

## **Sūrah al-Ḥajj (3)**

*Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī*

### **Section V: Verses (42-57)**

Verse 41 has the status of an explanatory verse that occurs as a parenthetical sentence. The previous discourse now resumes. By citing the history of the previous prophets and their rejecters, the Prophet (sws) and his companions are assured that all promises of God are destined to be fulfilled and so are His warnings. If there are any delays, it is because of the established practice of God in this matter. In this way, God tests His pious servants and conclusively communicates the truth to His adversaries. If people have eyes, they can see the signs and remnants of this established practice of God at every step; however, those whose hearts' eyes have gone blind, they cannot be influenced in any way.

In this regard, the Prophet (sws) is also directed to warn his adversaries in a clear way of the imminent danger while ignoring their attitude. There is nothing strange if they try to impede his preaching. Every prophet and messenger has faced such circumstances. However, the word of God was fulfilled and all the mischief worked by their diabolical opponents was put to shame by Him. If God has allowed such elements to make hay, the reason is to make the truth fully blossom and give opportunity to men of faith and understanding accept it with full insight. After that they will never waver.

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

### **Text and Translation**

وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ وَثَمُودٌ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَقَوْمُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَأَصْحَابُ مَدْيَنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَكَذَّبَ مُوسَىٰ فَأَمْلَيْتُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتَهُمْ ﴿٤٥﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ فَمِنْهَا هَؤُلَاءِ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا وَبَنِيَّ مُعْطَلَةٌ وَقَصْرِ مَشِيدٍ ﴿٤٨﴾ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا

فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونُ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى  
الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِنْدَ  
رَبِّكَ كَأَنَّهُ سَنَةٌ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْتُ لَهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهَا وَإِلَى  
الْبَصِيرِ ﴿٤٤﴾ قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي أَنَا لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٤٥﴾ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ  
مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ سَعَوْا فِي آيَاتِنَا مُعْجِزِينَ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَمَا  
أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَبَعَّى الْقَلْبُ الشَّيْطَانَ فِي أَمْرِيَّتِهِ فَيَنْسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا  
يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً  
لِلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ  
أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِلَى  
صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي مَرِيَّةٍ مِنْهُ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ  
عَذَابٌ يَوْمٌ عَقِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾ الْبَلْكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ يُحْكَمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي  
حَبْنَةِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَاُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

And if these people are denying you, then this is nothing strange? Before them, the nation of Noah, the ‘Ād, the Thamūd, the nation of Abraham, the nation of Lot and the people of Madyan have denied. And Moses too had been similarly denied. So, I gave some reprieve to these disbelievers, then seized. So, see how My curse was! And how many a settlement have We destroyed while they showed injustice. So, now they are lying on their roofs. And how many useless wells and fortified palaces are left deserted. Have these people not walked about in the land so that their hearts could have become such that they could have understood from them and ears could have become such that they could have listened from them because the eyes on the faces are not blind. In fact, those hearts become blind which are in the chests. (42-46)

And these people are asking you to hasten the punishment, whereas God is One Who never breaks His promise. And one day of your Lord is equal in count to your one thousand years. And how many a settlement We gave respite in spite of their oppression; then seized them and all have to return to Me alone. (47-48)

Tell them: O People! I am only an open warner for you. Then those who accepted faith and did righteous deeds, for them is



forgiveness and an honourable sustenance. And those who strive to oppose Our revelations, it is they who are the companions of Hell. (49-51)

And whichever messenger or prophet We sent before you, then whenever he desired something, Satan caused disruption in his desire. Thus, God obliterates the whisperings of Satan; then God strengthens His revelations and God is knowing and wise. This happens so that God makes these whisperings of Satan a means of trial for those who have an ailment in their hearts and who are hard-hearted. And indeed, these unjust people have gone very far in their hostility. And this also happens because those who have been given knowledge fully know that the truth is from your Lord. Thus, their faith should be strengthened on it and their hearts bow down before it. And God shall definitely show the straight path to those who have accepted faith. (52-54)

And these people who have denied, will continue to remain in doubt about this knowledge until when suddenly the Hour of Judgement hovers over their heads or the torment of a baleful day descends on them. On that day, God will have the sole authority. It is He Who will decide between them. So, those who would have accepted faith and would have also done righteous deeds shall be in orchards of delight and those who disbelieved and rejected Our revelations, then it is for them that there is a humiliating torment. (55-57)

### Explanation

وَأَن يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ وَثَمُودٌ ۖ وَقَوْمُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ ۚ وَأَصْحَابُ مَدْيَنَ ۚ وَكَذَّبَ مُوسَىٰ فَأَمْلَيْتُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتَهُمْ ۚ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ۚ<sup>1</sup>

The denial of Moses has been mentioned in the passive voice (كَذِّبَ مُوسَىٰ), whereas the prophets that are referred to before him are mentioned with reference to their respective nations. The reason for this could be that Moses (sws) was never denied by his nation; he was denied by the Pharaoh and his people. Right before Muḥammad (sws), it was he who was given the *sharī'ah*

1. And if these people are denying you, then this is nothing strange? Before them, the nation of Noah, the 'Ād, the Thamūd, the nation of Abraham, the nation of Lot and the people of Madyan have denied. And Moses too had been similarly denied. So, I gave some reprieve to these disbelievers; then seized them. So, see how My curse was!

and it was he whose account could have been most known to the last prophet. For this reason, without any prior introduction, as a final word on the subject. it was stated that just before Muḥammad (sws), Moses (sws) had been denied.

The word نَكِير is actually نَكِيرِي. The ي has been stripped off and substituted by the vowel sound as its remnant. This is a conventional occurrence in the Arabic language in deference to the requisites of rhyme. Lexicographers have generally regarded نَكِير to mean “denial.” I do not agree with this interpretation. It is evident from classical Arabic literature that it does not merely mean denial; it in fact refers to a denial punctuated with hate and aversion.

In these verses, the Prophet (sws) is assured that the way his nation is dealing with him is not the slightest different from how other nations dealt with their messenger. It is history repeating itself. The implication is that he is not at fault in any way, nor are his efforts lacking any preparation. He is impeccable in this matter. His nation is only following their predecessors. He should continue to do his work and leave these people to themselves.

The words فَأَمَلَيْتُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ refer to the fact that nations who denied their messengers were not immediately seized by God. They were given a considerably long period of respite. However, this respite did not induce them to reform themselves; it only increased their rebelliousness. So, God then seized them and that too in a way that they were utterly wiped off the face of the earth. The Prophet (sws) is told that his nation too will meet this fate if they do not mend their ways.

فَكَانَ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ فَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا وَبُئْرِ مُعَظَّلَةٍ وَقَصْرِ مَشِيدٍ ﴿٢﴾

The expression قَصْرٍ مَشِيدٍ refers to huge fortified palaces. In accordance with linguistic principles, just as the adjective مُعَظَّلَةٍ qualifies بُئْرٍ, similarly, a corresponding adjective for قَصْرٍ مَشِيدٍ is suppressed due to this concomitant indication.

What is mentioned in the previous verse is borne evidence to in this verse through signs and remnants in the lands Arab caravans used to pass by. All these accounts are famously preserved in classical Arabic literature.

2. And how many a settlement have We destroyed while they showed injustice. So, now they are lying on their roofs. And how many useless wells and fortified palaces are left deserted.



The word **وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ** is in the capacity of an accusative of state (*ḥāl*). It has been explained at various instances that on such occasions, injustice refers to injustice nations are themselves guilty of by being ungrateful to God's favours and by adhering to polytheism. This is a reference to the understanding by the foolish that the destruction nations suffer is merely accidental or because of change of fortune,. Such calamities are, in fact, governed by moral principles. Nations become guilty of showing ingratitude to God and this injustice decimates their individual and collective morals. The consequence of all this is that first their glory is shattered and their existence is routed.

The words **فَهِيَ خَادِئَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا** portray their situation. When huge buildings are razed to the ground, their destruction begins with their roofs. Before they are deserted, these roofs became old and decrepit and fall down. After that, the walls become unsafe and are razed to ground because of rains.

The expression **بِئْرٍ مُّعَطَّلَةٍ** is coordinated to **قَرَابَةٍ**. It may be kept in mind that because of water deficiency in Arabia, wells and fountains had great significance. People would inhabit only those places where water was available and wells could be dug. As a result, the land around these wells and fountains would bustle with activity the most. Thus, the expression “deserted wells” actually refers to the fact that all activity around them had ceased.

An adjective after **قَصْرٍ مَّشِيدٍ** is suppressed, as pointed out earlier. This adjective should also portray desertion and disuse. Thus, the complete meaning would be to the effect: How many grand and towering castles are lying deserted; in their balconies prominent chiefs would prostrate; but now they are only populated by nests of birds.

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۚ فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ<sup>3</sup>

The implication of this verse is that God has left these

3. Have these people not walked about in the land so that their hearts could have become such that they could have understood from them and ears could have become such that they could have listened from them because the eyes on the faces are not blind. In fact, those hearts become blind which are in the chests.

remnants and signs intact in order that people observe them and learn a lesson so that their hearts are able to reflect and their ears are able to hear. This is because the real tragedy of this world is not that eyes become blind; it is in fact the blindness of hearts. The implication is that if a person loses eyesight but has a vibrant heart, he can still observe all realities in spite of being blind. However, if the eyes of the hearts turn blind, he will be able to observe from his external eyes but understand nothing.

Here the mention of *فِي الصُّدُورِ* with *قُلُوبٌ* shows that a word to the effect *فِي الرُّؤُوسِ* is suppressed after *الْأَبْصَارِ*. This style in which corresponding parts of a sentence are suppressed necessitates this. Here since people who lack insight are being described, it was essential that the heart be portrayed with respect to its locus: real blindness is the blindness of the heart and the rejecters of the messenger are inflicted by this blindness. People should not think that they can see if the eyes on their face are open because the radiance of insight in the eyes comes from the heart and the eyes of their hearts are totally blind.

It may be kept in mind that Arab poets would wail profusely at the remnants of their beloved's residence. They would even fondly remember her stove and mill, weep over them and make others weep too. However, this was the ultimate that they could access. They never tried to look beyond this to learn a lesson from the ruins of their land that were conveying a thousand tales to them through their very existence. Similar is the case of our present-day archaeologists. They have dug deep in the ground to discover rare artefacts and filled museums with them. However, their research is only centred around determining if a particular object discovered belongs to a five thousand year old civilization or a seven thousand year old one. The actual reality to which these objects and ruins point have neither been understood by them nor perhaps is there any such chance in the future. The irony is that it is for this very purpose that these signs and ruins were preserved by God because it is only through this reminder that people are equipped with insight.

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ ۖ وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ﴿٤﴾

4. And these people are asking you to hasten the punishment, whereas God is One Who never breaks His promise. And one day of



The implication of this verse is that people regard God's calendar to be the same as theirs. Since these events have a specific time frame in His calendar which is much longer than that of human beings, they think that whatever they are being threatened with is fake since it is not materializing. The two calendars are vastly different and these people must realize this.

The count of years mentioned here to understand God's calendar is more of a hypothetical example and the words "like a thousand years" are themselves pointing towards this. The actual reality of these days is known to God only. Just as this comparison occurs in the Qur'ān, it also occurs in the Psalms and the Gospels. Thus, it is stated:

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. (2 Peter, 3:8)

Just as the Qur'ān mentions the creation of the heavens and the earth in six days, the Torah also does so. Sūrah al-Sajdah has stated the break up of stages of creation in each of these six days. Obviously, these days do not refer to earth days. These are the days of God whose length is only known to Him. Sufficient for us is the knowledge that God has created separate worlds and every world has a distinct and separate system. It would be incorrect to regard them as analogous to one another.

It is also evident from the Qur'ān that in the world of God, there are certain days which are even longer. For example, the day in which the angels and Gabriel reach God's presence is equal to fifty thousand earth years:

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ. (٧٠: ٤)

The angels and the Spirit ascend towards Him in a Day the measure of which is fifty thousand years. (70:4)

Some people have interpreted the word "day" in the verse under discussion to refer to the Day of Judgement and the length of the day as a metaphor for the severity of its punishment. This interpretation is not only against the context but also parallel

verses of the Qur'ān. In particular, ascribing this interpretation to celebrated authorities like Ibn 'Abbās (rta) and Mujāhid is absolutely incorrect. However, after the explanation presented above, no need now remains to refute it.

وَكَايْنٍ مِّنْ قُرَيْيَةٍ أَمَلَيْتُ لَهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهَا<sup>5</sup> وَإِلَى الْمَصِيرِ ﴿٥٨﴾

This verse is an answer to those who were asking to hasten the punishment: they are told that they must not show arrogance if they are being given respite from God. They will meet the fate mentioned in the verse if they continue with their ill-ways. They must also remember that the final return will be towards God. Everyone is destined to face Him in the Hereafter. Neither their companions and supporters nor their alleged deities and intercessors will help them.

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا أَنَا لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥٩﴾ فَأَلْذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَدَرْدَقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَالَّذِينَ سَعَوْا فِي آيَاتِنَا مُعْجِزِينَ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٦١﴾

Consider the expression نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ (open warner). It was a convention among the Arabs that where a caravan stopped for a break, a person guarded that place while being stationed at a high spot. If he felt danger from around him, he would take off his clothes and become naked. He would declare that danger was lurking near after which all men would unsheathe their swords and get ready to defend. That person was called “the naked warner.” Since this expression was indecent and therefore inapt for a prophet, the Qur'an changed it into a decent one: “open warner.” However, here the insinuation here to is to “the naked warner.” Just as the naked warner would inform his nation of an imminent danger, the Prophet (sws) as an open warner should inform his people of the danger. Making them aware is all that he can do. Making them see it or protect them from it is not his responsibility. If even after these clear warnings they pay no

5. And how many a settlement We gave respite in spite of their oppression; then seized them and all have to return to Me alone.

6. Tell them: O People! I am only an open warner for you. Then those who accepted faith and did righteous deeds, for them is forgiveness and an honourable sustenance. And those who strive to oppose Our revelations, it is they who are the companions of Hell.





anywhere in classical Arabic literature even though this is word abundantly used in Arabic. Some exegetes have cited a couplet to substantiate this meaning. However, in the first place what significance can a little-known couplet have to deflect the meaning of a very well-known word from its common meaning. Moreover, this couplet too is a fabrication and I can prove it to be so. However, not much can be gained from prolonging a needless discussion. The fact that Ibn Manzūr<sup>9</sup> too has referred to this meaning of the word carries no significance in my opinion. In spite of acknowledging all his expertise, I have already referred to this shortcoming of his in the foreword of this exegesis that at times he cites the meaning of a word from linguists that lack corroborative evidence. Since, his lexicon is very highly regarded, those who are not critics of the language adopt such meanings even though such meanings have no importance until they are substantiated through linguistic usage. Summing up, it can be said that there is no possibility of regarding this word to mean recital or reading.

Now let us reflect on the meaning of the verse and its components.

By referring to the opponents' race of outdoing one another mentioned in the previous verse, the Prophet (sws) is being assured that he is not the only person facing this situation. All prophets and messengers before him encountered similar circumstances. Whenever a prophet tried to take a step, showed courage in a matter or attempted to guide and reform people, mischief-mongers and miscreants tried to create hurdles in his way and defeat his whole enterprise. It may be kept in mind that whenever the Prophet (sws) took a step to invite and call people to the religion of truth, Abū Lahab and Abū Jahal and their likes followed him like a shadow to refute him.

Here the action taken by the Prophet to guide and reform his people is called تَشَى (to desire) and the effort put into it is called أَمْنِيَّة (desire, courage). The reason that these words are used is to highlight the fact that the wish and desire of a prophet is to guide people to God and make them understand His revelations. In order to achieve this objective, he adopts all sorts of measures. However, devils always lie in ambush to hijack these efforts. As

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9. Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, vol. 15, 295.



soon as they see a particular endeavour of the prophet succeeding they launch a propaganda against it. It may be kept in mind that the devils are at rest when they see that there is none to call people to the truth. However, as soon as they see that someone is raising this call, they sense danger for their future. It is then that they use all their guiles and lures to oppose it.

I have already explained the difference between a prophet (*nabī*) and a messenger (*rasūl*) under verse 49 of Sūrah Āl-i 'Imrān. By mentioning both words here, the purpose is to express the fact that no prophet or messenger is secure from this trial. In fact, it is an established practice of God regarding His prophets and messengers.

The word الشَّيْطَانُ here is used as a generic noun and refers to devils both among the jinn and men. In other words, both unite to defeat God's envoys.

The expression اَللّٰهُ يَلْقٰى الشَّيْطٰنَ فِيْ اُمْنِيَّتِهِم refers to the fact that these devils create all sorts of impediments in the wishes and desires and in the plans and projects of a prophet and messenger; they raise objections, make accusations and indulge in mockery in order to obliterate the impact of the call of truth.

Consider next the sentence: فَيَمْسُخُ اللّٰهُ مَا يُلْقِى الشَّيْطٰنُ ثُمَّ يُحْكُمُ اللّٰهُ اٰيَتِهِ. The word نَسَخَ means "to obliterate" and اَحْكَمَ means "to make someone persevere." The implication is that prophets and messengers face this trial in accordance with an established practice of God, and their benefit, as will presently be explained, is reaped by the believers. Ultimately, this conflict between truth and evil ends in victory for the truth and utter decimation of evil.

The assurance sounded is further emphasized by the attributes of God mentioned at the end of the verse. He makes the forces of good and evil come in conflict with one another and lets the devils create hurdle and mischief, and all this is governed by His knowledge and wisdom. For this reason, a prophet should fully trust God since whatever is going to happen will be based on His knowledge and wisdom and will ultimately be in favour of the truth.

This precise subject is discussed at other instances in the Qur'ān as well. Here are some examples:

وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شٰطِطِيْنَ الْاِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِىْ بَعْضُهُمْ اِلٰى بَعْضٍ زُخْرَفٍ

الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا ۖ وَكُشَاءَ رَبِّكَ مَا فَعَلُوا فَذَرْنَهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ وَلِتَصْغَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَفْئِدَةُ الَّذِينَ لَا  
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَلِيَرْضَوْهُ وَلِيَقْتَرِفُوا مَا هُمْ مُّقْتَرِفُونَ. (١١٣ - ١١٤)

And We have similarly made the devils among humans and the jinn to be the enemy of every prophet. In order to deceive one another, they keep inspiring falsehoods to one another. Had your Lord intended, they would never have been able to do this. And leave aside all their deception. God has given this opportunity so that it strengthens the faith of the believers and so that the hearts of those who deny the Hereafter are inclined towards it, and so that they are happy with it and earn whatever they intend to. (6:113-114)

These verses fully explain the verse of Sūrah al-Ḥajj under discussion. Readers may specially keep the words *يُؤْمِنُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ* in mind. It depicts precisely the same meaning as *دُخِرَفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا* in the verse under discussion.

In Sūrah al-Furqān, it is stated:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا مِّنَ الْبَاطِلِ ۚ وَأَكْفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ هَادِيًا وَنَصِيرًا وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ  
كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا وَلَا  
يَأْتُونَكَ بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا. (٢٥ : ٣١ - ٣٣)

And in this way, We have made enemies from the wrongdoers for every prophet, and rest assured that your Lord is sufficient for guidance and help. And these disbelievers object: “Why was this Qur’ān not revealed to him in a single instalment?” Thus, have We done this so that We can strengthen your heart through this to bear this heavy burden and We have revealed it gradually in a thorough way. And whatever objection these people will raise, We shall let you know its correct answer and best interpretation. (25:31-33)

In afore-mentioned verses, an example of a satanic impediment is also mentioned: when a messenger of God presents the words of God before people, then in order to blame him, they raise the objection that if he is God’s messenger why does he not present to them the whole of the Qur’ān; how can this be difficult for God? Their implication is that when he cannot do this, it only



means that he himself is authoring it. He presents as much as he fabricates and wrongly ascribes it to God to create an impression.

I have explained this verse in detail to answer all questions and dispel all doubts that can arise about it. After this explanation, it is not needed to refute the narrative cited by our exegetes as an occasion of revelation for this verse. In the first place, as can be seen, it does not need any occasion for revelation; it is fully clear in its meaning and is in complete harmony with its preceding and succeeding verses. A further indiscretion in this regard is that this narrative is suspect both with regard to its content as well as its chain of narration. It seems to be a mere fabrication by some un-Islamic elements. It was concocted to cast aspersions on the infallibility of prophets. Our exegetes – simpletons – are continuing to cite it in their books.

لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ وَالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ  
الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ  
فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٤﴾<sup>10</sup>

These verses explain the wisdom behind why the miscreants and the devils launch an all-out offensive against the call of truth whenever it is sounded in this world.

The word *فِتْنَةٌ* means “trial and test.” Obviously, if evil elements are not given a chance to use their guiles against the proponents of the truth, the two cannot be made distinct. Given the opportunity, the advocates of falsehood align themselves with the forces of evil and the proponents of the truth continue to adhere to the truth in spite of all the conspiracies hatched by the proponents of falsehood.

“Ailment” refers to the ailment of hypocrisy and the expression “who are hard-hearted” refers to the extreme enemies among the

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10. This happens so that God makes these whisperings of Satan a means of trial for those who have an ailment in their hearts and who are hard-hearted. And indeed, these unjust people have gone very far in their hostility. And this also happens because those who have been given knowledge fully know that the truth is from your Lord. Thus, their faith should be strengthened on it and their hearts bow down before it. And God shall definitely show the straight path to those who have accepted faith.

Jews and the Idolaters who had united to launch a counter-attack against the call to the truth. It is stated that God has given this respite to falsehood and evil so that it becomes a trial and test for the hypocrites and the miscreants. They can do whatever they like against the truth and fulfil all their desires.

The words **وَرَأَى الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ** express sorrow at these wretched people: they have strayed so far in their opposition to the truth that there is no possibility for their return. Concealed in these words also is an indication for the Prophet (sws) that he should now leave these people to themselves. They are facing the established practice of God.

Consider next the words: **وَلْيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ** **وَلْيَعْلَمَ** and **فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ** are used in their complete meaning and the knowledge referred to in **وَلْيَعْلَمَ** is the knowledge of the Qur'ān. Stated here is another underlying wisdom in evil being given respite: those have been given the knowledge of the Book become deeply acquainted with this knowledge. They fully get to know that the knowledge that they have acquired from the Prophet (sws) is the absolute truth and is from God. Moreover, the soundness of their knowledge also strengthens their faith and their hearts submit to God with full devotion and trust.

Here it needs to be kept in mind that the essence of a thing becomes evident from its opposite. If a person knows and believes in something but is not aware of what can be said in its criticism, there is a chance that when he becomes aware of it, his belief in it is shaken and jolted. However, if this critique has come before people and they have still stuck to their belief by evaluating the criticism, then they have accepted a truth on the basis of their own insight and there is little chance that some adverse current may make them give up their stance. It is to create this insight in religion that God gives respite to evil in this world: the adversaries of the truth are afforded the opportunity to spill their venom against it so that those who accept it, do not blindly accept it; they accept it with full comprehension.

Obviously, those who have such depth in knowledge will never have blind faith – which dwindles with every gust of the wind. In fact, true and deep knowledge produces true and deep faith. With such faith is engendered the submission to God that is its essence and without which faith has no weight on the scales of God.



Just as it is said that the hypocrites and the miscreants have strayed so far that there is no chance of their returning to the truth, the last part of the verse gives glad tidings to the believers that the devils will try their best to lead them astray but the Almighty will not let their faith go waste. He will give them the urge to be guided to the straight path that leads him to his Lord. The words *صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ* are undefined to express the importance and splendour of this path.

وَلَا يَرَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمٍ  
عَقِيمٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ أَلَمْ تَكُنْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلَّهِ تُيَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي جَنَّاتِ  
النَّعِيمِ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَوَلَّيْنَاكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٤٦﴾<sup>11</sup>

Earlier, while praising the believers, it was stated that opposition of the enemies make the believers even more strongly believe that the warnings sounded by the Prophet (sws) are absolutely true. Stated now is what will happen when the promised doom they doubted arrives. The word *عَقِيم* means “impotent and infertile.” Thus, in verse 29 of Sūrah al-Dhāriyāt, it is said *قَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ* (she said: I am barren). From here, the meaning of being harmful and sinister was incorporated in it and it was also used for the stormy wind which will cause a horrific calamity and have no element of benefit in it. Hence the punishment that visited the people of the ‘Ād is expressed thus in verse 41 of Sūrah al-Dhāriyāt: *وَفِي عَادٍ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ* (and there is a great lesson for them in the nation of ‘Ād too when we sent them a baleful wind). In verse 19 of Sūrah al-Qamar the expression *يَوْمَ نَحْسُ* is used in precisely the same meaning.

The words *أَلَمْ تَكُنْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلَّهِ تُيَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ* refer to the fact that if these people are only waiting for the Day of Judgment, they should remember that on the day all authority will rest with God. On

11. And these people who have denied, will continue to remain in doubt about this knowledge until when suddenly the Hour of Judgement hovers over their heads or the torment of a baleful day descends on them. On that day, God will have the sole authority. It is He Who will decide between them. So, those who will have accepted faith and also done righteous deeds shall be in orchards of delight and those who disbelieved and rejected Our revelations, then it is for them that there is a humiliating torment.

that day, neither will their factions and groups be of benefit to them nor their alleged deities and intercessors. It will be a day of verdicts and there will be chance for people to do any deeds to earn reward. God will deliver the verdict and pronounce the victor and the vanquished and everyone will face the consequences of his deeds.

The last part of the verse is the declaration of the verdict itself. The evil doers will face a humiliating torment because they regarded themselves to be above and beyond the teachings of God's messengers which is the worst form of arrogance. Owing to this arrogance, they are worthy of not only being punished but punished in a disgraceful way. It may be kept in mind that a punishment that is accompanied with humiliation increases its effect ten-fold.

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