

Sūrah al-Ḥajj (3)

Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī

Section VI: Verses (58-76)

In these verses, Muslims are first affectionately consoled. They are the ones who, in order to save their faith, were migrating to various regions as a result of the wave of persecution let loose by the enemies of the truth. By referring to His own attributes, God has assured them that all this matter is in the hands of God; He sees and hears everything. Just as a dead piece of earth is revived through rain and becomes brimming with life, in a similar way, the rain of mercy will drench them and they will be overcome with jubilation. The reason God is giving their enemies respite is that He is very merciful to His servants. He is not hasty in punishing people. However, His respite has a limit. If they do not duly value it, they will see its fate.

After this, the Prophet (sws) is addressed and told that his enemies will continue to adhere to their ill-ways; he should consign their matter to God and ignore them. Soon the day will come when God decides their fate. When it comes, their deities – against whom they were not prepared to hear a single word – will not be of any avail to them. If they are angered at this, then let it be; the Prophet (sws) should clearly communicate to them that all their deities combined do not even have the power to create a fly, and cannot even recover a thing a fly snatches away from them. The Prophet (sws) is also asked to make these foolish people understand that neither are the angels God's daughters nor His partners; They are His servants. From among them, God selects His envoys just as He does so from among human beings. These people should be further told that they are always under God's control. It is only He Who is the fountainhead and decider of all affairs.

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

Text and Translation

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ قُتِلُوا أَوْ مَاتُوا لَيَرْزُقَنَّهُمُ اللَّهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَيُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ مُدْخَلًا يَرْضَوْنَهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٧﴾ ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ عَاقَبَ بِبِشْلِ مَا عُوقِبَ بِهِ ثُمَّ بُغِيَ عَلَيْهِ لِيَنْصَرِنَهُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُورٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُورِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٥٩﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ هُوَ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٦٠﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَتُصْبِحُ الْأَرْضُ مُخْضَرَّةً إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٦١﴾ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٦٢﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَيُسَيِّرُ السَّمَاءَ أَنْ تَقَعَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا يَازِنُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَعُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ ﴿٦٤﴾ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ فَلَا يُنَازِعُونَكَ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَاذْعُرْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَإِنْ جَدَلُواكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَنْزِلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانٌ وَمَا لَيْسَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمُنْكَرَ يَكَادُونَ يَسْطُونُ بِالَّذِينَ يَثْلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَتِنَا قُلْ أَفَأَنْتُمْ تُبْشِرُونَ مِنْ ذَلِكَمُ النَّارُ وَعَذَابُ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَبَشِّرِ الْبَصِيرَ ﴿٧٠﴾ يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ مُرِبِّ مَثَلٍ فَاستِعْوَالَهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ وَإِنْ يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ ﴿٧١﴾ مَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٧٢﴾ اللَّهُ يُصْطَفَىٰ مِنَ الْمَلَكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٧٤﴾

And the people who migrated in the way of God, then were killed or died a natural death, God shall bless them with a good sustenance. And indeed it is God Who provides the best sustenance. He shall admit them to a place with which they shall

be pleased and satisfied. And God is indeed knowledgeable and gracious. (58-59)

Hear this thing and moreover he who took revenge equal to what afflicted him, then he is subjected to oppression, God shall definitely help him. Indeed, God is Forgiving, Merciful. (60)

This will happen because it is God Who makes the night enter the day and the day enter the night and God hears all and sees all. This will also happen also because God is the real deity and those which they invoke besides God are all false. And indeed God alone is the Supreme, the Greatest. (61-62)

Do you not see that it is God Who sends down water from the heavens; then, through it, the earth becomes lush green? Indeed, God is very discerning, well-aware. In His control is whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. And only God is self-sufficient and worthy of praise. (63-64)

Do you not see that God has put the things of the earth to your service and the ship also? It sails in the sea at His bidding. And He is holding the sky lest it should fall down on the earth, except at His directive. Indeed, God is very gracious to people and very merciful. And it is He Who has given life to you. Then He gives death to you; then He shall bring you back to life. Indeed, a human being is very ungrateful. (65-66)

And We have prescribed a path for each community; so they will tread on it alone. Then they must not be able to dispute with you in any way in this matter. And keep calling towards your Lord. Indeed, it is you who is on the straight path. And if they argue with you, tell them: God very well knows what you are doing. God will decide between you on the Day of Judgement in what you are differing. Do you not know that whatever is in the heavens and the earth is in God's knowledge? All these things are written in a register. Indeed, this is very easy for God. (67-70)

And they worship besides God those things about which God has revealed no sanction and nor do they have any knowledge about them. And no one will be the helper of these unjust people. And when Our clear revelations are recited before them, you see revulsion on the faces of these disbelievers. It is as if they will attack those who are reciting Our revelations to them. Tell them: Should I inform you of a thing of greater revulsion than this? It is Hell! God has promised it to these people who have disbelieved and what an evil abode it is! (71-72)

People, an example is cited: So, listen to it attentively. Those who you invoke besides God cannot even create a fly in spite of all of them trying to. And if a fly snatches something from them, they cannot even protect it. Those who desire and that what they desire are both frail. They have not recognized the importance of God the way it should be. Indeed, God is powerful, dominant upon all. (73-74)

God selects His messengers from the angels the way He does from human beings. Indeed, God hears and sees all. He knows what is behind and before them, and all matters turn to Him only. (75-76)

Explanation

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ قُتِلُوا أَوْ مَاتُوا لَيَرْزُقْنَهُمُ اللَّهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۚ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّزُقِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾¹

This verse is connected to the glad tidings given earlier gives further glad tidings to those oppressed Muslims who were forced to migrate from Makkah to protect their faith as a result of a wave of persecution lest lose by the disbelievers of the Quraysh.

It has been mentioned in verse 169 of Sūrah Āl-i ‘Imrān that those who die for the cause of God are alive and receive sustenance from Him in the life of Barzakh (بَيْنَ أَحْيَاءٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ). The same glad tidings are given here to people who migrate from their homes and die on the way though they are not killed. In other words, not merely being killed for this cause is martyrdom, even a natural death also has the same status. The word رَزَقَ comprehensively signifies all the favours and blessings of God and should not be confined in its meaning. When it is said that God provides the best sustenance, who can even imagine what He will provide those who left their homes and all they had for His cause?

لَيَدْخُلْنَهُمْ مُدْخَلًا يَرْضَوْنَهُ ۚ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٧﴾²

The word يَرْضَوْنَهُ encompasses a whole world of meaning. In

1. And the people who migrated in the way of God, then were killed or died a natural death, God shall bless them with a good sustenance. And indeed it is God Who provides the best sustenance.

2. He shall admit them to a place with which they shall be pleased and satisfied. And God is indeed knowledgeable and gracious.

other words, a person who leaves his home for the cause of God and dies during this migration, he should rest assured that he will be admitted into a place where not only all his hopes will be fulfilled but he will also be given so much more that he cannot even imagine in this world.

The attributes of God mentioned imply that such people should rest assured that whatever they are going through at the hands of the enemies of the truth is in God's knowledge. However, since besides being knowledgeable, He is also gracious, He does not immediately seize His enemies. In fact, He gives them full opportunity to mend their ways. But these people must remember that one day this respite will end and they will be brought to justice.

ذٰلِكَ ؕ وَمَنْ عَاقَبَ بِشُلٍّ مَّا عُوْقِبَ بِهِ ثُمَّ بُغِيَ عَلَيْهِ لَيَنْصُرَنَّهُ اللّٰهُ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُوْرٌ ﴿٣١﴾

The word ذٰلِكَ is the substitute of a whole sentence, as has been explained under verse 30 earlier. The implication is that what has been said is not something perfunctory in nature. It is a profound reality. Friends and foes alike must fully hear this. Moreover, it is now declared that if the oppressed Muslims retaliate on equal footing to defend their life and wealth, they have this permission. And, if after this, they are further harassed, then their enemies must remember that God is surely going to help them.

In the expression وَمَنْ عَاقَبَ بِشُلٍّ مَّا عُوْقِبَ بِهِ, is used in deference to *mujānasaḥ* as in دَنَاهُمْ كَمَا دَانُوا and جَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا. The words ثُمَّ بُغِيَ عَلَيْهِ show that if because of some defensive measure adopted by the Muslims, the disbelievers commit a further excess against them to dampen their courage so that in future they do no dare take a step to defend their persons and honour, then these disbelievers must remember and the believers must rest assured that God shall never let his happen. He shall definitely come to the rescue of His servants. The word “definitely” conceals a whole world of meaning borne testimony to by later incidents and by history. It may be kept in mind that these glad tidings were given to the Muslims at the time of migration. Later when they became a force in Madīnah, these same words were stated very clearly.

3. Hear this thing and moreover he who took revenge equal to what afflicted him, then he is subjected to oppression, God shall definitely help him. Indeed, God is Forgiving, Merciful.

Readers may look up what is written under verses 39-40.

The sentence “indeed, God is Forgiving, Merciful” has a special import here. Since these glad tiding were given right at the time of migration, there was a chance that the oppressed Muslims might take a hasty step in retaliation, whereas the appropriate time for this had not arrived as yet. For this reason, the Almighty has reminded them of His attributes of forgiveness and mercy. Even though Muslims have the right to protect their life, wealth and honour, however just as God Himself shows mercy to people in spite of their excesses, in a similar way Muslims too must exhibit this attitude to some extent. The time to nab these rebellious people is at hand. In other words, the implication is that God wants to see a reflection of His attributes in the Muslims.

ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُدْخِلُ الْيَلَّ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُخْرِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي الْيَلِّ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

Stated in this verse is the argument in favour of the promise of divine help mentioned earlier. These foolish people wrongly think that God does not have any role in the affairs of this universe. He in fact controls everything. It is He Who enters the day into the night and vice versa and He is also one who hears and sees all. In other words He is not deaf and blind so that He is unaware of the mischief caused by the wrongdoers. Thus when He is the actual controller and also sees and hears all, how can He remain detached from the governance of this universe? It is essential that He help those who want to reform this world against those who are creating disorder in it. How can this be difficult for Him at all when He is able to admit the night into the day and the day into the night – something which everyone is observing through his eyes. Without any bother, He can surely obliterate the darkness of disbelief and make the world shine with the radiance of faith.

ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَاَنَّ مَا يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِ هُوَ الْبَاطِلُ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٤٠﴾

Stated in this verse is the second argument: no one should

4. This will happen because it is God Who makes the night enter the day and the day enter the night and God hears all and sees all.

5. This will also happen also because God is the real deity and those which they invoke besides God are all false. And indeed God alone is the Supreme, the Greatest.

remain under the misconception that these enemies too have someone to help them. It is only God Who has full control of this universe. All those whom these people invoke besides Him are baseless and a mere deception; in fact, they are their own fabrications. God is exalted and mighty. How can these stones and idols be equated with Him? The foolish who worship them as deities are totally unaware of His majesty.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَتُصْبِحُ الْأَرْضُ مُخْضَرَّةً ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٦﴾

The words *أَلَمْ تَرَ* are meant to address each and every individual of a group separately. In the previous verses, the Almighty has substantiated His promise of help through His attributes. In this verse, the testimony of the world around human beings is also added to His attributes. The implication is that keeping in view the current adverse circumstances no one should think that God's help is improbable. Not every one can understand how God's mercy will manifest itself and when it will do so. People see how a land has become dry and desolate with no signs of plant life in it nor any chance of rain. However, when God wants, His winds bring forth clusters upon clusters of clouds. Then within the blink of any eye the land becomes drenched with water and becomes lush green. In a similar way, whenever God wants He will send clouds of help to His people even if the apparent circumstances are not conducive.

The attributes of God mentioned at the end of the verse have a very subtle implication. God is very discerning (لَطِيفٌ), He makes His plans materialize in a way that no one has any inkling of them. Since He is well-aware (خَبِيرٌ), He has knowledge of the past as well as the future, whereas people only have knowledge of the apparent.

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمُوتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٧﴾

This verse reinforces what is said earlier: everything in the

6. Do you not see that it is God Who sends down water from the heavens; then, through it, the earth becomes lush green? Indeed, God is very discerning, well-aware.

7. In His control is whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. And only God is self-sufficient and worthy of praise.

heavens and the earth belongs to Him and is under His control. Hence who can impede His intentions from materializing? The attribute الْحَمِيدُ (worthy of praise) is meant to qualify the attribute الْغَنِيُّ (self-sufficient). The reason was dispel any hopelessness in people because of God being self-sufficient; they should hope that in spite of being self-sufficient, He is benevolent to His people. In spite of being aloof, He is with everyone.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ ۖ وَيُسَبِّحُ السَّمَاءُ أَنْ تَقَعَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا يَأْذَنُ بِهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٨﴾

The implication of this verse is that the respite given to human beings in this world is God's favour and blessing. Everything of the heavens and earth is serving them – without which they cannot survive – at God's behest. All things will rebel against human beings and become their enemies were it not so for God's directive. As an example, the sailing of the ship in the sea is cited. It does so because God has put it in their service; otherwise, it would drown in the blink of any eye. Similar is the case of the sky. Had God not held it, it would have fallen down upon them. An annexing noun to the effect مخافة (lest) is suppressed before أَنْ.

The last part of the verse إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ implies that all these phenomena bear witness that whatever human beings have in this world is not because of their own knowledge and scientific advancements. It is purely due to God's mercy and favour. If the Almighty just displaces a single building block of this universe, the whole of its edifice will be razed to ground.

The tone of this verse is worthy of note: the threat it harbours for the rebellious elements of the Quraysh is evident from every word. The implication is that they should not hastily demand their punishment. If God is delaying it, it is not because of any difficulty He is facing; on the contrary, it is because of His mercy and favour so that they are able to benefit from this and mend their ways.

8. Do you not see that God has put the things of the earth to your service and the ship also? It sails in the sea at His bidding. And He is holding the sky lest it should fall down on the earth, except at His directive. Indeed, God is very gracious to people and very merciful.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ ﴿١١﴾⁹

This verse reminds them of the hereafter: if they do not face any torment in this world, how can they rest at peace; they still have to face the consequences of their deeds in the hereafter. Everyone has to return to God one day. It is He who has given life and it is He who gives death and then again He will give life. When creating the first time was not difficult for Him, how can it pose a difficulty the second time? The last part of the verse “indeed, a human being is very ungrateful” mentions the real reason for their rebelliousness: as far as the message of the Prophet (sws) and the Qur’ān is concerned, it is totally clear and there cannot be any two opinions about it. It is these people who are very ungrateful. The word “human being” here refers to these rebellious opponents; however, to express aversion, they are not directly addressed; instead a general word is used. This style also encompasses regret and sorrow at their behaviour.

لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ فَلَا يُنَازِعُكَ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَاذْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٢﴾¹⁰

The word مَنْسَك has been discussed under verse 34. Here it is used for ways of worship, the apparent form of divine law and its principles.

Earlier in this *sūrah*, it has been said that in that period the Jews and the Christians were openly siding with the Quraysh. In fact, it was they who were actually fuelling the whole debate. For this reason, the verse refers to them and says that God has prescribed a law for each community. The purpose of saying this was that they should worship God according to His law and when He makes a change in this law, they should whole heartedly accept it. This would make those who are sincere distinct from the rest.

9. And it is He Who has given life to you. Then He gives death to you; then He shall bring you back to life. Indeed, a human being is very ungrateful.

10. And We have prescribed a path for each community; so they will tread on it alone. Then they must not be able to dispute with you in any way in this matter. And keep calling towards your Lord. Indeed, it is you who is on the straight path.

Thus in the time of each messenger, changes have been made in the outward form of the *sharī'ah* and the innovations fabricated by the innovators have also been reformed. Those who were seekers of the truth, accepted this reform with full sincerity. However, the single-track minded and slaves to traditions remained adamant on their view. Out of their bias for them, they began debating those who argued against these cherished traditions of theirs. The verse states that similar is the situation of the Prophet's opponents: due to their stagnation and prejudice for their *jāhiliyyah* customs, they are not prepared to give up the path they are treading. Therefore, the Prophet (sws) should no longer show concern for them. The words *فَلَا يَنَازِعُكَ فِي الْأَمْرِ* imply that he should not give them any opportunity to engage in polemical debates with him. He should adhere to the straight path of his Lord and also invite them towards it. If they accept his call, it is fine; otherwise, he should leave them to themselves. Indeed, he is treading on the straight path. What harm can such a person incur from those who are treading the wrong path? With a little change of words, this subject has been brought up at other instances in the Qur'ān. Here are a few examples.

At the end of the discussion on the *qiblāh* in Sūrah al-Baqarah, it is said:

وَلِكُلٍّ وِجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّيُّهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ (٢ : ١٤٨)

And for each there is a fixed a direction towards which it turns. So, excel in the direction of virtues. (2:148)

In Sūrah al-Mā'idah, it is stated:

لِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَ مِنْهَا جَا ط وَ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَ لَكِنْ يَبْلُوكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ (٥ : ٤٨)

For each of you, We have ordained a rule and path. And had God pleased, He could have made you one community, but He wanted to try you by whatever He has blessed you with. So, try to outdo one another in good deeds. (5:48)

Readers may look up the explanation of these verses. I have tried to fully elaborate under them that these verses do not

portray any tolerance for the Jews and Christians, as some people have understood. They actually express and declare aversion against them.

وَإِنْ جَدُلُواكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١﴾ اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

The Prophet (sws) is advised here not to give others a chance to engage in polemical debate with him. However, in spite of this attitude of his, if they take the initiative in this regard, then he should try to ward them off by saying that God will decide between them on the Day of Judgement. He is fully aware of what these disbelievers are doing. In other words, the Prophet (sws) should ignore them and consign their matter to God. They are intentionally playing pranks and are not ones who can be persuaded through reasoning.

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

Though this verse addresses the Prophet (sws), however the rebuke found in every word of it is directed at his adversaries. When God is so well-informed that He knows that is in the heavens and the earth, the Prophet (sws) should consign their matter to Him. He will deal with them. The words “all these things are written in a register” augment the threat already sounded. Their implication is that no one should think that all these are baseless warnings; everyone should know that God has a written record of every person’s deeds. It has been intricately compiled. Moreover, no one should think that who can preserve the details of every person in such a minute way. This might be a tall order for everyone but, as the last part of the verse says, this is something very easy for God.

11. And if they argue with you, tell them: God very well knows what you are doing. God will decide between you on the Day of Judgement in what you are differing.

12. Do you not know that whatever is in the heavens and the earth is in God’s knowledge? All these things are written in a register. Indeed, this is very easy for God.

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَنْزِلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانٌ وَمَا يَكُونُ لَهُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ ۖ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ
نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٣﴾

This verse clears another misconception. The day God will deliver His verdict with justice none will be able to help the unjust. The deities and intercessors they associate with God are baseless. Neither has God sanctioned them nor do they have any knowledge regarding this matter. If someone associates someone with God without His permission, then this is tantamount to fabricating a lie against God, which is an act of greatest injustice. Regarding someone to be a deity without any logical or natural argument to support this claim is like following conjecture and conjecture can never replace knowledge and the truth.

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمُنْكَرَ ۚ يَكَادُونَ يَسْطُونُ
بِالَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا ۚ قُلْ أَفَأَنْتُمْ بِشِرِّ مَنِ ذِكُّكُمْ أَنْتَارُ ۚ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا ۖ وَبُسَّ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾

The verb يَسْطُونُ means “to attack someone.”

The implication is that though they do not have any reasoning in favour of their deities but in spite of this such is their bias against monotheism that when they are presented with lucid arguments in its favour, they writhe in frenzy and their faces convulse in anger and it looks as if they will attack those who recite these revelations before them. It is stated that if these people are so infuriated at them, they should be informed by the Prophet (sws) of a thing that will distort their faces even more and they shall necessarily face it: the fire of Hell and it is a very evil abode.

13. And they worship besides God those things about which God has revealed no sanction and nor do they have any knowledge about them. And no one will be the helper of these unjust people.

14. And they worship besides God those things about which God has And when Our clear revelations are recited before them, you see revulsion on the faces of these disbelievers. It is as if they will attack those who are reciting Our revelations to them. Tell them: Should I inform you of a thing of greater revulsion than this? It is Hell! God has promised it to these people who have disbelieved and what an evil abode it is!

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ فُزِبَ مَثَلٌ فَاسْتَعْوَالَهُ ۖ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ
اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ ۖ وَإِنْ يَسْلُبْهُمْ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ۖ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ ﴿١٥﴾

This verse depicts the baselessness of their deities with a powerful example.

The last sentence “those who desire and that what they desire are both frail” subtly refers to the fact that if a person regards someone to be a deity, it is because this is a remedy to his own frailty. However, these foolish people have set up deities which are more helpless than these people themselves. They seek help from the helpless.

مَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَكَبِيرٌ عَزِيزٌ ﴿١٦﴾

The verse implies that these people have not given due importance to God’s majesty and might. He is not someone helpless like their deities. On the contrary, He is very powerful and dominant. He is fully capable of implementing His intentions and no one can dare impede them.

اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَبِيحٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾

The verse implies that it is sheer naivety of these people that they have started to worship angels considering them to be daughters of God. Angels are not His daughters or partners. They are in fact His servants. Their only status is that some special ones among them are selected as His envoys and sent to His messengers.

The attributes of God mentioned at the end simultaneously refer to two important realities. Firstly, since God hears and sees all, what need does He have to make anyone His partner? Secondly, when God has these attributes, He is also watching

15. People, an example is cited: So, listen to it attentively. Those who you invoke besides God cannot even create a fly in spite of all of them trying to. And if a fly snatches something from them, they cannot even protect it. Those who desire and that what they desire are both frail.

16. They have not recognized the importance of God the way it should be. Indeed, God is powerful, dominant upon all.

17. God selects His messengers from the angels the way He does from human beings. Indeed, God hears and sees all.

over the obligations of the angels – they dare not exceed the prescribed bounds in the slightest way.

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۖ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٤١﴾¹⁸

Whatever is behind and after these angels is in God's knowledge. For this reason, they can neither increase God's knowledge in any way nor can any of their words and deeds escape God's eyes. They are not in a position to claim a piece of knowledge that God does not have. All matters are presented before God. They are neither presented before the angels nor will they ever be. On the contrary, reports of the tasks assigned to these angels are presented before God.

Section VII Verses (77-78)

These are the concluding verses of the *sūrah*. In the previous verses, the disbelievers of the Quraysh were proven as traitors and deceivers and thereby unworthy of being the custodians of the House of God and heirs to Abraham's legacy. At the same time, it was indicated that the real worthy custodians of this House of God are the Muslims who had been expelled from there. They had also been given the authority to wage *jihād* to liberate the House of God from their occupation and cleanse it from filth. Now, in these verses, Muslims are being guided to directives that are essential to fulfil the requisites of this great responsibility.

Text and Translation

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادَّعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَافْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادٍ ۖ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ۖ مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۖ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ ۚ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۖ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ﴿٧٨﴾

Believers! Keep kneeling and prostrating before your Lord and

18. He knows what is behind and before them, and all matters turn to Him only.

worshipping Him and do righteous deeds that you may succeed. And strive in the way of God in the most befitting way. It is He Who has selected you and not placed any constraint on you regarding religion. He has chosen the community of your father – Abraham – for you. It was he who had earlier named you Muslim and in this Qur'ān also your name is Muslim so that the messenger bears witness to God's religion before you and you bear witness to it before other people. So, be diligent in the prayer and pay *zakāh* and hold strongly to God. He only is your guardian. So, what a good guardian and what a good helper! (77-78)

Explanation

19. ^{سورة}يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَافْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

Earlier, as has been indicated, the requisites of the position of leadership were being stated, glad tidings of which are mentioned in this *sūrah*. This position is a great privilege and also a great responsibility. For this reason, kneeling and prostrating were mentioned the foremost. They actually signify the prayer. However, as pointed out under verse 112 of *Sūrah Tawbah*, when a prayer is mentioned in this way, the purpose is to also refer to attention and focus during the prayer. Also specially alluded to is the *tahajjud* prayer adhering to which is essential to become worthy of great responsibilities. Since, as just indicated, this is an occasion of both of privilege and responsibility, expressing gratitude and becoming worthy of the responsibility were other reasons for urging Muslims to show diligence in the prayer. Readers are advised to look up verse 41 of this *sūrah* in which Muslims are informed of the responsibilities of the custodianship of the *Ḥaram* and what does their Lord expect of them after entrusting them with this position of leadership.

The words *وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ* (keep worshipping Him) mention the specific after the general. Worship also encompasses obedience. In other words, what is required is worshipping and showing obedience to Him in all spheres of life.

The words *وَافْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ* (and do righteous deeds) are even more general. The implication is that they should do more virtuous

19. Believers! Keep kneeling and prostrating before your Lord and worshipping Him and do righteous deeds that you may succeed.

deeds. These deeds refer to ones which are not obligatory but are highly recommended and rewarding as a result. They have a great role in shaping the character of a person.

The last part *لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلَحُونَ* (that you may succeed) implies that if Muslims are diligent in doing all these deeds, they will become capable enough to be given the position of authority in the land that they are being promised. This will also make them worthy of success in the hereafter.

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۚ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَامٍ مَلَّةً
أَبْيَكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۖ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِن قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا يَكُونُ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ
وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ ۚ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ
فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ²⁰

The verse begins with directing Muslims to strive for the cause of God with their lives and their resources. This is in tandem to the preparation they were earlier required to make regarding their conduct. Here the word *jihād* does not refer to war for that is dependent on certain conditions. It has already been mentioned in verse 38-41 earlier. Here it refers to striving for the cause of God through all possible means a person can muster for the purpose of making His word superior.

The expression *فِي اللَّهِ* is actually *فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ*. The words “in the most befitting way” refer to the fact that this striving should not be half-hearted. It should be done in such a way that if it costs a person his life, he should be prepared for it.

The God Who is asking them to strive in this way is the one Who has chosen them for the responsibility of delivering His final message to mankind. This selection has been made by Him after relieving others whether they are the Quraysh or the Jews

20. And strive in the way of God in the most befitting way. It is He Who has selected you and not placed any constraint on you regarding religion. He has chosen the community of your father – Abraham – for you. It was he who had earlier named you Muslim and in this Qur’ān also your name is Muslim so that the messenger bears witness to God’s religion before you and you bear witness to it before other people. So, be diligent in the prayer and pay *zakāh* and hold strongly to God. He only is your guardian. So, what a good guardian and what a good helper!

from this position. Hence they should rise to the occasion and do full justice to their selection of leading other nations of the world. Their determination and resolve should be exemplary. They are further told that there are no constraints in this religion for them the way they existed in the religion followed by the Jews. God out of His favour has protected this religion – which is based on human nature – from all such constraints and restrictions. The implication is that even though this is a heavy burden, but they are capable of lifting it.

This religion is the legacy of Abraham (sws) their forefather and whose legacy can be more cherished than his. It should be kept in mind that here the real addressees are the Ishmaelites who were not only the progeny of Abraham (sws), they were also very proud of this lineage.

A verb to effect *وَاتَّبِعُوا* can be regarded to be suppressed before *وَمِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ* or the verb *اجْتَبِئْكُمْ* can be regarded to encompass the meaning of another verb that suits the occasion. I prefer the latter construction in light of verse 2 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah (*رَضِيتُ لَكُمْ*) (الإسلام ديننا).

The words “it was he who had earlier named you Muslim and in this Qur'ān also” indicate that this religion is the community of Abraham (sws). It was he who named them Muslims and then this same name was given to them in this final religion. Some scholars regard the antecedent of the pronoun *هُوَ* to be God. However, in my opinion, it refers to the prayer of Abraham (sws) mentioned in verse 129 of Sūrah al-Baqarah: *رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً* (Our Lord! And make us obedient to you and institute from our progeny a Muslim nation). The purpose of referring to this name in this supplication is to encourage Muslims by informing them that they are the manifestation of their father's prayer. Thus they should always keep this historical fact in mind.

It should not be misconstrued from the verse that the word Islam or Muslim was used by Abraham (sws) for the first time. Islam is the nature of all objects of this universe, as is indicated in verse 82 of Sūrah Āl 'Imrān. All prophets have always followed Islam. The only thing is that Abraham (sws) had prayed that a community emerge from the progeny of Ishmael and named it Muslim. Thus when this community emerged, God gave it the same name.

What is discussed in *لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ* (so

that the messenger bears witness to God's religion before you and you bear witness to it before other people) has also been mentioned in verse 142 of Sūrah al-Baqarah thus: *وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا* (and similarly, We have made you an intermediate community so that you be witnesses to God's religion before people, and the messenger be such a witness before you). The part of the verse under discussion refers to the purpose of selection: God has selected them after removing others from this position so that just as His messenger bears witness to His religion before them, they should bear witness to it before mankind until the Day of Judgement. The nature of bearing this witness has been discussed under verse 143 of Sūrah al-Baqarah.

Verse 77 began with the mention of the prayer and the reason for this was indicated there. The *sūrah* now ends emphasizing the prayer and *zakāh* with the words: "so, be diligent in the prayer and pay *zakāh* and hold strongly to God. He only is your guardian; so, what a good guardian and what a good helper." Here the directive to be adhere to the prayer and pay *zakāh* is with reference to the responsibility of "bearing witness to God's religion before mankind" imposed on this community. On these two pillars stands the whole edifice of religion.²¹ As long as people follow them, religion will be followed, and vice versa.

There is no difference in the expressions *وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللهِ* and *وَاعْتَصِمُوا* بِحَبْلِ اللهِ. This is the remedy being suggested to the hardships that will be faced in this cause: they should adhere to their stance with full resolve and keep their Lord in remembrance and hold fast to His Book. Moreover, they should show full faith in His help because He is the best of Guardians and the best of Helpers.

With these words, the explanation of this *sūrah* comes to its completion. *وَآخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ* (and our last words are that all gratitude is for God, Lord of the worlds).

Rahmānābād
6th July 1973

21. For details, see: Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*, vol. 1, 197-199.