

Sūrah Kahf (2)

Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī

Section III: Verses (27-31)

The topic coming up is related to the topic of the *sūrah*. Readers may recall that in the beginning of the *sūrah* the Prophet (sws) had been stopped from worrying about those who had become slaves to worldly riches so much that they had forgotten God and the Hereafter and were not ready to hear the message of the Qur'ān. After that the episode of the cave-dwellers was mentioned as a result of a question. It became evident from it that God does not let the efforts of those who stand up for His cause go waste. In fact, He assures and encourages them and helps them Himself on the hardships they face for His cause. Now in the succeeding verses, the introductory topic is once again taken up. The Prophet (sws) is addressed and told that he should recite the Book that is being revealed to him and ignore the constant new demands of people as well as their evasion and arrogance.

The law of God regarding providing guidance to people cannot change. He should direct all his guidance to his poor and indigent companions while disregarding the rich and affluent people. He should tell the arrogant that they are free to choose belief or disbelief. He who disbelieves will see his fate for himself.

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

Text and Translation

وَاتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ ۚ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۚ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا ۚ وَ
اصْبِرْ لِنَفْسِكَ مِمَّا الدَّيِّنِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ وَالْعَشَىٰ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنُكَ
عَنْهُمْ ۚ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَلَا تَطْعَمُ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ
أَمْرُهُ فُرْطًا ۚ وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ ۚ إِنَّا آَعْتَدْنَا

لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا وَإِنْ يَسْتَغِيثُوا يُغَاثُوا بِمَاءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ بِئْسَ
 الشَّرَابُ وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿٢٨﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ
 عَمَلًا ﴿٢٩﴾ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ
 وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِّن سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُّتَّكِئِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ نِعَمَ الثَّوَابِ وَ
 حَسَنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿٣٠﴾

And recite the Book of your Lord that is being revealed to you. None can change the laws of God. And you can never find anyone except Him as a refuge. And attach yourself deeply to people who call God morning and evening to please Him. And your eyes must not turn away from them because of the allurements of worldly life, and do not pay heed to what they say who We have made heedless to Our remembrance and who are engrossed in their desires and whose matter has exceeded the limits. And say: This only is the truth from your Lord. So, whoever wants can profess belief and whoever wants can take to disbelief. We have prepared for the unjust a fire whose tents shall embrace them. And if they plead for water, their pleadings shall be answered by water which shall be like molten brass. It shall roast faces. What nasty water and what a nasty abode! (27-29)

Indeed, those people who accepted faith and did righteous deeds, We shall not lay waste the reward of the deeds of those who are thorough in their deeds. For them shall be orchards of eternal residence which shall have rivers flowing beneath them. There they shall be made to wear gold bracelets and they shall adorn attires of *sundus* and *istabraq*, sitting on couches reclining. What a wonderful reward and what a wonderful abode! (30-31)

Explanation

وَأَنذِرْ مَا أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِن كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ ۚ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۚ وَلَٰكِن تَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾

The Prophet (sws) is being directed to recite the Book being revealed to him disregarding the demands of his opponents. He should neither get worried because of their questions nor be sorrowful on their stubbornness. God's law of guidance is

1. And recite the Book of your Lord that is being revealed to you. None can change the laws of God. You can never find anyone except Him as a refuge.

unchangeable. None can change this law. Only they will receive guidance who have its urge and only they have this urge who prove themselves worthy of this favour. This matter rests totally in the hands of God and there is no guide and helper other than Him.

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْعَدَاوَةِ وَالْعِشْيَةِ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنُكَ عَنْهُمْ^٢ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الدُّنْيَا^٢ وَلَا تُطِغْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا^٢

The word *فرط* means “to exceed the limits and to oppress.” Thus, the expression *الامر الفرط* would refer to some matter that has crossed all bounds.

It was not because of any personal gain that the Prophet (sws) was anxious about the faith of the leaders and the affluent of his nation; it was purely for the elevation of his religion. He thought that if they professed faith, it would open the way for others to accept faith. For this, he went to great lengths to pamper and give them time even at the expense of the rights of his very devout companions. This verse has stopped him from this tendency. Those having a flair for language understand that the harsh and stern tone of this verse is not directed at the Prophet (sws). It is, in fact, directed at the arrogant and the affluent who regarded the companions to be inferior and demanded that only if the Prophet (sws) snubbed his companions would they be ready to hear his message.

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ^٣ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ^٣ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا^٣ أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا^٣ وَإِنْ يَسْتَغِيثُوا يُغَاثُوا بِمَاءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ^٣ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ^٣ وَسَاءَتْ مَرْتَفَعًا^٣

2. And attach yourself deeply to people who call God morning and evening to please Him. And your eyes must not turn away from them because of the allures of worldly life, and do not pay heed to what they say who We have made heedless to Our remembrance and who are engrossed in their desires and whose matter has exceeded the limits.

3. And say: This only is the truth from your Lord. So, whoever wants can profess belief and whoever wants can take to disbelief. We have

The expression **وَقُلْ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ** is actually **وَقُلْ الْحَقُّ**. Instead of pampering and showing extra affection to them, the Prophet (sws) should do what the verse says.

The word **مُرْتَفَقًا** refers to a place on which a person can lean. I have translated it in its wider meaning as abode.

The verb **يَشْوِي** means “to fry” and **مُهْل** refers to molten brass. It expresses the intensity of heat of the water.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا ﴿٦٦﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَّكِئِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ ﴿٦٧﴾ نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَحَسَنَتْ مَرْتَفَقًا ﴿٦٩﴾⁴

After referring to the fate of the disbelievers, these verses depict the fate of those who professed belief in the Qur'ān. Since the rich and affluent regarded them to be inferior, things that were a source of pride for the affluent are specially mentioned as reward.

I have already written regarding the details of Paradise and Hell that they are among the *mutashābihāt*. Through such parables and similes, the details of the unknown world are made comprehensible to us. As far as their actual form and shape is concerned, only God knows them. We cannot have an exact idea of the molten brass of Hell or the golden bracelets of Paradise. It may also be kept in mind that while delineating these details, the Qur'ān keeps in consideration the information and taste of the Arabs because parables and similes can only be effective if the addressee knows their purport.

prepared for the unjust a fire whose tents shall embrace them. And if they plead for water, their pleadings shall be answered by water which shall be like molten brass. It shall roast faces. What nasty water and what a nasty abode!

4. Indeed, those people who accepted faith and did righteous deeds, We shall not lay waste the reward of the deeds of those who are thorough in their deeds. For them shall be orchards of eternal residence which shall have rivers flowing beneath them. There they shall be made to wear gold bracelets and they shall adorn attires of *sundus* and *istabraq*, sitting on couches reclining. What a wonderful reward and what a wonderful abode!

Section IV: Verses (32-44)

In the succeeding verses, the mentalities of the believers and the disbelievers are explained through a parable. Through this parable, the real misconception of those who were opposing the Prophet (sws) has become totally evident: they regarded their worldly success to be proof of the veracity of their ideology and deeds; when Muslims would warn them about God and the Hereafter, they would reply that since they were better off than them in worldly affairs, hence their beliefs and practices were necessarily right. Then from that they also drew the inference that the Hereafter was merely a figment of the imagination and if it ever appeared, there too they would be better off than the believers.

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

Text and Translation

وَاغْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَحَفَفْنَاهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زُرْعًا ﴿٣٢﴾ كَلَّتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ اتَتْهُمَا أَكْطَا وَكَمْ تَظْلِمُ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا ۖ وَفَجَرْنَا خِلْفَهُمَا نَهْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَكَانَ لَهُ شِجْرٌ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَنْ تَبِيدَ هَذِهِ أَبَدًا ﴿٣٥﴾ وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً ۚ وَلَئِنْ رُدِّدْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا ﴿٣٦﴾ قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّكَ رَجُلًا ﴿٣٧﴾ لَكِنَّا هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ﴿٣٨﴾ وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ تَرَنَّا أَقْلَ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَلَوْلَا ﴿٣٩﴾ فَعَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَنْ يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا ﴿٤٠﴾ أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَاءُهَا غَوْرًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا ﴿٤١﴾ وَاحِيطٌ بِشَرِّهِ ۖ فَاصْبِرْ يَقْلِبْ كَفَيْهِ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ﴿٤٢﴾ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ فِتْنَةٌ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنتَصِرًا ﴿٤٣﴾ هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ ۖ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا ﴿٤٤﴾

And narrate to them the parable of the two individuals. For one of them, We made two orchards of grapes, surrounded them with

rows of date-palms and also placed between them pieces of cultivable land. Both orchards bore a lot of fruit; not the slightest reduction took place. And in their centre We made a stream flow as well. And when its time to bear fruit arrived, he argued with his companion: "I have more wealth than you and am more powerful than you with regard to numbers too." And he entered his orchard while he was being unjust to his soul. He said: "I do not think that this will ever perish and I do not suppose that the Day of Judgement will ever come. And even if I am returned to my Lord, I shall only find a better place to where I return." (32-36)

His companion, while conversing with him, said: "Have you denied the Being Who created you from clay, then from a drop of fluid, then made you a complete human being? But my Lord is precisely that God and I do not associate any partners with my Lord. And when you had entered your orchard, why did you not say: 'All this is God's blessing; no one has any power without God.' If you see me with lesser wealth and children than you, then it may well be that my Lord gives me a better orchard than yours and sends a calamity on your orchard from the heavens so that it becomes a barren land or its water goes into the earth and you are not able to find it in any way." (37-41)

And its fruit was visited by a calamity. So, whatever he had spent on the orchard, he ended up wringing his hand on it. And his orchard had fallen down on its fences and he was saying: "Alas! Would that I had not associated any partner with my Lord!" And he neither had any group which could help him against God nor could he himself take revenge. At that time, all authority is with God, the true God. Only His reward is better and best is the fate He ordains. (42-44)

Explanation

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَحَفَفْنَاهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زُرْعًا⁵

The arrogant among the Quraysh are narrated a parable which mirrors their inner and outer selves and also makes them see the

5. And narrate to them the parable of the two individuals. For one of them, We made two orchards of grapes, surrounded them with rows of date-palms and also placed between them pieces of cultivable land.

fate of the conflict between truth and falsehood that was taking place between them and the Muslims. This parable is about two individuals. One of them was blessed with two grand orchards. The other did not have any such thing yet his chest had the treasure of faith in it and his heart was with filled with joy at God's comprehension.

The fact that one of them was given two and not one orchard is to express the completion of favour on him by God. In Sūrah al-Raḥmān too it is mentioned that the dwellers of Paradise will be given two orchards. This too is for completion of favour. For the Arabs, the concept of an ideal orchard was one which grew grapes; its borders had date-palms that bore fruit, enhanced the splendour of the orchard and protected it from sizzling winds. Moreover, the orchard should also have had pieces of cultivable land in which essential crops were sown according to the season, and there was a stream in the middle whose tributaries irrigated every part of the orchard.

كُلَّتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ اِنتَ اُكْهَاوَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا ۚ وَفَجَّرْنَا خِلْفَهُمَا نَهْرًا ۖ ﴿٦﴾

What else can a person need in this world if he has not one but two such orchards!

وَكَانَ لَهُ شِجْرٌ ۖ فَقَالَ لِبَصَاحِبِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ اَنَا اَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَاَعَزُّ نَفَرًا ۖ ﴿٧﴾

This verse states the attitude of the person who received these favours. What should have been expected from him was an expression of immense gratitude to the God Who blessed him with this favour. However, what actually happened when his companion urged him to show gratitude and warned him of God's wrath on being ungrateful, was that he began arguing with him in the way stated in the verse.

It is evident from the words *وَكَانَ لَهُ شِجْرٌ* that this discussion took place when the crops were ready for harvesting. Obviously, on such occasions, the owner of an orchard becomes all the more inebriated with his affluence.

6. Both orchards bore a lot of fruit; not the slightest reduction took place. And in their centre We made a stream flow as well.

7. And when its time to bear fruit arrived, he argued with his companion: "I have more wealth than you and am more powerful than you with regard to numbers too."

وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ ۖ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَن تَبِيدَ هَذِهِ أَبَدًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَمَا أَظُنُّ
السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً ۚ وَلَئِن رُّدِّتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِّمَّا مُنْقَلَبًا ﴿٢٦﴾⁸

The expression refers to the fact that he entered the orchard and uttered the words stated in the verse while he was expressing pride and arrogance on his affluence.

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ رَجُلًا ﴿٢٧﴾⁹

It is evident from this sentence that the believer has argued with his arrogant companion regarding his haughtiness and rejection of the hereafter. If he sees such power and might of God in the creation of a human being, why does he regard recreation to be far-fetched? This is a clear denial of these attributes of God.

لَكِنَّا هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ﴿٢٨﴾¹⁰

This is an expression of the faith of the believer. It is evident from it that faith in God does not merely mean to believe in Him but it is essential that God be regarded as one's Lord and Master. If a person believes in God but regards someone else to be his Lord, then he is a polytheist and such polytheism is also disbelief. If a person shows conceit on his wealth and status and regards them to be a consequence of his abilities and of his personal entitlement and also arrogantly thinks that no one can take away these things from him, then this also is polytheism because such a person regards himself to have a share in God's kingdom. The meaning of monotheism is that he regards every favour he has to be from God, continues to remain grateful for it, regards himself to be accountable for it and is fully aware that whenever God wants He can take away this favour from him.

8. And he entered his orchard while he was being unjust to his soul. He said: "I do not think that this shall ever perish and I do not suppose that the Day of Judgement shall ever come. And even if I am returned to my Lord, I shall only find a better place to where I return."

9. His companion, while conversing with him, said: "Have you denied the Being Who created you from clay, then from a drop of fluid, then made you a complete human being?"

10. "But my Lord is precisely that God and I do not associate any partners with my Lord."

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ تَرَنِّ أَنَا أَقَلَّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا¹¹

In this verse, the believer has informed his arrogant companion about the true requisite of faith. If his companion had found him to be lesser in wealth and children, it should not have been a cause of arrogance; on the contrary, he should have been thankful on the blessings of God. It was his duty to express and confess that all that was God's doing; without Him no one had the power to make or break anything.

The word *لَا* here occurs to distance the two objects of the verb. It is not directly related to the sentence. Examples of such auxiliary usage can be seen in classical Arabic literature as well as in our own languages.

فَعَسَى رَبِّي أَنْ يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا¹²

The word *حُسْبَان* is the plural of *حُسْبَانَة*. The latter word means “thunder and hail.” The word *زَلَق* refers to the land which is totally barren and devoid of any vegetation. Here the believer is informing his arrogant companion of a likely consequence of his haughtiness.

أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَاءً هَآغُورًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا¹³

The expression *غار الماء غورا* would mean that “water seeped completely into the ground.” In other words, instead of thunder and hail visiting them even if the running stream that watered their orchard disappeared into the land, what could they or anyone else do?

Earlier the statement of the believer's arrogant companion is cited in which, seeing his lush orchard that had borne fruit, commented that he could not even think that it could ever be destroyed. All the arrogant and haughty people of this world have

11. “And when you had entered your orchard, why did you not say: ‘All this is God's blessing; no one has any power without God.’ If you see me with lesser wealth and children than you,”

12. “Then it may well be that my Lord gives me a better orchard than yours and sends a calamity on your orchard from the heavens so that it becomes a barren land.”

13. “Or its water goes into the earth and you are not able to find it in any way.”

the same mentality. They become so engrossed in their luxuries and comforts that it weighs down heavily on them to even think that this lavishness can ever see its doom. For this reason, if anyone tries to awaken them from their oblivious slumber, they wonder how any fissure can find its way into their fortifications. However, when the time comes, God razes such forts to the ground in just one moment. At that instant, everyone can see how near is the destruction they regard to be so unlikely.

وَأُحِيطَ بِشَرِّهِ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى مَا أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ
يَلَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا¹⁴

The expression أُحِيطَ بِشَرِّهِ means “that thing was destroyed.”

Finally, the orchard reached the same fate about which the believer had warned his companion. An earthly or heavenly calamity decimated it in the blink of an eye. The fences which had creepers of grapes woven on them fell down and the whole orchard was razed to ground. It was at this instance, that his arrogant companion awoke from his slumber and he saw that the orchard he considered to be indestructible was lying in heaps. The wrecked orchard was before him like a corpse and he sorrowfully rubbed his hands on its carcass: whatever he had spent on maintaining it had gone down the drain, let alone earning any benefit from it. At that time, he remembered the advice of his friend and longingly expressed the desire of not associating anyone with God.

“Not associating anyone with God” means that he thought that he should not have been arrogant enough to assume that all that was the result of his own abilities and the consequence of him deserving it; in fact, he should have thought that it was a gift of God and he should have been grateful for it.

وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ فِئَةٌ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنتَصِرًا¹⁵

The implication of this verse is that when the calamity

14. And its fruit was visited by a calamity. So, whatever he had spent on the orchard, he ended up wringing his hand on it. And his orchard had fallen down on its fences and he was saying: “Alas! Would that I had not associated any partner with my Lord!”

15. And he neither had any group which could help him against God nor could he himself take revenge.

destroyed the orchard, the group he was proud of never came to his rescue. It was the group on the basis of which he had uttered the words: أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا.¹⁶

Moreover, he himself also did not have the strength to take revenge.

هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ ۖ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا ﴿٣٧﴾¹⁷

The word هُنَالِكَ points to the time of manifestation of God's punishment in the Hereafter.

The verse only mentions the fate of the righteous because the fate of the wrongdoers has already been mentioned earlier.

It may be kept in mind that whether it is the punishment of this world or of the next, the real purpose is to reward the righteous: punishing the wrongdoers is not the real purpose; it is only its necessary consequence.

Section IV: Verses (45-49)

In the succeeding verses, a parable is cited about this world whose love has blinded the slaves to the world so much that they have lost their souls and are not prepared to listen to what the Qur'ān and the Prophet (sws) are informing them of. It is stated that none of the adornments of this world will go with them to the next world. Only their righteous deeds will. So, anyone who wants to earn anything should do righteous deeds.

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

Text and Translation

وَأَعْرَبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيحُ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا ﴿٤٥﴾ الْبَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَالْبَاقِيَةُ الصَّلَاحُ ۗ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا ﴿٤٦﴾ وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ

16. "I have more wealth than you and am more powerful than you with regard to numbers too."

17. At that time, all authority is with God, the true God. Only His reward is better and best is the fate He ordains.

الْجِبَالِ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿٤٥﴾ وَعُرِضُوا عَلَى رَبِّكَ صَفًّا
لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّنْ نَجْعَلَ لَكُمْ مَوْعِدًا ﴿٤٦﴾ وَوَضَعَ الْكِتَابُ
فَتَرَى الْجُبْنَ مِمَّنْ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يُيَسِّرَتْنَا مَالِ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَ
لَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَافِزًا وَلَا يَظِلُّمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ﴿٤٧﴾

And recount to them the parable of this worldly life: it is like rain that We brought down from the heavens. Thus, the earth's vegetation became lush green because of it; then it turned into stubble that winds scatter about. And God has power over all things. Wealth and children are adornments of worldly life and the righteous deeds that remain are better with regard to reward and with regard to hope before your Lord. Bear in mind the day when We shall make the mountains move and you will see that the earth has become totally bare and We shall bring them together; then We shall not leave any of them. And all of them will be brought before your Lord in rows. We will say: "You have come before us the way We created you the first time. In fact, you thought that We shall never fix a day of promise for you for your accountability. And the register shall be brought forth. So, you will see the wrongdoers trembling at whatever is in it and they will say: "Alas our misfortune! What a strange register this is that it has not omitted any small or big sin from noting it down?" And whatever they would have done, they will find all of it there, and your Lord will not be unjust to anyone. (45-49)

Explanation

وَافْرَبَّ لَهُمْ مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ
هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيحُ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا ﴿٤٥﴾¹⁸

The expression *اِخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ* means that the earth's vegetation became lush and luxuriant and because of their abundance and strength became intertwined.

The worldly life referred to here is the one that is discussed in the previous section of verses. In other words, its lures and

18. And recount to them the parable of this worldly life: it is like rain that We brought down from the heavens. Thus, the earth's vegetation became lush green because of it; then it turned into stubble that winds scatter about. And God has power over all things.

attractions infatuate a person so much that he becomes oblivious of God and the hereafter. In Sūrah al-Ḥadīd, this is explained thus:

إِغْلَبُوا أَنبَا الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبَ وَلَهُمْ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُهُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرُوا فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ
كَثَلْ غَيْثٍ آغَجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا. (١٠:٥٧)

Know that the parable of the life of this world – a sport and an entertainment and an embellishment and in the matter of wealth and children a mutual show off and a quest to outdo one another in them – is that of rain whose luxuriant produce lures the hearts of the disbelievers; but then it withers and you see it turn yellow, then turns into bits and pieces. (57:10)

There are many things in this verse that need discussion and we will take them up at appropriate instances. Here the purpose is to only direct attention to the fact that this verse actually explains the parable of worldly life mentioned in this verse: it refers to a life of sport and an entertainment and a quest to outdo one another in material gains. It is these lures that make the affluent close their eyes as they get entangled in them. Except for luxury and comfort, cinema and theatre, cars and houses, wealth and assets, money and bank accounts, status and position nothing carries weight in their eyes. So engrossed they become in these that they do not have any time for other things.

In a similar way, it is stated in the verse under discussion that these people should be told that the life they have been infatuated with and think that it will never see its doom is transient. Rain does temporarily create luxuriance. Yet, not far away is the time when it will wither away. God has power over all things. Just as He has produced this luxuriance, He will make it decay.

الْبَالُ وَالْبُنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَقِيَّةُ الصُّلْحَةُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا ﴿١٩﴾

Since in Arabia, the defence and power of a person depended on familial and tribal support, his strength depended on an abundance of children. They would specially mention the

19. Wealth and children are adornments of worldly life and the righteous deeds that remain are better with regard to reward and with regard to hope before your Lord.

number of children they had in their gatherings held to express mutual superiority. Earlier the words express this very aspect: أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا²⁰

The verse states that if a person has to pin hopes on anything it should be righteous deeds. They will reap eternal blessings for him.

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَمْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا²¹

The implication of this verse is that today the earth appears lush and luxuriant; mountains are implanted in it; magnificent forts are erected on it; gardens and orchards embellish it. However, a day will come when even these mountains will be uprooted, what to speak of other things and the land will become bare and barren. The earth will be stripped of all its adornments. Everyone will be gathered by God and none will be left, whether rich or poor, master or slave, idol or idolater.

وَعَرَضُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ صَفًّا²² لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّنْ نَجْعَلَ لَكُمْ مَوْعِدًا

On that day, everyone will be brought before God. Today these people arrogantly strut because of their wealth but on that day they will appear before Him like slaves with hands tied; neither will they have their battalion of guards and attendants about them nor the assets they proudly boasted about; everything will be left behind. Precisely how could they have imagined this state of helplessness for they thought that no day of accountability had been fixed for them?

وَوَضِعَ الْكِتَابَ فَتَرَى الْبُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يُوزِنْتَنَا مَالٍ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا

20. "I have more wealth than you and am more powerful than you with regard to numbers too."

21. Bear in mind the day when We shall make the mountains move and you will see that the earth has become totally bare and We shall bring them together; then We shall not leave any of them.

22. And all of them will be brought before your Lord in rows. We will say: "You have come before us the way We created you the first time. In fact, you thought that We shall never fix a day of promise for you for your accountability."

يُعَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَافِزًا ۚ وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ۚ²³

The word *النَّكِتُ* here means the register of deeds of people. All the elaborate arrangement mentioned in the verse for recording deeds will be because God does not want to be unjust to anyone. Everyone will get what he earned.

Section V: Verses (50-59)

In the succeeding verses, the Quraysh are warned with reference to the incident of Adam (sws) and Satan: they have followed the footsteps of Satan in their attitude of denial. They regard him to be their real help and support and worship him and his progeny. It was he who had thrown a challenge of his animosity against the progeny of Adam (sws). They are relying on a very evil substitute. The Qur'ān that is being read out to them is a great mercy for them. It is presenting to them the reality in various styles so that they can truly appreciate it. On the contrary, they are adamant to see God's torment instead of His mercy and want His scourge instead of divine fodder. They contend that unless they are able to observe God's punishment, they will not believe in the punishment they are being warned of by the Qur'ān. At the end, the Prophet (sws) is assured that it is not the responsibility of a messenger of God to bring punishment; his responsibility is only to warn people of it and to give glad tidings to those who accept faith. The Prophet (sws) should continue to discharge his responsibility and leave these people to themselves because their hearts have become impervious to warning. His lord is gracious and merciful and for this reason giving them respite. If He wanted to immediately punish them, He could break their backs. However, all His acts are based on wisdom. Thus, the Prophet (sws) should fully trust Him and patiently do his work.

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

23. And the register shall be brought forth. So, you will see the wrongdoers trembling at whatever is in it and they will say: "Alas our misfortune! What a strange register this is that it has not omitted any small or big sin from noting it down?" And whatever they would have done, they will find all of it there, and your Lord will not be unjust to anyone.

Text and Translation

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ۖ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ ۖ أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا ﴿٥٠﴾ مَا أَشْهَدْتُهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا خَلْقَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ ۖ وَمَا كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْبَاطِلِينَ عَصَدًا ﴿٥١﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا شُرَكَاءِيَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَوْبِقًا ﴿٥٢﴾ وَرَأَى الْبُجُرْمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مُوَاقِعُوهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا ﴿٥٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ۖ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا ﴿٥٤﴾ وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ ۚ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةٌ الْأَوَّلِينَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ ۖ وَيُجَادِلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُوا آلِيَتِي وَمَا أُنذِرُوا هُزُوًا ﴿٥٦﴾ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَا ۖ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ۖ وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِلَّا أَبَدًا ﴿٥٧﴾ وَرَبُّكَ الْعَفْوُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ ۖ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبْتُمْ لَأَعَجَلَ لَكُمْ الْعَذَابَ ۖ بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَّنْ يَجْزُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْيلًا ﴿٥٨﴾ وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَعَلْنَا لِبَهْلِكِهِمْ مَوْعِدًا ﴿٥٩﴾

And remember when We directed the angels: “Prostrate before Adam.” So, all prostrated except Iblīs. He was among the jinn. Thus, he disobeyed the directive of his Lord. So, leaving Me, you make him and his progeny as your guardian, even though they are your enemies? What an evil substitute for the wrongdoers! And I neither called any of them at the time of creating the heavens and the earth nor at the time of their own creation. And I am not One Who makes My helpers those who lead astray. (50-51)

And remember the day when He says: “Call now those who you regarded as My associates.” So, they will call them, but they will not reply. And We shall place before them a ditch of destruction and the wrongdoers will see Hell and will think that they are about to fall in it and will not be able to find any way to escape from it. (52-53)

And We have mentioned all kinds of warnings in various ways in this Qur’ān to guide people, but human beings are the most

quarrelsome. And after guidance has come to people, the only thing stopping them from accepting faith and seeking forgiveness from their Lord is that the fate met by the previous ones also manifests for them or the torment appears from in front them. And We only send messengers as bearers of glad tidings and warnings, and these disbelievers frivolously dispute the truth with the help of evil in order to defeat the truth. And they have made My revelations and that of which they have been warned a piece of jest. And who can be more unjust than those who, when reminded through their Lord's revelations, turn away and forget the earning of their hands. And We have put covers on their hearts so that they are not able to understand it and have plugged their ears so that they are not able to listen to it. So, however much you may call them to guidance, they shall never be guided. And your Lord is very Forgiving and Merciful. Had He wanted to seize them right away because of their deeds, He would have immediately sent them a torment. Yet a time has been appointed for them and they shall not be able to find any refuge against it. And these are the cities We destroyed when their people became unjust to themselves and We appointed a time for their destruction. (54-59)

Explanation

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ط كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ ط
أَفْتَتَخَذُونَ ذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَولِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا ۝٢٤

The incident of Adam (sws) and Satan has been discussed in detail in Sūrah al-Baqarah and Sūrah al-A'raf. Here, regarding the species of Satan, the only thing to be kept in mind is that he was from among the jinnkind. He disobeyed God and was condemned. Satan is not the name of a whole category of creatures, as some people have understood. It is, in fact, the title of the jinn who deceived Adam (sws). His enmity with Adam (sws) and his progeny is well known. His progeny is fulfilling the mission of its forefather with full adeptness and they have won over so many from the progeny of Adam (sws) to lead other

24. And remember when We directed the angels: "Prostrate before Adam." So, all prostrated except Iblīs. He was among the jinn. Thus, he disobeyed the directive of his Lord. So, leaving Me, you make him and his progeny as your guardian, even though they are your enemies? What an evil substitute for the wrongdoers!

human beings astray that Satan himself would be very proud and profusely praise them for surpassing his own feat.

Here the arrogant among the Quraysh are reminded of the eternal enmity of Satan and his progeny. Sorrow is expressed on that they have made them their real guardians and helpers, and forsaken God. Then while turning away from them it is stated that they have adopted a very evil substitute.

Here should be kept in mind what I have elaborated upon while explaining Sūrah al-An'ām: the Idolaters of Arabia worshipped the jinn in various ways. They regarded every mountain and valley to be under the charge of a devil and jinn and in order to protect themselves from their evil, they would worship them and present offerings to them. Some jinn were considered so dangerous that in order to please them the unfortunate people would even sacrifice their children. They thought that if one of the children was not sacrificed to please one of the jinn, he would consume all of them.

In this verse, the Qur'ān has appealed to the sense of honour of the Quraysh in that Iblīs was from among the jinn. They have become his disciples in spite of the fact that Iblīs had shown such enmity for Adam (sws).

The word “wrongdoers” refers to the idolaters. The sentence *بِئْسَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا* expresses sorrow and wonder: if the wrongdoers found a substitute for God, it was the eternal enemy of their forefather and his progeny. This is the height of wretchedness.

مَا أَشْهَدُتُّهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا خَلَقَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ۖ وَمَا كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْبَاطِلِينَ
عَضْدًا ۚ ٢٥

The style of this verse is sarcastic: these people have so generously made these devils associates of God even though He never called them for help in creating them or the heavens and earth. God was never going to call such creatures who lead people astray. Yet, today they have been included in His divinity in such a way as if every feat was achieved by them.

25. And I neither called any of them at the time of creating the heavens and the earth nor at the time of their own creation. And I am not One Who makes My helpers those who lead astray.

وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مُوبِقًا ﴿٢٦﴾

This verse reminds them of their deprivation on that day. The pit of destruction will obstruct the idolaters and their idols from one another

وَرَأَى الْكُفْرُ مَوْنَ النَّارِ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مُوَاعِعُوهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا ﴿٢٧﴾

The verse expresses the state of helplessness of the wrongdoers: they will have knowledge of their destruction and fall into it while seeing their fate.

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ۚ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا ﴿٢٨﴾

The word مَثَلٌ refer to the facts and realities of the hereafter and of the unknown world that are presented in the form of parables in order to warn people and the word الْإِنْسَان refers to the quarrelsome Quraysh that are already under discussion. A general word has been used in order to express aversion from them.

وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةٌ الْأَوَّلِينَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا ﴿٢٩﴾

The word النَّاس here also refers to the Quraysh who are being addressed since the previous verses and the word قُبُل means “from the front” and “face to face.”

26. And remember the day when He says: “Call now those who you regarded as My associates.” So, they will call them, but they will not reply. And We shall place before them a ditch of destruction.

27. And We shall place before them a ditch of destruction and the wrongdoers will see Hell and will think that they are about to fall into it, and will not be able to find any way to escape from it.

28. And We have mentioned all kinds of warnings in various ways in this Qur’ān to guide people, but human beings are the most quarrelsome.

29. And after guidance has come to people, the only thing stopping them from accepting faith and seeking forgiveness from their Lord is that the fate met by the previous ones also manifests for them or the torment appears from in front them.

The implication of the verse is that the Qur'ān has warned them in various ways and nothing is hidden; however, people who want to evade the reality find various excuses for this. It is asserted that these people will not believe in any guidance and seek forgiveness unless one of the two situations alluded to in the verse takes place. The Qur'ān is inviting them to divine fodder but they are demanding divine punishment. There is no remedy for such wretched people. They do not know that when divine punishment descends, it will not go away without decimating them. So, what will they believe in after that?

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَ مُنْذِرِينَ³⁰ وَيُجَادِلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَمَا أُنذِرُوا هُزُوًا³¹

This verse is an answer to the earlier demand of punishment. It is absolutely baseless for these people to demand this from their messengers and is tantamount to defeating truth through evil. Those who are playing this prank have not understood the reality of torment and of the hereafter. They have made fun of the verses of warning and of God's punishment.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدُهُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا³¹ وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا³²

The implication of this verse is that if these people are being given respite in spite of what they do as mentioned, it is purely because of God's mercy. However, because of their evil deeds, their faculties have been barred from accepting guidance from the Qur'ān.

The actual structure of the verse would be: أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا

30. And We only send messengers as bearers of glad tidings and warnings, and these disbelievers frivolously dispute the truth with the help of evil in order to defeat the truth. And they have made My revelations and that of which they have been warned a piece of jest.

31. And who can be more unjust than those who when reminded through their Lord's revelations turn away and forget the earning of their hands. And We have put covers on their hearts so that they are not able to understand it and have plugged their ears so that they are not able to listen to it. So, however much you may call them to guidance, they shall never be guided.

وَقَرَأَ مِنْ أَنْ يَسْبِعُوهُ. Here, before the letter *أَنْ*, words to the effect *من* or *كراهة* are suppressed in accordance with linguistic principles of Arabic. Similarly, on the basis of parallelism, words like *أَنْ يَسْبِعُوهُ* are suppressed after *وَقَرَأَ أَذَانَهُمْ وَقَرَأَ*.

At the end of the verse, the Prophet (sww) is told that since their faculties have been rendered ineffective because of their attitude, they will not accept guidance howevermuch he may recite God's revelations before them. He should now consign their matter to God and patiently continue to discharge his obligation so that the truth is fully communicated to them in a conclusive manner.

وَرَبِّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ طُوبَىٰ إِذَا أَخَذَهُمْ بِكَاسِبُوا الْعَجَل لَّهُمُ الْعَذَابُ ط بَلْ لَّهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَّنْ يَّجِدُوا
مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْيلًا ﴿٣٢﴾

The word *مَوْيل* means “a place of refuge.”

The reason is now stated that if so wretched are these people that they will never accept guidance, why should they be kept alive? Why should God not send His torment to them? It is because God is very gracious and merciful and gives respite to the wrongdoers to the ultimate extent. Otherwise, if He wants to seize them immediately, none can stop Him. He is in no haste for He has appointed a time to grab them. When the time comes, they will not be able to escape from Him anywhere.

وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَعَلْنَا لِبَهْلِكِهِمْ مَّوْعِدًا ﴿٣٣﴾

This verse presents historical evidence on what is said earlier.



32. And your Lord is very Forgiving and Merciful. Had He wanted to seize them right away because of their deeds, He would have immediately sent them a torment. Yet a time has been appointed for them and they shall not be able to find any refuge against it.

33. And these are the cities We destroyed when their people became unjust to themselves and We appointed a time for their destruction.