

QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

Sūrah Maryam (3)

Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī

Section V: Verses (64-98)

Coming up are the closing verses of the *sūrah*. First, through the tongue of Gabriel, the Prophet (sws) is urged to be steadfast. After that, the rejecters of the Day of Judgement are rebuked. In particular, they are censured for their view that since in this world they have a superior status in this world to the believers, they regard themselves to be more guided and if ever there was going to be a Judgement Day they would have the same status through the help of their intercessors and partners of God. In the end, the Prophet (sws) is urged to disregard the demand of people to show them the punishment and through the Qur'ān warn and give glad tidings to the God-fearing among them. He is to depend on the Qur'ān for this purpose as it has appropriate guidance for them in every phase of delivering the truth to them. As for those who are stubborn and obdurate, he must inform them of their fate. They will meet this fate if they persist on this attitude and he will not be responsible for them.

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

Text and Translation

وَمَا تَنْتَزِلُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ ۚ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا وَمَا خَلْفَنَا وَمَا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ
نَسِيًّا ﴿٦٤﴾ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهِ ۖ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ سَمِيًّا ﴿٦٥﴾
وَيَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا مِئْتُ كَسُوفَ أُخْرَجُ حَيًّا ﴿٦٦﴾ أَوْ لَا يَذْكُرُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْئًا ﴿٦٧﴾ فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحْشُرَنَّهُمْ وَالشَّيَاطِينَ ثُمَّ لَنُخْصِرَنَّهُمْ حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ
لَنَنْزِعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شِيعَةٍ أَيُّهُمْ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمَنِ عِتِيًّا ﴿٦٩﴾ ثُمَّ لَنَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِالَّذِينَ هُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِهَا
صِلِيًّا ﴿٧٠﴾ وَإِنْ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا ۚ كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَقْضِيًّا ﴿٧١﴾ ثُمَّ نَنْجِي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا ۚ

نَدَّرَ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًّا ﴿٤٢﴾ وَإِذَا تُلْتِ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا أَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ خَيْرٌ مَقَامًا وَأَحْسَنُ نَدِيًّا ﴿٤٣﴾ وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَحْسَنُ
 أَثَاثًا وَرِعْيَا ﴿٤٤﴾ قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الضَّلَالَةِ فَلْيَبْذُذْ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ مَذًّا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَاوَمَا يُمُودَعُونَ
 إِلَّا مَا الْعَذَابُ وَإِنَّمَا السَّاعَةُ ط فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَأَضْعَفُ جُندًا ﴿٤٥﴾ وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ
 الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى ط وَالْبَقِيَّةُ الصَّلَاحُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ مَّرَدًّا ﴿٤٦﴾ أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي
 كَفَرَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالَ لَأُوتِيَنَّ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا ﴿٤٧﴾ أَطَّلَعَ الْغَيْبَ أَمِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٤٨﴾ كَلَّا ط
 سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ وَنَنبِّئُكَ لَهٗ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ مَذًّا ﴿٤٩﴾ وَنَرِثُهُ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَأْتِينَا فَرْدًا ﴿٥٠﴾ وَ
 اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لِّيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا ﴿٥١﴾ كَلَّا سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ
 ضِدًّا ﴿٥٢﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ تَؤْزُهُمْ أَذَا فُلًا تَعَجَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ ط إِنَّمَا
 نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ عَذًّا ﴿٥٣﴾ يَوْمَ نُخْشِ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْمَنِ وَفْدًا ﴿٥٤﴾ وَنَسُوقُ الْبُجُرْمِينَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ
 وَرْدًا ﴿٥٥﴾ لَا يَبْلُغُونَ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٥٦﴾ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ
 وَلَدًا ﴿٥٧﴾ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِدًّا ﴿٥٨﴾ تَكَادُ السَّمُوتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ
 الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا ﴿٥٩﴾ أَن دَعَا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ﴿٦١﴾ إِنْ كُلُّ
 مَنْ فِي السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا ﴿٦٢﴾ لَقَدْ أَحْصَاهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَكُلُّهُمْ
 آتِيهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فَرْدًا ﴿٦٤﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا ﴿٦٥﴾
 فَإِنَّا يَسْمُرُهُمْ يُدْهِنُهُمْ يُبْسِكُهُمْ فَتُبَسُّرُهُمُ الْبَاقِيَّةُ وَنُنَزِّلُ بِهِ قَوْمًا لُّدًّا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ
 قَرْنٍ ط هَلْ تُحِسُّ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَوْ تَتَسَاءَلُهُمْ رَبُّكَ ﴿٦٧﴾

And We descend only at the directive of your Lord. Whatever is in front of us and behind us and what is in between, all is under His control. And your Lord does not forget anything. He is the master of the heavens and the earth and of all that lies in between them. So, worship Him alone and adhere to His worship. Is there anyone similar to Him in your knowledge? (64-65)

And man says: “Will I be taken out and given life again after I die?” Does this man not remember that We have created him before when he was nothing. So, by your Lord! We shall surely gather them too and their devils also. Then We shall bring them

forth around Hell such that they will be sitting on their knees. Then from each group We shall sort people by separating those who remained the most rebellious against the Most Merciful God. Then We would be the most aware of those most worthy of entering this Hell. [And We shall order them:] “Each of one you shall surely enter it. This is a matter decided fulfilling which is the responsibility of your Lord.” (66-71)

Then We shall save those who feared God, and those who were unjust to their souls, We shall leave them sitting in it on their knees. (72)

And when Our clear revelations are recited out to them, those who have disbelieved ask the believers: “Tell us which among our two groups is better in rank and social status?” And how many a nation before them have We destroyed who were far greater than them in possessions and in majesty and splendour. Tell them: Those who persist in error, the dealing of God [with them] is that He grants them full respite until when they see the thing they are being promised – whether it is God’s torment or the hour of judgement – they will know who is the worst in status and weakest in helpers. (73-75)

And God increases the guidance of those who adopt the path of guidance, and good deeds that remain are better before your Lord with regard to reward as well as their consequence. (76)

Then have you seen that person who rejected Our revelations and claimed: “I shall also be blessed with wealth and children in the Hereafter.” Has he peeped into the Unseen or has he taken a promise from the Most Merciful? Certainly not! Whatever nonsense he utters, We shall write it down and increase His torment and We shall inherit the things he lays claim to and he shall come before Us alone. (77-80)

And they have set up deities besides God so that they may be of support to them. Certainly not! They will deny their worship and become their enemies. (81-82)

Have you not seen that We have let loose devils on the disbelievers. They are enticing them a lot. So, do not show haste that their matter be decided. We are fully counting for them. (83-84)

Remember the day when We shall bring the God-fearing towards the Most Merciful God in groups and drive the wrongdoers towards Hell thirsty. On that day, no one will have

authority to intercession except he who has taken a promise from the Most Merciful. (85-87)

And they say: "The Most Merciful God has children." Very grave is this statement you have given. It may well be that the heavens tear apart, the earth is rent asunder and the mountains collapse to the ground with an explosion that they have ascribed children to the Most Merciful God. And it is not befitting for the Most Merciful to make anyone His children. And whoever are in the heavens and the earth, all will be brought forth in the presence of the Most Merciful as none but His servants. He has surrounded them all and He has fully counted them. And each of them shall come forth before Him alone. However, those who have accepted faith and done righteous deeds, for them the Most Merciful shall soon create love and affection. (88-96)

Thus, We have made this Book easy and apt for you in your language so that through it you may give glad tidings to the God-fearing and warn this belligerent nation. And how many a nation have We destroyed before them. Do you feel any of them or hear their slight mention? (97-98).

Explanation

وَمَا نَنْزِلُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ لَهُ مَا يَنْزِلُ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا خَلَقْنَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ
نَسِيًّا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهِ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ
سَيِّئًا ۚ

These words are from the tongue of Gabriel. He has urged the Prophet (sws) to show patience and steadfastness. He has also clarified his own status and that of the other angels that they are not in a position to do anything on their own: they only obey God's directives. There is a special background to this advice and explanation given by him: the sole support for the Prophet (sws) against his opponents in this phase of conflict with his opponents was divine revelation. It was through this divine help that he received strength and was also able to answer all kinds of

1. And We descend only at the directive of your Lord. Whatever is in front of us and behind us and what is in between, all is under His control. And your Lord does not forget anything. He is the master of the heavens and the earth and of all that lies in between them. So, worship Him alone and adhere to His worship. Is there anyone similar to Him in your knowledge?

objections raised by them and check their mischief-mongering. Thus, quite naturally, he would anxiously wait for Gabriel to bring divine revelation in this phase. This anxiety was a natural outcome of the circumstances he was passing through. A soldier who is at the front fighting a huge army always waits for fresh guidance from the centre lest he may take a wrong step. However, every work of God is based on the wisdom only He knows. For this reason, the Prophet (sws) has been asked to wait and show patience on this anxiety at various instances in the Qur'ān. He is to adhere to his stance and not show haste. He will receive the guidance and help he needs at the appropriate times. In verse 114 of Sūrah Tāhā, the words thus used are: وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا². This topic is discussed at other instances in the Qur'ān too. However, here it is conveyed through the tongue of Gabriel that has enhanced its eloquence. I would like to allude to some of its aspects:

The first thing worthy of note here is that Gabriel has actually presented a type of apology to the Prophet (sws) that his coming with divine revelation is based on God's command. In other words, if angels do not come in quick succession to quench the Prophet's (sws) desire and to end his wait, it is not because of some error on their part. Unless they are directed by God, they can neither descend to him nor bring down revelation to him. They have no say in this and are wholly under God's command.

Another important point to highlight is that the position of Gabriel and the entire group of angels is clear: everything surrounding them, both before and behind, is completely governed and safeguarded by God. There is absolutely no chance that any of them would dare to overstep their boundaries or act on their own accord. God is fully aware that none of them could exploit any oversight to pursue their own desires without facing consequences. The reason for explaining this status of the angels was to refute the notion of the Arab polytheists who worshipped angels and thought that if ever the Hereafter came the daughters of God would save them from the wrath of their father by interceding for them. By reciting this statement of Gabriel, those foolish people are informed that when in the court of the Almighty, Gabriel – the leader of all angels – occupies this frail

2. And do not show haste in acquiring the Qur'ān before its revelation is complete and keep praying: My Lord! Increase my knowledge further.

position, it can well be imagined what power other angels have.

Regarding the words “and your Lord does not forget anything” my mind goes to another aspect too: the Prophet (sws) is assured that if there is any delay in divine revelation, it is based on some wisdom or expediency because his Lord does not forget anything. He is fully aware of all circumstances and problems as well of each and every supplication made to Him. There is no question of Him overlooking anything.

Consider next the verse: رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهِ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ سَمِيًّا. The word سَمِيٌّ means “similar” and “peer.” These words can be part of Gabriel’s speech and can also be an insertion from God. Examples of such insertions abound in the Qur’ān. Whatever of the two probabilities one considers, the only difference will be of that of the speaker. There will be no difference in the purport of the words. Even this difference is nominal since whatever Gabriel says is at God’s behest. God asked him to clarify his excuse regarding divine revelation and he complied.

My own inclination is towards the first probability. It is Gabriel who urged the Prophet (sws) to wait and exercise patience for he was being looked after by someone who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them and not by someone ordinary. Thus he is to adhere to His worship with full perseverance. Context and occasion show that here worship is used in its wider connotation and also includes obedience. I have already explained the essence of this word in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah. In verse 44 of this sūrah too, it implies obedience.

The word اصْطَبِرْ is used in place of صَبِرْ. It has a greater amount of stress in it. It should be kept in mind that increase in letters of a word magnifies its meaning too. Moreover, when the preposition ل occurs after either of these words in this way, they encompass the meaning of “to wait.” It is not easy to unfold these understood aspects of the verse in a translation. In Sūrah Ṭāhā, under the relevant verses, I will further elaborate on it.

The last part of the verse implies that when there is no peer or match of God, no one can hinder His intentions from materializing. The Prophet (sws) should continue with his work. God will ease away his hardships and implement all His intentions.

وَيَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا مِثُّ لَسَوْفَ أَخْرَجُ حَيًّا ۝³

Gabriel's words end here and it is now the Almighty Who begins His speech. After urging the Prophet (sws) to wait and show perseverance, the real reason of denial of his adversaries is referred to in their own words. Later it is refuted. Though a general word *إِنْسَان* is used, concomitant indications show that it refers to the Idolaters of Arabia who were denying the Day of Judgement regarding it to be improbable. A general word is used to express disgust. It is as if they are not worthy of being addressed.

As has been explained at other instances, the Idolaters of Arabia did not expressly deny the Day of Judgement. They held contradictory views about it. They believed that God gave life and death but regarded it to be farfetched that after dying people would be raised to life again and held accountable for their deeds. Their affluent were under the misconception that if ever the Day of Judgement came, they would have the same status as they had in this world. They also had great trust in their deities. They regarded them to be daughters of God and reckoned that if the Day came, those deities would exempt them from accountability. If these contradictory views of the Idolaters are kept in mind, readers will understand the subsequent topics discussed by the Qur'ān.

أَوَلَا يَذْكُرُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنْ يَكُ شَيْئًا ۝⁴

Attention here is directed at the contradictory views held by the Idolaters: when they cannot deny that God has created mankind from nothingness, why do regard being created again as something far-fetched? When He can create from “nothing,” how can it become difficult for him to create from “something.”

فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحْشُرَنَّهُمْ وَالشَّيَاطِينَ ثُمَّ لَنُخْضِرَنَّهُمْ حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا ۝⁵

Concomitant indications show that the word “devils” here

3. And man says: “Will I be taken out and given life again after I die?”

4. Does this man not remember that We have created him before when he was nothing.

5. So, by your Lord! We shall surely gather them too and their devils also. Then We shall bring them forth around Hell such that they will be sitting on their knees.

encompasses both devils among men and the jinn. It is known that the Arabs also used to worship many jinn. Similarly, their deviant leaders also had led them astray and they blindly followed them. Moreover, when God's messenger asked them to open their eyes, they tried to harass and harm him.

The word جثي is the plural of جاث. The verb جثا means to sit on one's knees. This is the sitting position of criminals – just as criminals sit before a ruler to hear his verdict.

These criminals will await the decision regarding the part of Hell they will be consigned to. This is communicated to them in the form of an oath.

ثُمَّ لَنَنْزِعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شِيعَةٍ أَيُّهُمْ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمَنِ عِتِيًّا ٦

The deviant leaders will be isolated from the masses. The purpose will be to make them lead their followers to Hell just as they led them astray in the previous world. Each person will enter the section of Hell he deserves.

ثُمَّ لَنَنْحُنَّ أَعْلَمُ بِالَّذِينَ هُمْ أُولَىٰ بِهَا صَدِيدًا ٧

None else than God will know more about who deserves which section of Hell. He will not need to consult anyone in this regard. None will be in a position to say to God that he is more knowledgeable than Him and hence his intercession must be taken into consideration. This is a subtle sarcasm on the wrong belief of intercession held by the idolaters: only he can intercede before God who can claim that he is more informed than Him. Now who can be a bigger megalomaniac than he who can tell God that he knows more about someone; that he is very pious; so do not say anything to him and send him to Paradise directly.

وَإِنْ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَقْضِيًّا ٨

The word حَتْم means “to be incumbent.” The address here is to

6. Then from each group We shall sort people by separating those who remained the most rebellious against the Most Merciful God.

7. Then We would be the most aware of those most worthy of entering this Hell.

8. [And We shall order them:] “Each of one you shall surely enter it. This is a matter decided fulfilling which is the responsibility of your Lord.”

the idolaters who are under discussion since the previous verses. Earlier they were referred to indirectly. Here they are directly addressed. Both these styles have their own benefits. Just as indirect mention signifies ignoring someone, direct address signifies great anger. There are several examples of a shift in address from indirect to direct in the Qur'ān and classical Arabic literature. An example is verse 89 of this very *sūrah*. In the verse under discussion too, a similar shift in address has taken place. Since the purpose is to express immense anger for the wrongdoers, God will directly address them and order them to enter Hell without any exception, for the time to present excuses and pleas has expired. At the same time, the Prophet (sws) is told that this matter is certain to take place. It has been made incumbent by God on Himself. The Prophet (sws) will observe the fate of his enemies with his very eyes.

This interpretation of the verse is extremely evident. However, our exegetes have regarded this verse to address all mankind. Thus, they regard that everyone whether, pious or wrongdoer will pass through Hell. The only compensation for the former will be that they will be able to pass over the bridge erected between the two ends of Hell. The latter however, will fall into the pit of Hell. This misconception has arisen by not understanding the style adopted here. In fact, most erroneous interpretations are the result of such misunderstandings. It is strange that they could not recollect the following verse of the Qur'ān while making such a grave statement that the righteous too would pass through Hell:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ لَا يَسْعَوْنَ حَسِيسَةً
وَهُمْ فِي مَا اشْتَهَتْ أَنفُسُهُمْ خَالِدُونَ لَا يَحْزَنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الْأَكْبَرُ وَتَتَقَرَّبُهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
هَٰذَا يَوْمُكُمْ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ. (١٠٣-١٠١: ٢١)

Indeed, 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." (21:101-103)

In order to safeguard against such errors of interpretation, my advice to serious students of the Qur'ān is to study Imām Farāhī's tract *Asālīb al-Qur'ān*.

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَنَذَرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًا ۖ ﴿٤٦﴾⁹

The word ثُمَّ expresses sequence. In other words, God will first deal with the wrongdoers. After consigning them to Hell, He will turn to those who feared Him. Saving the God-fearing here does not mean saving them from Hell because they will not even hear its sound, as referred to earlier. Here the implication is that God will save them from all the worries and waits which they may harbour before reaching their ultimate destination.

It has already been explained that the word جِثِيًا refers to the wrongdoers who will sit on their knees waiting for their verdict. In the verse 68, this usage is quite evident. However, here its use does raise a question because the word فِيهَا would mean that they will be in Hell. However, it is evident from other instances of the Qur'ān that they will cry and scream in Hell and not sit on their knees. To avoid this complication, our exegetes have changed the meaning of this word. This change is against its lexical usage and hence I do not agree with it. In my opinion, here this word is used for the situation when after God's judgement they will be consigned to the keepers of Hell and will await the gates of Hell to be opened. The implication is that God will show His utter indifference to them by leaving them in this situation after which the gates of punishment will be opened for them

وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ خَيْرٌ مَّقَامًا وَأَحْسَنُ نَدِيًّا ۖ ﴿٤٧﴾¹⁰

This is an excuse the wrongdoers presented when the Qur'ān was recited before them: since in this world they have a superior status, why should they think that they deserve the wrath of God and a punishment will visit them; on the contrary, this shows that they have more respect before God than the believers. They have

9. Then We shall save those who feared God, and those who were unjust to their souls, We shall leave them sitting in it on their knees.

10. And when Our clear revelations are recited out to them, those who have disbelieved ask the believers: "Tell us which among our two groups is better in rank and social status?"

been given all these things while the believers do not have them.

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَحْسَنُ أَثَاثًا وَرَغِيَا ۚ¹¹

The word قَرْن refers to “people of one era” as well as to a “nation.”

Those who were arguing are told that possessing great means and resources and majesty and splendour is neither because a nation is close to God nor will these things save it from God’s grasp. The fate of previous nations bears witness to this. Though these nations are not named here; other *sūrahs* name them.

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الضَّلَالَةِ فَلْيَبْدُدْ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ مَدًّا ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَآيُوعِدُونَ ۖ إِنَّمَا الْعَذَابُ وَ
إِنَّمَا السَّاعَةُ ۖ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَأَضْعَفُ جُندًا ۚ¹²

This verse expresses the established practice of God regarding the defiant and the rebellious. The Prophet (sws) is asked to convey what the words of the verse say to those who had become arrogant because of worldly riches.

God is not a weak being and if He does not catch the arrogant immediately does not mean that they will be able to run away. His planning is very secure. He keeps giving respite until either the punishment that is ordained to visit those who deny their messenger visits them or the Day of Judgment appears.

A few things are noteworthy in this verse:

First, the style adopted in قُلْيَبْدُدْ. It was not stated that God gives them respite. On the contrary, this word means that it is only befitting for the Most Merciful to give them respite. In other words, giving respite to the wrongdoers is a requisite of God’s power, wisdom and planning. Unfortunate are those who regard this respite to be their success and become even more rebellious.

Second, here two things are mentioned “the Punishment” and the “Hour.” When both these are stated together, the first refers to worldly punishment and the second to the next-worldly

11. And how many a nation before them have We destroyed who were far greater than them in possessions and in majesty and splendour.

12. Tell them: Those who persist in error, the dealing of God [with them] is that He grants them full respite until when they see the thing they are being promised – whether it is God’s torment or the hour of judgement – they will know who is the worst in status and weakest in helpers.

punishment. All messengers of God have warned their people of two punishments. It has been explained at other instances that when a nation denies its messenger, it is necessarily destroyed after the truth is conclusively communicated to it.

Third, superlatives are at times used without comparison.

Another thing worthy of note is that just as the foolish among the Arabs of the *jāhiliyyah* period did not give much importance to God and the Hereafter, men of science and learning of current times also, because of their arrogance, regard these realities to be figments of the imagination. In the recent past, a friend mentioned to me that if God and the Hereafter are discussed with the people residing in the US, they reply that their average age is more than the ones in the subcontinent. Had his claim been true, their average age should have been more. At this I replied that not only is their average age more, their suicide rate is also more. Even now they have not been able to dispense with the angel of death. What has happened is that they have actually taken up his task.

وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى وَالْبَقِيَّةُ الصَّلَاحُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ مَرَدًّا ۝¹³

This verse occurs in parallel to the previous one. In other words, just as God gives respite to those who give preference to deviance over guidance, in the same way, He continues to give more guidance to people who adopt guidance. A sane person does not give much importance to immediate gain; he gives more weight to deeds which are more rewarding and better with regard to their fate. Slaves of this world only see immediate gains and have no concern with what will happen after death. On the other hand, the eyes of a believer are focused on what will happen in the hereafter. He evaluates all his deeds in the light of their potential consequences.

This verse reassures the believers and tells them to ignore the people who show pride because of their worldly possessions. Though they do not possess wealth and assets, their guidance is increasing by the day and what they are gathering in the form of good deeds guarantees them the eternal kingdom of God in the hereafter. On the other hand, the wealth and assets gathered or is

13. And God increases the guidance of those who adopt the path of guidance, and good deeds that remain are better before your Lord with regard to reward as well as their consequence.

being gathered by their opponents will become the fuel of Hell for them.

I have translated the word مَرَدًّا as consequence and this translation is very close to the real essence of the word.

In the Qur'ān righteous deeds are named as اَلْبَقِيَّةُ الصَّالِحَةُ at many instances. It is evident from this that only those deeds are righteous which are eternal and abiding. Deeds which are meant for a small period of time and are not eternal cannot be deemed as righteous. As for the question which deeds are eternal and which ones are not, the answer to this is that the latter are the ones which are done while keeping the objectives of this worldly life in mind; they are not eternal because this world is not eternal. Eternal deeds are only those which are done solely for God and the Hereafter because God is eternal and so is the Hereafter.

أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالَ لَأُوتِيَنَّ مَالًا وَ وَلَدًا ۚ أَطَلَعَ الْغَيْبَ أَمْ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا ۚ¹⁴

Here the Qur'ān has cited another misconception of the disbelievers and refuted it. The statement of this misconception begins by the word أَفَرَأَيْتَ. Those who have a taste for the Arabic language know that when the address begins with this word, it means that a person who has delusions of grandeur about himself or something very foolish is being referred to.

An Arabic style that readers must keep in their minds is that it is not essential that the word الَّذِي always occur for some definite noun. At times, it also occurs for a similitude, some very eloquent examples of which are found in the Qur'ān.¹⁵ On such occasions, it does not refer to any specific person. Here its purpose is to cite the example of a specific mentality or a character. In the verse under discussion also, it does not refer to any person; it portrays the mentality of a particular group.

People referred to in this similitude do not regard favours and blessings to be gifts of God. They regard themselves to be

14. Then have you seen that person who rejected Our revelations and claimed: "I shall also be blessed with wealth and children in the Hereafter." Has he peeped into the Unseen or has he taken a promise from the Most Merciful?

15. See, for example, verse 92 of Sūrah al-Nahl.

entitled to them or think that they are the consequence of their own competence. For this reason, they arrogantly think that they are entitled by birth to leadership and affluence and no one can deprive them of these; if ever the Hereafter comes, they will live luxuriously there as well.

Since this claim is totally foolish and childish too, it is answered in a sarcastic and disparaging way.

كَلَّا سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ وَنَبْدُلُهُ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ مَدًّا ۖ وَنَرِثُهُ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَأْتِينَا فَرْدًا ﴿١٦﴾

This verse rejects their baseless claim in a furious way. In other words, the punishment ordained for disbelief shall visit them; moreover, because of their arrogance this punishment will continue to increase from God.

On the Day of Judgement, such a person will have no helpers or their deities or intercessors to save him. He should realize that all that He has been given to him by God will be taken away by Him and he will come to God empty handed the way he entered this world empty handed.

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لِّيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا ۖ كَلَّا سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا ۖ ﴿١٧﴾

The greatest support of these Idolaters was their unfounded deities. They contended that if ever the time came for them to be held accountable before God, those deities would save them because of their influence. In particular, they greatly trusted the intercession of the angels for they regarded them to be favoured daughters of God. They worshipped the angels because they thought that God would never disregard their intercession. In this world also, they were responsible for granting sustenance and children to them from God and after death too if they needed any help, those angels would be there to help them. It is this support and backing that is called *عِزٌّ* here. Its actual meaning is “power

16. Certainly not! Whatever nonsense he utters, We shall write it down and increase His torment and We shall inherit the things he lays claim to and he shall come before Us alone.

17. And they have set up deities besides God so that they may be of support to them. Certainly not! They will deny their worship and become their enemies.

and strength.”

The second of the above verses refutes this baseless claim of theirs. It is specified in the Qur’ān that when the Idolaters would seek help from their deities citing their worship in the previous world, they will immediately reply that they had no knowledge that some foolish people used to worship them; they never asked for this worship. If they have been foolish enough to do it, they should face its consequences. All their desires will end up in vain. In fact, these alleged deities will curse them and become their enemies.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ تَؤْذُهُمْ أَوْ لَا تَعْبَلُ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّا نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ
عَذَابًا ۝١٨

When it is said *أَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ* it means that some unleashed the dog on the prey. Precisely this style is adopted here. The word *أَوْ* means “to incite.”

These disbelievers will be dealt in this way in accordance with the established practice of God mentioned thus in verse 36 of Sūrah al-Zukhruf: ۝١٩ وَمَنْ يَعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ

The verses under discussion actually express God’s assurance for the Prophet (sws) that he should not be worried at the animosity shown to him by his opponents and not hastily demand their punishment. The more their enmity is increasing in extent, the closer they are getting to their doom. Because of their enmity for the truth, God has let loose devils on them to incite them as much as they can so that the truth is conclusively communicated to them. Soon their matter shall be decided. Every single moment is being counted by God. Once their time expires, they will not even get a moment’s respite.

Readers may remember that this section of verses began with Gabriel’s advice to the Prophet (sws) to wait and exercise patience. This same topic is now brought up here in another way – this time directly from God. It harbours a final warning for the Prophet’s enemies and also gives glad tidings to him that their

18. Have you not seen that We have let loose devils on the disbelievers. They are enticing them a lot. So, do not show haste that their matter be decided. We are fully counting for them.

19. And he who becomes indifferent to the remembrance of God, We depute a devil on him who becomes his companion.

matter will soon be decided. It is also evident from the words “they are enticing them a lot” and “do not show haste that their matter be decided” that these verses were revealed at the time when enmity of these people had reached its ultimate extent. So much so, the Prophet (sws) too will wait for God’s decision regarding this conflict.

يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْنِ وَفْدًا ﴿٢٠﴾ وَنَسُوقُ الْبُجْرِمِينَ إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ وَرْدًا ﴿٢١﴾ لَا يَنْفِكُونَ
الْشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٢٢﴾²⁰

The word وفد means to go somewhere with honour and respect just as emissaries and messengers go to a leader or to the court of a king.

The word ورد is a noun from ورد and means to come to a spring of water just as thirsty camels do so.

The exception in إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْنِ عَهْدًا is severed in my opinion. They negate the intercession of the alleged deities.

Who will have the right to intercede? I have been discussing this issue at appropriate instances in this exegesis. Some principles in this regard are reminded below:

Only the prophets and witnesses to the truth will have the prerogative to intercede. It is a position of honour given to them and will be bestowed by God only on those who are worthy of it.

They too will only be allowed to intercede with God’s permission and will do it for only those for whom they are granted permission. They will not be authorized to take the initiative to intercede for whom they do not have permission.

Their intercession will entirely be based on the truth. It does not behove them to convert falsehood into the truth and vice versa and neither can anyone dare do this before the God Who has knowledge of the unseen.

There will be no intercession for those who spent their lives in polytheism and disbelief or for those who laid claim to faith but spent all their lives doing bad deeds and in disobedience to God and His messenger.

All these principles are verified from the verses of the Qur’ān.

20. Remember the day when We shall bring the God-fearing towards the Most Merciful God in groups and drive the wrongdoers towards Hell thirsty. On that day, no one will have authority to intercede except he who has taken a promise from the Most Merciful.

I have discussed them at various instances in this exegesis and will also do so in detail ahead. Obviously, when these conditions are imposed on intercession and cannot be denied, there is no possibility of a license be given or obtained for sins on its basis. In this case, only they can hope for intercession who spent their lives on faith, did righteous deeds and sought repentance but because of negligence or emotional frenzy committed sins besides doing pious deeds. Such people it is hoped will be worthy of God's mercy and will be forgiven because of the Prophet's intercession. As for those who, banking on intercession, are spending their lives in sin and like the Jews hope to be forgiven because they think that they are a people enveloped by God's mercy, their wishful thinking has no basis in the light of the Qur'ān.

²¹ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا ۚ

The word وَلَدٌ means “children.” It is used for both singular and plural entities as well as masculine and feminine genders. The Jews and the Christians and the Idolaters of Arabia all were guilty of ascribing children to God. The Idolaters of Arabia regarded the angels to be daughters of God. The Jews regarded Ezra to be God's son and the status given to Jesus (sws) by the Christians has already been referred to in detail earlier in this *sūrah*.

The previous verse refuted the wrong concept of intercession. Now in the succeeding verses, this heinous form of polytheism is refuted. This form actually originated from the wrong concept of intercession. Obviously, if a free license for sins is to be obtained from God, it is not possible without ascribing sons and daughters to him and hopes pinned on them that the favoured ones of God will save people from His grasp even if they indulge in all kinds of sins. It is because of this desire that the Arabs regarded the angels to be God's daughters and the Christians fashioned the belief that God has atoned for the sins of mankind by having his son sacrificed.

²² لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِدًّا ۚ

The word إِدٌّ refers to something very grave and ominous.

21. And they say: “The Most Merciful God has children.”

22. Very grave is this statement you have given.

The style adopted here may be noted. Indirect narration has changed into a direct address. This shift in address from indirect to direct is done to express severity of anger, as can be seen earlier in verse 71.

The fact that what the idolaters say is regarded as something very grave is because they associate partners in God's divinity: God has a great sense of honour for His peerlessness and will never tolerate anything like this. When human beings in their capacity do not tolerate anything that is against their sense of honour, how can the sole owner of the heavens and the earth put up with His servants who worship someone else. This sense of honour of God has been mentioned in all ancient scriptures in the form of a similitude: when you cannot bear your wife sleeping with anyone else, how can the honourable God bear His servant prostrating before someone else.

23. تَكَادُ السَّمَوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا

The word هَد means a wall or a structure falling down with a loud thud.

It is evident from this verse that even the heavens and the earth feel this sense of honour and are not willing to tolerate people who associate partners with God. However, they are obedient to God and as long as He gives respite to a group of people, they too control their anger.

It should be kept in mind that what this verse states is not an exaggeration. What it states is a fact. When a son having a sense of honour would never tolerate being ascribed to some other father than his own or besides his own father others are also regarded as his father, how can the heavens and the earth and the oceans and the mountains put up with such disrespect and dishonour that they be ascribed to someone other than the one and only God or that other gods be regarded to have a share with God in their creation. It has been explained at another instance that the heavens and the earth and the sun and the moon have an Abrahamic nature. They express this nature through their manifestation in this universe. This nature of theirs abhors accepting people who ascribe children to God. However, the reins of these elements of nature are in the hands of God. For this

23. It may well be that the heavens tear apart, the earth is rent asunder and the mountains collapse to the ground with an explosion ...

reason, they cannot take any independent step.

24. **أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَكَذَّابًا** ﴿٩١﴾

Stated in this verse is the reason for the fury and anger of the heavens and the earth.

25. **وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَكَذَّابًا** ﴿٩٢﴾

The deviant belief of those who ascribe children to God is negated here on the basis of it being against God's attributes: What is the need for him to have children? He neither needs any helper to accomplish His tasks nor any heir to His possessions and assets. He neither needs anyone to keep alive His work nor any support in old age. He is self sufficient. So why should He have children?

26. **إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ اِلَّا اَتٰى الرَّحْمٰنَ عَبْدًا** ﴿٩٣﴾

This verse refers to the status and position of God's creatures. Each and every one is His servant equal in status. None shall be His son or daughter there.

27. **لَقَدْ اَحْصٰهُمْ وَعَدَّاهُمْ عَدًّا** ﴿٩٤﴾ **وَكُلُّهُمْ اَتَيْهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فَرْدًا** ﴿٩٥﴾

The word **إِحصاء** means to keep something in control.

Everyone will be in complete control of God on the Day of Judgement. He will have counted everything and there is not the slightest chance that anything will be beyond His control or left out of His counting or there be any mistake in counting. Everyone will come before him alone. Neither will he have his children or grandchildren with him nor any helper or intercessor. Each person will be involved so much with his own self that he will forget about others. Every individual will be solely accountable for his deeds before God.

24. ... that they have ascribed children to the Most Merciful God.

25. And it is not befitting for the Most Merciful to make anyone His children.

26. And whoever are in the heavens and the earth, all will be brought forth in the presence of the Most Merciful as none but His servants.

27. He has surrounded them all and He has fully counted them. And each of them shall come forth before Him alone.

٢٨ ﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا﴾²⁸

Mentioned now are people who will remain secure from being helpless and selfish. At other instances in the Qur'ān, it is specified that on that day the angels too will welcome the believers with peace and blessings and salutations shall be conveyed to them from God as well. The believers too will congratulate one another as a victorious team. In short, praises and greetings will be showered from all over.

Readers may have noticed that in this *sūrah*, among the noble attributes of God, Raḥmān (the Most Merciful) is repeated a lot. In no other *sūrah* is it repeated so much. My mentor Farāhī used to call it the Raḥmānī *sūrah*. Obviously, this plentiful mention cannot be without any wisdom. This wisdom in my opinion is that regarding the attributes of God and His dealing with His servants, most misconceptions that have arisen in nations is because of a wrong conception of this attribute. Besides other topics concepts, this *sūrah* presents the correct concept of this attribute.

Here I would like to allude to some deviations that have resulted because of a wrong understanding of this attribute.

The Christians are mentioned the foremost in the *sūrah*. Let us first see how they were led away from the truth. The reason was that they thought that since human beings were eternal sinners and had remained so ever since their inception, hence there was no possibility of their salvation. It was the merciful God Who sent His son out of His grace who atoned for the sins of all those who would believe in him by sacrificing his own life.

Though the misguided beliefs of the Jews are not directly mentioned in this *sūrah* but it is evident from the Qur'ān that in order to hide their wrongdoings they took the pretext of God's mercy. They thought that they were the progeny of prophets and the righteous and hence could not be cast into Hell and if ever they were, it would be only for a few days. After punishing them for a short time, the merciful God would forgive them.

The Idolaters of Arabia worshipped the angels, regarding them to be the daughters of God. They thought that the Day of Judgement was a mere fantasy but if there was any reality in it, the daughters of the merciful God would earn salvation for them through their intercession.

28. However, those who have accepted faith and done righteous deeds, for them the Most Merciful shall soon create love and affection.

All these misconceptions and deviations were found in the background. In order to rectify them, God has explained the true concept of this attribute. His mercy does not negate His justice and His justice is a requisite of His mercy. When He gives glad tidings to the believers, it is out of His mercy and when He warns the rebellious, that too is because of His mercy. If He forgives the unjust and the rebellious because they are descendents of prophets and revered personalities or because someone has interceded for them or they are ones who love His alleged son, this would be against His mercy: it would be clear oppression. Since He is the Most Merciful, it is a requisite of His mercy that He listen to the truthful and reward them for being adherents to the truth and cast the oppressors and the wretched into Hell. Casting them into Hell is not against His mercy. It is in fact an exact manifestation of His mercy. One should also keep in mind that those who disobey God do not harm Him in any way; they in fact harm themselves and others. The limits and bounds imposed by God are not for His own protection for He does not need it; they are for the protection of His creatures and for their development. For this reason, the matter of criminals is not God's personal one; it is the matter of all His creation. The requisite of His mercy with them is that He does not set them free without punishing them. If the *sūrah* is deliberated upon while keeping in view these requisites of the attribute Raḥmān, it will become evident that the warnings and glad tidings found in it are all based on this attribute.

29 ﴿فَإِنَّمَا يَسْمُنُهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لِنُبَشِّرَ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَتُنذِرَ بِهِ قَوْمًا لِّدًّا﴾

The antecedent of the pronoun in *يَسْمُنُهُ* is the Qur'ān. Though it is not mentioned in word, but since from the very beginning of the *sūrah* it is being discussed that all prophets of God had the same message for their followers as what the Qur'ān is presenting, the antecedent can only be the Qur'ān. In this context, bringing a pronoun without a mention of the noun is not a flaw, it is a requisite of eloquence. This style signifies the majesty of the noun even though it is not stated. Without its mention a person spontaneously knows what it is. Examples of this style abound in the Qur'ān.

29. Thus, We have made this Book easy and apt for you in your language so that through it you may give glad tidings to the God-fearing and warn this belligerent nation.

People generally regard the word تيسير to mean “to make something easy.” The verse in their view means that the Qur’ān is very easy. Though the inference in itself is correct in that God has made the Qur’ān easy; however, it is absolutely incorrect to infer that the Qur’ān is a plain book that needs no deliberation or deep thinking. Those who have this misunderstanding have not understood the correct meaning of تيسير. In Arabic, this word does not mean to make something easy. It means making something appropriate and apt by equipping it with all that is needed for its objective. The expression يَسِّرَ الْقُرْآنَ لِلرُّكُوبِ would mean that after been trained and fed, a horse was fully equipped with a saddle, a bridle and a stirrup and made ready for riding. The verse وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ means “We have made the Qur’ān very apt for instruction and reminding by equipping it with all its requisites.” I have already discussed in detail the various aspects of Qur’ānic *tafsīr* in my book *Mabādī Tadabbur-i Qur’ān*.³⁰ Readers may look it up.

The expression قَوْمًا لَّدَا refers to the Quraysh. The word لَّدَا is the plural of لَّدَا. The latter means someone who is belligerent and stubborn. The Arabs were uncouth because of living in tribal societies and were also very rigid and prejudiced because of being unlettered. Thus they used to vehemently oppose the Prophet (sws) at everything and to harrass him would present new demands every now and then.

At the end of the *sūrah*, the Prophet (sws) is assured and his opponents are warned. It is stated that God has made the Qur’ān very appropriate and persuasive for the purpose of conclusive communication of the truth; it is in the language of the Prophet (sws) and his nation which he can readily understand and also make his nation understand if they really are up to it. Nothing else is needed in its presence. His responsibility regarding it is not to persuade people in its favour. His only obligation is to give glad tidings of success to those who fear God. As for the belligerent and aggressive among them, he should warn them of punishment in this world and in the hereafter. This subject is discussed thus in *Sūrah Ṭāhā*:

30. Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī, *Mabādī Tadabbur-i Qur’ān* (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1988), 73-182

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا وَصَرَّفْنَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْوَعِيدِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ أَوْ يُحْدِثُ لَهُمْ
ذِكْرًا. (١١٣: ٢٠)

Thus, We have revealed it in the form of an Arabic Qur'ān and have mentioned My warning in it in various ways so that they remain secure from God's wrath or it may produce some insight in them. (20:113)

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ هَلْ تُحِسُّ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَوْ تَسْمَعُ لَهُمْ رِكْزًا ۖ ﴿٣١﴾

The word رِكْزٌ means “the sound of someone approaching.”

The implication of the verse is that the Prophet (sws) should discharge his obligation of delivering warnings and glad tidings. Those who do not listen to him will see their fate. There are a lot of lessons they can learn from history. Before them many nations were destroyed by God's punishment. They have been wiped out such that no one hears anything about them. In a similar way, these people too will be wiped out because of their denial of the Prophet (sws).

With these words, the explanation of this *sūrah* comes to its completion.

اللهم ارنا الحق حقا وارزقنا اتباعه و ارنا الباطل باطلا وارزقنا اجتنابه و صلى
الله تعالى على محمد وبارك وسلم

(God show us the truth the way it is and give us the urge to adopt it and show us the evil the way it is and give us the urge to stay away from it and blessings of God the exalted be on Muḥammad and peace and salutations).

Lahore
27th Nov 1972



31. And how many a nation have We destroyed before them. Do you feel any of them or hear their slight mention?