

winds that bring rain are obviously beneficial and useful. Another meaning of the word *'urfan* is 'one after another'. In this interpretation, the verse signifies 'those winds that bring rain and clouds consecutively'. The word *'āṣifāt* is derived from *'aṣf* that literally means 'winds that blow violently or vehemently'. This refers to fiercely blowing winds that sometimes do occur in the world. The word *nashirāt* refers to 'winds that spread (clouds) all over after the rain is over'. The word *fāriqāt* is the attribute of the angels 'who differentiate (between right and wrong) distinctly by bringing down the Divine revelation'. The phrase *fal-mulqiyāti dhikran* also refers to the 'angels'. The word *dhikr* 'Reminder' refers to the Qur'ān or revelation in general. The verse signifies 'I swear by angels who [by bringing down revelation] separate between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, [and the lawful and the forbidden]'. Likewise, I swear by angels who bring down revelation or Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This interpretation is plain and simple, and does not require any undue stretch of imagination.

In this interpretation, the question arises as to the contextual relationship between swearing oaths by various types of winds and the angels. First of all, it is not possible to fathom the Wisdom of Divine speech. However, it is possible to hypothesise. Allah swears oaths by useful winds and harmful winds. Winds that bring rain and clouds are useful, while those that blow fiercely and cause destruction are harmful. These belong to the perceptible world. All human beings can observe them. The perceptible things are mentioned first for reflection. The imperceptible world is mentioned later, such as the angels and revelation. If man reflects carefully on them, he will develop certainty of belief in them as well.

عُدْرًا أَوْ نُذْرًا (to provide excuses [for the believers] or giving warnings (to disbelievers...77:6) This phrase is complement to verse [5]: فَأَنْزَلْنَاهُ فَاذْكُرُوا then bring down the advice, [77:5] The 'advice' refers to the 'revelation' that came down upon the Prophets. Verse 6 says that it serves two purposes. In the case of the people of truth and believers, it persuades them to seek excuse from Allah for their shortcomings, and pray for forgiveness; and in the case of the people of falsehood and disbelievers, it contains a warning for them of Allah's torment, if they oppose His command.

إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَوَاقِعٌ (...that which you are promised is sure to happen...77:7)

This is the subject of these oaths. It means that the Day of Judgement, Reckoning, and Reward and Punishment that is promised by the Prophets has certainly to be fulfilled. Allah then describes some of the events that will occur on the Day of Judgement. The stars will be extinguished, which could mean that they will be completely destroyed, or they will exist, but their lights will be lost. In this way the entire world will be plunged in absolute darkness. The second event to occur is the splitting of the sky. The third event to occur is that the mountains will be blown away as dust. The fourth event is described in the following verse:

وَإِذَا الرُّسُلُ أَقْبَتْ (and when the messengers will be assembled at the appointed time, [then all matters will be decided.] [77:11]) The word *uqqitat* is derived from *tauqīt* which primarily means 'appointment of time'. According to Zamakhsharī, it signifies 'to arrive at an appointed time' [as cited in Rūḥ]. In this context, the second meaning appears to be more appropriate. The verse signifies that the appointed time for the Prophets and Messengers to assemble with their communities will arrive, so that all matters concerning them may be decided. The verses further describe the Day of Judgement as the great and horrible day and the Day of Decision. It shall be the day of destruction for the deniers and rejecters, thus:

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ (Woe, that Day, to the deniers!...77:15) The word *wail* means 'destruction'. According to certain Ḥadīth narratives, the word *wail* is a 'valley of Hell where the pus of the wounds of the inmates of Hell will be collected. This is the place where the deniers will live. After this, the present-day people are asked to learn a lesson from [the destruction] of the former generations, thus:

أَلَمْ نُهْلِكِ الْأَوَّلِينَ (Did We not destroy the earlier people?...77:16) It refers to the nations of 'Ād, Thamūd, nation of Lūṭ عليه السلام and Fir'aun (The Pharaoh) who were destroyed because of their obstinacy.

ثُمَّ نُنْعِمُهُمُ الْآخِرِينَ (Then We will cause the later ones to follow them....77:17) According to popular reading, Verse 17 purports to say that the present-day infidels, the people of Makkah, will receive punishment soon. They were punished and destroyed by Muslims in the Battle of Badr and so on. The difference between the punishment of former nations and the community of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is as follows: The former nations used

to be destroyed by celestial punishment with all their habitations. The infidels in the community of the Holy Prophet ﷺ do not receive celestial punishment, because of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ special honour. They are punished by the weapons of Muslims. Furthermore, the destruction is not general. Only the obdurate criminal leaders are destroyed.

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ كِفَاتًا. أَحْيَاءَ وَأَمْوَاتًا (Did We not make the earth a container that collects the living and the dead?...25, 26) The word *kifāt* is derived from *kaft*. It means 'to gather things together'. Thus *kifāt* is a thing that embodies many things within itself. Earth is created by Allah in a fashion that humans when alive, remain on its back, and when dead, in its belly.

إِنَّهَا تَرْمِي بِشَرَرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ. كَأَنَّهُ جِدَلَتِ صُفْرًا (It emits sparks [as huge] as castles...77:32) The word *qaṣr* means a 'huge, magnificent castle'. The word *jimālah* is used in the sense of *jamal*, and means 'camel'. The word *ṣufr* is the plural of *aṣfar* which means 'yellow'. The verse describes the fire of Hell. It will emit such huge sparks of fire, as if they were huge and magnificent castles. Then they will break up into little splinters, as if they were yellowish camels. Some scholars have translated the word '*ṣufr*' as 'black' because yellowish colour of camels tends to blackness. [Rūḥ].

هَذَا يَوْمٌ لَا يَنْطِقُونَ. وَلَا يُؤَدِّنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَدِرُونَ (This is a day when they will not speak, nor will they be allowed to offer excuses...77:35, 36) In other words, this is the Day in which they will not be able to talk, nor will they be permitted to offer pleas for their misdeeds. However, other verses of the Qur'ān inform us that they will speak and will be permitted to offer excuses. There is no discrepancy between the two verses, because there will be various stages on the Plain of Gathering (*Maḥshar*) through which people will have to pass. Sometimes they will pass through a stage where it would be forbidden for them to speak or offer excuses; and at another stage they will be permitted. [Rūḥ].

كُلُوا وَتَمَتَّعُوا قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُجْرِمُونَ ("Eat and drink for a while! You are guilty ones...77:46) This verse addresses the infidels through the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They may eat and drink and enjoy themselves in this world, but the span is short, and then there will be nothing but punishment for them. [Abū Ḥayyān].

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ارْكَعُوا لَا يَرْكَعُونَ (And when it is said to them, "Bow down", they do not bow down...77:48) According to most commentators, the word *rukū'*

is used here in its primitive sense 'to bow down and submit'. The verse signifies that when they were told to submit to the Divine commands, they refused to comply. Some scholars take the word *rukū'* in its technical sense and interpret the verse to signify 'when they are called to prayer, they refused to pray.' The *rukū'* is a part of the prayer, but it refers here to the whole prayer . [Rūḥ]

فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ (Now, in which discourse, after this, will they believe? ...77:50) The Holy Qur'ān is the last Book of Allah which explains its message and wisdom most lucidly, excellently, eloquently, elegantly, and its arguments most convincingly. Its style is extremely effective and the admonition soul-capturing. If they do not believe in such a Book, then for which word are they waiting? This is to express disappointment in them. A Ḥadīth narrative instructs that when one recites this verse, he should say 'I believe in Allah'. This statement must be made outside the prayer, or in voluntary prayer. He must abstain from this statement in obligatory and *Sunnah* prayer. Ḥadīth narratives are clear on this point. And Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mursalāt
Ends here

Sūrah An-Naba'

(The Great Event)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 40 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 40

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿١﴾ عَنِ النَّبِیِّ الْعَظِیْمِ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِیْ هُمْ فِيْهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ
 ﴿٣﴾ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥﴾ اَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ
 الْاَرْضَ مِهْدًا ﴿٦﴾ وَالْجِبَالَ اَوْتَادًا ﴿٧﴾ وَخَلَقْنٰكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا ﴿٨﴾
 وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ﴿٩﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّیْلَ لِبَاسًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ
 مَعَاشًا ﴿١١﴾ وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا
 وَهَاجًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَاجًا ﴿١٤﴾ لِّنُخْرِجَ بِهٖ
 حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَجَنَّتِ الْاَفَا فَا ﴿١٦﴾ اِنَّ یَوْمَ الْفُضْلِ كَانَ مِیْقَاتًا
 ﴿١٧﴾ یَوْمَ یُنْفَخُ فِی الصُّوْرِ فَتَاتُوْنَ اَفْوَاجًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَفُتِحَتْ السَّمَا ؕ
 فَكَانَتْ اَبْوَابًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَسُیِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا ﴿٢٠﴾ اِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ
 كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ﴿٢١﴾ لِلطُّغٰیِیْنَ مَابًا ﴿٢٢﴾ لِّلْبِیْثِیْنَ فِیْهَا اَحْقَابًا ﴿٢٣﴾
 لَا یُدُوْقُوْنَ فِیْهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا ﴿٢٤﴾ اِلَّا حَمِیْمًا وَّعَسَاقًا ﴿٢٥﴾ جَزَاءً
 وَفَاقًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا لَا یَرْجُوْنَ حِسَابًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰیٰتِنَا
 كِذَابًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَكُلَّ شَیْءٍ اَحْصٰیْنٰهُ كِتٰبًا ﴿٢٩﴾ فَدُوْقُوْا فَلَنْ نَّزِیْدَ كُمْ

إِلَّا عَذَابًا ﴿٣٠﴾ إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا ﴿٣١﴾ حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا ﴿٣٢﴾
 وَكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا ﴿٣٤﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا
 كِذْبًا ﴿٣٥﴾ جَزَاءً مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا ﴿٣٦﴾ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَنُ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾ يَوْمَ
 يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا ۗ لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أِذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ
 وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ﴿٣٨﴾ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ ۗ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَا بَأْ
 ﴿٣٩﴾ إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا ۗ يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ
 وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَلَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا ﴿٤٠﴾

About what are they asking each other? [1] About the Great Event [2] in which they dispute! [3] Truly, they will soon know. [4] Again, truly, they will soon know. [5] Did We not make the earth as a floor, [6] and the mountains as pegs? [7] And We have created you in pairs, [8] and made your sleep a source of rest, [9] and made the night a covering, [10] and made the day a source of livelihood. [11] And We have built seven strong (skies), [12] and created a luminous lamp (the sun). [13] And We have sent down from the rain-laden clouds abundant water, [14] so that We bring out therewith grain and vegetation, [15] and thick gardens. [16]

Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time, [17] a day when the trumpet will be blown, so you will come in multitudes, [18] and the sky will be opened, so it will become as gates, [19] and the mountains will be set in motion, so they will be as mirage. [20] Surely Jahannam (the Hell) is set in ambush. [21] (It is) an abode for the rebellious people [22] who will be abiding in it for ages. [23] They will taste nothing cool in it, nor a drink, [24] except boiling water and pus, [25] this being a recompense in full accord (with their deeds). [26] They did not expect (to face) accounting (of their deeds), [27] and they rejected Our signs totally. [28] And everything (from their deeds) is thoroughly recorded by Us in writing. [29] "So now taste! We will never add to you

anything except torment." [30]

For the God-fearing there is sure achievement, [31] gardens and grapes, [32] and buxom maidens of matching age, [33] and goblets filled up to the brim. [34] They will not hear therein any vain talk, nor lies, [35] this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing grant, [36] (from) the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, the All-Merciful. No one will have power to address Him, [37] on the Day when the Spirit and the angels will stand in rows. They will not speak, except the one who is permitted by the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful) and speaks aright. [38] That is the Day which is sure to come. So whoever so wishes may take refuge with his Lord. [39] We have warned you of an approaching torment (that will be inflicted) on a day when one will see what his hands have sent ahead, and the disbeliever will say, "O would that I had become dust!" [40]

Commentary

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ (About what are they asking each other?...78:1). The word 'amma is made up of two particles: [1] The preposition عَنْ 'an (about); and [2] the interrogative particle مَا 'mā' (what?) (the last letter, that is, 'mā' has been omitted according to the grammatical composition. The sense is : About what are they asking each other?' Allah Himself replies to the question when He says:

عَنِ النَّبَاِ الْعَظِيْمِ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيْهِ مُخْتَلِفُوْنَ (About the Great Event in which they dispute!....78:2,3). The word *naba'* means 'news' but not every news is *naba'*. It means a 'momentous news of a great event'. This refers to the news of the Day of Judgement. The verse purports to convey that the inhabitants of Makkah ask about the Day of Judgement in which they dispute [while some of them believed in Resurrection, others did not.]

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that when the revelation of Qur'an started, the pagan Arabs used to form circles and discuss and criticise it, especially about the tremendous import of Resurrection and Judgement referred to in the Qur'an. The pagans thought this was impossible, and they used to have protracted discussion. The disbelievers persuade themselves to believe that the predicted event will never take place,

though there were others who believed in the event. The Sūrah opens by shunning the enquirers and the enquiry, it wonders that anyone should raise any doubts about Resurrection and Judgement. Some of the commentators express the opinion that their enquiry was not a genuine one where they were keen to learn about the truth. So they ask half-mockingly and half in doubt, when that event, so loudly pronounced, will happen. Qur'an has responded by asserting one statement twice for emphasis, thus:

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ. ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ (Truly, they will soon know. Again, truly, they will soon know....78:5) The particle *kallā* is negative, and means 'never, by no means'. It means here that this matter cannot be understood by question and answer or by disputation and debate. Its reality will be understood by them when they will face it. It is such a reality that has no room for questions, disputation or denial. The Qur'an says that soon they will come to know about it [and this statement is repeated twice for emphasis]. In other words, when they die, they will discover the realities of the next world. They will see the horrors of the Hereafter with their eyes.

Then the Holy Qur'an has pointed to different demonstrations of His power to prove that it is not impossible for Allah to destroy this entire world and re-create it once again. Reference is made to the creation of earth, mountains, human beings, males and females and the creation of suitable conditions for human life, health and activities. One of the things mentioned in this connection is :

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا (and made your sleep a source of rest,...78:9). The word *subāt* is derived from *sabt* which means 'to cut off'. Sleep is something that cuts off the worries and tensions one may have, and thus gives him such a rest that cannot be attained from anything else. Therefore, some scholars translate the word *subāt* as 'rest'.

Sleep Is a Great Gift

After mentioning in verse [8] that Allah has created mankind in pairs, Allaah Ta'ālā states in verse [9] that among the means of their comfort, He created sleep, which is a great divine gift. Sleep is a great source of relaxation for the entire creation - for rich as well as for poor, for learned

people, as well as for the illiterate ones, for kings as well as for labourers. This gift is made available equally and simultaneously for all. Rather, experience shows that this gift is most readily available to the poor and labouring class, as compared to the affluent and the elite class. The latter class has all the means of comfort, they have comfortable homes, they have moderately warm and cold places, they have comfortable mattresses and pillows that are rarely available to the poor. But the gift of sleep is not dependent upon the mattresses, pillows, cottages and bungalows. It is purely a divine gift that is given directly by Allah. Often the poor, with no means of comfort and without bed or bedding, enjoy the best sleep in an open space. Sometimes, the affluent and the men of means suffer from insomnia and can only get sleep when they take sleeping pills. Often the pills do not work either. Not only that this great gift is given to all creatures - humans as well as animals - and it is given free of charge, without working for it. Allah has made it compulsory for everyone in a way that even if he wishes to keep awake because of load of work, sleep is imposed on him by Allah's mercy, so that his tiredness is removed and he is refreshed to work further. This arrangement is a wonderful means of providing rest and peace for man.

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا (and made the night a covering...78:10) This points to the fact that man naturally feels sleepy when light decreases and darkness prevails, when there is tranquillity all around and there is absence of noises. The verse under comment additionally signifies that Allah did not only give man sleep, but created in the entire world conditions that are suitable for sleep. That is to say: [1] darkness of night; [2] the state of sleep is imposed on all humans and animals simultaneously, so that they sleep at the same time. In this way, there will be peace and tranquillity throughout the world. Like other works, if there are different times for different people to sleep, no one will have peace and tranquillity.

Thereafter the verse reads:

وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا (and made the day a source of livelihood...78:11). Man requires, together with sleep, other essentials of life, such as livelihood. Otherwise, the sleep will turn into death. If the world would have had only nights and no days, and man would have continued to sleep all the time, how would he have obtained his livelihood and other essentials,

whereas day is the time when he could work hard and make activities in the daylight in order to earn a living. Thus the verses under comment purport to say that Allah has, in order to complete the comforts of life, made the night a cloak and the day for earning a living. وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَاجًا.

Now attention is drawn to the comforts we get from the sky. The most useful thing in the sky is the light of the sun. It is mentioned in the following verse: وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَاجًا (and created a luminous lamp [the sun]....78:13). Then, among the useful things below the sky, the most beneficial and the most essential thing is the raining clouds which are mentioned thus: وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا (And We have sent down from the rain-laden clouds abundant water,...78:14). The word *mu'shirāt* is the plural of *mu'sirah* 'rain-laden cloud'. This indicates that rain comes down from the cloud. There are verses, however, that indicate that rain comes down from the sky. Those verses too probably refer to 'upper atmosphere'. There are many verses in the Qur'an where the word *samā'* is used in that sense. Having mentioned these Divine blessings, the Sūrah reverts to its original theme of Resurrection and Judgement:

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفُضْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا (Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time...78:17). 'The Day of Decision' refers to the Day of Resurrection. It is a fixed appointment. Other verses indicate that the trumpet will be blown twice. When it is blown the first time, the entire world will come to an end. When it is blown the second time, people of the entire world, the earlier generations as well as the latter generations, will be resurrected and come in multitudes and droves. Sayyidnā Abu Dharr Ghifārī رضي الله عنه reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "On the Day of Resurrection, people will come in three different groups: [1] a group will come in the Plain of Gathering whose stomach will be full, wearing clothes and riding mounts; another group will come to the Plain of Gathering bare feet; and a third group will be brought on the Plain of Gathering being dragged on their faces." [Mazharī cites the following authorities: Nasā'ī, Ḥākim and Baihaqī]

Some narratives report ten types of group. Some scholars say that the groups on the Plain of Gathering will be divided according to their deeds and character. The narratives are not conflicting. All of them may be true.

وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا (and the mountains will be set in motion, so they will be as mirage....78:20). The word *suyyirat* 'set in motion' signifies that mountains, which are taken as an example of firmness and strength, will

be shifted from their positions, and will become like little particles of dust flying about in the atmosphere. The word *sarāb* literally means 'to disappear' and it also refers to 'mirage' or an optical illusion, as of a sheet of water, that sometimes appears in a desert, because it seems to be a sheet of water from a distance, but when a person comes near it, it disappears. [Ṣiḥāḥ and Rāghib].

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا (Surely Jahannam [the Hell] is set in ambush. 78:21). The word *mirsād* means 'an ambush' or 'lying in wait to attack unawares' or 'a secret position for surprise attack'. Here Hell refers to the bridge of Hell. The angels of reward and punishment will lie in wait. The angels of punishment will make a surprise attack on the inmates of Hell, and the angels of reward will lie in wait to accompany the inmates of Paradise and take them to their abode. [Maḏharī]

Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى said that there will be an outpost of guardian angels on the bridge of Hell. If anyone has a permit to enter Paradise, he will be permitted to enter; but if anyone does not have the permit to enter Paradise, he will be prevented from entering it. [Qurtubī]

لِلطَّغْيَانِ مَأْبَا ([It is] an abode for the rebellious people...78:22). The combined sense of verses 21 and 22 is that the bridge of Hell is set in ambush for all, the good and the bad. They will have to go over it. But Hell is the abode of the rebellious people. The word *tāghīn* is the plural of *tāghī*, being derived from *tughyan*, meaning 'rebellion'. Thus the word *tāghī* refers to a 'person who exceeds the limit in disobeying the authority [of Allah]'. This is possible only when he gives up his faith. Hence, the word *tāghīn* in this context would refer to the disbelievers. It may also refer to the stray groups of Muslims who have deviated from the limits of Qur'an and Sunnah, though they may not have adopted *kufr* expressly, such as Rawafīd, Khawārij, Mu'tazilah and others. [as in Maḏharī].

لَبِثِينَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا (who will be abiding in it for ages....78:23). The word *lābithīn* is the plural of *lābith* which means 'one who abides'. The word *aḥqāb* is the plural of *ḥiqbah* and means 'ages or a long time'. Scholars differ on the exact length or specific amount of time meant by this word. Ibn Jarīr has recorded that Sayyidnā 'Alī ؑ states that *ḥiqbah* is eighty years, and the year constitutes twelve months, and every month comprises thirty days, and each day is equivalent to one thousand years, thus one *ḥiqbah* totalling about twenty million and eighty-eight hundred

thousand years . Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah, 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنهم and others say that one *ḥiqbah* is seventy years instead of eighty years. The rest of the calculation remains the same. [Ibn Kathīr]. In Musnad of Bazzār, Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar ﷺ traces the following Ḥadīth to the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

لا يخرج احدكم من النار حتى يمكث فيه احقاباً، والحقب بضع وثمانون سنة،
كل سنة ثلثمائة وستون يوماً مما تعدون

"Those who will be put in Hell for punishment of their sins, they will not be able to come out until they tarry therein for a few *Aḥqāb*. One *ḥiqbah* will be a little over eighty years, and the year has three hundred and sixty days according to your reckoning [in this life]."

This Tradition, though does not interpret this verse, it does explain the sense of the word *aḥqāb*. Some of the Companions mention that one day is equivalent to a thousand years. If they had heard this from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, there is conflict in the narratives. In the face of such conflict, it is not possible to settle on one narration. However, there is a common denominator between the two conflicting narratives, that *ḥiqbah* means 'an extremely long period of time'. Therefore, Baidawī has interpreted the word as 'many long periods of time successively following the others.

Problem of Eternity of Hell

If it be argued, as some do, that the inmates of Hell, after serving the long ages in Hell, will be released because no matter what the length of *ḥiqbah*, it is, nonetheless, finite and limited and will come to an end some time or other. But looking at other clear verses of the Qur'ān, the argument does not hold up. We come across express text like:

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا

'[They, the disbelievers] shall remain therein [in the Fire] for ever'.

Therefore, there is the consensus of Ummah that neither Hell will perish, nor will the disbelievers be released at anytime.

Suddi reports from Sayyidnā Murrah Ibn 'Abdullah ﷺ that if the inmates of Hell are informed that they will abide in Hell for the number of pebbles in the entire world, they will be happy even at this information,

because these pebbles though will count into billions or zillions, still they are finite. If so, their punishment will, some time or the other, come to an end. If the same information is given to the inmates of Paradise that they will abide therein to the count of billions of pebbles in the entire world, it will sadden them, because, in that case, no matter how long the space of time they will live in Paradise, they will be expelled after this period. [Maḏharī]

In any case, the notion that after a few *aḥqāb* the disbelievers will be released from Hell is contrary to the explicit texts and common consent of the Ummah, and as such it is unworthy of consideration, because the verse does not mention what will happen after the *aḥqāb*. It merely mentions that they will have to abide in Hell 'for ages [*aḥqāb*]'. This does not necessarily imply that there will be no Hell after *aḥqāb* or its non-believing inmates will be released. Therefore, Sayyidnā Ḥasan ؓ says that no specific period has been defined for the inmates of Hell, so that they will be released after that. It is that which has no end to it. Whenever one *ḥiqbah* [era] is over, a new *ḥiqbah* will start; when the second era come to an end, a third *ḥiqbah* will start; when the third *ḥiqbah* ends, the fourth *ḥiqbah* will start; and it will carry on ad infinitum. Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ؓ also interprets the word *aḥqāb* as referring to 'the time which has no end to it. Whenever one era ends, a new era follows it until eternity'. [Ibn Kathīr and Maḏharī]. Ibn Kathīr describes another possibility which Qurtūbī supports and Maḏharī adopts. The possibility is that the word *ṭāghīn* 'rebellious people' probably does not refer to the disbelievers, but to the people of *Tauḥīd*, who, on account of their false beliefs, fall into one of the categories of deviant groups. Traditionalists refer to them as *ahl-ul-ahwa'* 'heretics whose beliefs are not in keeping with the common consent of the People of *Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jama'ah*. In this case, the verse purports to say that they are the people of *Tauḥīd*, but bordered on the boundary of disbelief on account of false beliefs. They, however, did not cross into the boundary of explicit disbelief. They will therefore abide in Hell for the period of *aḥqāb*, and then discharged therefrom by virtue of the creed of *tauḥīd*.

Maḏharī, in support of this possibility, has cited the Prophetic Ḥadīth which was reported earlier on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar ؓ with reference to Musnad of Bazzār, in which the Holy Prophet

ﷺ said that after the period of *aḥqāb* has passed, these people will be taken out of Hell. Abū Ḥayyān, however, disputes this on the grounds of the verses that follow the present verse:

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا. وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا

(They did not expect [to face] accounting [of their deeds], and they rejected Our signs totally....78:28)

These verses contradict the possibility that *ṭāghīn* 'rebellious people' could be referring to people of Tauhid and deviant groups, because in the concluding verses it is expressly mentioned that they explicitly reject reckoning and utterly deny the Prophets عليهم السلام. Likewise Abū Ḥayyān rejects out of hand Muqatil's opinion that this verse is abrogated.

A group of commentators find a third interpretation of this verse. A statement after this verse, namely, لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا (They will taste nothing cool in it, nor a drink, except boiling water and pus...78:25) - is circumstantial clause to *aḥqāb*, in which case the verse purports to say that for the countless aeons of *aḥqāb* that they will be in Hell they will not be tasting any coolness of air nor any food or drink excepting for boiling water and [scalding] pus. When the *aḥqāb* is over, the condition may change, and other kinds of punishment may be imposed. The word *ḥamīm* means 'intensely boiling water if brought near the face, it would burn its flesh, and when put into the stomach it would cut into pieces the internal organs'. The word *ghassāq* means 'blood and pus, and washings of wounds that will ooze from the inmates of Hell'.

جَزَاءً وَفَاءً (this being a recompense in full accord [with their deeds]....78:26). The punishment given to them in Hell will be based on justice and equity - a fitting recompense - on account of their false beliefs and evil deeds. They will not be wronged in the least.

فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا ("So now taste! We will never add to you anything except torment."....78:30). In other words, in the world they continued to add disbelief. If death did not overtake them by coercion, they would have continued to add disbelief, and today their punishment will be increased.

Thus far the punishment of disbelievers was depicted. As opposed to this, the reward and blessings of the righteous believers are depicted below.

جَزَاءً مِنْ رَبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا (this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing

grant...78:36). The blessings of Paradise described above is the reward of the believers and is an abundant grant from their Lord. Here two things are mentioned. First, these blessings are a reward of their deeds. Secondly, they are a Divine grant. Apparently, they seem to be contradictory, because reward means receiving something in lieu of doing some service, whereas grant is given gratis. The Qur'ān has combined the two words in order to indicate that the blessings of Paradise are reward for the inmates of Paradise only apparently, and in reality they are a Divine grant given to them gratis, because human deeds cannot be the reward of even those blessings which were given to him in the world, let alone the blessings of the Hereafter which depend entirely on Divine grace as is confirmed by the Tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "No one can enter Paradise merely by virtue of his deeds, unless Allah shows His grace." The Companions asked: "What about you, Messenger of Allah." He replied: "Nor will I enter Paradise merely by virtue of my action."

The word *hisāban* has two meanings: [1] a grant [that is] sufficient [and] abundant. This meaning is adapted from the following idiom: *أَحْسَبْتُ* *أَحْسَبْتُ* فَلَانَا أَى أَعْطَيْتُهُ، مَا يَكْفِيهِ حَتَّى قَالَ حَسْبِي *ahṣabtu* means that I gave him so much so that it was sufficient for him until he yelled out "enough, this is too much for me"; and [2] the second meaning 'balancing of account' and 'comparing'. Sayyidnā Mujāhid رضي الله عنه says that in this context the verse purports to say that the Divine grant will be given gratis to the inmates of Paradise. The grant will be in keeping with the degree of sincerity as reported in authentic Traditions. The deeds of the noble Companions are greater than the deeds of the rest of the Ummah. If a Companion were to spend in the way of Allah one *mudd* = [815,39 grams] and a non-Companion were to spend to the equivalent of Mount Uhud, the Companion's one *mudd* will weigh heavier than the mountain. And Allah knows best!

لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا (...No one will have power to address Him,...78:37)

This sentence is probably connected to the preceding verse: *جَزَاءً مِّن رَّبِّكَ* *عَطَاءً حِسَابًا* (this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing grant...78:36) In this case, it would mean that when Allah grants a certain grade of reward, no one dare speak about the grade as to why someone got more and others got less. But if this sentence is treated as an isolated one, it will mean that no one in the Plane of Gathering will have the power to speak to Him without His permission. This permission will be granted in some of

the positions of Gathering, and not in others.

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا (on the Day when the Spirit and the angels will stand in rows. They will not speak, except the one who is permitted by the Raḥmān [the All-Merciful] and speaks aright -78:38). Rūḥ (Spirit), according to some of the commentators, refers to the angel Jibrā'īl عليه السلام. He has been mentioned before the other angels in general in order to show the greatness of his status. According to certain Prophetic traditions, Rūḥ is not an angel but a huge army of Allah. They have heads, hands and legs. In this interpretation, there will be two rows. One row will be that of Rūḥ and the other will be that of the angels.

يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ (...on a day when one will see what his hands have sent ahead...78:40) Apparently, this refers to the Day of Judgement. Every person will see his deeds with his own eyes in the Plane of Gathering. This might happen in one of two ways: [1] his ledger of deeds will be given in his hands and he will see it; or [2] his deeds will appear in the Plane of Gathering, epitomized in a visible shape, as certain narratives confirm this. Still a third possibility exists. The word 'day' may refer to 'the day of death'. And the words 'will see' means to see in the grave or barzakh, as explained by Maḥzarī.

وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَا لَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا (and the disbeliever will say, "O would that I had become dust...78:40) Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه reports that on the Day of Resurrection the entire earth will become a plane surface where all human beings, *Jinn*, domesticated animals and wild animals will be gathered. If one animal had wronged another animal in the world, it will be given the opportunity to take its revenge. If a goat with horns had wronged a goat without horns, it will be granted the opportunity to take its avenger. When this phase is over, all animals will be commanded to become dust. They will become dust. At that moment the disbelievers will wish that they were also animals and would become dust like them, so that they would have been spared the torment of reckoning and punishment of Hell. We seek refuge in Allah from it! Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Naba'
Ends here

Sūrah An-Nāzi‘at (Those Who Pull Out)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 46 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 46

وَالنَّزِعَاتِ غَرْقًا ﴿١﴾ وَالنَّشِيطَاتِ نَشْطًا ﴿٢﴾ وَالسَّابِحَاتِ سَبْحًا ﴿٣﴾
فَالسَّابِقَاتِ سَبْقًا ﴿٤﴾ فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا ﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ ﴿٦﴾
تَتَّبِعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ ﴿٧﴾ قُلُوبٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ ﴿٨﴾ أَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ ﴿٩﴾
يَقُولُونَ ءَإِنَّا لَمَرْدُودُونَ فِي الْحَافِرَةِ ﴿١٠﴾ ءَإِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا نَّخِرَةً
﴿١١﴾ قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذًا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾ فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ
﴿١٣﴾ فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ﴿١٤﴾ هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى ﴿١٥﴾ إِذْ
نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴿١٦﴾ إِذْهَبْ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى
﴿١٧﴾ فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَىٰ أَن تَزَكَّىٰ ﴿١٨﴾ وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَىٰ
﴿١٩﴾ فَأَرَاهُ الْآيَةَ الْكُبْرَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَىٰ ﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ أَذْبَرَ
يَسْعَىٰ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَىٰ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَىٰ ﴿٢٤﴾
فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَىٰ ﴿٢٥﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّمَنْ
يَخْشَىٰ ﴿٢٦﴾ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ طَبَّهَا ﴿٢٧﴾ رَفَعَ
سَمَكَهَا فَسَوَّيْتُهَا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَأَعْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُخْهَا ﴿٢٩﴾

وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحِيهَا ﴿٣٠﴾ أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَهَا ﴿٣١﴾
 وَالجِبَالَ أَرْسَبَهَا ﴿٣٢﴾ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِإِنْعَامِكُمْ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ
 الطَّامَّةُ الْكُبْرَى ﴿٣٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَى ﴿٣٥﴾ وَبُرَزَتِ
 الْجَحِيمُ لِمَنْ يَرَى ﴿٣٦﴾ فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَى ﴿٣٧﴾ وَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
 ﴿٣٨﴾ فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى ﴿٣٩﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ
 وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَى ﴿٤٠﴾ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى ﴿٤١﴾
 يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسِلُهَا ﴿٤٢﴾ فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرِهَا
 ﴿٤٣﴾ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهِيهَا ﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ مَّن يَخْشَاهَا ﴿٤٥﴾
 كَانَهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبُثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا ﴿٤٦﴾

I swear by those (angels) who pull out (the souls of the infidels) vigorously [1] and by those (angels) who untie the knot (of the souls of the believers) smoothly, [2] and by those who float (in the atmosphere) swiftly, [3] then proceed forward quickly, [4] then manage (to do) everything (they are ordered to do,) [5] (you will be resurrected) on the Day when the shocking event (i.e. the first blowing of the trumpet) will shock (everything), [6] followed by the next one (i.e. the second blowing of the trumpet.) [7] Hearts, on that Day, will be throbbing, [8] (and) their eyes will be downcast. [9]

They say, "Are we going to be brought back to our former state (of Life)? [10] Is it when we will have turned into decayed bones?" [11] They say, "If so, that will be a harmful return." [12] So, it will be only a single harsh voice, [13] and in no time they will be (brought) in the plain (of *hashr*). [14]

Has there come to you the narrative of Mūsā? [15] (Recall) when his Lord called to him in the blessed valley of Tuwa: [16] "Go to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). Indeed, he has crossed all bounds (in making mischief). [17] And say (to him,) "Would you like to purify yourself, [18] and that I guide you to your Lord, so that you fear (Him)?" [19] So he showed him the biggest sign. [20] But he rejected and disobeyed, [21] then he turned back, and

tried hard (to refute the Messenger), [22] then he gathered (his people) and shouted [23] and said, "I am the supreme lord of yours." [24] So, Allah seized him for the deterrent punishment in the Hereafter and the present world. [25] Indeed, there is a lesson for him who fears (Allah). [26]

Are you more difficult to be created or the sky? He has built it, [27] He has raised its height, then made it proper, [28] and darkened its night, and brought forth its daylight, [29] and, after that, He spread out the earth. [30] From it, He brought out its water and its meadows, [31] and firmly fixed the mountains, [32] (all this) as a benefit to you and your cattle. [33] So when the Biggest Havoc will come [34] on the day when man will recall what he did, [35] and the Hell will be exposed for all who see, [36] then for the one who had rebelled, [37] and preferred the worldly life (to the Hereafter), [38] the Hell will be the abode, [39] whereas for the one who feared to stand before his Lord, and restrained his self from the (evil) desire, [40] the Paradise will be the abode. [41]

They ask you about the Hour (the Day of Judgment) as to when it will take place. [42] In which capacity are you to tell this? [43] With your Lord is the final word about it. [44] You are only a warner for anyone who fears it. [45] The day they will see it, it will seem to them as if they did not live (in the world), but only for one afternoon or for the morning thereof. [46]

Commentary

وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا (I swear by those [angels] who pull out [the souls of the infidels] vigorously ...79:1). The word *nāzi‘āt* is derived from *naz‘* and it means 'to draw vigorously'. The word *gharqan* is its corroborative because the word *gharq* is used here in the sense of *ighrāq* and means 'to exert oneself much or to the utmost extent in the thing'. The Arabic idiom has it اغرق النّازع في القوس 'He drew the bow with great vigour'. The Sūrah begins with an oath by certain characteristics of the angels to affirm that the Resurrection is a certainty. The subject of the oath, however, has been contextually deleted. The oath of the angels is probably apt on this occasion because they are all the time involved in the administration and running of the world. They are executing their duties loyally. On the Day of Judgement, all material causes will be severed. Unusual events will

occur and the angels will be involved in them.

Five characteristics of the angels are mentioned which are concerned with or related to the extraction of the soul at the time of death. The purport of the verses is to affirm that Resurrection is a certainty. It starts with human death. Every man's death is his partial Day of Doom, and this has an important impact on his belief in Resurrection. The five qualities are as follows:

The first quality of the angels:

النَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا I swear by those (angels) who pull out (the souls of the infidels) vigorously.

This refers to the angels of punishment who draw the souls of the infidels vigorously and harshly. The words 'vigorously' refer to spiritual pain. The humans around the dying person may not be sensitive to the pain. Often it is noticed that the soul of an infidel apparently slips out easily, but this ease is perceived by humans around the dying man. The pain is felt by the soul of the dying person. Who can perceive it? We are aware of it only because Allah has informed us about it in this verse.

The second quality of the angels :

وَالنَّاشِطَاتِ نَشْطًا (and by those [angels] who untie the knot [of the souls of the believers] smoothly, [2]) The word *nashiṭāt* is derived from *nashṭ* and it means 'to untie the knot'. This signifies 'to untie the knot of something which contains water or air, so that it may be released easily'. This is metaphor for drawing out the souls of the believers gently, unlike the souls of the infidels which are plucked out harshly. In this case too the adverb 'smoothly' refers to the spiritual smoothness, and not to the physical experience. Sometimes, it happens that there is a delay at the time of death of a righteous believer. This may not be suspected to mean that he is undergoing some sort of suffering, although physically it may seem so. When the soul of an infidel is extracted, the entire scene of the punishment of *barzakh* comes in front of him. It is frightened by it, disperses throughout the body and tries to hide or escape. The angels forcefully extract the soul just as wet wool wrapped around a skewer is forcefully removed. When the soul of a believer is extracted, on the other hand, the reward, the blessings and the welcome news of the *barzakh*

come in front of him.

The third quality of the angels :

وَالسَّيِّحَاتِ سَبِيحًا (and by those who float [in the atmosphere] swiftly...79:3). The word *sabḥ* literally means to 'swim' or 'float'. Here it signifies 'to glide along swiftly as in the sea where there is no mountain barrier'. The one who swims fast and goes far in swimming or a boatman who moves directly towards his final destination. The 'angels who float swiftly' refer to the quality of the angels of death who extract human souls and take them quickly towards the sky.

The fourth quality of the angels :

فَالسَّيِّفَاتِ سَبِيحًا (then proceed forward quickly...79:4). According to Divine instruction, the angels do not delay in transporting the souls of people to their good or their bad abodes. The soul of a believer is transported to the atmosphere and blessings of Paradise, and that of an unbeliever to the atmosphere and torment of Hell.

The fifth quality of the angels :

فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا (then manage [to do] everything [they are ordered to do,]...79:5). In other words, the last task of these angels of death will be as follows: Those who are commanded to reward and comfort the deserving souls, will gather means of reward and comfort for them; and those who are commanded to punish and cause pain to [the evil souls] will organise means for that.

Reward and Punishment in the Grave

The Sūrah thus far confirms that at the time of death, the angels will arrive and extract human souls. Then they will take them to the sky and swiftly transport them to their abodes, the good souls to the good abode and the bad souls to the bad one. There they will organise means of reward or punishment and pain or comfort for them. The verses show that the reward and punishment will take place in the grave or *barzakh*. Thereafter the reward and punishment will be meted out on the Day of Judgement. Authentic Traditions give elaborate details of this. There is a lengthy Tradition of Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib رضي الله عنه cited in Mishkāt-ul-Maṣābiḥ with reference to Musnad of Aḥmad.

Nafs [Self] Rūḥ [Spirit - Soul]: Qāḍī Thanā’ullah's Research and Analysis

The readers are referred to a special research and analysis by the Baihaqī of his time, Qāḍī Thanā’ullah Pānīpatī, that was presented in this book under verse [29] of Sūrah Ḥijr. Here the learned commentator has added some more details which dispose of many doubts which arise from the above Tradition: The human soul is a refined body which permeates the dense material body. The [ancient] doctors and philosophers called it as *rūḥ* or soul. But the real spirit is an abstract substance and a subtle divine creature connected in a special way with this physical soul or *nafs*, the life of which is dependent on the Divine Spirit. The pure, abstract and non-material spirit is the life of the first soul on which depends the life of the body, and therefore it is called the 'soul of soul'. The real nature of the connection between these two kinds of soul is not known to anyone. It is known to Allah alone. Perhaps an illustration would clarify the matter. If we were to hold a mirror against the sun, then, despite that the sun is 149.6 million kilometres away from the earth, its reflection comes into the mirror. And because of the light, that too starts glowing like the sun. The same thing applies to the human soul. If it exerts itself in spiritual struggle and ascetic discipline in keeping with the teachings of [Divine] revelation, he will be enlightened. Otherwise he would be polluted with the bad effects of the physical body. This is the refined bodily soul that the angels transport to the heaven and transport him back with honours if he is enlightened. Otherwise the doors of the heaven are not opened for him and is thrown down from top. This is the refined bodily soul, the Tradition notes, which Allah created from dust and to it He will return him and from it. He resurrect him. It is this refined bodily soul that gets enlightened and becomes fragrant. But the same body can stink because of [the filth of] disbelief and idolatrous practices. The 'abstract spirit' is connected with the dense body through the refined bodily soul. The abstract spirit never dies. The reward or punishment of grave is experienced by the refined bodily soul which keeps connected with the grave whereas the abstract spirit remains in *'illiyyūn*, and it feels the effects of reward and punishment indirectly. Thus the statement that 'the soul is in the grave' is true in the sense that 'soul' in this context refers to the bodily soul. The statement that 'the soul is in *'Ālam-ul-arwāḥ* or *'illiyyūn*' is also true, because the 'soul' in this context refers to *rūḥ*

mujarrad or 'abstract spirit'. Thus it is possible to reconcile the apparently conflicting statements.

فَأَذَاهُمُ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ (and in no time they will be [brought] in the plain [of *hashr*]...79:14). The word *sāhirah* refers to 'the surface of the earth'. When the earth will be re-created at Resurrection, it will be a completely level surface. There will be no mountain barriers, no buildings or caves. This is referred to as '*sāhirah*'.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be hurt by the stubbornness of the obdurate rejecters of Resurrection. The next verses recount the story of Mūsā عليه السلام and Fir'aun to console him, and to show that the adverse attitude of the pagans is not confined to him. The previous prophets have also faced similar situations, but they endured them with patience. The Holy Prophet ﷺ too should exercise patience and fortitude.

فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى (So, Allah seized him for the deterrent punishment in the Hereafter and the present world....79:25). The word *nakāl* means an 'exemplary punishment' or 'an extremely severe punishment given to an offender to deter others against committing a similar offence or sin'. The phrase 'punishment of the '*ākhirah*' refers to the punishment of the Hereafter that will be meted out to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). The phrase 'punishment of the '*ūlā*' refers to the punishment meted out to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) and his army in this world whereby they were destroyed by drowning.

Further, the Qur'ān again disposes of the doubt of the rejecters of resurrection who pose the question: "Are we going to be brought back to our former state (of life)? Is it when we will have turned into decayed bones?" [10-11] In other words, this is a negative rhetorical question. They purport to say that it is not possible for them to be restored to life after death when they have become perished and worm-eaten bones. Allah responds that the Supreme Creator, Who drew out this universe without any pre-existing matter and without any instrument, certainly has the Supreme power to give existence to things after destroying them. Why should it be a surprise?

In the verses that follow, the horrors of the Day of Judgement are depicted. It is mentioned that on that Day, every person will be presented with his deeds. Described also are the abodes of the inmates of Paradise

and Hell. Towards the end, special traits of the people of Paradise and those of Hell are portrayed by which a man can decide in this very world whether, according to the rules, his abode would be Paradise or Hell. The expression 'according to the rules' has been used because many verses and narratives indicate that there could be 'exceptions to the rules'. For example, a person might attain freedom from Hell and enter Paradise by virtue of intercession or directly through the grace of Allah. This is an exception to the rule. The general rule is the same as has been mentioned in these verses.

First, the special marks of the inmates of Hell are described. They have two characteristics:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ وَآثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا (then for the one who had rebelled, and preferred the worldly life [to the Hereafter]...79:38). In other words, [1] instead of remaining loyal to Allah and His Messenger and following their commands, they adopt the line of rejection and rebellion; and [2] prefer the life of this world to that of the Hereafter. In other words, if he were to do a deed that gives comfort and pleasure in this world but punishment in the Hereafter, he would prefer the comforts and pleasure of this life to the pleasure of the next life. Those who are characterised by these two qualities the Blazing Fire, that is Hell, will be their abode, thus: فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ (the Hell will be the abode...79:39).

Thereafter, the special marks of the inmates of Paradise are described. They too have two characteristics:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَىٰ النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ (whereas for the one who feared to stand before his Lord, and restrained his self from the [evil] desire, 79:40). In other words, [1] the first characteristic of a God-fearing person is that, in this life, he shudders at the thought of appearing before Allah to account for his deeds on the Day of Reckoning; and [2] forbids the baser self from its evil desires. Those who are characterised by these two qualities have the good news that the Paradise will be their abode, thus: فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ (the Paradise will be the abode....79:41)

Three Levels of Suppressing [the Base] Self

The verse under comment lays down two conditions of attaining the abode in Paradise, but carefully considered, the two conditions, in terms of consequence, are one. The first condition is the fear of accountability in

the presence of Allah. The second condition is to restrain oneself from the evil desires. As a matter of fact, fear of Allah causes one to restrain oneself from evil desires. Qāḍī Thanā'ullah Pānipatī has written in his Tafsīr Maḥzarī that there are three levels of suppressing evil desires, as follows:

The first level is that one avoids false beliefs which are in conflict or incompatible with express texts [of the Holy Qur'ān and established Sunnah] and consensus of [the righteous] predecessors. In this level, a person deserves to be called 'Sunnī Muslim'.

The second level is the middle one. A person, in this stage, may think of committing sin. Then he may remember that he has to account for his deeds before Allah [on the Day of Reckoning]. As a result, he abandons the thought of committing sin. The complement to this level is that one abstains from doubtful things and those acts that are permissible in themselves, but there is apprehension that if committed, they may lead one to slip into impermissible acts. Sayyidnā Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr رضي الله عنه narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "He who abstained from doubtful things has protected his honour and religion. He who indulged in doubtful things will eventually indulge in forbidden things." The expression 'doubtful things' signifies those acts about which one is not certain whether they are permissible or not, both possibilities being equal. Let us consider a few examples: if a person is ill and can take [wet] ablution, but he is not sure whether taking [wet] ablution in this state would be harmful. Thus the permissibility of dry ablution (*tayammum*) becomes doubtful. Likewise a person is able to perform prayers in a standing position, but feels great difficulty. He is now in doubt whether or not it is permissible for him to perform prayers in a sitting position. On such occasions, one should abandon the doubtful thing or act, and prefer what is definitely certain. This is *taqwa* and the middle course of suppressing the selfish desires.

Tricks of the Base Self

There are acts whose sinful nature is obvious to every one. The selfish desires prompting to such sinful acts may be suppressed by one's deliberate efforts and firm resolution. However, there are evils prompted by one's base self even during his acts of worship and other good deeds, such as self-conceit, (*Ujb*) vanity, (*Kibr*), and show off (*Riyā'*). These are such sins whose sinful nature is often not discoverable to a common

person, still they are very severe and firmly ingrained evil desires of one's base self. One is at times deceived by them, because he continues to think that his actions are right. It is extremely necessary that first and foremost this lower self must be suppressed. But this cannot be achieved by one on his own. It is necessary for one to search for a perfect spiritual master (*Ash-shaikhul-kāmil*), and hand himself over to him for guidance. He acts as the authentic guide and the only one to whom a seeker of Truth should turn in his quest and follow his advice. In turning to the spiritual master, the seeker is turning to Allah Almighty. The *shaikh* engages him in the spiritual struggle and endeavour [*mujāhadah*] against the passions and tendencies of the lower self [*'uyūb-un-nafs*].

Shaikh Imām Ya'qūb Karkhī رحمه الله تعالى says that in his young age he was a carpenter. He found laziness, and felt darkness in his inner self. So, he intended to keep fasts for a few days so that he may get rid of the laziness and darkness. Co-incidentally, one day, while he was fasting, he went up to Shaikh Imām Bahā'uddīn Naqshbandī. The Shaikh called for meals for his guests. He was also invited to partake of the meal, and the Shaikh said: "He is a very bad slave who is the slave of his base self that misleads him. It is better to partake of meal than to keep fast with evil desires of the base self." Shaikh Karkhī says that at that moment he realised that (by fasting) he was falling prey to self-complacency, self-conceit and pride, which the Shaikh Naqshbandī perceived. On that occasion, Shaikh Karkhī realised that a spiritual master's permission and guidance is needed to take up an optional act of worship, because the spiritual master is aware of the hidden tricks of the evil desires of the base self. If an optional act of worship will be accompanied by such motives, the will put a stop to it [for remedial purposes]. He asked Shaikh Naqshbandī: "If I cannot find a Shaikh who is called in Ṣūfī terms as *fānī fillah* and *bāqī billah*, (the explanation is coming in the next paragraph.) what must I do?" He replied: "Recite *istighfār* abundantly and recite *istighfār* [seek Allah's pardon] twenty times regularly after every prayer, so that it works out to a hundred times reciting it five times a day." The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Sometimes I feel my heart disturbed, and I recite *istighfār* [seek Allah's pardon] a hundred times a day."

The third and the highest level of suppression of the base self is that

by abundant *dhikrullah* [remembrance of Allah] and constant *mujāhadah* [spiritual struggle and endeavour against the evil passions] and *riyāḍah* [ascetic discipline], one's self (*nafs*) is so much cleansed and purified that the desires that tempts him to evil are totally eliminated. This is the special stage of *wilāyah* [Divine friendship], which in Ṣūfī Terminology is called *fānī fillah* and *bāqī billah*. The Qur'an says regarding such people [addressing the Satan]:

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ

'My servants are such that you have no power over them
[15:42]'

The following Tradition applies to the same category of *walī*:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونَ هَوَاهُ تَبَعًا لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ

'None of you can be a [perfect] believer unless his [base] desires of self follow my teachings.'

Towards the end of the Sūrah, the Holy Qur'an responds to the *mala fide* demand of the infidels that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should let them know the exact date and time of the Day of Judgement. They are told that knowledge of the time and date is within Allah's own special prerogative. Allah's consummate wisdom did not pass the information to any angel or Prophet عليهم السلام. Therefore, the demand is futile.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Nāzi'āt
Ends here

Sūrah 'Abas (Frowning)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 42 verses and 1 section.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 42

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿١﴾ أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّى ﴿٣﴾
أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى ﴿٤﴾ أَمَا مِنْ اسْتَعْجَلِي ﴿٥﴾ فَأَنْتَ لَهُ
تَصَدَّى ﴿٦﴾ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا يَزَّكَّى ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَا مِنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى ﴿٨﴾
وَهُوَ يَخْشَى ﴿٩﴾ فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى ﴿١٠﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ ﴿١١﴾
فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ ﴿١٢﴾ فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ ﴿١٣﴾ مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ ﴿١٤﴾
بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾ كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾ قَتَلَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ ﴿١٧﴾
مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ ﴿١٨﴾ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَرَهُ ﴿١٩﴾ ثُمَّ
السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ ﴿٢٠﴾ ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ ﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْشَرَهُ ﴿٢٢﴾
كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَا أَمَرَهُ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ ﴿٢٤﴾
أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا ﴿٢٦﴾ فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا
حَبًّا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَعِنَبًا وَقَضْبًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَحَدَائِقِ غُلْبًا ﴿٣٠﴾
وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا ﴿٣١﴾ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ ﴿٣٢﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ
الصَّاحَةُ ﴿٣٣﴾ يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَيْنِهِ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِكُلِّ أَمْرٍ مِّنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ
 ﴿٣٧﴾ وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَوُجُوهٌ
 يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ تَرَهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ ﴿٤١﴾ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ
 الْفَجْرَةُ ﴿٤٢﴾

He (the Holy Prophet ﷺ) frowned and turned his face, [1] because the blind man came to him! [2] And what could tell you (O Holy Prophet about the prospects of the blind man?) May be, (if you had attended him properly,) he would have attained purity, [3] or have taken to the advice, and the advice would have benefited him. [4] As for the one who does not care (about faith), [5] you are anxious to pursue him, [6] while there is no blame on you, if he does not attain purity. [7] As regards the one who has come to you rushing eagerly, [8] while he fears (Allah), [9] to him you pay no heed! [10]

Never! (you should never act in this way,) Indeed this (Qur'an) is an advice. [11] So, whoever so wills, let him remember it. [12] It is (recorded) in those scripts (of the Preserved Tablet) that are honoured, [13] exalted, purified, [14] in the hands of those scribes [15] who are honourable, righteous. [16]

Death be unto the man! How ungrateful he is! [17] From which stuff did He (Allah) create him? [18] From a drop of semen! He created him, and designed him in due proportion, [19] then He made the way easy for him, [20] Later, he made him die, and put him into the grave, [21] thereafter, when He will intend, He will raise him up. [22] No! He has not yet fulfilled what He (Allah) had commanded him. [23]

So, let the man look to his food, [24] how well We poured water, [25] then how nicely We split the earth, [26] then We grew in it grain, [27] and grapes and greens, [28] and olive and date-palms, [29] and gardens, full of thick trees, [30] and fruits and fodder, [31] as a benefit for you and your cattle. [32]

So when there will come the Deafening Noise, [33] the Day when one will flee from his brother, [34] and from his mother and father, [35] and from his wife and sons, [36] every one of them will have enough concern to make

him careless of others. [37] Many faces, on that day, will be bright, [38] laughing, rejoicing, [39] and many faces, on that day, will be stained with dust, [40] covered by darkness. [41] Those are the disbelievers, the nefarious. [42]

Commentary

Circumstance of Revelation

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ, the companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a blind man. It once happened that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was engaged in a talk with the leaders of Quraish about some matters of belief. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ arrived there. Imam Baghawi adds that being blind and unable to see the surroundings, he did not realise that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was occupied with the others. He, therefore, burst into the circle and called the Holy Prophet ﷺ repeatedly. [Maḥḥarī]. According to Ibn Kathīr, he requested the Holy Prophet ﷺ to teach him a verse of the Qur'ān and insisted an immediate enlightenment on the question. On that occasion, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was occupied with the non-believing leaders of Makkah in the hope that they would embrace the faith of Islam. The leaders to whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ was speaking were 'Utbah Ibn Rabī'ah, Abū Jahl Ibn Hishām and the Holy Prophet's ﷺ uncle 'Abbās ؓ [who had until then not embraced the Islamic faith].

The Holy Prophet ﷺ disliked the intrusion, and showed his displeasure by turning aside from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm, thinking that he was a committed Muslim who frequently visited him, and therefore he could speak to him at another appropriate time. There was no religious loss in postponing the response to him. On the other hand, the Quraish leaders neither frequented the Holy Prophet's ﷺ company, nor could the Word of Allah be conveyed to them at any time. At that particular moment, they were listening to the Holy Prophet's ﷺ discourse and there was hope that they would embrace the Islamic faith. But if the conversation was rashly interrupted, apparently they would have been deprived of the faith. In view of this situation, the Holy Prophet ﷺ showed adverse reaction by turning aside from 'Abdullāh Ibn umm Maktūm ؓ, and continued his discourse with the Quraish leaders. When the assembly broke up, the verses of Sūrah 'Abas were revealed to record Allah's dislike for this attitude, and to give directions for future.

This attitude of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was based on *ijtihād* or 'an

opinion based on personal reasoning'. He thought that if a Muslim were to adopt a speech style that is not in keeping with etiquettes of a gathering, he needs to be reprimanded, so that in future he may be careful in future. That is the reason why Holy Prophet ﷺ turned his face away from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ. Secondly, disbelief (*kufr*) and polytheism (*shirk*) are the most severe sins, and an effort to eradicate them should take priority over the subsidiary precepts of Islam on which Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ asked for enlightenment. Allah Almighty, through this Surah, did not confirm the correctness of this *ijtihad* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and explained to him that educating a genuine seeker will most certainly benefit him, while the benefit of discussion with the opponents (who disdainfully turn away their face when the Holy Prophet ﷺ talks to them) is shaky and doubtful. Doubtful thing cannot be preferred over certainty. As for the violation of etiquette committed by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm, its excuse is pointed out by the Holy Qur'ān in the word 'blind'. It is indicated by this word that being a blind man, he could not see what the Holy Prophet ﷺ was doing and with whom he was engaged in conversation. Thus he was excusable, and was not liable to be subjected to aversion. This indicates that if an excusable person were to break any rule of etiquette unwittingly, he should not be reprimanded.

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى (He [the Holy Prophet ﷺ] frowned and turned his face, 80:1). The word '*abasa*' means 'he frowned' and the word '*tawallā*' means 'he turned aside'. Since the reference here is to the Holy Prophet ﷺ who himself is addressed, the verbs should have been in the second person: 'you frowned and you turned aside'. But the Holy Qur'ān on this occasion uses the third person in order to maintain the honour of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as if this attitude were shown by some other person, and in a subtle way it alludes to the point that what the Holy Prophet ﷺ did was not befitting his high status. Then the next sentence وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ (and what could tell you? ...80:3) alludes to the fact that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was excusable, because it did not come to his attention that the Companion is asking something whose effect will be certain and the effect of conversation with others is dubious. The second sentence abandons the third person, and switches to the second person in order to maintain the

honour of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Had he not been addressed in second person at all, it might have created the impression that he is not addressed directly because of his unapproved conduct, which would have been an unbearable pain and grief for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Just as the third person in the first statement is meant to show respect to him, the second person in the following sentence is also meant to honor and console him.

لَعَلَّهٗ يَرْشِيْكَ اَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرٰى (May be, [if you had attended him properly,] he would have attained purity, or have taken to the advice, and the advice would have benefited him...80:4).

In other words, because Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ was a genuine believer, any advice given to him would have benefited him and served to purify him. The companion sought enlightenment and its benefit was certain. If the Holy Prophet ﷺ enlightened him on the topic, he would have purified himself and attained perfection. If that did not happen, he would have at least attained the basic benefit of Divine remembrance. He would have improved the love and fear of Allah in his heart. The word *dhikrā* means 'to remember Allah abundantly' [Ṣiḥāḥ].⁽¹⁾

On this occasion, the Qur'ān has used two sentences *yazzakkā* and *yazzakkaru*. The first statement signifies 'to be purified' and the second statement signifies 'he may take heed and the reminder may benefit him'. The first stage is that of the 'righteous' who cleanse their inner and outer selves. The second stage is that of *mubtadī* 'beginners on the spiritual journey'. At this stage, the beginner is reminded of Allah which enhances the greatness and awe of Allah in his heart. The two sentences are disjoined by disjunctive particles *au* (or) and technically they are not necessarily exclusive to one another. The sense is that 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ would have attained either both benefits, or at least, the second one, that is, increase in Allah's remembrance and in His awe, which is the initial step towards perfection [Mazharī]

An Important Qur'ānic Principle of Teaching and Preaching

On this occasion, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was faced with two different

(1) This interpretation is based on taking the word '*dhikrā*' in the sense of remembrance of Allah'. However, some other exegetes have taken this word to mean 'advice', and the translation of the text, as well as the explanation following in the next paragraph, is based on it. (Muḥammad Taqī Usmānī)

requirements at the same time. On the one hand, he was required to teach a Muslim and to encourage him on attaining perfection. On the other hand, he had to provide guidance to non-Muslims. The principle laid down here makes it clear that the first requirement takes priority over the second one. It is improper to delay the first task (educating Muslims) because of the second task. This indicates that education of Muslims and their reform are more important than, and take priority over, getting the non-Muslims to embrace the faith.

Scholars should avoid any such indulgence when disposing of any doubts of the non-Muslims, which may create doubts or complaints in the minds of the general body of Muslims. The teachers, preachers and reformers need to keep in mind these Qur'anic guidelines to maintain the welfare and priority of the Muslims. How beautifully Akbar Allahabadi, the Urdu poet, versifies this principle:

بے وفا سمجھیں تمہیں اہل حرم اس سے بچو..... ذیروالے کج ادا کہدیں یہ بدنامی بھلی

'Protect yourselves from a position where people of the Hāram (Muslims) call you unfaithful.

As opposed to this, if People of temple [non-Muslims] call you 'ill-mannered', (because of your faithfulness to your religion), this dishonor is better.

The following verses clarify the principles more elaborately:

أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَعْنَىٰ فَأَنَّىٰ لَهُ تَصَدَّىٰ (As for the one who does not care [about faith], you are anxious to pursue him!...80:6).

In other words: 'Those who turn away from you and your religion, you are pursuing them under the hope that some how they should become Muslims, while this is not your responsibility. If they do not embrace the faith, there will be no blame on you.

Thereafter, in verses 13 and 14, Allah Almighty has described the high status of the Holy Qur'an, thus:

فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ (It is [recorded] in those scripts [of the Preserved Tablet] that are honoured, [13] exalted, purified - 14).

The word *ṣuḥuf* refers to *lauḥ mahfūẓ* 'the Preserved Tablet'.

Although it is a single thing, but *ṣuḥuf*, the plural form of *ṣaḥīfah* is used because all divine scriptures are written in it, or because the angels copy their scriptures from them. The word *marfū'ah* means 'exalted in the sight of Allah'. The word *muṭahharah* (purified) means 'people in the state of sexual defilement, menstrual discharge, post-natal bleeding and people in the state of minor uncleanness are not permitted to touch it'.

بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ. كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ (in the hands of those scribes who are honourable, righteous. [80:15-16])

The word *safarah*, with *fathah* [=a+a] on the first two letters, may be the plural of *safir* which means a 'scribe'. In this case, it would refer to the recording angels, or to the Prophets عليهم السلام and those of their aides who write down the revelation. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ and Mujāhid hold this view.

The word *safarah* may be used as the plural of *safir* in the sense of 'envoy'. In this case, it would refer to the angels who convey the revelation, and Prophets عليهم السلام and their companions who write the revelation. The 'ulama' (knowledgeable persons) of the Muslim community' are also included in this term, because they too are envoys between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Muslim community. The messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said that he who recites the Qurān and is an expert in the art of recitation, he will be with the honorable, righteous envoys. He who is not an expert in the art of recitation, but recites it correctly with difficulty, he shall receive double reward. [Transmitted by Shaikhain from 'Ā'ishah - Mazhari]. This shows that a non-expert will receive double reward - one for recitation of Qurān, and the other for bearing the difficulty. This also indicates that an expert will receive countless rewards. [Mazhari]

The preceding verses mentioned that the Qurān is exalted and that belief in it is incumbent. Subsequently, the rejecters of Qurān are cursed and they are warned against showing ingratitude towards Divine favours. That the Holy Qur'an is a great Divine blessing is understood only by the men of Divine knowledge and understanding. Further, there is the mention of those Divine favours that Allah confers on man since his inception to the end of his life. These are material and physical things

that a man with basic intellect can understand. Human creation is mentioned, thus:

مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ. مِنْ نَظْفَةٍ (From which stuff did He [Allah] create him? From a drop of semen! ..80:18-19).

First a question is raised: 'O man! Consider what Allah has created you from?' Since its reply is so obvious that there can be no other reply, the next verse itself says: 'From a drop of semen!' Thus the verse draws pointed attention to the very humble beginning of man, so that it may be brought home to him that Allah having created him from such an insignificant thing as a sperm-drop, created him and proportioned him:

خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَرَهُ (He created him, and designed him in due proportion..80:19). In other words, He has made him with a special design and with great wisdom. His stature, body-structure, his face, his length and breadth of the limbs, his joints, his eyes, nose and ears are all well-proportioned in their creation. If any limb or organ loses its proportion, man's face will go awry, and every activity will become a problem.

The word *qaddara* is derived from *taqdir* which is also used in the sense of 'predestination'. Taking the word in this sense, the verse may also mean here that when man is under creation in his mother's womb, Allah predetermines four things for him: his life span, his sustenance, his deeds and whether he would be miserable or happy [as in the ḥadīth of Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه recorded by Shaikhain].

ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسْرَهُ (then He made the way easy for him...80:20) Allah through His consummate wisdom creates man in his mother's womb, creation after creation, within three layers of darkness [i.e. the belly, the womb and the amniotic membrane]. It is kept in a safe place in the belly. The mother in whose belly all this is happening is totally unaware of any of the details of this process. Thereafter, when the baby becomes perfect with all its limbs and organs, Allah made it possible that a body weighing 3 to 4 kg comes out through an extremely narrow passage, and the mother does not suffer unduly. So blessed be He Who is the best Creator!

ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ (Later, he made him die, and put him into the grave..80:21) After mentioning the inception of human life, Allah points to its end, that is, death and grave. Death has been mentioned here in the context of

blessings of Allah. It indicates that death is a blessing rather than a calamity. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have put it thus: تحفة المومن الموت "The gift of a believer is death." Moreover, there is a profound wisdom in death at macro level for the entire world.

The phrase فاقبره *fa-aqbarah* (and put him into the grave) describes another blessing of Allah, in that when man is dead, he is not left lying on the earth like other animals where he might rot, blow up and burst [and probably be ravaged by vultures or beasts]. But, even after death, he is honoured in the most befitting manner. His body is washed ceremonially, enshrouded in clean cloths, and buried in a grave with respect.

This verse also indicates that it is obligatory to bury a dead human body.

كَلَّا لَمَّا يُقْضَىٰ مَا أَمَرَهُ (No! He has not yet fulfilled what He [Allah] had commanded him...80:23).

Having mentioned in the preceding verses the beginning and the end of human life, Divine Omnipotence and Divine blessings, the current verses warn the non-believing man that the demand of Divine Signs and blessings was to carefully ponder and believe in Allah, and comply with His injunctions, but the unfortunate creature failed to do so. Further, the Divine favours are mentioned that were conferred on man between the beginning and end of his life. Man is then asked to consider the sources of his food. Allah showers down water abundantly from the clouds. He cleaves the earth with new growth. Thereupon He causes grain to grow out of it. At first, a fragile shoot germinates and sprouts. Then many different kinds of grain, fruits and gardens come into existence. Having warned man several times about these Divine blessings, the Sūrah concludes with the mention of Resurrection, thus:

فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاخَّةُ (So when there will come the Deafening Noise..80:33). The word *ṣākhkhaḥ* means 'deafening cry or shout' and it refers to the blowing of the trumpet, which will be a deafening sound.

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ (the Day when one will flee from his brother..80:34). This depicts the scene when all the people will have gathered in the Plain of Gathering. Each person will be worried about himself, and the

situation will be so horrifying and tense that it will make people heedless of anything around them. In the world, there are relationships between people that make one willing to lay down his life for the other, but on the Day of Resurrection there will be such horror and chaos that they will be unable to take care of anyone. In fact, even if one sees the other in front of him, he will turn away from him. They will try to flee from their brothers, from their mothers and fathers, from their spouses and their children. They will not be able to help any of them in the Hereafter, despite the natural attachment they had with them in the world. Normally, one is more anxious in this world about his parents than about his brothers, and he is more anxious about his wife and children than about his parents. Keeping this in view, the relationships, in the present verse, are arranged from lower order to higher order.

The Chapter ends on a note of warning to disbelievers that if they reject the Qurʾānic message and persist in opposition to the Holy Prophet ﷺ they will have to face a day of reckoning when misery, shame and ignominy will be their lot. The righteous believers, however, will reside in Gardens of Bliss, their faces beaming with joy and happiness.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah ‘Abas
Ends here

Sūrah At-Takwīr (The Folding)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 29 verses and one sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 29

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ ﴿١﴾ وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ
 سُيِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ ﴿٤﴾ وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ
 ﴿٥﴾ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ ﴿٦﴾ وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ ﴿٧﴾ وَإِذَا
 الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ ﴿٨﴾ بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ ﴿٩﴾ وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ
 نُشِرَتْ ﴿١٠﴾ وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ ﴿١١﴾ وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِّرَتْ
 ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِذَا الْجَنَّةُ أُزْلِفَتْ ﴿١٣﴾ عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرَتْ ﴿١٤﴾
 فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالْخُنَّسِ ﴿١٥﴾ الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا عَسْعَسَ
 ﴿١٧﴾ وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا تَنَفَّسَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿١٩﴾ ذِي قُوَّةٍ
 عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ
 بِمَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ بِالْأُفُقِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمَا هُوَ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ
 بِضَنِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ
 ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيمَ
 ﴿٢٨﴾ وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

When the sun will be folded up, [1] and when the stars will swoop down, [2] and when the mountains will be set in motion, [3] and when the ten-months pregnant she-camels will be abandoned, [4] and when the wild beasts will be gathered together, [5] and when the seas will be flared up, [6] and when the people will be arranged in categories, [7] and when the girl-child that was buried alive will be asked, [8] for what sin she was killed, [9] and when the scrolls (of deeds) will be unrolled, [10] and when the sky will be stripped off, [11] and when the Hell will be set ablaze, [12] and when the Paradise will be brought close, [13] then everyone will know what he (or she) has put forward, [14]

So, I swear by those (stars) that recede, [15] that proceed, that withdraw from the scene, [16] and by the night when it departs, [17] and the morning when it starts breathing, [18] it (the Qur'ān) is surely the word of a noble messenger (Jibra'īl عليه السلام), [19] the one possessing power, and a high status with the Lord of the Throne, [20] the one obeyed there, trusted. [21] And your companion (Muhammad عليه السلام) is not a madman. [22] And he did see him (Jibra'īl عليه السلام) on the clear horizon. [23] And he (the Prophet عليه السلام) is not stingy about (the news of) the unseen. [24] Nor is it the word of an outcast satan (devil). [25] Then where are you going? [26] It is nothing else but a message of advice for all the worlds, [27] for the benefit of any one from among you who intends to go straight. [28] And you cannot intend (to do anything) unless it is so intended by Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. [29]

Commentary

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ (When the sun will be folded up...81:1) The word *kawwara* is derived from *Takwīr* which denotes for the sun 'to lose its light'.¹ Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣṭrī رحمه الله تعالى has attached this interpretation to it. Another sense of the word is 'to cause to fall'. Rabī' Ibn Khaitham assigns the following interpretation to this verse: The Sun will be thrown into the ocean, and as a result of its heat the entire ocean will turn into fire. The two interpretations are not contradictory. They may be reconciled thus: first, its light will be put off and then it may be thrown

(1) Another meaning of *Takwīr* is 'to fold', and the translation in the text is based on this meaning. The sense of folding the sun is that its function will come to an end, and it will lose its light. As such, it comes to mean same thing as mentioned in first interpretation. Muhammad Taqi Usmani

into the ocean. Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī records from Sayyidnā Abū Huharirah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said that on the Day of Resurrection the Sun and the Moon would be thrown into the ocean. Musnad of Bazzār has the addition that they will be thrown into Hell. Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Abid-Dunyā and Abush-Shaikh stated that on the Day of Resurrection Allah will throw the Sun, the Moon and all stars into the ocean. Then a violent wind will blow over them, as a result of which the entire ocean will turn into fire. Thus it is correct to say that the Sun and the Moon will be put into the ocean. It is likewise correct to say that they will be put into Hell, because the entire ocean at that time will have been turned into Hell. [Derived from Maḏharī and Qurṭubī]

وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ (and when the stars will swoop down...81:2). The word *inkadarat* is derived from *inkidār* and it denotes 'to fall'. The righteous predecessors have interpreted it thus. It signifies that all the stars from the sky will fall into the oceans as explained in the preceding verses.

وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ (and when the ten-months pregnant she-camels will be abandoned...81:4). The Arabic word '*ishār*' is the plural of the word '*usharā*' and is applied to she-camels having ten months pregnancy. Such she-camels were considered by the Arabs to be a very valuable asset, because they expected her to give birth to more camels and abundant milk. As such, they used to protect her and never left her free. The verse referring to this custom of the Arabs, who were the immediate addressees, depicts the horrible scene of the Doomsday when even the most favorite wealth, like such a she-camel, will be abandoned and neglected by its owners because of the calamity they will be facing.

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ (and when the seas will be flared up...81:6). The word *sujjirat* is derived from *tasjīr* and it signifies 'to set ablaze'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه assigns this interpretation to the word in this context. Another sense of the word is 'to fill' and a third sense of the word is 'to mix or admix'. Some commentators have interpreted it in this sense. None of these interpretations is contradictory to each other. First, the salt and sweet water are admixed and the rivers are made to flow forth into the sea; then the seas will meet together and become one and having more water; then the seas will be set on fire; and then the Sun and the Moon and the stars will be thrown into the water. Then all the water will be turned into fire which will become part of Hell. [Maḏharī]

وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ رُوِّجَتْ (and when the people will be arranged in categories...81:7). It means that the people on the Plain of Gathering will be grouped, like with like, in terms of belief and deeds. Disbelievers will be grouped together and believers will be grouped together. There are differences between the deeds and habits of believers and there are differences between the deeds and habits of disbelievers. The non-believers will be re-grouped according to their essential characteristics and the Muslims too will be re-grouped according to their essential characteristics as is reported in Baihaqī on the authority of Sayyidnā Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr رضي الله عنه that Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه said that the people doing similar deeds, good or bad, will be joined together. For example, the knowledgeable persons from among the Muslims who were serving Islamic studies will be made into one group; the people who devoted themselves for worship will be made into another group; the people performing *jihād* will be together, and the people whose main characteristic was to spend in charities will be gathered in one place. On the other hand, those who were involved in wicked activities like thieves, robbers, adulterers will also be assembled in their respective groups. Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه based this statement on the verse of the Holy Qur'an in which Allah says in Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah: وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً [and you will be (divided into) three categories. (56:7) It is mentioned further in that Sūrah that out of the three categories, two will attain salvation who are named as the 'foremost' and 'people of the right' while another group, namely the 'people of the left' will be comprised of the infidels.

وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ (and when the girl-child that was buried alive will be asked, for what sin she was killed...81:8-9) The word *mau'ūdah* is the girl-child buried alive. It was a common practice in pre-Islamic time of ignorance that people would take the birth of a girl as a matter of shame for their fathers, and therefore they would bury them alive as soon as they were born. Islam has abolished this barbaric practice completely. This verse, while depicting the scene of Resurrection, mentions that the girls who were buried alive will be questioned for what crime they were killed. Apparently, it seems that the question will be posed to the girl herself. This will give the victim an opportunity to prove her complete innocence and thus the perpetrators of this crime will be hauled up in the Divine Court of Justice, and will be duly punished for their wrongdoing.

It is also possible that the question will be posed to the killers of the girls why they committed infanticide.

Important Note

In any case, one question may arise here: The day referred to in these verses is named as the 'Day of Requital' and the 'Day of Judgement'. This name itself sows that every person, on that day, will be put to a trial where he will be asked all sorts of questions about his deeds. Why has the Holy Qur'ān, at this place, singled out only the question asked about the girl that was buried alive. Carefully considered, it would appear that such a girl was the victim of the barbarism of her own parents. As such, there was no one to raise a complaint against such a brutal act, and to demand retaliation, especially when she was buried secretly with no evidence left. The verse, therefore, signifies that on the Day of Reckoning, even those criminals will be exposed and hauled up in the Divine Court of Justice against whom there was no evidence, nor was there anyone who could stand up on their behalf to demand justice. Allah knows best!

Abortion After Four Months is Tantamount to Infanticide

Ruling [1]

Burying alive infants or killing them is a major sin and a heinous brutality. Aborting a foetus after four months falls under the same category in Shari'ah, because within four months the foetus receives the soul and treated as a living human being. Likewise, if a person strikes on the stomach of a pregnant woman which causes the baby to abort, then, according to the common consent of the Muslim jurists, it would be incumbent upon him to set free a slave or pay its price in blood-wit or *diyāh*. If the baby was alive at the time of aborting and then died, full *diyāh* will be incumbent. Abortion before four months is also unlawful, except in cases of necessity, but compared to the first case, it is a sin of lesser degree, because it does not amount to killing of a living human being clearly.

Ruling [2]: Birth Control

Birth control, whose many forms are invented today, is also termed by the Holy Prophet ﷺ as 'hidden infanticide' in a *ḥadīth* reported by Muslim from *Judhāmah* bint *Wahb* رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. There are, however, some *ahadith* in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have allowed '*azl* (coitus interruptus) or to have observed silence when asked about it,

which is a sign of permissibility of such an act. But it should be remembered that its permissibility is restricted to genuine needs, and that too in a way that productivity of the woman is not permanently blocked. [Maẓharī]. The present-day medical science has invented some measures that prevent pregnancy forever. The Shari‘ah does not permit such measures under any circumstances. Allah knows best!

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ (and when the sky will be stripped off...81:11) The word *kushiṭat* is derived from *kashṭ*, and it literally means 'to strip off' the skin of an animal. Probably, this condition will prevail at the first blowing of the Horn, which will happen in this world. The stars, the Sun and the Moon that contributed to the beauty of the sky will all lose their light and lustre and will be thrown into the ocean. The outlook of the sky will be changed. This phenomenon is termed in this verse as: 'The sky will be stripped off'. Some commentators interpret the word *kashṭ* in the sense of 'folding up'. The verse, according to them, purports to say that the sky that surrounds the upper atmosphere over our heads will be folded up.

عَلِمْتُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرْتُ (then everyone will know what he [or she] has put forward...81:14). It means that when Resurrection, with all the horrors mentioned above, will take place, man will realise what he has brought with him. The word 'what' here refers to his good and bad deeds, all of which will be in front of him, either in the form of the Record of Deeds that will be given in his hands or his deeds will assume a specific body shape as is understood from certain Traditions. Allah knows best!

Having described the horrors of Resurrection, and the accountability of deeds, Allah swears an oath by a few stars to confirm that the Qur‘ān is the truth that has been sent down, fully protected from any interruption or distortion, and that the Prophet ﷺ who has received it is a great personality, and the angel (Jibra‘īl ﷺ) who descended with it was known to him before hand. Therefore, there can be no room for any doubt about its veracity. The verses here swear an oath by five stars which the ancient Greeks called *khamsah mutahayyirah* or 'the five wandering stars', since they seemed to stray irregularly across the sky. At times they are seen moving from East to West, and at others, from West to East. Different reasons have been assigned to their irregular movements. The ancient Greeks hold several contradictory explanations for this. The research of modern scientists concurs with some of the ancient

philosophers, and differs from some others. The Creator alone knows the truth and reality. The scientists merely guess and conjecture which may be wrong. The Qur'ān has, therefore, not involved its readers in such a useless debate. Allah showed us what was beneficial, that is, to observe the Divine Omnipotence, His Consummate Wisdom and to repose our faith in Him.

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ. ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ (it [the Qur'ān] is surely the word of a noble messenger [Jibra'īl], the one possessing power and a high status with the Lord of the Throne...81:19-20). This is the subject of oath that affirms that Qur'ān is the word brought by a noble messenger. Then three qualities are attributed to this noble messenger. The first quality is that he possesses power. The second quality is that he has high status and lofty rank with Allah, and he is obeyed in the upper realm. The third quality is that he is trusted, and there is no possibility of his committing any breach of trust or tampering with the message he conveys. The word 'noble messenger' obviously refers to the angel Jibra'īl عليه السلام, because the word 'messenger' is used for angels as it is used for prophets, and all the three qualities attributed to the 'messenger' in the next verses are truly present in Jibra'īl عليه السلام. His being powerful is mentioned in Sūrah An-Najm in the following words;

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى

It is taught to him by one (angel) of strong faculties.[53:5]

It is established through the *ḥadīth* of Mi'rāj that he is obeyed by other angels, because when he accompanied the Holy Prophet ﷺ to the sky and ordered the angels appointed on its doors to open them he was obeyed by them. That he is trust-worthy is too obvious to need a proof.

Some commentators, however, take the phrase 'honourable messenger' to refer to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and accordingly have made an attempt to take all the three qualities referring to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In the next verses, the Holy Qur'ān has mentioned the high status of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and has refuted the silly objections raised against him by the infidels.

وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ (And your companion [Muḥammad ﷺ] is not a

madman....81:22) This is rebuttal to the foolish criticism of the enemies who said that Muḥammad ﷺ is [God forbid!] insane.

وَلَقَدْ رَأَهُ بِالْأُفُقِ الْمُبِينِ (And he did see him [Jibra'īl عليه السلام] on the clear horizon. ...81:23) In other words, Muḥammad saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام on a clear horizon. A similar statement occurs in Sūrah An-Najm as follows:

وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَى

while he was on the upper horizon....53:7)

The purpose of mentioning this is to show that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was well-acquainted with Jibra'īl عليه السلام, the angel of revelation. He had seen him in his original shape. Therefore, there can be no room for doubt in the veracity of revelation he brings to him.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Takwīr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Infīṭār

(Cleaving)

This Sūrah is Makkī. and it has 19 verses.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 19

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ ﴿١﴾ وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انْتَشَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ
 فُجِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ ﴿٤﴾ عَلِمْتَ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ
 ﴿٥﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوِّدَكَ
 فَعَدَلَكَ ﴿٧﴾ فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ ﴿٨﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَدِّبُونَ
 بِالذِّينِ ﴿٩﴾ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾ يَعْلَمُونَ
 مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ
 ﴿١٤﴾ يَصْلَوْنَهَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٥﴾ وَمَاهُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَا
 آذَرْنَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ مَا آذَرْنَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٨﴾ يَوْمَ لَا
 تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ ﴿١٩﴾

When the sky will be cleft asunder, [1] and when the stars will disperse, [2] and when the seas will be burst forth, [3] and when the graves will be overturned, [4] then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [5] O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord, [6] who created you, then perfected you, then brought you in due proportion? [7] He composed you in whichever form He willed. [8] Never! (i.e. one should never be heedless

towards him.) But you deny the Requital, [9] while (appointed) over you there are watchers, [10] who are noble, writers (of the deeds), [11] who know whatever you do. [12] Surely the righteous will be in bliss, [13] and surely the sinners will be in Hell, [14] in which they will enter on the Day of Requital, [15] and they will not (be able to) keep away from it. [16] And what may let you know what the Day of Requital is? [17] Again, what may let you know what the Day of Requital is? [18] A Day when no one will have power to do any thing for another! And all matters, on that Day, will belong to Allah (alone). [19]

Commentary

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ (...then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind...82:5) In the preceding verses [1-4] of the Sūrah, Allah depicts the scene of the Day of Judgement that when the sky splits, the stars fall, the seas are poured forth [ie the fresh and salt water bodies will merge to form one mass of water] and the graves are overturned [ie corpses will emerge from their graves], every soul shall come to know what it had sent ahead and what it had left behind. The phrase 'what he sent ahead' means the good or evil act which he has done in his life; and the phrase 'what he left behind' means what he failed to do or refrained from doing. It is also possible that 'what he sent ahead' refers to the acts he has done himself, and 'what he left behind' refers to the acts one has not done himself, but he has laid down a custom in the society. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "If anyone establishes a good tradition in Islam, he will have a reward for it and the equivalent of the rewards of those who act upon it after him, without theirs being diminished in any respect; but he who establishes a bad custom in Islam will bear the responsibility of it and the responsibility of those who act upon it after him, without theirs being diminished in any respect." This subject was dealt with earlier under the following verse: يُنبئُ الإنسانُ يومئذٍ بما قدمَ وأخَرَ 'Man will be informed of what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [53:13]'

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّبَكَ (O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord...82:6) The opening of the Sūrah mentions the violent events that will take place at the end of this worldly life, and the current set of verses reminds us of the inceptive stages of our creation. The sum total of the verses purport to say that if man had considered carefully, he would have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and he would not have deviated a

hair's breadth from Divine injunctions, but he slumped into heedlessness and forgetfulness. In the present verse, he is reprimanded by a rhetorical question and by means of gentle remonstrance as to what has lured him away from His Gracious Lord, and led him to disobedience, despite he knows his beginning, and he knows his end.

The verse further goes on to remind man of the inceptive stages of his creation. First, it says: خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّكَ (who created you, then perfected you, ...82:7). The sense is that not only did Allah create man, but He also perfected his creation and proportioned his body, limbs and organs. Every limb and organ is well placed. The body, height, length and breadth of every limb are kept in harmony, symmetry and balance. Any deviation from the symmetrical construction of the human body, the organs will become dysfunctional. Then the verse says: فَعَدَّلَكَ (...then brought you in due proportion?...82:7). Man is granted such symmetry, harmony and balance that no other animal in the world is granted to that degree. Along with physical and physiological symmetry and harmony, he has been granted well-balanced disposition, despite the fact that man is made up of opposing humours – blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile. Some are hot and others are cold, and yet the perfect wisdom of Allah prepared a well-balanced disposition. Thereafter a third characteristic is mentioned as follows:

فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ (He composed you in whichever form He willed....82:8). This is to indicate that since the basic structure of all human beings is the same, it was expected that the zillions of members of the human society would have shared the same shape, size and features, but the perfect mastery and the wonderful acumen of the Supreme Creator has created them so differently that each one of them has its own unique features that make him clearly distinct from all others, and no one is confused with another.

Having stated the creative acumen of the Great Creator, the verse states: يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّبَكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ (O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord,...82:6). Allah has endowed man with such natural faculties and abilities that every limb and every joint of his body was enough to remind him of His Creator, and to make him obedient. But he is lured away from his gracious Lord, has forgotten Him and disobeyed Him. The question is: How did he forget his Lord, how did he become

heedless of Him, and how is he lured away from his Lord? On this occasion, the adjective *karīm* (Gracious) used for the 'Lord' points to the answer. The reason for such an ungrateful attitude is that Allah is Gracious and does not punish man immediately after his committing a sin. Rather, his sustenance, welfare and well-being, and worldly comforts [and pleasures] are not curtailed. He misinterprets Allah's magnanimity, and thus falls into deception. If man were to think rationally, he would adopt a grateful attitude and obedient behaviour, rather than adopting an ungrateful attitude and impudent behaviour. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى says:

كَمْ مِنْ مَغْرُورٍ تَحْتَ السَّيِّئِ وَهُوَ لَا يَشْعُرُ

'How many humans are there whose faults are put [by Allah] under cover, (i.e. He did not disgrace them), yet they do not appreciate (and are deluded by His grace).'

إِنَّ الْبَارَّاءَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ (Surely the righteous will be in bliss, and surely the sinners will be in Hell,...82:13-14) These two statements are connected with verse [5] above: 'عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ' 'then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [5]'

The verse informs us that each person, on the Day of Reckoning, will know what he has done, and what will be the consequences of his deeds. The present verse says that the righteous will be in perfect bliss, while the sinners will be in a Blazing Fire of Hell.

وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ (and they will not [be able to] keep away from it...82:16) The inmates of Hell will never be able to get away from it, because the torment will be eternal, as the concluding verse of the Surah asserts: يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا (A Day when no one [with his own free will in the Plain of Gathering] will have power to do any thing for another!). This does not negate intercession, because that will not happen with one's own free will, unless Allah grants permission to someone to intercede on someone's behalf, and then accepts the intercession. And all matters, on that Day, will belong to Allah (alone). [19]' Allah knows best!

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Infīṭār
Ends here

Sūrah At-Taṭfīf

(Curtailing the Rights)

Sūrah At-Taṭfīf was revealed in Makkah It has 36 Verses and 1 Section.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 36

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا اكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ ﴿٢﴾
وَأِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنَّهُمْ
مَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤﴾ لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦﴾
كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَارِ لَفِي سَجِّينٍ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَجِّينٌ ﴿٨﴾
كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يُكَذِّبُونَ
بِیَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا يُكَدِّبُ بِهِ إِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿١٢﴾ إِذَا تَتَلَّى
عَلَيْهِ ائْتِنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ سَكَرَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّمَّحْجُوبُونَ
﴿١٥﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُوا الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ
تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيِّينَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ
مَا عِلِّيُّونَ ﴿١٩﴾ كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ إِنَّ
الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ عَلَى الْأَرَآئِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ تَعْرِفُ فِي

وَجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٢٤﴾ يُسْقُونَ مِنْ رَاحِقٍ مَخْتُومٍ ﴿٢٥﴾
 خِتْمُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَفِسُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمَرَاجُهُ مِنْ
 تَسْنِيمٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا
 كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُونَ
 ﴿٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ
 قَالُوا إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَا أُرْسِلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِظِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾
 فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ عَلَىٰ الْأَرَائِكِ ۖ
 يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ هَلْ نُؤِيبُ الْكُفَّارَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

Woe to the curtailers [1] who, when they measure something to receive from people, take it in full, [2] and when they measure or weigh something to give it to them, give less than due. [3] Do they not think that they have to be raised up [4] on a Great Day, [5] the Day when all the people will stand before the Lord of the worlds? [6] Never! (i.e. they should never forget that Day.) Indeed the Record of Deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [7] And what may let you know what *sijjīn* is? [8] A register, inscribed! [9] Woe that day to the deniers, [10] who deny the Day of Requital! [11] And none denies it but every sinful transgressor. [12] When Our verses are recited to him, he says, "(These are) tales of the ancients." [13] No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust. [14] No! Indeed they will be screened off from their Lord on that Day. [15] Then they will have to enter the Hell. [16] Then it will be said, "This is what you used to deny." [17]

No! The record of deeds of the righteous is in *'illiyyūn*. [18] And what may let you know what *'illiyyūn* is? [19] A register inscribed, [20] attended by those (angels) who are blessed with nearness to Allah! [21] Indeed the righteous will be in absolute bliss. [22] While (sitting) on thrones, they will be watching (the scenes of Paradise). [23] You will recognize on their faces the glamour of bliss. [24] They will be served with a pure sealed wine to drink, [25] the seal of which will be of musk. And in aspiring for this, the competitors should

compete. [26] and it will be blended with (a drink from) Tasnīm, [27] a spring from which will drink those who are blessed with nearness. [28]

Indeed those who were guilty used to laugh at those who believed, [29] and when they passed by them, they used to wink at one another, [30] and when they went back to their family, they went enjoying their mockery, [31] and when they saw them, they said, "Surely these are the ones who have gone astray" [32] while they were not sent as watchmen over them. [33] So, today those who believed will laugh at the disbelievers. [34] While (sitting) on thrones, they will be seeing [35] whether the disbelievers have been paid back for what they used to do. [36]

Commentary

According to Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, Sūrah Taṭfif was revealed in Makkah. Therefore, most of the copies of the Qur’ān refer to it as the Makkī Sūrah. According to Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās, Qatādah, Muqātil and Ḍaḥḥāk رضي الله عنه, it is a Madanī Sūrah, but only about eight verses are Makkī. Imām Nasā’ī transmits a narrative from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه that when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم arrived in Madīnah, the people of Madīnah whose most transactions were based on measurements used to cheat and short measure. For this reason, Allah revealed the Sūrah. It is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه that this is the first Sūrah that was revealed as soon as the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم arrived at Madīnah. The reason is that it was a common practice in Madinah that the people used to be very strict in measuring when they had to receive something from others, but when they sold something, they used to cheat the buyers. After the revelation of this Sūrah, all of them abandoned this bad custom totally, and mended themselves in a way that they are now well-known in their honesty in weighing and measuring. (Reported by Ḥākim, Nasā’ī, and Ibn Mājah, with sound chain of narrators)

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ (Woe to the curtailers...83:1) The word *mutaffifin* 'those who give short measure or weight' is derived from *Tatfif* 'to give short measure or short weight'. The Qur’ānic expression 'Woe to the curtailers' is indicative of the injunction that this practice is prohibited.

Tatfif has a Wider Scope

The Qur’ān and Sunnah have prohibited *Tatfif* which primarily

signifies 'giving short measure and weight', because generally all transactions are carried out by things that can be measured or weighed. But the basic purpose of weighing or measuring is none else but to give a person what he deserves. It, therefore, indicates that the rule is not restricted to weights and measures only, but it includes all other means through which the rights of someone are evaluated, assessed or appraised. It is obligatory that all rights are given to the deserving persons in full, whether they are assessed by weight, measure, number or any other means. In terms of this concept of *Tatfīf*, it is prohibited to give to any person less than his due.

It is recorded in Muwāṭṭā' of Imām Mālik that Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn-ul-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه saw a person curtailing [cutting short] his bowing and prostration postures in prayers, he said to him:

لَقَدْ طَفَّفْتَ

'You have committed *Tatfīf* (curtailed the right) of Allah.'

Having cited this statement of Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn-ul-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه, Imām Mālik formulates the following postulate:

لكلّ شيءٍ وفاءٍ وتطفيف

'Everything has a full due and a short measure.'

This postulate can apply even to prayers, ablution, cleanliness and all the rights of Allah and the ways of worship. If someone is deficient in fulfilling these rights of Allah, he is guilty of *Tatfīf*. Similarly if one cuts short human rights [by failing to perform duties imposed upon him or keeping to the terms of agreement duly], he is covered by the rule laid down by the verse regarding *Tatfīf*. For example, if an employee has entered into a contract with the employer that he shall work for specified time, it is imperative for him to work for the stipulated hours. If he curtails the hours, he is guilty of *Tatfīf*. Generally, people - even scholars - are lax in this matter. They do not regard curtailment of their obligations relating to service or labour as sin. May Allah protect us from it!

HADĪTH: Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

خمس بخرمس

'There are five sins, for which there are five punishments.'

[1] He who breaks his covenant, Allah will cause his enemy to subdue him.

[2] The nation that abandons the sacred laws of Allah, and decides cases according to other laws, poverty will prevail commonly among them.

[3] The nation among whom promiscuity and *zinā* (fornication or adultery) becomes rampant, Allah will punish them with epidemics and endemic diseases.

[4] Those who curtail measures and weights, Allah will cause famine to break out amongst them. and

[5] Those who fail to pay their *Zakāh*, Allah will withhold rain from them.

[Cited by Qurṭubī who said that Al-Bazzār has narrated the over-all sense of this *ḥadīth*, though with different words; and Mālik Ibn Anas has also narrated it from Ibn 'Umar].

Ṭabarānī narrates from Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "When it becomes rampant in a community to steal from the spoils of war, Allah will cast terror of enemies into their hearts; when usury becomes a common practice in a community, death becomes a frequent occurrence in that society; a community that gives short measure and weight, Allah cuts off their sustenance; those who decide against the truth, murder becomes common among them; and those who betray their agreement, Allah causes their enemies to prevail upon them." [Mālik has also transmitted it, but as a saying of Ibn 'Abbās. See Mazḥarī].

Various Forms of Poverty, Famine and Curtailment of Sustenance

The Ḥadīth (cited above) states that people's 'sustenance' may be Cut Off as a punishment to short measuring: This can take different forms. They may be completely deprived of their sustenance; or sustenance may be available, but they may not be able to eat or use it, as it commonly happens nowadays in the case of many diseases. Likewise, 'famine' might take different forms: Items of necessity might be lacking; or they might be

available abundantly, but it might be difficult to purchase them, because the prices are unbearably exorbitant, as is experienced nowadays. The Ḥadīth says that in certain situations *faqr* will prevail in the society. *Faqr* is generally translated as 'poverty', but its real meaning in Arabic is 'being in need' or 'being dependent on someone'. Keeping this meaning in view, the situation of *faqr* pointed out in the Ḥadīth is not confined to lack of money and other necessary things, but it also includes a situation where people depend on others in their business and other necessities of life. The more a person is in need of others, the greater is his degree of *faqr*. Let us consider the conditions of the present age. Man is bound by the most complicated laws that restrict his living, his movement and his intentions, so that he is unable to eat what he wants to eat, or utter what he wants to utter. He possesses money, but he is not free to buy of his choice from where he wants to. He is not free to undertake a journey [or to travel] as and when he wants to. He is bound so much by these restrictive laws that he has no choice but to follow the official procedure for which he has to flatter the officials [at every level] including the peons. Without this, life is difficult. This entire system of dependence on others is a part of *faqr*. This elaborate explanation should dispel the doubts that might apparently arise regarding the statement of the Ḥadīth.

***Sijjīn* and 'illiyīn**

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِي سِجِّينٍ (Never! [i.e. they should never forget that Day.] Indeed the Record of Deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [83:7] The word *sijjīn* is derived from *sajana* which means to 'imprison in a narrow place'. According to Qāmūs, the word *sijjīn* means 'eternal imprisonment'. Traditions indicate that *sijjīn* is a special place where the souls of the non-believers are kept, and in the same place, the Record of the evil deeds of every wicked person is kept separately. It is also possible that in this there is a consolidated book in which the deeds of all the non-believers of the world are recorded.

Where is this place? According to a lengthy *ḥadīth* reported by Sayyidnā Bara' Ibn 'Azib رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that *sijjīn* is beneath the seventh level of the earth, and 'illiyīn is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. [Baghawī, and Aḥmad etc., as quoted by Maḥzarī]. According to certain Traditions, *sijjīn* is the seventh earth which

contains the souls of the disbelievers, and 'illiyīn is the seventh heaven which contains the souls of the believers.

The Locale of Paradise and Hell

Baihaqī has recorded a narration from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām رضي الله عنه that Paradise is in the heaven, and Hell is in the earth. Ibn Jarīr cites in his commentary on the authority of Sayyidnā Mu'adh Ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه a narrative of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, according to which he was asked about the meaning of the following verse:

وَجَايَءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ

'and Jahannam (Hell), on that day, will be brought forward,
[89:23]'

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked from where the Hell be brought forward? He replied: "From the seventh earth." These narratives indicate that Hell will be brought forward from the seventh earth. It will suddenly flare up there, and all the oceans will join its blazing fire, and come forward in full view of all. This interpretation is reconcilable with narratives that define *sijjīn* as the name of a place in Hell. [Mazhari]. And Allah knows best!

كُتِبَ مَرْقُومٌ (A register inscribed!...83:9) The word *marqūm* (translated above as 'inscribed') signifies here *makhtūm* meaning 'sealed'. Imām Baghawī and Ibn Kathīr say that this statement is not the interpretation of *sijjīn*, but rather the explication of a phrase before that, namely:

كِتَابَ الْفُجَّارِ

'Indeed the record of deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [83:7]'

It is a book inscribed and sealed. No one can add anything to it, nor can anyone remove anything from it, nor is any alteration possible in it. The place where it will be kept for safe-custody is called *sijjīn*, and it is the place where the souls of the wicked unbelievers are gathered.

رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust...83:14). The word *rāna* is derived from *rain* and it means 'rust' or 'dust' or 'filth'. In other words, the rust of committing many sins has covered up their hearts. Just as rust consumes the iron, and turns it into dust, in the same way, the rust of