

Al-Anaam

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah takes its name from Ayats 136, 138 and 139 in which some superstitious beliefs of the idolatrous Arabs concerning the lawfulness of some cattle *Al-Anaam* and the unlawfulness of some others have been refuted.

Period of Revelation

According to a tradition of Ibn Abbas, the entire Surah was revealed at one sitting in Makkah. Asma, a daughter of Yazid and a first cousin of Muaaz-bin Jabl, says, "During the revelation of this Surah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was riding on a she-camel and I was holding her nose-string. The she-camel began to feel the weight so heavily that it seemed as if her bones would break under it." We also learn from other traditions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) dictated the entire Surah the same night that it was revealed.

Its subject matter clearly shows that it must have been revealed during the last year of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life at Makkah. The tradition of Asma, daughter of Yazid, also confirms this. As she belonged to the *Ansar*

and embraced Islam after the migration of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Yathrib, her visit to the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah must have taken place during the last year of his life there. For before this, his relations with those people were not so intimate that a woman from there might have come to visit him at Makkah.

Occasion of Revelation

After determining the period of its revelation, it is easier to visualize the background of the Surah. Twelve years had passed since the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been inviting the people to Islam. The antagonism and persecution by the Quraish had become most savage and brutal, and the majority of the Muslims had to leave their homes and migrate to Habash (Abyssinia). Above all, the two great supporters of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Talib and Khadijah, were no more to help and give strength to him. Thus he was deprived of all the worldly support. But in spite of this, he carried on his mission in the teeth of opposition. As a result of this, on the one hand, all the good people of Makkah and the surrounding clans gradually began to accept Islam; and on the other hand, the community as a whole, was bent upon obduracy and rejection. Therefore, if anyone showed any inclination towards Islam, he was subjected to taunts and derision, physical violence and social boycott. It was in these dark circumstances that a ray of hope gleamed from Yathrib, where Islam began to spread freely by the efforts of some influential people of Aus and Khazraj, who had embraced

Islam at Makkah. This was a humble beginning in the march of Islam towards success and none could foresee at that time the great potentialities that lay hidden in it. For, to a casual observer, it appeared at that time as if Islam was merely a weak movement it had no material backing except the meager support of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) own family and of the few poor adherents of the movement. Obviously the latter could not give much help because they themselves had been cast out by their own people who had become their enemies and were persecuting them.

Topics

These were the conditions, when this discourse was revealed. The main topics dealt with in this discourse may be divided under seven headings:

1. Refutation of *shirk* and invitation to the creed of *Tauhid*.
2. Enunciation of the doctrine of the life-after-death. And refutation of the wrong notion that there was nothing beyond this worldly life.
3. Refutation of the prevalent superstitions.
4. Enunciation of the fundamental moral principles for the building up of the Islamic society.
5. Answers to the objections raised against the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his mission.
6. Comfort and encouragement to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers who were at, that time in a state of anxiety and despondency because of the apparent failure of the mission.

7. Admonition, warning and threats to the disbelievers and opponents to give up their apathy and haughtiness. It must, however, be noted that the above topics have not been dealt with one by one under separate headings, but the discourse goes on as a continuous whole and these topics come under discussion over and over again in new and different ways.

The Background of Makki Surahs

As this is the first long Makki Surah in the order of the compilation of the Quran, it will be useful to explain the historical background of Makki Surahs in general, so that the reader may easily understand the Makki Surahs and the references to its different stages in connection with the commentary on them.

First of all, it should be noted that comparatively very little material is available in regard to the background of the revelation of Makki Surahs, whereas the period of the revelation of all the Madani Surahs is known or can be determined with a little effort. There are authentic traditions even in regard to the occasions of the revelation of the majority of the verses. On the other hand, we do not have such detailed information regarding the Makki Surahs. There are only a few Surahs and verses which have authentic traditions concerning the time and occasion of their revelation. This is because the history of the Makki period had not been compiled in such detail as that of the Madani period. Therefore we have to depend on the internal evidence of these Surahs for determining the period of their revelation: for example, the topics they

discuss, their subject matter, their style and the direct or indirect references to the events and the occasions of their revelation. Thus it is obvious that with the help of such evidence as this, we cannot say with precision that such and such Surah or verse was revealed on such and such an occasion. The most we can do is to compare the internal evidence of a Surah with the events of the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah, and then come to a more or less correct conclusion as to what particular stage a certain Surah belongs.

If we keep the above things in view, the history of the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah can be divided into four stages.

The first stage began with his appointment as a Messenger and ended with the proclamation of prophethood three years later. During this period the Message was given secretly to some selected persons only, but the common people of Makkah were not aware of it.

The second stage lasted for two years after the proclamation of his prophethood. It began with opposition by individuals: then by and by, it took the shape of antagonism, ridicule, derision, accusation, abuse, and false propaganda. Then gangs were formed to persecute those Muslims who were comparatively poor, weak and helpless.

The third stage lasted for about six years from the beginning of the persecution to the death of Abu Talib and Khadijah in the tenth year of prophethood. During this period, the persecution of the Muslims became so savage and brutal that many of them were forced to migrate to

Habash. Social and economic boycott was applied against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the members of his family, and those Muslims who continued to stay in Makkah were forced to take refuge in Shib-i-Abi Talib which was besieged.

The fourth stage lasted for about three years from the tenth to the thirteenth year of prophethood. This was a period of hard trials and grievous sufferings for the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers. Life had become unendurable at Makkah and there appeared to be no place of refuge even outside of it. So much so that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to Taaif, it offered no shelter or protection. Besides this, on the occasion of Hajj, he would appeal to each and every Arab clan to accept his invitation to Islam but met with blank refusal from every quarter. At the same time, the people of Makkah were holding counsels to get rid of him by killing or imprisoning or banishing him from their city. It was at that most critical time that Allah opened for Islam the hearts of the *Ansar* of Yathrib where he migrated at their invitation.

Now that we have divided the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah into four stages, it has become easier for us to tell, as far as possible, the particular stage in which a certain Makki Sarah was revealed. This is because the Surahs belonging to a particular stage can be distinguished from those of the other stages with the help of their subject matter and style. Besides this, they also contain such references as throw light on the circumstances and events that form the background of their revelation. In

the succeeding Makki Surahs, we will determine on the basis of the distinctive features of each stage, and point out in the preface, the particular stage in which a certain Makki Surah was revealed.

Islamic Creed

This Surah mainly discusses the different aspects of the major articles of the Islamic creed: *Tauhid*, life-after-death, prophethood and their practical application to human life. Side by side with this, it refutes the erroneous beliefs of the opponents and answers their objections, warns and admonishes them and comforts the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers, who were then suffering from persecution.

Of course, these themes have not been dealt with under separate headers but have been blended in an excellent manner.

Topics and their Interconnection

Ayats 1-12. These verses are of introductory and admonitory nature. The disbelievers have been warned that if they do not accept the Islamic creed and follow the light shown by the revelation from the All-Knowing and All-Powerful Allah, they would go to the same doom as the former disbelievers did. Their arguments for rejecting the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the revelation sent down to him have been refuted and a warning has been given to them that they should not be deluded by the respite that is being granted to them.

Ayats 13-24. These verses inculcate *Tauhid*, and refute *shirk* which is the greatest obstacle in the way of its acceptance.

Ayats 25-32. In these verses, a graphic scene of the life in the Hereafter has been depicted in order to warn the disbelievers of the consequences of the rejection of the articles of faith.

Ayats 33-73. Prophethood is the main theme which has been discussed from the point of view of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his mission, the limitations of his powers, the attitude towards his followers and also from the point of view of the disbelievers.

Ayats 74-90. In continuation of the same theme, the story of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) has been related to bring home to the pagan Arabs that the mission of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which they were opposing, was the same as that of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). This line of argument was adopted because they considered themselves to be his followers, especially the Quraish who were proud of being his descendants as well.

Ayats 91-108. Another proof of his prophethood is the Book, which has been sent down to him by Allah, for its teachings show the right guidance in regard to creed and practice.

Ayats 109-154. Divine restrictions have been contrasted with the superstitious restrictions of the pagan Arabs in order to show the striking differences between the two and thus prove the Quran to be a revealed Book.

Ayats 155-160. The Jews, who were criticized in Ayats 144-147 along with the pagan Arabs, have been urged to compare the teachings of the Quran with those of the Torah

so that they might recognize their similarity and give up their lame excuses against it, and adopt its guidance to escape the retribution on the Day of Resurrection.

Ayats 161-165. This is the conclusion of the discourse: the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been instructed in a beautiful and forceful manner to proclaim fearlessly the articles of the Islamic creed and their implications.

1. All praises be to Allah, who created the heavens and the earth, and made the darkness and the light. Then those who disbelieve, to their Lord, they ascribe (others) to be equals.*¹

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ
الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا بِهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ

*¹ It should be noted that the addressees were the mushrik Arabs, who acknowledged that the Creator of the earth and heavens and of the sun and the moon is Allah, who brought about the day and night. None of them believed that these were the works of Lat or Hubal or Uzza or of any other god or goddess. Therefore Allah admonished them, saying (so to speak), “O foolish people, when you yourselves admit that the Creator of the heavens and earth and of the night and day is Allah, why do you, then, make others your gods, and prostrate before them, make offerings to them, present your needs before them and invoke them for help.” (Refer to E.N. 2 of Surah Al-Fatihah and E.N. 163, Surah Al-Baqarah).

It may be noted that *zulumat* (plural of *zulmat*) has been

used in contrast to *noor* (light, singular form). It is because darkness is merely the absence of light and may be of many kinds.

2. He it is who has created you from clay,^{*2} then He has decreed a term (of life). And a term determined is with Him,^{*3} then you are in doubt.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ
قَضَىٰ أَجَلًا وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى
عِنْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تَمْتَرُونَ

*2 Allah says that He has created man from clay because each and every particle of the human body comes from the earth and from nowhere else.

*3 “A term determined” is the “Day of Resurrection”, when all human beings will be brought back to life and presented before Allah for rendering the account of their life on the earth.

3. And He is Allah in the heavens and in the earth. He knows what you conceal and what you reveal, and He knows what you earn.

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَفِي
الْأَرْضِ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّكُمْ وَجَهْرَكُمْ
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُونَ

4. And never came to them a sign of the signs of their Lord except they turned away from it.

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ
رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ

5. Indeed, they denied the truth when it came to them. So there will soon come to them the news*4 of that which they used to mock at.

فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ
فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيهِمْ أَنْبَاءُ مَا كَانُوا
بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٥﴾

*4 The reference is to the *news* of the successes that were to follow the emigration of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Al-Madinah. At the time of this revelation, neither the disbelievers nor the believers could ever imagine the nature of the news they were going to receive. So much so that even the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself was unaware of the kind of successes the Muslims were going to achieve in the near future.

6. Have they not seen how many a generation We have destroyed before them, whom We had established on the earth, such as We have not established you. And We showered abundant rains on them from the sky, and We made the rivers flow beneath them, then We destroyed them for their sins, and brought forth after them a generation of others.

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
مِنْ قَرْنٍ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
مَا لَمْ نُمَكِّنْ لَكُمْ وَأَرْسَلْنَا
السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِدْرَارًا وَجَعَلْنَا
الْأَنْهَارَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ
فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَنْشَأْنَا
مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا آخَرِينَ ﴿٦﴾

7. And even if We had sent down to you (Muhammad) a

وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي

written book on parchment, so that they could touch it with their hands, those who disbelieve would have said: “This is nothing but obvious magic.”

قِرطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ لَقَالَ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ
مُبِينٌ

8. And they say: “Why has not an angel been sent down to him.”*5 And if We had sent down an angel, the matter would surely have been judged, then no respite would be granted to them.*6

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ
وَلَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكًا لَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ
ثُمَّ لَا يُنظَرُونَ

*5 The ignorant objectors argued that if Muhammad (peace be upon him) was really a Messenger from Allah, an angel ought to have come down from heaven to declare to the people: “This is the Messenger of Allah, so obey him; otherwise you shall be punished.”

The ignorant objectors did not understand how the Creator of the heavens and earth could leave His Messenger (peace be upon him) in such a plight as to be maligned and stoned by his enemies. They argued that the Messenger of such a Supreme Sovereign ought to have come with a large retinue or at least with an angel, in attendance on him, to protect him from his enemies and to fill the people with awe and to convince them of his prophethood and to carry out his orders in some supernatural ways.

*6 The first answer to their objection is that in case Allah had sent down an angel, no respite would have been given

to them for reforming themselves and mending their ways. They have been given a chance because no angel has been sent to make the reality so clear as to leave no alternative for them but to believe. It is obvious that this would have defeated the very purpose of their life in the world to undergo their test. That is why no angel has been sent. Man should undergo his test and discover the unseen reality without actually seeing it, merely by the right use of his reasoning and thinking powers, and then bring under control his own self and its desires in accordance with the dictates of that reality. It is thus obvious that the unseen must remain unseen for the sake of that test.

The worldly life, the period of that test, will remain so only as long as the unseen remains unseen. No sooner will the unseen become evident than that period will automatically come to an end, and instead of test, it will be the time of the result of the test. Therefore, Allah is not granting your demand for an angel to appear before you because Allah does not like to end the term of your test before the expiry of the period of the test. (Refer to E.N. 228, Surah Al-Baqarah).

9. And if We had made him an angel, We would have made him (appear as) a man, and We would have covered them with (confusion), that in which they cover themselves.^{*7}

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكًا لَّجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّا يَلْبَسُونَ



^{*7} The only other alternative was to send an angel in

human form. Allah says that if He had sent an angel in human form, they would have felt the same difficulty in recognizing him as they were feeling in recognizing Muhammad (peace be upon him). This, too, would have involved them in doubts. Therefore it was for their own good that Allah had not sent an angel in attendance on His Messenger.

10. And indeed, messengers were ridiculed before you, then those who mocked at them were surrounded by that which they used to ridicule.

وَلَقَدْ اسْتَهْزِئُ بِرُسُلٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ
مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. Say (O Muhammad): “Travel in the land, then see how was the end of those who denied.”*8

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ أَنْظِرُوا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١١﴾

*8 That is, those, who ridicule the Message, should travel through the land and see the remains, and study the history of the former peoples. These will bear witness to the horrible end of those who behaved in the way they are behaving towards Muhammad (peace be upon him).

12. Say: (O Muhammad): “To whom belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth.” Say: “To Allah.”*9 He has decreed

قُلْ لِمَنْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ لِلَّهِ كَتَبَ عَلَى
نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ لِيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَىٰ

upon Himself mercy. He will surely assemble you on the Day of Resurrection, there is no doubt about which. Those who have lost their souls are the ones who do not believe.

يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ
الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

*9 It is a nice way of cornering the mushrikin. At first Allah tells His Messenger (peace be upon him) to ask them, “Whose is all that is in the heavens and the earth?” The questioner put the question and waited for an answer. But they kept silent because their answer could neither be in the negative nor in the affirmative. They could not deny this because they themselves believed that all belongs to Allah. But they could not affirm this because, in that case, they themselves would have supplied the adversary with an argument against their own creed of shirk. After putting them in this critical position, Allah enjoined His Messenger (peace be upon him) to say, “All belongs to Allah.”

13. And to Him belongs whatsoever dwells in the night and the day, and He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing.

وَلَهُ مَا سَكَنَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

14. Say (O Muhammad): “Shall I take as a protector other than Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. And He it is who

قُلْ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أُتَّخَذُ وَلِيًّا فَاطِرِ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ يُطْعِمُ

feeds and is not fed.”*10
 Say: “Indeed, I have been commanded that I should be the first of those who submit themselves, and not be of those who associate others (with Allah).”

وَلَا يُطْعَمُ قُلِّ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ
 أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَلَا
 تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

*10 This contains a subtle argument: all those, whom the mushrikin have made their gods besides Allah, stand in need of nourishment from their devotees, not to speak of giving nourishment to them. No Pharaoh can set up his grandeur unless his subjects pay taxes and make offerings to him; no saint becomes worthy of worship, unless his worshipers build a grand mausoleum for him; no god becomes a god unless his devotees make his idol and set it up in a grand temple and decorate it with ornamentation. Thus, all the artificial gods stand in need of their servants. It is the Lord of the universe alone, Who does not stand in need of anyone’s help but all others stand in need of Him, and it is His Godhead alone that does not stand in need of any prop from anyone whatsoever, but supports itself.

15. Say: “Indeed I fear, if I should disobey my Lord, the punishment of a tremendous Day.”

قُلِّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي
 عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾

16. He from whom it (punishment) is averted that day, (Allah) has surely been Merciful to him. And that is

مَنْ يُصْرَفْ عَنْهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمَهُ وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِينُ

the manifest success.



17. And if Allah should touch you with affliction, then none can relieve from it except Him. And if He touches you with good, then He has power over all things.

وَإِنْ يَمَسَّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا
كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ
يَمَسَّكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ



18. And He is the Omnipotent over His slaves, and He is the All Wise, the All Knower.

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ
الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ



19. Say (O Muhammad): “What thing is greatest in testimony. Say: “Allah is witness^{*11} between me and you. And this Quran has been revealed to me, that I may warn you thereby, and whomsoever it may reach. Do you indeed testify that there are other gods with Allah.”^{*12} Say: “I bear no (such) witness.”^{*13} Say: “He is the only One God. And truly I am free of that which you associate (with Him).”

قُلْ أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَكْبَرُ شَهَادَةً ۗ قُلْ
اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۚ وَأُوحِيَ
إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنذِرَكُمْ بِهِ
وَمَنْ بَلَغَ ۚ أَنتُمْ لَتَشْهَدُونَ
أَنَّ مَعَ اللَّهِ ءَالِهَةً أُخْرَىٰ ۗ قُلْ
لَا أَشْهَدُ ۚ قُلْ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهُهُ
وَاحِدٌ وَإِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ



*11 That is, Allah is a witness that I have been appointed a Messenger by Him and whatever I say is from Him.

*12 Mere guess-work or speculation does not suffice for testifying to anything: none can testify to a thing with certainty without the necessary knowledge about it. The question implies: Do you really have the knowledge that there is any other Sovereign with authority than Allah, Who is worthy of service and worship?

*13 That is, you may, if you so like, give false testimony without any knowledge, but, as for me, I cannot give such a testimony.

20. Those to whom We have given the Book, they recognize this (Quran) as they recognize their sons.*14

Those who have lost their own selves are then those who do not believe.

الَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ
أَبْنَاءَهُمُ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ
فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

*14 It means that those who possess the knowledge of revealed Books, know it for certain that there is only One God, Who has no partner in His Godhead. Therefore they can discern the right creed about Allah from among many different kinds of other creeds' and theories about Godhead, just as any person can identify his own child from among many thousands of other children.

21. And who does more wrong than he who invents against Allah*15 a lie,

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ
كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِعَايَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لَا

or denies His signs.*16
Indeed, the wrongdoers will
not succeed.

يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ

*15 “Who invents against Allah a lie” is the claim that there are many other partners with Allah in His Godhead who have divine attributes and powers and are thus worthy of worship. It is also false to allege that Allah Himself has made such and such His special courtiers and has enjoined (or at least approved) that divine attributes should be ascribed to them and that they should be treated with reverence, like Allah.

*16 “His signs” are all those signs that point to the fact that there is only One God in the universe and that all others are His servants. These signs are spread all over the universe. They are found in the person of man himself and in the character and the great achievements of the prophets and in the revealed Books. That is why the one, who, in the presence of all these “signs” ascribes divine attributes to others and considers them worthy of divine rights, is in fact guilty of gross iniquity. It is indeed a great injustice that one should ascribe such divine attributes to others without any evidence, knowledge, observation and experience merely on the basis of guess work or the traditions of the forefathers. As a result of this false creed, he does injustice to truth, to reality, to his own self and to everything and everyone he deals with in this universe.

22. And on the day when
We shall gather them all
together, then We shall say

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ

to those who associated others (with Allah): “Where are your partners, whom you used to claim.”

لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِكُمُ
الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. Then there will be no excuses for them except that they will say: “By Allah, our Lord, we were not those who associated (with You).”

ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِتْنَتُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا
وَاللَّهِ رَبِّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. See how they will lie against themselves, and lost from them will be what they used to invent.

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. And among them are those who listen to you, and We have laid over their hearts coverings, lest they should understand it, and in their ears a deafness.^{*17} And if they were to see every sign, they will not believe in it, to the point that, when they come to you, they dispute with you, those who disbelieve say: “This is nothing but tales of the ancients.”^{*18}

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ
وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ
يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ
يَرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوكَ يُجَادِلُونَكَ
يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا
أَسْطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

***17** Here Allah has ascribed to Himself the cause of the defects produced in their faculties of understanding, hearing and seeing, for everything that takes place in the world under the natural law does, in fact, take place by the command of Allah because He is the author of that law. Therefore the resulting effects of the working of that law, in fact, take place by the will and order of Allah. The obdurate disbelievers do not understand, do not hear and do not see the truth, even though they seem to listen to the Message of the Messenger, because their obduracy, their prejudice and their unwillingness have, according to the law of nature, dulled their faculties. The law is that if one is bent upon obduracy and does not adopt the attitude of a righteous person, all the doors of his heart automatically get locked against every kind of truth that goes against his desires. When this natural process is described in the human language, it will be said, "The doors of the heart of such and such a person are locked." But God, without Whose command and leave nothing whatsoever can happen, will describe the same like this, "We have locked the doors of the heart of such and such a person." This is because a human being will describe the thing as it seems to happen, whereas Allah states the true nature of the happening.

***18** This is the excuse that the foolish people put forward for rejecting the message. They say, "There is nothing new in the message towards which the Messenger is inviting us. This is the same old message that we have been hearing before." According to these foolish people, in order to be

true, a message must also be new because according to them that which is old cannot be true. Whereas the fact is that the message has always been one and the same and will ever remain so. The Messengers of Allah, who had been coming from the earliest times for the guidance of mankind, have always been communicating the same message; likewise, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was also presenting the same old message. Of course, only those, who being devoid of divine light, cannot see the aforesaid eternal reality, might invent something new and by forging some theories present them as truth, saying, “We have a new message, which has never been given by anyone before us.”

26. And they prevent (others) from it, and they (themselves) keep away from it. And they do not destroy except themselves, and they perceive (it) not.

وَهُمْ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَيَنْعَوْنَ
عَنْهُ وَإِنْ يُهْلِكُونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ
وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

27. And if you could see when they shall be made to stand by the Fire, they will say: “Would that we could be sent back, and we would not deny the revelations of our Lord, and we would be among the believers.”

وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ وَقِفُوا عَلَى النَّارِ
فَقَالُوا يَلَيْتَنَا نُرَدُّ وَلَا نَكْذِبُ
بِعَايَتِ رَبِّنَا وَنَكُونُ مِنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

28. Nay but, it has become manifest to them that which

بَلْ بَدَا لَهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُخْفُونَ مِنْ

they had been concealing before.^{*19} And if they were sent back, they would certainly revert to that which they were forbidden from, and indeed they are liars.

قَبْلُ وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا نُهُوا
عَنْهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

***19** Their desire, that, if they could return to this world again, they would believe in the message, will not be the outcome of any right thinking and reasoning or any real change of their hearts and minds, but will be the result of witnessing the reality after which even the most obdurate disbeliever dare not deny it.

29. And they say: “There is none but our life of the world, and we shall not be raised (again).”

وَقَالُوا إِن هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا
الدُّنْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

30. And if you could see when they will be made to stand before their Lord. He will say: “Is not this the truth.” They will say: “Yes, by our Lord.” He will say: “So taste the punishment because you used to disbelieve.”

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
قَالَ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ قَالُوا
بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّنَا قَالَ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. They indeed are losers who deny the meeting with Allah, until when the Hour comes

قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً

upon them suddenly, they will say: "Alas for us, over what we neglected about it." And they will bear their burdens on their backs. Is not evil what they bear.

قَالُوا يَحْسَرْتَنَا عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَّطْنَا
فِيهَا وَهُمْ يَحْمِلُونَ أَوْزَارَهُمْ عَلَىٰ
ظُهُورِهِمْ ۗ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَزِرُونَ



32. And the life of this world is nothing but play and amusement.^{*20} And the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who fear (Allah). Will you not then understand.

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ
وَلَهُوَ ۗ وَاللَّذَائِرُ الْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ
لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ ۗ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ



***20** This does not mean that the life in this world is not real and earnest and has been created merely for sport and pastime without any serious purpose. What it means is that compared with the everlasting life in the Hereafter, the short transitory life in this world is like sport and pastime, which are diversions from serious work, to which one has to return after recreation. Moreover, this worldly life has been likened to sport and pastime, because here are many things of deceptive appearances that are liable to involve in misunderstanding those people, who lack common sense and vision, and help them assume false positions so as to make life mere sport and pastime. For instance, the role of a ruler in this worldly life is, in fact, not any different from that of an actor who plays the role of a king on the stage,

wears a crown and gives commands which are obeyed like those of a real king; whereas, in fact, he has no powers of a real king and is deposed, imprisoned and killed by the order of the director. Likewise, many other such dramas are being performed on the stage of this world day and night all around us. There is the court of a saint or a goddess, where the needs are being fulfilled, whereas, in fact, that court has no such power. Then there is another actor who performs the feats of divining the unseen and the future, whereas, in fact, none possesses such knowledge. Still another poses to be the nourisher of others, when in fact, he himself stands in need of obtaining provisions from others. There is still another who poses as if he has the power of bestowing honor and benefit or of inflicting disgrace and loss and behaves arrogantly as if he were the absolute master of all around him. In fact, he himself is utterly powerless and helpless, for a little turn of fortune can dethrone him from the high pedestal of greatness to the lowest depths of disgrace. So much so that he might even be at the feet of those very people, over whom he was ruling as a despot. All these dramas that are being played on the stage of life are abruptly brought to an end by death. Then everyone will cross over to the other world and see for himself everything in its true color. Then, all the misunderstandings of the life of this world shall be removed and everyone will be shown the real worth of what he had earned for the life-after-death.

33. Indeed, We know that it grieves you what they say.

قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِي

Though indeed, they do not deny you, but the wrong doers repudiate the revelations of Allah.*21

يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ
وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ

تَجْحَدُونَ

*21 The fact is that all the people of his tribe regarded the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) truthful and honest up to the time he had not begun to recite the revelations of Allah before them. They falsified him only when he began to deliver to them the message of Allah. Even then, there was none who dared charge Muhammad (peace be upon him), the man, with falsehood; nay, even his bitterest enemies never accused him of having ever told a lie concerning any worldly matter. It was Muhammad, the Prophet (peace be upon him), whom they charged with falsehood. So much so that even Abu Jahl, who was the bitterest of all his enemies, never accused him of falsehood. According to a tradition related by Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), Abu Jahl himself declared during a conversation with the Prophet (peace be upon him), “We do not call you a liar, but regard as false what you are presenting.” On the occasion of the battle of Badr, Akhnas bin Shariq asked Abu Jahl in private, “There is no third person here besides the two of us, tell me the truth whether you regard Muhammad as a truthful man or as a liar.” He answered, “By God, Muhammad is a truthful person and has never told a lie in his life, but if Bani Qusayy, who have already the privilege of being the bearers of the national

flag and the providers of water to the pilgrims and the keepers of the keys of the Kabah, should also be acknowledged as the recipients of prophethood, what would then be left for the rest of the Quraish?" For this very reason Allah is comforting His Prophet (peace be upon him), saying, "It is not you whom they are rejecting as an impostor but it is Our message which they are rejecting; when We are forbearing everything and giving them respite after respite, why should you show any kind of anxiety."

34. And indeed, messengers have been denied before you, so they were patient over that which they were denied, and they were harmed until Our help reached them. And none can alter the words (decrees) of Allah.*22 And surely there has reached you some news about the messengers (before you).

وَلَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا وَأُوذُوا
حَتَّىٰ أَتَاهُمْ نَصْرُنَا وَلَا مُبَدِّلَ
لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِنْ
نَّبَائِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ



*22 The "words" referred to here is the law of Allah concerning the conflict between the right and the wrong. According to this law, it is essential that the righteous should be tried for a long period to stand their test in order to prove their fortitude, their righteousness, their spirit of sacrifice and their fidelity, their firm belief in their faith and their complete trust in Allah. For this they must pass through afflictions and hardships in order to develop those high moral qualities which can be learned only by going

through this hard and tough course, for with these weapons alone, they are required to win the battle against falsehood. When, according to this law, they prove their competence, then will Allah's help come at the right moment to support them and this help cannot be brought about before its time by anyone.

35. And if their aversion is hard on you, then if you can, so seek a tunnel into the earth, or a ladder into the sky, so that you may bring them a sign.*²³ And if Allah had so willed, He could have gathered them all to the guidance. So be not you among those who are ignorant.*²⁴

وَإِنْ كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكَ إِعْرَاضُهُمْ
فَإِنْ أَسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تَبْتَغِيَ نَفَقًا
فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ سُلَّمًا فِي السَّمَاءِ
فَتَأْتِيَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ ۚ فَلَا
تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ



***23** Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) felt that his people did not accept the message in spite of his continuous preaching, he cherished the desire that Allah might send such a clear sign that they should have no alternative left but to accept his message. In this verse Allah has admonished His Messenger (peace be upon him) against cherishing any such desire, so as to say, “Do not show impatience at their obduracy, but go on performing your mission persistently in the way and order We are laying down for it. If this mission had to be performed by means of miracles, could We not Ourselves have done so? But We

know that this method is not suitable for bringing about that intellectual and moral revolution and for the establishment of that righteous society for which you have been appointed a Messenger. If, however, you cannot endure the heart burning caused by their indifference and rejection and if you imagine that a tangible sign, that might appeal to them, is required to break this inert state of their minds, then you should yourself try to bring about such a sign. You may, if you can, go deep down into the bowels of the earth or ascend up to the heavens for this purpose, but you should not expect from Us that We would fulfill this desire of yours, for there is no room for it in Our scheme.”

***24** This is to impress that it is not the purpose of Allah that all human beings should be forced to accept the guidance somehow or other. Had it been so, He would have created them in such a way that they would have been righteous by birth like angels. Then there would not have been a need of sending the Prophets and the Books. And of making the believers enter into a conflict with the disbelievers for the gradual establishment of the way of Allah. But Allah does not desire this. On the contrary, He intends that the truth should be presented to the people in a rational way so that those, who are convinced of it, may adopt it without any coercion, and then mold their characters in accordance with it to prove their moral superiority over the disbelievers. In this way they would go on attracting the best among the people towards it till they succeeded in establishing the way by virtue of their high ideals, best principles of life, pure characters and strong

arguments and with resolute struggle with the disbelievers. Then Allah assures them of the guidance and help they need and deserve at any stage. But if one wishes that, instead of this natural process, Allah should adopt some supernatural method and eradicate false ideas from the minds of the people and bring in pure ones instead and establish the righteous civilization in place of the evil ones, he should know that Allah will not do this, for this will be against the wisdom of the scheme of His creation of man. He has created man as a responsible being, granted him powers to exploit the things of the world and given him the freedom of action, both good and evil, and granted him a definite term for the preparation of the test and fixed the time for the declaration of the result of the test to punish or reward him according to his efforts.

36. Only they will respond who listen. And the dead^{*25} whom Allah will raise, then to Him they will be returned.

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ وَالْمَوْتَىٰ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ ﴾

***25** “They will respond who listen” are the people whose conscience is alive, who try to judge rationally between right and wrong, and who do not deliberately and obdurately lock the doors of their hearts. “And the dead” are the people who blindly follow a way and are not ready to leave it and follow any other way even though that may manifestly be the right way.

37. And they say: “Why

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن

is not a sign sent down to him from his Lord.” Say: “Indeed, Allah is Able upon sending down a sign, but most of them do not know.”*26

رَبِّهِمْ قُلْ إِنْ أَلَّهَ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ
أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ آيَةً وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

*26 “Sign” means a tangible miracle. Allah says that the reason why he is not showing a sign is not that He is unable to do so but for another reason whose wisdom they do not understand. (See E.N. 6).

38. And there is not a creature on the earth, nor a bird flying on its two wings, but they are communities like you. We have not neglected in the Book (of decrees) a thing. Then unto their Lord they shall be gathered.

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا
طَيْرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَّمٌ
أَمْثَالُكُمْ مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. And those who deny Our revelations are deaf and dumb in darkness.*27 Whomsoever Allah wills, He sends him astray. And whomsoever He wills, He sets him on the straight path.*28

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُمُّوا
وَبُكْمٌ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ مَنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ
يُضِلَّهُ وَمَنْ يَشَأِ يُجْعَلُهُ عَلَىٰ
صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٩﴾

*27 That is, if you are really serious in your demand of

seeing a sign in order to judge whether the message of this Prophet (peace be upon him) is true or false, you should see and ponder over the innumerable signs that are found in abundance all around you. For instance, if you consider animal life, you will see that the structure of the bodies of each species of birds and beasts suits its functions immensely well; the qualities and characteristics that have been ingrained in its nature help to fulfill all its needs. The provision of its nourishment has been arranged in a wonderful way. And the course of its life has been so predetermined that it cannot transgress its limits in any way whatsoever. Allah also sees that each and every animal, nay, even the smallest insect, is being looked after, protected and guided, wherever it be, for the performance of the functions predestined for it. In short, you will find that its structure suits it well; it has been given inherent powers that help provide its needs: excellent provisions have been made for its food. The process of its birth, procreation and death has been going on according to a regulated fixed scheme. If you give a careful consideration to this sign alone, you will realize that the teachings of this Prophet (peace be upon him) about the Oneness of God and His attributes and the way of life based on these to which he invites you are absolutely true. Yet you neither try to see with open eyes these signs nor listen to the message this Prophet (peace be upon him) is conveying to you. As a result, you have been involved in ignorance and, therefore, desire to see some wonderful miracle for mere pastime.

***28** This is how Allah lets them go astray: (1) He holds back

the opportunity for observing His signs from the one who chooses to remain in ignorance; (2) He keeps hidden the pointers to the reality from the one who is a victim of prejudices, even though he should see His signs, and lets him remain involved in misunderstandings and move farther and farther away from the reality. On the contrary, He guides the seeker after truth to the right way by affording him the opportunity to make use of his knowledge for the purpose of discovering the reality, and showing him the signs guiding towards it. We daily notice instances of these types. There are millions of people before whose eyes countless signs are spread in their own persons and in the universe, but they see them like animals and do not learn any lessons from them. Then there are the physicists, chemists, zoologists, botanists, biologists, geologists, astronomers, physiologist, anatomists, historians, archaeologists, social scientists, etc. who observe such signs as may enlighten the minds and the hearts with faith, but they seem to see no sign to lead them to the reality, just because they begin their study with prejudiced minds, merely for the sake of material gains. Not only this, but every sign leads them to atheism, disbelief, materialism and nature worship. In contrast to them, there are those, who observe the wonders of the universe and the phenomena of nature with open eyes and open hearts, and find the signs of God all round them: So much so that they can see His sign in each and every green leaf.

40. Say: "Have you considered, if there came

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتَكُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابٌ

upon you the punishment of Allah, or there came upon you the Hour, would you call upon other than Allah, if you are truthful.

اللَّهُ أَوْ أَتْتِكُمْ آلْسَاعَةَ أُغَيْرَ اللَّهِ
تَدْعُونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

41. Nay but, it is Him you call, so He would remove that for which you called unto Him, if He wills, and you forget what you have associated (with Him).^{*29}

بَلْ إِيَّاهُ تَدْعُونَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا
تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِنْ شَاءَ وَتَنْسَوْنَ
مَا تَشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

***29** In answer to the demand of the disbelievers for a sign, they were told that there was not one sign, but innumerable signs scattered all around them and their attention has been drawn in Ayat 38 to study the mystery of the life of any bird or beast and they would find sign of God. Now in Ayats 40-42, they have been directed to another sign that they can find in their own selves. When some affliction befalls a man or death confronts him with all its dreads, then he sees no refuge in any other than Allah. On such occasions even the most confirmed polytheists forget their gods and invoke God's help. Likewise, the most obdurate atheists, in their utter helplessness, involuntary pray to God for rescue, this sign-man's own state of mind is being presented here as a pointer to the reality, for this is a clear proof of the existence of One God. And of the urge of God worship that has been embedded deep in the heart of every human being. Though it might have been kept suppressed by negligence and ignorance, sometimes it comes to the

surface under the stimulus of some misfortune.

Ikrimah, son of Abu Jahl, who was an arch enemy of Islam, was led towards Islam by witnessing such a sign. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) conquered Makkah, Ikrimah fled to Jaddah and sailed for Abyssinia. During the voyage, there came a furious storm which threatened to sink the boat. At first the passengers began to invoke their gods and goddesses for help. But when the storm became so violent that they feared that the boat was going to sink, they all cried out, "This is not the time to call anyone except Allah, because He alone can save us." This opened the eyes of Ikrimah and the locked doors of his heart: "If there is none here except Allah to help us, how can there be any to help us in any other place? This is what Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been teaching us for the last twenty years any we have been fighting it out with him." That was the most decisive moment in the life of Ikrimah. He made a solemn pledge with Allah to this effect: "If I escape from this storm, I will directly go to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to become a follower of his." Allah rescued him from that storm and he fulfilled his pledge. He not only became a Muslim, but spent the rest of his life in the service of Islam by performing jihad.

42. And We did indeed send (messengers) to nations before you, then We seized them with tribulation and adversity, that they might humble themselves.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ

43. Then why did they not humble themselves when Our torment reached them. But their hearts became hardened, and the devil made fair seeming to them that which they used to do.

فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا
وَلَكِنْ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ
الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

44. So when they forgot what they had been reminded of, We opened to them the gates of all things. Until, when they rejoiced in that what they were given, We seized them suddenly, then they were plunged in despair.

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ
فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا
أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ
مُبْلِسُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. So the roots of the people who did wrong were cut off. And all the praises be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

فَقُطِعَ دَابِرُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

46. Say: “Have you considered, if Allah should take away your hearing and your sight and set a seal upon your hearts, ^{*30} who is a god other than Allah who could bring them (back) to you.” Behold, how We put forth

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ
وَأَبْصَارَكُمْ وَخَتَمَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ
مَنْ إِلَهُ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ
أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ

in diverse forms the revelations, yet still they turn away.

ثُمَّ هُمْ يَصْدِفُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

***30** “And set a seal upon your hearts” means, deprive you of the powers of thinking and understanding.

47. Say: “Have you considered, if the punishment of Allah should come upon you suddenly or openly, will any be destroyed except wrongdoing people.”

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتَكُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ بَغْتَةً أَوْ جَهْرَةً هَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

48. And We do not send the messengers except as bearers of glad tidings, and warners. So whoever believes and reforms, there shall be no fear upon them, neither shall they grieve.

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ فَمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

49. And those who deny Our revelations, the punishment will touch them for that they used to disobey.

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَمَسُّهُمُ الْعَذَابُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

50. Say (O Muhammad): “I do not say to you that with me are the treasures of Allah, nor that

قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ

I know the Unseen, nor that I say to you that I am an angel. I do not follow except that which is revealed to me.”^{*31} Say: “Are equal the blind and the seer.^{*32} Do you not then reflect.”

لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ إِنِ اتَّبَعُ إِلَّا مَا
يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي
الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ أَفَلَا
تَتَفَكَّرُونَ



***31** This verse removes the silly notions about prophethood and answers the absurd objections raised against the claim of prophethood by Muhammad (peace be upon him). The foolish people have always had the silly notion that a Prophet of Allah must be supernatural and capable of performing wonderful miracles. For instance, they expected that a whole mountain should turn into a mass of gold at his bidding; that the earth should throw out treasures by his orders; that he should be able to tell the people all about their past and future; that he should be able to locate a lost thing and foretell whether a sick person will get well or die and whether a pregnant woman will give birth to a male or a female. They also believed that such a person should be above the common human limitations. They could not conceive anyone to be a prophet, if he suffered from hunger or thirst and needed sleep, or, if he had wife and children and went to the bazaar to buy and sell the necessities of life, or, if he was sometimes forced to borrow money or was involved in poverty and indigence.

When Muhammad (peace be upon him) put forward the claim that he was a Messenger of Allah, his contemporaries

wanted to test his claim with the touch-stone of such silly notions. They would ask him questions about the unseen things and demand supernatural miracles from him. They would also raise the objection that he was merely a common man, who needed food and drank water like them; who had wife and children and who moved about in the bazaars. In answer to these things, Allah told His Prophet (peace be upon him) to inform them that he never claimed to be supernatural; his only claim was that he was following the revelations he received from Allah and that he should be judged by that standard only.

***32** The question is meant to bring home to them this fact: “I have seen with my own eyes and experienced directly the realities I am presenting to you, and I have gained their accurate knowledge through revelation; therefore my evidence is that of an eye witness. On the contrary, you are blind with regard to those realities: all your notions concerning them are based on guess-work and speculation or on the blind following of others. Therefore, the difference between you and me is the same as of the man who is able to see and the one who is blind. That is what gives me superiority over you and not that I possess the treasures of God or have the knowledge of the unseen or that I am free from the common human limitations.

51. And warn by this (Quran) those who fear that they will be gathered before their Lord. For them, besides Him, there is no protector,

وَأَنْذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ
يُحْشَرُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِنْ
دُونِهِ وَّلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ لَّهُمْ

nor an intercessor, that they may fear (Allah).^{*33}

يَتَّقُونَ
٥١

***33** That is, you should pay special attention only to those who believe that one Day they shall have to go before Allah to render an account of their deeds and who do not cherish any such false hopes that somebody's intercession and help will save them. It is because this admonition can produce good effect only on such people and not on those who are so absorbed in the enjoyment of the pleasures of this world that they never think of their death or of going before Allah. Likewise, this admonition will fall flat on those who are making merry in this world, deluding themselves into believing that no harm will come to them in the Hereafter because of their spiritual relation with such and such a saint or because such and such a holy person will intercede with Allah in their behalf or because such a one has already made atonement for them. Obviously, no admonition can be beneficial to such people.

52. And do not send away those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His pleasure.^{*34} Not upon you is of their account in anything, nor is of your account upon them in anything. So were you to send them away, you would then become of the wrongdoers.^{*35}

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ
بِالْغَدْوَةِ وَالْعِشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ
وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ
الظَّالِمِينَ
٥٢

***34** In this passage Allah has answered one of the objections that the big chiefs of the Quraish used to raise in regard to the followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They would say that none but the lowest stratum of society, consisting of slaves, menials and the like, had accepted Islam. They would taunt him of having such companions as Bilal, Ammar, Suhaib, Khabbab, etc. and ask in a jeering way, “Are these the only (honorable) people from amongst us, upon whom Allah has showered His blessings?” They did not rest content with making fun of their poor condition, but also passed stinging remarks about their past shortcomings, saying: “Just have a look at the past history of such and such people, who are today forming the pious group of the believers.” Allah has advised Prophet (peace be upon him) not to be disheartened by their unkind remarks.

***35** That is, if they had done something wrong in the past, they themselves shall be accountable for it and not you, for everyone shall get the reward of the good or evil one has done. Therefore, no good deed of yours will be put to their credit, nor will you be burdened with any evil deed of theirs. They come to you merely as seekers after truth and it will be injustice to look down upon them and drive them away.

53. And thus have We tried some of them with others, ^{*36} that they might say: “Are these the ones upon whom Allah has

وَكَذَلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُمْ
بِبَعْضٍ لِيَقُولُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ مِنْ
اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ

bestowed favor among us.”
Is Allah not best Aware of
those who are grateful.

بِأَعْلَمَ بِالشَّكِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

***36** That is, by bestowing the blessing of Islam at the outset on the poor and indigent and those who held a low position in society, We have involved the upper rich and proud class in trial.

54. And when those who believe in Our revelations come to you, say: “Peace be on you. Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy, that any of you who does evil in ignorance then repents thereafter, and corrects himself, then surely, He is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.”^{*37}

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ
رَبُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ
مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهْلَةٍ ثُمَّ
تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

***37** Allah has told his Messenger (peace be upon him) to console those of his followers who had committed heinous sins during the days of ignorance by inspiring them with the assurance that He forgives and treats leniently those who repent and mend their ways and, therefore, the taunts of the enemies of Islam need not worry them about what they had done in the past.

55. And thus do We explain in detail the revelations, and (thus) the way of the

وَكَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ

criminals may become
manifest.*38

وَلِتَسْتَبِينَ سَبِيلُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

*38 In order to understand the significance of Ayat 55, we should keep in view Ayat 37 in which the disbelievers asked, “Why has no sign been sent down to this Prophet (peace be upon him) from his Lord.” In the subsequent passage (Ayats 38-54), several manifest signs have been cited to show that there is no lack of signs but the disbelievers do not want to see them. Then in Ayat 55 such people have been warned, as if to say, “In this way, We make Our signs clear, plain and manifest so that those, who persist in their disbelief in spite of those signs, should prove themselves to be guilty ones. For they choose the way of deviation deliberately, not because there is a lack of signs to show the right way but because they do not want to see the signs.”

56. Say (O Muhammad):
“Indeed, I have been forbidden that I worship those whom you call upon besides Allah.” Say: “I will not follow your vain desires, for indeed I would go astray then, and I would not be of those rightly guided.”

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ
تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَأَتَّبِعُ
أَهْوَاءَكُمْ قَدْ ضَلَلْتُ إِذَا وَمَا
أَنَا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ

57. Say (O Muhammad):
“Indeed, I am on clear evidence from my Lord, and you have denied it. I do

قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي
وَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِهِ مَا عِنْدِي مَا

not have that for which you are trying to hasten.*39 The judgment is none but for Allah. He declares the truth, and He is the best of the judges.”

تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ
إِلَّا لِلَّهِ يَقْضُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ
الْفَاصِلِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

*39 This alludes to the demand of the opponents for the scourge of Allah with which they were being threatened. They said, “Why does a scourge not come down upon us, when we are openly denying and defying you? If you have been really sent by Allah, then anyone, who denied and insulted you, would have been swallowed by the earth or stricken dead by lightning. How is it that the Messenger of Allah and his followers are undergoing untold afflictions and sufferings, while their tormentors are enjoying their lives merrily?”

58. Say “If that I had what you are trying to hasten for, the matter would have been decided between me and you. And Allah is best aware of the wrong doers.”

قُلْ لَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ
بِهِ لَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. And with Him are the keys of the unseen, none knows them except him. And He knows what is on the land and the sea. And not a leaf falls but He knows it. And there is not a grain

﴿٥٩﴾ وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا
يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
الْبُرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ
إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلْمَتٍ

amid the darkness of the earth, nor anything wet nor dry, but it is in a clear Book.

الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَظٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا
فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٥١﴾

60. And it is He who takes your souls by night (in sleep), and He knows what you do by day. Then He raises (wakes) you up therein (by day), that may be fulfilled the term appointed. Then unto Him will be your return. Then He will inform you of what you used to do.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُم بِالنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَىٰ أَجَلٌ مُّسَىٰ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. And He is the Omnipotent over His slaves. And He sends over you guardians (angels),^{*40} until when approaches to one of you death, Our messengers (angels) take him (his soul), and they do not neglect (their duty).

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْرِطُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

***40** Angels who keep strict watch over each and everything a man does or thinks of and maintain a complete record of all this.

62. Then they are returned to Allah, their Lord in truth. Unquestionably, His is the

ثُمَّ رُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقِّ ﴿٦٢﴾

judgement. And He is the swiftest of those who take account.

أَلَا لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَهُوَ أَسْرَعُ الْحَاسِبِينَ



63. Say (O Muhammad): “Who rescues you from the darkness of the land and the sea, you call upon Him humbly and in secret, (saying) if we are saved from this, we certainly will be among the thankful.”

قُلْ مَنْ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْ ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً لَئِنْ أَنْجَيْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ



64. Say: “Allah rescues you from this and from all (other) distresses, then you associate others (with Him).”^{*41}

قُلِ اللَّهُ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ



***41** That is, you yourselves are a witness that Allah alone is All-Powerful: He alone has the sole authority and your prosperity and adversity entirely lie in His power and He alone is the maker of your destinies. That is why you turn to Him in your affliction, when you find that no other means of rescue has been left for you. In the face of this clear sign, you have set up, without any reason or rhyme, others as partners in His Godhead. You live on His provisions but treat others as your providers; you get help from Him in your need, but set up others as your helpers and protectors; He rescues you from your distress, yet you regard others (besides Him) as your rescuers; it is He

Whom you humbly invoke in your affliction, yet you take your offerings to others when he removes it. In short, you witness the proofs of His Godhead, day and night, yet you serve and bow down before others.

65. Say (O Muhammad):
“He has the power over that He can send upon you punishment from above you, or from beneath your feet, or to bewilder you with factions, and make you taste the violence of one another.” Behold, how We set forth in diverse forms the signs so that they might understand.^{*42}

قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ
عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِنْ
تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْبِسَكُمْ شِيْعًا
وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ ۗ أَنْظُرْ
كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَفْقَهُونَ



***42** It is a warning to those who had become very bold in their enmity with the truth because no scourge from Allah was in sight. They are being warned that the scourge of Allah does not take long to come. A gust of wind can destroy them all at once. A sudden shake of an under ground earthquake can sink their habitations. A spark can set on fire the magazines of enmity and involve clans, nations and countries in endless blood feuds. Therefore, if no scourge is coming on you, this should not make you so bold and neglectful as to go on treading blindly the way you are following without discerning whether it is right or wrong. Instead you should take advantage of the respite that is being given and of the signs that are being presented

to you and recognize the reality and follow the right way.

66. And your people (O Muhammad) have denied it, and it is the truth. Say: "I am not a guardian over you."^{*43}

وَكَذَّبَ بِهِ قَوْمُكَ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ
قُل لَّسْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

*43 That is, it is no part of my duty to make you see what you would not see and to make you understand what you would not understand; nor am I responsible for bringing down a scourge on you, if you would not see or understand it. The only duty that has been assigned to me is to make plain to you the distinction between truth and falsehood. Now that I have done my duty and you have rejected the truth, the evil consequences of which I have been warning you will appear in due course.

67. For every news there is a term appointed, and soon you will know.

لِكُلِّ نَبَأٍ مُّسْتَقَرٌّ وَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

68. And when you (O Muhammad) see those who engage in vain discourse about Our revelations, withdraw from them until they enter into another topic. And if the devil causes you to forget,^{*44} then do not sit, after the remembrance, with the wrongdoing people.

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي
آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى
يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ وَإِمَّا
يُنْسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَا تَقْعُدْ
بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِى مَعَ الْقَوْمِ
الظَّالِمِينَ

***44** That is, if you ever forget this instruction and keep sitting in the company of such people.

69. And it is not upon those who fear (Allah) any accountability for them (the disbelievers) of anything, but (only for) a reminder that perhaps they may fear (Him).^{*45}

وَمَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ مِنْ
حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَلَكِنْ
ذِكْرٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

***45** Here very important practical instructions have been given to the pious people. Their first and foremost duty is to save themselves from any disobedience of Allah; they should not worry unnecessarily about the disobedient people, for they are not responsible for their disobedience. They should not, therefore, impose it upon themselves as an obligation that they have to convince them anyhow by argument and to refute their absurd objections. Their only duty is to present the truth before them. Then, if they do not accept it, the pious people should not waste their time and energy by entering into useless polemical disputes, discussions and argumentations with the disbelievers. Instead, they should spend their time and energy in educating and training and reforming those who are sincere seekers after the truth.

70. And leave alone those who take their religion for a play and amusement, and whom the life of the world has deluded. And

وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا
وَلَهْوًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا

remind with it (Quran) lest a soul be destroyed by what it has earned. It has besides Allah no protector, nor intercessor. And if he offers every ransom, it will not be accepted from him. Such are those who deliver themselves to ruin because of what they have earned. For them will be a drink of boiling water, and a painful punishment because they used to disbelieve.

وَذَكِّرْ بِهِ أَنْ تُبْسَلَ نَفْسٌ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ وَإِنْ تَعَدَلَ كُلَّ عَدَلٍ لَّا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أُبْسِلُوا بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

71. Say (O Muhammad): “Shall we call on others besides Allah, that which neither benefits us nor harms us, and turn on our heels after when Allah has guided us, (we would then be) like one whom the devils have enticed away (to wander) in the earth bewildered, (while) he has companions calling him to guidance (saying): Come to us.” Say: “Indeed, Allah’s guidance is the guidance, and we have been

قُلْ أُنَدِّعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُنَا وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا وَنُرَدُّ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْنَا اللَّهُ كَالَّذِي اسْتَهْوَتْهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فِي الْأَرْضِ حَيْرَانَ لَهُ أَصْحَابٌ يَدْعُونَهُ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ أُمَّتِنَا قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ وَأُمِرْنَا لِنُسَلِّمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

commanded to submit to the Lord of the Worlds.”



72. “And that to establish prayers, and to fear Him, and it is He to whom you shall be gathered.”

وَأَنْ أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَهُوَ
الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

73. And it is He who has created the heavens and the earth in truth.*46 And on the Day He will say: “Be”, so it shall be. His word is the truth. And on the Day when the trumpet*47 will be blown, His will be the dominion.*48 All Knower of the unseen and the seen.*49 And He is the All Wise, All Aware.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ
كُنْ فَيَكُونُ قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ وَلَهُ
الْمَلَكُ يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ
عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ وَهُوَ
الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ

*46 It occurs at several places in the Quran that Allah has created the heavens and the earth in all truth. It has very comprehensive meanings.

(1) It means that the heavens and the earth have not been created for fun. It is not the creation of the fancy of some god, or the toy of a child to be played with for amusement and broken after satiety. In fact, this world is a very serious affair and its creation has great wisdom and a grand purpose behind it. It must, therefore, come to an end at the appointed time and then be resurrected so that the Creator may take account of all that has been done in it and

ultimately build the next world on the results of that reckoning.

That this world has been created for a purpose has also been mentioned at other places in the Quran in various ways:

(a) Lord, You have not created all this in vain. (Surah Al-Imran, Ayat 91).

(b) We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them for mere fun. (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 16).

(c) Do you think that We have created you without any purpose and that you will never be brought back to Us? (Surah Al-Muminun, Ayat 115).

(2) The whole universe has been built on the solid foundations of the truth. Everything in it is based on just, wise and right laws and there is no room for injustice and folly and falsehood to take root and bear fruit in it. One should not, however, be misled by the partial and temporary successes of falsehood. At times, Allah may allow the worshipers of falsehood opportunity to try their best for the success of falsehood and injustice and wrong ways. This is in order to show that all their efforts shall ultimately fail and every worshiper of falsehood will see at the last reckoning that all the efforts made for the success of this unholy cause had gone utterly waste.

(3) Allah has created the universe in truth and is ruling over it by His own personal right. He wields authority here because of His personal right as its Creator. One should not, therefore, be misled by seeing others holding authority

over the affairs of the world. In fact, no one has, nor can have, any right to rule here, for no one has any right whatsoever over anything in the universe.

***47** It is beyond our comprehension to understand the real nature of the blowing of the Trumpet. What we learn from the Quran is that on the Day of Resurrection when the first Trumpet shall be blown by the command of Allah, everyone and everything shall perish. Then after this (Allah alone knows how long after this) the second Trumpet shall be blown; then everyone from the beginning of the creation to its end, shall be brought back to life and mustered in the Plain of Resurrection. In short, on the first blowing of the Trumpet, the present system of the universe shall be destroyed and on its second blowing the new system, different in form and with different laws, shall be created.

***48** It does not mean that today sovereignty is not His. What it means is this: “On that Day the curtain, that is covering the reality today, will be lifted and it will become apparent that all those who seemed to wield authority or were supposed to wield it, had absolutely no authority, and that sovereignty entirely belongs to Allah alone, Who is the Creator of the universe.”

***49** *Ghaib* is all that is hidden from the naked eye and cannot be seen and *Shahadat* is all that is visible to it.

74. And when Abraham said to his father Azar: “Do you take idols for gods.^{*50} Indeed, I see you and your people in manifest

﴿ وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ عَازَرَ
اتَّخِذْ أَصْنَامًا ءَالِهَةً إِنِّي أَرَأَيْتَكَ

error.”

وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧٤﴾

***50** The incident relating to Abraham (peace be upon him) is adduced in order to confirm and reinforce the view that just as Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions, thanks to the guidance vouchsafed by God, had denounced polytheism and had turned away from all false gods, bowing their heads in obedience to the One True Lord of the universe, so had been done by Abraham in his time. In the same way as ignorant people were then opposing the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and those who believed in him, Abraham, too, had been opposed in his day by the people among whom he lived. Furthermore, the answer Abraham gave to his people in the past can also be given by Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his followers, for he was on the same path as Noah, Abraham and the other Prophets who had descended from Abraham (peace be upon them all). Those who had refused to follow the Prophet (peace be upon him) should therefore take note that they had deviated from the way of the Prophets and were lost in error.

At this point it should also be noted that Abraham (peace be upon him) was generally acknowledged by the Arabs to be their patriarch and their original religious leader. The Quraish, in particular, were proud of their devotion to Abraham (peace be upon him), of being his progeny and of being servants to the shrine built by him. Hence, the mention of Abraham's (peace be upon him) doctrine of monotheism, of his denunciation of polytheism and his

remonstration with his polytheistic people, amounted to demolishing the very basis on which the Quraish had prided themselves. It also amounted to destroying the confidence of the people of Arabia in their polytheistic religion. This also proved to them that the Muslims stood in the shoes of Abraham himself, whereas their own position was that of an ignorant nation which had remonstrated with Abraham (peace be upon him) out of ignorance and folly.

75. And thus did We show^{*51} Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who have certainty.^{*52}

وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ
الْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

***51** That is, just as the phenomena of nature are before your eyes and the signs of God are being shown to you daily, so were they before Abraham (peace be upon him). But you, like blind men, do not see anything in spite of looking at them. The same stars, the same moon and the same sun rise and set before your eyes, but they leave you, as far away from the reality at the time they set as you were at the time they rose. But when Abraham saw with his heart's eyes, these very phenomena of nature, he reflected upon them and came to know of the reality.

***52** In order to understand the true nature of the dispute between the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and his people mentioned in this passage and others in the Quran, one should keep in view the religious and social conditions

of his time. Now that Ur, the birth place of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), has been unearthed by modern archaeologists, it has helped reveal the real conditions prevailing in that land during that age. Sir Leonard Woolley has published the results of this research in this regard in his book, "Abraham", London, 1935. A resume of the same, which has been translated into English from the Tafhim-ul-Quran, is given below.

It has been estimated that round about the year 2100 B.C. which is now generally regarded by scholars as the period of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), the population of Ur was nearly 250,000; it might even have been 500,000. It was a flourishing industrial and business center. On the one side, it attracted trade goods from as far off places as Pamir and Nilgiri, and on the other, it had trade relations with Anatolia. The State, whose capital it was, extended a little less to the north and a little more to the west of modern Iraq. The people were mostly craftsmen and merchants by profession. The inscriptions of the age that have been deciphered from the archaeological remains show that they had a materialist outlook on life. Their main object of life was to amass wealth and make merry. They practiced usury and were wholly absorbed in business. They regarded one another with suspicion and resorted to litigation on minor grounds. Their prayers to their gods generally consisted of supplications for long life, prosperity and flourishing business. The population was divided into three classes.

(1) The Amelu: This was the highest class which consisted

of the priests, state officials and military officers, etc.

(2) The Mushkenu: These were the merchants, craftsmen, and farmers.

(3) The Ardu: The slaves.

The Amelu class enjoyed special distinctions and privileges. They had greater rights both in the criminal and in the civil law than those of other people and their life and property were held sacred and precious.

Such was the city and the society in which the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) opened his eyes. According to the Talmud, he was a member of the Amelu class, and his father was the chief official of the state (See Surah Al-Baqarah: E.N. 290).

The tablets excavated at Ur mention the names of about 5,000 gods. Each city had its own god and also a special deity, who was regarded as the chief god or the city god and was entitled to greater reverence than the others. The city god of Ur was “Nannar” (the moon god) and scholars of the later ages have also called this city “Qamrinah” after that god. The other big city was “Larsah” which afterwards became the seat of government instead of Ur; its chief god was “Shamash” (the sun god). Under these chief gods there were many minor gods also, most of whom had been adopted from among the stars and planets and a few from among the earthly objects. People thought that their prayers for less important things were granted by these minor gods. The symbols of all these heavenly and earthly gods and goddesses had been formed in the shape of idols and all rites of worship were performed before them.

The idol of Nannar had been kept in a grand shrine built on the highest peak at Ur and near it the sanctuary of his wife Ningil had been built. The shrine of Nannar was just like a royal palace where every night a different female worshiper would go and become his bride. Thus there lived a large number of women in the shrine who had been dedicated to the god and their position was no better than religious prostitutes. The woman who would sacrifice her virginity in the name of the god was regarded very respectable. The common belief was that a woman must surrender herself at least once in her lifetime to another man in the way of god in order to attain salvation. It is obvious that the people to benefit most from this religious prostitution were the male priests themselves.

Nannar was not merely a god; he was the biggest landlord of the country, the biggest merchant, the biggest craftsman and the chief executive of the country's political life, for a very large number of gardens, houses and fields had been dedicated to his shrine. Besides the income from these sources, farmers, landlords and merchants also brought their offerings of corn, milk, gold, cloth, etc., to the shrine. Naturally there was a big staff to look after these offerings. Many factories were run and business on a large scale was done on behalf of the Temple. The highest court of justice had been established in the shrine and the priests acted as judges and their judgments were regarded as from God. The royal dynasty also derived its sovereignty from Nannar, who was the real sovereign. The king ruled over the country on his behalf and was, therefore, himself raised

to the rank of a deity and worshiped like the other gods.

The dynasty which was ruling over Ur in the time of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had been founded by Ur-Nammu who in 2300 B.C. had established a vast empire, which extended to Susa in the east and to Lebanon in the west. It was from him that the dynasty received the title of Nammu which became Namrud in Arabic. After the emigration of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) this dynasty and this nation were visited by continuous disasters. Their downfall was hastened by the destruction of Ur and the capture of Namrud along with the idol of Nannar by the people of Elam. Then the Elamis established their rule at Larsah which dominated over the land of Ur also. The last blow was dealt by Babylon, which had grown powerful under an Arab dynasty and brought both Larsah and Ur under its control. As a result of this downfall, the people of Ur lost their faith in Nannar who had failed to protect them from humiliation, shame and ruin.

Nothing can be said with certainty about the response the people of this land made to the teachings of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) after his emigration, but the law promulgated in 1910 B.C. by Hamurabi (Amraphel of Gen. xiv), king of Babylon, bears evidence that it had been influenced directly or indirectly by the guidance of Prophethood. A pillar inscribed with this complete code was discovered by a French archaeologist in 1902 A.D. and its English version was published in 1903 A.D. by C. H. W. John under the title, "The Oldest Code of Law." Most of the principles and details of this law and the law of the

Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) are in general, alike. If the results of the archaeological research, which has been carried out so far, are correct, one thing that clearly stands out is that shirk was not merely a religious belief and basis of polytheistic rituals with the people of Abraham but it was indeed the very basis of their economic, cultural, political and social system of life. In contrast to this, the Message of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) not only clearly struck at the root of idol worship, but also hit hard upon the sovereignty and worship of the royal dynasty and the social, economic and political status of the priests and nobles and the collective life of the whole country. Therefore, the acceptance of his invitation had far reaching implications. It called for a complete metamorphosis of the prevailing social pattern and demanded its re-construction on the basis of *Tauhid*. That is why, as soon as the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) began to deliver the Message, the common people and the nobles, the priest class and Nimrod, all stood up together to suppress his voice which gave rise to the bitter dispute, mentioned in the Quran.

76. So when the night covered him over (with darkness), he saw a star. He said: "This is my Lord." But when it set, he said: "I do not love those that set."

فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا
 قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا
 أُحِبُّ الْآفِلِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

77. Then when he saw the moon rising up, he said:

فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْقَمَرَ بَازِعًا قَالَ هَذَا

“This is my Lord.” But when it set, he said: “If my Lord does not guide me, I shall surely be among the people who go astray.”

رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِي
رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ
الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

78. Then when he saw the sun rising up, he said: “This is my Lord. This is greater.” But when it set, he said: “O my people, I am indeed free from what you associate others (with Allah).”

فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ بَازِغَةً قَالَ
هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا
أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا
تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

79. Indeed, I have turned my face towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, firmly upright, and I am not of those who associate others (with Allah).”^{*53}

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا
وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾

***53** In Ayats 76-78, the way of thinking which led the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) to the reality before his appointment as a Messenger of Allah has been stated. It teaches that if a person uses his brain and eyes rightly, he can reach to the reality, even if he is born and bred, like Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), in surroundings charged with shirk in which one might have had no chance of learning anything about the Oneness of God. The only condition is that one makes the right sort of observation of

the phenomena of nature and reflects upon them carefully and exercises his reasoning to reach to the truth by a connected, logical train of thoughts. It appears from the preceding verse that the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), from the beginning of his conscious life, was surrounded by the people who worshiped the stars, the moon and the sun. It was, therefore, natural that the starting point of his search for the truth should be the question: Can any of these objects really be the Lord and Sustainer? That is why his thinking centered round this question and when he discovered that all the gods of his people were bound tightly by an un-alterable law and were revolving in accordance with it, he came to the inevitable conclusion that none of these gods possessed, in the least, any quality that might entitle it to be the Lord. The Lord and Sustainer is only that One, Who has created them and bound them to His own obedience.

The wording in which the event has been couched, has generally given rise to an objection. "So when the night covered him over, he saw a star and said... And I am not of those who associate others (with Allah)." The question arises in the mind of the common reader: Did the night not cover over Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) every day of his life ever since he was a child and did he not see the stars, the moon and the sun rise and set before this particular occasion? Though he saw them every night, it is obvious that he began to deliberate like this only when he had attained his maturity. Why has then the event been described in such a way (.....When the night covered over

him) as to give rise to the doubt as if he had never seen the stars and the moon and the sun ever before this? As such an assumption cannot hold good in ordinary circumstances, some people have had to invent an extraordinary story to remove this seeming anachronism. They say that the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was born and brought up in a cave, where it was arranged that he should not see the stars, the moon and the sun before he attained his maturity. The matter, however, is so simple that it does not need the invention of a fantastic story to explain it. It can be easily understood by a well-known incident in the life of Newton. One day when he saw an apple fall down from the tree to the ground, his mind suddenly turned to the problem: Why do things fall down to the ground? At last his deliberation led him to formulate and prove the law of gravity. Here, too, the question might arise: Had not Newton ever seen anything falling to the ground before this incident? It is obvious that he must have seen many things fall to the ground many times before this. How is it, then, that the fall of that particular apple on that particular day stirred up that particular mental activity which the daily fall of hundreds of things to the ground had not roused before this? The simple answer is that the minds are not always excited in the same way by the same kind of observations. Many a time, it so happens that one sees a thing over and over again but that does not stir up his mind to any mental activity; then there comes a moment when the sight of that very thing diverts the mental activity towards a particular problem. Or, if one's mind is engaged

in the solution of a problem and one suddenly catches sight of a particular thing which had always been before his eyes, it excites the mind to a mental activity that helps solve the problem. The same thing happened in the case of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). Nights came and passed away, the stars, the moon and the sun rose and set for years, but on one particular night the observation of one particular star excited that mental activity which led him to the central reality of the Oneness of God. It may be that ever since he attained maturity, he might have been thinking over the problem of the worship of the stars, the moon and the sun, because this was the religion of his people and on this was based the whole system of the life of that community. Then one night the observation of the star suddenly excited the mental activity that helped him solve the problem. It is also possible that the observation of the star was the starting point of that mental activity.

In this connection, there is another possible doubt that must also be removed. Was the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) guilty of shirk (even though temporarily), when seeing the star and the moon and the sun, he said, "This is my Lord." A little thinking will convince one that he was not at all guilty of shirk for in his search for reality, a seeker-after-truth has, inevitably, to pass through several stages of deliberations about shirk. Therefore, what determines his creed is not the temporary deliberation but the direction of one's research and the ultimate destination where he stops. These intervening stages of deliberation have to be made by every seeker-after-truth in his search

for reality. These are made for the sake of research and should not be taken as the final decision. The deliberation about any form of shirk is in a questioning manner and is not its practice. When a seeker-after-truth stops to deliberate about anything and says, “it is so,” it is not his final judgment. What he means to say is, “is it so?” That is why he proceeds further in his research as soon as he gets a negative answer at any of these stages.

80. And His people disputed with him. He said: “Do you dispute with me concerning Allah while He has guided me. And I do not fear what you associate with Him, except that my Lord wills something. My Lord encompasses all things in knowledge. Will you then not remember.”*54

وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ^ج قَالَ أَتُحْجُونِي
فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِ^ج وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا
تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ رَبِّي
شَيْئًا^ظ وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا
أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ



*54 The Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) asked the mushrikin to remember the fact that his Lord, whom they also acknowledged as their Lord, had the knowledge of everything and was fully aware of what they were doing. Then he posed the question in order to rouse them from their heedlessness towards the message and use their common-sense to consider the reality. The Arabic word *tadhakkur* contains this sense.

81. And how should I fear that which you associate

وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ

(others with Allah), and you do not fear that you have associated (others) with Allah, that for which He has not sent down to you any authority. So which of the two factions has more right to security, if you have knowledge.

وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمْ
بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
سُلْطَانًا ۚ فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ
بِالْأَمْنِ ۖ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

82. Those who believe and do not mix their belief with wrongdoing,^{*55} those are for whom there is security, and they are rightly guided.

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا
إِيمَانَهُم بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ
الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

***55** Some commentators are of the opinion that the people of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) did not believe in Allah or were ignorant of His existence and regarded their gods as the sole masters of the universe. Accordingly, they have based their comments of this passage and others about Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) on this assumption. Obviously, they are wrong because the whole passage clearly shows that those people did not deny Allah as the Creator of the earth and heavens, but were guilty of associating others with Allah in His Godhead and Sovereignty. This is clear from these and other words of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him):

“There is no reason why I should fear those whom you have made partners with Allah.” Moreover, the manner, in

which he mentions Allah, while addressing his people, shows that they also believed in Allah but associated other partners with Him as well.

The word *zulm* that occurs in this verse stands for shirk. When some companions mistook it for sinfulness, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself removed their misunderstanding saying, "Here it means shirk."

In this connection, it will also be interesting to note that this most important event of the life of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) which has been described in this here and which was the starting point of his great mission, has not been mentioned at all in the Bible. The Talmud, however, mentions it, but it differs from the Quran in two things:

(1) In it the order is "from the sun to the stars and to God" but it is the other way round in the Quran.

(2) It states that, when he said about the sun, "This is my Lord," he worshiped it also at the same time and did the same with the moon.

83. And that was Our argument which We gave to Abraham against his people. We raise by degrees whom We will. Certainly, your Lord is All Wise, All Knowing.

وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ
عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْ
نَّشَاءُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ



84. And We bestowed upon him (Abraham) Isaac

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ

and Jacob, all (of them) We guided. And Noah did We guide before, and among his progeny, David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. And thus do We reward those who do good.

كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. And Zachariah and John and Jesus and Elias. all (of them) were of the righteous.

وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِيلِيَّاسَ كُلٌّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot. And all (of them) We preferred above the nations.

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. And (some) among their fathers, and their offsprings, and their brethren. And We chose them, and We guided them to a straight path.

وَمِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٨٧﴾

88. Such is the guidance of Allah with which He guides whom He wills of His slaves. And if they had

ذَلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا

associated others (with Allah), worthless would be to them all that they used to do. *56

لَحِبَطَ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



*56 That is, even if the above mentioned people had been guilty of shirk like you, they would never have been exalted to such high ranks. This is because shirk is such a heinous sin that it destroys good works. It is just possible that any such person might have won fame as a great conqueror by ruthless destruction, or might have amassed fabulous wealth by foul means and become a notorious wealthy man like Korah or done some infamous thing and won name for himself but he could never have won the exalted position of being the leader of the pious and the rightly guided. They won the unique distinction of being the source of virtue and guidance for the whole world because they scrupulously avoided shirk and steadfastly followed the way of God worship.

89. Those were the ones whom We gave the Book, and the authority, and the prophethood. *57 But if these disbelieve in it, then indeed We shall entrust it to a people who are not therein disbelievers. *58

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ فَإِنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَتُّوْلَاءٍ فَقَدْ وَّكَلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَيْسُوا



بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ

*57 Here it has been stated that three things had been bestowed on the Prophet:
(1) The Book, divine guidance.

(2) The Judgment, the good sense to understand that guidance and the capability to apply its principles to the affairs of life and the God given ability to form correct opinions about the problems of life.

(3) The Prophethood, the office of guiding the people in accordance with the divine guidance.

*58 That is, it does not matter at all, if these disbelievers and mushrikin have rejected the guidance of Allah. We have raised a community of the believers, who appreciate fully the worth of this blessing.

90. Those were the ones whom Allah guided, so emulate from their guidance. Say: "I ask of you no reward for it. It is not but a reminder for the nations."

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ
فَبِهَدْيِهِمْ أَقْتَدِهِ^ط قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ
عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ
لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

91. And they did not appraise Allah with a true estimation due to Him, when they said: *59 "Allah has not sent down to a human being any thing." Say: "Who sent down the Book which Moses came with, a light and guidance for mankind, which you have put on parchments, disclosing (some of) it and concealing much.

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِذْ
قَالُوا مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ بَشْرًا مِّنْ
شَيْءٍ قُلْ مَن أَنزَلَ الْكِتَابَ الَّذِي
جَاءَ بِهِ^ط مُوسَىٰ نُورًا وَهُدًى
لِّلنَّاسِ تَجْعَلُونَهُ^ط قَرَاطِيسَ
تُبَدُونَهَا وَتُخْفُونَ كَثِيرًا وَعُلِّمْتُمْ

And (by which) you were taught that which you did not know, (neither) you, nor your fathers.”*60 Say: “Allah (sent it down).” Then leave them to play in their vain discussions.

مَا لَمْ تَعَلَمُوا أَنْتُمْ وَلَا آبَاؤُكُمْ
قُلِ اللَّهُ^ط ثُمَّ ذَرَّهُمْ فِي خَوَاضِهِمْ
يَلْعَبُونَ

*59 The context in which the words, “Allah has not sent down to human being anything” occur and their refutation clearly show that these were the words of the Jews. They uttered these words when the disbelievers and the mushrikin of Arabia asked them, “Tell us whether the word of Allah has really been sent down to this man, Muhammad (peace be upon him).” This question had arisen because the Prophet claimed (peace be upon him), “I am a Prophet and the Book is being sent down to me.” The Quraish and the mushrik Arabs turned to the Jews because they possessed the Book and believed in the Prophets and could speak with authority. Therefore, their answer provided the opponents with a strong weapon against Islam and they repeated the answer as an argument to dissuade the people from it. That is why their answer has been cited here and refuted.

Here a possible doubt should also be removed: How can a Jew, who believes that the Torah had been sent down by God, say, “Allah has not sent down to human being anything?” A little thinking will show that a person in his obduracy often utters such things as are against his fundamental principles merely to refute his opponent. As

the Jews were bent upon refuting his claim to prophethood, they had been so blinded by their opposition to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), that in denying his prophethood they even denied the very office of prophethood.

“And they did not appraise Allah with a true estimation due to Him” means that they committed a grave error in evaluating His powers and wisdom. For the person who says: “Allah has not sent down the knowledge of the truth and guidance for life,” makes either of the two wrong estimates:

(1) He believes that Allah has no power to send down revelation to any man, and this is a wrong estimate of the powers of Allah.

(2) He thinks that though Allah has given man intelligence and authority to exploit the resources of nature, He has made no arrangement for his right guidance, but has left him to act indiscriminately in the world, and this is a wrong estimate of the wisdom of Allah.

***60** This answer is meant for the Jews, who had furnished the disbelievers and the mushrikin with the arguments that “Allah has not sent down to human being anything.” To refute their objection it has particularly been pointed out that the Torah was sent down to Moses (peace be upon him) by Allah, for they themselves believed and could not deny that the Torah had been sent down to Moses (peace be upon him) by Allah. Thus, it was by itself a refutation of their assertion that Allah has not sent down anything to any man. It also proved at least that the word of God can be

sent down to a man, as it had been sent down to Moses (peace be upon him).

92. And this is a Book (Quran) which We have sent down, blessed, confirming that (revealed) before it, and so that you may warn the mother of towns (Mecca) and all those around it. And those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it, and they are constant in guarding their prayers. ^{*61}

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ
مُصَدِّقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلِتُنذِرَ
أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَالَّذِينَ
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ
وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ مُحَافِظُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

***61** After showing in the preceding verse that the word of God can be sent down to a man and that it had actually been sent down to Moses (peace be upon him), a man, the Quran in this verse proceeds to prove that the word, which has been sent down to Muhammad (peace be upon him), is actually the word of God. Four things have been put forward as a proof thereof:

(1) It is a blessed Book: it presents the best principles for the welfare and true success of man. It teaches the right creeds and inculcates all kinds of virtues and exhorts the people of follow a high standard of morality for leading a pure life. At the same time, it does not teach in any way whatsoever any vice selfishness, narrow-mindedness, cruelty, obscenity and the like, which you have interpolated in abundance in your sacred Books.

(2) It does not present anything different form the guidance

contained in the former scriptures: nay, it testifies to the same teaching that had been presented in them.

(3) This Book aims to fulfill the very object for which the former Books had been sent, that is, to shake up and arouse those people who had become forgetful of the noble object for which they had been created, and to warn them of the evil consequences of their wicked ways.

(4) The message of this Book has not attracted those from among mankind who are the worshipers of this world and slaves of their desires, but only such people as are able to see the higher things of life beyond the narrow bounds of their worldly life. Then the most obvious characteristic of the revolution that this Book has brought about in their lives is that they stand out conspicuously among the people around them for their piety and God-worship. Is it possible for any book invented by an impostor, who has the audacity to say that it is from Allah, to produce such excellent results?

93. And who can be more unjust than he who invents against Allah a lie, or says: "It has been inspired to me," while not a thing has been inspired to him, and who says: "I will reveal the like of that which Allah has revealed." And if you could see, when the wrong doers are in the agonies of death

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ
كَذِبًا أَوْ قَالَ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوحَ
إِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ قَالَ سَأُنزِلُ مِثْلَ
مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ
الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُو أَيْدِيهِمْ

and the angels extend their hands (saying): “Discharge your souls. This day you shall be recompensed with the punishment of humiliation because of what you used to say against Allah other than the truth. And you were, towards His verses, being arrogant.”

أَخْرَجُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ
تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ
وَكُنْتُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ



94. And certainly you have come to Us alone as We created you the first time, and you have left all that We had bestowed on you behind you. And We do not see with you your intercessors, whom you claimed that they were among you partners (with Allah). Indeed, it has all been cut off between you, and lost from you is all that you used to claim.

وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَى كَمَا
خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرَكْتُمْ مَا
خَوَّلْنَاكُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ وَمَا
نَرَى مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ
زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءُ لَقَدْ
تَقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْكُمْ مَا
كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ



95. Truly (it is) Allah who splits the seed grain and the fruit kernel (for sprouting).^{*62} He brings forth the living from the dead,

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى ﴾
يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَمُخْرِجُ

and it is He who brings forth the dead from the living.*63
Such is Allah, then how are you deluded away.

الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ الْحَيِّ ذَالِكُمْ اللَّهُ
فَأَنْتَ تُؤَفِّكُونَ

*62 That is, it is Allah Who splits open the seed and the fruit kernel underground and causes those to grow into plants or trees.

*63 It means that Allah creates living creatures out of lifeless matter and discharges lifeless matter out of living creatures.

96. The Cleaver of the daybreak, and He has appointed the night for resting, and the sun and the moon for reckoning. Such is the measuring of the All Mighty, the All Knowing.

فَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ
سَكَنًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
حُسْبَانًا ذَالِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ
الْعَلِيمِ

97. And it is He who has placed for you the stars that you may be guided by them through the darkness of the land and the sea. Indeed, We have explained in detail the signs for a people who have knowledge.*64

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ النُّجُومَ
لِتَهْتَدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ
وَالْبَحْرِ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ
يَعْلَمُونَ

*64 That is, We have made clear the signs which show conclusively that there is only One Allah and that none else has the divine attributes or powers and none else is entitled

to any of the divine rights. However, those who lack knowledge cannot reach the reality by means of these signs; only those who observe the phenomena of nature in a rational way can attain this precious wealth.

98. And it is He who has created you from a single soul,^{*65} and (gave you) a place of residing and a repository. Indeed, We have explained in detail the signs for a people with understanding.^{*66}

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ
وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ قَدْ
فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَفْقَهُونَ



***65** That is, Allah has created the entire human race from one single being, Adam, who was the first man.

***66** That is, only men of understanding can find clear signs of the reality in the creation of human race and in the different functions allotted to man and woman for its reproduction at the different stages of human life from birth to death. But those, who live like animals and hanker after the fulfillment of the desire of the worldly life, can see nothing worthwhile even in these signs.

99. And it is He who sends down water from the sky, then We produce with it vegetation of all kinds, then We bring forth from it the green (crops), We bring forth, out of which, the thick clustered grain. And

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُخْرِجُ مِنْهُ
حَبًّا مُتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِنَ

out of the palm tree from the sheath of it, (We bring out) thick clustered dates hanging low, and gardens of grapes, and the olive and the pomegranate, resembling and yet different (in taste). Look at their fruit, when they begin to bear fruit, and its ripening. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who believe.

طَلَعَهَا قِنَوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّتِ مِّنْ
أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ
مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَبِهٍ أَنْظُرُوا إِلَى
ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ إِنَّ فِي
ذَٰلِكُمْ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

100. And they associate with Allah jinns as partners,^{*67} though He has created them, and they impute to Him sons and daughters without knowledge.^{*68} Glorified be He and High Exalted above what they attribute (to Him).

ط
وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ
وَخَرَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ
سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالٰى عَمَّا
يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

***67** That is, in spite of these clear signs, some people have set up as His partners some hidden beings that are merely the creations of their own imagination and whims. They have gone so far in their ignorance as to allot different powers and duties to them in the management of the universe and in determining the destiny of man. For instance, one has been made the god of rain and another of vegetation; one is the goddess of wealth and another of disease, etc. Such absurd beliefs have been prevalent among all polytheistic peoples about spirits, devils, monks, gods

and goddesses.

***68** The pagan Arabs called the angels as the daughters of God. Likewise some mushrik communities have invented even a genealogical tree of gods and goddesses descending from God.

101. (He is) the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a son, and (when) there is for Him no companion. And He created all things, and He is, of all things, the All Knower.

بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنِي
يَكُونُ لَهُ وُلْدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ
صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

102. Such is Allah, your Lord. There is no god except Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He is the guardian over all things.

ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ
وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

103. Vision can not comprehend Him, and He comprehends (all) vision. And He is the Most Subtle, the All Aware.

لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ
الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

104. Indeed, there has come to you insights from your Lord. So whoever sees, it is for (the good of) his own

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصَائِرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ عَمِيَ

self. And whoever is blind, it is to his own (harm). And I (Muhammad) am not a watcher over you.*69

فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ



*69 In the sentence, “I am not a watcher over you,” Allah is speaking in the first person on His Prophet’s behalf. Just as the second person in the Quran denotes different people at different places, so the first person also denotes different beings at different places. As is well known, in some places, the second person is the Prophet or the believers or the people of the Book, and at other places it is the disbelievers or the mushrikin or the Quraish or the Arabs or the human beings in general, though the Quran is meant to be the guidance for all mankind, likewise at some places, the first person is Allah Himself and at others it is the angel, the bearer of the revelation, or a group of angels, or the prophets or the believers, though, in every case, the words are of Allah. However, one can determine the real person with the help of the context.

The meaning of the sentence. “I am not a watcher over you,” is: “My only duty is to present the guidance before you. Then, it is for you to open your eyes to see it or to keep your eyes shut like a blind man. It is not my duty to force open the eyes of those who deliberately keep them shut and to make them see what they do not see.”

105. And thus do We diversify the verses, and that they might say (O Muhammad): “You have

وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْصِرُ الْآيَاتِ
وَلِيَقُولُوا دَرَسْتَ وَلِنُبَيِّنَهُ لِقَوْمٍ

studied” and that We may make it clear for the people who have knowledge.*70

يَعْلَمُونَ

*70 The different ways of expression, in which the revelation has been couched, are a test for the people, because they help to discriminate the counterfeit from the genuine. The same thing has already been stated in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 26, in connection with the mention of insignificant things like flies, gnats, etc. in the parables of the Quran. Just as the mention of these insignificant things helps the seekers in finding the truth, in the same way the different ways of expression help those, who have knowledge and make use of it, to think deeply about their aims and objects and learn lessons for their own good. On the contrary, those people, who are bigoted, pay no attention to the subject matter, but begin to think on other lines. For instance, they begin to conjecture how this illiterate man can compose such excellent discourses. Thus, instead of judging the Quran from its excellent themes to be the revelation from Allah, they turn to every other possible source and say, “You have learned this from such and such person.” Then in the light of this so called successful research into the source of the Quran, they conclude that it could not be the Book of God.

106. Follow that which has been inspired to you from your Lord. There is no god except Him. And turn away from those who associate

اتَّبِعْ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ

others (with Allah).

المُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

107. And if Allah had willed, they would not have associated others (with Him). And We have not made you over them a watcher, nor are you a guardian over them.*71

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكُوا^ط وَمَا
جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا^ط وَمَا
أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾

***71** It means, you have been appointed to invite the people to the message and not to keep watch over them like a police inspector. Therefore your only duty is to present the message to the people and try, your best to convince them of the truth. After that, if someone does not accept the truth, leave him alone. You have not been appointed to force the people to accept it so as to leave no worshiper of falsehood within the range of your prophethood. Therefore you should not worry and try to make them open their eyes which they have deliberately shut. If Allah had, in His wisdom, willed that there should remain no worshiper of falsehood, He would not have entrusted you with this task. He could have made each and every human being a follower of the truth, merely by a single word of His command. But this is not the object of the creation of man. The real object is that man be given the freedom of choice between the truth and falsehood: And then by presenting the light of the truth before him, he be tested which one of the two he chooses. Now the right course for you is to follow the right way for yourself and to invite others to follow it.

Then you should make those, who accept it, your friends and not to forsake them in any case, even though they are very insignificant in the eyes of the worldly people. On the other hand, you should leave those alone who do not accept it and let them go to the evil end to which they themselves want to go and persist in doing so.

108. And do not insult those whom they (disbelievers) call upon besides Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge.^{*72} Thus We have made fair seeming to each people their deed.^{*73} Then to their Lord is their return, then He will inform them of what they used to do.

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ
عِلْمٍ ۗ كَذَلِكَ زَيْنًا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ
عَمَلُهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ
فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



***72** The followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) have been advised not to lose their balance in zeal for preaching but to remain within proper limits when engaged in discussions and polemics with the non-Muslims and to refrain from offending against their creeds and from vilifying their leaders and objects of worship, for this will repel and alienate them all the more from the truth.

***73** Allah has ascribed their deeds to Himself, for everything that takes place in accordance with the laws of nature does, in fact, happens by the command of Allah. (Refer to E.N. 17 above). As Allah is the Author of all the laws of nature, everything happens by His command: therefore, Allah says, “Thus We have made fair seeming to

each people their deed.” The human beings would, however, express the same thing, saying, “This has happened according to the law of nature.”

109. And they swear by Allah their strongest oaths that if there came to them a sign,^{*74} they would surely believe in it. Say: “The signs are only with Allah,^{*75} and what will make you perceive that (even) if it (the sign) came, they would not believe.”^{*76}

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِن
جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ لِّيُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا
الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ
أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

***74** Here “sign” stands for such a tangible miracle seeing which they should have no alternative left but to acknowledge that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a true Prophet appointed by Allah.

***75** That is, I have no power to bring about and present signs, for these are entirely in the power of Allah and He may or may not show them.

***76** These words are addressed to those Muslims, who ardently wished (and sometimes even expressed their wish) that their misguided brethren should be shown such a sign as might bring them to the right way. To this Allah has answered: you should realize that they would not believe even if a sign were shown to them, for this demand is merely a pretext for their disbelief.

110. And We shall turn away their hearts and their eyes (from guidance), as they

وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْعَادَهُمْ وَأَبْصَرَهُمْ كَمَا

did not believe therein the first time,^{*77} and We shall leave them in their trespass wandering blindly.

لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ أَوْلَ مَرَّةٍ وَنَذَرَهُمْ
فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

***77** That is, there has been no change in their mentality since the first time they heard and rejected the message of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). They are still following the same crooked and perverted way of looking at the message and, therefore, are unable to see and understand it rightly.

111. And even if We had sent down to them the angels, and the dead had spoken to them, and We had gathered all things before them, they would not have believed except that Allah so willed,^{*78} but most of them are ignorant.

﴿ وَلَوْ أَنَّا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ
وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَى وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ
كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا
إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ
يَجْهَلُونَ ﴾

***78** That is, as they are not going to reject falsehood and accept the truth by making a free and deliberate choice, the only alternative left for making them follow it is that Allah should force it upon them. He should change their nature so as to deprive them of the freedom of thought and action like other species which have not been made responsible for what they do. But this is against the wisdom of the object for which Allah has created man. You should not, therefore, expect that Allah would make them believers by

His supernatural intervention.

112. And thus We have appointed for every prophet an enemy, devils from mankind and jinn, inspiring some of them to others with adorned speech as a delusion.^{*79} And if your Lord had so willed, they would not have done it,^{*80} so leave them alone, and that which they invent.

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا
شَيْطِينَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي
بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرَفَ الْقَوْلِ
عُرُورًا ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ
فَذَرَّهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ



***79** Allah is consoling His Messenger (peace be upon him), so as to say, “You should not worry at all about the united and active antagonism of the satans from among men and jinn against your mission. This is not a new thing only happening to you for it has always been happening like this to the messengers. Whenever a messenger came to show the right way, all the satanic powers girded up their loins to make his mission a failure.”

“Adorned speech” are all those devices, schemes, suspicions, objections, etc., that are employed by the satans to excite and incite the common people against the message and the messenger who invites them to the truth. Then all these things have been called the means of deceit and delusion as a whole, for all the weapons that the opponent use against the truth are, in fact, deceptions not only for others but also for the deceivers themselves, though they appear to be very useful and effective weapons.

***80** We have already explained in E.N. 73 above the fact of this matter, but the fine distinction between Allah's *will* (*mashiyat*) and His *approval* (*rada*) should also be kept in mind; otherwise there might arise very serious misunderstandings. It must be clearly understood that nothing whatsoever can happen without the *will* and permission of Allah, for no incident can happen, unless Allah makes room for it in His vast scheme and provides means for its happening. But it does not necessarily mean that Allah also approves of and is pleased with that incident. For instance, no thief can commit theft, no murderer can kill, no tyrant can be tyrannical, no breaker of peace can cause disorder, no unbeliever can disbelieve and no mushrik can commit shirk, etc. without the *will* of Allah. Likewise, no believer can have faith and no pious person can be pious unless it be the *will* of Allah. Yet, He is not pleased with the first kind of bad deeds, whereas He is pleased with and approves of and likes the second kind of good deeds. It is true that the *will* of Allah is working for an ultimate great good, but that can only come about by means of a conflict between light and darkness, good and bad, peace and disorder. Therefore, He allows, for the sake of His great good designs, the necessary freedom both to the powers of obedience and to those of disobedience, of piety and sin, of prophethood and the forces of evil, so that both might be allowed to perform the deeds of their own choice and to those of His creatures (men and jinn) who have been delegated with a limited authority and the consequent responsibility. Everyone is free to make a

choice of good deeds or of bad deeds for himself in this world. Both the good and the bad people are allowed to have the necessary means, as far as it suits and fits into the divine design, but only those who make a choice of good works merit His pleasure and approval. For, Allah likes that His servants should make the right use of their freedom of choice and adopt good instead of evil.

In this connection, it will be worthwhile to understand why Allah mentions over and over again that it is by His *will* that the enemies of truth have been allowed to carry on their nefarious activities. This is to impress upon the Prophet (peace be upon him), and through him on his followers, that the nature of their work is different from that of the angels, who carry out the commands of Allah without meeting with any resistance. Their mission, requires that in their conflict with the wicked and rebellious people, they should exert their utmost to make the way of Allah dominant over their ways. That is why it is the *will* of Allah to allow such people as have deliberately chosen the way of rebellion against Allah to exert their worst in pursuance of their choice. Likewise, He also allows the believers a full opportunity to exert their utmost in the service and obedience of Allah that they have deliberately chosen. Though He is pleased with and gives His help and succor to the believers and guides them to the right way because they do the deeds He likes them to do, yet they should not expect that Allah will force, by His supernatural intervention, the unbelievers to believe, if they do not want to believe by their free choice. Or that He will remove by

force from their way those satans amongst men and jinn who have deliberately chosen to use all the powers of their hearts and minds and bodies against the truth in order to block its way. They should note it well that, if they sincerely intend to work for the cause of truth, virtue and righteousness, they will have to prove this by putting up hard struggle and exerting their utmost in their conflict with the worshipers of falsehood. If Allah had willed to demolish falsehood and make the truth dominate by miracles, there was no need to entrust this work to the believers for in that case He Himself could have arranged the things so as to leave no satan in the world and no room for shirk and disbelief to make their appearance.

113. And that may incline to it (deceptive speech), the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter, and that they may be well pleased with it, and that they acquire whatever they may be acquiring.

وَلِتَصْغَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَفْعَدَةُ الَّذِينَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَلِيَرْضَوْهُ
وَلِيَقْتَرِفُوا مَا هُمْ مُقْتَرِفُونَ



114. (Say O Muhammad) “Then is it other than Allah I shall seek as judge, and it is He who has sent down to you the Book (Quran), explained in detail.”^{*81} And those to whom We gave the Book (aforetime) know that it is

أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْتَغِي حَكْمًا وَهُوَ
الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ
مُفَصَّلًا وَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنَزَّلٌ مِّن

revealed from your Lord in truth. So be not you of those who doubt.*82

رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
الْمُمْتَرِينَ

*81 The speaker in this sentence is the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the addressees are his followers, who desired that a sign should be shown for the conversion of the disbelievers. They have been told that no sign will be shown, for Allah had made all the realities plain in the Quran. As regards to their conflict with falsehood, He has decreed that the followers of the truth will have to exert for its domination in the natural way without expecting any supernatural intervention from Him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has, therefore, been asked to declare, “Should I, then, seek some authority higher than Allah to revise His decree and to send down such a miracle as should force them to believe?” (Refer to E.N. 76).

*82 That is, these principles, that have been laid down for the domination of the truth, are not new ones which might have been invented today to explain away the difficulties and obstacles of the way. All those people, who possess the knowledge of the divine Books and are acquainted with the mission of the prophets, will bear testimony that whatever is being stated in the Quran is the very truth, which is eternal and has never changed.

115. And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and justice. None can change His Words. And He

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا
وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَهُوَ

is the All Hearer, the All Knower.

السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١١٥﴾

116. And if you obey most of those on the earth, they will mislead you from Allah's way. They do not follow except conjectures, and they do not but falsify.*83

وَإِنْ تَطَعْتَ أَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا
يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾

***83** The right thing for a seeker-after-truth is not to consider what way the majority of the people are following because that is based on guess work instead of knowledge. Their beliefs, theories, philosophies, principles of life and laws are the result of guess work and are, therefore, sure to mislead. In contrast to that, the way of life with which Allah is pleased, can only be the way which Allah Himself has taught. Therefore, the seeker-after-truth should adopt that way and steadfastly follow it, even though he is left alone on it.

117. Indeed, your Lord, it is He who knows best who strays from His way, and it is He who knows best those who are guided.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَضِلُّ عَنْ
سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ
بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١١٧﴾

118. So eat of that on which Allah's name has been mentioned, if you are believers in His revelations.*84

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ بِعَايَاتِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾

***84** Among the many wrong things which the people have adopted as religious laws without any divine sanction are also the restrictions they have imposed on the articles of food. That is why some people have made certain things lawful whereas they are unlawful in the sight of God, and certain other things unlawful, though Allah has declared them to be lawful. In this connection, the most absurd thing on which some of the former people insisted and on which some of the modern people also insist, is that if Allah's name is pronounced at the slaughter of an animal, it is unlawful and if it is slaughtered without mentioning Allah's name over it, it is quite lawful. In this verse Allah has refuted such ideas and commanded the Muslims to discard all such whims and superstitions which have been invented by the unbelievers and the mushrikin and break all such restrictions which the people have imposed on themselves against the guidance of Allah, if they sincerely believe in it. They should, therefore, make unlawful only that which Allah has made unlawful and vice versa.

119. And what is it with you that you do not eat of that on which Allah's name has been mentioned, and indeed He has explained in detail to you what is forbidden to you, except that to which you are compelled.^{*85} And indeed, many do lead (others) astray by their own desires without

وَمَا لَكُمْ إِلَّا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ
 اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَا
 حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا مَا اضْطُرَّرْتُمْ
 إِلَيْهِ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا لَيُضِلُّونَ
 بِأَهْوَاءِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ

knowledge. Certainly, your Lord, He knows best of the transgressors.

هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

***85** See Ayats 114-116 of Surah An-Nahl. Incidentally, this reference also shows that Surah An-Nahl was revealed before Surah Al-Anam.

120. And leave the apparent of sin and the concealed thereof. Indeed, those who earn sin will be recompensed for that which they used to commit.

وَذَرُوا ظَهْرَ الْاِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الْاِثْمَ
سَيَجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَقْتَرِفُونَ

﴿١٢٠﴾

121. And do not eat of that on which Allah's name has not been mentioned, and for sure it is abomination. And indeed, the devils do inspire to their friends to dispute with you.^{*86} And if you obey them, you would indeed be those who associate others (with Allah).^{*87}

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذَكَرْ اسْمُ
اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَاِنَّهٗ لَفِسْقٌ وَّانِ
الشَّيْطٰنِ لِيُوْحٰوْنَ اِلٰى
اَوْلِيَآئِهِمْ لِيُجَدِّلُوْكُمْ وَاِنَّ
اَطَعْتُمُوْهُمْ اِنَّكُمْ لَشٰرِكُوْنَ

﴿١٢١﴾

***86** This is with reference to the different kinds of doubts and objections with which the Jewish scholars used to poison the minds of ignorant Arabs against Islam. According to a tradition of Abdullah bin Abbas, one of the objections taught by the Jews against the Prophet

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was: “How is it that the one killed by Allah (by natural death) should be unlawful, while the other which is killed by us (by mentioning the name of Allah) should be lawful?” This is an instance of the crooked attitude of those so called people of the Book. They would invent and pose questions like this before the common people so as to poison their minds with doubts and to arm them with weapons to fight with the truth.

*87 It is also shirk to acknowledge the Godhead of Allah and at the same time follow the decrees and ways of those who have turned away from Allah. The acknowledgment of the Oneness of Allah demands that one should obey Allah in all aspects of his life. So much so that if a person believes that someone else also should be obeyed along with Allah, he would be guilty of committing shirk in his creed. And if a person obeys such people as arrogate to themselves the authority of making things lawful and unlawful, in utter disregard of the guidance of Allah, he would be guilty of practical shirk.

122. And is he who was dead, then We gave him life,^{*88} and We made for him a light by which he can walk among the people, like him whose similitude is in darkness,^{*89} from which he can never come out. Thus it is made fair seeming^{*90} to the disbelievers that which they

أَوْ مَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا
لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ
كَمَن مَّثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ
بِخَارِجٍ مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

used to do.



***88** Here, “He who was dead” means who was first in a state of ignorance and lacked understanding. Likewise, “Then We gave him life” means then he was given knowledge and understanding and was restored to that mental state which can recognize the truth. And the fact is that one who cannot distinguish between right and wrong and does not know the right way, might be regarded as alive from the physical point of view, but he does not enjoy that life which makes him a real human being. He is no doubt a living animal, but he is not a living man. A living man is only he who can distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, righteous and unrighteous.

***89** That is, how can you expect that a man, who has gotten real understanding of life and recognizes clearly, by the light of knowledge, the straight way from among the countless crooked ways, would live a life like those who lack understanding and blunder blindly into the darkness of ignorance and folly?

***90** It is the law of Allah that He makes their deeds seem fair to those who refuse to be guided by the light which is offered to them and who prefer to tread the crooked paths, even though they are invited to the right way. Then they begin to love darkness and like groping their way through it like the blind and to be knocked about throughout their lives. Accordingly, every vice appears to them worth enjoying and every piece of folly a gem of wisdom. After the failure of such an experiment that produces mischief, they

get ready for another in the hope that the first failure was due to some accidental mistake that will be avoided in future experiments.

123. And thus We have placed in every town the greatest of its criminals to conspire therein. And they do not conspire except against their own selves, and they do not perceive.

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ
أَكْبَرَ مُجْرِمِيهَا لِيَمْكُرُوا
فِيهَا وَمَا يَمْكُرُونَ إِلَّا
بَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

124. And when there comes to them a sign, they say: “We shall never believe until we are given the like of that which was given to Allah’s messengers.”*91 Allah knows best with whom to place His message. There will afflict those who committed crimes, humiliation from Allah and severe punishment, for that which they used to conspire.

وَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ
حَتَّى نُؤْتَى مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ
اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ
سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا صَغَارٌ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا
كَانُوا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

***91** What they meant was: “We are not going to believe in the claim of the Messengers that an angel came to them with a message from Allah, unless the angel comes directly to us to deliver the message of Allah.

125. So whoever Allah wills to guide, He

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ

expands his breast to Islam.*92 And whoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast tight, constricted, as though he were climbing up into the sky. Thus, Allah places ignominy upon those who do not believe.

صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ
يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا
حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ فِي
السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ تَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ
الرَّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ



*92 “He expands his breast to Islam” means: “Allah makes him fully convinced of the truth of Islam by removing from his mind and heart every kind of doubt, suspicion, hesitation and indecision about Islam.”

126. And this is the path of your Lord, (leading) straight. We have indeed detailed the revelations for a people who heed to admonition.

وَهَذَا صِرَاطُ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمًا
قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ



127. For them will be the abode of peace*93 with their Lord. And He will be their protecting friend because of what they used to do.

هُم دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُوَ
وَلِيُّهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



*93 “Abode of peace”: The heaven, place of perfect peace and happiness, where the dwellers will be immune from

every kind of calamity and misery.

128. And the day when He will gather them together (and say): “O company of the jinns,^{*94} you have indeed (mislead) many of mankind.” And their friends among mankind will say: “Our Lord, we did benefit, some of us from the others,^{*95} and we have reached our appointed term which You did appoint for us.” He will say: “The Fire is your residence, you will dwell therein, except for what Allah wills. Indeed, your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing.”^{*96}

وَيَوْمَ تَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا يَمْعَشِرُ
الْجِنَّ قَدْ اسْتَكْرَثْتُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ
وَقَالَ أَوْلِيَائُهُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ رَبَّنَا
اسْتَمْتَعَ بَعْضُنَا بِبَعْضٍ وَبَلَّغْنَا
أَجَلَنَا الَّذِي أَجَّلْتَ لَنَا قَالَ
النَّارُ مَثْوَاكُمْ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا إِلَّا
مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ



***94** Here by the *jinn* are meant the satans of *jinn*.

***95** That is, every one of us made an unfair use of the other and cheated him for selfish ends.

***96** As Allah is All-Wise and All-Knowing, both punishment and forgiveness will be based on wisdom and knowledge and, therefore, will be reasonable and just. He will forgive only that wrongdoer, whom He knows not to be personally responsible for his crime and liable to punishment.

129. And thus We shall make the wrong doers

وَكَذَلِكَ نُؤَلِّي بَعْضَ الظَّالِمِينَ

friends of one another,
because of that which they
used to earn.*97

بَعْضًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾

***97** That is, just as they were accomplices in their sins and crimes in the world, so they shall also share the punishment in the Hereafter.

130. “O you assembly of the jinns and the mankind, did not there come to you messengers from amongst you, reciting to you My verses, and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours.” They will say: “We bear witness against ourselves.”*98 And the life of the world deceived them. And they will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers.*99

يَمَعَشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ أَلَمْ
يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ
عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ
لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا شَهِدْنَا
عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِنَا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَوةُ
الدُّنْيَا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ
أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾

***98** That is, we confess that one messenger after the other came from You and informed us of the truth but it was our own fault that we did not believe in what they said.

***99** They themselves would confess that they were not ignorant of the truth: it did reach them but they deliberately rejected it.

131. This is because your Lord destroys not the townships unjustly while

ذَٰلِكَ أَن لَّمْ يَكُن رَّبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ

their people were unaware,
(so the messengers were
sent).^{*100}

الْقُرَىٰ بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلُهَا غَافِلُونَ



***100** It means that Allah does not desire to allow the guilty ones the opportunity to protest and say, You did not inform us of the truth, nor did You send anyone to show us the right way. But now when, in our ignorance we have adopted the wrong way, You are going to punish us for it. In order to refute this argument, Allah sent His Messengers and Books to fore-warn mankind and jinn, prior to the execution of His judgments. If, in spite of this, the people choose wrong ways and are punished for this, they themselves are to be blamed and not Allah.

132. And for all, there will be ranks according to what they did. And your Lord is not unaware of what they do.

وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا
وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا
يَعْمَلُونَ



133. And your Lord is self sufficient, the possessor of mercy (Compassionate).^{*101} If He wills, He could take you away and cause to succeed after you whom He wills, even as He raised you up from the posterity of other people.

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَنِيُّ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ إِن
يَشَاءُ يُدْهِبْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفْ مِنْ
بَعْدِكُمْ مَّا يَشَاءُ كَمَا
أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ قَوْمٍ
ءَاخِرِينَ



***101 “Your Lord is Self-Sufficient”:** He does not stand in need of any kind of help from you, nor does He need anyone to look after His interests. Therefore, you can do him no harm by your disobedience, nor can you do Him any good by your obedience. Even if all of you rebel against Him, you cannot detract an iota from His kingdom; nor can you add an iota to it, if all of you decide to obey and worship Him. He needs neither your obedience nor your offering. As a matter of fact, he is showering His countless blessings on you without desiring anything in return from you.

In the context in which “Compassionate” occurs, it implies two things. First, it is only out of compassion for you that Allah is showing you the right way and not for His own interest. It will not serve any interest of His if you follow the right way and keep away from the wrong ways: nor will it do Him any harm if you swerve from it. As a matter of fact, you will be serving your own interest and avoiding harm to yourselves by following it. Therefore, it is His kindness that He teaches you the right conduct to enable you to attain higher ranks and restrains you from wrong behavior that will throw you to the lowest depths of degeneration. Second, your Lord is not ruthless: He does not enjoy punishing you for trifling offenses and errors. As a matter of fact; He is very kind and sympathetic to all His creatures and rules over them with great compassion. That is why He forgives and forbears your shortcomings over and over again and shows compassion and leniency to you even though you become guilty of disobedience, sins and

crimes. You impudently discard His commandments, knowing well that He is your Providence; yet He forgives and forbears and gives you respite after respite, so that you may understand the reality and mend your ways. Had He been ruthless, He could have destroyed you instantly and raised another people to replace you, or destroyed the whole human race and created another species.

134. Indeed, that which you are promised will surely come to pass,^{*102} and you cannot escape.

إِنَّ مَا تُوْعَدُونَ لَأْتِي وَمَا
أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ

١٣٤

***102** That is, Resurrection, when all human beings, from the first to the last, shall be brought back to life and presented before their Lord for final judgment.

135. Say (O Muhammad): “O my people, work according to your way.^{*103} Surely, I am working too. Then soon you will know who it is whose end will be (best) in the Hereafter. Certainly, the wrong doers will not prosper.”

قُلْ يَاقَوْمِ أَعْمَلُوا عَلَيَّ
مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ فَسَوْفَ
تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ تَكُونُ لَهُ
عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ
الظَّالِمُونَ

١٣٥

***103** That is, if you do not take the warning from Me and do not give up your wrong ways, then you may go on following the ways of your choice, and let me follow my way. Ultimately, both you and I will see the consequences.

136. And they^{*104} assign to Allah, from that which He created, of the crops and the cattle, a portion. Then they say: “This is for Allah,” by their claim, “And this is for our (Allah’s so called) partners.”^{*105} Then that which was to their partners, so does not reach to Allah. And that which was to Allah, so that goes to their (Allah’s so called) partners.^{*106} Evil is what they decide.

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ
الْحَرثِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا فَقَالُوا
هَذَا لِلَّهِ بِزَعْمِهِمْ وَهَذَا
لشُرَكَائِنَا ۗ فَمَا كَانَ
لشُرَكَائِهِمْ فَلَا يَصِلُ إِلَى
اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ
إِلَىٰ شُرَكَائِهِمْ ۗ سَاءَ مَا
يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

***104** The preceding discourse (Ayat 135) ended with these words: If these people are not willing to accept your admonition and insist on their ignorance, tell them to act in their own way and that you will act according to your own way. The Day of Judgment will surely come one day when they will know the consequences of their conduct. Anyhow, this is certain that the workers of iniquity will not be successful there. Now from here (Ayats 136-146), instances of their ignorance are being cited to tell them what their iniquity was in which they persisted and from which they could not expect any success.

***105** They assigned a portion of the agricultural produce to Allah as a mark of their gratitude because they believed that all land belonged to Allah Who caused the crops to

grow; likewise they set apart for Allah a portion of the animals which were of great use to them because He was their Creator as well. But at the same time, they also assigned a portion as offerings to the patron gods of their family or clan, for they believed that Allah showed His kindness to them, because their gods, goddesses, angels, jinn, stars and the souls of their dead ancestors interceded with Him in their behalf. They also expected that in this way they would continue their kindness to them. That is why Allah is first of all taking them to task for the iniquity they were committing, so as to say: It is sheer ingratitude that you are making offerings to others of the things that I have created and given you with My own mercy and grace. How is it, then, that you are making others partners in the offerings of your gratitude to Me? Do you think that I give these things to you because of the intercession of others? Then, by implication, Allah has rebuked them for dividing the shares between Him and the partners set up by them with Him in accordance with their own presumptions. This is because they have become their own law makers and assign to Allah and to others whatever share they deem proper. When in fact, Allah is the real giver of everything. Therefore, the portion to be assigned to Him in gratitude should be determined by His law, which should also decide the shares of the other rightful claimants to it. It is thus clear that even that share, which they arbitrarily set apart for Allah and distribute in the poor and indigent, does not merit any worth and there is no reason why it should be accepted by Allah.

***106** This implies a fine sarcasm. They have been rebuked for the evil practices to which they resorted in order to reduce even that portion which they themselves ear-marked for Allah, so as to increase the portion set apart for their gods. This showed that they were far more interested in their self-made gods than God. For instance, they would not mind if any fruit or grain out of the share assigned to Allah happened to go to the other side, but would return it, if anything happened to go to the share of Allah from the share of their gods. In case of drought, if they were forced to make use of the consecrated grain, they would use the share ear-marked for Allah but would not touch the share of their gods for fear lest any misfortune should befall them on account of its desecration. If there happened to be a deficiency in the share of their gods, they would make it up from that of Allah's share, but in the reverse case, they would not take even the smallest thing from the share of their gods to make up for the deficiency in Allah's share. Obviously they would invent very plausible excuses for this. For instance, they would say, God is rich and can afford to forgo any decrease in His share, but the case of gods is different because they are not rich like Allah: therefore they inflict punishment even at the slightest decrease in their share.

The root cause of these superstitious practices was the different uses to which the two consecrated shares were put. Allah's share was given to the beggars, the indigent, the wayfarers, the orphans, etc., but the share consecrated to the gods went to the priests directly or indirectly when it

was offered to the gods in their temples. That is why their selfish religious leaders had been, for centuries, impressing on their ignorant followers that there was no harm, if any decrease occurred in the share of Allah, but on no account should there be any decrease in the share of their gods, “the beloved of God.” On the contrary, it was rather commendable that their share should continue to swell.

137. And thus to many of the idolaters, their (Allah’s so called) partners have made fair seeming the killing of their children,^{*107} that they may ruin them,^{*108} and make their faith obscure for them.^{*109} And if Allah had willed, they would not have done so. So leave them alone and what they fabricate.^{*110}

وَكَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَ لِكَثِيرٍ
مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتْلَ
أَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَائِهِمْ لِيُرْدُوهُمْ
وَلِيَلْبِسُوا عَلَيْهِمْ دِينَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ
اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرَهُمْ وَمَا
يَفْتَرُونَ



***107** Here the word *shuraka* (associates) has been used in a different sense from the one employed in verse 136. There the associates meant the deities whose intercession they regarded as a means of attaining to the blessings and made them partners with Allah in offerings. But, on the contrary, in this verse associates implies the men and devils, who had made the killing of their own children lawful and praiseworthy for them. In the preceding verse they were guilty of shirk because they associated others with Allah in His worship and devotion. Here they were guilty of shirk

because they accepted others besides Allah as law givers and made them judges for deciding the lawful and the unlawful. According to Islam, a person who accepts any law made by other than Allah as authoritative and follows it and considers himself subject to the limits prescribed by it, is guilty of making that being partner with Allah. Both of these are acts of shirk. One is guilty of shirk whether or not one gives the title of lord or god to those to whom one consecrates offerings or accepts and obeys the laws made by them.

As regards the killing of their children, the Arabs committed this sin with three objects in view and the Quran has condemned all the three:

(1) They killed their daughters in order to avoid the disgrace of having a son-in-law, or lest they should fall into the hands of the enemy during the clannish wars, or they should become a cause of disgrace for them in any other way.

(2) They killed their children for economic reasons. They feared lest the burden of their nourishment should become unbearable for them.

(3) They sacrificed their children at the altar of their gods to please them.

***108** The word “ruin” here is very meaningful. On the one hand, it implies moral ruin, for the man who becomes so hard-hearted and cruel as starts killing his own children, loses not only the tender qualities of humanity but also those of animality; on the other, it also implies destruction of the human race and one’s own nation, for the inevitable

result of the killing of children is reduction of the population of one's own nation and consequently of the world as a whole. Obviously, the nation which prevents the birth of its future supporters and builders of its civilization and heirs of its heritage, or kills them as soon as they are born, most surely falls into the abyss of destruction. Above all, this inhuman cruelty to innocent children destroys all the chances of success in the life-after-death because such a one who kills his own humanity, nay, even his own animal instinct of love for offspring, and shows such enmity with the human race and with one's own nation, most surely incurs the most painful torture from Allah.

***109** Their religious leaders, their chiefs and the elders of the clans and others who exercised any influence on them and who claimed to be the followers of the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them), had been adding different creeds, rites and practices to the pure religion taught by the Prophets and causing confusion in the minds of the people about it. Yet the common Arabs of the pre-Islamic period believed that they were following the religion of their Prophets, which was the chosen religion of Allah, though it had been utterly polluted. This was because no record of the real religion of the Prophets had been preserved in their traditions or history or in any other book and none could sift it from the additions and changes that had been made in it afterwards.

***110** That is, O Messenger, you do not need to worry about them, if, in spite, of your admonitions, they insist on following the false ways they have invented. All this has

come to pass because it is the will of God that they should be allowed to follow the way of their choice; otherwise they would not have been able to do what they are doing.

138. And they say: “These cattle and crops are forbidden. No one can eat of them except whom we will,” by their claim,^{*111} and (certain) cattle whose backs are forbidden (for burden), and the cattle on which (at slaughtering) they do not mention the name of Allah.^{*112} (All that is) lying against Him.^{*113} He will recompense them for what they used to fabricate.

وَقَالُوا هَذِهِ أَنْعَمٌ وَحَرَّتْ
حِجْرٌ لَا يَطْعَمُهَا إِلَّا مَنْ نَشَاءُ
بِزَعْمِهِمْ وَأَنْعَمٌ حُرِّمَتْ
ظُهُورُهَا وَأَنْعَمٌ لَا يَذْكُرُونَ اسْمَ
اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا أَفْتِرَاءً عَلَيْهِ
سَيَجْزِيهِمْ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَفْتَرُونَ



***111** Here another self-made religious regulation of the *mushrik* Arabs has been refuted. They used to make vows to reserve certain cattle or the products of certain fields for some particular temple or saint or deity and had made set rules for their use. Accordingly, the right of the use of different kinds of offerings was reserved for a particular kind of people. Allah has declared these to be acts of shirk and warned them against these self-made laws, as if to say, “We will punish you for making vows concerning offerings to others from provisions provided by Us, because We have neither commanded you to make such vows nor prescribed restrictions for their use. All these things have been

invented by the rebellious and arrogant people who shall be dealt with severely.”

*112 We learn from traditions that in certain forms of vows and offerings, it was not considered right to pronounce the name of Allah over cattle. It was also forbidden to ride on them during the Hajj journey, because one has to pronounce: *Labbaik, Allahumma labbaik*: I am present, O my Allah, I am present, during it. Likewise, they insisted that Allah’s name should not be mentioned while milking them or riding them or slaughtering them or eating them.

*113 That is, these regulations were not prescribed by Allah, but they were following these with the conviction that they had been prescribed by Allah, though they had no authority from Allah for this thing. The only authority, they had, was that it had been the practice of their forefathers.

139. And they say: “That which is in the bellies of these cattle is exclusively for our males and is forbidden to our females. And if it is (born) dead, then they all may share in it.”*114 He will soon recompense them for their (false) attribution. Verily, He is All Wise, All Knower.

وَقَالُوا مَا فِي بُطُونِ هَذِهِ
الْأَنْعَامِ خَالِصَةٌ لِّذُكُورِنَا
وَمُحْرَّمٌ عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَإِنْ يَكُنْ
مَيْتَةً فَهُمْ فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ
سَيَجْزِيهِمْ وَصْفَهُمْ إِنَّهُ
حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

*114 According to another article of the self-made law of

the Arabs about the cattle, consecrated by vows and offerings, the males alone were allowed to eat of the flesh of the young ones born from their wombs and the females were forbidden to eat of it. However, if the young one was born dead or it died immediately after its birth, both the males and the females could partake of it.

140. Indeed, lost are those who have killed their children in foolishness without knowledge, and have forbidden that which Allah bestowed upon them, inventing a lie against Allah. They indeed have gone astray and are not guided.*115

قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا أَوْلَادَهُمْ
سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَحَرَّمُوا مَا
رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ افْتِرَاءً عَلَى اللَّهِ قَدْ
ضَلُّوا وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ



*115 That is, although those people, who invented these rituals and customs, were your forefathers, your religious leaders and your chiefs, yet the fact is that they were wrong and had gone astray. Also it is a fact that those ways were wrong and they cannot become right and sacred simply because these were invented by your forefathers and your religious leaders, who permitted the inhuman slaughter of one's own children, who made unlawful, without rhyme or reason, the pure provisions given by Allah and who introduced innovations in religion and ascribed them to Allah. They cannot be regarded as rightly guided by any stretch of imagination even though they be your forefathers and leaders; they were certainly misguided and shall bear

the consequences of their evil ways.

141. And it is He who produces gardens trellised and non trellised,^{*116} and the date palms, and crops of divers flavor, and the olive, and the pomegranate, resembling and yet different (in variety and taste). Eat of their fruit when they bear fruits, and pay its due on the day of its harvest, and waste not by excess. Indeed, He does not love those who are extravagant.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ جَنَّاتٍ مَّعْرُوشَاتٍ وَغَيْرَ مَعْرُوشَاتٍ وَالنَّخْلَ وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا أُكْلُهُ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَانَ مُتَشَابِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَءَاتُوا حَقَّهُ يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ



***116** The original Arabic words *jannat-im-marushat-in* literally mean gardens of creepers, trellised, and has been translated into vineyards; *wa-ghaira-marushat-in* literally mean gardens of plants that are non-trellised and has been translated into gardens of upright trees.

142. And of the cattle are carriers (for burdens), and for slaughter.^{*117} Eat of that which Allah has bestowed upon you, and do not follow the footsteps of the devil. Surely, he is an open enemy to you.^{*118}

وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ حَمُولَةٌ وَفَرَشَاتٌ كُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوتَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ



*117 The original Arabic word *farsh* refers to animals (like sheep etc.) in the sense that they are of small size and almost touch the ground while they are moving about, or in the sense that they are laid on the ground at the time of slaughter, or in the sense that beds are made of their skins and hair.

*118 From the context in which this verse (142) occurs, it is obvious that Allah wills to impress three things:

(1) The gardens, the fields and the animals you possess, have all been bestowed by Allah, and none else has any share in this favor and, therefore, none else is entitled to any gratitude for this.

(2) As none else has any share in this favor, these should be used in accordance with the law of Allah, and none else has any right to prescribe limits for their use; therefore the one who observes the rituals prescribed by anyone other than Allah, transgresses the limits prescribed by Allah and follows the ways of Satan.

(3) All these things have been created by Allah for food and other uses for mankind and none has any right to make these unlawful without knowledge. Therefore Allah does not approve of the restrictions that have been imposed on these things, as a result of superstitions and presumptions.

143. Eight pairs. Of the sheep twain (male and female), and of the goats twain (male and female). Say: "Is it the two males He has forbidden or the

ثَمَنِيةَ أَزْوَاجٍ ط مِنْ الضَّانِ
اثنَيْنِ وَمِنْ الْمَعْرِ اثنَيْنِ قُلْ
ءَالذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمَا

two females, or that which the wombs of the two females contain. Inform me with knowledge if you are truthful.”*119

أَشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ
نَبِّئُونِي بِعِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ

صَادِقِينَ ١٤٣

*119 That is, your answer should be based on knowledge and not on mere presumptions, superstitions or the traditions of your forefathers.

144. And of the camels twain (male and female), and of the oxen twain (male and female). Say: “Is it the two males He has forbidden or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females contain.*120 Or were you present to witness when Allah commanded you this.” Then who does greater wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah, that he may lead mankind astray without knowledge. Certainly, Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.

وَمِنَ الْإِبِلِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ
اثْنَيْنِ ۚ قُلْ ءَآلِ الذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ
الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمْآ أَشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ
أَرْحَامُ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ ۚ أَمْ كُنْتُمْ
شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ وَصَّيَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا
فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ
كَذِبًا لِيُضِلَّ النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۚ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ

الظَّالِمِينَ ١٤٤

*120 The question whether some animals of the same family are lawful and others unlawful, has been posed with

such a detail so that the absurdity of their superstitions may become obvious even to them. It is absurd on the face of it that the male of the same family should be lawful and the female unlawful, or conversely, the female should be lawful and the male unlawful, or the animal should be lawful, but the young one of the same be unlawful. This is such a nonsensical thing that no right thinking person, nay, no man in his senses, can imagine that Allah could ever impose such unreasonable restrictions. It should be noted that the method applied by the Quran to show the absurdity of the superstitious practices of the Arabs can also be applied with equal force to expose the folly of the superstitious practices of the other nations of the world, which have imposed unreasonable restrictions on food and adopted inhuman indiscrimination against other human beings.

145. Say: "I do not find in that which is revealed to me anything forbidden to an eater that he eats it, except that it be carrion, or blood poured forth, or swine flesh, for that indeed is unclean, or the abomination which was immolated to other than Allah.^{*121} Then whosoever is forced by necessity, without disobedience nor exceeding,

قُلْ لَّا أَجِدُ فِي مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحْرَمًا
عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ
يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَّسْفُوحًا أَوْ
لَحْمَ خِنزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ أَوْ
فِسْقًا أَهْلًا لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنْ
أَضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ

then certainly your Lord is
Oft Forgiving, Most
Merciful.”

رَبِّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ
١٤٥

*121 This subject has already been dealt with in Ayat 173, Surah Al-Baqarah; Ayat 3, Surah Al-Maidah; and Ayat 115, Surah An-Nahl.

There appears to be a little difference in the wording of this verse and that of Ayat 173 of Surah Al-Baqarah. In the latter verse it is simply blood that is forbidden, but in this verse it is the blood that has been shed, when an animal is wounded or slaughtered. The addition of the word *masfuh* (that has been shed) merely explains the nature of the blood and does not make any difference in the commandment itself. Likewise in Ayat 3 of Surah Al-Maidah, some other things besides these four have also been mentioned. The animals that have been strangled or beaten to death, or killed by a fall, or mangled by a beast of prey. This, too, does not make any difference in the commandment in the two verses, because this is an explanation which shows that the animals which are killed in that way should also be considered as carrion.

Now let us consider the various opinions of the Jurists. Abdullah bin Abbas and Aishah (may Allah be pleased with them) were of the opinion that, out of the animal food, only these four were unlawful and all others were lawful. But there are several traditions to the effect that the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited other animals besides these four or held them in detestation, e.g., domestic donkeys and fanged beasts of prey and birds with claws.

Therefore most jurists do not consider the prohibition to be confined to these four things only, but extend it to others; then there is also a difference of opinion among the jurists about the prohibition or otherwise of certain animals. For instance, Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik and Imam Shafai declare the domestic donkey to be unlawful, but there are others who assert that the domestic donkey is not unlawful and say that it was prohibited by the Prophet (peace be upon him) on one occasion only for some special reason. The Hanafi s consider the carnivorous beasts and birds of prey and the animals that live on dead flesh to be absolutely unlawful, but according to Imam Malik and Auzai, the birds of prey are lawful and Laith considers the cat to be lawful. According to Imam Shafai, only those carnivorous beasts are unlawful that (like the lion, wolf, tiger) attack man. According to Ikrimah, the crow and the badger are both lawful. Then according to the Hanafis, all crawling creatures are unlawful, whereas Ibn Abi Laila, Imam Malik and Auzai consider the snake to be lawful.

A careful and critical study of the above makes it quite clear that, in reality, only these four things mentioned in the Quran are unlawful and that there are certain other animal foods that are detestable in various degrees. Therefore those things, which according to authentic traditions were held in detestation by the Prophet (peace be upon him), are almost unlawful, but those things about which there is a difference of opinion among the jurists, their detestation is doubtful. As far as personal detestation of certain things by some people is concerned, the Islamic

law does not compel anyone to eat what one dislikes. The same applies to the detestation of certain things by some groups or nations. Conversely, the law does not allow any person or community or nation to force others to consider as unlawful anything that they detest, or to prohibit its use to those who consider them unlawful.

146. And unto those who are Jews, We forbade all (animals) with claws. And of the oxen and the sheep, We forbade to them their fat, except what adheres to their backs, or the entrails, or that which is mixed with the bone. Thus We recompensed them for their rebellion.*¹²² And indeed, We verily are truthful.

وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا
كُلَّ ذِي ظُفْرٍ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ
وَالْغَنَمِ حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ
شُحُومَهُمَا إِلَّا مَا حَمَلَتْ
ظُهُورُهُمَا أَوْ الْحَوَايَا أَوْ مَا
أَخْتَلَطَ بِعَظْمٍ ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُمْ
بِغَيْرِهِمْ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ



*¹²² That certain things were made unlawful for them as punishment for their rebellion has been mentioned in the Quran at three places:

(1) All the articles of food, which are lawful in the Muhammadan law, were also lawful for the children of Israel, except those which Israel had forbidden for himself before the Torah was given. Say to them, bring the Torah and read out any passage from it (in support of your objection), if you are right. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 111).

(2) It is because of the criminal attitude of those who became Jews..... that We had made unlawful many pure things which were formerly lawful for them. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 160).

(3) Here in this Surah, in Ayat 146.

From the above three verses, we conclude that the difference between the Muhammadan and the Jewish laws in regard to the legality or otherwise of animal food is based on two things. First, centuries before the revelation of the Torah, the Prophet Jacob (Israel) had given up the use of several things, and after him, his offspring also did the same. This went on for such a long time that the jurists of the Jewish law began to believe that those things were unlawful in their religion. Accordingly, they inserted in the Torah, the prohibition of those things, the three of which were the camel, the hare and the coney. That is why the Torah, as contained in the existing Bible prohibits their eating. (Levit. 11: 4-6 and Deut. 14:7). But, the open challenge of the Quran to them to bring the Torah in proof thereof shows that the commandments referred to above did not exist in the Torah at that time and were inserted afterwards; otherwise the Jews would have at once accepted the challenge of the Quran and presented the commandments thereof.

The second difference between the two laws was caused by the rebellious attitude of the Jews against the divine law. They became their own law-makers and made many things unlawful by their hair-splitting and Allah let them remain involved in that misunderstanding as a punishment. These

things comprise two categories:

(1) Animals with claws such as the ostrich, the cuckoo, the swan, etc. and

(2) The fat of the cow and the goat, etc. Afterwards, both kinds of prohibitions were incorporated in the existing Torah. (Levit. 11: 16-18, Deut. 14: 14-17, Levit. 3: 17, 7: 22-23). But it is obvious from Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 160 that at first these things were not unlawful in the Torah, but were made so after the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). History also bears evidence that the existing Jewish law was formulated by Rabbi Judas at the end of the second century of the Christian Era.

Now let us consider the objection that might arise regarding the above explanation. If these things were made unlawful in the manner explained above, why has, then, Allah used the word *harramna* (We prohibited) here in verse 130 and in verse 160 of Surah An-Nisa. In considering the objection, we should keep in mind the two ways in which things are made unlawful by Allah.

(1) He prohibits a thing through a Messenger and a Book, and this is the blessing from Him:

(2) He sets false religious law givers and counterfeit law makers over His rebellious servants and they declare pure things as unlawful. As such a prohibition is the curse of God and a punishment from Him, it has been attributed to Him.

147. So if they deny you
(O Muhammad), then say:
“Your Lord is the Owner of

فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ رَبُّكُمْ

vast mercy, and never will His wrath be turned back from the people who are criminals.”*123

ذُو رَحْمَةٍ وَاسِعَةٍ وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَأْسُهُ
عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ



*123 That is, your Lord has limitless Mercy and if even now you repent of your disobedience and adopt the right way of obedience, He will forgive you. But if you persist in your criminal and rebellious attitude, you should note it well that none will be able to ward off His wrath and punishment from you.

148. Those who associate others (with Allah) will say: “If Allah had willed, we would not have associated others (with Allah), nor our fathers, and we would not have forbidden anything (against His will).”*124 Thus did deny those who were before them, until they tasted Our wrath. Say: “Do you have any knowledge that you can produce before us. You follow not except conjecture, and you do nothing except guessing.”

سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ
اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا ءَابَاؤُنَا
وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ
كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّى ذَاقُوا بَأْسَنَا قُلْ
هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ
فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ
إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا
تَخْرُصُونَ



*124 That is, The *mushrikin* will put forward the same old

excuses to justify their crime and wrong conduct which have always been put forward by the criminals and wrong doers of every age. They will say, it is the will of Allah that we should commit shirk and make some lawful things unlawful; for, if Allah had not so willed, it would not have been possible for us to commit such acts. As we are doing these things in accordance with the will of Allah, we are doing the right thing. And if what we are doing is not right, Allah is to blame for it and not us. We are bound by the will of Allah to do what we are doing because anything other than this is beyond our power.

149. Say: “Then for Allah is the conclusive argument. So if He had so willed, He would indeed have guided you all.”*125

قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَلِيغَةُ فَلَوْ شَاءَ
لَهَدَانَكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ



*125 In order to understand the significance of this decisive answer to their lame excuse, let us analyze it:

(1) It warns: The will of God has always been made an excuse by the criminals of all ages to justify their wicked acts and erroneous conduct. This misled them so much that they rejected the truth and consequently met with ruin that overtakes those who fight against the truth.

(2) The excuse which you are putting forward is not based on knowledge but on conjecture and guess work. The whole of your argument is based on hearsay about the will of Allah. You do not understand the meaning of the will of Allah in regard to man. Therefore you wrongfully believe that if a thief commits theft he is not to be regarded as a

thief, because he had done this under the will of Allah. Its real meaning is that Allah will open for a man whatever way he would choose for himself, the way of gratitude or ingratitude, guidance or deviation, obedience or disobedience. Then Allah will let the man do anything, good or bad, he chooses, and will provide for its fulfillment the means that fit in His vast universal designs. Therefore if you and your forefathers were allowed to commit shirk and declare lawful things unlawful under the will of Allah, they had to bear its consequences, for it does not mean that Allah approved of these things. Likewise you shall be responsible and accountable for your wrong choice and for your evil intentions and wicked deeds.

The last sentence, “Had Allah so willed, He would indeed have guided you all,” settles the issue decisively. It implies: Your argument, had Allah willed, we would not have committed shirk, is incomplete. The complete thing will be this: Had Allah willed, He would have shown guidance to all of us. In other words, You yourselves do not intend to choose the right way, but you desire that Allah should make you inherently righteous like angels. You should, however, note it well, that Allah could have done so if He had so willed. But this is not His will. Therefore He will let you go astray on the wrong way that you yourselves have chosen to follow.

150. Say (O Muhammad):
 “Bring forward your
 witnesses, who can bear
 witness that Allah has

قُلْ هَلُمَّ شُهَدَاءَكُمْ الَّذِينَ
 يَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ هَذَا

forbidden this. Then if they bear witness, so you do not bear witness with them.*126

And do not follow the desires of those who deny Our revelations, and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, and they deem (others) as equal with their Lord.

فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَلَا تَشْهَدْ مَعَهُمْ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا
بِعَايَتِنَا وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ
يَعْدُلُونَ



*126 That is, if they understand the grave responsibility of bearing witness and realize that one should bear witness only to that thing of which one has knowledge, they will never testify that all their self imposed restrictions on food, that are current among them and according to which such and such a one should not eat such and such a thing, have been prescribed by Allah. But if these people do not realize the responsibility of bearing witness and impudently give false evidence in the name of Allah, you should not associate yourself with their falsehood. As a matter of fact, the real object of challenging them to bear witness is to sort out the righteous people, if any, from among them, and not that you should accept their false testimony. It is expected that in response to the challenge to bear witness, those, who have any righteousness left in them, will consider very seriously whether the rituals they were following were really prescribed by Allah and if they find no proof that these were sent down by Allah, they will give them up.

151. Say (O Muhammad):
Come, I will recite that

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ

which your Lord has forbidden to you.^{*127} That you associate not anything with Him,^{*128} and be good to parents,^{*129} and do not kill your children because of poverty. We provide sustenance for you and for them. And you come not near to lewd things,^{*130} what is apparent of them and what is concealed. And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except in the course of justice.^{*131} This He has commanded you with, that you may understand.”

رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا تَشْرِكُوا
 بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا
 وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ
 إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ
 وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ
 مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا
 النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا
 بِالْحَقِّ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّوْنُكُمْ بِهِ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ



***127** That is, the limits set by your Lord are not those which you have imposed on yourselves, but they are the following which Allah has set for the regulation of human life and which have always been the fundamental basis of all divine laws. (Please compare these precepts with those contained in Exodus chapter 20).

***128** One is guilty of shirk if:

- (a) One sets up another besides Allah as god, or
- (b) One attributes to another any of those attributes that naturally and exclusively belong to Allah, or
- (c) One sets up a partner with Allah in His powers, or
- (d) In His rights.

According to (a), all those creeds which set up partners with Allah in the essence of His Godhead shall be shirk, e.g. the creed of Trinity of the Christians, the creed of musrhik Arabs to believe in the angels to be daughters of God and to attribute Godhead to their gods and goddesses and the members of the royal families.

According to (b), all those, who believe that someone other than Allah also possesses one or some or all of the attributes which exclusively belong to Allah, shall be guilty of shirk. For instance, it will be shirk if one believes that someone knows all about everything including the unseen or hears everything or is completely free from each and every defect and weakness, and is infallible like Allah.

According to (c), one shall be guilty of shirk, if one believes that someone else besides Allah is able to wield any one or all of those powers that exclusively belong to Him. For instance, one shall be committing shirk, if one believes that someone else besides Allah can, in a supernatural way, benefit or harm or fulfill needs or help or protect or defend, or hear prayers, or make or mar destinies, or set the limits of lawful or unlawful, proper or improper, or prescribe laws (*sharia*) for human life. These shall be shirk, for all these things are the exclusive characteristics of Godhead.

It shall be shirk under (d) if one surrenders to another any or all of those rights to which Allah alone is entitled. For instance, Allah alone has the right that man should stand with bound hands, bow and prostrate before Him, or he should make vows and give offerings in His name alone or make sacrifices as a mark of gratitude in acknowledgment

of His greatness; He alone has the right that He should be invoked to ward off troubles etc. Likewise, Allah alone is entitled to all forms of worship, devotion and glory and He alone has the right to be loved more than anyone or anything else and all other affections should be sacrificed for His love. He alone should be feared so that one would not dare displease or disobey Him openly and secretly. He alone has the right to be obeyed unconditionally and unreservedly, and His guidance alone should be made the sole standard of judging right from wrong and none else should be obeyed except in accordance with the obedience to Allah. If ever, one of these rights is surrendered to someone other than Allah, it will be setting that one as a partner with Him, whether that one is given the title of god or not.

***129** “Good to parents” includes respect and honor, obedience and desire to please and serve parents etc. This right of the parents has been stated in the Quran at several places immediately after the rights of Allah. This is a clear proof that this right of the parents is only next to the right of Allah and has priority over all human rights.

***130** The Arabic word *fawahish* applies to all kinds of impure acts, whose obscenity is absolutely obvious. The Quran declares adultery, sodomy, nudism, calumny, marriage with father’s wife as indecencies. Besides these, theft, drinking and beggary have also been included in the list of indecencies in the traditions. Likewise, all other obscene acts are also indecencies and the divine commandment demands that such acts should neither be

committed openly nor secretly.

***131** This is the declaration of the sanctity of human life by Allah Who has made it inviolable as a basic principle. As regards to its destruction by right, the Quran allows this in three cases and the Prophet (peace be upon him) added two more to these. The Quran makes it lawful to take the life of the one:

(1) Who is proved guilty of the intentional murder of another person.

(2) Who opposes Islam and obstructs its establishment so as to leave no other alternative than to fight with him.

(3) Who spreads disorder within the Islamic territory or exerts to overthrow the established Islamic government.

Besides these, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has made it lawful to take the life of the one:

(4) Who, in spite of being married, is proven guilty of adultery.

(5) Who becomes an apostate and deserts the Islamic community.

These five are the only cases in which it becomes lawful to take human life and there is no other case in which it becomes lawful to take human life and there is no other case besides these in which human life may be taken, be it that of a Muslim, or of a dhimmi, or of an unbeliever.

152. “And come not near to the wealth of the orphan except with that which is better,^{*132} until he reaches (the age of) his full

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا
بِأْتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ
أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ

strength. And give full measure and weight with justice. We burden not any soul beyond its capacity.*133

And when you speak, do justice, even if it be (against) a near relative. And fulfill the covenant of Allah.*134 This He has commanded you with, that you may remember.”

وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ
نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ
فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ
وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ذَٰلِكُمْ
وَصَنَّكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ



*132 “That which is better” will be the one which is based on selflessness, good intentions and the welfare of the concerned orphan, and which is not objectionable in the sight of God or man.

*133 “And give full measure and weight with justice,” is a fundamental principle of the divine law: Allah has added, “We burden not any soul beyond its capacity,” to assure people that whoever tries his very best to be just and right in measuring, weighing and carrying out other trade transactions, will be absolved from his responsibility and will not be taken to account, if in spite of his best efforts, there happens to be an unintentional error.

*134 “Covenant of Allah” is:

- (a) The solemn agreement which man makes with Allah,
- (b) the solemn pledge which he makes with another man in the name of Allah, and
- (c) the natural compact that comes into force as soon as one is born in the human society on Allah’s earth.

The first two kinds of covenants are intentional and optional, but the third one is a moral and natural obligation. Though man has no option in the choice of the third compact, yet it is as binding as the first two and should be honored as much. This is because Allah has given him life with extraordinary physical and mental faculties and furnished the earth for his habitation and provided nourishment, and limitless resources etc. for him. Naturally all this entails some rights of Allah on him. Likewise, it entails some rights of the mother who gives birth to and nourishes him and of the father who brings him up and of the society that affords him many kinds of facilities and opportunities. All these rights become, by their very nature, obligatory on him in varying degrees. It is true that this covenant of man with God and society has not been written in any statute book, nevertheless it has been ingrained by nature in each and every particle of his body, which itself owes its very existence to this covenant. A reference to this has been made in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 27: “Who break Allah’s covenant after ratifying it: who cut asunder what Allah has ordered to be joined and who produce chaos on the earth.” It has again been mentioned in Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 172 to this effect: “At the time of the creation of Adam, Allah brought forth all his would be descendants up to the Last Day, from the loins of mankind, and made them stand witnesses to the covenant that He is their Lord.

153. And verily, this is My path, leading straight, so follow it. And follow

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا
فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ

not (other) ways, that would separate you from His way.^{*135} This He has commanded you with, that you may fear (Allah).

فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ
وَصَّانِكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ



***135** “This is My path, leading straight, so follow it.” This natural covenant demands that man should follow the path shown by Allah, because any deviation from it into the paths of rebellion or independence or in the worship of another than Allah will be the first violation against that covenant, and will mislead one into other violations one after the other. Besides, no man can fulfill the obligations of this most delicate, vast and intricate covenant unless one accepts divine guidance and follows it in every aspect of life.

“And follow not (other) ways” because they will turn you away from His right way which is the only way which leads to His nearness, pleasure and approval. Moreover, when the people deviate from His right way, each man has to make his own choice out of the hundreds of other ways. Thus the people are scattered in all directions and there is bewilderment, confusion and disorder among all mankind and this becomes a hindrance in the way of its real progress and development (See E.N. 35, Surah Al-Maidah).

154. Then We gave Moses the Book, making complete (Our favor) upon him who would do good, and an

ثُمَّ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ تَمَامًا
عَلَى الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ وَتَفْصِيلًا

explanation of all things, and a guidance and a mercy, that they might believe in the meeting with their Lord. *136

لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهَدَىٰ وَرَحْمَةً
لَّعَلَّهُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ

*136 “Believe in the meeting with their Lord” means that one should believe that he shall have to render an account of his deeds to his Lord; therefore he should live a life of responsibility. Here it may imply that the Torah was sent: (1) To produce a sense of responsibility among the Israelites themselves and, (2) To induce the other people to make a study of its high moral system of life, and to observe the noble effects of its guidance and blessing on those who adopted its teachings so that they may be convinced that a life of responsibility based on the belief in the life of the Hereafter is far better than an irresponsible life based on its rejection and this observation may convince them to believe in the Hereafter.

155. And this (Quran) is a Book which We have revealed as a blessing, so follow it and fear (Allah), that you may receive mercy.

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ
فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

156. Lest you should say: “The Book was only sent down to two groups before us, *137 and that we were indeed unaware of what they studied.”

أَنْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابُ
عَلَىٰ طَائِفَتَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا
عَنْ دِرَاسَتِهِمْ لَغَافِلِينَ

***137 That is, to the Jews and the Christians.**

157. Or lest you should say: “If only the Book had been sent down to us, we would surely have been better guided than they. So indeed, (now) there has come to you a clear evidence from your Lord, and a guidance and a mercy. So who does greater wrong than he who denies the revelations of Allah, and turns away from them.^{*138} We shall soon recompense those who turn away from Our revelations with an evil torment, because of their having turned away.

أَوْ تَقُولُوا لَوْ أَنَّا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا
الْكِتَابُ لَكُنَّا أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمْ
فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن
رَّبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ فَمَنْ
أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن كَذَبَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَصَدَفَ عَنْهَا سَنَجْزِي الَّذِينَ
يَصْدِفُونَ عَن آيَاتِنَا سُوءَ
الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْدِفُونَ

***138** Here *Ayaat* are Allah’s revelations presented in the Quran as well as His Messenger’s (peace be upon him) noble character and the pure lives of the believers which clearly distinguished them from the unbelievers, and also those wonderful phenomena of nature which the Quran was putting forward as proofs of the truth of its Message.

158. Do they (then) wait (for anything) except that the angels should come to them, or your Lord should come,

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ
الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ

or there should come some of the signs of your Lord. The day when some of the signs^{*139} from your Lord will come, no benefit will it do (then) to a soul to believe in them, if he had not believed before, or earned through his faith any good.^{*140} Say: "Wait you, we too indeed are waiting."

بَعْضُ ءَايَاتِ رَبِّكَ يَأْتِي
بَعْضُ ءَايَاتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ
نَفْسًا إِيمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ ءَامِنْتَ
مِن قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا
خَيْرًا قُلْ أَنْتَظِرُونَ إِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُونَ



***139** Signs are the signs of the Day of Resurrection or some imminent scourge or some other sign that may unveil the reality in such a way as to leave no doubt about it and after which no more chance for test and trial might be left.

***140** That is, if after seeing these signs a disbeliever repents of his disbelief and professes faith, such a conversion shall be meaningless; likewise the one who professes to believe but adopts the way of disobedience, shall be deemed to have no faith at all, because faith and obedience can have any value only up to the time that the reality remains hidden behind the curtain, and the prospect of a long life is ahead and the world with all its allurements is deluding one into believing that there is no Allah and no Hereafter; therefore, one should eat, drink and be merry.

159. Indeed, those who have divided their religion, and become sects,^{*141} you are not with them in

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا
شِيَعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا

anything. Their affair is only with Allah, then He will inform them of what they used to do.

أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا
كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

***141** Though the address is directed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) , yet all the followers of the true religion are, through him, included in it. It means that the righteous people should not follow the ways of those who became sects by causing divisions in the true religion, which has always been the same and is the same today. Its basic principles are that Allah alone is the Deity and Lord of the whole universe. That none should be set up as His equal or partner in His attributes, powers or rights. That there shall be the next world, in which all human beings shall have to render the account of what they do in this world, and that they should mold their lives in accordance with those broad fundamental principles that have been taught by Allah through His Messengers and Books. This is the true religion that had been given to mankind from the very first day of its creation. As regards to the different religions and sects that came into existence afterwards, they were the result of the changes that were made in the true religion by different people at different times. Some of them introduced new things into it, others made changes in it to suit their desires, still others mixed things in it because of their exaggerated reverence. Then they tampered with its creed by mixing with it their whims, their speculations and their philosophies. They also changed it by adding to its commandments their innovations and their self made laws

and by corrupting its regulations by hair-splitting and exaggerating the differences in its details and by rendering important things unimportant and vice versa. They went to two extremes: they adored some Prophets too much and opposed and rejected others. In this way numerous new religions and sects came into existence and divided humanity into fighting groups. Therefore it is essential for a follower of the true religion to have nothing to do with any of these sects and to keep his own path clear of them.

160. Whoever comes with a good deed, for him is ten times the like thereof (to his credit). And whoever comes with an evil deed, will not be recompensed except the like thereof, and they will not be wronged.

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرٌ
أَمْثَالِهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا
يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا
يُظْلَمُونَ



161. Say (O Muhammad): “Indeed, my Lord has guided me to a straight path, a right religion, the way of Abraham,^{*142} the true in faith. And he was not among those who associated others (with Allah).”

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَيْتَنِي رَبِّيَ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيمًا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ



***142** “Way of Abraham”: This is another distinctive characteristic of the ever-true-faith. This has been given preference to “way of Moses” or “way of Jesus” because the followers of Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them) had

applied the misnomers of “Judaism” and “Christianity” to that “way.” Moreover, the term “way of Abraham” has been used because both the Jews and the Christians acknowledged Abraham (peace be upon him) as a true Prophet. They also knew it well that he died long before the births of Judaism and Christianity. The Arab mushrikin also could not deny that his “way” was the right way, for they believed that he was a righteous man and in spite of their ignorance, they had to acknowledge that the founder of the Kabah was a pious worshiper of Allah and not an idolater.

162. Say: “Indeed, my prayer, and my sacrifice, and my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds.”

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ
وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

*143 The Arabic word *nusuk* (rites of worship) may mean animal sacrifice as well as all other forms of prayer and worship.

163. “He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of those who surrender (to Him).”

لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ^ص وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ
وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

164. Say: “Is it other than Allah shall I seek as a Lord, and He is the Lord of all things.*144 And each

قُلْ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْغِي رَبًّا وَهُوَ رَبُّ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ^ج وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ

soul earns not except against itself. And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of others.*145 Then to your Lord is your return, then He will indeed inform you of that wherein you used to differ.

نَفْسٌ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ
وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ
مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ
تَخْتَلِفُونَ



*144 That is, when, in fact, Allah is the Lord of everything in the universe, how can any other be my Lord? When I see that the whole of the universe submits to His law and I, too, being a part of the universe, have to submit to Him in my physical life, how can then it be rational that I should seek another Lord for the guidance of that part of my life for the conduct of which I have been given common sense and option?

*145 It means that everyone is responsible and accountable for his own deeds and this responsibility can, on no account, be shifted from one to the other.

165. And it is He who has appointed you vicegerent of the earth, and has exalted some of you above others in ranks, that He may try you through that which He has given you.*146 Indeed, your Lord is swift in retribution, and indeed, He is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ
الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ
بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَبْلُوكُمْ فِي مَا
ءَاتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ
وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ



***146** In this verse three realities have been stated;

(1) That each and every thing in the universe belongs to Allah and all human beings are His vicegerents on the earth in the sense that He has entrusted many of His things to them and delegated powers to exploit them.

(2) That Allah has ascribed different ranks to His vicegerents in regard to the trusts. He has entrusted some with a large number of His things, while others with a small number and endowed some with a greater capacity for work than others. Likewise there is a difference in the powers He has delegated to them: nay, he has even given powers to some human beings over other human beings.

(3) That this worldly life is merely a test and all the things and powers that have been given as trusts are the means of the test. An accurate record is being kept of how each man is making use of his trust and how far he is exploiting these things in accordance with the terms of the trust and how he is using or abusing his abilities, capabilities, etc. in this regard. The result of his test will determine man's rank in the next world.

