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POWER OF PASSION

Passion is a very commendable trait. People who are passionate in their work can achieve great success. It can produce results beyond our imagination and bring about substantial changes in our lives and the lives of those around us.

QUR'AN: SURAH ANBIYA (78-94)

Coming up is the mention of prophets who had some specific traits in their conduct. They were the ones who were examples for all mankind with regard to their character. Foremost, David (sws) and Solomon (sws) are mentioned. Both were best examples of kings with a very humble temperament. They were blessed by God with majesty and splendour but they remained thankful to God and were never misled by their grandeur. They spent all their resources and abilities to please God.

HADITH: CLEANING AFTER DEFECTION

Jābir stated: "God's Messenger (sws) said: 'Cleaning with mud-stones after defecation should be once only; the ramī of the columns should be once; the sa'ī between Ṣafā and Marwā should be once; the ṭawāf should be once. When anyone of you cleans yourself with mud-stones after defecation, he should do it once only.'" (Muslim)



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Our Motto

Stand upright speak thy thoughts, declare
The truth thou hast, that all may share
Be bold, proclaim it everywhere
They only live who dare."
(Lewis Morris)

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Contents

EDITORIAL

Power of Passion 5

Dr Shehzad Saleem

QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

Sūrah al-Anbiyā' (3) 6

*Amīn Aḥsan Işlāḥī/
(Tr. by Dr Shehzad Saleem)*

HADITH STUDIES

Cleansing after Defecation 41

Dr Shehzad Saleem

EDITORIAL

Power of Passion

Dr Shehzad Saleem

Passion is a very commendable trait. People who are passionate in their work can achieve great success. It can produce results beyond our imagination and bring about substantial changes in our lives and the lives of those around us.

If we are in any way lacking in passion, we must not think that we are lazy or apathetic individuals. It is only that we have not struck the right chord. As soon as we discover our aptitude and interest or if already discovered, put it to use, passion lights up in us as if it just needed a spark to kindle it.

Each of us is born with some talent which can be termed as our passion. We relish it when we use it. We even lose track of time. It is therefore just a question of self-discovery. It will make us spring into action and will indeed need restraint to control it.

Another thing which can help discovering our passion is to live in the company of passionate people, for passion sure is contagious and weaves a spell on those around.

Once passion is kindled in our field of interest, at times it can be put to use in other fields too because results are something which induce more passion and enhance it to a great degree.

Once of the greatest passions a human being can really benefit from is the passion for seeking the truth and changing oneself in accordance with one's discovery. Passion can also help us to become good human beings who place others before themselves and like to help those around them.

Passion and zeal do not allow us to give up easily or to resign ourselves to tough circumstances. They make us rise after every fall and start again in the wake of failures.

Passion makes us achieve difficult targets and think of out of the box solutions for complex problems.

Passion makes us a warm and welcoming person who is always accessible to others when they need us.

So let us passionately discover our passion!

QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

Sūrah al-Anbiyā' (3)

Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī

Section VI: Verses (78-94)

In the preceding verses, the prophets who were founders of their nations were mentioned in chronological order. Coming up is the mention of prophets who had some specific traits in their conduct. They were the ones who were examples for all mankind with regard to their character. Foremost, David (sws) and Solomon (sws) are mentioned. Both were best examples of kings with a very humble temperament. They were blessed by God with majesty and splendour but they remained thankful to God and were never misled by their grandeur. They spent all their resources and abilities to please God. After that Job (sws), Ishmael (sws), Idrīs (sws) and Dhū al-Kifl (sws) are mentioned. They outshone human beings with regard to their patience and perseverance. God put them through severe trials but they remained steadfast in each. After that Jonah (sws), Zacharias (sws) and Mary (sws) are mentioned. They called upon their Lord in hopeless and desperate circumstances. God accepted their supplications and out of His special mercy made the impossible possible for them.

There is a great lesson in the lives of these messengers for the addressees of this *sūrah* who were showing arrogance on being granted favours and blessings from God. At the same time, they also provided guidance to the oppressed companions of the Prophet (sws) who at that time were passing through very precarious trials and could see nothing but darkness in front of them.

Readers may proceed to study these verses in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

وَدَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَحْكُمُونَ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَشَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ ۖ وَكُنَّا لِحُكْمِهِمْ شَاهِدِينَ

فَقَهَّمْنَهَا سُلَيْمِينَ ۖ وَكَلَّا اتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا ۖ وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطَّيْرَ ۖ وَكُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوسٍ لَّكُمْ لِيُحْصِنَكُمْ مِنْ بَأْسِكُمْ ۚ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ شَاكِرُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَسَلَّمْنَا الَّرِّيحَ عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِ رَبِّهِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا ۖ وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ وَمِنَ الشَّيَاطِينِ مَنْ يَغُوصُونَ لَهُ وَيَعْمَلُونَ عَمَلًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ ۚ وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حَفِظِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ ۖ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ مِنْ ضُرٍّ ۖ وَآتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَذَكَرَىٰ لِلْعَبِيدِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ إِذْ رَسَّ وَذَ الْكُفْلَ ۖ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَادْخُلْنَاهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا ۖ إِنَّهُمْ مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾ وَذَ النُّونَ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَن لَّنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَىٰ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَن لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَنكَ ۖ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ ۖ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ ۖ وَكَذَلِكَ نُخَيِّبُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَذَكَرَ يَّا إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا ۖ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ ۖ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ يَحْيَىٰ ۖ وَأَصْلَحْنَاهُ ۖ رُؤُوسَهُ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسْأَلُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا ۖ وَكَانُوا لَنَا خُشِعِينَ ﴿٩٩﴾ وَآلَتِیَ أَحَصَّنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ رُّوحِنَا وَجَعَلْنَاهَا وَابْنَهَا آيَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً ۖ وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ كُلٌّ إِلَيْنَا رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا يَكْفُرْ ۖ إِن لِّسَعْيِهِمْ ۖ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَبِذُونِ ﴿١٠٣﴾

And We also showed Our favour to David and Solomon. Recall, when they were passing a judgement on the dispute of a cultivated land when the goats of some people had barged into it at night and We were observing this matter. So, We guided Solomon about the dispute and We had blessed each of them with wisdom and knowledge. And We had made the mountains and the birds sing together with David. They glorified God along with him and it is We Who were the ones Who did these things. And We taught him the skill of a military attire for you so that it may protect you in warfare. Then will you also express gratitude in this way? (78-80)

And We made strong winds subservient to Solomon which would blow at his directive to a land in which We had placed blessings. And We are aware of everything. And We also made subservient to him from among the devils who would dive down into the seas for him and would do other errands as well and We

were watching over them. (81-82)

And We showed mercy to Job as well when he called out to his Lord: “I am in distress and you are the Most Merciful among all the merciful.” So, We accepted His prayer and delivered him of his suffering and restored to him his family too, and as many more with them also from Our special grace and so that this is a reminder for those who worship God. (83-84)

And We also showed favour to Ishmael, Idrīs and Dhū al-Kifl. All these were among the steadfast. And We admitted them into Our mercy. Indeed, they were among the pious. (85-86)

And We showed mercy to the companion of the fish also when being angry with them he left his people and he thought that We shall not question him. Thus, he cried out in the layers of darkness: “There is no deity except you. Exalted are you. Indeed, I am at fault.” Thereupon, We answered his prayer and relieved him of sorrow. And in this way do We deliver the believers. (87-88)

And We showed favour to Zacharias also when he called out to his Lord: “Lord! Do not leave me by myself and you are the best of all heirs.” So, We answered this prayer and blessed him with John and made his wife favourable for him. Indeed, these people would take the initiative in righteous deeds and would worship Us in every state of hope and despair and would remain submissive to Us. (89-90)

And on that [chaste woman] also who guarded her vulnerable organs. So, We blew into her Our Spirit and made her and her son a sign for the people of the world. (91)

This community of yours is one community and I only am your Lord. So, worship Me alone. And they tore their religion into pieces. Each has to return to Us. Then he who does righteous deeds and also has faith, his effort will not go waste. We are Ones writing it for him. (92-94)

Explanation

وَدَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَخْكُفْنَ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَسَتْ فِيهِ غَمَمُ الْقَوْمِ ۖ وَكُنَّا لِحُكْمِهِمْ شَاهِدِينَ ۚ وَكُنَّا
فَقَّهْنَهَا سُلَيْمَانَ ۖ وَكُلًّا آتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا ۚ وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطَّيْرَ ۚ وَكُنَّا
فَاعِلِينَ ۚ

1. And We also showed Our favour to David and Solomon. Recall, when they were passing a judgement on the dispute of a cultivated land

The nouns David and Solomon occur in the text in their accusative form just as is the case with Noah earlier on. In other words, there is an understood verb indicated by the context that is suppressed. It has been revealed in the translation.

The word نَفَسَ refers to the grazing of cattle and goats at night. The feminine pronoun in فَفَهَّنَهَا occurs in deference to the antecedent that is evident from the context. Examples of this can be seen in earlier *sūrahs*.

The verses refer to a dispute that was referred to David (sws) for his verdict. No details are provided about it. What only is evident is that a herd of goats belonging to someone had barged into the cultivated fields of another person. David (sws) pronounced his verdict on this matter but was not able to reach its crux. His son Solomon (sws) who was still young at that time gave his opinion which was more correct and just. Ultimately, David (sws) decided in accordance with his son's opinion. The question as to what was the verdict delivered by the father and what the opinion of the son was is a needless one since here the purpose of the Qur'ān is not to present the details of the dispute; its purpose rather is to show the extent of caution David (sws) exercised in his verdicts in spite of being a ruler and a prophet: as soon as he realized his mistake on the basis of his young son's opinion, he immediately changed his decision and accepted the opinion of someone junior and inexperienced. The second purpose is to show that such was the son God blessed David (sws) with that even in his youth he had a very pronounced ability of decision-making: he would at times advise his illustrious father who held his advice in high regard. It was a matter of great fortune that a father have such an accomplished son who was not only someone he could count on in matters of governance but who could also at times guide him. It is to point to this reality that this dispute is referred to here. Our exegetes have presented the details of a dispute that is totally extraneous to the Qur'ān. Different scenarios can be assumed but they will always be

when the goats of some people had barged into it at night and We were observing this matter. So, We guided Solomon about the dispute and We had blessed each of them wisdom and knowledge. And We had made the mountains and the birds sing together with David. They would glorify God along with him and it is We Who were the ones Who did these things.

conjectural and this writer does not like to go after conjectures.

The words “We were observing this matter” imply that after granting the reins of political leadership to this family, God did not become aloof from its affairs. He continued to observe their governance and assessed how sensitive they were to administer justice among their subjects and how sharp, cautious, selfless and unbiased were they in their own responsibilities. Thus, both father and son proved worthy of these responsibilities. As soon as the son realized that father had committed a mistake in administering justice, he took it upon himself to advise him. On the other hand, as soon as the father realized that the son’s opinion was more just, he immediately submitted to it. It is this character which defines a good ruler and whomsoever God makes a ruler, He does so to judge this conduct.

The words “and We had blessed each of them wisdom and knowledge” imply that it because of this character trait of the father and son that God blessed both with prophethood and reins of political authority.

The words “and We had made the mountains and the birds sing together with David” point to the simple and austere nature of David (sws). On the one hand, God made him a ruler and he established peace and administered justice among his subjects with full vigilance and altruism. On other hand, such was his God-connection that at night he would go to the mountains which would then reverberate with the sounds of his hymns and prayers that glorified and praised God and even the birds would join him in chorus. It is evident from the Torah that David (sws) was a very melodious singer and also had a very moving voice. Moreover, all his prayers and supplications are in the forms of hymns and these hymns are divine. If we read the Pslams, we can see that the poetical essence in the translation of these hymns has been lost but even then hearts shudder on reading them. When a tuneful singer like David (sws) chanted these divine hymns while sitting among the valleys of the mountains in the exhilarating early hours of the morning, surely the mountains would have sung with him together with the birds. These words should not be regarded as some poetic utterance; they are a fact. The Qur’ān has specified that each and every object of this universe is extolling the Almighty but we are not able to understand it. This liking for extolling the Almighty is enhanced when a person chants a song

that reflects their feelings. At that time, they become ecstatic and join that person in singing. If we do not hear the hymns and praises sung by birds and mountains, we must not think that there is none who hears them. Those who have fervent hearts and ardent souls can hear them.

It is worth noting that the expression سَخَّرْنَا لَهُ is not used. Instead, it is said: سَخَّرْنَا مَعَهُ. Evident from the word مَعَهُ is that the Almighty had made the mountains and birds join David (sws) in his chants. They would chip in with him.

Here the verb الْجِبَالُ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطَّيْرُ occurs between the co-ordinated words الطَّيْرُ and الْجِبَالُ. Apparently, it should have come after الطَّيْرُ. The reason that this word is pre-placed is that the glorification chants of the birds are well known whereas that of mountains is a unique thing. For this reason, the verb was placed just adjacent to it.

The words وَكُنَّا لِعِبَادِنَا imply that only God can do these tasks. He can put the trees, stones, mountains, birds and animals in the service of anyone He wants. Such favours of God are not acquired by force or power; they are purely His gifts.

وَعَلَيْنَاهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوسٍ لَّكُمْ لَتُحَصِّنَكُمْ مِّنْ بِأْسِكُمْ ۖ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ شَاكِرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

Not only was David (sws) fully devoted to God, he was also a valiant soldier. The verse refers to the body armour which David (sws) invented. It is evident from history that the forms of the attire which David (sws) invented bore no parallel. In classical Arabic poetry related to warfare, armour made by him is often mentioned. In the war attire of those times, it was this armour which was the most important. Now times have changed and such weapons and instruments are no longer needed. However, in those times, David's (sws) army was considered to be the strongest on the basis of this armour. The purpose here is to show that he was both a God-devoted person and someone with great military might: on the one hand, his moving chants and hymns would melt mountains and on the other hand, his military inventions and onslaughts would continue to strike awe in his enemies.

After highlighting both these aspects of his life, the verse ends

2. And We had taught him the skill of a military attire for you so that it may protect you in warfare. Then will you also express gratitude in this way?

by asking the addressees of this *sūrah* if they too have the courage to become grateful like him. In spite of being blessed with wisdom, prophethood, political authority and might such was his simple and austere nature. It is this amalgamation of worldly and next-worldly traits that God requires and such are His grateful people. They are not like the wretched ones who praise the splendour and grandeur of this father and son but have become slaves to this world.

وَلِسُلَيْمَانَ الرِّيحَ عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَالِمِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

The presence of ل in سَلَّمَ shows that the verb سَخَّرْنَا is suppressed here. When this verb occurs with the preposition ل, it means putting something into the service of someone. In other words, the meaning is: “We had subdued the winds to make them subservient to Solomon (sws).” It is evident from history that David (sws) had a very large land force but it was in the reign of Solomon (sws) that the sea force made unparalleled advancements. He had invented ships with sails which travelled to India and to western islands. Their naval fleet was the most powerful in its times. In the Red sea, its centre was Tarsīs which is in the Gulf of ‘Aqabah and there were sea ports in Ṣuwar, Ṭā’ir and Yāfah. Until that time, sails were the only means to control sea winds. These sails also served as engines for the ships. Solomon (sws) had invented sails which would allow ships to navigate smoothly in stormy winds. They would make long trips to their destinations in all types of favourable or unfavourable winds without any fear. Since all this was the consequence of the science taught by God, it has been stated that God had made strong winds subservient to Solomon (sws) which would blow at this behest.

The words “a land in which We had placed blessings” refer to the land of Palestine and Syria etc. Being very lush and fertile, the land had great trade significance.

The sentence وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَالِمِينَ also occurred in verse 51 with a slight change in connection with Abraham (sws). It has already been explained there. The implication is that God fully knew the

3. And We had made strong winds subservient to Solomon which would blow at his directive to a land in which We had placed blessings. And We are aware of everything.

abilities and strengths of Solomon (sws). It is because of this that He gave him the power to harness winds. After blessing him with this power, God did not become aloof; He continued to observe how Solomon (sws) used it. In fact, it is this one aspect which has failed to be understood by our scientists of current times. Instead of regarding their cosmological achievements to be a blessing of God, they think that these are the result of their own competence. The fact is that all these successes owe themselves to the intellect and guidance given to them by God. It is towards this reality that the words **وَكُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ** point earlier. Once a person wrongly thinks that all his inventions owe themselves to his ability, another wrong notion springs forth which is even more destructive: he thinks that the control he has achieved of these elements can be used by him in any way he wants to; none can stop him. The Qur'ān has criticized this by the words **وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمِينَ**: providence is not so naïve as to hand over the keys of its treasures to people and become aloof so that people can make hay and do whatever they want to. In fact, it is aware of everything and when this is so, it means that if someone wrongly uses these abilities, he will definitely be held accountable one day. Both David (sws) and Solomon (sws) knew this fact very well. For this reason, even after achieving great success at both land and sea, they were never misled to think that all this was due to their own abilities; on the contrary, they regarded all these things to be God's blessings and whatever steps they took, they did so with the realization that one day they will be held accountable by God. It is this realization that makes a person truly grateful and obedient to God. This aspect of the lives of David (sws) and Solomon (sws) will be discussed in detail in the exegesis of Sūrah al-Naml.

وَمِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ مَنْ يَغْوِصُونَ لَهُ وَيَعْمَلُونَ عَمَلًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ ۖ وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حَافِظِينَ ۙ

The devils referred to are the ones that were subservient to Solomon (sws). It is evident from both the Qur'ān and the Torah that he had a formal army of human beings, jinn and birds. Thus it is stated in verse 17 of Sūrah al-Naml: **وَحُشِرَ لِسُلَيْمَانَ جُنُودًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَ**

4. And We had also made subservient to him from among the devils who would dive down into the seas for him and would do other errands as well and We were watching over them.

﴿١٢٠﴾ الْإِنْسُ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ⁵ This *sūrah* also mentions a powerful jinn that he had. The jinn had told him that if ordered, he could bring over the throne of queen Sheeba to him before his court was dismissed. These jinn would dive into the oceans to obtain corals and pearls and would also run other errands. By putting these evil elements into the service of mankind was a great feat of Solomon (sws). The real task before a competent ruler is not only to employ the beneficial elements but also those otherwise for the development and progress of society. We have already discussed in detail the knowledge that was given to Solomon (sws) to subdue devils under verse 102 of *Sūrah al-Baqarah* where the incident of Hārūt and Mārūt is mentioned. Some people are of the opinion that devils here refer to those disbelieving nations who were under his control. However, in my opinion, this would amount to linguistic injustice to the word. No doubt, this word has been used in the *Qur'ān* for miscreants among both men and jinn. However, it has never been used for disbelieving nations in the absolute sense. It can refer to miscreant elements among disbelieving nations but that too in a secondary way – never primarily. It basically can only connote miscreants among the jinn.

The words *وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حَفَظِينَ* refer to the fact that it was not that Solomon (sws) could control these devils on his own; it was God Who had given them in His control and He was watching over them so that none could escape or go against the wishes of Solomon (sws). Had this not been the case, they would have played havoc. These words actually admonish people who after harnessing certain forces of nature think that they have become their masters: neither can anyone snatch them nor can these forces rebel against them. This notion is based on ignorance and short-sightedness. If today man has got control over steam, gas, electricity and the atom etc, it is only because God has made this possible for him. Moreover, they will only remain in his control as long as God intends. If God loosens His grip over them, these forces through which such huge achievements have been made will wreak havoc.

وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَكَشَفْنَا

5. And the army of Solomon from among the jinn, humans and birds was put to regular inspection.

مَا بِهِ مِنْ ضُرٍّ وَآتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِندِنَا وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْعَابِدِينَ ﴿٦﴾

After citing two outstanding exponents of gratitude, mention is now coming up of prophets who set sterling examples of their patience. In this regard, Job (sws) is mentioned the foremost. It is evident from the Bible that he was a very righteous person who lived in Uz. The Almighty had blessed him with a large family and a lot of wealth. He had seven sons and three daughters. He also had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, one thousand oxen and five hundred donkeys who would carry their burdens. He had several servants. No one was as wealthy as him in the East. However, in spite of this splendour he was very grateful and obedient to God. He never got incriminated with any sin.

His righteousness was looked upon with jealousy by Satan and his agents. They reproached his righteousness by saying that it is because God has blessed him with affluence of all sorts; if he was deprived of this, he would never be grateful to God (Job, 4:9-11).

After this he was afflicted with a series of trials from God. His herds were looted, servants were killed, children passed away and all his wealth and splendour vanished. Instead of losing hope in God, he pleaded and implored before Him. The Bible records:

Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.” (Job: 1, 20-22)

After financial afflictions, Job underwent a series of ailments and matters reached the extent:

... Afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the

6. And We showed mercy to Job as well when he called out to his Lord: “I am in distress and you are the Most Merciful among all the merciful.” So, We accepted His prayer and delivered him of his suffering and restored to him his family too, and as many more with them also from Our special grace and so that this is a reminder for those who worship God.

ashes. (Job, 2:7-8)

Job bore this affliction too with great patience and trust in God – the way he did in the case of his earlier afflictions. Ultimately, he passed this test too with flying colours and was rewarded by God with much more than he had lost:

After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before. All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. ... The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part. ... After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. (Job, 42:10-16)

Consider the eloquence of the supplication: **أَتَى مَسْئِيَ الضُّمُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّحِيمِينَ**. Though Job (sws) referred to his pain and suffering, he did not utter the purpose of the supplication and left it to God's mercy. He said that he was afflicted with sorrow and that God was the most merciful among all the merciful. The implication is that he presented his grief before God and consigned his matter to Him; whatever God did would be befitting to His mercy and this would have blessings for Job (sws). It is this state which is called complete contentment on the decisions of God. He who attains this state gains the status of **رَاضِيَةٌ مَرْضِيَّةٌ** in the Hereafter. It is very difficult to determine from the trials and circumstances a person passes through in this world if their good outcome is good for a person or vice versa. At times, what he desires is harmful for him. For this reason, in all matters in which the beneficial aspect is not determined by God, it is better to consign it to Him. He alone knows whether sickness is better for a person or good health; death is better for him or life.

The Almighty accepted the supplication of Job (sws) mentioned in the words: "I am in distress and you are the Most Merciful among all the merciful." He restored his health and gave him children too. His grandeur and majesty too was given back to him once again. It may be noted that in his supplication, Job (sws) only referred to his physical ailments and not to his wealth and children. Given his circumstances, if he was able to get back his health, he regarded his desire to be more than met.

However, God, out of His grace, not only gave him what he desired but far more – something he did not regard himself to be worthy of because of his humility.

It is evident from the words “and restored to him his family too, and as many more with them” that God gathered his family members who had dispersed in this period of trial, replaced those who had died and increased his followers.

The words “from Our special grace and so that this is a reminder for those who worship God” highlight the fact that whatever happened, happened because of God’s favour. The circumstances were apparently very hopeless. Neither Job (sws) nor anyone else could have expected them to change in this manner. But God made it happen for His servant. The last part of the sentence shows that God also did this to make this incident a memorable one for those who worship Him: such are His favours on those who attach themselves to Him in all circumstances whether good or bad.

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ كُلٌّ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

Ishmael (sws) and Idrīs (sws) have been discussed under verses 54-57 of Sūrah Maryam. The similarity of traits these two prophets had has been alluded to there. Here Dhū al-Kifl has also been mentioned and about all the three is it stated that they were very patient. This shows this was a special quality all three had. The patience exercised by Ishmael (sws) is clearly known: the Qur’ān has alluded to it at several instances. However, nothing is known about the life and times of Idrīs and Dhū al-Kifl. These names are not mentioned in ancient scriptures. Either their pronunciation has been completely changed in Arabic or they have been erased from the previous scriptures and the Qur’ān has actually revived them. This is as far as my humble knowledge is concerned. Some people think that Dhū al-Kifl is actually Ezekiel (sws). However, this opinion can only be relied upon if it is known that he had this title. The names of both these prophets have been introduced through the Qur’ān and patience is a prominent trait of theirs. It should be kept in mind that neither

7. And We also showed favour to Ishmael, Idrīs and Dhū al-Kifl. All these were among the steadfast. And We admitted them into Our mercy. Indeed, they were among the pious.

the Qur'ān nor the Torah mentions all the prophets and their life histories. Only God knows all of them.

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاصِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَىٰ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ
سُبْحٰنَكَ ۖ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝٨

ذَوَالنُّونِ refers to Jonah (sws). Here he has been mentioned by this title which means “companion of the fish.” نُونُ means fish. Since he was swallowed by the fish, he was given this name. This title not only refers to this incident but also has an element of affection in it.

Jonah (sws) was sent as a messenger to the Ninevites. According to Book of Jonah, its population was one hundred and twenty thousand. In verse 147 of Sūrah al-Şaffāt, the words used are: مِائَةٌ أَلْفٌ أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ (a hundred thousand or even more). This corroborates the Biblical account. He preached among the Ninevites for a long period of time but they turned a deaf ear towards him. Ultimately, his sentiments of honour towards the truth overcame him and being dejected and heartbroken at the cold attitude of his people, he left them. He thought that when he could not penetrate into these stone-hearted people, why should he waste his time on them and face hardships. It was but natural for a truthful person to feel helplessness and humiliation on the lack of acknowledgement of the truth. However, when Jonah (sws) was overwhelmed by these emotions, he overlooked a very important aspect: when should a God's messenger leave his people? He cannot take the decision on his own. It is God's decision that he must follow in this regard. Only He knows when a nation has become bereft of the ability to accept the truth and when a messenger should declare his acquittal from it and consign it to God's punishment. The established practice of God regarding His messengers has always been that a messenger cannot leave his nation without God's permission even if it is after the life of a messenger and even if not a single person accepts his call. Jonah (sws) could not abide by this stipulation because of his intense

8. And We showed mercy to the companion of the fish also when being angry with them he left his people and he thought that We shall not question him. Thus, he cried out in the layers of darkness: “There is no deity except you. Exalted are you. Indeed, I am at fault.”

regard and love for the truth. He thought that when after a very long time in which he cautioned and warned his nation not a single person had shown any inclination towards the truth, he had fulfilled his obligation to God and he should consign such a wretched nation to Him and migrate from them. Fulfilling his obligation to God also meant that he did not think that God will hold him accountable for this and in fact thought that he would be delivered from the trial he was passing through.

This thought of Jonah (sws) in itself was based on pure sentiments but the trials which the Almighty has subjected his people to are bound to take their course. After being disenchanted with his nation, he embarked on a ship which was about to set off for a journey. After sailing for sometime, the ship was caught in a storm. When the storm did not blow away, the sailors, in accordance with the general superstition of those times in this regard, thought that a runaway slave had boarded the ship; unless he was thrown overboard, they would not be delivered from the storm. Finally lots were cast to find out who that person might be. It is indicated in Sūrah al-Şāffāt that it was Jonah (sws) who was given the responsibility of casting lots. The reason for this perhaps was that the people of the ship thought that he was the most respectable among them. Nevertheless, lots were cast and it fell upon Jonah (sws) and as a result he was thrown into the sea. There a large fish, most probably a whale, swallowed him. However, swallowing God's Messenger is no easy a matter. When Jonah (sws) saw that the way he had adopted to come out of the darkness of his hardships had plunged him into deeper darkness, he uttered that abiding supplication from the bottom of his heart about which it is guaranteed that if it is expressed with sincerity it is always accepted. So the Almighty accepted his supplication and the fish cast him on the sandy shore. There, to save his emaciated body from the heat of the sun, the Almighty had grown a pumpkin creeper or some similar plant where he was able to find refuge. When he recovered from this accident and felt some energy in his body, he was directed to go again to the people of Nineveh and warn them of the Hereafter. It is evident from the Book of Jonah in the Bible that the Almighty created an effective means for this: the creeper which had given refuge to Jonah (sws) in its shade suddenly became dry for some reason. People who are grateful to God's favours value the smallest of His favours. When the creeper

withered away, it deeply affected Jonah (sws). At this, the Almighty directed his attention to the fact that if he has been aggrieved by the withering away of a trivial creeper in whose cultivation and nourishing he had no role, then he should reflect on how God could consign the people of the city of Nineveh to torment who were created and brought up by Him? God then asked him to go again and invite them to His message; it may well be that they listen to his call and become worthy of God's mercy. In accordance with this directive, Jonah (sws) once again went to the people of Nineveh to warn them of the Hereafter. Such was the profound effect of his call that everyone from the common man to the king started to tremble. All of them professed faith in God. The king took off his royal robe and attired himself in sackcloth. He gave a royal decree to the masses that everyone should desist from evil, fast, plead to God and be penitent.

Since our exegetes have made a great mess in reporting the account of Jonah (sws), I have presented the above details to give its true picture. All these details are based on the insinuations and statements of the Bible and the Qur'ān. More details will be found in Sūrah al-Şāffāt. With this background, let us now reflect on the components of the verse.

The object of مُعَاذِبًا is suppressed in إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُعَاذِبًا because of concomitant indications. The implication is: he left his nation being sad and angry. Obviously, this was due to the fact that he did all that he could to warn them, but they completely ignored him and in fact continued to debase the truth and make fun of his message.

The words فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ imply that he thought that in this manner he would be able to deliver himself from the trial his nation had put him through. His zeal and passion for the cause of the truth made him overlook the fact that it was the Almighty Who had deputed him on this front; if he deserted it without His permission, he could face an even greater trial from God. Found in this sentence is a comment on an aspect of this step that Jonah (sws) forgot but it was concealed in it. He could not for a moment have thought that if he left his nation, he would escape God's accountability. However, he must have thought that after distancing himself from these wretched elements, he could free himself from the affliction he was passing through and would be able to lead his remaining life in peace. This thought in itself is not

a sin, but a messenger, as just indicated, is like a soldier deputed at a front. For this reason he was not permitted to leave that place on his own even though the motivation might have been his love and respect for the cause of the truth. If he did something like this, it would mean that he could save himself from God's trial on his own. This hidden aspect was not evident to Jonah (sws). For this reason, it was made plain to him so that its gravity became known to him. It should be kept in mind that at times a person takes a very innocent step but it reflects a notion that is not correct. Unless someone wise directs his attention towards it, it eludes him. God has unveiled this notion of Jonah (sws) to correct it. This method of correcting someone's view is more sagacious. Since messengers of God are an example for all mankind, even a slight deviation from them is checked by God and they are shown how far reaching its consequences can be if it is not stopped.

This interpretation is in consonance with the norms, sense and reason and also does not entail any blame on Jonah (sws). Also there remains no need to violate linguistic principles in interpreting لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ, as exegetes have done. The irony is that even after such overthinking, they were not able to solve the difficulty in it.

Here details of the incident encountered by Jonah (sws) in the ship have been suppressed. Only the supplication he uttered in the belly of the fish deep down in the dark sea is mentioned. The Almighty accepted it. The reason for this suppression has already been pointed out earlier: the purpose is not to divulge its details but to show that the gracious God accepts the supplications of His servant in the most hopeless of situations and delivers him from great calamities. The only condition is that the person regard his Lord to be his guardian and protector and plead before Him only.

In the Book of Jonah of the Bible, this supplication is mentioned in the following words:

In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me.
From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you
listened to my cry. (Jonah, 2:1)

The plural الظُّلُمَاتُ signifies the intensity of the darkness and its expansiveness. In the Arabic language, at times a plural denotes vastness. Examples of such plurals are البِشَارِقُ and البِغَارِبُ. Here it

refers to vastness of the darkness found in the belly of the fish and in the deep sea it was swimming. The purpose is to show that no one should be misled by the fact that God needs a public forum or a radio or a television to communicate His message. He listens to the cries of His servants in the pitch darkness of the deep sea and responds to them.

Consider next the supplication of Jonah (sws): لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ ۚ إِنَّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ. In this supplication, Jonah (sws) has not expressed any desire or demand; he only expressed and confessed his mistake. After this, he left the matter to his Lord accepting that His verdict would be the best and have wisdom and mercy in it because God is free of all defects. First of all, he expressed that only God is worthy of worship and obedience and all matters turn to Him. After that, he regarded God to be above and beyond all faults. Then he confessed his mistake that whatever had happened was the consequence of his fault; he was unjust to his soul and God was never unjust to him.

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ ۖ وَخَلَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ ۖ وَكَذَلِكَ نُصْحِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩﴾

Even though Jonah (sws) had not expressed his real desire in his supplication and had just consigned himself to the Almighty, all his stress and sorrow was relieved by the God Who knows the unseen, listens to supplications from the depths of the ocean and knows all secrets. Here the stress and sorrow referred to is not merely the one he had encountered in the ship, it also refers to the situation that made him leave his people. At another instance in the Qur'ān, it is stated that when he preached to his nation a second time, all of them embraced faith and the punishment that looked imminent was warded off.

The last part of the verse “and in this way do We deliver the believers” is to bring it in line with the circumstances which prevailed at the time it was revealed in the Qur'ān. Obviously, these incidents have not been narrated without a purpose. They are meant to assure Prophet Muḥammad (sws) and his companions that they must not lose hope however hopeless the circumstances may be. God knows and listens to their supplications and pleadings. He delivers sincere believers from

9. Thereupon, We answered his prayer and relieved him of sorrow. And in this way do We deliver the believers.

all their sorrows the way He delivered Jonah (sws). A day will come when the dark times they are facing will vanish, the truth will prevail and his nation will embrace the radiance of faith.

وَذَكَرَ يَّا إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ ¹⁰

The account of Zachariās (sws) has been mentioned in detail in Sūrah Maryam. He too supplicated before God in apparently very hopeless circumstances. However, despite these desperate and despondent circumstances, God made possible the impossible. It has been mentioned in Sūrah Maryam that his wife was infertile and he was very old himself. All his relatives were unworthy and totally indifferent to religion. In this situation, he was worried that he had no heir to the legacy of Jacob's progeny he carried with himself and his time might be near. He thus anxiously supplicated to God to not leave him by himself in old age and bless him with an heir who could inherit his legacy and that of Jacob's progeny.

The words “and you are the best of all heirs” do not mean that if he is not given an heir in response to his supplication, then none will remain who would be a follower of God's religion because God's works are dependent on him or his family; on the contrary, He Himself is the best heir of His religion. The implication is that the only objective of his supplication was that he and his family were not deprived of the good fortune of serving His religion they always had. God's tasks are not dependent on him and he can raise anyone to serve His religion.

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ يَحْيَىٰ وَأَصْلَحْنَاهُ زَوْجَهُ ¹¹ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسْأَلُونَ فِي الْغَيْبَاتِ وَ
يَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا ¹¹ وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ

The supplication of Zachariās (sws) had a very noble purpose. He actually wished to be blessed with someone who would serve religion. His legacy did not consist of wealth and assets, it consisted of the religion of Jacob's progeny and wanted this sacred legacy to remain secure. For this reason, his supplication

10. And We showed favour to Zachariās also when he called out to his Lord: “Lord! Do not leave me by myself and you are the best of all heirs.”

11. So, We answered this prayer and blessed him with John and made his wife favourable for him. Indeed, these people would take the initiative in righteous deeds and would worship Us in every state of hope and despair and would remain submissive to Us.

was deemed worthy of acceptance. God gave his infertile wife the ability to bear a child and he was blessed with a celebrated son, John (sws).

Consider the words: “indeed, these people would take the initiative in righteous deeds and would worship Us in every state of hope and despair and would remain submissive to Us.” His supplication was accepted by God because people like him were not slaves of worldly desire; they were ones who vied with each other in pious deeds. The reference in “these people” is especially to the family of Zacharias (sws). His paternal family was negligent to religion, as has been explained in Sūrah Maryam. However, those affiliated to him specially were religious. The ailment of running after worldly pleasures was not found in them. In fact, they had the spirit of outdoing each other in righteousness, which was a distinct feature of Jacob’s progeny.

His second trait is mentioned as “would worship Us in every state of hope and despair.” This is in contrast to the attitude of the Idolaters as well as people who had become slaves to worldly desires. The Qur’ān tells us that when such people face hardships they plead and supplicate at length before God and promise that if their problem is solved they will forever remain sincere to Him. However, when God does the needful, they regard it to be product of their own planning and forget Him as if they had never even called upon Him. It is said that in contrast to these, the ones mentioned in the verse are ones whose character was neither hypocritical nor idolatrous; on the other hand, they called upon God in all circumstances whether in hope or in despair.

The words “would remain submissive to Us” refer to the fact that such people were not ones who would become arrogant if they were blessed with favours and become ungrateful and desperate if they are deprived of them: they were ones who were submissive to God in all circumstances.

وَالَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ مَرْجَهَا فَانْفَضْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَجَعَلْنَاهَا آيَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

This verse refers to Mary (sws) who has been mentioned in detail in Sūrah Maryam. She has not been named here because the attribute that has been stated is so specific that none else but

12. And on that [chaste woman] also who guarded her vulnerable organs. So, We blew into her Our Spirit and made her and her son a sign for the people of the world.

she can be implied.

The expression *أَخَصَّنَتْ فَرْجَهَا* must not be interpreted literally. The expression *أَخَصَّنَ فَرْجَهُ* is an idiom like *سد الشبهة* and *رتق الفتق* etc. In these idioms, the literal meaning of the words is not implied; rather the overall meaning for which they have been coined is implied. Thus *أَخَصَّنَ فَرْجَهُ* would mean *تحصن من السوء* (he kept himself cleansed from every vice or protected himself from danger). Just as this idiom is used for women, it is also used for men. The word *فَرْج* in Arabic actually refers to *موضع مخافة* (place of fear). Examples of this usage can be presented but only they will benefit from these who are well-versed with classical Arabic literature and would not be of any use to the general readers of this exegesis.

The words “so, We blew into her Our Spirit” refer to the fact that God through His special word of command *كُنْ* (be) blew His spirit into a child conceived in her womb. Since Jesus (sws) was conceived in this way against general physical and biological laws through this word of command, it has been said that God blew His spirit into him. It is on account of this that the verse goes on to state that Jesus (sws) and his mother are from among the great signs of God. I have explained how they are signs of God. Jesus (sws) himself said the same words about himself as the Qur'ān as stating, as is evident from the Gospels. It is the followers of Paul who have distorted the incident and given it a new interpretation. I have dealt in detail with these interpolations in the explanation of Sūrah Āl-i ‘Imrān.

13. *إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ* ﴿٩٧﴾

This is the summary of the whole discussion after a mention of all the prophets. The implication is that if anyone discriminates between the prophets, creates innovations in the religion brought by them or adulterates monotheism with polytheism, then the responsibility rests on him. The prophets are absolved from this.

14. *وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ كُلًّا إِلَيْنَا رُجُوعٌ* ﴿٩٨﴾

These words sound a threat to the people who had marred

13. This community of yours is one community and I only am your Lord. So, worship Me alone.

14. And they tore their religion into pieces. Each has to return to Us.

God's religion with innovation thus splitting it into pieces and now each group was opposing the religion brought by the prophets in order to support their own ways. The Prophet (sws) is told that he should disregard the people who are opposing him because once they return to God, He will expose their deeds. Nothing will remain hidden.

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ لِسَعِيدٍ ۖ وَإِنَّا لَهُ كَاتِبُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾¹⁵

Once they return to Him, God will fully reward people who did righteous deeds as long as they adhered to faith and belief in one God. Each and every virtue done by them will be noted down and there is no possibility that any of their deeds is missed by God. It has been explained at other instances that only those deeds are acceptable to God which are done only for Him while having faith in Him. Deeds not done for Him carry no weight before Him even if they are as profound as migration and *jihād* for His cause.

Section VI: Verses (95-112)

Coming up are the concluding verses of the *sūrah*. Warning people of the Hereafter with which the *sūrah* began is taken up again here. This section commences with the very words (اِقْتَرَبَ) with which the *sūrah* began (اِقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ). In this way, the Qur'ān itself guides us to the coherence found in it. This style is found in most *sūrahs*. My mentor calls it عود على البدء (return to the beginning). The benefit of this style is that if the real purpose of a *sūrah* is lost in its expanse, it is brought before the addressees once again.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses in this background.

Text and Translation

وَحَرَامٌ عَلَى قَوْمٍ أَهْلُكُنْهَا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَأْجُوجُ وَمَأْجُوجُ وَهُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَنْسِلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَاقْتَرَبَ الْوَعْدُ الْحَقُّ فَإِذَا هِيَ شَاخِصَةٌ أَبْصَارُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا قَدْ كُنَّا فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِنْ هَذَا بَلْ كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾ إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ حَصْبُ جَهَنَّمَ

15. Then he who does righteous deeds and also has faith, his effort will not go waste. We are Ones writing it for him.

أَنْتُمْ لَهَا وَرِدُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ لَوْ كَانَ هَؤُلَاءِ إِلَهًا مَا وَرَدُوهَا ۖ وَكُلٌّ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يَسْعَوْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾ لَا يَسْعَوْنَ حَسْبِيسَهَا ۖ وَهُمْ فِي مَا اشْتَهَتْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ لَا يَحْزَنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الْأَكْبَرُ وَتَتَلَقَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ۖ هَٰذَا يَوْمُكُمْ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِ ۖ لِنُكْشِبَ ۖ كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيدُهُ ۖ وَعَدًّا عَلَيْنَا ۖ إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِن بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ إِنَّ فِي هَٰذَا لَبَلَاغًا لِّقَوْمٍ عَابِدِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي أَنبِئُكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ ۖ إِنَّكُمْ لَأَنْبَاءُ إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ آذَنْتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ سَوَاءٍ ۖ وَإِنْ آذَرْتِ أَقْرَبُ ۖ أَمْ يُعِيدُ مَا تُوْعَدُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ مِنَ النُّقُولِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ وَإِنْ آذَرْتِ لَعَلَّه فِتْنَةٌ لَّكُمْ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١١١﴾ قُلْ رَبِّ احْكُم بِالْحَقِّ ۖ وَرَبُّنَا الرَّحْمَنُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

And for whichever settlement We have destined destruction, it is forbidden for them to turn to the truth. They shall never turn [to it] until that time arrives when Gog and Magog are let loose and they launch an onslaught from every high place. (95-96)

And the true promise of the Day of Judgement has drawn near; then all of a sudden those who have disbelieved will stare in astonishment. They will cry out: “Woe be to us! We remained in this state of negligence. In fact, it is we who were unjust to our selves.” (97)

Now you and your deities that you have been worshipping instead of God will become the firewood of Hell. You shall certainly enter it. Had they been deities, they would not have entered it and now all shall remain in it forever. These worshippers are to cry out in it, and such will be the situation of these deities that they will hear nothing in it. (98-100)

However, those who have been promised a good fate by Us shall be kept away from it. They shall not even listen to its sound and shall forever remain in the bliss they desire. That great commotion of that day shall not afflict them with grief and the angels will welcome them. They will say: “This is that day of yours which you were being promised of.” (101-103)

Bear in mind the day when We shall roll up the sky the way pages are rolled up in a scroll. The way We began the first creation,

in the same way, We shall do it again. This is a definite promise that We are responsible for. Indeed, We are certain to do it. (104)

And We have written in the Psalms after the piece of advice that the earth shall only be inherited by My righteous servants. Indeed, in it is great awareness for those who worship. And We have only sent you as a mercy for the people of the world. Say: It is this which is only divinely revealed to me: Your God is one God. So, do you submit yourselves to Him? Then if they turn away, say: I have warned all of you equally. Now I do not know whether that time you are being promised is near or far off. Indeed, He alone knows the words said openly and those also that you conceal. And I do not know whether perhaps this time is a trial for you and a respite to gain benefit. (105-111)

He prayed: My Lord! Judge with fairness, and Our Lord is the Most Merciful from whom help is requested against what you say. (112)

Explanation

16. **وَحَرَامٌ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ**

A part of this verse is suppressed according to common linguistic styles of Arabic. It is explained by the words: **أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ**. Thus the overall implication would be:

وَحَرَامٌ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَنْ يَرْجِعُوا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ

Many examples of similar suppressions can be seen in the earlier *sūrahs* of this exegesis. Here the verb **أَهْلَكْنَاهَا** connotes decision. At times, when the certainty of an incident or matter is to be expressed, it is stated as if it has already happened.

The verb **رجع** means “withdrawing from falsehood and turning towards the truth.”

In this verse, the Prophet (sws) is stopped from being anxious about the faith of the miscreants of the Quraysh. He is told that they are now facing an established practice of God. Just as the previous nations were destroyed and did not embrace faith after the utmost efforts of their respective prophets, in a similar way, it has now become impossible for these people to accept faith.

16. And for whichever settlement We have destined destruction, it is forbidden for them to turn to the truth. They shall never turn [to it].

God's torment has become destined for them because of their stubbornness. The implication is that the Prophet (sws) should stop worrying about them and consign their matter to God. Earlier, in verse 6 of this *sūrah*, this topic was discussed thus:

مَا آمَنَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَفَهُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ

Before them, none of the people of the settlements We destroyed professed faith; so, will they profess faith?

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَأْجُوجُ وَمَأْجُوجُ وَهُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَنْسِلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾¹⁷

Gog and Magog have been discussed in detail under verses 98-99 of *Sūrah al-Kahf*. It is evident from the *Qur'ān* that near the Day of Judgement, Gog and Magog will launch an onslaught from all sides and the whole world will be filled with disorder. How exactly this will happen is something known only to God. Here the reason that they are mentioned is that the Prophet (sws) should not waste any further time on the people who want to see various signs to accept faith. They are not ones who can be convinced by the arguments presented by the *Qur'ān* that are based on human nature and intellect; they will only accept faith when the Day of Judgement will stare them in the eye – when professing faith will be of no use.

وَاقْتَرَبَ الْوَعْدُ الْحَقُّ فَإِذَا هِيَ شَاخِصَةٌ أَبْصَارُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا¹⁸ يَوِيلُنَا قَدْ كُنَّا فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا بَلْ كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾

The implication of this verse is that the promise of the Day of Judgement they regard far-off is not so. The time of its arrival is very near. In verses 6-7 of *Sūrah al-Ma'ārij*, it is said: *إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ* وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا بَعِيدًا (they regard it to be far off, and We see it very near at hand). The fact is that human beings measure time by their own short standards and thus think that the Day of Judgement is far-off. By God's measurement standards, it is very near. This

17. Until that time arrives when Gog and Magog are let loose and they launch an onslaught from every high place.

18. And the true promise of the Day of Judgement has drawn near; then all of a sudden those who have disbelieved will stare in astonishment. They will cry out: "Woe be to us! We remained in this state of negligence. In fact, it is we who were unjust to our selves."

topic has also been discussed in 1 verse of this *sūrah*. There some other aspects too were explained. Readers may look it up.

The words “then all of a sudden those who have disbelieved will stare in astonishment” depict its unexpected arrival. Such will be its horrific nature that that people who today are stubbornly demanding its arrival and making fun of it will be struck with fear and consternation. Whenever a person sees something suddenly, he keeps staring at it in amazement.

The words *يُؤَيِّنَا كُنُوفًا غَفْلَةً مِّنْ هَٰذَا بَلْ كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ* portray the situation they will be faced with. The word *قَالُوا* (they said) is suppressed here. They will confess that it was not that no one came to awaken them from their slumber of indifference; on the contrary, God did send people for this purpose who did their utmost to awaken them but it was they themselves who were unjust to their souls and kept making fun of the warnings sounded to them. It may be kept in mind that the real impediment in believing in the Day of Judgement is not that it does not have a convincing argument in its favour; the real impediment is the indifference of people. A person does not want to believe in it in spite of being explained these arguments because this is something that conflicts with his desires. In such a situation, the sole thing that can support him is indifference. He remains in this state and continues to defer his preparation for it until one day it will suddenly stare him in the eye.

19. *إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ أَنتُمْ لَهَا وَرِدُونَ*

In other words, this confession will be of no use to them. The words “You shall certainly enter it” imply that whether they plead or cry, they will have to encounter the destructive pit of Hell. There is no escape from it.

The letter *ما* in the words *وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ* indicates that they refer to the idols and stones the Idolaters used to worship. The use of *ما* for non-living objects is common. The purpose of making these idols into the fuel of Hell is obviously not to punish them; it is, in fact, to show their worshippers the horrible fate of their deities. In the first place idols like *Lāt*, *Manāt*, ‘*Uzzā* and *Ḥabl* which the Idolaters worshipped were mere hypothetical names that they had invented

19. Now you and your deities that you have been worshipping instead of God will become the firewood of Hell. You shall certainly enter it.

and did not exist in reality. Moreover, they would worship them in the form of stone idols. The fate of some polytheistic nations who used to worship prophets and righteous individuals is not mentioned here. It is described at certain other instances in the Qur'ān. Thus, for example, the Christians worship Jesus (sws). Details of the testimony that will be borne against them by Jesus (sws) is mentioned in Sūrah al-Mā'idah. In a similar way, other prophets and righteous individuals will declare their acquittal from their worshippers on the Day of Judgement. They will express their ignorance of being worshipped and go on to say that if their worshippers have indulged in this foolishness, they should bear its consequences; they never told them to worship them.

20 ﴿لَوْ كَانَ هُوَ آلَ إِلَهَةٍ مَا وُرِدُواهَا وَكُلٌّ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ﴾

Stated in this verse is the reason for which these idols will be cast into Hell. It has been indicated earlier that the reason for consigning them to Hell is to show the horrible fate their deities will encounter. This will be extreme humiliation for those who were the last hope of all their desires. They will see how helpless they are like their own selves and how they and their deities both will face punishment.

The words “and now all shall remain in it forever” imply that both the worshippers and the worshipped will eternally remain together in Hell.

Concomitant indications show that the first part of this verse will be directly addressed to them and the second one is a declaration of their permanent fate.

21 ﴿لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يَسْعَوْنَ﴾

The word زَفِيرٌ means “pleadings and crying.” The pronoun هُمْ in the first sentence is for the worshippers and in the second for the idols. On first sight, this may seem that there is an ambiguity in the antecedents in both mentions of this pronoun. However, as has been indicated in the light of several examples earlier on, this ambiguity is a shortcoming when there is a chance that it

20. Had they been deities, they would not have entered it and now all shall remain in it forever.

21. These worshippers are to cry out in it, and such will be the situation of these deities that they will hear nothing in it.

actually exists. If there is no such chance and the antecedents can be definitively determined, this cannot be regarded a shortcoming. It in fact imparts brevity to the discourse. Here there is actually no such possibility of ambiguity. The verse implies that worshippers will cry and plead in Hell and the mere stones they regarded as deities and worshipped will not even know that they were being worshipped and sought help from. This topic is discussed at other instances in the Qur'ān too in different styles: the companions of Hell will implore for help but none will be there to help them.

It is possible that in the second part, someone thinks that verb and pronoun mentioned are ones that are used for living beings, so how can they be used for stones and idols? The answer to this question is that they are used with reference to the opinion of the worshippers: they considered these stones to hear their pleadings. Many examples of such usage can be seen in classical Arabic literature and in the Qur'ān.

22. ^{١٠٢} إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ

The noun qualified by the verb الْحُسْنَىٰ is suppressed. The implication is that those who have already been promised a good fate by God will be kept away from Hell. The promise of this good fate has been mentioned earlier in verse 94. There it was said: “Then he who does righteous deeds and also has faith, his effort will not go waste. We are Ones writing it for him.”

23. ^{١٠٣} لَا يَسْمَعُونَ حَسِيسَهَا ۖ وَهُمْ فِي مَا اشْتَهَتْ أَنفُسُهُمْ خَالِدُونَ

This verse clearly refutes the opinion of those people who, after not being able to correctly determine the address in verse 71 of Sūrah Maryam,²⁴ think that once every person including the believers will have to pass over Hell. Readers may look up my explanation.

If a person does not have the freedom to alter and adapt the

22. However, those who have been promised a good fate by Us shall be kept away from it.

23. They shall not even listen to its sound and shall forever remain in the bliss they desire.

24. وَإِنَّ مِنْكُمْ لِلْآوَادِهَا (and there will be none among you who will not pass by it).

luxuries provided to him, their monotony will bore him and he will desire new surroundings for his entertainment and amusement. Human beings are species who have a will and intention. For this reason, they prefer the greatest of bliss on their own conditions. To give due regard to this requirement of their nature, the Almighty has made Paradise for the believers in such a way that they can create variety according to what they desire. Not the slightest hindrance will be a barrier to any of their wishes. Obviously, this eternal bliss and creation of diversity whenever desired is something which the greatest of emperors ruling this world neither had nor can ever have. At another instances, this fact is illustrated by verse 108 of Sūrah al-Kahf: لَا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا جَوْلًا (the companions of Paradise would not like to leave their Paradise)

25 ﴿لَا يَخْزِيهِمْ انْفِرَاجُ الْاَكْبَرِ وَتَتَلَقَّهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ هَذَا يَوْمُكُمْ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ﴾

The expression الْاَكْبَرِ refers to the great upheaval that will take place in the whole universe once the trumpet is blown. The Qur'ān has portrayed it at various instances. In particular, the *sūrahs* of the last chapter have depicted it in such a way that if person has insight, he can actually observe it with his eyes. The words “then all of a sudden those who have disbelieved will stare in astonishment” of verse 97 are pointing towards it.

يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ كَمَا بَدَأْنَا اَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُّعِيدُهُ وَعَدًا عَلَيْنَا اِنَّا
كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ 26 ﴿١٠٨﴾

The word السِّجِلِّ refers to the scroll or register in which written pages are preserved. The word كُتُب here means “written pages” and اَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ is grammatically a locus. The expression مَرَّةً is also used in the Qur'ān at various instances to convey this meaning.

The participle in وَعَدًا عَلَيْنَا is for emphasis, ie, it is a certain

25. That great commotion of that day shall not afflict them with grief and the angels will welcome them. They will say: “This is that day of yours which you were being promised of.”

26. Bear in mind the day when We shall roll up the sky the way pages are rolled up in a scroll. The way We began the first creation, in the same way, We shall do it again. This is a definite promise that We are responsible for. Indeed, We are certain to do it.

promise from God, as is indicated earlier by the words **الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ**.

The words “indeed, We are certain to do it” imply that no one should think that they are being sounded a bluff. This promise shall be fulfilled by God come what may; He has decided it and it is very easy a task for Him.

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ ²⁷

This verse refers to the Psalms. Though it has been mentioned at various instances in it that the earth shall be inherited by the righteous servants of God, yet chapter 37 is especially dedicated to this one fact. For this reason, reproduced below is the chapter in full so that the veracity of the Qur'ān's reference becomes evident and it also becomes clear which “earth” is being referred to here. Moreover, the true meaning of **مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ** is also evident and it becomes known that what is being alluded to by the word **الذِّكْرُ**.

In the following pages, first the complete chapter shall be cited and the individual components of the verse that specially need elucidation will be explained.

¹ Do not fret because of those who are evil
or be envious of those who do wrong;

² for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.

³ Trust in the LORD and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

⁴ Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

⁵ Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him and he will do this:

⁶ He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,
your vindication like the noonday sun.

⁷ Be still before the LORD
and wait patiently for him;
do not fret when people succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.

⁸ Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;

27. And We have written in the Psalms after the piece of advice that the earth shall only be inherited by My righteous servants.

- do not fret—it leads only to evil.
- ⁹ For those who are evil will be destroyed,
but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.
- ¹⁰ A little while, and the wicked will be no more;
though you look for them, they will not be found.
- ¹¹ But the meek will inherit the land
and enjoy peace and prosperity.
- ¹² The wicked plot against the righteous
and gnash their teeth at them;
- ¹³ but the Lord laughs at the wicked,
for he knows their day is coming.
- ¹⁴ The wicked draw the sword
and bend the bow
to bring down the poor and needy,
to slay those whose ways are upright.
- ¹⁵ But their swords will pierce their own hearts,
and their bows will be broken.
- ¹⁶ Better the little that the righteous have
than the wealth of many wicked;
- ¹⁷ for the power of the wicked will be broken,
but the LORD upholds the righteous.
- ¹⁸ The blameless spend their days under the LORD's care,
and their inheritance will endure forever.
- ¹⁹ In times of disaster they will not wither;
in days of famine they will enjoy plenty.
- ²⁰ But the wicked will perish:
Though the LORD's enemies are like the flowers of the field,
they will be consumed, they will go up in smoke.
- ²¹ The wicked borrow and do not repay,
but the righteous give generously;
- ²² those the LORD blesses will inherit the land,
but those he curses will be destroyed.
- ²³ The LORD makes firm the steps
of the one who delights in him;
- ²⁴ though he may stumble, he will not fall,
for the LORD upholds him with his hand.
- ²⁵ I was young and now I am old,
yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken
or their children begging bread.
- ²⁶ They are always generous and lend freely;

their children will be a blessing.

²⁷ Turn from evil and do good;
then you will dwell in the land forever.

²⁸ For the LORD loves the just
and will not forsake his faithful ones.
They will be protected forever.²⁸

Wrongdoers will be completely destroyed;
the offspring of the wicked will perish.

²⁹ The righteous will inherit the land
and dwell in it forever.

³⁰ The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom,
and their tongues speak what is just.

³¹ The law of their God is in their hearts;
their feet do not slip.

³² The wicked lie in wait for the righteous,
intent on putting them to death;

³³ but the LORD will not leave them in the power of the wicked
or let them be condemned when brought to trial.

³⁴ Hope in the LORD
and keep his way.

He will exalt you to inherit the land;

when the wicked are destroyed, you will see it.

³⁵ I have seen a wicked and ruthless man
flourishing like a luxuriant native tree,

³⁶ but he soon passed away and was no more;
though I looked for him, he could not be found.

³⁷ Consider the blameless, observe the upright;
a future awaits those who seek peace.

³⁸ But all sinners will be destroyed;
there will be no future for the wicked.

³⁹ The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD;
he is their stronghold in time of trouble.

⁴⁰ The LORD helps them and delivers them;
he delivers them from the wicked and saves them,
because they take refuge in him.

In my opinion, it is to this Psalm that the Qur'ān has referred

28. See Septuagint; Hebrew *They will be protected forever.*

here. If it is reflected upon, one can clearly see that it is in the form of discrete stanzas in which words of counsel are sounded first and then a repetitive verse occurs “the land and country shall be inherited by the pious and righteous servants of God.” This style can be seen in the Qur’ān as well in Sūrah al-Raḥmān where the verse is repeated.

If the underlined sentences are deliberated upon, it will be eternal. Thus, for example, it is said:

And their inheritance will endure forever (18)

Then you will dwell in the land forever (27)

They will be protected forever (28)

The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever (29)

Obviously, these glad tidings of an eternal kingdom cannot relate to this earth which we inhabit. Neither are any of its things eternal nor is its inheritance specific for the righteous. On the contrary, this earth and all of its things are mortal and God has given respite in it to both the righteous and the wicked. After that, the heavens and the earth both will be destroyed and a new world will be born with new laws. It will be eternally inherited by the righteous and the wrong doers will be cast into Hell.

Precisely the same inference is validated by the Qur’ān. Earlier in verse 104, it is pointed out that one day the Almighty will destroy this sky. In verse 48 of Sūrah Ibrāhīm, it is stated: *يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَوَاتُ* (keep in mind the day when the earth is changed into a different earth and the heavens also). In the new earth and sky created, the law undoubtedly would be that they will eternally belong to the righteous. The wrongdoers will have no share in it. This is evident not just from the Psalms and the Qur’ān, it is also evident from all divine scriptures and from the teachings of all the prophets and messengers of God.

It is this reality which the Qur’ān explains with reference to the Psalms in the verse under discussion. The Psalms are a collection of hymns revealed to David (sws). As has been mentioned in this *sūrah*, he was a prophet as well as an illustrious king. A declaration that the real and final kingdom of the earth will belong only to the righteous would have been the most effective from the mouth of a prophet. When a mighty king makes such a

proclamation, who else can dare say anything else.

After this explanation, consider now the components of the verse.

It is evident with reference to Psalm 37 cited earlier that the teaching of the Psalms which the Qur'ān has alluded to here has been explained in detail in a very moving way. It has also become evident that the real fact stated occurs in the form of a repetitive verse with words of counsel and lofty instruction being sounded before it. This is referred to by the Qur'ān as *مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ*. The importance of this reference is that in fact it is these words of counsel which guarantee an eternal kingdom in the Hereafter.

The real thing for which the Qur'ān has alluded to the Psalms is referred to by the words “that the earth shall only be inherited by My righteous servants.” It is evident from the portion of the Psalms cited that the earth mentioned in this verse refers to the earth that will be brought into existence in the Hereafter and whose inheritance will solely be meant for the righteous servants of God.

29 *إِنَّ فِي هَذَا بَلَدًا لِّقَوْمٍ عٰبِدِيْنَ*

The word *بَلَدًا* here encompasses the meanings of general declaration and general glad tidings. It is undefined to magnify it. The implication is that it is God's verdict that the inheritors of the new earth will only be the righteous servants of God. This constitutes huge glad tidings for those who worship Him. So people should try to struggle to their best for the Hereafter. They should not sacrifice it for the life of few days of this world.

30 *وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ*

The implication of the verse is that God has sent the Prophet (sws) as a mercy for mankind to deliver glad tidings and warnings to people. He should inform them of this reality. His sole responsibility is dissemination and proclamation and should try to carry it out. As for the arrogant who make fun of his warnings and demand to see the promised doom, he should tell them that God has sent him as a mercy to them and not as a punishment. He should tell them that he is unaware of its time of arrival. Only God has its knowledge.

29. Indeed, in it is great awareness for those who worship.

30. And We have only sent you as a mercy for the people of the world.

31 ﴿قُلْ إِنِّي أُوْحِي إِلَىٰ أَنِّي إِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۚ فَهَلْ أَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

The last part of the verse carries a vehement warning: are these people willing to consign themselves to the powerful and ever-existing God or not? The implication is that the Prophet (sws) has done his duty and now it is their responsibility; if they continue to be stubborn and make fun of him at the backing of their idols and deities, he is absolved of his responsibility towards them. The responsibility of the consequences now rests with them.

32 ﴿فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ أَذْنُكُمْ عَلَىٰ سَوَاءٍ ۖ وَإِنِ أَذْرَىٰ أَقْرَبُ أَمْرًا بَعِيدٌ مَّا تُوعَدُونَ﴾

The implication of the verse is that if even after this decisive warning they persist with their attitude of evasion, the Prophet (sws) should tell them that he has informed their leaders and their followers, the prominent and the ordinary, the rich and the poor all about the imminent danger. None of them can now present the excuse that he had not been warned. As for the time of this danger to materialize, he is not aware of it. Only God – on whose directive he is warning them – knows it.

33 ﴿إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْتُمُونَ﴾

This is a very comprehensive and eloquent verse. The implication is that when God knows the hidden and the known aspects of peoples' lives, they should consign their matter to him. He will do what His wisdom entails. He knows the demand they are making from the Prophet (sws) as well as its reason.

It may be kept in mind that those who were demanding the punishment from the Prophet (sws) were not doing it because they thought that it was a bluff or that he was lying to them. They only did so to annoy and pester him and to deceive their masses. It is while referring to this fact that it has been said that they should not think that God is unaware of the secrets of their

31. Say: It is this which is only divinely revealed to me: Your God is one God. So, do you submit yourselves to Him?

32. Then if they turn away, say: I have warned all of you equally. Now I do not know whether that time you are being promised is near or far off.

33. Indeed, He alone knows the words said openly and those also that you conceal.

hearts. He fully knows them and for this reason the Prophet (sws) is not worried at their demand. He fully trusts God's knowledge and wisdom.

³⁴ وَإِنْ أَدْرَىٰ لَعَلَّهٗ فِتْنَةٌ لَّكُمْ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣٤﴾

The antecedent of the pronoun in لَعَلَّهٗ is the “delayed promise” indicated in the previous verse. In other words, it is being said that if this promise is being deferred, the Prophet (sws) does not know the reason for it. Only God knows it. It may well be a trial for them so that the truth is conclusively communicated to them. It can also be that God wants them to have some more time to eat and enjoy. Whatever the reason, it should not be a cause of arrogance for them. On the contrary, they should try to benefit from it. If it is the first case, they should hurry and repent and in case of the second, they should be grateful to God.

³⁵ قُلْ رَبِّ احْكُم بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَرَبُّنَا الرَّحْمَنُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

This verse is both a supplication from the Prophet (sws) and also a farewell to the enemies. God accepted his supplication and the Prophet bade farewell to his enemies by expressing the fact that he only seeks help from God on what they say and do because He is the real helper.

With these words, the explanation of this *sūrah* comes to its completion. فَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ (gratitude be to God on this).

Rahmānābād

18th March 1973

34. And I do not know whether perhaps this time is a trial for you and a respite to gain benefit.

35. He prayed: My Lord! Judge with fairness, and Our Lord is the Most Merciful from whom help is requested against what you say.

HADITH STUDIES

Cleansing after Defecation

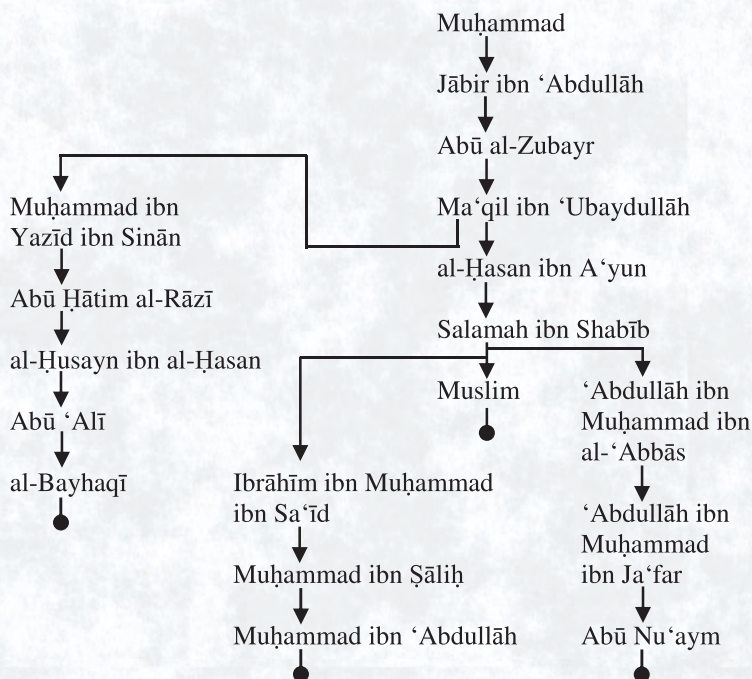
Dr Shehzad Saleem

حدثني سَلَمَةُ بْنُ شَبِيبٍ حَدَّثَنَا الْحَسَنُ بْنُ أَغَيْنَ حَدَّثَنَا مَعْقِلٌ وَهُوَ بْنُ عُبَيْدٍ
اللَّهُ الْجَزَرِيُّ عَنْ أَبِي الزُّبَيْرِ عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
الِاسْتِجْبَارُ تَوَّ وَرَمَى الْجَبَارُ تَوَّ وَالسَّيُّ بَيْنَ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةِ تَوَّ وَالطَّوَّافُ تَوَّ وَإِذَا
اسْتَجْبَرَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِرْ بِتَوَّ

Jābir stated: “God’s Messenger said: ‘Cleaning with mud-stones after defecation should be once only; the *ramī* of the columns should be once; the *sa’ī* between Ṣafā and Marwā should be once; the *ṭawāf* should be once. When anyone of you cleans yourself with mud-stones after defecation, he should do it once only.’”¹

Following is the schematic illustration of the *isnād* of this narrative’s variants:

1. Muslim, *Al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīh*, vol. 2, 945, (no. 1300). See also: Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Musnad al-mustakhraj*, vol. 3, 380, (no. 3002); Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan al-kubrā*, vol. 5, 90, (no. 9104).



Abū al-Zubayr Muḥammad ibn Muslim ibn Tadrus al-Makkī (d. 116 AH) is a *mudallis* and variants have his *‘an‘anah*.² Also though Abū al-Zubayr is regarded as trustworthy by many authorities, here is the *jarḥ* recorded on him by al-Mizzī:³ In the opinion of Nu‘aym ibn Ḥammād, Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī regards him to be weak and in the opinion of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah regards him to be weak. Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s opinion about him is: *yuktabu ḥadīthuhū wa lā yuḥtajju bihī*. Abū ‘Adī says that though he is reliable yet he has reported some narratives from *du‘afā’*.

Shu‘bah has regarded Abū al-Zubayr to be *ḍa‘īf* as well.⁴

2. Ibn Ḥajar, *Taqrīb al-tahdhīb*, 506.

3. Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 26, 407-410.

4. Al-Tirmidhī, *Al-‘Ilal al-ṣaghīr*, 765.