

If man thinks carefully, this verse does not only concern wealth and money, but it also concerns every power, strength and energy of our body. When we expend it and it gets depleted, Allah replaces it and has arranged for its replenishment. Imagine even if our limbs, organs and other body parts were made of steel and worked constantly for 60-70 years, they would have diminished long ago. However, as they diminish, Allah replenishes them inwardly as though by means of an automatic machine. Likewise, man keeps spending and it is constantly replenished.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

أَنْفَقَ يَا بِلَالُ وَلَا تَخَشَ مِنْ ذِي الْعَرْشِ إِقْلَالًا

"O Bilāl, spend and do not fear that the Lord of the Throne will render you indigent." (Ibn Kathīr)

أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَى. وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى [revealed] in the scriptures of Mūsā and of Ibrāhīm who fulfilled [his covenant]?... 53:37- 38) In verse [37], the Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام has been described by the expression *waffā* which is derived from the root word *wafā'* and it means to fulfill faithfully the covenant one has made with someone.

Special Characteristic of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام: fulfillment of Covenant

Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had a covenant with Allah that he will obey Him and convey His Message to all the people. He fulfilled faithfully the covenant: He obeyed Allah and delivered His Message to His creatures. As a result, he was made to pass through severe trials and tribulations. This is the interpretation placed upon the expression *waffā* (fulfilled) by Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr and others.

Several narratives describe particular works of Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام as a purport of the expression *waffā*, but the two versions are not contradictory, because fulfillment of covenant is general. It comprehends acting upon all the Divine injunctions, obeying Allah in all actions, fulfilling the duties of Prophet-hood and messenger-ship and reforming the creation of Allah.

Let us consider the narrative which Ibn Abī Ḥatīm has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū 'Umāmah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the verse 37, and asked: Do you know what is the meaning of

waffā (fulfilled)? Sayyidnā Abū 'Umāmah رضي الله عنه replied: Allah and His Rasūl know best. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

وَفِي عَمَلٍ يَوْمِهِ بَارِعٍ رَكَعَاتٍ فِي أَوَّلِ النَّهَارِ. (ابن كثير)

"He fulfilled the day's work by starting it with the performance of four *rak'at* [that is, *ṣalāt-ul-ishrāq*]."

This is supported by the Tradition recorded in Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه, according to whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

إِبْنِ آدَمَ أَرْكَعْ لِي أَرْبَعَ رَكَعَاتٍ مِنْ أَوَّلِ النَّهَارِ أَكْفِكَ آخِرَهُ. (ابن كثير)

"O Son of 'Ādam! Perform four *rak'at* of prayer in the early part of the day, I shall take of you in all your affairs till the end of the day."

Ibn Abī Ḥātim reports another Tradition from Sayyidnā Mu'adh Ibn Anas رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Do you know why Allah gave Ibrāhīm عليه السلام the title of *al-ladhi waffā* (the one who fulfilled)? Then, he said, 'Because he used to recite the following *dhikr* every morning and evening:

فَسُبِّحَنَ اللَّهُ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَحِينَ تُظْهِرُونَ. (ابن كثير)

Scriptures of Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليه السلام: Special Guidance and Teachings

Whenever any command, statement, action or teaching of Allah is quoted in the Qur'ān from the scriptures of the former Prophets عليه السلام, it means that it is obligatory for this 'Ummah to act upon it, unless there is an explicit text abrogating the previous teachings. Forthcoming eighteen verses elaborate on the special teachings of the scriptures of Holy Prophets Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهما السلام. Of them only two of the previous teachings are concerned with practical life. The rest are meant to advise, warn and draw attention to the Signs of Allah. The two verses [38] and [39] concerned with prescriptive teachings are as follows:

None shall carry the Burden of Any Other on the Day of Resurrection

﴿٣٨﴾ وَأَنْ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى ﴿٣٩﴾

(It was) that no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of the

other, [38] and that a man shall not deserve but (the reward of) his own effort, [39]

The word *wizr* originally means a burden, and the verse purports to say that every man shall have to carry his own wrongdoings, whether disbelief or sin, and none else shall carry his burden of sin, as Allah states in [35:18].

وَأَنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ إِلَىٰ جَمِيلًا لَا يُحْمَلُ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ

And if a person carrying a heavy load calls (someone) to (share) his load, nothing from it shall be carried (by the latter), even though he be a near of kin. [18]

By load or burden is meant the load or burden of sin and its punishment, signifying that on the Day of Resurrection the punishment of one will not be given to another, nor will anyone have the choice to pay for another's sin as the verse quoted above clearly indicates.

This verse also refutes the thinking of the person which was narrated above as Background of Revelation: He had become a Muslim or was going to become one, and his friend rebuked him, saying that if any punishment is meted out to him, he guarantees him that no harm will come to him. The friend assured him that he would bear the burden of his punishment, and save him. This verse further clarifies that in matters, such as these, there is no possibility that one person may commit the sin and another is held accountable to pay the price.

As for the Ḥadīth of Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥain, that the dead are punished because of the weeping and wailing of their families on his death, it relates to the person who himself used to weep and wail for the deceased and was wont to it, or who had advised his heirs to weep and wail for him after his death. (Mazhari). In this case he is punished for his own deed, not on account of other people's deed.¹

The second injunction is contained in verse [39] وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ

(1). It should be noted here that if one weeps on the death of a person in a way that he or she cannot control his or her emotions, it is not a sin in Shari'ah. The wailing that has been prohibited is a particular type of wailing that was customary in Pre-Islam Arab society, and is still in vogue in some areas, in which one would cry loudly, often in an artificial manner, and would invite others to weep, slapping his face, tearing his clothes and complaining of the destiny. It is this type of formal wailing that is meant here by the esteemed author. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

(and that a man does not deserve but [the reward of] his own effort,....53:39) The summary of this verse is that just as no person shall carry the burden of sin of any other, so shall he benefit only from the good that he himself has done. It is not the case that a person performs a righteous act instead of someone else, and the latter is absolved of his responsibility. For example, if a person performs the obligatory prayers and fasts on behalf of somebody else, the latter will not be absolved of his religious duties and obligations. He is still liable for them. Likewise, if a person embraces faith on behalf of somebody else, the latter cannot be regarded as a believer.

Thus interpreted, no juristic problems arise in connection with this verse. However, some superficial questions do arise regarding Hajj and *Zakāh*. In times of necessity Shari'ah permits to perform Hajj on behalf of somebody else, or pay *Zakāh* on his behalf with his permission. How is this possible? A careful analysis of the two situations does not pose any problem: In the case of *Hajj-e-Badal*, the sender of a person to perform this type of pilgrimage bears the expenses himself,² and thus it is his [the sender's] own act for which he will be rewarded. In the case of *Zakāh*, appointing someone to pay is also the act of the person who made the appointment, and not that of the appointee. Therefore, the two cases are not in conflict with verse [39].

Offering Reward of Good Deeds to others

In the foregoing section we have explained that verse [39] means that no person can perform an obligatory act, such as faith, prayers and fasts, on behalf of some other person to free him of his religious duties. He will be able to benefit only from the good he himself has done. This, however, does not imply that a person cannot perform supererogatory acts and proffer their reward to someone else. There is ample textual evidence of Shari'ah that a person can supplicate or give charity or do any other good deed and proffer its reward to others. Further, there is an overwhelming consensus of the Ummah on this issue. (Ibn Kathīr)

However, only Imām Shāfi' رحمه الله تعالى differs on this issue. He says that the reward of recitation of the Qur'an cannot be proffered to anyone

(2). It should be kept in mind that this is allowed only when one is unable to perform Hajj due to a physical constraint, and therefore his obligation becomes limited to sending someone else with his own expense. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

else. He takes the above verse in a general sense and argues that the rewards of the purely bodily acts of worship, such as the prayer, fasting and recitation of the Qur'ān and so on, cannot be passed on to any other person. According to Imām Abū Hanifah رحمه الله تعالى and majority of the leading jurists, it is permissible. They argue that just as it is possible to pray for and proffer the reward of charity to another person, so likewise it is possible to recite the Qur'ān and perform other voluntary prayers to pass the reward to another person who will receive it. Qurṭubī says, in his Tafsīr, a large number of Traditions bear testimony to the fact that a believer will receive the reward of the righteous acts of another person. Tafsīr Maẓharī has, on this occasion, collected all the relevant Traditions which prove that another person does receive the benefit of *Iṣāl-e-Thawāb* (proffering the reward of good acts).

The foregoing verses have elaborated on two issues with reference to the scriptures of Prophets Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهم السلام: [1] No one will bear the burden of another's sin and punishment; and [2] No one shall be freed of his Shar'ī obligations, unless he himself performs them. These two rules of law were available in the Shari'ah of all the Prophets. However, they are especially mentioned in relation to Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهم السلام probably because in their days an evil custom had taken deep root that the son used to be killed instead of the father; and father, brother, sister or some other member of the family used to be killed instead of the son. The Shari'ah of these prophets abolished all the evil customs of the dark age.

وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَى (and that his effort will soon be seen...53:40) In other words, outer actions of a person are not sufficient. Allah will take into account the real, inner motive and driving force behind them whether they were performed with the sincerity of purpose, or they were done with some ulterior motive. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ

"Actions shall be judged only by the intentions."

That is, the outer aspect of actions is not sufficient. The inner aspect is also necessary. Actions must be performed purely for the good pleasure of Allah and in compliance with His command.

وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ (and that to your Lord is the end [of every one],... 53:42) This means that ultimately every one will return to Allah on the Day of Resurrection, and give an account of his actions.

Some of the commentators interpret that this statement purports to say that the access of human thought and imagination ends with Allah. The reality of His Being and attributes cannot be discovered by human imagination, because they are beyond conceptualization. Thus we are clearly prohibited from deliberating (See Ma'ariful Qur'an, Vol.2/pp 277-280 [Tr.]) in His Being and His Attributes. There are narrations that tell us to ponder over the manifestation of His Attributes and bounties, and not to conceptualize His Being and His Attributes or Qualities, the reality of which should be left to the Divine Knowledge only.

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَى (and that He is the One who makes [one] laugh and makes [him] weep,...53:43) Mankind experiences happiness and grief, and consequently laughing and weeping. Man assigns this to the secondary causes [which refer to every existent thing in this universe, and that is where he ends the matter. If we analyze carefully and profoundly, the whole system of cause and effect ends with Allah, the Primary and Supreme Cause. No secondary cause makes anyone happy or sad, nor does it make him to laugh or weep. Both of these things are created by Allah. He created the series of secondary causes and effects in our finite world. But as the Primary and Supreme Cause, He can at any moment make the laughing person weep, and make the weeping person laugh. How well it has been versified!

گوش گل چرخن گفتم کن خندانست بعد لب چرموده که نالانست

What have You whispered to the ear of a flower (O Allah) whereby it is smiling?

And what have You said to the nightingale whereby it is weeping all the times?

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَعْنَىٰ وَأَقْنَىٰ (and that He is the One who gives wealth and preserves [it]...53:48) The word *ghinā* means affluence, and *ighnā* means to give wealth to somebody else, and enrich him. The word *aqnā* is derived from *qinyatun* which means preserving and reserve wealth. The meaning of the verse is that it is Allah Who enriches His servants and grants wealth to them to their satisfaction, so that they are able to use some and keep

some in their reserve fund for future use.

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشِّعْرَى (and that He is the One who is the Lord of Sirius ...53:49) The word *shi'rā* with the diacritical symbol *kasrah* under the letter *shīn* is the name of a star, called Sirius which is behind Jauzā'. Some of the Arab tribes worshipped the mighty star, Sirius, because they regarded it as a source of good or bad luck for them. Allah mentions this star in particular in order to refute their false notion and to affirm that He is the Lord and Master of this star as well, although He is the Creator, Master and Lord of all the stars, heavens and the earth.

وَأَنَّهُ أَهْلَكَ عَادًا لِأُولَىٰ وَنَمُودًا فَمَا أَبْقَى (and that He has destroyed the earlier 'Ād, and Thamūd, so spared none,...53:50-51) The people of 'Ād were among the strongest, fiercest people and the most rebellious against Allah. There are two branches of this people: one of them is known as 'ulā [the first] and 'ukhrā [the latter or the second]. Holy Prophet Hūd عليه السلام was sent to 'Ād, but they disobeyed him, as a result Allah annihilated the entire nation by a violently furious wind. This is the first nation that was destroyed in punishment after the destruction of the people of Holy Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام. (Maḥzarī) Holy Prophet Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام was sent to the tribe of Thamūd, being the second 'Ād, but they too disobeyed their Prophet. Those who transgressed were caught by the awesome Cry of Jibra'īl عليه السلام and their hearts were burst by the horrific sound resulting in the mass destruction of those people. (See Ma'āriful Qur'an Vol. 4/p. 651 and the cross-reference given there. [Tr.]

وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ أَهْوَى (And He destroyed the overturned towns also,... 53:53) The word *Mu'tafikah* literally means *mu'talifah* (joined together). These were a few settlements adjacent to the city. Holy Prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام was sent to them. Because of disobedience and commission of shameful and unspeakable sins, their cities [of Sodom and Gomorrah] were turned upside down by Jibra'īl عليه السلام.

فَعَشَّهَا مَا عَشَّى (so covered they were by that which covered.... 53:54). This refers to the fact that the cities were first overturned, and after that stones of hard clay were sent down on them, which covered them.

Here ends the teachings of the scriptures of Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهما السلام.

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارَى (Then, which of your Lord's bounties would you dispute?...53:55). *Tamārā* means to dispute and oppose. According to Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, the verse is addressed to every human being. After seeing so many and so clear and invincible arguments in the preceding verses and the Signs in the scriptures of Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهما السلام that support and substantiate the claims of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ about the truth of his revelation, the verse says to the obstinate disbelievers: How long will you continue to deny the truth and wander in the wilderness of disbelief? The verse further makes it abundantly clear for those who think and deliberate that there should be no room for any doubt in the Messenger of Allah, his revelation and his teachings. Having heard about the stories of destruction and punishment of past nations, this is an opportune occasion for them to straighten out. This well-timed occasion is a favour of Allah. They should take advantage of it instead of fighting and opposing it.

هَذَا نَذِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّذِرِ الْأُولَى (This [Holy Prophet] is a warner from the (genus of the) previous warners...53:56). *Hādha* is a demonstrative pronoun and points either to the Holy Prophet ﷺ or to the Qur'ān. With reference to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it means that in the past, many Prophets were sent to their respective nations, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ is sent to all mankind, and he is not a new thing among the Messengers. He is well-established in the straight path. With reference to the Qur'ān, it means that he has come with a book of guidance which, if complied with, assures them of success in this world and in the Hereafter. The opponents should fear the Divine punishment.

أَزَفَتِ الْأَرْفَةُ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَاشِفَةٌ (The Imminent (Hour) has approached. [53:57] There is no one, beside Allah, to remove it...53:58). The verb '*azifa*' is used in the sense of *qaruba* which means to draw near. *Āzifah* is the feminine active participle from the verb *azifa* and it refers to the Imminent Event. In other words, the Imminent Event has drawn near, referring to the Day of Resurrection. No one besides Allah can prevent it from happening, nor does anyone know when it will happen, except Him. The imminence of Resurrection is in relation to the age of the entire world. The Ummah of Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is right at the end of it near the Day of Judgement.

أَفَمِنْ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ تَعْجَبُونَ وَتَضْحَكُونَ وَلَا تَبْكُونَ

discourse, and laugh [at it], and not weep....53:59-60). The phrase 'this discourse' refers to the Qur'ān. That is, the Qur'ān, the Divine Discourse, which is itself a miracle, has already come to them. They are surprised at it and laugh in jest and mock at it, and do not weep at their sins and shortcomings.

وَأَنْتُمْ سَاهُونَ (while you are engaged in vain play?53:61). *Sāmidūn* is the plural of "*sāmid*" from the root word *sumud* which literally denotes to be heedless. *Sāmidūn* is used in the sense of *ghafilun*, meaning unmindful. Some of the Imāms have interpreted the word *sumud* to mean to sing. That meaning can equally fit or apply in this context.

فَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ وَاعْبُدُوا (Now, fall down in prostration and worship [Allah]...53:62). It means that preceding verses have a lesson for everyone who considers them seriously that he should worship Allah and bow down before him in humbleness.

It is recorded in Bukhārī on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse he prostrated, and all those around him also prostrated along with him—Muslims, pagans, Jinns and mankind. Another report from 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd, as recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim, narrates that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ finished reciting the Sūrah before a mixed gathering of Muslims and disbelievers, and, along with his followers, he prostrated himself on the ground, the disbelievers too prostrated, except one old Quraishi man who took a handful of soil and, having applied it on his forehead said, 'This is enough for me.' 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ said that he saw this man later on killed as a disbeliever. Following the example of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the Muslims were expected to prostrate. As far as the idolaters are concerned, having been profoundly impressed with the solemnity of the occasion and being overawed by the august recitation of the Qur'ānic words, as well as by the Divine Majesty and Glory, might also have fallen in prostration. However, since this prostration was performed in the state of disbelief, it did not carry any reward, but it did leave a deep impression on them; and as a result of this impact, they all later on embraced the Islamic faith, except one person who died in the state of *kufr*, because he arrogantly refrained from performing the *sajdah*.

Ṣaḥīḥain record a report from Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Thābit ؓ to the

effect that he recited the entire Sūrah An-Najm in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but he [the Holy Prophet ﷺ] did not perform the *sajdah*. It does not necessarily follow from this that the *sajdah* is not obligatory or compulsory. It is possible that at that particular moment, he did not have his ablution or there must have been some other legitimate reason for not performing the *sajdah*. In such situations, it is not obligatory to perform the *sajdah* forthwith. It can be delayed until the reason has ceased. And Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Sūrah An-Najm, through the help and grace of Allah, the Pure, the exalted, ended on Friday night 1st Rabi'-uth-Thānī 1391, in one week. Allah willing, this chapter will be followed by Sūrah Al-Qamar. Allah grants success!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Najm
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qamar

(The Moon)

This Sūrah is Makki. It contains 55 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَاَنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ ﴿١﴾ وَاِنْ يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا
 سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ ﴿٢﴾ وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا اَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَكُلُّ امْرٍ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ ﴿٣﴾
 وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنَ الْاَنْبَاءِ مَا فِيهِ مُزْدَجَرٌ ﴿٤﴾ حِكْمَةٌ بَالِغَةٌ فَمَا تُغْنِ
 النَّذْرُ ﴿٥﴾ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ اِلَى شَيْءٍ نُّكْرٍ ﴿٦﴾ خُشَعًا
 اَبْصَارُهُمْ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْاَجْدَاثِ كَاَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُّنتَشِرٌ ﴿٧﴾
 مُهْطِعِينَ اِلَى الدَّاعِ ط يَقُولُ الْكٰفِرُونَ هٰذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِرٌ ﴿٨﴾

The Hour (of doom) has drawn near, and the moon has been split asunder. [1] And when these people see a sign, they turn away and say, "(This is) a transient magic." [2] And they have rejected (the Truth) and followed their desires, while every matter has to be settled (at some time). [3] And there has come to them as much news (of the earlier communities) as contains enough to warn, [4] a perfect wisdom, but the warnings are of no avail (to them). [5] Therefore, turn aside (O Prophet,) from them. (They will see the reality) on the Day when the caller will call to a terrible thing. [6] With their eyes humbled, they will come out of the graves like locusts spread all over, [7] rushing quickly towards the caller. (On that Day) the disbelievers will say, "This is a

difficult day." [8]

Linkage between Sūrah An-Najm and Sūrah Al-Qamar

Whereas the preceding Sūrah An-Najm had ended on a note of warning to disbelievers in the words: *أَزِفَةَ الْأَرْزَةِ azifat-il-‘āzifah*, i.e., the Hour of their doom has drawn near, the present Sūrah opens with a similar sentence, "The Hour (of doom) has drawn near" and this statement is followed by one of its proofs, that is, the appearance of the miracle of the moon being split asunder. There are many signs of the Day of Doom; one of them is the advent of the last of the Prophets Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ itself, as reported in a *ḥadīth* 'I was sent like this with the last Hour' and he pointed with his middle and index fingers. There are many other Traditions mentioning that the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is close to the Day of doom. Likewise, a great sign of Doomsday is the miracle of the Prophet ﷺ when he split the moon into two pieces, then he rejoined them. Also, the miracle of 'moon-splitting' is significant from another point of view: Just as Allah's power split the moon into two, so will planets and stars be destroyed by Him by breaking them into very small pieces which is not impossible, as has been proved by the miracle of splitting the moon.

The Phenomenon of Moon-Splitting : A Miracle

The disbelievers of Makkah asked the Messenger of Allah to produce a proof in support of his claim, and he, with the dispensation of Allah, split the moon into two parts. This miracle is verified by the concluding part of verse 1: 'and the moon has been split asunder.'. The incident has been narrated successively in Traditions of reliable authority, and reported by such learned Companions as ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd, ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar, Jubair Ibn Muṭ‘im, ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās, Anas Ibn Mālik ﷺ and others. ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ reports that he himself was present and witnessed when the Messenger of Allah performed this miracle. Imāms Ṭaḥāwī and Ibn Kathīr رحمهما الله تعالى have stated that the reports narrating the phenomenon of 'moon-splitting' are *mutawātir* (i.e. it has been reported successively and uninterruptedly by such a large number of authorities that their concurrence on falsehood is inconceivable.) Therefore, this Prophetic miracle has been proved by incontrovertible evidence.

It was mentioned earlier that a large number of Traditions report the

incident of 'moon-splitting', which may be summarized as follows: Whilst the Messenger of Allah was sitting at Minā in Makkah, the pagans demanded that the Messenger of Allah should produce a proof substantiating his claim. Allah split the moon in two parts. A part of the moon was over one mountain on the eastern side, and another part was over another mountain on the western side. Thus there was a mountain between the two parts. This incident took place on a moonlit night. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to all who were present: 'Be witnesses'. When all the people saw the miracle clearly, the two pieces rejoined. It was not possible for any person with eyes to deny this clear miracle. However, the pagans said: 'Muḥammad has ensorcelled us, but he cannot bewitch the whole world; so let us wait for people to come from the neighboring parts of the country and hear what they have to say'. (Baihaqī and Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālīsī) Ṭayālīsī records on the authority of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ that when travelers from the neighboring parts of the country arrived, they confirmed that they did see the moon in two parts. Some reports indicate that the miracle of 'moon-splitting' occurred twice, but more authentic reports confirm that the miracle occurred once only. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān) The following Traditions are worth noting, which have been taken from Ibn Kathīr:

(1) Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālīk ﷺ narrates, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī:

إِنَّ أَهْلَ مَكَّةَ سَأَلُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ يُرِيَهُمْ آيَةً فَأَرَاهُمُ الْقَمَرَ شَقِيْنًا حَتَّى رَأَوْا حِرَاءَ بَيْنَهُمَا. (بخارى ومسلم)

'The people of Makkah asked the Messenger of Allah to show them a sign, and he split the moon into two parts until they saw the mount of Hira' between them'.

(2) Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ narrates, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī and Muslim, and in Musnad of Aḥmad,

إِنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ شَقِيْنَيْنِ حَتَّى نَظَرُوا إِلَيْهِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَشْهَدُوا.

"The moon was split in two parts during the time of Allah's Messenger, and they saw its two parts. Allah's Messenger said: 'Be witnesses!'"

Ibn Jarīr has cited this report with the following addition:

كُنَّا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِمِنَى فَانشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ فَأَخَذَتْ فِرْقَةٌ خَلْفَ الْجَبَلِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اشْهَدُوا اشْهَدُوا .

"Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه says: 'We were with Allah's Messenger at Minā. Suddenly the moon split in two pieces, and one piece went away behind the mountain. Allah's Messenger said: "Be witnesses; be witnesses.'"

(3) The narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه is recorded by Baihaqī and Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālīsī in the following words:

إِنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ بِمَكَّةَ حَتَّى صَارَ فِرْقَتَيْنِ فَقَالَ كُفَّارُ قُرَيْشٍ أَهْلُ مَكَّةَ هَذَا سِحْرٌ سَحَرَكُمْ بِهِ ابْنُ أَبِي كَبْشَةَ أَنْظَرُوا السُّفَّارَ فَإِنْ كَانُوا رَأَوْا مَا رَأَيْتُمْ فَقَدْ صَدَقَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا لَمْ يَرَوْا مِثْلَ مَا رَأَيْتُمْ فَهُوَ سِحْرٌ سَحَرَكُمْ بِهِ فَسُئِلَ السُّفَّارُ قَالَ وَ قَدِمُوا مِنْ كُلِّ جِهَةٍ فَقَالُوا رَأَيْنَا . (ابن كثير)

"In Makkah, the moon was split into two parts. The disbelieving Quraish claimed: 'This is sorcery. Ibn Abī Kabshah [the Prophet] has ensorcelled you. Therefore, wait for the neighboring travelers to arrive. If they too have seen the two pieces of the moon, so he has spoken the truth. But if they have not seen the parts of the moon, then this is indeed a magical illusion which he has performed on you.' When the travelers arrived and were asked about it, they all confirmed that they did see the two parts of the moon.' : (Ibn Kathir)

Criticism against the Miracle of 'Moon-Splitting'

The critics have raised two types of criticism against the miracle: one is based on the assumptions of Greek philosophers, and the other is based on layman's thinking.

The deviant Greek philosophers assume that it is not possible for the heaven and other celestial bodies to split or crack, and rejoin. But this is merely an idea unsubstantiated by any solid or concrete proof. Whatever proof or evidence the philosophers have advanced is flimsy, shaky, inadequate and unsubstantial. The Islamic philosophers [*mutakallimīn*] have broken down their arguments and have shown that they are baseless, false and absurd. They could not prove by any rational argument that 'moon-splitting' is impossible. Indeed, illiterate people regard every unusual thing as impossible. Obviously, the very meaning of

mu'jizah or a prophetic miracle is that it is an unusual event that is abnormal and out of general habit, which cannot be performed by common people. Any ordinary work which can be performed at any time cannot be called *mu'jizah* or miracle.

The other criticism based on a layman's thinking is that if such a wonderful event had taken place, its knowledge would have been commonplace and would have found its mention in the books of history, but they say that they have found no such thing recorded.

Such a thinking is too simplistic which lacks careful analysis. A careful analysis shows that the event had occurred in Makkah at night. At that particular moment, in many parts of the world it must have been day time where and when the question of witnessing this event does not even arise. In many other countries, it must have been middle of the night, or last part of the night when the people normally sleep. Furthermore, people who are awake also do not stare at the moon all the time. Splitting of the moon would not make any difference on the moonlight spread on the earth, so that it would attract people's attention. The event took place suddenly and lasted for a short while. It is a daily experience that in particular countries at different times lunar eclipse takes place. Nowadays a forecast is made about its occurrence well in advance, yet there are hundreds of thousands of people who are absolutely unaware of it. Can this be the proof that the lunar eclipse did not take place? Thus if the event is not recorded in world history books, its occurrence cannot be denied or refuted.

Besides, the event is recorded in the famous and reliable history book of India called 'Tarikh-e-Farishtah'. It has been mentioned in this book that the Mahārājah, a native ruler, of Malabār had witnessed this phenomenon that night with his own eyes, and had it entered in his diary. This incident was the cause of his embracing Islam. Earlier on the narratives of Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālīsī and Baihaqī were quoted about the pagans of Makkah themselves who inquired from the people arriving from the neighboring parts of the country and they confirmed and verified that they had seen it. Allah, the Pure and the Exalted, knows best!

وَإِنْ يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ (And when these people see a sign, they

turn away and say, "[This is] a transient magic.... 54:2). The word *mustamirr*, in the popular sense of the word, as used in Persian and Urdu, means something lasting or enduring. However, in the Arabic language it is sometimes used in the sense of passing away or coming to an end, being derived from *marra* and *istamarra*. Leading authorities on Tafsīr, like Mujāhid and Qatādah رَحْمَهُمَا اللهُ تَعَالَى, have applied this sense of the word in the present context. Thus the verse means that the Quraish alleged that the sign of moon-splitting they saw was an illusion and false; its effect will soon diminish and fade away. Another meaning of the word *mustamirr* is strong and firm. Abūl-‘Āliyah and Ḍaḥḥāk رَحْمَهُمَا اللهُ تَعَالَى interpret the word in this sense, meaning that this is a very potent sorcery.

وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ مُّسْتَقَرٌّ (...while every matter has to be settled....54:3). The literal meaning of the word *istiqrār* is to settle. The verse means that everything must ultimately reach its end and the matter must become clear. If a veil is fabricated and cast over the truth or reality, eventually [in its designated time] the false veil will be removed and the truth and falsehood will be clearly distinguished.

مُهَيِّطِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ (rushing quickly towards the caller....54:8). The word *muḥṭi‘īn* literally denotes walking quickly with one's head raised above. This, together with the two preceding verses, gives a graphic picture of the Day of Gathering or Reckoning. The people will hasten hurriedly in the direction of the voice of the Caller towards the *maḥshar* (area of Reckoning). The words: "With their eyes humbled,." in preceding verse (7) are in no conflict with the present verse, because there will be many different occasions in *maḥshar*. On some of these occasions, the eyes of all the people will be cast down.

Verses 9 - 17

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ فَكَذَّبُوا عَبْدَنَا وَقَالُوا مَجْنُونٌ وَازْدُجِرَ ﴿٩﴾
 فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَانتَصِرْ ﴿١٠﴾ فَفَتَحْنَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَاءٍ
 مُّنْهَمِرٍ ﴿١١﴾ وَفَجَّرْنَا الْأَرْضَ عُيُونًا فَالْتَقَى الْمَاءُ عَلَى أَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ
 ﴿١٢﴾ وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَى ذَاتِ الْأَوَاحِ وَدُسِّرِ ﴿١٣﴾ تَجْرِي بِأَعْيُنِنَا جَزَاءُ

لَمَنْ كَانَ كُفِرَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ تَرَكْنَهَا آيَةً فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ ﴿١٥﴾
 فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذْرٍ ﴿١٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسْرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلدِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ
 مُدَكِّرٍ ﴿١٧﴾

The people of Nūḥ denied (the truth) before them. So they rejected Our slave, and said, "(He is) a madman", and he was (also) threatened (by them). [9] So he prayed to his Lord saying, "I am overpowered, so defend (me)." [10] So We opened the gates of the sky with water pouring forth profusely, [11] and We caused the earth to gush forth as springs; so the water (of both kinds) met together for a destined event. [12] And We caused him (Nūḥ) to board that (ship) which had planks and nails, [13] which sailed under Our Eyes, as a reward for the one who was rejected (by the infidels). [14] And We left it (the ship) as a sign. So, is there one to take lesson? [15] How then was My torment and My warnings? [16] And indeed We have made the Qur'an easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice? [17]

The Story of the People of Nūḥ عليه السلام and the Lesson Learnt from it

مَحْنُونَ وَأَزْدُجَرَ (and said, "(He is) a madman", and he was threatened... 54:9). The word *wazdujira* literally denotes 'he was rebuked'. It refers to the attitude of the people of Nūḥ عليه السلام who rebuked and threatened him to stop him from preaching. On another occasion in the Qur'an, we read that the people of Nūḥ عليه السلام threatened and warned him that if he does not stop propagating his message, he would be stoned to death.

'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid reports from Mujāhid that when some of his people found him somewhere, they would choke him, as a result he would become unconscious. But when he recovered, he would pray to Allah, 'O Allah! Forgive my people, for they do not know the truth'. In this way, he endured the persecution of his people patiently for nine hundred and fifty years, prayed for their forgiveness and understanding of the truth. Eventually, when the situation became intolerable, and he could no longer resist his people, he invoked Allah to help him against them. As a result, Allah opened the gates of the heaven with torrential rain, and the entire nation was drowned which is mentioned in the forthcoming verse.

فَالْتَقَى الْمَاءُ عَلَىٰ أَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ

destined event....54:12). In other words, the rain water pouring down from the skies in torrents and also bubbling water gushing forth from under the ground, caused the Deluge [a huge flood] which engulfed the entire land, and thus the Divine decree was fulfilled, destroying the people of Nūḥ عليه السلام to the last man, and even the peaks of the mountains could not give them any shelter.

ذَاتِ الْوَاحِ وَدُسُرٍ (to board that [ship] which had planks and nails...54:13). The word *alwāḥ* is the plural of *lawḥ* and it refers to a board or a plank. The word *dusur* is the plural of *disār* and it stands for nail. It also means a cord of fibres of the palm tree with which the planks of a ship are bound together.

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ (And indeed We have made the Qur'an easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?...54:17). The word *dhikr* in the prepositional phrase '*lidh-dhikr*' has several shades of meaning: to remember or memorize or by-heart; and to take heed of admonition and warnings. Both these meanings are equally applicable here. Allah has made it easy to memorize the Holy Qur'an. The followers of the previous scriptures were not privileged to memorize their entire book, word by word - whether Torāh, Injīl or Zabūr. It is one of the privileges conferred on Muslims that He has made it easy, even for the tender-aged children, to commit the entire Qur'an to memory, word for word, without missing out a single letter. The Qur'an is preserved in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of Ḥuffaẓ for the past fourteen hundred years in every age, people and their children of every level, in every region or territory of the world.

The verse could also mean that Allah has made the Qur'an so simple that just as an intellectual and knowledgeable person benefits from its contents, so does a layman, having no expertise in relevant sciences. He too can benefit from its admonition and warnings (at his own level).

Qur'an is Made Simple to Memorize and to Take Heed; Not for Ijtihād or Istinbāt

In this verse the verb يَسَّرْنَا *yassarnā* [We have made easy] is qualified by the prepositional phrase لِلذِّكْرِ *lidh-dhikri* [for seeking advice]. This implies that the Qur'an has been made easy to the extent of memorizing it and paying heed to its advice and warnings, from which all can benefit -

whether a learned scholar or an unlearned person, whether young or old. This does not necessarily imply that derivation or deduction of laws and injunctions from the Qur'an is easy for everybody. *Ijtihād* or *Istinbāt* (deduction) of injunctions from the Qur'an is a science, having its own complex rules. Scholars well-grounded in knowledge have spent years of their life to attain to the position where they could exercise *Ijtihād* and *Istinbāt*. It is not a field where every ordinary person or layman can play his role

This indicates the error of some of the deviant people who, on the strength of this statement, wish to pose as *mujtahid* and derive laws and injunctions with their own reasoning, without acquiring complete and profound knowledge of the Qur'an, and without fully grasping its methodological principles and rules. This is clear deviation!

Verses 18 - 42

كَذَّبَتْ عَادٌ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَدَابِي وَنُذِرِ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا
صَرْصَرًا فِي يَوْمِ نَحْسٍ مُّسْتَمِرٍّ ﴿١٩﴾ تَنْزِعُ النَّاسَ ۖ كَانْتَهُمْ أَعْجَازُ
نَخْلٍ مُّنْقَعِرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَدَابِي وَنُذِرِ ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا
الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّذَكِّرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٢٣﴾
فَقَالُوا أَبَشْرًا مِّنَّا وَاحِدًا نَّتَّبِعُهُ ۗ إِنَّا إِذًا لَّفِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ ۗ أَلْقَى
الذِّكْرَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُوَ كَذَّابٌ أَشِرٌّ ﴿٢٥﴾ سَيَعْلَمُونَ غَدًا مِّنَ
الْكَذَّابِ الْأَشِرِّ ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّا مَرْسَلُوا النَّاقَةَ فِتْنَةً لَهُمْ فَارْتَقِبْهُمْ وَاصْطَبِرْ
﴿٢٧﴾ وَنَبِّئْهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاءَ قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ كُلُّ شَرِبٍ مُّحْتَضِرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾
فَنَادُوا صَاحِبَهُمْ فَتَعَاطَى فَعَقَرَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَدَابِي وَنُذِرِ
﴿٣٠﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيمِ الْمُحْتَظِرِ
﴿٣١﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّذَكِّرٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ
لُوطٍ بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٣٣﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَاصِبًا إِلَّا آلَ لُوطٍ ۗ نَّجَّيْنَاهُمْ

بِسَحَرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ نِعْمَةٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا ۖ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي مَنْ شَكَرَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ
 أَنْذَرَهُمْ بَطْشَتَنَا فَتَمَارَوْا بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدُوهُ عَنْ صَيْفِهِ
 فَطَمَسْنَا أَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذِرِ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَبَّحَهُمْ بُكْرَةً
 عَذَابٌ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذِرِ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ
 لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّدْكِرٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ النُّذُرُ ﴿٤١﴾
 كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ أَخْذَ عَزِيزٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

(The people of) 'Ād rejected (their prophet). How then was My torment and My warnings? [18] We did send to them a furious wind in a day of lasting bad luck, [19] plucking people away, as if they were trunks of uprooted palm-trees. [20] How then was My torment and My warnings? [21] And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice? [22] (The people of) Thamūd rejected the warners. [23] So they said, "Shall we follow a single human being from among us? Then we will be in error and insanity. [24] Is it that the advice has been cast upon him alone out of all of us? No, but he is a bragging liar." [25] Tomorrow they will know who is the bragging liar! [26] We are going to send the She-camel as a trial for them; so watch them (O Ṣāliḥ,) and keep patience, [27] and tell them that water (of the well) is to be shared between them (and the She-camel), so as the right of having water shall be attended by each (alternatively). [28] Then they called their man (to kill the She-camel,) so he undertook (the task) and killed (the She-camel). [29] How then was My torment and My warnings? [30] We sent upon them a single Cry, and they were like crushed leafs of a hedge-builder. [31] And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice? [32] The people of Lūṭ rejected the warners. [33] We sent upon them a rain of stones, except the family of Lut whom We saved in the last hours of night, [34] as a grace from Us. This is how We reward the one who offers gratitude. [35] And he (Lut) had certainly warned them of Our grasp, but they disputed the warnings. [36] And they had even tried to tempt him against his guests (so that they may snatch them away for bad purpose,) but We blinded their eyes: "Now taste

My torment and My warnings!" [37] And on the next morning, a lasting torment overtook them: [38] "Now taste My torment and My warnings." [39] And indeed We have made the Qur'an easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice? [40] And the warners came to the family of Fir'aun (Pharaoh). [41] (But) they rejected all Our signs; so We seized them – a seizure by a Mighty, a Powerful Being. [42]

Lexicological Analysis

The word سُعْر *su'ur* has appeared twice in this Sūrah. First it has appeared in verse 24 in connection with the people of Thamūd where it is their own word, and means 'madness or insanity'. The second time, the word appears in connection with the punishment of the sinners where it is the word of Allah in the forthcoming verse [47] فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعْرٍ Here the word *su'ur* may also be taken in the sense of Hell-Fire. According to lexicologists, the word *su'ur* is used in both these senses.

رَاوِدُوهُ عَنْ ضَيْفِهِ (And they had even tried to tempt him against his guests...54:37). The word *murawadah* signifies to entice someone to satisfy one's lust. This verse refers to the night when the angels came to Prophet Lūt عليه السلام in the shape of handsome young men, as a test from Allah for his people who were addicted to homosexuality. Prophet Lūt عليه السلام hosted his guests. The licentious people came to him from every direction, and the Prophet Lūt عليه السلام had to shut the door to protect his guests. They came during the night and tried to break the door down and scale the walls to come in. The immoral behaviour of his people distressed Prophet Lūt عليه السلام but when the guests revealed to him that they were angels and have been sent by Allah to inflict destructive punishment on his people, he felt comforted; they assured him that they will not be able to hurt them in any way.

Sūrah Al-Qamar started on the note that Doomsday is fast approaching, so that the infidels and pagans, who have lust and greed for this world and are unaware of the Hereafter, come to their senses. First, the punishment of the Hereafter is mentioned. Then the evil consequences of their misdeeds in the present life are cited. Reference is made to the conditions of world-famous nations, their opposition to their respective prophets and its evil consequences. The people of Nūh عليه السلام were the first people who were destroyed by Divine punishment. Many different kinds of devastating torments were inflicted on the people of Nūh, the tribes of 'Ad, Thamud and Lūt عليه السلام and the people of Fir'aun in

this world. Their stories and histories are recounted in detail on several occasions in the Qur'ān. Here they have been condensed.

All these five nations were the strongest and resourceful. It was not possible for any of the subdued nations to overcome any of these superpowers. The current set of verses show how the superpowers were destroyed by Divine punishment. After describing the punishment of each nation, the Qur'ān repeats the following statement as a refrain: فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ (How then was My torment and My warnings?). That is, when the Divine chastisement overtook these nations who were very powerful in terms of might, wealth and number were killed like flies and mosquitoes. In addition, the following verse is repeated to advise the Muslims and the infidels in general: وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ (And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?) This is to indicate that the only way to avoid the terrible chastisement is to take to the advice of the Qur'ān. Allah has made the Qur'ān easy to the extent of paying heed to the admonition and warnings. Only the most ill-fated person will not take advantage of the warnings.

The forthcoming verses address the people of the time of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ that they are not more powerful in terms of wealth, number and might than the people of Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام, the tribes of 'Ad and Thamū, Prophet Lūt's عليه السلام people and the people of Fir'aun. Then how are they sitting in a careless manner?

Verses 43 - 55

اَكْفَارُكُمْ خَيْرٌ مِنْ اَوْلَائِكُمْ اَمْ لَكُمْ بَرَاءَةٌ فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٤٣﴾ اَمْ يَقُولُونَ
 نَحْنُ جَمِيعٌ مُنتَصِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ ﴿٤٥﴾ بَلِ
 السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ اَدْهَىٰ وَاَمَرٌ ﴿٤٦﴾ اِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي
 ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ فِي النَّارِ عَلٰى وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُوقُوا
 مَسَّ سَقَرَ ﴿٤٨﴾ اِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَمَا اَمْرُنَا اِلَّا
 وَاِحْدَةٌ كَلَمٰحٍ بِالْبَصْرِ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَهْلَكْنَا اَشْيَاعَكُمْ فَهَلْ مِنْ
 مُدَكِّرٍ ﴿٥١﴾ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ

مُسْتَطَرٌّ ﴿٥٣﴾ إِنَّ الْأُمْتَقِينَ فِي جَنَّتٍ وَنَهْرٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ
عِنْدَ مَلِيكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴿٥٥﴾

(Now) are the disbelievers among you in a better position than all of them (the aforesaid punished people), or do you have immunity (recorded) in the sacred books? [43] Or do they say, "We are a large group, well-defended." [44] Soon shall this 'large group' be defeated, and all will turn their backs. [45] Rather the Hour (of judgment) is their appointed time (for their full recompense), and the Hour is more calamitous and more bitter. [46] Surely the guilty ones are in error and madness. [47] On the Day when they will be dragged into the Fire on their faces, (it will be said to them,) "Taste the touch of Hell." [48] Verily, We have created every thing according to (Our) predestination. [49] And (implementation of) Our command is no more than a single act like the twinkling of an eye. [50] And We have destroyed people like you; so, is there one to take lesson? [51] And every thing they have done is recorded in the books (of deeds). [52] And every thing, small and big, is written down. [53] Of course, the God-fearing will be in gardens and rivers, [54] in a seat of Truth, near to the Omnipotent Sovereign. [55]

Lexicological analysis

The word *زُبُرٌ* *zubūr* (in verse 43) is the plural of *zabūr*, which stands for any written book. It specifically refers to the Scripture that was revealed to Prophet Dāwūd عليه السلام.

أَذْهَى وَأَمْرٌ (...more calamitous and more bitter...54:46). The word *adhā* means more or most calamitous. The word *amarr* is derived from *murr* which originally means 'bitter'. By extension anything 'difficult' or 'painful' is also referred to as *amarr* and *murr*. In the phrase *فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ* *fī ḍalālīn wa su'ur*, *ḍalāl*, as is known, means 'error' or 'deviation' and the word *su'ur* in the present context means the 'Hell-Fire'.¹ In the phrase *ashyā'akum*, (verse 51) *ashyā'* is the plural of *shi'ah*, and it means a 'follower', that is, those who follow their pattern of life.

(1). This is according to one interpretation. The other meaning of the word is 'madness' and the translation in the text is based on this meaning. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

In the phrase *مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ maq'adi-ṣidqin*, the word *maq'ad* means 'seat' and the word *ṣidq* means 'truth' and implies the 'seat of truth' where there will be no idle and obscene talks.

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ (Verily, We have created every thing according to [Our] predestination...54:49). In the prepositional phrase *bi-qadar*, the word *qadar* literally denotes to 'measure' and to create something with a proper measure and proportion. It is possible for this literal sense of the word to apply in the current verse: Allah is the Supreme Sage Who created every species of the existent entity wisely with proper measurement - whether big or small, and in different shapes and sizes. Having created, He maintains the structure of every individual in a very wise measurement: The fingers and toes are not equal in size; the lengths are different; the length and breadth of hands and legs are wisely structured; and their bones, muscles and skins are created flexible to stretch and contract. When we analyze every single part of every single limb and organ of [human] body, we discern the wondrous vistas of Divine wisdom opening up.

As a theological term, *qadar* is used in the sense of *taqdīr* [Divine predetermination, predestination, preordainment, preordering or decree]. Most authorities on Tafsīr, on account of some versions of *ḥadīth*, take the word *qadar* here in this sense. It is recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that once the pagans of Quraish came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ debating and arguing with him on the question of *taqdīr* (Predestination). On that occasion this verse was revealed. In the light of this tradition, the verse purports to say that Allah has predetermined the total sum of everything. He created everything with predestined limits before they were created. He knew everything that will occur before it occurred, and recorded everything [time and place, growth and decline] that will occur, before they occurred. Everything that occurs in this world, occurs according to the Divine Plan worked out in Pre-Eternity or Eternity-without-Beginning.

The question of *taqdīr*, according to *Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jamā'ah*, is one of the affirmed and standard articles of faith in Islam. Anyone who denies it outright is an atheist or goes out of the pale Islam, and the sects that deny it by convoluted or twisted interpretation are *fāsiqīn* [sinners or

transgressors]. Imām Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd and Ṭabarānī record a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه that the Holy Messenger ﷺ said: "Some members of every community are Magians, and the Magians of my Ummah are those who deny *taqdīr*. If they fall ill, do not visit them; and if they die, do not attend their funerals." (Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī.) Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qamar
Ends here

Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān

(The All-Merciful)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 78 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 25

الرَّحْمٰنُ ﴿١﴾ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ ﴿٣﴾ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ﴿٤﴾ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ ﴿٥﴾ وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ ﴿٦﴾ وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٧﴾ اَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ ﴿٨﴾ وَاَقِمْوْا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوْا الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٩﴾ وَالْاَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْاَنَامِ ﴿١٠﴾ فِيْهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْاَكْمَامِ ﴿١١﴾ وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ ﴿١٢﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اِلٰهٍ رَبِّكُمْ تُكذِّبْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ ﴿١٤﴾ وَخَلَقَ الْجَاْنَ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِّنْ نَّارٍ ﴿١٥﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اِلٰهٍ رَبِّكُمْ تُكذِّبْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ ﴿١٧﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اِلٰهٍ رَبِّكُمْ تُكذِّبْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اِلٰهٍ رَبِّكُمْ تُكذِّبْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اِلٰهٍ رَبِّكُمْ تُكذِّبْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ

كَأَلْعُلَامٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةٍ رَبِّكُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

The Raḥmān (The All-Merciful) [1] has taught the Qur'ān. [2] He has created man. [3] He has taught him (how) to express himself. [4] The sun and the moon are (bound) by a (fixed) calculation. [5] And the vine and the tree both prostrate (to Allah). [6] And He raised the sky high, and has placed the scale, [7] so that you should not be wrongful in weighing. [8] And observe the correct weight with fairness, and do not make weighing deficient. [9] And the earth is placed by Him for creatures, [10] in which there are fruits and the date-palms having sheaths, [11] and the grain having chaff, and fragrant flowers. [12] So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [13] He has created man from dry clay, ringing like pottery, [14] and created Jann (father of the Jinn) from a smokeless flame of fire. [15] So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [16] He is the Lord of both points of sunrise and both points of sunset. [17] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [18] He has set forth the two seas that meet together, [19] while between them there is a barrier they do not transgress. [20] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [21] From both of them come forth the pearl and the coral. [22] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [23] And His are the sailing ships raised up in the sea like mountains. [24] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [25]

Linkage of the Sūrah and the Wisdom of Repeating the words, 'Which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?'

The preceding Sūrah Al-Qamar was mainly concerned with some of the rebellious nations of antiquity who were punished for rejecting the Divine Message. The description of every punishment was followed by the sentence: فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِي (Then how was My torment and My warnings? ...54:16). This sentence was repeated many times in order to warn people against similar Divine punishment. Another verse that was repeated as a refrain at telling intervals is وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ (And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?...54:17). This verse urges people to accept the Qur'ānic Message, believe in it and follow its right guidance.

Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān, on the other hand, mainly describes the boons and bounties of Allah, of this world as well as of the Hereafter. Thus when a particular bounty of Allah is described, the verse *فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ* (*fa-bi-ayyi' ālā'i Rabbikumā tukadhdhibān* (So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?) is used deliberately as a refrain in order to awaken the people and urge them to give thanks to Allah for His favours. This verse is repeated thirty-one times in the Sūrah. According to the rules of stylish usage, repetition of an expression serves the deliberate purpose of 'emphasis'. Especially, the repetition in these two Sūrahs of the Qur'ān is repetition only in apparent form. In reality, the repeated sentence is each time related to a new subject, and having its own significance, cannot be taken as redundant. In Sūrah Al-Qamar, the *فَكَيْفَ* (Then how was My torment 54:16) has followed the description of each new torment. Likewise, in Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān, after the description of every new bounty the verse *فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ* (So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?) is repeated, which being related to a new subject is not redundant. 'Allāmah Suyūṭī رحمه الله تعالى terms this device of repetition as *At-tardīd*. Arab masters of eloquence, regard this device as aesthetically beautiful, polished, effective, moving, forceful and persuasive use of language. The device is used both in prose as well as in poetry. It is used not only in Arabic but [almost in all the languages of the world, as for instance] the most accomplished and consummate poets of Persian and Urdu have used them. This is no occasion to collect samples of their compositions here. Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī has collected its several examples on this occasion.

Was Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān Revealed in Makkah or Madinah?

On the basis of a few narratives Imām Qurṭubī concluded that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah, and he prefers this view. Tirmidhī records from Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited this Sūrah before some people who remained silent. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

"I recited this Sūrah to the Jinns, on the night of Jinn, and their receptive response was better than yours! Whenever I recited Allah's statement *فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ* (So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?) They said: *لا بَشِيءَ مِنَّا نَعْبُدُكَ رَبَّنَا نَكُذِّبُ فَالِك الْحَمْدُ* 'None of your bounties do we deny, our Lord! All praise is due to You'".

This narrative indicates that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah, because 'the night of the Jinn' refers to the night when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ met the Jinns to convey to them the Message of the Qur'ān and impart knowledge to them. This incident took place in Makkah. Likewise, Imām Qurṭubī refers to a few more narratives which indicate that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah .

The opening word of the first verse of the Sūrah is Ar-Raḥmān (The All-Merciful). One of the reasons for beginning the Sūrah with this name of Allah is presumably that the infidels of Makkah were unaware of this name of Allah. They used to say, مَا الرَّحْمَنُ؟ "What is Ar-Raḥmān?" [as mentioned in 25:60] This name has been selected here to let them know it.

The second reason could be to indicate that teaching the Qur'ān, which has been mentioned in the next verse as Allah's act, was a sheer gift flowing from Allah's beneficence, and not because this or any other act is obligatory on Allah for which He could be held responsible, nor because He is in need of anyone.

In the entire Sūrah, Allah's bounties - worldly as well spiritual - are continuously recounted. The greatest of all bounties is the knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān, because it is an all-comprehensive Book directing man in temporal and spiritual matters and in matters relating to this world and the next. Those who heeded the Holy Qur'ān and fulfilled its right, like the blessed Companions, Allah raised their status in the Hereafter and blessed them with inconceivable bounties and favours. In this world too they are promoted to such high stations as the greatest of kings were not able to attain.

Grammatically speaking, the verb عَلَّمَ 'allama [to teach] requires two objects, the direct and the indirect: [1] that of which the knowledge is imparted; and [2] he to whom the knowledge is imparted. Here the first object [the Holy Qur'ān] is explicitly stated, but the second object is not. Some of the exegetes express the view that the second object is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who was taught the Qur'ān directly by Allah, and through him the entire creation. It is possible to look at it from another point of view: The purpose of the Holy Qur'ān is to give guidance to the entire creation of Allah, and to teach them good morals and the righteous deeds. Therefore, no particular object has been specified. The fact that the

second object has not been explicitly specified indicates its generality, that is, it refers to the totality of human beings.

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ (He has created man. He has taught him [how] to express himself...55:4) Man's creation itself is a great boon of Allah and in the natural order of things he is first and foremost, so much so that even imparting the knowledge of the Qur'ān, which is mentioned first, can only take place after his creation. However, the bounty of Qur'ānic knowledge is mentioned first, and the creation of man later, because the fundamental object of man's creation is to impart to him the knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān, and for him to follow its guidance as stated elsewhere in the Qur'ān: وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (And I did not create the Jinns and the human beings except that they should worship Me.) [51:56] Surely, worship without Divine guidance is not possible. The source of the Divine guidance is the Holy Qur'ān. Thus Qur'ānic knowledge is mentioned before man's creation.

Having created man, uncountable bounties are bestowed upon him. Of them, imparting the knowledge of expression has been mentioned especially, because the bounties necessary for man's growth and development, and his existence and survival like his food and water, his protection against cold and heat, his dwelling arrangements and so on are bounties in which all creatures are equal partners. Among the bounties that are peculiar to human beings Knowledge of the Qur'ān has been mentioned first, and it was followed by the knowledge of expressions, because deriving benefit from the Qur'ān, and imparting it to others, is dependent on the knowledge of expression. The word *bayān* ('how to express himself') comprehends all the means of communication created by Allah, like speech, writing etc. There are various languages and dialects of various nations in various regions of the world. All these are constituent parts of linguistic knowledge which is the practical interpretation or application of the verse عَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا (And He taught Adam the names, all of them) [2:31] فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

Allah's Signs

الْقَمَرَ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرَ يُحْسَبَانِ (The sun and the moon are [bound] by a [fixed] calculation...55:5) This verse draws attention to two of the celestial bodies from among the bounties of Allah. They are especially mentioned presumably because the entire system of this world depends on the

movement of these bodies in their orbits in perfect succession, according to precise calculation that is never delayed nor disturbed.

The word حُسْبَان *hūsban* with *ḍammah* [=u] on the first letter is, according to some lexicologists, used in the sense of *ḥisāb*, the infinitive, meaning 'to calculate', like غفران *ghufrān* [to forgive], سُبْحَانَ *sūbhan* [to declare purity], قرآن *Qur'ān* [to recite or read]. Other lexicologists feel that *hūsban* is the plural of *ḥisāb*. The meaning of the verse, according to the former lexicologists, would be: The two bodies, on which depends man's entire life, run on fixed courses. They are subject to certain laws and they perform regularly, punctually and unerringly their allocated tasks - alternation of night and day, change of seasons and determination of years and months. If we go by the latter lexicologists' interpretation that *hūsban* is the plural of *ḥisāb*, then it will refer to the fact that each of the sun and the moon has its own calculated orbits. The entire solar system is proceeding on the basis of different calculations, and each one of them is so firm and accurate that no deviation has ever occurred, since millions of years, even for a second.

This age is regarded as an age of ascension for science. The marvelous new inventions of the scientific age have caused wonders even for the philosophers. However, there is a clear difference between human inventions and Divine creation, which every discerning person can observe. Human inventions are subject to a series of continuous breakdown and damage, which require to be serviced, repaired, overhauled or refurbished. A machine, no matter how strong or sophisticated, needs to be repaired or at least serviced after a while. If this is not done in time, it will remain useless. The huge Divine creation, on the other hand, needs no repairs, no service nor refurbishing at any time. Neither the solar system overtakes the lunar movement, nor does the lunar movement outstrip the solar system. The sun and the moon and other celestial bodies, each float and move in its own orbit.

وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ (And the vine and the tree both prostrate [to Allah]....55:6). The word *najm* refers to the 'plants having no stem' and the word *shajar* refers to any 'tree' with stems or trunk, twigs and branches. All of them prostrate to Allah. *Sajdah* or prostration is the supreme symbol of humility, respect, surrender and unconditional love and obedience of Allah. In this context, the verse means that Allah has

assigned a specific task to every tree, plant, creeper, and their leaves and fruits for the benefit of mankind and they are performing their tasks without the slightest deviation from their assigned duties. The plants without stems and the trees humbly submit themselves to Allah's will. Verse [6], read along with the preceding verse [5], shows that everything, from the largest celestial body to the smallest plant, is subject to His laws manifest in nature. A little disturbance in or deviation from their set course would bring down in pieces the whole universe, which has been created for the service of man. It is inconceivable, therefore, that man for whose service this vast and complicated but perfectly regulated universe has been brought into being would have been created without a purpose. The life of man surely has a grand Divine aim to which repeated reference has been made in this entire Surah and in other parts of the Qur'ān. There are two types of obedience: [1] obedience that is carried out by free will, as for instance, man and *jinn* are given free will to choose between obeying Allah's laws or disobeying them; and [2] all other creation of Allah are assigned specific tasks or duties to perform without any choice. The latter is referred to as *iṭā'ah takwīniyyah* or *jabriyyah* 'compelled or coerced obedience'. In the current verse, the word *sajdah* refers to this type of 'obedience to Allah's laws in nature' where the natural objects have no choice.

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ (And He raised the sky high, and has placed the scale....55:7) The verbs *rafa'a* and *wada'a* are antonyms: *rafa'a* means 'to raise up' and *wada'a* means 'to put down'. The verse first describes that Allah has raised the heavens. This could have its obvious or outer meaning referring to the physical height of the sky, and it could also have its metaphorical meaning, referring to the high status of the heaven: In relation to the earth, the heaven occupies a higher position. Normally, the earth is understood to be the opposite of the heaven. From this point of view, the heaven and the earth are treated as opposites and mentioned throughout the Holy Qur'ān in that way. Having described the high position of the heaven, the Qur'ān goes on to describe that Allah has set the balance, but 'placing the scale' *vis-à-vis* 'raising the heaven' does not seem to form a suitable pair according to the linguistic norm. As a matter of fact, a closer analysis of the context indicates that the verse is describing the 'placing of the earth'. Three verses later, verse (10) reads

وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ (And the earth is placed by Him for creatures...55:10) Thus the Qur'an is actually describing the heaven and the earth as opposites. In between the two, a third factor [that of placing the scale] is inserted for a sage reason. The wisdom in this seems to lie in the fact that the verses that follow lay stress on observing justice and fairness. They do not allow violation of rights and practice of injustice. Following the verses referring to 'raising the heaven' and 'placing the earth' are verses that describe the scale and enjoin the correct use of it. This implies that the ultimate purpose of creating the heaven and the earth was to establish justice, peace and harmony. Peace, safety, security and harmony cannot prevail on earth without establishing justice. Without justice, chaos, disorder, mischief and corruption will hold sway in the land. Allah, the Pure and the Most High, knows best!

The word مِيزَانٌ *mizān* has been interpreted variously. In the current verse, scholars like Mujāhid, Qatādah, Suddī and others interpret it in the sense of 'justice', because that is the purpose of *mizān* [scale]. Other scholars have taken the word in its obvious sense of a piece of equipment used to determine the weights of people or things. This equipment could be a pair of scales, consisting of a bar with a pan or a dish at each end or it may be some modern equipment used for the purpose of measuring and weighing. The ultimate sense of this interpretation in any case is maintaining rights and establishing justice and fair play.

أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ (so that you should not be wrongful in weighing...55:8). The earlier verse stated the creation of the scale, and this verse states the reason for its creation. The imperfect verb تَطْغَوْا *taṭghaw* is derived from تَطْغَى *ṭughyān* which stands for 'injustice'. Thus verses [7] and [8] put together mean: '[The '*mizān* or scale' has been created so that you may not transgress the balance and thus practice injustice'].

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ (And observe the correct weight with fairness, ...55:9). The word قِسْطٌ *qisṭ* literally means 'justice'. The meaning is obvious: 'And observe the weight with equity'.

وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ (and do not make weighing deficient...55:9). The word خُسْرٌ *khusr* means 'to skimp or make deficient'. The opening part of verse [9] was the positive aspect of the injunction, and the concluding part is its negative aspect, in that it is unlawful to fall short of measure or weight.

The two parts, positive and negative, put together the verse as a whole means 'Do not cheat in weights and measures, but rather observe justice and fairness'.

وَالْأَرْضُ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ (And the earth is placed by Him for creatures...55:10). The word أَنَام 'anām with *fatha* [=a] on the first letter on the grammatical measure of سَحَاب *saḥāb*, refers to all the creatures that are on the surface of the earth. Baiḍāwī translates the word as 'everything having a soul'. Evidently, the word 'anām in the verse refers to mankind and the *jinn*, because only these two species of Allah's creation are obligated to observe the precepts of Sharī'ah. Furthermore, they are addressed throughout the Sūrah. For instance in the refrain verse فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ (So, [O mankind and Jinn,] which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?...55:13) The dual second person attached pronouns and the dual forms of the verbs second person sustained throughout Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān are addressed to Jinn and mankind.

فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ (in which there are fruits ...55:11). The word فَاكِهَةٌ *fākihah* refers to fruits that are normally eaten after food for pleasure.

وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ (...and the date-palms having sheaths...55:11). The word أَكْمَام *akmām* is the plural of كِمَم *kimm*, and refers to 'the cover that surrounds and protects dates and other fruits in the beginning'.

وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ (and the grain having chaff, ...55:12). The word حَبَّ *ḥabb* means grain, as for instance 'wheat', 'gram', 'rice', 'a kind of vetch', 'lentil' and so on. The word 'aṣf is the outer cover of some type of grains, like rice or wheat husk, which Allah creates with His power and consummate wisdom. Man's attention is drawn to the fact that each grain of the food he eats several times a day has been created by Allah, out of His unbounded grace and beneficence, from soil and water in inconceivably wonderful ways. He protected every grain against insects with the outer cover until maturity, so that it was prepared as a morsel of food. The current verse, thus, briefly points to all those natural things that are so essential for the physical development of man. The mention of 'aṣf [husk] is to remind that it is the fodder for your animals. This is another bounty of Allah because man needs the milk of the animals for nourishment. Furthermore, animals are used as a means of transportation to convey human beings from place to place as well as to

carry load, cargo and luggage.

وَالرَّيْحَانَ (...and fragrant flowers...55:12). The popular meaning of the word الرَّيْحَانَ *raiḥān* is fragrance or fragrant plant or sweet-scented plants. Ibn Zaid has interpreted the word thus in the current verse. Allah has produced a variety of fragrances and sweet-smelling flowers on plants and trees. Sometimes the word *raiḥān* is used in the sense of livelihood and sustenance. It is said in Arabic: خَرَجْتُ أَطْلُبُ رَيْحَانَ اللَّهِ (I came out looking for sustenance provided by Allah.) Sayyidna Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه interprets it in this strain.

Mankind and Jinn are surrounded by Divine Bounties

فَيَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَفِّرُوا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكُمْ مَا تَكْفُرُونَ (So, [O mankind and Jinn,] which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?...55:13). The word أَلَاءَ *‘alā’* is the plural and it means 'benefits, benefaction, favour, boon, blessing or bounty'. The address is to the two species of Jinn and men referred to in verse 33 below and many other verses of Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān where Jinn are specifically mentioned.

The Creation of Humans and Jinns

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ (He has created man from dry clay, ringing like pottery...55:14). The word *insān* [man] in this context refers unanimously to ‘Adam عليه السلام. The word *ṣalṣāl* [clay] refers to the wet soil when it becomes dry and heavy. The word *fakḥkhār* refers to the wet soil when it is baked.

وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ (and created *Jānn* [father of the *Jinns*] from a smokeless flame of fire...55:15) The word جَانَّ *jann*, refers to the class of beings called '*jinn*'. The word مَارِجٍ *mārij* refers to the 'smokeless flame of fire'. The major element in the creation of *jinn* is the smokeless flame of fire, just as the major element in the creation of man is dry sounding clay.

Allah is the Lord of the Two Points of Sunrise and the Two Points of Sunset

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ (He is the Lord of both points of sunrise and both points of sunset...55:17) The sun rises at different cardinal points in the east in winter and in summer: Thus we have the two easts [*mashriqain*]. Similarly, the sun sets at different cardinal points in the west in winter and summer: Thus we have two wests [*maghribain*].

Allah created Different Types of Water

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِينِ (He has set forth the two seas that meet together...55:19). Literally, the verb *maraja* means 'to let loose'. The word *bahrain* [two seas or two types of waters] refers to sweet and salty waters. Allah has created two types of waters. In some places the two seas meet together, the samples of which are available in every region of the world. However, where the sweet and salty waters meet, there is a distinct barrier between the sweet and salty waters. In some cases, the two types of waters are seen distinctly in higher or lower position. If the salty water overrides the sweet water, the characteristics of the sweet water will not be spoiled; nor will the characteristics of the salty water be affected in any way if the sweet water overrides it. Thus the Qur'an states: مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِينِ "He has set forth the two seas that meet together, while between them there is a barrier they do not transgress....55:20)

يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ (From both of them come forth the pearl and the coral...55:22). The meaning of لُؤْلُؤُ *lu'lu'* is quite well-known, that is, 'pearl'. The word مَرْجَانُ *marjan* too is one of the 'precious jewels or gems'. It is a hard substance formed from coral which has branches like trees. Both these precious jewels or gems are produced in the waters. It is generally understood that pearls and corals are both hunted or fished for in the salty waters, not in the fresh waters, whereas the verse states that they are fished for in both kinds of waters. It is possible to reconcile the verse with the general understanding: Pearls as well as corals originate in sweet waters where it is not easy to hunt for or from which to fish out the gems or jewels. The sweet waters flow into the salty waters where the substances are carried and deposited. The pearls and corals are brought out from there. Therefore, the source of the pearls and corals is said to be the salty seas.

وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ (And His are the sailing ships raised up in the sea like mountains...55:24). The word جَوَارِي *jawari* is the plural of جَارِيَةٌ *jariyah*. One of its meanings is ship and that is the sense in which it is used in the current verse. The word مُنْشَأَتْ *munsha'at* is derived from نَشَأَ *nasha'a* which means 'to rise up or high, be lofty'. *Al-munsha'at* thus refers to 'sails of the ships that are lofty'. The verse describes the wisdom of making the ship and its running on the surface of the water.

Verses 26 - 45

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ
 ﴿٢٧﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ
 ﴿٣٠﴾ سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيَّةَ الثَّقَلَيْنِ ﴿٣١﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾
 يَمْعُشَرُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَنِ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا
 تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شَوْاظٌ مِّن نَّارٍ ۖ وَنَحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْصِرِينَ
 ﴿٣٥﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَإِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ
 وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ
 لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ
 ﴿٤٠﴾ يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمِهِمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ
 ﴿٤١﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا
 الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ يُطَوَّفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ إِنِ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ
 رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

Every one who lives on it (the earth) has to perish. [26] And your Lord's Countenance will remain, full of majesty, full of honour. [27] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [28] All those in the heavens and the earth beseech Him (for their needs.) Every day He is at some task. [29] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [30] Soon We are going to spare Ourselves for you (to reckon your deeds), O two heavy species (of Jinns and mankind)! [31] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [32] O genera of Jinns and mankind, If you are able to penetrate beyond the realms of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate. You cannot penetrate except with an authority. [33] So, which of the bounties of your Lord

will you deny? [34] A flame of fire and a smoke will be loosed against you, and you will not (be able) to defend. [35] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [36] So, (it will be a terrible event) when the sky will be split apart and will become rosy, like (red) hides. [37] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [38] On that day, neither a man will be questioned about his sin, nor a Jinn, (because every thing is known to Allah). [39] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [40] The guilty ones will be recognized (by the angels) by their marks and will be seized by foreheads and feet. [41] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [42] This is the Jahannam (Hell) that the guilty people deny. [43] They will circle around between it and between hot, boiling water. [44] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [45]

Allah is the Ever-living, Free of all Need

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (Every one who lives on it (the earth) has to perish, and your Lord's Countenance will remain, full of majesty, full of honour...55:26-27). The attached pronoun [it] refers to الأرض *al-ard* [the earth] which has been explicitly mentioned antecedently in verse [10] وَالْأَرْضُ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ (And the earth is placed by Him for creatures..). Furthermore, 'the earth' is one of those general things that can be referred to by a pronoun even if they are not mentioned explicitly as an antecedent. Verse [26] means that man and *jinn* that dwell on the earth are subject to decay and death. *Jinn* and man have specifically been singled out in this verse, because in this Surah these two species of Allah's creation are mainly addressed. This, however, does not necessarily imply that the heaven and the celestial beings are not perishable. In fact, on another occasion in the Qur'an Allah has stated in general terms: كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ (Everything is going to perish except His Face). (28:88)

وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ (...your Lord's Countenance55:27). The word *wajh* [Face], according to majority of the exegetes, stands for the 'Being of Allah'. The attached second person pronoun in *rabb-i-kā* [=your Lord] refers to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. It is a great honour for him that he should be remembered by Allah in special ways when praising him, as for instance, 'abduhū (His servant). Here, Allah, the Lord of lords, declares His direct special relationship with the Holy Prophet ﷺ and addresses him thus:

rabb-i-kā [your Lord].

According to the well-known exegetes, the verse purports to convey that since everything [including *jinn* and mankind] dwelling on earth will be reduced to nothing, and the heavenly bodies all brought to naught, and the whole material universe made non-existent, still human reason demands that there should be a Being who should remain and who should never die. Such a Being is Allah Who created the whole universe and Who is the First and the Final Cause of all things. He alone will abide because He is Self-Subsisting, All-Sustaining, Independent and Besought of all.

The word *fanā'* has two possible meanings: [1] everything is potentially subject to decay and death and is eventually destined to perish, having no capacity for permanence and immortality; and [2] all things will actually pass away on Doomsday.

Other exegetes have interpreted the phrase *وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ* 'your Lord's Countenance' to mean 'your side', that is, out of all existent beings only those things will attain permanence that are on the side of Allah. This includes the Being of Allah and His Attributes. It also includes the actions and conditions of Allah's creation that remain firmly attached to Allah and is never separated from Him in any situation. In sum, the verse means: 'Everything that man, *jinn* and angels do for Allah's pleasure will remain under His care and protection and as such will attain permanence, never to perish.' This interpretation is supported by another verse: *مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ* (What is with you shall end and what is with Allah shall last....16:96) The phrase 'what is with you' refers to 'wealth and power, comfort and discomfort, love and hatred'. All these states and matters are transitory and must perish. The phrase 'what is with Allah' refers to 'man's actions and states which remain firmly attached to Allah and is never separated from Him in any situation are destined to last, never to perish. Allah, the Pure and Most Exalted, knows best!

ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (...full of majesty, full of honour...55:27). In other words, the Lord is the Master of Greatness, Grandeur and Tremendousness. This is Allah's Majesty that overwhelms His creation and fills them with awe. The Lord is also the Master of Honour, signifying that those who benefit by the great favours Allah has bestowed upon them and walk in the path

of truth and righteousness will be granted more favours by the Lord of Honour. Despite being the Lord of Greatness and Majesty, Allah is not like the worldly kings and rulers who would not pay attention to others or the indigent people. He grants their petition and invocation. The next verse [to be analysed in the forthcoming paragraph] bears testimony to this interpretation. The current phrase under discussion constitutes one of those special Attributes of Allah which if a suppliant were to invoke before calling upon Allah for help, protection, inspiration and a host of other things, the supplication will be readily granted as recorded in Tirmidhi, Nasa'ī and Musnad of Aḥmad. Ibn 'Amir رضي الله عنه has transmitted that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *الطُّوًّا بِيَاذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ* (Persist [in invoking Allah] with 'O Lord of Majesty and Honour'.") The imperative *alizzū* is derived from the infinitive *ilzāz* which means 'to continue firmly in some course of action'. [Maḏharī]

يَسْئَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ (All those in the heavens and the earth beseech Him. Every day He is at some task...55:29) The verse signifies that all creatures stand in need of Allah, in all conditions and situations. They all seek His help willingly or unwillingly. The earthly creatures ask for their specific needs. In this world, they need sustenance, health and welfare, and comfort; and in the Hereafter, they need forgiveness, mercy and Paradise. The celestial creatures do not eat and drink, they do however need Allah's mercy and grace. Allah's grace, forgiveness and so on surround them all the time. The phrase *كُلَّ يَوْمٍ* 'every day' is the adverb of time of the verb *يَسْئَلُهُ* 'beseech'.⁽¹⁾ The 'day' is not used in its popular sense, but in the sense of 'time' in general. All His creation, in different regions, in different languages implore for their needs all the time. Obviously, each member of the earthly and celestial beings has countless needs. Who else besides the Absolutely Powerful Being, the Lord of Majesty, is able to respond to their needs every moment of the time? Therefore, 'every day' is followed by the sentence *هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ* 'He is at some task', that is, His Attributes know no limit or count, and keep finding their manifestations in diverse ways all the time. He gives life to some and causes others to die. He elevates some and others He abases. Some He

(1) This is according to one construction of the sentence. Other exegetes have taken the phrase 'every day' as relating to 'He is at some task'. The translation of the verse given above is based on this latter construction, which is also adopted by Moulana Thanawi رحمه الله تعالى. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani).

causes to become ill and others He cures. He alleviates the adversity of some; He causes the aggrieved ones to smile; He grants the requests of suppliants; He forgives the sins of the sinners and makes them deserving of Paradise; He gives power to some, and He snatches it away from others and abases them. In sum, every Attribute of Allah keeps finding its manifestation in diverse ways all the time.

A Warning for Humans and Jinn

سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهَ الثَّقَلَيْنِ (Soon We are going to spare Ourselves for you [to reckon your deeds], O two heavy species! ...55:31) The word ثَقْلَانِ *thaqalān* is the dual of ثَقْل *thaqal* which denotes 'burden or load'. Thus the word *ath-thaqalān* [the dual form] denotes 'the two heavy or weighty things', and signifies 'the men' and 'the *Jinn*' as the context shows. In Arabic, the word *thaqal* refers to anything the weight or value of which is well-known. It is in this sense that the word has occurred in the following Prophetic Tradition: إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ الثَّقَلَيْنِ (Indeed I leave amongst you two weighty and valuable things... which will continue to guide you.) Some versions of the Tradition state that those two weighty and valuable things are: كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَعِترَتِي "Allah's Book and my family" and others state: كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَ سُنَّتِي "Allah's Book and my normative Sunnah [practices]". The end result of both the versions amount to the same thing because *'itrah* refers to both types of family, lineal or spiritual. Therefore, it refers to all the noble Companions. The end result of the Tradition is that after the Prophet ﷺ there are two things that will serve to guide and set aright the Muslims: [1] the Book of Allah; and [2] the example of the blessed Companions in all their mutual dealings and transactions. The version that uses *'itrah* instead of *Sunnah* means the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ that reached the Muslims through the noble Companions.

Be that as it may, the word ثَقْلَيْنِ *thaqalain* in the Tradition refers to the two weighty and valuable things. From this point of view, *Ath-thaqalān*, in the current verse, refers to the two species of Allah's creation, *Jinn* and human beings, because they are the weightiest and most valuable beings [possessed of soul] dwelling on earth.

Then the verse says, 'Soon We are going to spare Ourselves for you' The verb سَنَفْرُغُ *sanafrughu* is derived from فَرَآغَ *farāgh*, which means to be free from occupation. The antonym of *farāgh* is شُغْلٌ *shughl* [to occupy]. The word *farāgh* informs us of two things: [1] that one was occupied with

something; and [2] now he has become free from that occupation. This type of *farāgh* is common in human beings. However, neither of these senses apply to Allah. He is above them. Surely, nothing will occupy Allah from attending to anything else, nor does He become free or unoccupied like human beings do. Therefore, the verb *sanafrughu* [We are going to spare Ourselves to you] is employed as a metaphor. This metaphorical use of the word is common in human speech. This expression is used to show the importance of some work: 'We are now free to attend to you, being fully focused on you'. Anyone who fully focuses attention on any work, idiomatically it is said that 'he has no other work or he has nothing else to do'. In a verse preceding this [29], it was mentioned that the earthly beings ask for their specific needs, such as sustenance, health and welfare, and comfort; and forgiveness, mercy and Paradise. The celestial beings need Allah's mercy, grace and forgiveness which surround them all the time. From this point of view, Allah is, every moment, in a state of characteristic manifestation of His Divinity and Divine Attributes. The verse *sanafrughu* [We are going to spare Ourselves for you...] indicates that on the Day of Judgement all petitions, their acceptance and acting on them will come to an end. Of all the manifestations, there shall remain only one manifestation and that is taking account of deeds and passing judgement with absolute justice and equity. [Rūh]

يَمْعَشَرُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا ط
لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَنٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

(O genera of Jinns and mankind, If you are able to penetrate beyond the realms of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate. You cannot penetrate except with an authority....55:33)

In the preceding verse *jinn* and mankind were addressed as *Ath-thaqalan* and warned that their deeds will be reviewed and every single one of them will attract reward or punishment. The current verse purports to say that no one will be able to hide from death, nor will anyone be able to escape from attendance or giving account of actions on the Day of Judgement. This verse does not use the expression *تَقْلَنُ* *Thaqalan* as in the preceding verse but explicitly uses the expression *يَمْعَشَرُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ* (O genera of *Jinns* and mankind) '*Jinn*' is mentioned first followed by 'men' presumably because a high-power energy is required to pass through the confines of heaven and earth. Allah has given Jinns

more power than human beings in such matters. The meaning of the verse is: 'O Company of *Jinn* and human beings, if you think that you will be able to find refuge and thus avert death by avoiding the angel of death or run away from the Plains of Gathering or the Plains of Reckoning, then try to cross the bounds of the heavens and the earth if you have the power and ability to do so.' This is no mean task. This requires high-powered energy. The combined forces of Jinns and mankind will not be able to harness the energy to go beyond the confines of the heavens and the earth. The purport of the verse is not to show the possibility or probability of passing beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth. The proposition is hypothetical. The purport of the verse is to demonstrate the utter powerlessness and inability of men and Jinns to achieve this feat.

If the purpose of 'penetrating through the heavens and the earth' mentioned in the verse is to escape death, then it refers to this world and means: It is not within the power of any man or *Jinns* to cross the bounds of the heavens and the earth and escape death. This is stated according to human thinking. Otherwise, no one is outside the power and the authority of Allah, even if he crosses the bounds of the heaven and the earth. And if the escape intended by 'penetrating through the heavens and the earth' stands for 'escaping accountability on the Day of Reckoning', the purport of the verse is to demonstrate its absolute impossibility. For according to other Qur'ānic verses and Traditional narratives the heaven will crack open, on the Day of Judgement, and all the angels will border on the sides of the earth and the people will be hemmed in from all sides. The Jinn and human beings will experience the horrors of the Day of Resurrection and run in different directions. In whichever direction they run the angels will lay siege to the areas that Allah has fortified for the purpose of recapturing the escapees. [Rūḥ]

This Verse does not point to Space Exploration by Rockets and Sputniks

In the present scientific age, experiments are being conducted in an effort to come out of the gravity of the earth and to explore the heavenly bodies by rockets, sputniks and other spacecrafts. Obviously, none of these experiments are conducted beyond the bounds of the heaven. In fact, they are far below the surface of the heaven, let alone crossing the

heavenly confines. Thus this verse has no bearing on space travels and reported incidents of reaching some of the heavenly bodies. Some simple-minded people posit this verse as the basis of demonstrating the possibility of space travels, whereas these simpletons are merely displaying ignorance about the actual meaning of the Qur'an.

يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِّنْ نَّارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرُونَ (A flame of fire and a smoke will be loosed against you, and you will not [be able] to defend...55:35) Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and other leading authorities on Qur'ānic exegesis have said that the word *shuwaz* with refers to 'flame or fire without smoke' and the word *nuhās* refers to 'smoke in which there is no flame'. This verse too addresses the two species of creation, the *jinn*s and mankind. It addresses them and describes how fire and smoke will be unleashed against them. The verse could mean that after the reckoning is over, and the disbelievers are sent to the Hell, they will experience two different types of punishment. In some places there will be only fire and flame, with no smoke at all. In other places there will be only smoke and no flame or fire. Other Qur'ānic exegetes regard this verse as a supplement to the preceding one, and assign the following meaning to it: O *jinn* and mankind; it is not within your power to cross the bounds of the heavens. If you do attempt to escape on the Day of Resurrection, then the angels [including those guarding the Hellfire] will bring you back by directing the flames of fire and smoke. The verb *فَلَا تَنْتَصِرُونَ* *falā-tantaṣirān* is derived from *إِنْتِصَارٌ* *intiṣār* which means 'to help someone to defend him against a calamity' and thus the words *فَلَا تَنْتَصِرُونَ* *falā-tantaṣirān* signify that the *jinn*s and mankind will not be able to help each other against Divine punishment, try as they might.

The Horrors of the Day of Resurrection

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ (On that day, neither a man will be questioned about his sin, nor a *Jinn*...55:39) One interpretation of this verse is that no one will be asked whether or not he had committed the sin, because it will have already been recorded by the angels in the ledger of deeds, and Allah has the Pre-Eternal knowledge of it. The question will be 'why' did they commit the sin? This is the interpretation of Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه. Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى interprets it as follows: There will be no need for the angels of punishment to question the criminals whether or not they committed the sin. They will be known by their special marks [See verse

(41) below] clearly showing on their faces. The angels will be able to recognize them by their distinguishing marks and hurl them into the Hellfire according to the type of misdeeds they might have committed. A composite interpretation of the two explanations is as follows: This event will take place when people will have given account of their deeds, and judgment will have been passed against the criminals to go to Hell on the Day of Reckoning. They will not be questioned nor will any negotiation be held about their sins at that stage. Their characteristic signs will be seen on their faces, and accordingly they will be hurled into Hell.

Qatādah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى says that the verse refers to a stage after they will have been questioned about their sins, but they will have refused under oath. Then their mouths and tongues will be sealed, and their hands and feet will be asked to bear witness. At that stage no more questions will be asked from them. Ibn Kathīr notes all three explanations. They are close to each other, and thus there is no conflict.

يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ (The guilty ones will be recognized [by the angels] by their marks and will be seized by foreheads and feet...55:41) The word *sima* means 'a sign'. Ḥasan Baṣṭrī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى says that the day when sentence will be passed against the guilty to go to Hell, the following will be their signs: They will be known by their dark faces and their blue eyes. Through grief their faces will turn pale. The angels will recognize the guilty by these signs and seize them.

The word نَوَاصِي *nawāṣī* is the plural of نَاصِيَةٌ *nāṣiyah*, and means 'forelock'. Some will be dragged by their forelocks, and others will be dragged by their feet. Or it could mean that sometimes they will be dragged by their forelocks and at other times they will be dragged by their feet. The third explanation could be that the angels of punishment will bend their foreheads down to their feet and tie the forelocks to the feet, and throw them into the Hellfire. Allah knows best!

Verses 46-78

وَلَمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّتٍ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾
ذَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فِيهِمَا عَيْنِينَ

تَجْرِبِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ
 زَوْجِنِ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ مُتَّكِعِينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ
 بَطَّائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ ۗ وَجَنَّاتٍ جَنَّتَيْنِ دَانِ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا
 تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فِيهِنَّ قَصْرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ ۗ لَمْ يَطْمِئْتُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا
 جَانٌّ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ كَانَّهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ
 وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾ هَلْ جَزَاءُ
 الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَمِنْ
 دُونِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾ مُدْهَامَتَيْنِ
 ﴿٦٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾ فِيهِمَا عَيْنِينَ نَضَّاحَتَيْنِ ﴿٦٦﴾
 فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ فِيهِمَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَّانٌ ﴿٦٨﴾
 فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾ فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حِسَانٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ فَبِأَيِّ
 آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ حُورٌ مَقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَامِ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَبِأَيِّ
 آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾ لَمْ يَطْمِئْتُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٧٤﴾
 فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾ مُتَّكِعِينَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ
 وَعَبْقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ تَبْرَكَ اسْمُ
 رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَلِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ﴿٧٨﴾

And for the one who is fearful of having to stand before his Lord, there are two gardens [46] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [47] both having lot of branches. [48] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [49] In both there are two flowing springs. [50] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [51] In both there are two kinds of every fruit. [52] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [53] (The people of these gardens will be) reclining on floorings whose (even) linings are of thick silk, and the fruits plucked from the two gardens will be at hand.

[54] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [55] In them there are maidens restraining their glances, whom neither a man will have touched before them, nor a Jinn. [56] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [57] They look like rubies and corals. [58] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [59] Is there any reward for goodness other than goodness? [60] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [61] And lesser than these two, there are two other gardens (for the second category of the God-fearing), [62] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [63] both dark green! [64] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [65] In both there are two springs gushing forth profusely. [66] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [67] In both there are fruits and date-palms and pomegranates. [68] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [69] In them there are women, good and gorgeous, [70] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [71] the houris, kept guarded in pavilions [72] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [73] whom neither a man will have touched before them, nor a Jinn. [74] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [75] (The people of these gardens will be) reclining on green cushions and marvelously beautiful mattresses. [76] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [77] Glorious is the name of your Lord, the Lord of Majesty, the Lord of Honour. [78]

The Delight of the Righteous in Paradise

The foregoing verses spoke of the horrible punishments to be faced by the disbelievers. In the current set of verses we are told about the rewards and bounties reserved for the righteous believers. The verse 46 speaks of two Gardens that are exclusively reserved 'for those who are fearful of having to stand before their Lord'. This phrase refers to those fortunate believers who are, at all times, concerned about reckoning on the Day of Judgement and, as a result, keep away from all sorts of sins under all circumstances. Obviously, these are the people who enjoy special nearness to Allah. In verse [62] below we read: *وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّاتٌ* (And lesser than these two, there are two other gardens...55:62) This verse does not specify the class of righteous believers who will receive these gardens. However, the phrase *مِنْ دُونِهِمَا* *min dunihimā* ('and lesser than these two') indicates that

the Gardens mentioned in verse [62] are for the general body of believers who are lesser in their spiritual attainment than the foremost believers who are granted special nearness to Allah.

The Qur'ānic exegetes have explained the two sets of pairs of Gardens in other ways as well. Here we have adopted the most plausible and preferable explanation: that is, the first two Gardens are reserved exclusively for the foremost believers who are granted special nearness to Allah; and the second two Gardens are reserved for the general body of believers. That the two Gardens mentioned in Verse 62 are inferior to the first two is supported by authentic Traditions. Bayān-ul-Qur'ān cites the Prophetic Tradition from Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr to the effect that while interpreting verses [46] and [62] the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: *جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ لِلْمُقَرَّبِينَ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ وُرْقٍ لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ* "There are two Gardens made of gold for believers who are granted special nearness to Allah; and there are two Gardens made of silver for the People of the Right [that is, for general body of righteous believers]." Also, it is recorded in Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr that Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib رضي الله عنه said, *الْعَيْنَانِ الَّتِي تَجْرِيَانِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ النَّصَاطِينِ*, "The two springs that are flowing freely [in the first two Gardens] are better than the two other springs that are mentioned as 'gushing forth' (in the second two gardens). In verse [50] springs (in the first two gardens) promised to the believers have been described as flowing freely and ceaselessly *تَجْرِيَانِ [tajriyān]* while in verse [66] the springs (in the second two gardens) are described as 'gushing forth' *نَضَّاحَتَيْنِ [naḍḍākhatān]*. The quality of 'gushing forth' is the characteristic of all springs, but the quality of 'flowing' is an additional characteristic of specific springs. This is the concise description of all four springs that the inmates of Paradise will be given.

Related Considerations

In Verse 46, the phrase, *وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ* (for the one who is fearful of having to stand before his Lord...55:46) refers, according to most exegetes of the Qur'ān, to standing before Allah on the Day of Resurrection to give the account of one's deeds. The word 'fearful' signifies that he is mindful under all conditions, whether in public or in private, that one day he has to appear in the Court of Allah to give an account of his deeds. Evidently such a person will never go near the sinful acts.

Other exegetes, like Qurtubī and others, interpret this to mean : 'the

one who is fearful of the Station of His Lord'. That is, he is mindful of the High Station of Allah whereby He is watchful and keeps guard over his words and deeds, overt or covert. All his movements and activities are known to Him. This explanation is close to the previous explanation, in that Allah's keeping guard over him will keep him away from sins.

ذَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ (both having lot of branches...55:48). This describes the first two Gardens. There will be plenty of trees abounding in branches and consequently their shade will be dense, and the fruits will be in abundance. The other two Gardens are described later. No such qualities are mentioned about them, which may imply their relative deficiency in this quality.

فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَيْنِ (In both there are two kinds of every fruit...52). The phrase "of every fruit" denotes that the first two gardens will comprehend all kinds of fruit. As opposed to this, verse [68] simply states *fākīhah* [=fruits] about the second two gardens. The word *زَوْجَيْنِ* *zawjān* [two kinds] means every fruit will be of two types. This may be referring to one kind of dried fruits, and the other of fresh ones. It could also mean that one kind will be of normal taste, and the other of some extra ordinary flavor. [Mazhari]

لَمْ يَطْمِئُنُّنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ (...whom neither a man will have touched before them, nor a *Jinn*...55:56). The word *طَمَّتْ* *ṭamth* has different meanings. 'Menstrual discharge' is termed as *ṭamth*, and the menstruating woman as *طَامِثٌ* '*ṭamith*'. It also means 'sexual intercourse with a virgin'. This second sense is meant here in this verse.

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ (Is there any reward for goodness other than goodness?...55:60). Having described the two Gardens for the intimate believers, it is declared as a principle that a good deed attracts a good reward. The righteous believers will be blessed, therefore, with good rewards.

مُدْهَامَّتَيْنِ (both dark green!...55:64). This is one word verse, and it means 'dark green with foliage'. The word is derived from *idhimām* signifying, for a meadow or garden, to become of dark green hue inclining to black by reason of abundance of moisture or irrigation. This description is not assigned to the first two Gardens. This does not necessarily imply that they do not have this quality. The former Gardens are described as ذَوَاتَا

أَفْئَانٍ 'having lot of branches'. This comprehends the quality of 'dark green' as well.

فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حِسَانٌ (In them there are women, good and gorgeous,...55:70) The word خَيْرَاتٌ *khairāt* (translated above as 'good') refers to 'the good character of those women'; and the word حِسَانٌ *ḥisān* (translated above as 'gorgeous') refers to 'women who have beautiful features'. These qualities too will be common with the maidens of both the Gardens, to which reference was made in the foregoing verses.

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ وَعَبْقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ (...reclining on green cushions and marvelously beautiful mattresses....55:76) Qāmūs explains that the word رَفْرَفٍ *rafrāf* means 'silk fabric greenish in colour' which is used in making carpets, pillows, cushions and other items of decoration. It is mentioned in the Arabic lexicon *Ṣiḥāḥ* that they are embellished with arboreal and floral patterns, which, in Urdu, is called مُشَجَّرٌ *mushajjar*. The noun عَبْقَرِيٍّ *‘abqariyy* refers to 'every fine, beautiful fabric or material' and the adjective *ḥisān* [beautiful] qualifies it.

تَبَرَّكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (Glorious is the name of your Lord, the Lord of Majesty, the Lord of Honor....55:78) Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān is replete with verses that call attention to Allah's blessings, boons and bounties, and His favors upon man. In conclusion, this verse has been appended as a synopsis: What can one say about the Pure Being? Even His Name is Glorious. All Divine boons and bounties subsist by virtue of His Name. Allah, the Pure and the Most High, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah

(The Imminent Event)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 96 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 56

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ﴿١﴾ لَيْسَ لِيُوقِعَتِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ ﴿٢﴾ خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ
 ﴿٣﴾ إِذَا رُجَّتِ الْأَرْضُ رَجًا ﴿٤﴾ وَبُسَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًا ﴿٥﴾ فَكَانَتْ
 هَبَاءً مُّنبَثًّا ﴿٦﴾ وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً ﴿٧﴾ فَأَصْحَبُ الْمِئْمَنَةِ لَا مَا
 أَصْحَبُ الْمِئْمَنَةِ ﴿٨﴾ وَأَصْحَبُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ لَا مَا أَصْحَبُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ
 ﴿٩﴾ وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿١١﴾ فِي جَنَّتِ
 النَّعِيمِ ﴿١٢﴾ ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَقَلِيلٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ عَلَى
 سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُونَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾ مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَقَلِّبِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ
 وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ بِأَكْوَابٍ وَأَبَارِيقٍ وَكَأْسٍ مِّنْ مَّعِينٍ ﴿١٨﴾
 لَا يَصِدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُنْزِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَفَاكِهَةٍ مِّمَّا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾
 وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَحُورٍ عِينٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ كَأَمْثَالِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ
 الْمَكْنُونِ ﴿٢٣﴾ جَزَاءً لِّبِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا
 لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْتِيهَا إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَأَصْحَبُ الْيَمِينِ لَا

مَا أَصْحَبَ الِئْمِينِ ﴿٢٧﴾ فِي سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُودٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَطَلْحٍ مَّنضُودٍ ﴿٢٩﴾
 وَظِلِّ مَمْدُودٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ ﴿٣٢﴾
 لَّامَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَفُرْشٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ إِنَّا
 أَنشَأْنَهُنَّ إِنشَاءً ﴿٣٥﴾ فَجَعَلْنَهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا ﴿٣٦﴾ عُرْبًا أترَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾
 لِأَصْحَابِ الِئْمِينِ ﴿٣٨﴾ ثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾
 وَأَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ لِمَا أَصْحَبُ الشِّمَالِ ﴿٤١﴾ فِي سَمُومٍ
 وَحَمِيمٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَظِلِّ مِّنْ يَّحْمُومٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ لَّابَارِدٍ وَلَا كَرِيمٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّهُمْ
 كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَكَانُوا يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى الْحِنثِ
 الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَكَانُوا يَقُولُونَ لَا آئِدًا مِّننَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا إِنَّا
 لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ أَوْ آبَاؤُنَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ
 ﴿٤٩﴾ لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَىٰ مِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٥٠﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ أَيْهَا
 الضَّالُّونَ الْمُكْذِبُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ لَأَكَلُونَ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِّنْ زُقُومٍ ﴿٥٢﴾
 فَمَالِئُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَشَرِبُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٥٤﴾
 فَشَرِبُونَ شُرْبَ الْهَيْمِ ﴿٥٥﴾ هَذَا نُزُلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٥٦﴾

When the Imminent Event (of Doom) will occur, [1] there will be no one to deny its occurrence. [2] It will be abasing (some), exalting (others) [3] when the earth will be jolted with a quake, [4] and the mountains will be crumbled with a thorough crumbling, [5] until they will become dust, scattered in the air, [6] and you will be (divided into) three categories. [7] As for the People of the Right, how (lucky) are the people of the Right! [8] And the People of the Left? How (wretched) are the People of the Left! [9] And the Foremost are the foremost. [10] Those are the ones blessed with nearness (to Allah) [11] in gardens of bliss, [12] many from the earlier generations, [13] and of a small number from the later ones. [14] (They will be sitting) on thrones woven

with gold, [15] reclining on them, facing each other. [16] They will be served in rounds by Immortal boys [17] with bowls and jugs and a goblet of pure wine, [18] from which they will neither suffer headache, nor will they be intoxicated, [19] and with fruits of their choice, [20] and the meat of birds that they desire. [21] And (for them there will be) houris, having lovely big eyes, [22] all (neat and clean) like a hidden pearl, [23] as a reward for what they used to do. [24] They will hear neither an absurd talk therein, nor something leading to sin, [25] but the words of *salām*, *salām* (as greetings). [26] As for the People of the Right, how (lucky) are the People of the Right! [27] (They will be) amid lote-trees with no thorns, [28] and the trees of *ṭalh*, (banana, or a fragrant tree) having layers one upon the other, [29] and a shade, spread all over, [30] and water, poured forth, [31] and a lot of fruits, [32] neither interrupted (in any season), nor prohibited, [33] and mattresses of high quality. [34] Surely We have created those (females) a fresh creation, [35] and have made them virgins, [36] amorous to their husbands, matching them in age, [37] for the People of the Right, [38] (comprising) many from the earlier generations, [39] and many from the later ones. [40] As for the People of the Left, How (wretched) are the People of the Left! [41] (They will be) in burning wind and boiling water, [42] and in a shade of black smoke, [43] neither cool nor graceful. [44] They were before that indulged in luxuries, [45] and used to persist in major sins, [46] and used to say, "Is it that when we die and become dust—is it that we will be raised again, [47] and our ancient fathers as well?" [48] Say, "All the earlier and the later ones [49] will be gathered together for a fixed time of a specified Day. [50] Then O you, the erring, the denying people, [51] you will have to eat from the tree of *Zaqqūm*, [52] and to fill with it the bellies, [53] then you will have to drink boiling water on top of it, [54] and to drink like camels suffering from the disease of over-thirst. [55] This will be their entertainment on the Day of Requit. [56]

Special Characteristic of Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah: Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd's Didactic Story on his Deathbed

Ibn Kathīr cites a story on the authority of Ibn 'Asakir from Abū Zābyah that when Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه was lying on his deathbed, Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه paid him a visit and the following

conversation ensued.

'Uthmān رضي الله عنه: "مَا تَشْتَكِي؟" "What are you suffering from?"

Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه: "ذُنُوبِي" "from my sins."

'Uthmān رضي الله عنه: "مَا تَشْتَهِي؟" "Do you desire anything?"

Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه: "رَحْمَةَ رَبِّي" "Yes, Allah's mercy."

'Uthmān رضي الله عنه: "أَلَا أَمْرُكَ بِطَبِيبٍ؟" "Shall I call a doctor for you?"

Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه: "الطَّبِيبُ أَمْرَضَنِي" "It is the doctor who has given me the ailment."

'Uthmān رضي الله عنه: "أَلَا أَمْرُكَ بِعَطَاءٍ؟" "May I send you an allowance from the public treasury?"

Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه: "لَا حَاجَةَ لِي فِيهِ" "I have no need for it."

'Uthmān رضي الله عنه: "يَكُونُ لِبَنَاتِكَ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ" "Accept it, [please]. You are leaving daughters behind you. It will help them."

Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه: "أَتَخْشَى عَلَى بَنَاتِي الْفَقْرَ إِنِّي أَمَرْتُ بَنَاتِي يَقْرَأْنَ كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ سُورَةَ الْوَاقِعَةِ. إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: مَنْ قَرَأَ سُورَةَ الْوَاقِعَةِ كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ لَمْ تُصِبْهُ فَاقَةٌ أَبَدًا. (ابن كثير ٣٠٢:٤)" "You are worried about my daughters that they must not suffer from poverty. I have no such worry, because I have instructed them to recite Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah every night. I have heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, 'Whoever recites Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah every night will never suffer from poverty'."

Ibn Kathīr, after citing this story from Ibn 'Asākir, has supported it with other chains of transmitters and other sources.

Horrors of the Day of Resurrection

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ (When the Imminent Event (of Doom) will occur...56:1). Ibn Kathīr says Al-wāqī'ah is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection, because there is no room for doubt in its occurrence. It is real and will surely come to pass.

لَيْسَ لَوْفَعَتِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ (...there will be no one to deny its occurrence...56:2). The word *kādhībah* in this context is the verbal noun, like 'āfiyah and 'āqībah. The sense of the verse is that 'the news of the occurrence of this event cannot be a false news'. Some authorities have taken the word

kādhībah in the sense of *takdhīb* [to deny] and the meaning, in that case, is clear that 'no one can deny the fact that it will come to pass'.

خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ (It will be abasing [some], exalting [others]...56:3). The verse means that the 'Inevitable Event' referred to in the previous verse will bring about a great revolution in the lives of men, as is witnessed at the time of revolution of governments. The high and the mighty will be laid low and the despised and down-trodden will be exalted; the poor become rich and the rich become poor. This is how Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه interprets this statement. The purpose is to depict the horrors of the Day of Resurrection .

Three Categories of People on the Day of Resurrection

وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً (and you will be [divided into] three categories...56:7). Ibn Kathīr says that people will be divided into three different categories on the Day of Resurrection. One group will be on the right side of Allah's Throne, and they are those who were brought forth from the right side of the loin of 'Ādam عليه السلام. These people will be given their Ledgers of Deeds in their right hands and will be taken to the right side of the Divine Throne. They are the inmates of Paradise.

The second category comprises those who will be placed to the left of Allah's Throne. These are people who were brought forth from the left side of the loin of 'Ādam عليه السلام. This category will be given their Ledgers of Deeds in their left hands and will be taken to the left side of the Divine Throne. They are the inhabitants of the Fire. [We seek refuge in Allah from their behaviour pattern!]

The third category consists of *As-sābiqūn* [the foremost] who are described as *Al-muqarrabūn* [the fortunate believers who are granted special nearness to Allah]. They will be placed in front of the Divine Throne. They include the Messengers, the Prophets, *Ṣiddiqīn*, martyrs and the friends of Allah. They are fewer than those on the right side. Towards the end of the Surah, the description of the three categories will be taken up again to mention that some signs start appearing, right from the time of death of a person, to indicate in which category he or she is going to fall.

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ (And the Foremost are the foremost....56:10) Imām Aḥmad رحمه الله تعالى has recorded a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidah

'Ā'ishah Ṣiddīqah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the noble Companions: "Do you know who will be the first to be accommodated in the Divine Shade on the Day of Resurrection?" The noble Companions replied: اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ "Allah and His Messenger know best." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "They are those who accept the truth when it is presented to them; when they are asked for the rights due from them, they fulfill them; and they judge about the matters of others as they would judge about themselves."

Mujāhid says that *As-sābiqūn* (the Foremost) refers to 'the Prophets'. Ibn Sirin says that it refers to early Muslims who performed their prayers facing the two qiblas, namely, *baytul-maqdis* and *baitullah*. Ḥasan and Qatādah say that in every Ummah there will be *As-sābiqūn*. Some of the commentators express the view that they are people who go first to the mosque.

Ibn-Kathīr cites all these views and concludes that they are all correct and authentic in their own right. The opinions are not in conflict with one another, because *As-sābiqūn* are those who must have been foremost in their invincible faith and righteous deeds in this world, and as such they would be the 'Foremost' in the Hereafter in terms of reward which will befit their faith and good deeds.

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَفَلِيلٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ (...many from the earlier generations, and of a small number from the later ones....56:13-14) The word ثَلَاثَةٌ *thullatun*, means 'a party, group, company'. Zamakhsharī says that *thullatun* refers to 'a throng or a large number of people'.

Who are أَوَّلِينَ **Awwalin** (earlier generations) and آخِرِينَ **'Ākhirin** (later ones)?

The words '*awwalīn*' (earlier generations) and '*ākhirīn*' (later ones) are used twice: First, in connection with *As-sābiqūn* (the Foremost) who are favoured with special Divine nearness; and secondly, in connection with Ashab-ul-yamin [the People of the Right, or the general body of believers]. In the case of the 'Foremost' it is mentioned that there will be 'many' from amongst the '*awwalīn*' (earlier generations) who will be categorized as 'the Foremost', but from amongst the later generations, the number of the 'Foremost' will be smaller. As opposed to this, in the description of the People of the Right, the word '*thullah*' (many) is