and not due to any physical inability or weakness. The 'Shari'ah' demands that one ought to renounce all the sins, but if someone renounces only a particular sin, Ahl-us-Sunnah hold that that particular sin would be forgiven, whereas his liability for other sins would continue.

Verses 27 – 35

وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ يُنَزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ
 مَا يَشَاءُ ۗ إِنَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ
 بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُ ۗ وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ
 خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَثَّ فِيهِمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ ۗ وَهُوَ عَلَى
 جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ
 أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ
 وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ الْجَوَارِ
 فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ ﴿٣٢﴾ إِنْ يَشَأْ يُسْكِنِ الرِّيحَ فَيَظْلَلْنَ رَوَاكِدَ
 عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ أَوْ يُوقِفَهُنَّ
 بِمَا كَسَبْنَ وَيَعْفُ عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي
 الْيَتْنِ مَالَهُمْ مِنْ مَّحِيصٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

And should Allah expand the provision for His slaves (to its full extent), they would spread mischief on earth; but He sends down what He wills in (due) measure.

Surely, with regard to His slaves, He is All-Aware, Ever-Watchful. [27] And He is the One who sends down rain after they have lost hope, and He extends His mercy. And He is the Guardian, Worthy of all praise. [28] And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and of the creatures He has spread in them. And He is Powerful to assemble them whenever He so wills. [29] And whatever hardship befalls you is because of what your own hands have committed, while He overlooks many (of your faults). [30] And you are not able to frustrate (Him) in the earth. And, besides Allah, you have neither someone to protect, nor someone to help. [31] And among His signs are ships in the sea, like mountains. [32] If He wills, He may stop the wind, so they will stand still on its back. Surely in this, there are signs for everyone who is ever patient, fully grateful. [33] Or He may destroy them because of what they earned, and may overlook many, [34] and (in such an event) those who raise disputes in Our verses will come to know that there is no way for them to escape. [35]

Commentary

Sequence and background of Revelation

In these verses, Allah Almighty has given the proof of His Oneness by pointing out to the perfection of His Wisdom through which He has tied up the whole universe with a stable system, which is surely being supervised by a Being who is All-Wise and All-Aware.

Allah Almighty has opened this subject by pointing towards the economic system which He, in His Wisdom, has established in this world. This subject bears a relationship with the previous verses wherein it had been stated that Allah Almighty accepts the worships of the believers which includes acceptance of their supplications as well. Here one could get perplexed by the frequent observation that a Muslim supplicates for some worldly need, but his objective is not met; this doubt has been removed in the first of the above verses. The gist of the clarification is that sometimes fulfillment of one's all desires is neither in his own interest nor in the interest of his society. As such, if any supplication of anyone at any time has apparently not been accepted, it would be for the sake of greater well-being of the universe which nobody knows, except the All-knowing, All-wise Creator. If every human being of this world is given every kind

of sustenance and every kind of blessings, this system of the world just cannot be managed wisely. (Tafsīr Kabīr)

Some narrations also corroborate that this verse was revealed about those Muslims who used to wish that they also should get the same wealth and opulence as was available to the infidels. Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى has reproduced the statement of Sayyidnā Khabbāb Ibn 'Aratt ؓ that when they saw the wealth and opulence of Banū Quraizah, Banū Naḍīr and Banū Qainuqā' (the Jewish tribes), the desire to have such affluence welled up in their hearts also, and thereafter this verse was revealed. And Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn Ḥārith ؓ states that some of the companions of Ṣuffah had expressed their desire to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that Allah Almighty may make them wealthy and this verse was revealed thereafter. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, etc.)

General Abundance of Wealth in the World is cause of Tumult

However, this verse states that had every kind of sustenance and every kind of blessing been provided abundantly to every individual of this world, the discord and dispute between one another would have crossed all limits, because due to abundance of wealth, nobody would be in need of another person, nor would one be subdued by another. On the other hand, one attribute of wealth is that greed and inordinate desire also increase with the increase in wealth. It would necessarily have resulted in the common use of force to get possession of another person's property, hence disputes and fights, rebellion and other misdeeds would have crossed all limits. That is why Allah Ta'ālā, instead of providing everybody with every kind of sustenance and every kind of blessing, has distributed his blessings in such a way that somebody has abundance of riches and wealth, another person is healthier and stronger than others, yet another person is more comely and beautiful than others, and yet another has surpassed others in knowledge and wisdom. In short, everybody is dependent on others for one thing or another, and it is this inter-dependence which is the foundation of civilization.

This is the meaning of وَلَكِنْ يُنَزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَّا يَشَاءُ (but He sends down what He wills in (due) measure - 42:27) It means that Allah has bestowed His blessings upon the people of this world in a special way. And by stating further on إِنَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ (Surely, with regard to His slaves, He is All-Aware, Ever-watchful - 42:27) it has been indicated that Allah

Almighty knows very well what is good for a person and what is harmful. Accordingly, He has provided everybody with what is good for him, and if He has deprived somebody of anything, it is because of his and the whole world's welfare. It is not at all necessary that we should understand the underlying wisdom and welfare behind the decision about every individual, because everyone thinks on the basis of his limited knowledge, whereas Allah Almighty is looking at the whole world. Therefore it is simply not possible to gauge all of His Wisdom. A perceivable parallel would be the case of an honest head of state who has passed certain orders which happen to affect some people adversely, and these people naturally face problems. Now a person who has been so affected adversely is quite likely to feel bad about those orders of the head of the state, because his thinking is limited to his own interest. But a person who is looking at the circumstances of the whole state and the whole nation and who appreciates that the whole state cannot be sacrificed for the sake of one individual's interest, does not consider such a step to be bad. Then how is it possible to gauge the Wisdom of the Being who is managing the system of the whole universe? If this point is kept in mind, the confusion and perplexity generated by the sight of anyone surrounded by tribulation would disappear by itself.

This verse also tells us that distribution of wealth and goods equally to all the people of the world is neither possible, nor desirable nor is it required for the existence of the system of the universe. This issue will be discussed in detail in explanation of the verse نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ (43:32) of surah Zukhruf.

The Difference between Paradise and the World

Here a question may arise that all kinds of blessings will be provided in abundance to all human beings in Paradise, so why would it not cause mischief there? And the answer is that the cause of mischief in this world is the abundance of wealth and goods coupled with greed and inordinate desire to have more and more which keeps on increasing with wealth. But greed and inordinate desire would simply not be there in Paradise, although blessings and delights will keep on being showered. And that is why this mischief would not surface there.

The question why could not greed and inordinate desire be removed and wealth and goods be provided in abundance in this world as well, is

quite irrelevant. The very purpose of creating this world is to have co-existence of good and evil. It is simply not possible without it to arrange trial of human beings which is the real purpose of creation of the universe. Therefore, the real purpose of creating this universe would have failed, if greed and desire had been removed altogether from human beings. Paradise, on the other hand, would comprise goodness only, therefore, such base emotions will simply not be there.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا (And He is the One who sends down rain after they have lost hope - 42:28)". It is usual for Allah Almighty to send down rain whenever the earth is in severe need of water. But by saying "after they have lost hope", attention is being drawn towards the fact that sometimes Allah Almighty, in deviation from His usual norm, delays sending down rain so much that people begin losing hope. Apart from trial, such a happening is to warn that rain and famine are all in the power of Allah Ta'ālā; whenever He wants, He stops rain because of people's misdeeds, etc., so that people turn their attention towards His kindness, and display their humility and dependence. If rains had been subject to a strict time-table without any deviation, people would have considered rains to be purely subject to apparent causes, and would have become inattentive to Allah's Almighty's power. Here losing hope means losing hope in their contrivances because disappointment with Allah's kindness is *kufr* (infidelity).

وَمَا بَثَّ فِيهِمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ (and the creatures He has spread in them - 29). The original lexical meaning of دَابَّةٌ 'dābbah' (used in the text and translated as 'creatures') is anything which moves about of its own will; later on this word began to be used for animals. This verse states that Allah Almighty has created many creatures which move about on the earth as well as in the sky. The creatures which move about on the earth are all too visible; the ones which move about in the sky could well be the angels as well, and it is quite possible that there may be some animals in the sky so far unknown to man.

Briefly, in view of the system of the universe, Allah Almighty has not provided every one with wealth and goods in abundance, rather He has distributed them in accordance with the dictates of wisdom. But the good things of universe which are of general benefit have been provided to everyone. Rain, clouds, earth, sky and the creatures therein have all been

created for the benefit of human beings, and they all demonstrate the Oneness of Allah. If after all this, anyone suffers any hardship, he should consider it to be due to his own deeds, and he should do a little heart searching, instead of complaining against Allah Ta'ālā.

(And whatever hardship befalls you is because of what your own hands have committed, while He overlooks many [of your faults]... 42:30) means exactly the same. Sayyidnā Ḥasan رضي الله عنه has narrated that when this verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said "I swear by the Being Who holds my life, that anyone who gets scratched by a piece of wood, or his nerve shivers or his step falters is all due to his sins, and Allah Ta'ālā does not punish for every sin, rather the number of sins He overlooks far exceeds those for which any punishment is given." Maulānā Ashraf Alī Thānavī رحمه الله تعالى has stated that just as the physical hardships and tortures befall due to sins, the inner ailments are also caused by sins. One sin committed by a person becomes the cause for getting involved in other sins. Ḥāfīz Ibn Qayyim has written in his book *Ad-Dawā-'ush- Shāfī* that one prompt punishment of a sin is that one gets involved in other sins; similarly the prompt reward of a virtuous deed is that it attracts another virtue. Baiḍāwī and others have stated that this verse is specifically meant for those people who are likely to commit sins. The hardships and the troubles that befall prophets who are innocent of sins, children who have not reached the age of puberty and mad persons, who do not commit any sin, are not covered by this verse. There are other reasons for them, for example, they are upgraded in their rewards. And in reality a man cannot fathom the depths of wisdom behind them. (Allah knows best)

It is proved from some narrations of Ḥadīth, as reproduced by Ḥākim in *Mustadrak* and by Baghawī on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه that those sins for which punishment is given in this world are forgiven for Muslims in the Hereafter. (Mazharī)

Verses 36 – 43

فَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ
وَأَبْقَى لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ

كَثِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشِ وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُواهُمْ يَغْفِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
 اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا
 رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ
 ﴿٣٩﴾ وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِثْلُهَا ۚ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ
 إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَلَمَنْ انتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ مَا
 عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ ﴿٤١﴾ إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ
 وَيَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۗ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾
 وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٤٣﴾

So, whatever thing has been given to you is an enjoyment of the worldly life. And that which is with Allah is much better, and much more durable for those who believe and place their trust in Allah, [36] and (for) those who abstain from the major sins and from shameless acts; and (for those who) when they get angry, they forgive, [37] and those who have responded to their Lord (in submission to Him), and have established salah, and whose affairs are (settled) with consultation between them, and who spend out of what We have given to them, [38] and those who, when they are subjected to aggression, defend themselves. [39] And the recompense of evil is evil like it. Then the one who forgives and compromises has his reward undertaken by Allah. Surely, He does not like the unjust. [40]

And the one who defends himself after having been wronged, there is no blame on such people. [41] Blame, in fact, is upon those who wrong people and make mischief on earth unjustly. For such people there is a painful punishment. [42] And if one observes patience and forgives, it is, of course, one of the courageous conducts. [43]

Commentary

The above verses state the imperfection and temporary nature of the blessings of this world, as against the perfection and permanence of the blessings of the Hereafter. The most important and major condition for

obtaining the heavenly blessings in the Hereafter is faith and belief, without which nobody can get them. However, if in addition to faith, one has taken full care of virtuous deeds as well, then one will get the heavenly blessings right from the beginning, otherwise one would get them after being punished for one's sins and shortcomings. That is why the first condition stated in the above verses is belief referred to by the words, "those who believe". Then those particular deeds have been stated without which, according to the rule, the bounties of the Hereafter will not be obtained from the beginning, but after having been punished for one's sins. The rule is there for application in general, but if Allah Ta'ālā wills, He may forgive all the sins of the greatest of the sinners, and give him the blessings of the Hereafter right from the beginning, He is not subject to any rule or code. Now, let us look at those particular virtues and deeds which have been mentioned with such an importance.

First virtue: عَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ (and place their trust in Allah - 36,) meaning those who place their trust in Allah, under all circumstances, in all matters; they do not consider anyone else to be the real cause of any thing.

Second virtue: الَّذِينَ يَحْتَنِبُونَ كَثِيرَ الْأَلِيمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشِ (those who abstain from the major sins and from shameless acts - 37). What are major sins? Details have already been stated in the commentary of Sūrah Nisā'; the author has also given a complete list of major and minor sins in his booklet in Urdu published under the little of "Gunah-e- bay ladhdat (گناہ ے لذت)".

The wisdom behind specially mentioning shameless acts, apart from all the other major sins, is that they are not only graver, but also infectious in that they influence others also. Shameless acts include adultery and the acts that precede it as preludes, and those bad deeds which are committed brazenly in public, because they corrupt the whole society and their liability is also very severe.

Third virtue: وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ يَغْفِرُونَ (and when they get angry, they forgive - 37.) This is a moral quality of the highest order, because when love and anger prevail upon someone, they make him blind and deaf, and he loses his ability to distinguish right from wrong, and true from false, rather, he cannot appreciate the results of his own actions. The one who is angry tries his utmost to vent his anger fully upon the one with

whom he is angry. That is why Allah Ta'ālā has defined this quality of Mu'mins and virtuous persons that when they are angry, they not only maintain the limits of right and wrong, but also forgo their justified rights.

Fourth virtue: وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ (and those who have responded to their Lord [in submission to Him] and have established Ṣalāh - 38). 'Responding to the Lord' means to accept Allah's orders immediately, without questioning them, and get ready to obey them, irrespective of whether the order is or is not according to one's liking. This includes carrying out all the obligatory duties and avoiding all the things considered unlawful and undesirable in Islam. But ṣalāh being the most important of all the obligations, and having the quality of enabling discharge of other duties and avoidance of unlawful things, has been mentioned prominently.

The fifth virtue: وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ (whose affairs are settled with consultation between them - 38). The sense is that in all important affairs where the Shari'ah is silent, they they consult each other. 'Affairs' have been qualified by us with the word 'important', because the word 'Amr' used in the text signifies importance in common usage. It has been clarified in the explanation of the verse (وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ) And consult them in the matter - 3:159) of sūrah 'Āl-'Imrān that important affairs include affairs of the state as well as important affairs in general. Ibn Kathīr has stated that consultation in the important affairs of the state is compulsory. The selection of the head of the state through consultation, ordained by Islam, brought to an end the autocratic rule of kings of the days of ignorance who used to take the state as an inherited estate. As such, Islam laid the foundation of real democracy by ending autocracy. But Islam, unlike western democracies, has not given total authority to the public. There are certain restrictions on the members of the advisory body. So the system of government in Islam is a very moderate one, quite apart from autocracy and western democracy. Please see details in the second volume of Ma'arifulQur'an from page 227 to 238.

Imām Jaṣṣāṣ has stated in Aḥkām-ul-Qur'an that this verse has made the importance of consultation evident, and we are under orders to consult wise and far sighted people for taking action in important matters requiring advice, and not to act hurriedly relying only on ourselves.

Importance of consultation and its process

Khaṭīb Baghdādī has narrated the following statement of Sayyidnā ‘Alī عليه السلام “I asked the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that if, after you we face a situation about which neither the Qur’ān has any specific ruling, nor have you given any direction, how should we proceed?” The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم replied by saying,

اجمعوا له العابدين من امتي واجعلوه بينكم شورى ولا تقضوا برأى واحد

“In such a case, assemble *‘ābidīn* (the worshipping people) of my ummah, and decide the matter by mutual consultation; do not take decision on any individual’s single opinion.” (Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī, referring to Khaṭīb)

In some versions of this narration, the word ‘*fuqahā*’ (jurists) also appears along with *‘ābidīn* (the worshipping people) which means that the jurists who have understanding of the religion and worshipers are the ones who should be consulted.

The author of Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī has stated that if the above process is not followed in consultation, rather irreligious people and people without proper knowledge of religion are consulted, the ill effects would prevail upon the good in their advice.

Baihaqī رحمه الله تعالى has narrated in Shu‘ab-ul-‘Imān from Sayyidnā Ibn Umar عليه السلام that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said, “Anyone who intends to do something, and he takes that action after consultation, Allah Ta‘ālā would guide him towards the best possible option.” It means that He will turn that person’s direction towards an option that results in his betterment. A similar *ḥadīth* reported by Sayyidnā Ḥasan عليه السلام has been reproduced by Bukhārī in Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad, and by ‘Abd Ibn Ḥumaid in his Musnad that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, after reciting the above verse, said:

ما تشاور قوم قط الا هتدوا لأرشد أمرهم

“When a nation takes an action after mutual consultation, it is surely guided towards the correct course.”

As reported in a hadith, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “So far as your rulers are the best among you, your rich people are generous (enough to spend in the way of Allah and on poor people) and your affairs are

decided through mutual consultation, then the back of the earth would be better for you than its belly (i.e. the life would be better than death) but when your rulers are the worst from among you, your rich people are misers and your affairs are given in the charge of women, then the belly of the earth will be better for you than its back (i.e. death will be better than life). (Rūḥ-ul-Maʿānī)

Sixth virtue:- وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ (who spend out of what We have given to them - 38) It refers to spending for virtuous deeds, such as *zakāh*, obligatory and optional alms. Qurʿān usually mentions *zakāh* and *ṣadaqāt* (alms) immediately after *ṣalāh*. But the mention of mutual consultation immediately after *ṣalāh* and the mention of *Zakāh* after it is perhaps to attract attention to the possibility of utilizing the five times daily *ṣalāh* congregation in mosques for the purpose of consultation also in matters which require mutual consultation. (Ruh-ul-Maʿani)

Seventh virtue:- وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ (and those who, when they are subjected to aggression, defend themselves - 39.) The original word used in the text is '*yantaṣirūn*' which may be translated as 'defend themselves' and also as 'retaliate'. In the latter case, retaliation must be equal, and should in no case exceed the limit of equality. This quality, in reality, is a further elaboration of the third virtue, i.e. forgiving the opponents. It means that though forgiveness is a good quality, yet one may face certain situations where the mischief gets a fillip if one forgives, and hence it is better to take revenge in those situations. This verse has defined the rule that in those situations where taking revenge is the more suitable option, one has to take care that one does not exceed the equalizing limit, otherwise he will become unjust and transgressor. That is why this verse is followed by the verse 40, وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِثْلُهَا (and the recompense of evil is evil like it.) which lays down the equitable rule of retaliation that one may cause just as much physical or monetary harm to his opponent as he has received from him; but the condition is that causing that harm is not a sin in itself. For example, if someone has been forced by another to take an alcoholic drink, it would not be permissible for him to force the other person to take an alcoholic drink.

Although permission has been given in this verse to take revenge in equal measure, but immediately thereafter it is emphasized again that **فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ** "the one who forgives and compromises has his reward

undertaken by Allah. - 40” The instruction is that to forgive is better. More details are given in the later two verses.

The Moderate decision between forgiveness and revenge

Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī رحمه الله تعالى has stated that former virtuous elders did not like that Muslims are disgraced and debased by the sinners and oppressors who, if not taken to task, may be encouraged to their further wrongdoings. Therefore, where it is apprehended that the sinners and oppressors would become more daring and would harass the decent people if they are forgiven, then it is better to take revenge from them. And to forgive would be better in case the transgressor is repentant, and there is no apprehension of his becoming more daring. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn-ul-'Arabī in Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān and Qurṭubī in his Tafsīr have concurred to the view that forgiveness and revenge are applicable as suitable, in different situations,. For one who is repentant after having transgressed, it is better to forgive and for one who is stubborn and insistent upon transgression, it is better to take revenge.

Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī رحمه الله تعالى has, however, explained the issue in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān from a little different angle. He says that Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned two qualities particular to the true, sincere and virtuous Muslims in both the verses. The verse emphasizing on forgiveness tells us that they are not overcome by anger, rather kindness and generosity remains dominant in their temperament because of which they forgive the ones who commit excess against them. And in the verse that refers to revenge, we are told that it is a particular quality of these virtuous people that if at any time their heart is inclined to take revenge of an injustice and they do so, they do not exceed the equitable limit, although to forgive is always better for them.

Verses 44 – 50

وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ وَالِيٍّ مِّنْ بَعْدِهِ ۗ وَتَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ لَمَّارًا
 الْعَذَابَ يَقُولُونَ هَلْ إِلَىٰ مَرَدٍّ مِّنْ سَبِيلِ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَتَرَاهُمْ يُعْرَضُونَ
 عَلَيْهَا خَشِيعِينَ مِنَ الدَّلِّ يَنْظُرُونَ مِنْ طَرْفٍ خَفِيٍّ ۗ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ

الْآلِ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ مُّثَقِمٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ
 يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ ﴿٤٦﴾
 اسْتَجِيبُوا لِرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ
 مَلْجَأٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ نَكِيرٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا إِنْ عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا الْبَلْغُ وَإِنَّا إِذَا أَذَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا
 رَحْمَةً فَرَحَّ بِهَا وَإِنْ تُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَإِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ
 كَفُورٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُخَلِّقُ مَا يَشَاءُ يَهَبُ
 لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَاءًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ الدُّكُورَ ﴿٤٩﴾ أَوْ يَزْوِجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا
 وَإِنَاءًا وَيَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ عَقِيمًا إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

And the one whom Allah lets go astray, there is no one for him to protect thereafter. And you will see the wrongdoers, when they will see the punishment, that they will say, "Is there any way to be sent back (to the world)?" [44] And you will see them being presented to it (the Fire), downcast because of humiliation, looking with stealthy glance. And those who believe will say, "The real losers are those who have lost their own selves and their families on the Day of Judgment." Be aware that the wrongdoers are in lasting punishment. [45] And for them there will not be any friends who may help them besides Allah. And the one whom Allah lets go astray, for him there is no way (to save himself). [46] Respond to your Lord before there comes a day for which there will be no reversal from Allah's side. For you there will be neither a refuge that day, nor an opportunity to question (Allah about your fate). [47] So, if they turn away, then We did not send you as a supervisor over them. You are not responsible but for conveying the message. And when We make man taste mercy from Us, he rejoices with it, and if an evil befalls him because of what their hands sent ahead, then man becomes ungrateful. [48] To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He grants females to whom He wills, and grants males to whom He wills. [49] Or He combines for them

couples, both males and females, and makes whom He wills barren. Surely, He is All-Knowing, Very-Powerful.

[50]

Commentary

The earlier three of the above verses state the end of those people who, as against the virtuous Muslims, remained desirous of the delights and luxuries of this world, instead of caring about the Hereafter. Then in verse 47, they have been advised to repent and embrace faith before the scourge of Doomsday comes upon them. Thereafter, in verse 48, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been comforted and assured that if these people do not come to their senses, despite your preaching again and again, and despite your tireless efforts, then you should not worry: **فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا** "So, if they turn away, then We did not send you as a supervisor over them. You are not responsible but for conveying the message" - 48.

Verses 49 and 50 state the absolute power and perfect wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā in the creation of this universe in which He has no partner, and then mankind has been called to believe in the Oneness of Allah. In this regard, after stating the creation of the earth and the heavens, Allah Almighty has stated a fact about His power in verse 49, **يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ** (He creates what He wills.) to indicate that He has absolute Power to create anything small or big. He creates whatever He wills whenever He wills. In this context, creation of mankind has been mentioned by saying, "He grants females to whom He wills, and grants males to whom He wills. Or He combines for them couples, both males and females, and makes whom He wills barren. Surely He is All-Knowing, Very Powerful. (49,50)" It means that nobody's intention or authority has anything to do in the creation of a human being, nor does anybody have its knowledge. What to say of anybody else, even the intention or choice of the parents, who are the apparent agents of the creation of a human beings, does not have any bearing on the child's creation. Let alone having a say in the child's creation, the mother does not even know before the child is born, as to what is being formed in her womb, and how it is being processed.

It is Allah Ta'ālā alone who grants female children to whom He wills, and male children to whom He wills; to some He grants both male and female children, and He renders some females barren who do not have any children.

While stating the sex of children in this verse, Allah Ta‘ālā has mentioned females first, and males later. Taking a hint from this verse, Sayyidnā Wāthilah Ibn Asqa’ ﷺ has said that blessed is the woman who gives birth to a daughter first. (Qurtubī)

Verses 51 – 53

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَائِ حِجَابٍ
 أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ حَكِيمٍ ﴿٥١﴾
 وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ
 وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِنْ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا
 وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ صِرَاطِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي
 السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ أَلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٥٣﴾

And it is not (possible) for a human being that Allah speaks to him, except by way of revelation, or from behind a curtain, or that He sends a messenger, then he reveals, with His permission, what He wills. Surely, He is High, Wise. [51] And in similar way, We have revealed to you a Spirit from Our command. You did not know earlier what is the Book or what is ‘Iman’ (true faith), but We have made it (the Qur‘ān) a light with which We guide whomsoever We will from among Our slaves. And indeed you are guiding (people) to a straight path, [52] the path of Allah, the One to whom belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. Be aware that towards Allah all matters shall finally return. [53]

Commentary

The first of the above verses (51) was revealed in response to a hostile Jewish demand. As mentioned by Baghawī, Qurtubī and others, the Jews asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ, “How can we believe in you while you neither see Allah Ta‘ālā, nor do you speak to Him face to face, as Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ used to see and converse with Allah Ta‘ālā?”

The Holy Prophet ﷺ told the Jews that it is wrong to say that Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ has seen Allah Ta‘ālā. Then this verse was revealed

to announce that it is not possible for any human being to converse with Allah Ta'ālā face to face in this world. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام also did not hear Allah Ta'ālā face to face, but only heard the voice from behind a curtain.

This verse also tells us that there are only three ways in which Allah Ta'ālā speaks to a human being. One is '*wahy*' which is infusion of something in the heart. It can happen while one is awake, and it can also happen during sleep in the form of a dream as stated in many *aḥādīth* that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, *أُلقيَ في روعي* (This has been infused in my heart. And the dreams of the prophets عليهم السلام are also a form of wahy, because Satan cannot find his way in them. In case of dreams, the words do not usually come from Allah Ta'ālā; only the subject matter is infused in the mind which is then rendered by the prophets in their own words.

The second way in which Allah may address a person, as mentioned in the above verses, is that Allah speaks from behind a curtain, as happened to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام on Mount Ṭūr, where he heard the speech of Allah Ta'ālā, but did not see Him. Therefore he asked Allah Ta'ālā to show Himself. The reply was in negative, as mentioned by the Holy Qur'an in sūrah A'rāf (7:143).

And this curtain which prevents man from seeing Allah Ta'ālā is not something which can hide Allah Ta'ālā, because nothing can hide His All-Pervasive Light. Rather, it is the weakness of man's vision that becomes a curtain against seeing Allah. That is why when his vision would be strengthened in Paradise, every dweller of Heaven will be favoured with ability to see Allah Ta'ālā, as per the creed of Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah in accordance with the explanations of correct *aḥādīth*.

This rule that no one can converse face to face with Allah Ta'ālā, without any curtain in-between, pertains to this world. The specific mention of 'human being' in this verse is because the intention here is to address mankind. Otherwise, apparently Allah Ta'ālā does not speak face to face even with the angels, as stated by Sayyidnā Jibra'il عليه السلام in a narration of Tirmidhī, "I had become very close, and yet there were seventy-thousand more curtains." And if the face to face conversation of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with Allah Ta'ālā during the Night of Ascension

(*Lailat-ul-mi'rāj*) is proved, as stated by certain learned persons, it would not negate this rule, because that conversation did not take place in this world, but in the Heavens. (Allah knows best)

The third method is mentioned in the verse as *أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا* "that He sends a messenger" (42:51). The messenger could be Jibra'īl عليه السلام or any other angel who may carry Allah Ta'ālā's message, and read it out to the prophet. And this has been the most common way. The whole of Glorious Qur'ān has been revealed in this fashion through angels. It should be noted that the word '*wahy*' has been explained above to mean infusion in mind or heart only, but this word is often used for all kinds of Divine discourses also, as narrated in a lengthy *ḥadīth* of Bukhārī where the message sent through an angel has also been termed as one kind of '*wahy*'. And there are two forms in which the angel carries the message. Sometimes he appears in his original form, and sometimes in the human form. (Allah knows best)

مَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُونَ مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِنْ (You did not know earlier what is the Book or what is 'Īmān', but We have made it a light with which We guide whomsoever we will from among Our slaves - 42:52). This verse is a complement of the subject of the first verse. The gist is that in this world, nobody has ever seen, nor can ever see and converse face to face with Allah Ta'ālā. However, Allah Ta'ālā does send '*wahy*' to His chosen bondsmen in three ways described in the first verse. And in accordance with Allah Ta'ālā's practice, '*wahy*' is sent to the Holy Prophet ﷺ as well. The demand of Jews that Allah Ta'ālā should speak to him face to face is simply a display of ignorance and hostility. That is why Allah Ta'ālā has stated that whatever knowledge a man obtains, even a prophet for that matter, is all a grant of Allah Ta'ālā. Until Allah Ta'ālā tells them through '*wahy*', they would neither be aware of any Book nor would they know the details of faith. Unawareness of the Book before '*wahy*' is quite obvious; absence of knowledge of faith means that its details, rules and regulations, and its exalted place become known to a prophet after '*wahy*', not before it, otherwise it is proved with consensus of the ummah that whomever Allah chooses to make His Messenger or Prophet, He gives him faith and belief right from the beginning of his birth; his faith is engraved in his nature. These chosen people are firm believers, even before prophethood and before '*wahy*' is sent to them. Principles of belief become

a part of their nature and behaviour. That is why all the prophets were opposed by their people and they piled up all sorts of allegations against them, but no one had ever accused a prophet of idolatry, even before he was appointed as a prophet. Qurṭubī, in his Tafsīr, and Qāḍī 'Ayād in *Shifā'* have dealt with this subject in full detail.

**Alḥamdulillah
the commentary on
Sūrah Shūrā
ends here.**

Sūrah Az-Zukhruf

The Gold

Sūrah Az-Zukhruf is Makkī. It has 89 Verses and 7 Sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 8

حَمَّ ﴿١﴾ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِنَّهُ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلَىٰ حَكِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ أَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمُ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا أَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّسْرِفِينَ ﴿٥﴾ وَكَمْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ نَبِيِّ فِي الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٦﴾ وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٧﴾ فَاهْلَكْنَا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا وَ مَضَىٰ مَثَلُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٨﴾

Hā Mīm. [1] By the manifest Book, [2] We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān, so that you may understand. [3] And it is, in the Mother of the Book (the Preserved Tablet) with us, surely sublime, full of wisdom. [4] Shall We remove the advice away from you because you are a transgressing people? [5] And how many a messenger have We sent to the earlier people! [6] And no messenger came to them, but they used to mock at him. [7] So We have destroyed those who were stronger than these (people of Makkah) in power, and the example of the earlier people has already passed. [8]

Commentary

This Sūrah is Makkī, although Muqātil رحمه الله تعالى has said that the verse وَأَسْفَلُ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا (43:45) is Madanī, and according to another view, this

Sūrah was revealed in Heaven during *Lailat-ul-Mi'rāj* (the Night of Ascention) (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī) - Allah knows best.

Hā Mīm- Only Allah knows its meaning.

وَالكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ (By the manifest Book - 43:2) The book in this verse refers to the Holy Qur'ān. Whenever Allah swears by anything, it is usually an argument for the statement that follows. Swearing by the Qur'ān in this verse is an indication that the Qur'ān, by virtue of being a miracle, is a proof in itself of its being a Divine Book. To call it a 'manifest book' means that its subjects consisting of exhortations and advices are easily understandable; but as far as deduction of the precepts of 'Sharī'ah' is concerned, it certainly is a difficult job which cannot be performed without complete capability of '*ijtihād*'. This point has been clarified in Sūrah Alqamar, verse 17, وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ (And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice? - 54-17). Here, it has been stated that the Qur'ān is easy for obtaining advice. Hence, it does not necessarily follow that *ijtihād* and inferring injunctions will be easy also; rather, it is proved through other evidences that full expertise in related subjects is a necessary condition for this exercise.

A Preacher must not give up his preaching due to disappointment

أَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمْ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا أَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُسْرِفِينَ (Shall we remove the advice away from you because you are a transgressing people? - 43:5) The meaning is that We will not give up advising you through the Qur'ān, no matter how rebellious and disobedient you may become. This tells us that the person who is engaged in preaching and inviting others towards Islam should carry the message to everybody; he must not give up preaching to some people or any group simply because they are non-believers, highly irreligious, sinners and transgressors.

Verses 9 - 25

وَلَيْنُ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ خَلَقَهُنَّ الْعَزِيزُ
الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٩﴾ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٩﴾ وَالَّذِي نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً ۖ بِقَدَرٍ فَأَنْشَرْنَا
بِهِ بَلَدَةً مَيِّتًا ۚ كَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْفُلْكِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُونَ ﴿١١﴾ لِتَسْتَوُوا عَلَى
ظُهُورِهِ ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ إِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَتَقُولُوا سُبْحَانَ
الَّذِي سَخَّرَلَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ
﴿١٣﴾ وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءًا ۗ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٤﴾
أَمْ اتَّخَذَ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ بَنَاتٍ وَأَصْفَحَكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ
بِمَا ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ مَثَلًا ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾ أَوْ
مَنْ يُنشَأُ فِي الْحِلْيَةِ وَهُوَ فِي الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٧﴾ وَجَعَلُوا
الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبُدُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَاثًا ۗ أَشْهَدُوا خَلْقَهُمْ ۗ سَتُكْتَبُ
شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَا عَبَدْنَاهُمْ ۗ
مَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ؕ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ أَمْ اتَّيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا
مِّن قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَمْسِكُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَى
أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ
فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا
عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ مُّقْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ قُلْ أَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِأَهْدَىٰ مِمَّا وَجَدْتُمْ
عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَكُمْ ۗ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ
فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

And should you ask them as to who has created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say, "They are created by the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing," [9] the One who has made the earth a cradle for you, and has made for you pathways therein, so that you may be guided, [10] and the One who has sent down water from the sky in due measure, then We have revived with it a dead

town. — In the same way, you will be brought out (alive from the graves), [11] – and the One who has created all the pairs, and has made for you the boats and the cattle that you ride, [12] so that you may mount on their backs, then recall the favour of your Lord after having mounted on it and say, 'Pure is the One who has subjugated this for us, and We were not able to have control over it, [13] and of course, towards our Lord we have to return.' [14]

And they have ascribed to Him (that He is composed of parts, (and that too) out of His slaves. Surely, man is openly ungrateful. [15] Is it that He has adopted daughters from those whom He has created, and chosen you for (having) sons? [16] And when one of them is given the good news of (the birth of) that which he has claimed to be like *Raḥmān* (i.e. the daughters), his face turns black, and he becomes choked with sorrow. [17] Is it that (Allah has chosen) those (as His offspring) who are grown up in ornaments, and who cannot express themselves in debate clearly? [18] And they have held angels, who are the slaves of the *Raḥmān*, as females. Have they witnessed their creation? Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned. [19] And they say, "Had the *Raḥmān* so willed, we will not have worshipped them." They have no knowledge of that. They do nothing but make conjectures. [20] Or have We given to them a book before this, and they are adhering to it? [21] Instead, they say, "We have found our fathers on a certain way, and we are on their footprints, fully guided." [22] And similarly, We did not send a warner to a town before you, but its affluent people said, "We have found our fathers on a certain way, and we are following their footprints." [23] He said, "Even if I bring to you something better in guidance than that on which you have found your fathers?" They said, "We totally disbelieve in what you are sent with." [24] So, We took revenge from them. Now look, how was the end of those who rejected (Our messengers). [25]

Commentary

جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا (has made the earth a cradle for you - 10) meaning that the comfort provided by the earth is that of a cradle; its apparent look of being a plain floor does not negate its being spherical.

وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْفُلْكِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُونَ (and has made for you the boats and the

cattle that you ride, - 12). There are two kinds of means of transport employed by man - one those vehicles which are made by man himself, and two the animals in whose creation human effort is not involved at all. 'Boats' include all kinds of man-made vehicles, and 'cattle' include all the animals used for riding. Both these means of transport are great blessings of Allah Ta'ālā. That cattle are Allah's great blessings is obvious, because despite their being many times stronger than man, Allah Almighty has made them so submissive to him that even a child leads them to wherever he wants through a halter or mor-string. Similarly the man made vehicles, right from the bicycles to the aeroplanes and the space-crafts are also great blessings of Allah Almighty, because they are, though, made by man apparently, there is no other than Allah Ta'ālā who has provided man with ability and techniques to manufacture them? Allah Almighty, the All-Powerful is the One Who has endowed the human intellect with the power that moulds iron like wax. And besides, all the raw materials used in their manufacturing and their properties are direct creations of Allah Almighty.

ثُمَّ تَذَكَّرُوا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ (then recall the favour of your Lord - 13). This tells us that a sensible and alert person should not display negligence, carelessness or his need-free of the divine help while enjoying the blessings of the Actual Benefactor, rather he should acknowledge that it is a reward from Allah Almighty, obliging him to be grateful and to display his impotence and humility. Actually this is the difference between an infidel and a *Mu'min* that an infidel uses the good things of this world carelessly and negligently, while the *Mu'min* cognizant of the blessings of Allah bows his head to Allah Almighty in humility. It is for this reason that the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* have taught supplications for patience, steadfastness and gratefulness, and if anyone makes a habit of supplicating those prayers in his daily life while getting up, sitting down, walking about, etc., then all his (or hers) permissible activities turn into acts of worship. These supplications are collected by 'Allāmah Ibn-ul-Jazrī in his book *Al-Ḥisn-ul-Ḥaṣīn*, and Maulānā Thanawī in *Munajat-e-Maqbūl*.

Supplications of a traveler

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرْنَا هَذَا (Pure is the One who has subjugated this for us - 13). These words of supplication are to be said when mounting a transport.

This was the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ according to many narrations. The *mustahab* (preferable) way to ride a transport, as stated by Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه, is to say بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ 'Bismillāh' (With the name of Allah) when one is putting the first foot on the animal or the vehicle, and after one has set himself or herself on the transport, one should say اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ 'Alḥamdulillāh' (All praise belongs to Allah), and then one should say the words mentioned in this verse from سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِى سَخَّرَلَنَا لِمُنْقَلِبُونَ upto (Qurṭubī). Moreover according to some reports, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, after saying these words, used to supplicate in the following words also:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ الصَّاحِبُ فِي السَّفَرِ وَالْخَلِيفَةُ فِي الْأَهْلِ وَالْمَالِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ
وَعَثَاءِ السَّفَرِ وَكَآبَةِ الْمُنْقَلَبِ، وَالْحَوْرِ بَعْدَ الْكُورِ وَسُوءِ الْمَنْظَرِ فِي الْأَهْلِ وَالْمَالِ.

"O Allah, you are my companion in the journey, and my substitute for my family. O Allah, I seek your refuge from the sufferings of the journey, and from coming back in a sad situation, and from a bad state of being after a good one, and from a bad scenario appearing to me about my family and my belongings."

According to one narration, the following words are added to the above supplication,

اللَّهُمَّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي إِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Allah, there is no god but You. I have done wrong to myself; so forgive me. Surely, no one can forgive the sins, but You alone. (Qurṭubī)

وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُفْرِعِينَ (and we were not able to have control over it - 13). This statement is as true for mechanical means of transport as for cattle and animals, because if Allah Ta'ālā had not created their raw materials, or had not endowed them with their particular properties, or had not endowed the human intellect with capability to discover those properties, even the whole universe, acting together in unison, could not have produced these vehicles.

وَأَنَا إِلَى رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ (and of course, towards our Lord we have to return - 14). These words teach us that every time a man embarks on a journey, he should think of his last arduous journey to the Hereafter also, which one has to undertake in all circumstances; – and the only way to make it easy is to have a vehicle of good deeds.

وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءًا (And they have attributed to Him [that He is composed of] parts [and that too] out of His slaves...43:15) 'parts' in this verse means 'offspring', because the polytheists used to say that angels are daughters of Allah, and by using the word 'parts' instead of 'offspring' the fallacy of their claim has been pointed out on pure logical ground. The gist of the argument is that had Allah any offspring, that offspring will have been His part, because a son is a part of his father, and it is a rule of logic that an entity that consists of parts is dependent upon its parts for its full existence. This will then necessarily mean that Allah Ta'ālā is also dependent on His offspring, which is obviously impossible, because dependence of any kind, being a negation of the Divine Majesty, is out of question in Allah's case.

أَوَمَنْ يُنَشَأُ فِي الْحِلْيَةِ (Is it that (Allah has chosen) those (as His offspring) who are grown up in ornaments,... 43:18). This tells us that use of ornaments and adornment in accordance with 'Shari'ah is permissible for women. As such, there is consensus on this issue, but at the same time the manner of speech indicates that getting so much involved in adornment that one is busy in it the whole day long, is not proper; it is not only a symptom of one's being short-sighted, but also a cause of it.

وَهُوَ فِي الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِينٍ (and who cannot express themselves in debate clearly - 18). This reflects the reality that a great majority of women do not have the same ability as men to express their feelings clearly. Therefore, if it comes to argumentation, it is difficult for them to prove their own contention and to refute the other's arguments in a clear manner. But this applies to the majority. If some women are eloquent in their speech and excel even men in this regard, it does not go against this verse, because the rule applies to the majority, and not to every single individual.

Verses 26 - 30

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي بَرَاءٌ مِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقْبِهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ بَلْ مَتَّعْتُ هَؤُلَاءِ وَآبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ

وَرَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ وَإِنَّا بِهِ
كٰفِرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

And (recall) when Ibrāhīm said to his father and to his people, "I disown that which you worship, [26] except the One who has originated me; so He will guide me." [27] And he made it a word lasting among his posterity, so that they may return. [28] But, I gave these and their fathers enjoyment, until the truth came to them, and a messenger who explains (it). [29] And when the truth came to them, they said, "This is magic, and we totally disbelieve in it." [30]

Commentary

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ (And [recall] when Ibrāhīm said to his father and to his people,..... 43:26) At the end of the previous verses, Allah Ta'ālā had stated that the '*mushrikīn*' (polytheists) of Arabia had no argument in favour of their '*shirk*' (polytheism) except that they were carrying on the customs of their forefathers. Obviously, sticking to such customs against logical and historical arguments is far from truth and justice. Now the point made in the present verses is that, even if they are adamant on following their ancestors, why do they not follow Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام who is the most noble of their ancestors, and it is taken by themselves as a matter of pride to be among his offspring. He was not only a believer in '*tauḥīd*' (Oneness of Allah) who emphatically directed all his children to remain adherent to this belief, but his life-long behavior also indicates that following forefathers against logical and historical proofs is not permissible. When he was ordained prophethood in the world, all his people were polytheists in pursuit of the customs of their forefathers, but he, instead of blindly following his forefathers, announced his dissociation from his people, according to the dictates of positive proofs; hence his declaration: إِنِّي بَرَاءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ "I disown that which you worship" (43:26).

We find from this verse that if anyone lives among a group or people who are misguided or involved in bad deeds, and his silence about their attitude may be construed as being agreeable to them, then it is not enough for him to simply correct his own beliefs and deeds, rather he has to disown their beliefs and deeds as well. This is what Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام did - he not only made his belief and actions distinctly different in

practice, but he also disowned their belief and deeds vocally.

وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقْبِهِ (And he made it a word lasting among his posterity.) It means that Ibrāhīm ؑ did not keep the belief in 'tauḥīd' restricted to himself, rather he emphasized upon his posterity also to remain firm on this faith, as a result of which a large number of his posterity adhered to *tauḥīd*. In Makkah and its surroundings, there were many blessed souls, even till the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, who had remained steadfast in the original 'dīn' of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ؑ.

We learn from this verse that it is one of the obligatory duties of a Muslim to try his best to put his or her children on the path of the correct religion and to make them practice it throughout their lives. The Holy Qur'ān tells us that Sayyidnā Yaqūb ؑ also had directed his sons, shortly before his death, to remain firm on the correct faith. As such, it is necessary, as a consistent practice of the prophets, to employ one's best possible efforts to reform the morals and deeds of his or her children. So to say, there are many ways to reform one's offspring which should be used according to the situation, but Shaikh Abdul Wahhāb Sha'rānī رحمه الله تعالى has said in his book *Laṭā'if-ul-Minan wal-Akhlāq* that the most effective way for the betterment of one's offspring in matters pertaining to 'dīn' is that the parents should pray to Allah regularly to make them true practicing Muslims. Alas! The negligence of parents from this easy way is becoming very common these days, and the parents themselves are witnessing the ill effects of this negligence.

Verses 31 - 32

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣١﴾
 أَهْمُ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ ط نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَّعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي
 الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ
 بَعْضًا سَخِرِيًّا وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

And they say, "Why was this Qur'ān not revealed on a great man from (either of) the two towns?" [31] Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord? We have distributed among them their livelihood in the worldly

life, and have raised some of them over others in ranks, so that some of them may put some others to work. And the mercy of your Lord is much better than what they accumulate. [32]

Commentary

Allah Ta'ālā has in these verses, has replied to an objection of the pagans of Arabia used to be raised against the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Actually, they were not prepared to accept, at the first place, that a man could be a messenger of Allah Ta'ālā. The Holy Qur'an has referred, at many places, to their objection that they could not accept Sayyidnā Muhammad ﷺ as a messenger of Allah, while he eats and drinks and walks about in the market places like any ordinary man. When it was clarified through many verses of the Qur'an that not only the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but all the prophets who came to this world, were human beings, they started advancing another argument that if prophethood had to be bestowed upon a human being, why was it not given to some wealthy man of a high rank and position from Makkah or Ṭā'if instead of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who was not so wealthy? According to some narrations, they had proposed the names of Walīd Ibn Mughīrah and 'Utbah Ibn Rabī'ah from Makkah, and 'Urwah Ibn Mas'ūd Thaqaḫī, Ḥabīb Ibn 'Amr Thaqaḫī or Kinānah Ibn 'Abdiyālīl from Ṭā'if. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Allah Almighty has given two answers to this objection. The second answer is found in the next verses which will be explained there, while the present verse (32) has provided the first answer in the words, "Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord?". "Mercy of your Lord" refers here to 'prophethood' and the gist of the answer is that appointing someone as a prophet is a mercy from Allah which he bestows upon and allocates to human beings on the basis of His absolute wisdom, and according to His exclusive discretion for which He needs not to consult anyone, nor has anyone a right to interfere with it. You have no concern with distribution of prophethood so that your advice should be sought before anyone is made a prophet. Your intellect and understanding is too deficient to be entrusted with selecting suitable persons for the office of prophethood, or for the distribution of this divine mercy among people. How can you distribute among people an office as high as prophethood, while you have no ability to distribute something that is much lower and easier, that is, your economy. You are not good enough even to carry out

the distribution of your wealth and means of sustenance. We know that if you are entrusted with this responsibility, you will not be able to manage it even for one day, and the whole system will simply collapse. That is why Allah Ta'ālā has not assigned the distribution of provisions in this world to you; rather He has kept it in His own hands. Since this comparatively ordinary work cannot be entrusted to you, how can a great job like distribution of prophethood be given in your hands?

This is what the above verses mean, but in the context of replying to the '*mushrikīn*', many economic principles are laid down and indications are given by Allah Ta'ālā regarding the economic system of the world; their brief explanation is necessary here.

The Natural system of Distribution of wealth

نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ (We have distributed among them their livelihood).

This is to say that Allah in His infinite wisdom, has devised such a system for the world that everybody is dependent on another for meeting his needs. Thus all the people, bound in this mutual inter-dependence, are fulfilling the needs of the whole society. This verse has made it quite clear that Allah Almighty has not assigned the work of distributing livelihood to any human organization or authority that works out a plan (as claimed by the socialist theory) how to define the needs of a society, how to meet those needs, how to allocate the means of production to various channels, and how to distribute the income, and on what basis. Instead, all these functions rest with Allah Ta'ālā. What it means is that by making every person dependent upon another, an automatic system has been developed that may solve these issues, with the only condition that it is not hindered by unnatural factors like monopolies etc. This system of mutual interdependence is known in modern economic terminology as the 'supply and demand mechanism'. The natural law of 'supply and demand' is that shortage in the supply of an item results in an increase in its price, and thus attracts more factors of production towards its production, so that they may earn more profit. But when the production outpaces the demand, its prices decrease, and so does the profit, thereby diverting the means of production towards more profitable items. Islam has employed this natural mechanism of supply and demand to produce and distribute wealth, and has not assigned the distribution of livelihood to any organization under ordinary circumstances. The reason is that human

planning, however advanced it may be, cannot take into account every element of human necessities; such social issues are usually resolved through a natural process that works in an automatic manner. If such problems are entrusted to human planning, it can only result in artificial restraints imposed on the natural human freedom. For example, the fact that the hours of daylight are for working, and the night is meant for sleeping was not determined by any social contract or by human planning; it came about through nature's automatic process. Similarly, who should marry whom is automatically arranged in accordance with the natural system of personal inclinations; nobody has even thought of arranging it through planning. If the question of selecting a particular field of academic specialization is entrusted to the planning of a government, instead of one's own inclination and taste, it will result in nothing but coercion and compulsion which may, in turn, disturb and spoil the natural human life. Similarly, the economic system is taken care of by Allah's wisdom and power; everybody knows in his heart what he wants to do, which job is more suitable for him, and which he can perform properly. As such, everybody, even if he is a sweeper, is happy loving his work, and is proud of it.

However, unlike capitalism, Islam has not given so much freedom to the individuals as allows them to accumulate wealth by any means, lawful or unlawful, and deprive others of their livelihood. Islam has therefore drawn a clear line between *ḥalāl* (permissible) and *ḥarām* (impermissible) sources of income. It has, on the one hand, totally prohibited usury or interest, speculative transactions, hoarding and gambling (which in its technical sense in Islamic law is much more general than its lexical meaning in English), and on the other hand, has levied *zakāh*, 'ushr, etc., even on permitted income. And thus Islam has closed the doors of those social ills that are found in the present day capitalistic system. If despite all this, monopolies are created at any time, government has been permitted to intervene and break them up. Details on this subject can be seen in the author's Urdu books on 'The Issue of Interest' 'Distribution of Wealth in Islam' and 'Economic Reforms in Islamic System'.

The truth about economic equality

وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ (and have raised some of them over others in

ranks). This tells us that economic equality, in the sense that the income of all the individuals of this world should be equal, is neither desirable nor practically feasible. The reason is that Allah Ta'ālā has charged every member of this universe with some duties, and has given them rights in proportion to their obligations. All the creatures, excepting man, are liable for the least duties in the sense that there is nothing like lawful, unlawful or prohibited for them, and hence they have the least rights. Accordingly, man has been given vast freedom in dealing with them; he can use them in any way for his benefit, subject to some minor restrictions. He uses some animals as his food, some he rides and some creatures are trodden under his feet, but these things are not considered to be the denial of the rights of those creatures, because their duties are very few, hence their rights are also to that proportion. Human beings and jinns have been given more responsibilities in their duties than any other creature of this universe in that they are accountable to Allah Ta'ālā in each utterance, each deed each move and each movement; if they do not carry out their duties, they are liable to punishment in the Hereafter. That is the reason why Allah Ta'ālā has given much more rights to human beings and jinns as compared to other creatures. And then, even among human beings, those whose duties and obligations are more than others have been given more rights as well. As such, prophets عليهم السلام whose responsibilities exceed those of all other human beings, were given more rights than others in many respects.

The same principle has been applied by Allah Ta'ālā to the economic system also. Allah has given economic advantages and rights to anyone in accordance with his duties and obligations. It is obvious that equality in duties and obligations is not possible, and differences are unavoidable. It is simply not feasible that everybody's economic benefits i.e. income and duties be exactly equal, because they depend on one's natural abilities which include physical strength, health, intellectual power, age, level of intelligence, efficiency and quickness; it is obvious to everyone that it is beyond the capability of even the most advanced communist state to create homogeneity and equality among people in respect of these qualities. When differences in the abilities of human beings are unavoidable, there have to be differences in their economic duties. And since economic rights are linked with these duties, differences in economic

rights i.e. incomes are also unavoidable, because if everybody's income is made equal, while duties continue to be different, equity and justice cannot be established. It is now quite evident that complete equality in incomes can never be fair at any time. As such the communist claim that equality will be achieved in the ultimate stage of completion of communism, is neither practicable nor equitable.

To determine whose duties are more and whose are less and to determine their rights accordingly is an extremely sensitive and difficult task, and man does not have any perfect standard, as yet, to measure it. Sometimes one gets the feeling that an expert and experienced engineer has earned in only one hour what a common unskilled laborer could not, even by carrying tons of earth during the whole day. But in all fairness, one has to concede that the whole day's carefree hard work of the laborer just cannot match the burden of responsibility of the engineer. Besides, the income of the engineer is not compensation for only one hour's work, but it really is compensation partly for the exercise of the mind, burning of the mid-night oil and effort put in to get engineering education and training, and then in getting experience and expertise. In its early days, communism has accepted the differences in incomes and as such there are vast differences in the incomes of different categories of the populace in all the communist countries. But where they have slipped is that they have given control over all means of production to the government, thereby determination of duties and commensurate distribution of incomes has also come under the control of the government. As mentioned earlier, man does not have a perfect standard to measure that the rights are in accordance with one's duties; as such a few functionaries of the government in communist countries have the power to dole out, as much as they want, to any person and withhold, as much as they want from anyone. In the first place, such discretionary powers give rise to corruption, nepotism etc. Secondly, even if one presumes that all the functionaries of the government are angels, and they truly desire to distribute the incomes in the country according to the dictates of justice and equity, then what is the measure through which they may be able to determine the difference in the duties of an engineer and a laborer, and in that context what should be the difference between their incomes?

The fact is that the right decision in this matter is beyond human

understanding, and that is why it has been kept in the domain of nature. This is what Allah Ta'ālā has hinted at in the verse under discussion which says, "and have raised some of them over others in ranks". Instead of leaving human beings determine this difference, Allah Ta'ālā has kept it in His own hands in the sense that by associating others in the fulfillment of everyone's needs, a system has been developed where everyone is constrained to pay the other's rightful dues for the fulfillment of his own needs. Here also, the mechanism of supply and demand based upon mutual dependence, determines everybody's income. In other words, everyone determines for himself the compensation that is adequate for the responsibilities he has undertaken; if he is offered less than that, he will not agree, and if he demands more than that, the other person will not agree to get the work done by him. This is exactly what the verse says: "so that some of them may put some other to work.") meaning that Allah has made the incomes of the people different, so that one person may employ another; if their incomes had been the same, nobody will have been of use to another person.

Of course, in abnormal situations, big capitalists may take undue advantage of this natural system of supply and demand, and may compel poor people to work for lesser wages than their actual entitlement. In order to prevent this, Islam has, in the first place, given thorough injunctions of *ḥalāl* (lawful) and *ḥarām* (unlawful), and a wide-ranged code of ethics based on the concept of the Day of Retribution. But if at any time, such a situation does appear, then the Islamic government has been given an authority to determine the wages and salaries during those abnormal conditions. But this authorization is limited to the abnormal conditions, and there is no need to let the government have control of all means of production for this purpose, because its harm far outweighs its gains.

The Meaning of Islamic equality

It is quite clear from the above discussion that complete equality in incomes is neither a requirement of equity and justice, nor has it been actually established anywhere; It is not possible or desired in Islam either. Of course, the equality that Islam has established is in the matters of law, social behavior and in honoring the rights of everyone. What it means is that everybody is equal in exercising one's legal, civil and social rights for