

Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl (3)

Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī

Section VI (Verses 58-60)

Earlier in verse 11, it has been mentioned that when the Prophet (sws) warned the Idolaters of the torment, they would immediately demand to be shown that torment. Now that the torment has been mentioned in the previous verses, the established practice of God about it is explained. They are told why the Almighty does not show people the signs of His torment merely because people demand them.

Text and Translation

وَأَنَّ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُوهَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُوهَا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا ﴿٥٨﴾ وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَنْ نُرْسِلَ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَآتَيْنَا ثَمُودَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَخْوِيفًا ﴿٦١﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ أَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّءْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَنَحْوَهُمْ قَوْمًا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٦٣﴾

There is not a single city that We shall not destroy before the Day of Judgement or not inflict it with a severe punishment. This is written in the book. And the only thing that has stopped Us from sending signs of punishment is that the earlier generations denied them. And We gave the Thamūd a she-camel as an eye-opening sign. But they were unjust to themselves and denied it. And We only send signs to frighten [people]. (59-60)

And remember when We said to you: Your Lord has surrounded the people. And that dream We showed you, We only made it a trial for the people and that tree as well which has been cursed in the Qur'ān. And We frighten them, but this thing is merely increasing them in their extreme rebelliousness. (60)

Explanation

وَأَنَّ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُوهَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُوهَا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا ۖ كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا¹

The word قرية refers to the central and main cities where their leadership and nobles reside.

This verse answers the demand of the disbelievers of the Quraysh regarding the sign of the promised punishment. Here the style adopted is concise. However, in verse 16 of this *sūrah*, the established practice of God has been referred to which governs what is stated here: فَحَقَّقَ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلَ فَدَمَّرْنَاهَا تَدْمِيرًا².

This established practice has always been in play and will continue to be so. However, for the disbelievers of the Quraysh, this issue had become even more grave. The reason was that God had sent a messenger among them. A messenger is the final means of conclusive communication of the truth. If a nation rejects its messenger, it is given some respite and then necessarily destroyed. This is written in the register of God. It is stated there that such and such a nation will be intentionally guilty of certain crimes that will lead to its destruction.

وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَنْ نُرْسِلَ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ۖ وَآتَيْنَا ثَمُودَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا ۚ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَخْوِيفًا³

Here the Almighty has alluded to the wisdom and mercy because of which He is not sending a sign of punishment, in spite of the emphatic demand of the Quraysh. It is said that the purpose of such signs is to admonish and warn people so that they fear the punishment they are being informed of. However, previous nations because of their wretchedness instead of paying

1. There is not a single city that We shall not destroy before the Day of Judgement or not inflict it with a severe punishment. This is written in the book.

2. And when We intend to destroy a settlement, We direct its affluent. So, they create great disorder in it. Thus, the word is fulfilled for them. Then at once We totally wipe it out.

3. And the only thing that has stopped Us from sending signs of punishment is that the earlier generations denied them. And We gave the Thamūd a she-camel as an eye-opening sign. But they were unjust to themselves and denied it. And We only send signs to frighten [people].

heed to such signs ended up rejecting them and thereby opened the door to divine punishment.

The preposition *بِ* in *فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا* evidences the fact that a word to the affect *كذبوا* is encompassed here. Thus the overall expression would be *ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَكَذَّبُوا بِهَا* (they were unjust to their souls and denied the sign of the she-camel).

This example shows how a previous nation denied a sign. If the stubbornness of the Thamūd had not blinded them, this sign was enough for them. Not only did they not benefit from this sign, they killed the she-camel and in this way opened the door to their own destruction.

If God sends a sign of punishment, it is meant to warn people of the actual punishment. However, the obdurate are not convinced by it. They interpret it in a way that suits them. Thus if they see a stone-hurling wind, they will regard it to be a stream of beneficial clouds that will drench them. If some natural calamity is encountered, they will attribute it to the tide of time. In short, any sign whose purpose is to warn them is unable to convince them. What can only convince them is the punishment itself. However, once it arrives, being convinced will become immaterial.

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ أَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ ۚ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّءْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ ۚ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْبَلْعُوتَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ ۚ وَنُخَوِّفُهُمْ ۚ فَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا ۝⁴

The previous verses mentioned the attitude of the nations regarding the signs of punishment. Now the attitude of the Prophet's nation, in particular, is referred to. The purpose is to show that if a sign of punishment is shown at their demand, their attitude too would be no different. They also will deny it because until now they have made fun of the warnings they have been given. Thus, for example, when the Almighty told the Prophet (sws) that God has surrounded them, they mocked and derided him instead of taking heed from it.

This is a reference to the verses in which the Almighty has stated that He is advancing towards Makkah by diminishing the

4. And remember when We said to you: Your Lord has surrounded the people. And that dream We showed you, We only made it a trial for the people and that tree as well which has been cursed in the Qur'ān. And We frighten them, but this thing is merely increasing them in their extreme rebelliousness.

power and influence of the disbelievers who inhabit it. Thus, for example, it is stated in Sūrah al-Ra'd:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا. (٤١: ١٣)

Do they not see that We are closing in upon this territory by reducing it from its borders? (13: 41)

The above words were revealed when Islam had started to spread in Makkah. It was as if the people of Makkah were gradually being surrounded by Islam. This topic is also discussed in verse 21 of Sūrah al-Faṭḥ. Then when Islamic forces started to gain victories, the Qur'ān predicted the conquest of Makkah in the following words:

وَأُخْرَى لَمْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ أَحَاطَ اللَّهُ بِهَا. (٢١: ٤٨)

And another victory also on which you do not have power as yet. However, God has it in His grasp. (48:21)

All these future events were not just whims. Circumstances were clearly pointing towards them. However, the stubborn leaders of the Quraysh continued to deny them until the very end. Ultimately, they had to surrender to the Muslims.

The words “and that dream We showed you, We only made it a trial for the people” state the second example of their stubbornness. They made fun of this example too.

The word الرُّؤْيَا (dream) refers to the ascension mentioned at the beginning of this *sūrah*. It has been explained there that this incident was a means of warning both the Quraysh and the Israelites: the custodianship of both the houses of God would be taken away from its corrupt and fraudulent custodians and consigned to Prophet Muḥammad (sws) and his followers. However, none of these two groups paid heed to this warning either. They made so much fun of it that the very thing which was meant to warn them and inform them of the future became a trial for them because of their wretched attitude.⁵

5. Earlier in this exegesis, I have explained the nature of the dreams shown to prophets of God. They are a means of divine revelation. Prophet Muḥammad (sws) was shown numerous incidents in dreams only. At times, the observations witnessed in dreams are more trustworthy than what is seen from the naked eye.

The words “and that tree as well which has been cursed in the Qur’ān” state the third example of warning which they did not pay heed to. They refer to the *zaqqūm* tree about which the Qur’ān (44:43) has stated that it will be in Hell. Emaciated with hunger, the dwellers of Hell will leap to eat it. Then because of extreme thirst, they will drink boiling water like thirsty camels. The attribute of “cursed” for the tree is the opposite of “blessed.” On the one hand is the blessed tree which is beneficial to God’s creatures because of its shade, fruit and freshness. Its direct opposite is the cursed tree which has neither shade nor fruit. It is just an amalgam of thorns and is filled with poison and sourness – a curse and calamity for God’s creatures. These are the attributes of the *zaqqūm* tree.

It is obvious that these traits of Hell have been narrated here so that the negligent and the indifferent pay heed and do what they can to save themselves from it. However, the wretched Quraysh instead of benefitting from these warnings started to make fun of them by analogously regarding the circumstances of the next world with that of the existing one. They mocked these statements by typically saying that this person is trying to gather fire, water and a tree at one place! How can a tree survive in fire? How can water and fire co-exist?

The words “and We frighten them, but this thing is merely increasing them in their extreme rebelliousness” imply that people whose minds have become so distorted that what is straight appears twisted to them should not be expected to believe if they are shown a sign of punishment at their demand. They will find some excuse or the other if they see it. They are not ones who will learn from a sign of punishment. They will only be convinced if they see the actual punishment – after which belief or disbelief becomes immaterial.

Section VII (Verses 61-65)

The succeeding verses expose the real reason of the arrogance of these people. This real reason is not what they express by saying that they want to see a sign of punishment to believe in the Prophet (sws). The fact is that after being blessed with God’s favours, they have become arrogant instead of being grateful to Him. In adopting this attitude, they have precisely followed Satan and the latter has in exact terms proved his point about the

progeny of Adam (sws).

Readers may proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ۖ قَالَ ءَأَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِينًا ۖ
قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَكَ هَذَا الَّذِي كَرَّمْتَ عَلَيَّ لَئِنْ أَخَّرْتَنِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَأَحْتَنِكَنَّ ذُرِّيَّتَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۖ
قَالَ أَذْهَبَ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَاءُكُمْ جَزَاءً مَوْفُورًا ۖ وَاسْتَغْنِرُ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِّنْ
مِنْهُمْ بِصُورَتِكَ وَأَجْلِبُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِخِيَلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكُهُمْ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ وَعَدَهُمْ ۖ وَمَا
يَعِدُّهُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ۚ إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ ۖ وَكُنْ بِرَبِّكَ وَكَيْلًا ۚ

And remember when We had said to the angels: “Prostrate before Adam.” So, they prostrated except Iblīs. He said: “Should I prostrate before him who you have created from clay?” He said: “Just see! Is this the one who you honoured above me? If you give me respite until the Day of Judgement, I shall consume all his progeny except a few.” God said: “Very Well! Those among them who follow you, then Hell is the full recompense for all of you. And whoever among them you can overpower, scare them with your commotion; bring upon them your riders and pedestrians, become a partner in their wealth and children and make promises with them. And the promises Satan makes with them are nothing but deception. Indeed, you will not have any power over My own servants and as a guardian, sufficient is your Lord.” (61-65)

Explanation

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ۖ قَالَ ءَأَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِينًا ۖ⁶

The creation of Adam (sws) and his dialogue with Satan has been discussed in detail in Sūrah al-Baqarah and Sūrah al-A‘rāf. For this reason, I will confine myself to explaining the meaning of this verse with regard to its context only.

The verse sounds an assurance to the Prophet (sws). The real reason of the denial of these people is not that they have not been shown any sign of punishment; their arrogance is the real reason

6. And remember when We had said to the angels: “Prostrate before Adam.” So, they prostrated except Iblīs. He said: “Should I prostrate before him who you have created from clay?”

Indeed, you will not have any power over My own servants and as a guardian, sufficient is your Lord.”

for this denial. In this matter too, they have exactly followed Satan, their leader. Just as his arrogance did not let him prostrate before Adam (sws) thinking that he was made of a superior substance, these people too have become blind because of their power and authority and their arrogance is not letting them accept Muḥammad's superiority and believe in him.

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَكَ هَذَا الَّذِي كَرَّمْت عَلَىٰ لَيْسَ أَخْرَأْتَن إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ لَا تَحْتَنِكَن ذُرِّيَّتَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۚ

The word *أَرَأَيْتَكَ* also connotes sarcasm and humiliation. The meaning of the expression *احتنك الجراد الارض* would mean that “the locusts consumed the lush crops.”

The verse shows that this enmity of Adam (sws) and his progeny with Satan will continue until the Day of Judgement. Its purpose is to show that people who are not professing faith have been hijacked by Satan and his progeny and he has in fact proven the claim that he made at the beginning when Adam (sws) was created.

قَالَ أَذْهَبَ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَاءُكُمْ جَزَاءً مَّفُورًا ۖ

The verse shows that the respite demanded by Satan from God until the Day of Judgement was given to him. However, this opportunity given to him will still not secure him from punishment because Hell is such an abode that it will punish him commensurate to what he will do in this whole period of respite.

وَأَسْتَفْرِزُّ مَنْ اسْتَطَعَتْ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبَ عَلَيْهِم بِخَبِيرِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكُهُمْ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ وَعَدَهُمْ ۖ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ۙ

The word *استفراز* means “to make someone anxious and worried” and *صوت* here connotes “uproar, commotion and propaganda.”

The verse refers to the extent of opportunity given to Satan and his progeny to lead people astray. It serves as a caution to them

7. He said: “Just see! Is this the one who you honoured above me? If you give me respite until the Day of Judgement, I shall consume all his progeny except a few.”

8. God said: “Very Well! Those among them who follow you, then Hell is the full recompense for all of you.

9. And whoever among them you can overpower, scare them with your commotion; bring upon them your riders and pedestrians, become a partner in their wealth and children and make promises with them. And the promises Satan makes with them are nothing but deception.

so that they should not take it easy and all those who want to protect their faith from his lures should remain forever vigilant.

Satan is told to do whatever he possibly can to divert people from the straight path. He can make use of all sorts of commotion and propaganda in this regard. He can employ the print, public and social media with all their influence to his advantage.

It may be kept in mind that bringing over pedestrians and riders mentioned in the verse is not a metaphor. It is a literal fact. All the wars incited by the enemies of Islam to persecute the believers are included in this.

Satan has also been given the opportunity to become a partner in the wealth and children of people. His worshippers will regard him so. They will take out a share for him from their wealth and keep their children's names after him and even sacrifice them for his pleasure.

He also has the chance to lure people through his enchanting promises. By falling for them, these people will become negligent of their real responsibilities of life. But they should remember that all promises of Satan are fake. These include the notion of the idolaters of Arabia that the angels they worship bring them closer to God or the notion of the Jews that they are the children and favoured ones of God and thus fire shall not even touch them.

10 إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ ۖ وَكُفٰى بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلًا ﴿٦٧﴾

This is an assurance sounded to those who strongly adhere to faith: whatever Satan can do, his power is not absolute; he cannot forcibly lead people astray. Absolute authority is with God only. So, the servants of God who, inspite of the mischief worked by Satan, want to adhere to their faith and with full confidence entrust themselves to God will find God to be their guardian. They will need none else than Him for this purpose. He will protect His servants in the gravest of circumstances and secure their faith.

Section VIII (Verses 66-72)

The succeeding verses depict the attitude of people when they are caught in some calamity. On such instances, they call upon God and plead before him. As soon as they are secure from it,

10. Indeed, you will not have any power over My own servants and as a guardian, sufficient is your Lord."

they once again show arrogance. They completely forget that if God wants He can once again strike them with another calamity and that too in such a way that it becomes permanent for them. After that the parable of two groups is mentioned: one which sees the world with open eyes and learns lessons from it; the second which always remains blind. The fate of both these groups is referred to. This parable is actually of the disbelievers of the Quraysh, who were the first addressees of the Qur'ān. However, the attitude of other arrogant people is no different.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

رَبُّكُمُ الَّذِي يُرِيحُ لَكُمْ الْفُلْكَ فِي الْبَحْرِ لِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُونَ إِلَّا إِلَٰهًا فَلَمَّا نَجَّيْكُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ أَعْرَضْتُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ كَفُورًا ﴿٦٧﴾ أَفَأَمْنْتُمْ أَنْ يَخْصِفَ بِكُمْ جَانِبَ الْبَرِّ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ وَكَيلًا ﴿٦٨﴾ أَمَرْتُمْ أَنْ يُعِينَكُمْ فِيهِ تَارَةً أُخْرَىٰ فَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ قَاصِفًا مِنَ الرِّيحِ فَيَغْرِقَكُمْ بِمَا كَفَرْتُمْ ۚ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا بِهِ تَبِيعًا ﴿٦٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَلَّلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا ﴿٧٠﴾ يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِصْمَامِهِمْ ۚ فَمَنْ أَؤْتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِرِسَالَةٍ فَانْصَرَفَ وَكَثَبَ ۚ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿٧١﴾ وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٧٢﴾

Your Lord is one who makes the ship sail for you in the sea so that you can seek His bounty. Indeed, He is very Merciful to you. And when you are struck by a calamity in the sea, all those you invoke besides Him disappear. Then when He safely brings you to the shore, you turn away. And human beings are very ungrateful. (66-67)

Have you no fear that He take you towards the shore sinking you with the earth or send upon you a chilling wind; then you find no one as your protector? Or have you no fear that He take you to the sea again, then send on you a stormy wind; thus, He drown you for your ingratitude and you not find any supporter for yourselves who is able to come after Us for it? (68-69)

And We have bestowed honour on the children of Adam and provided them with transport both in the land and the sea and granted them sustenance of pure things and gave them prominent superiority over many creatures of Ours. Bear in mind the day

when We shall call every group with its leaders. Then those who are given their account in their right hands, they will read it and not the slightest injustice shall be done to them. And he who remains blind in this world, he shall remain blind in the Hereafter as well and farthest in error. (70-72)

Explanation

رَبُّكُمُ الَّذِي يُزَيِّجُ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ فِي الْبَحْرِ لِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ﴿١١﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُونَ إِلَّا إِلَٰهَهُ ۚ فَلَمَّا نَجَّيْكُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ أَعْرَضْتُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ كُفُورًا ﴿١٢﴾

This is a parable which depicts that whatever favour people get is actually from God. They can benefit from it and they owe the obligation of being thankful to God for it. However, such is their wretchedness that when they receive a favour, they become arrogant before God and regard it be a result of their own effort and of the favour shown to them by their alleged deities. However, when people are struck by a calamity, they fervently beseech God, forgetting all their deities. Then as soon as God delivers them, they once again resort to their evil ways and forget Him.

In order to illustrate this attitude, the example of travelling on a ship is given. It is God's power and might which makes it sail across the sea with thousands of tons of load. God has made this possible so that people benefit from their sea travel and be grateful for this favour. But such are they that when the ship smoothly sails across the sea, God never comes to their minds. However, as soon as it is caught in a whirlpool and shakes violently, they forget their arrogance and also their deities and only plead to God. Yet this situation remains as long as the ship is caught up in a whirlpool. As soon as it comes out of it and they step on the shore, they neither remember their troubled times nor their pleading to God.

This parable also sounds an assurance to the Prophet (sws): he should not think that the Quraysh will accept the path of faith and guidance once he shows them the sign of the punishment they are asking for. If they encounter a calamity, they will implore God and

11. Your Lord is one who makes the ship sail for you in the sea so that you can seek His bounty. Indeed, He is very Merciful to you. And when you are struck by a calamity in the sea, all those you invoke besides Him disappear. Then when He safely brings you to the shore, you turn away. And human beings are very ungrateful.

as soon as they are secure from it, they will revert to their previous misdeeds. This path of guidance can be known if a person pays heed to his nature and to his intellect. If these people are not prepared for this, how can a sign of punishment guide them?

أَفَأَمِنْتُمْ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ بِكُمْ جَانِبَ الْبَرِّ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٢﴾

These people are posed the question mentioned in this verse to caution and prod them: do they think that God's kingdom is confined to the sea and not the land? If He thrusts them in the land or sends on them a stone-hurling wind which totally ravages them and their houses, who can save them from Him?

أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ أَنْ يُعِيدَكُمْ فِيهِ تَارَةً أُخْرَىٰ فَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ قَاصِفًا مِّنَ الرِّيحِ فَيَغْرِقَكُمْ بِهَآ كَفَرْتُمْ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَاهُ تَبِيْعًا ﴿١٣﴾

The word قاصف means "something which smashes and breaks something" and تبيع means "helper" and supporter."

They think that once they have been let go by God, they have no obligation towards Him. It is very possible that He punishes them once again for their ingratitude. In verse 75, the words used are: "then you will not find anyone to help you against Us."

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَهُمْ فِي الْوَبْرِ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَهُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا ﴿١٤﴾

Mankind is now reminded that the honour mentioned in this verse entails that they must remember these favours of God and instead of showing arrogance, be grateful to Him. Showing arrogance on favours is the way of Satan and his fate is known.

Also evident from this verse is that the superiority human beings have over other species is not absolute. There are other

12. Have you no fear that He take you towards the shore sinking you with the earth or send upon you a chilling wind; then you find no one as your protector?

13. Or have you no fear that He take you to the sea again, then send on you a stormy wind; thus, He drown you for your ingratitude and you not find any supporter for yourselves who is able to come after Us for it?

14. And We have bestowed honour on the children of Adam and provided them with transport both in the land and the sea and granted them sustenance of pure things and gave them prominent superiority over many creatures of Ours.

creatures of God who are more superior than him.

يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ¹⁵ فَمَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ يَقْرَءُونَ كِتَابَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا

The word أناس means “a group of people” and إمام refers to “leaders and chiefs.”

This verse reminds them of the Day of Judgement when God’s court of justice will be set up. Every group will be called by God along with its leaders: the pious with their pious leaders and the impious with their impious leaders. The accounts of the pious will be handed over to them in their right hands and the impious in their left ones.

Those who will be handed over their accounts in their right hands will read them and see that not the slightest injustice has been done to them. Every single virtuous deed whether small or big will be written in it and will be fully recompensed. The verb “to read” here is used in its actual sense: they will happily read everything and be thankful to God for His graciousness. Though the impressions of the ones who will be handed over their accounts in their left hands are not mentioned in words, it is evident from the context that instead of reading their accounts they will express frustration and sorrow. They will know that their evil deeds have made their register of accounts a thing of regret and embarrassment.

Gathering each group with its leaders and followers has the aspect of honouring them as well as conclusive communication of the truth. The leaders of the virtuous will see that the cause of making God’s words superior for which they endangered their lives has thankfully produced superb consequences. On the other hand, the leaders of evil people will see the fate of their misdeeds and those who followed them will curse them and will demand a double torment for them, as is stated at another instance.

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا¹⁶

After the companions of the right hand, this verse mentions the

15. Bear in mind the day when We shall call every group with its leaders. Then those who are given their account in their right hands, they will read it and not the slightest injustice shall be done to them.

16. And he who remains blind in this world, he shall remain blind in the Hereafter as well and farthest in error.

fate of the companions of the left hand. Since these people remained blind in this world, they will be raised up blind in the next one as well. If they were far away from their real destination in this world, this distance will be much more in the next. This is because once they are raised up in that world no chance will remain for them to return to the straight path.

Section IX (Verses 73-84)

In the succeeding verses, it is emphasized on the Prophet (sws) to adhere to his stance in spite of opposition from his rivals. However much they insist that they will become his companions if he makes some amendment in the Qur'ān as per their wish, he does not have the slightest authority to make such an amendment. The most that they can achieve by harassing him is to make matters so difficult for him that he is compelled to leave his city. If this happens, then after his departure, they too would not be able to live in the city. They will meet the same fate as the one which nations of messengers meet when they migrate. After that the Prophet (sws) has been directed to seek help from the prayer especially the *tahajjud* prayer to acquire perseverance. He has then been taught the supplication that he must make just before migration. The victory associated with migration is then indicated. At the end, sorrow is expressed at the wretchedness of the Prophet's rivals: the Qur'ān which is a cure and mercy of them has become a scourge for them because of their own misdeeds.

Readers may now proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُوكَ عَنِ الذِّمَىٰ أَوْ حِينًا إِلَيْكَ رِغَفَتٍ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَةً ۖ وَإِذَا لَا تَأْخُذُكَ
خَلِيلًا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَلَوْلَا أَنْ ثَبَّتْنَاكَ لَقَدْ كِدَّتْ تَزْكُنَ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا ﴿٧٤﴾ إِذَا لَا أَذْنُكَ ضَعْفَ
الْحَيَاةِ وَضَعْفَ الْمَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٧٥﴾ وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَسْتَفِزُّوكَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ
لَيُخْرِجُوكَ مِنْهَا وَإِذَا لَا يَلْبِثُونَ خَلْقَكَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٧٦﴾ سُنَّةَ مَنْ قَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا
وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٧٧﴾ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِكَ الشَّيْءِ إِلَىٰ عَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ ۖ إِنَّ
قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا ﴿٧٨﴾ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ ۖ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا
مَّحْضُودًا ﴿٧٩﴾ وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَدْخِلْنِي مَدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَأَخْرِجْنِي مَخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَاجْعَلْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ

سُلْطَنًا نَّصِيرًا ﴿٨٠﴾ وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ۚ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا ﴿٨١﴾ وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٨٢﴾ وَإِذَا أُنْعِمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ ائْرَضَ وَتَابَ جَانِبَهُ ۚ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشُّمَّ كَانَ يَكُوسَا ﴿٨٣﴾ قُلْ كُلُّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ ۖ فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِبَن هُوَ أَهْدَى سَبِيلًا ﴿٨٤﴾

And it may well have been that by subjecting you to trials they turned you away from what We have revealed to you so that you present something other than this Qur'ān by fabricating it on Us. And then they would have made you their close friend. And had We not braced you it may well have been that you become a little inclined to them. If this had happened, We would have doubly punished you of life and death. Then you would not have found anyone against Us as your helper. (73-75)

And, indeed, they are after uprooting you from this land in order to turn you out from here. And if this happens, then they too will not be able to stay here for long after you. Keep in mind Our established practice about the messengers We sent before you and you will not find any change in this practice of Ours. Be diligent in the prayer from the descent of the sun to the darkness of the night and especially in the recital of *fajr*. Indeed, the recital of *fajr* is in attentive presence. And offer the *tahajjud* prayer at night also. This is additional for you. You may hope that your Lord will raise you such that you will be showered with praise and pray: Lord! Let my entry be with honour and let my departure be with honour and bless me with a helping authority especially from Your self. And declare: The truth has arrived and evil has perished and evil was bound to perish. (76-81)

And what We reveal in this Qur'ān is a cure and mercy for the believers and this thing is only increasing the unjust in their loss. And when We bless a human being with Our favour, he shows evasion and turns away. And when some calamity strikes him, he loses hope. Say: Each will follow his own way. So, your Lord knows full well those who are more on the right path. (82-84)

Explanation

وَأَن كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَةً ۖ وَإِذَا لَا تَتَّخِذُكَ خَلِيلًا ﴿٨٠﴾ وَلَا أَن تَبْتَئِكَ لَعَدَدْتَ تَرَكْن إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨١﴾ إِذَا لَا ذَنْفَكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيَوةِ وَضِعْفَ

النَّبَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٥٧﴾ 17

In the expression *وَأِنْ كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ*, the preposition *عَنْ* shows that the word *كَيْفَتِنُونَكَ* encompasses the meaning of *يَصْرِفُونَكَ* or a word of similar meaning. The implication is that the opponents of the Prophet (sws) have launched such a massive onslaught against him that by inflicting him with various trials they may well have made him give up his stance. However, the Almighty saved him from this situation.

A phase comes in the preaching of messengers when their opponents think that their preaching is deeply rooted in the land and mere blind opposition will not counter it. On such occasions, they undertake the political intrigue mentioned in the verse or present a compromising formula. This phase also ensued in the preaching mission of Prophet Muḥammad (sws). When his opponents saw that his words were deeply influencing the masses, some of their groups suggested to him that if he made such and such amendments in the directives of the Qur'ān, they would accept his invitation and become his bosom friends.¹⁸ Narratives mention the name of the Thaqīf tribe in this regard. This was a very tough phase for the Prophet (sws). On the one hand were divine directives revealed to him regarding which he did not have the authority to alter it the slightest. On the other hand, he was very desirous of his nation to accept faith and did not want to waste a chance that could lead to their acceptance of faith. This situation made him hesitant. The words “it may well be that you become a little inclined to them” point to his reluctance. It was in this precarious situation that God helped his messenger and dispelled his reluctance.

It should be kept in mind that infallibility of prophets does not mean that they can never be in a state of indecision or a wrong inclination cannot pass through their hearts. It only means that in

17. And it may well have been that by subjecting you to trials they turned you away from what We have revealed to you so that you present something other than this Qur'ān by fabricating it on Us. And then they would have made you their close friend. And had We not braced you it may well have been that you became a little inclined to them. If this had happened, We would have doubly punished you in life and death. Then you would not have found anyone against Us as your helper.

18. A similar thing has been mentioned in verse 49 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah as well. Readers may look it up.

the first place none of their inclinations is based on evil desires and is always virtuous in nature. Secondly, even in the path of virtue if they take a step which is not correct, the Almighty protects them and guides them in the right direction.

The words “If this had happened, We would have doubly punished you of life and death; then you would not have found anyone against Us as your helper” apparently address the Prophet (sws). However, the rebuke in them is addressed to those who were bringing the suggestion of this compromise so that they get to know that if this entails double punishment for the Prophet (sws) in this world and the next, then how can it even materialize?

A governing noun is suppressed in *ضَعُفَ الْحَيَاةُ وَضَعُفَ الْمَمَاتُ*. Thus, the actual sense is: *ضَعُفَ عَذَابُ الْحَيَاةِ وَضَعُفَ عَذَابُ الْمَمَاتِ*. This warning of a two fold punishment is according to the rank and status of a messenger. The higher the status of a person, the higher his responsibility and accountability.

وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَسْتَفِزُّوكَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ لِيُخْرِجُوكَ مِنْهَا وَإِذَا لَا يَلْبِثُونَ خَلْقًا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٤٩﴾
سُنَّةٌ مَن قَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ رُّسُلِنَا وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٥٠﴾¹⁹

The word *إِسْتَفِزَّاز* means “to make some anxious and apprehensive” and the word *الأرض* refers to Makkah.

When the Prophet’s opponents lost hope of any compromise, their opposition, which was no less earlier, increased two fold. They employed their full force to compel him to leave Makkah. The verse comments on this attitude of theirs.

It has been explained at another instance that a messenger is a means of conclusive communication of the truth. As long as he remains among his people, he continues to seek forgiveness for them. Hence his presence among them secures them from God’s torment. However, when the behaviour of his nation forces him to migrate from them, it becomes a soulless entity. The process of conclusive communication of the truth stands complete. After this, either God’s torments appears and cleanses the land of this filth or the swords of the believers are unleashed on these people

19. And, indeed, they are after uprooting you from this land in order to turn you out from here. And if this happens, then they too will not be able to stay here for long after you. Keep in mind Our established practice about the messengers We sent before you and you will not find any change in this practice of Ours.

and decimate them. For the miscreants of Makkah, this second situation arose.

The word *سُنَّةٌ* is in the accusative like *يَوْمٌ* generally is. Thus, the sense would be: *أَذْكُرْ سُنَّةَ مَنْ*. The implication is that the Prophet (sws) and his companions should remember the established practice of God regarding the messengers He sent earlier. Such suppression emphasizes a certain thing and keeps it under direct focus.

²⁰ *أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُنُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا* ﴿٢٠﴾

The expression *أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ* does not merely mean to offer the prayer. It means to show diligence and vigilance in the prayer.

The word *ذُنُوكِ* refers to the descent of the sun. There are three stages of this: one, when it descends from midday, second when it descends from the line of sight and third when it disappears from the horizon. These three times are the times for the *zuhr*, *‘aṣr* and *maghrib* prayers. The particle *لِ* on *ذُنُوكِ* connotes time. This is a conventional usage of this particle in Arabic. On such occasions, it means “at.” Thus, for example, *الصَّلَاةُ لِأَوْقَاتِهَا* would mean “the prayer at its time” and *أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُنُوكِ الشَّمْسِ* would mean “be vigilant in the prayer at the time of the sun’s descent.”

The expression *غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ* means darkness of the first part of night when it becomes pronounced. This is the time of the *‘ishā’* prayer. Though the expression can be governed by the verb *أَقِمِ*, in my opinion it is in the accusative because of specification (*ikhtiṣās*). The sense would be *أَحْضُ بِالذِّكْرِ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ* signifying the importance of the *fajr* prayer.

The *قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ* in *قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ* refers to the recital of the Qur’ān in the *fajr* prayer. This word is also referring to a prolonged and audible recital of it in general terms. The word *مَشْهُودًا* refers to attentiveness and focus in listening to this recital which both a prayer leader and his followers experience especially in the *fajr* prayer and it also refers to the presence of the angels during it. Aḥādīth mention their blessed presence on this occasion.

It is evident from this that the times of the five prayers is mentioned in the Qur’ān itself. In fact, it is evident from the next verse that the *tahajjud* prayer and its time is also mentioned in the Qur’ān. If even after such explicit mention, someone says

20. Be diligent in the prayer from the descent of the sun to the darkness of the night and especially in the recital of *fajr*. Indeed, the recital of *fajr* is in attentive presence.

that the Qur'ān does not mention the times of the five prayers, what can be said except a prayer for his guidance.

It is evident from the times of the prayers that they are fixed keeping in view the kneeling and prostration of the great signs of this universe. It is evident from the verse under discussion that the sun remains in the state of standing, kneeling and prostration in all the times of night and day. Obviously, same would be the state of things which receive the sun's reflection. They too continue to stand, kneel and prostrate before their Lord. Thus, for example the following verses refer to this aspect:

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طُوعًا وَكَرْهًا وَظِلُّهُمْ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ (١٥ : ١٣)

Whatever is in the heavens and the earth all are prostrating before Him willingly or unwillingly and also their shadows morning and evening. (13:15)

تَسْبِيحٌ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ^ط وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يَسْبِيحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ. (٤٤ : ١٧)

The seven heavens, the earth and whatever they contain all glorify Him only, and there is nothing which does not praise Him while glorifying Him, yet you do not understand their glorification. (17:44)

All these creations of God invite human beings through their form and state that just as they kneel and prostrate before God, people too should do so and create harmony with these creations and pray to God. However, it is the misfortune of a human being that he prostrates before the most trivial of things but shows arrogance before his real Lord. The fact is that these trivial things themselves prostrate before God and are subservient to Him. One can consider the example of the sun. Its kneeling and prostration are mentioned here. Who can imagine the extent of how much it was worshipped and is being worshipped?

Here, as indicated earlier, the Prophet (sws) is directed to adhere to the prayer to acquire patience and perseverance in the difficult phase he and his companions were passing through. Without the support of God, facing such hardships for the cause of the truth with perseverance is not possible. And the greatest means to seek this support is the prayer, especially the *tahajjud* prayer, which is discussed in the next verse.

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ ۖ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا ﴿٢١﴾

The word تهجد literally means to get up after sleeping a little at night. However, as a term, it refers to the prayer that is offered at night after sleeping a little. The ب in بِهِ is for locus of time and the antecedent of the genitive pronoun is لَيْل.

The word نَافِلَةٌ means “additional.” It is used in the positive sense always, implying abundance and addition in favours. It is not used for abundance and addition in harm. In other words, the Prophet (sws) is told that this *tahajjud* prayer is additional for him. The word لَّكَ signifies that it is an obligation the Prophet (sws) must fulfil. Thus, all his life he offered it with diligence. As indicated earlier, this emphatic directive of being vigilant in prayers was to acquire the strength to counter Satanic forces. Precisely for this purpose, he was directed to offer the mandatory *tahajjud* prayer. About it, it is said that it was for his additional support and help. It will increase his patience and perseverance in countering the difficulties he will face in the cause of the truth. Though this prayer is not an obligation for the common man, yet for those who embark upon fighting satanic forces and establishing the rule of truth on the earth, this prayer is the greatest means of obtaining God’s help. Thus, righteous individuals who have had the opportunity to serve their religion have always adhered to this prayer.

The connotation of hope and expectation of the word عَسَى when used with reference to God becomes associated with the addressees instead of God. Thus, for example, verse 8 of this very *sūrah* عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يَرْحَمَكُم would mean “You may hope that God will have mercy on you.” Similarly, verse 83 of *Sūrah Yūsuf* عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا would mean “I hope that God will bring everyone of them to me.” The verse under discussion has been similarly translated. This interpretation also dispels the notion raised by those not conversant with the language that when everything is known to God, why should hope and expectation be ascribed to him? It may also be noted that the case of لَعَلَّ when used with God is no different.

In مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا, the word مَقَامًا in my opinion is not in the

21. And offer the *tahajjud* prayer at night also. This is additional for you. You may hope that your Lord will raise you such that you will be showered with praise.

meaning of locus (*ẓarf*). It is in fact a verbal noun and here it is in the meaning of a stressed object (*maf'ūl muṭliq*). Since there is a similarity of meaning between بَعَثَ and مَقَامَ, the word بَعَثَ means “to raise” and مَقَامَ means “to stand and to rise;” hence there is nothing wrong in the word being regarded as a stressed object. The implication is that today these people are raising a deafening commotion to oppose and condemn the Prophet (sws), but he should adhere to his stance and be diligent in the prayer specially the *tahajjud* prayer and should hope that his Lord will raise him such that a great *ummah* will be praising him and God too will accept his efforts.

22. وَقُلْ رَبِّ اَدْخِلْنِيْ مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَّاَخْرِجْنِيْ مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَّاجْعَلْ لِّيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ سُلْطٰنًا نَّصِيْرًا ﴿٢٢﴾

The قُلْ word here means “to pray.” It is used in this meaning in the Qur'ān at a number of instances. One example can be seen in verse 29 of Sūrah al-Mu'minūn.

The word صِدْق means “stability and permanence” and the word سُلْطٰن signifies “dominance and authority.”

It is evident from the previous verses that such were the adverse circumstances the Prophet (sws) was facing in Makkah that he had no option left by to migrate from there. However, God's Messengers never migrate from their people without God's permission. For this reason, the Prophet (sws) stood his ground with full perseverance and courage. This was the first instance in which he was asked to offer this supplication in which not only his migration is indicated but also carries glad tidings that his entry to a new city has been taken care of even before his departure from Makkah. His departure and entry will be with honour and stability and in his journey of migration, God's special help will guide him. The fact that the verse first mentions his entry shows that arrangements have been made for it even before his departure from Makkah. The words “especially from Your self” show that however much the circumstances appear adverse, his Lord will especially make this arrangement Himself. Deliberation shows that though the apparent words of this verse constitute a supplication, in reality, it is a great glad tidings given in precarious circumstances. If we read the details of

22. And pray: Lord! Let my entry be with honour and let my departure be with honour and bless me with a helping authority especially from Your self.

the Prophet's journey and his entry into Madīnāh from history, it will appear that those who witnessed it found the words of the Qur'ān coming true word for word.

23 ﴿وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَّقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا﴾

The word *حَقٌّ* (truth) refers to the Qur'ān and the religion of truth brought by it and *بَاطِلٌ* (evil) refers to the evil religion to obliterate which it was revealed.

Earlier, the Prophet (sws) was instructed the supplication of migration. Now, in the prevailing unfavourable circumstances, he is asked to proclaim the triumph of the truth and the defeat of evil. The reason for this is that the migration of a messenger of God is in reality a prelude to the success of his call. After that his opponents are necessarily routed and the religion of truth prevails.

The sentence “and evil was bound to perish” indicates that evil has no basis in human nature. Like self-growing weeds and bushes, it only spreads when no one is there to clean it. However, when cleaners are present, though they may have to undertake hardship to do away with such crap, ultimately it is routed. In its place, the lush green foliage of the truth blossoms forth for the Almighty has made human nature such that only the seed of truth flourishes in it.

At the conquest of Makkah, this prophecy was fulfilled. At that time, the Prophet (sws) through his spear dismembered the idols placed in the Ka‘bah while reciting this verse. It was as if its practical manifestation had appeared.

24 ﴿وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا﴾

This verse expresses sorrow and rebuke at the misfortune and evil fate of the rejecters of the Qur'ān: whatever the Almighty has revealed in it is an antidote to their spiritual and intellectual ailments; it is peace and mercy for them in its entirety; however, people who are unjust to their souls are only increasing their misfortune owing to this; this is because they are making themselves worthy of punishment both in this world and the next by denying the truth even after it has become apparent to them.

23. And declare: The truth has arrived and evil has perished and evil was bound to perish.

24. And what We reveal in this Qur'ān is a cure and mercy for the believers and this thing is only increasing the unjust in their loss.

وَإِذَا أُنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَابَجَانِبِهِ ۖ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشُّمُّ كَانَ يَئُوسًا ۚ²⁵

The word *الإنسان* (human being) is a general one. However, here it refers to the miscreants of the Quraysh whose character was previously discussed. They arrogantly evaded the Book of God and His Messenger, as is evident from the words: “he shows evasion and turns away.” It is for this reason that the Almighty referred to them by a general word.

The word *وَنَابَجَانِبِهِ* (to turn away) after *أَعْرَضَ* (evasion) portray their evasion. An evasion can also be decent and polite but when a person evades something because of hate and dislike, he physically turns away too.

The correct attitude should have been that these people had expressed gratitude on God's favours and patience on trials. However, favours had made them arrogant to such an extent that they demanded a sign of punishment from the Prophet (sws) when he called them to the truth. If God seized them, they would awake from their slumber but it would be too late. They would stand routed.

قُلْ كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ ۖ فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِسَنِّ هُوَاهُدَىٰ سَبِيلًا ۚ²⁶

Though the word *كُلٌّ* is an indefinite noun, but in certain instances as is the case here, it becomes a definite noun. In such instances, it refers to all the groups or persons which are mentioned earlier.

The word *شَاكِلَتِهِ* means “way.” The implication is that if these people are not willing to listen to the Prophet (sws), they should do what they like and the Prophet (sws) should continue with his stance. The coming circumstances will divulge who reaches the destination.

In other words, this verse signifies the Prophet (sws) reposing trust in God. He is directed to consign their matter to God and strictly adhere to his view.



25. And when We bless a human being with Our favour, he shows evasion and turns away. And when some calamity strikes him, he loses hope.

26. Say: Each will follow his own way. So, your Lord knows full well those who are more on the right path.