

an explanatory translation of

القرآن الكريم

The Qur'ān

Volume III

297
RIZ

SAYYID MUHAMMAD RIZVI

*AN EXPLANATORY TRANSLATION OF
THE QUR'ĀN*

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The Qur'ān

Volume III

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RIZ

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TRANSLITERATION

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Transliteration</i>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Transliteration</i>
ء	'	ك	k
ب	b	ل	l
ت	t	م	m
ث	th	ن	n
ج	j	و	w
ح	ḥ	ه	h
خ	kh	ي	y
د	d	ة	ah
ذ	dh		
ر	r	<i>Long Vowels</i>	
ز	z	ا	ā
س	s	و	ū
ش	sh	ي	ī
ص	ṣ		
ض	ḍ	<i>Short Vowels</i>	
ط	ṭ	ا	a
ظ	ẓ	و	u
ع	'	ي	i
غ	gh		
ف	f		
ق	q		

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ تَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ
أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى
سَيِّدِ رُسُلِكَ وَخَاتَمِ أَنْبِيَائِكَ
مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الظَّاهِرِينَ
وَصَلِّ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ



Translator's Note

Reciting the Qur'ān daily, and specially in the month of Ramaḍān, is regarded as an act of great merit in Islam and thus we see that every practicing Muslim tries to recite the whole Qur'ān in this holy month. And probably for the same reason the Qur'ān has been divided into thirty equal parts so as to enable a Muslim to complete its recitation by the end of a month.

My arrival in Vancouver, in 1983, at the invitation of a Muslim community of British Columbia coincided with the holy month of Ramaḍān. As in every Muslim community, here also a program for recitation of the Qur'ān was organised in the evenings. But as the recitation of the Qur'ān is a means of understanding its teachings and not an aim in itself, I suggested to conduct a program of *tafsīr* after the daily recitation. The Qur'ān is a guidance to the perfect system of life, a light in the darkness of ignorance, a reminder of reality in the hustle bustle of the worldly life and a distinguisher between the right and the wrong—and so it is essential for every Muslim to understand it.

In the program of *tafsīr*, when I emphasized on the importance of understanding the Qur'ān by reading its translation, many brothers said, "We find it difficult to understand the translations of the Qur'ān." There were two main reasons underlying this problem: either the

translation was too literal and thus unreadable; or if the translation was fluent and readable, the lack of the context surrounding the verses made them incomprehensible for a non-specialist reader.

It was this problem faced by most of our non-specialist Muslims which inspired the idea of preparing an explanatory translation of the Qur'ān. At first I translated *sūratu 'l-Hujarāt*—the 49th chapter of the Qur'ān which was studied in the above-mentioned *tafsīr* program—in the present method as a trial. When it proved useful and rewarding for the general readers of the Qur'ān who expressed their views and encouraged me in person and in writing, I decided, by putting my trust in Allāh, to translate the whole Qur'ān in the same method. This is the third of the six intended volumes. Each volume will consist of five parts of the holy Book.

The words and sentences in *italics* are the explanatory remarks added in between the original wordings of the Qur'ān which are in standard type-face. And the numbers, in smaller size, at the beginning of some of the sentences or words indicate the number of the verses of the Qur'ān.

Wherever there is difference of opinion among the *mufasssirin* (the commentators of the Qur'ān) in interpretation or meaning of a word or a verse, I have mostly relied on *al-Mizān fi Tafsīri 'l-Qur'ān* (in 20 volumes) of 'Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn at-Ṭabāṭabā'ī. Other sources and references, when used, have been mentioned in their relevant places.

May Allāh, *subḥānahu wa ta'āla*, accept this humble effort to serve Islam, and bestow strength to complete this work.

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Volume 3

(chp. 9 ver. 94 — chp. 18 ver. 73)

PART ELEVEN

⁹⁴The *hypocrites who remained behind without any excuse* will apologise to you when you return to them *from the expedition of Tabūk*. Say, "Do not apologise; we will not believe in you *as Allāh* has already informed us about your stories *of hypocrisy*. Allāh and His Messenger will surely see your doing; then, *on the day of judgement*, you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the seen, and He will inform you of what you were doing."

⁹⁵O *Muḥammad!* When you return back to them, they will swear to you by Allāh so that you may leave them alone. So turn away from them, for they are an abomination, and their abode is hell—a recompense for what they were earning. ⁹⁶They will swear to you so that you may be pleased with them. And if you become pleased with them, *even* then Allāh will surely not be pleased with the transgressing people. (*Pleasing the people is of no use unless Allāh is also pleased.*)

The Qur'ān

The Bedouins

⁹⁷The Bedouins are more severe in unbelief and hypocrisy, and most vulnerable to not knowing the limits *and laws* which Allāh has revealed to His Messenger. (*This is so because they dwell in the desert and are thus normally deprived of the means of knowledge.*) Allāh is Knowing, Wise.

⁹⁸And *some* among the Bedouins are those who consider what they expend *in charity* as a fine; and they await *the befalling* of calamities upon you. Upon them be the evil calamity! Allāh is Hearing and Knowing.

⁹⁹And *some* among the Bedouins are those who believe in Allāh and the last day, and consider what they expend *in charity* as a means of bringing them near to Allāh and to the prayers of the Messenger. And surely it is a means of bringing themselves near to their Lord—Allāh will shortly admit them into His mercy; surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.

The Perfect & Imperfect Human Beings

1. *The Perfect Believers:*

¹⁰⁰Those who are par-excellent and fore-most *in faith* from among:

the Emigrants (*muhājirīn*),

the Helpers (*anṣār*),

and those who followed them in goodness (*tābi'īn*);*

* For the meaning of *muhājirīn* and *anṣār*, see footnote under 8:72. The term *tābi'īn* (those who followed...), in this context, can be applied to every Muslim who follows the Prophet and his good companions from the early days of Islam till the last day of this world. It should not be restricted to "the disciples of the companions of the Prophet" as in the terminology of *'ilumu 'r-rijāl* (the science of the narrators of *ḥadiṯh*).

al-Barā'at 9 The Acquittal

Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. And He has also prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, they shall abide in it forever—that is, *indeed*, the great achievement.

2. *The Hypocrites:*

¹⁰¹O *Muḥammad!* Some from among those who are around you —from the Bedouins as well as from the people of Madinah— are hypocrites; they have taken pride in hypocrisy. You do not know them, *but* We know them; and We shall chastise them twice (*in this world as well as in their graves*) and then, *on the day of judgement*, they shall be returned to a grievous chastisement.

3. *The Sinful Believers:*

¹⁰²And *there are* other *believers* who have mixed a good deed with another evil one, *but they* have confessed their sins. It may be that Allāh will turn towards them *with forgiveness*; Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful. (*The hearts of sinful believers will be in suspense between fear of punishment and hope of forgiveness until the day of judgement.*)

Zakāt—a means of purification:

¹⁰³O *Muḥammad!* Those who are rich among your followers, take alms (*zakāt*) from their wealth —*thus* you will be cleansing them and purifying them thereby— and pray for them, surely your prayer is a *means of comfort* for them. Allāh is Hearing, Knowing. ¹⁰⁴Do not they know that Allāh accepts repentance from His servants and takes alms *as an atonement*, and that Allāh is the Most-Forgiving, the Merciful.

The Qur'ān does not describe the items which are liable for zakāt, but the ḥadith has explained them. The following is a list which is, more or less, acceptable by all the Muslims:

The Qur'ān

- Coins: 1. gold coins;
2. silver coins;
Livestock: 3. camels;
4. cows;
5. goats.
Crops: 6. wheat;
7. barley;
8. dates;
9. raisins.

Zakāt becomes obligatory only when each of these items reach to their niṣāb (the minimum amount) as explained in the books of Islamic laws.

¹⁰⁵And O Muḥammad, say to the believers: "Work; and Allāh will see your work and so will His Messenger and the chosen believers. And shortly you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the seen, then He will inform you of what you were doing.

4. The "Suspended" People:

¹⁰⁶And there are others who are deffered to Allāh's decision: whether He will chastise them or He will turn towards them *with forgiveness and mercy*. Allāh is Knowing, Wise. (They are in suspension about their outcome as they do not possess anything which may lead them towards reward or punishment. Such people are also known as *mustaḍ'afīn*. See 4:75, 98-99.)

Masjid Quba versus Masjid Ḍirār

Some people from the tribe of Banu 'Amr bin 'Awf built a mosque which became famous as Masjid Quba. They requested the Prophet to honour them by visiting the mosque and praying in it. The Prophet obliged their request.

al-Barā'at 9 The Acquittal

Some time after that, a hypocrite group from their sister tribe known as Banu Ghanam bin 'Awf built a mosque just near Masjid Quba. They were friends of a monk known as Abu 'Āmir. The latter had promised the group of Banu Ghanam bin 'Awf that he is going to Byzantine and will return back with a Christian army to oust the Prophet and the Muslims from Madinah. The mosque which they had built was not for worshipping Allāh, but only a cover for harbouring the enemies of Allāh and His Messenger. By building this new mosque they also intended to divide those who attended the prayers in Masjid Quba. Later on, the mosque built by the hypocrites became famous as Masjid Ḍirār.

The hypocrites of Banu Ghanam approached the Prophet and requested him to honour them also by visiting their mosque and praying in it. This request was made when the Prophet was getting ready for the expedition of Tabūk. The Prophet said that he will see into it when he comes back from Tabūk.

While the Prophet was returning back from the expedition of Tabūk, Allāh revealed the following verses about Masjid Ḍirār:

¹⁰⁷And for those hypocrites of Banu Ghanam who built a mosque to harm the Muslims, to disbelieve, to divide the believers and to provide a hide-out for those who fought against Allāh and His Messenger aforetime — and, of course, they will still swear that "We desired nothing but good" — Allāh testifies that they are truly liars. ¹⁰⁸So O Muḥammad! Never stand in it for performing prayers!

The Prophet ordered 'Āsim bin 'Awf al-'Ijlāni and Mālik bin ad-Dhakhsham to destroy and burn the Masjid Ḍirār.

I swear that the mosque that was founded upon piety from the very first day —i.e., Masjid Quba— is worthier that you should stand in it for prayers, because therein are men who love to cleanse themselves spiritual-

The Qur'ān

ly as well as physically; and Allāh loves those who cleanse themselves.

¹⁰⁹Is the person who founded his building upon the fear of Allāh and *His* pleasure better, or the one who founded his building upon the brink of an undercut bank, and so it tumbled with him into the fire of hell? And Allāh does not guide the unjust people.

¹¹⁰The building which the *hypocrites* had built will always be a cause of uneasy doubt in their hearts, unless their hearts get cut into pieces (*i.e., unless they die*). And Allāh is Knowing, Wise.

Some Aspects of Jihād

¹¹¹Allāh has indeed bought from the believers their lives and their possessions so that, *in return*, they shall have the Garden. *How do the believers 'sell' their lives and possessions to Allāh?* They fight in the way of Allāh—they kill, and are killed. *The reward of their sacrifice is a promise binding upon Him in the Tawrāt, the Injīl, and the Qur'ān.* And who can live upto his promise more than Allāh? So, *O believers*, rejoice in the bargain which you have made with Him—that is, *indeed*, the great achievement.

Who are the believers?

¹¹²*The believers, as individuals, are those*

who repent,

serve Allāh,

praise Him,

"travel" to mosques,

bow down and prostrate in prayers.

And as members of human society they are those:

who bid others to good,

forbid evil,

and protect the limits imposed by Allāh.

al-Barā'at 9 The Acquittal

O *Muḥammad*, give good news to the believers.

¹¹³It is not *right* for the Prophet and for the believers to ask forgiveness for the polytheists, even though they be *their* near relatives. *This prohibition applies* after it has become clear to the believers that the polytheists are the inmates of Fire.

A question: Then how did Ibrāhīm ask forgiveness for his uncle, Azar, who was an idolater? ¹¹⁴Ibrāhīm asked forgiveness for his uncle* only because of a promise he had made to him *when he thought that his uncle was ignorant, not an obstinate unbeliever*. But when it became clear to him that he (*i.e., his uncle*) was an enemy of Allāh, he disassociated himself from him. *After all, Ibrāhīm was very compassionate, forbearing.*

¹¹⁵Allāh does not 'mislead'** a people after He has guided them, till He makes clear to them what they should fear. Allāh knows everything. ¹¹⁶Surely the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth is Allāh's. He gives life and causes death; and, besides Allāh, you do not have any guardian or helper.

¹¹⁷Allāh has turned *mercifully* towards the Prophet, the Emigrants and the Helpers who followed him at the time of difficulty (after the hearts of a group among them had almost swerved aside *from obeying the command of the Prophet but then He turned towards them mercifully*).

* See note under 6:75.

** See the comment under verse 2:6.

The Qur'ān

He surely is Compassionate *and* Merciful to them.

As already mentioned in verse 38 and onwards in this chapter that when the Prophet went to the expedition of Tabūk, some people remained behind in Medina. Among those who remained behind were the following three persons: Ka'b bin Mālik, Murārah bin ar-Rabī' and Hilāl bin Umayyah. These three persons were not hypocrites; they just remained behind out of negligence.

When the Muslims returned from Tabūk, they ignored these three persons and did not even talk to them. Even their wives came to the Prophet and asked whether or not they should leave them. The Prophet said, "No; but don't let them sleep with you." Faced with such rejection, the three left the city of Medina and went to the hills. There they even separated from each other, and for the next fifty days they just prayed and cried to Allāh for forgiveness of their sin. Allāh accepted their prayers and forgave them:

¹¹⁸*And Allāh turned with forgiveness to the three who were left behind by their own choice. They did not realize the seriousness of their sin until when the earth, with all its breadth, became strait for them, and their souls became strait for themselves. And they came to know that there was no shelter from Allāh except in Him, so they started to pray for forgiveness. Then Allāh turned towards them with forgiveness, so that they might also turn towards Him with obedience. Surely Allāh is the Oft-forgiving, the Merciful.*

¹¹⁹*O you who believe! Fear Allāh, and be with the true ones.*

¹²⁰*It is not right for the people of Madinah and for those Bedouins who dwell around them to stay behind the Messenger of Allāh, and to prefer their own lives*

al-Barā'at 9 The Acquittal

to his. This is so because they will not be stricken —by thirst, nor fatigue, nor hunger in the way of Allāh, neither will they tread any path which enrages the unbelievers, nor will they gain anything from any enemy— but that a righteous deed is written to their account *in compensation for their problems*. Surely Allāh does not neglect the reward of the good-doers. ¹²¹Nor do they spend any thing, small or great, nor do they traverse any valley, but that it is written to their account so that Allāh may reward them with the best of what they were doing.

Islam gives top priority to the seeking of religious knowledge; this can best be understood from the following verse which says that not all should go for jihād, rather some should spend their lives in seeking religious knowledge and teaching others. This verse also exempts the seekers of religious knowledge from participating in jihād. The term "religious knowledge" is used here in the broadest sense of the word, it is not restricted to Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh).

¹²²And it is not right for the believers to go forth all together for jihād. So why should not a party from every section of the Muslim ummah go forth to acquire knowledge in religion, and to warn their people when they return to them—so that they may beware of the punishment of Allāh in the hereafter.

¹²³O you who believe! Fight the unbelievers who are near to you, and let them find in you strength. And know that Allāh is with those who guard themselves against displeasing Him.

The Qur'ān

The Hypocrites of Madinah

¹²⁴Whenever a surah (chapter) is revealed, there are some *hypocrites* among the *people of Madinah* who say, "Which of you has been more intensified in faith by this recent revelation?!"

As for the believers, the revelation has intensified them in faith, and they rejoice. ¹²⁵As for those *hypocrites* in whose hearts is a disease, the revelation has added an abomination to their *previous* abominations, and they die while they still are unbelievers.*

¹²⁶Do they not see that they are tried every year once or twice?! Yet they do not repent, nor do they mind.

¹²⁷Whenever a chapter is revealed, *the expressions on the faces of the hypocrites betray them, and so they look at one another as if asking: 'Does any one see you?' Then they turn away. As a result of their transgression, Allāh has turned their hearts away from the truth* because they are the people who do not *want to understand*.

¹²⁸O *Mankind!* There has indeed come to you a Messenger from among yourselves; your fall into distress is *a matter of grief* to him, he is anxious over you; *and to the believers, he is gentle and compassionate*.

¹²⁹O *Muḥammad!* If they turn away from the truth, then say, "Allāh is enough for me; there is no god but He. In Him I put my trust, and He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne."

* For the meaning of "disease" see 2:10; for "abomination" see 6:126.

Chapter Ten

SŪRAH YŪNUS *(Jonah)*

(revealed at Mecca; consisting of 109 verses)

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Allāh—the Lord of the Universe

¹Alif Lām Ra. These are the verses of the Wise Book.

²Was it a wonder to the people that We revealed to a man (*i.e.*, *Muḥammad*) from among themselves, *saying*: "Warn the people, and give good news to those who believe that they have a firm footing with their Lord"?! The unbelievers say, "This *man* is surely a manifest sorcerer."

³Surely your Lord, Allāh is the one who created the heavens and the earth in six periods of time, then He

The Qur'ān

sat down upon the "throne", directing the affairs of the universe. * There is no intercessor *who could intercede*, except after His permission. That is Allāh, your Lord; so serve Him. Will you not then mind?

⁴To Him shall you return, all together—*this is a promise binding upon Allāh. He is the one who originates creation, and then He repeats it by raising them to life after their death* so that He may justly reward those who believe and do good deeds; but as for those who disbelieve, they shall have a drink of hot water and a painful chastisement for their disbelieving.

⁵He is the one who has made the sun shine, and the moon a light, and He ordained for it mansions so that you may know the numbers of the years and the reckoning of the time. ** Allāh did not create it but with truth (*i.e., with a purpose*); making the signs of His existence and power manifest for a people who know. ⁶In the alternation of the night and the day, and in what Allāh has created in the heavens and the earth—surely there are signs for a people who guard themselves against displeasing Allāh.

* See footnotes under 7:54.

** The sun has been described as "*ḍiyā'* - shine", whereas the moon has been described simply as "*nūr* - light". Hundreds of years after the revelation of the Qur'ān, man came to know that the sun is the source of light, whereas the moon just reflects the light from the sun. "This calls for some comment. Whereas the Bible calls the Sun and Moon 'lights', and merely adds to one the adjective 'greater' and to the other 'lesser', the Qur'ān ascribes differences other than that of dimension to each respectively. Agreed, this is nothing more than a verbal distinction, but how was one to communicate to men at this time [i.e, in the 7th century A.D.] without confusing them, while at the same time expressing the notion that the Sun and Moon were not absolutely identical 'lights'?" (Dr. M. Bucaille, *The Bible, the Qur'ān and Science*, 3rd ed. Paris, n.d., p. 161.)

Yūnus 10 Jonah

⁷Surely those who do not hope in meeting Us *on the day of judgement* and are pleased and satisfied with the worldly life, and those *also* who are heedless of Our signs—⁸they are the ones whose abode is the fire because of *the evil deeds* that they have been earning.

⁹Those who believe and do good deeds, their Lord will surely guide them by their faith—beneath them rivers will flow in gardens of bliss; ¹⁰therein their cry shall be “Glory be to Thee, O Allāh,” and their greeting therein shall be “*salām* = Peace,” and the last of their cry shall be, “Praise be to Allāh, the Lord of the universe.”

¹¹If God should hasten the chastisement unto men as they desire the hastening of good, their doom would have been decreed for them. But *at the moment* We leave those who do not hope in meeting Us in their insolence, wandering blindly.

¹²When affliction touches a man, he calls Us *while lying* on his side, or *while* sitting or *even while* standing. But when We have removed his affliction from him, he passes on as if he had never called Us for an affliction that had touched him. In this way what they were doing is presented to the extravagants in favourable light. ¹³We certainly destroyed the generations before you when they transgressed, and, *of course, they had been already warned by their messengers who* came to them with the clear signs—but they would *still* not believe! In this way We recompense the guilty people. ¹⁴Then We made you successors in the earth after them, so that We may see how you act.

The Unbelievers of Mecca (V)

¹⁵When Our clear revelations are recited to the *idol-worshippers of Mecca*, those who do not hope in meeting

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Us say, "Bring a Qur'ān other than this, or, *at the least*, change it to *accomodate our ideas*." O Muḥammad, say, "It is not *right* for me to change it of my own accord. I follow nothing except what is revealed to me. Surely I fear the chastisement of the great day if I disobey my Lord."

¹⁶O Muḥammad, say, "I cannot accept your request because whatever I say is not from me, it is from Allāh. If Allāh had wished I would not *even* have recited the revelation to you *in the first place*, nor would He have taught it to you. O the people of Mecca, I have lived among you a lifetime before the revelation and you know that I never brought such messages before, and you also testify to my truthfulness and know that I have not been taught by anyone—so do not you then understand that what I have brought to you is not my invention, rather it is a true message of God?!"

¹⁷Who can be more unjust than the one who forges a lie against Allāh, or *he who* rejects His revelations?! Surely the guilty shall not prosper.

¹⁸The Meccan polytheists worship besides Allāh the idols which can neither harm them nor benefit them, and they say, "These are our intercessors with God." O Muḥammad, say, "By saying this, do you intend to inform Allāh of what He does not know in the heavens and the earth?! Glory be to Him! He is exalted above what they associate with Him."

¹⁹In the early stage of its life mankind was but one united community, then they differed about the divine guidance—some accepted it, others rejected it. Had not a word —about deffering their punishment to the day of judgement— preceded from your Lord, the matter would have been *immediately* resolved about which they differed.

Yūnus 10 Jonah

²⁰The Meccans say, "Why has not a sign, other than the Qur'ān, been sent down to him (i.e., Muḥammad) from his Lord?" O Muḥammad, say, "The revelation comes from the unseen (*al-ghayb*)—and the unseen is only for Allāh; therefore wait, I too am waiting with you."

²¹When We make the people of Mecca taste mercy (i.e., the Qur'ān) after an affliction (i.e., ignorance) has visited them, lo! they devise plans against Our revelations. O Muḥammad, say, "Allāh is swifter at devising plans against you." Surely the angels who also act as Our messengers are writing down what you are devising.

The Present Life

²²He is the one Who makes you travel on the land and the sea; *He comes to your help* even when you are in the ships. The ships sail with the *passengers* in a pleasant breeze, and they rejoice at it. *But when* there comes upon them a strong wind and the waves come on them from every side, and they fear that they have been encompassed—they call upon Allāh, being sincere to Him *in regard to the religion by praying*: "If You deliver us from this *situation*, we shall surely be among the grateful ones."

²³But when He delivers them, lo! they wrongfully become insolent in the earth. "O men! Your insolence is only against yourselves, *it is only* a provision of the worldly life—eventually unto Us shall be your return, then We shall inform you of what you were doing."

²⁴The parable of the worldly life is as the water which We send down from the cloud: it mingles with the plants of the earth (which men and cattle eat) until the earth gets its vanity and becomes beautiful *with its gardens and crops*, and its inhabitants *start to think* that they have power over it. But then Our command (*in form of natural*

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disaster) comes to it by night or day *and destroys it*, and thus We change it into a field which has already been harvested as though yesterday it was not rich *with crops at all*. In this way We make clear the revelations *about the worldly life* for the people who reflect.

This was a parable of the present life, whereas ²⁵Allāh invites *the people* to the abode of peace (dārus salām) and guides whomsoever He pleases to the straight path.

²⁶As for those who do good, there is a good *reward* and a surplus; neither dust nor abasement will come upon their faces—they are the inhabitants of the Garden, in it they shall abide.

²⁷As for those who have earned evil deeds, the recompense of an evil deed will be the like of it *and* abasement will come upon them (they shall have none to protect them from Allāh) as if their faces have been covered with part of the dark night—they are the inmates of Fire, in it they shall abide.

²⁸On the day when We shall gather them all together, then We shall say to those who associated *others to Us*: "Stay in your place, you and those whom you associated *with Me*!" Then We shall separate them *from each other*. Then their associates will say, "It was not us that you were worshipping; ²⁹Allāh is sufficient as a witness between us and you that we were quite unaware of your worship."

³⁰There *on the day of judgement* every soul shall examine what it sent before (*i.e., they will be confronted with their deeds of the present life*). They shall be returned to Allāh, their True Master; and what they were forging shall go astray from them.

Yūnus 10 Jonah

Allāh—the Lord of the Universe

³¹O Muḥammad, say:

“Who gives you provision from the heaven and the earth?

“Or who *actually* possesses *the power of your hearing and sight?*

“And who brings forth the living from the dead, and brings forth the dead from the living?*

“And who directs the affairs of *the universe?*”

They will surely say, “Allāh is the one who does all these things.” O Muḥammad, then say, “Will you not then guard yourselves against displeasing Allāh?”

³²Then this is Allāh, your True Lord. And what is there after the truth but error? So how are you then turned away *from the truth?*! ³³Thus is the word of your Lord proven true against those who transgress because they are not believing.

³⁴O Muḥammad, say: “Is there any one among your associates *and idols* who can originate the creation, and then reproduce it?” Say, “Allāh originates the creation, then He reproduces it *by, for example, bringing the dead back to life.* So how are you turned away *from the truth?*”

³⁵O Muḥammad, say: “Is there any one among those whom you associate *with Allāh* who can guide you to

* In other words: Who brings forth a believer from unbelieving parents and vice versa; or a child with eyesight from blind parents and vice versa; or a child with hearing from deaf parents and vice versa?

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the truth?" Say, "Allāh guides *every one* to the truth. Is He Who guides to the truth more worthier to be followed, or he who cannot guide himself unless he is guided *by someone else*? Then what is the matter with you; how do you judge *your guide*?"

³⁶Most of them follow only conjecture; surely conjecture will not suffice anything against the truth. Surely Allāh knows what they are doing.

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³⁷This Qur'ān is not *a book* that could have been forged by those other than Allāh; rather it is a confirmation of *the revelations* which were *sent* before it and a clear explanation of the Book in which there is no doubt—it is from the Lord of the universe.

³⁸What! Do they say that he (i.e., Muḥammad) has forged it? Then O Muḥammad, say: "If you think that I have forged this Book, then produce a chapter (*sūrah*) like it, and call on whomsoever you can besides Allāh for help, if you are truthful in your assumption." ³⁹No, they won't be able to do so: but they reject *the Book* of which they do not have a comprehensive knowledge, and whose interpretation has not yet come to them. Those who were before them rejected *the past revelations* in the same way. So see what was the outcome of the unjust people.

⁴⁰O Muḥammad, there are some among *the Meccans* who believe in *the Qur'ān*, and there are some who do not believe in it; and your Lord knows the mischief-makers very well.

⁴¹O Muḥammad, if they call you a liar, then say: "To me belongs my deeds and to you belongs your deeds; neither are you responsible for whatever I do, nor am I responsible for whatever you do."

Yūnus 10 Jonah

⁴²O Muḥammad, there are some among them who hear you—but can you make the 'deaf' listen to you *even* though they do not *want to* understand?! ⁴³And there are some who look at you—but can you guide the 'blind' even though they do not *want to* see?! (*These two verses say that the perception with the ears and the eyes are of various degrees: Some people just hear but they do not listen; while others hear with "the ears of the heart" and listen. In the same way, some just look, but they never see; while others look and see.*)

⁴⁴By punishing them, Allāh does not treat the men unjustly in anything; rather, *by committing sins*, the people are being unjust to themselves. ⁴⁵And on the day He shall gather them —*it will be* as if they had not tarried *in their graves* but for an hour of the day— they will recognize each other. Losers are those who rejected the meeting with Allāh *on the day of judgement*, and they are not rightly-guided.

The Consequence of Rejecting the Messengers

⁴⁶O Muḥammad, We shall either show you some of *the chastisements* with which We threaten the Meccan unbelievers, or We shall cause you to die *before that*—*the decision of chastisement rests totally with Allāh because eventually* unto Us shall be their return; and Allāh is a witness to what they are doing.

⁴⁷Every nation had a messenger *from Allāh*; and when their messenger came *to them*, the issue was justly decided between them—*if they followed their messenger, they will be rewarded; and if they rejected their messenger, they will be punished. In the matter of reward or punishment, they shall not be dealt with unjustly.*

When the Meccan unbelievers heard this verse, ⁴⁸they started to ridicule the Prophet and say, "When will this

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threat *about the chastisement* materialize, if you are truthful?"

⁴⁹Say O Muḥammad, "Firstly, I have no power even to benefit or harm myself, but as Allāh pleases—so how am I to know when He will punish you? Secondly, for every nation there is a *decreed term of doom*; when their term comes they shall not be able to delay it by a single hour nor shall they be able to call it earlier."

⁵⁰Say O Muḥammad, "Tell me! What do you think if His chastisement comes upon you by night or by day? *You can't save yourselves from it?*" (Then what is there in the punishment that the sinners would like to hasten?)
⁵¹"And when the chastisement comes upon you, will you then believe in Allāh?! *At that time it will be said, 'Now, you believe so as to save yourselves from the chastisement, whereas you were the ones who wished to hasten it!'*"
But believing at the last moment will not benefit at all. ⁵²Then, on the day of judgement, it shall be said to those who were unjust, "Taste the ever-lasting chastisement. Do you deserve anything except what you were earning by your evil deeds?"

⁵³The unbelievers of Mecca ask you: "O Muḥammad, is it true whatever you say about the chastisement?"

Say O Muḥammad: "Of course, by my Lord! It is true; and you will not be able to escape from it. ⁵⁴Even if every soul that had been unjust possessed all that is in the earth which he would certainly offer as ransom against his sins (and they will secretly even regret when they see the chastisement), it shall not be accepted from them. The matter shall be justly decided between them, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. ⁵⁵Why, don't they realize that He will not accept their ransom because whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allāh? Surely the promise of Allāh is true, but most of them do not know. ⁵⁶He not only possesses the entire

Yūnus 10 Jonah

universe but even gives life and causes death, and to Him you shall be returned."

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⁵⁷O Men! Now there has come to you *the Qur'ān* as an admonition from your Lord, a healing for *the spiritual disease* which is in the hearts, a guidance and a mercy for the believers. ⁵⁸Say O Muḥammad, "This Book has come by the grace of Allāh and His mercy, and for this *the believers* should rejoice. It is a Book which is better than whatever they amass as *their worldly wealth*."

⁵⁹O Muḥammad, say to the Meccan unbelievers: "Tell me! What do you think about the provision that Allāh has sent down for you—then you *by yourselves* make some of it unlawful and some lawful?" Say: "Has Allāh given you permission *to do so* or are you forging a lie against Allāh?" ⁶⁰And what will be the thought of those who forge lies against Allāh *about* the day of resurrection? Allāh is surely the Lord of grace *which He bestowes* upon mankind; but most of them do not thank.

⁶¹O Muḥammad, you are not in any situation, neither do you recite any part of the Qur'ān, nor do you, *O people*, do any work but that We are witnesses over you when you engage in it. And escapes not from Your Lord the weight of *even* an atom in the earth or in the heaven, nor anything smaller than that or greater—*there is nothing in the universe* but that it is in "the Manifest Book" *i.e., in Allāh's knowledge*.

The Friends of Allāh

⁶²As for the friends of Allāh there will be no fear for them nor shall they grieve, *both in this world and in the*

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hereafter. ⁶³The "friends of Allāh" are those who believe and guard themselves against displeasing Allāh. ⁶⁴There is good news for them in the present life and in the hereafter; *this a promise of Allāh*—there will be no change in the words of Allāh. This is, indeed, the great achievement.

⁶⁵And O Muḥammad, as for what the unbelievers say to you, do not let their saying grieve you—the glory entirely belongs to Allāh. He is the Hearing, the Knowing. ⁶⁶Oh yes, surely whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth belongs to Allāh. And those who call upon others besides Allāh, do not *really* follow the associates *ascribed by them to Allāh*—they do not follow anything but conjecture, and they are merely conjecturing.

Allāh—the Lord of the Universe

⁶⁷He (i.e., Allāh) is the one Who made for you the night so that you may rest in it, and *He made* the day illuminant so that you may work in it—surely in it there is a sign for those who hear with "the ears of their hearts".

⁶⁸They say that Allāh has taken *unto Himself* a son or a daughter. Glory be to Him! *He does not need a son*; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth belongs to Him. You have no authority for *believing in* this. Do you say against Allāh that which you do not know? ⁶⁹Say, O Muḥammad, "Those who forge a lie against Allāh shall not be successful." ⁷⁰*They shall just have* a provision of this world, then unto Us shall be their return; then We shall make them taste the severe punishment because they were disbelieving.

Prophet Nūḥ (II)

Yūnus 10 Jonah

⁷⁰O Muḥammad, recite to them the story of Nūḥ *who was striving hard to guide his people all by himself; but they would not listen to him. At last he challenged them to do whatever they wanted with him. That is when he said to his people:*

"O my people! If my stay among you and my reminding you of the signs of Allāh appears intolerable to you—but of course, I, on my part, have put my trust in Allāh—then I challenge you to:

"Make a joint decision with your associates regarding me and let not your decision be dubious to any of you; then prosecute me and do not grant me a respite.

⁷²*"But if you turn back from my message then let it be known to you that I will not lose anything because I have not asked you for any wage; my wage for calling you to the right path falls only on Allāh; and I have been commanded to be of those who submit themselves to Allāh (muslim)."*

⁷³But they rejected Nūḥ, so We delivered him and those who were with him in the Ark, and We made them the successors; and We drowned those who rejected Our signs. Therefore behold how was the outcome of the *people who had been warned.*

⁷⁴Then We sent after Nūḥ messengers to their people. *The messengers came to them with clear signs; but the people would not believe in what they had obstinately rejected before. Thus We seal the hearts of those who exceed the limits by constantly denying the truth.*

Prophet Mūsā (III)

The Qur'ān

⁷⁵After those *messengers* We sent Mūsā and Hārūn with Our signs to Fir'awn and the aristocrats of his *society*, but they displayed arrogance and became sinners.

⁷⁶So when the truth came to them from Us *in form of the miracles which We had given to Mūsā*, Fir'awn and his people said, "Surely this is a clear sorcery!" ⁷⁷Mūsā said, "What! Do you say *this* to the truth when it has come to you? Is this a sorcery? But *don't you realize that the sorcerers are not successful!*"

⁷⁸They said, "O Mūsā and Hārūn! Have you come to us to turn us from *the religion* on which we found our fathers, and so that the glory and power of the land of Egypt may belong to you two? But *be sure that we, the Coptics*, are not going to believe in you, *the Israelites.*"

⁷⁹To reject the signs brought by Mūsā, Fir'awn said, "Bring to me every cunning sorcerer."

⁸⁰After some days when *all the sorcerers of Egypt* came to Fir'awn, Mūsā said to them, "Cast down whatever you have to cast."

⁸¹Then when they had cast down *their magic-ropes and staves*, Mūsā said, "What you have brought is sorcery; surely Allāh will shortly make it futile. Allāh, indeed, does not set right the work of the mischief-makers. ⁸²And Allāh will enforce the truth by His words, though the sinners be aversive to it."

⁸³But none believed in Mūsā —except the descendents of his *own Israelite* people— because of fear of Fir'awn and their *own* aristocrats, lest he would persecute them; and surely Fir'awn was high-ranking and powerful in the land of Egypt, and he was one of those who exceeded in their use of power.

⁸⁴Mūsā said to the Israelites, "O my people! If you have believed in Allāh, then put your trust *only* in Him if you *truly* are those who submit themselves to Allāh."

⁸⁵They said, "Of course O Mūsā, we have put our

Yūnus 10 Jonah

trust in Allāh." Then they prayed: "O our Lord! Do not make us a *subject of trial* for the unjust people. ⁸⁶And deliver us by Your mercy from the unbelieving people."

⁸⁷Then We revealed to Mūsā and his brother Hārūn, "Take houses in Egypt for your people, make your houses facing *each other*, and establish prayers; and O Mūsā, give good news to the believers *about their final victory*."

⁸⁸Mūsā said, "Our Lord! You have given to Fir'awn and his aristocrats the *material* beauties and wealth in the present life—*not as a blessing* O our Lord, *but* so that they may be led astray from Your way.* Our Lord! Destroy their wealth and harden their hearts so that they do not believe until they see the painful punishment." (While Mūsā was praying to Allāh, his brother Hārūn was saying "Amen".)

⁸⁹Allāh said to Mūsā and Hārūn, "Your prayers have been accepted, therefore stay firm *in your work of calling the people to the right path* and do not follow the path of those who do not know."

⁹⁰In fulfillment of Our promise to them, We made the Children of Israel pass over the sea. When Fir'awn came to know about their flight, he and his armies followed them tyrannically and impetuously.

Fir'awn never changed his intention of pursuing them until when the drowning overtook him and death dangled over him, he said: "O God! I believe that there is no god but He in whom the Children of Israel have believed, and I assure You that from this very moment I am of those who submit themselves to You."

* This is an example of what Allāh has said in verse 3:177.

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⁹¹Allāh said, "What! Now you have believed when you have no other choice! Whereas before this you had disobeyed and you were one of the mischief-makers. O Fir'awn, it is too late now, you will surely be put to death. ⁹²But today We shall deliver you —your lifeless body only— from the sea so that you may be a sign and a warning to those who will come after you."* Although many people, indeed, are heedless of Our signs.

⁹³After delivering them from Fir'awn, We settled the Children of Israel in a secure settlement, and We provided them with good things. They did not differ among themselves until the knowledge came to them. (That is, their disagreement was not because of ignorance.) Surely your Lord will decide between them on the day of resurrection in what they differ.

A Review of the Above

- * This verse is an outstanding example of the Qur'ān's truth that it is God's revelation to Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). It very clearly says that the Pharaoh's body will be saved and preserved to serve as a warning for the coming generations. This information was made available for the first time through the Prophet 1407 years ago. At that time, however, nothing was known of this fact; it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that the mummified bodies were discovered in the tombs in the Necropolis of Thebes on the opposite side of the Nile from Luxor, and placed in the Egyptian Museum of Cairo. (For further details, see Dr. Bucaille's *The Bible, the Qur'ān and Science*, p.254. Dr. Bucaille has personally examined the mummified body of the Pharaoh.) If the Qur'ān was an invention of Muḥammad and not a revelation from God, then how did he know of this fact which was not even known to the Jews or the Egyptians of his time? Those who like to accuse Muḥammad of studying the Bible and conveying its historical narrations in his own words will be utterly disappointed to see that even the Bible has not mentioned this fact; it just says that "there remained not so much as one of them;" (Exodus 14:28-9) and does not describe the plan of God to preserve the body of Pharaoh.

Yūnus 10 Jonah

⁹⁴O Muḥammad, if you are in doubt about what We have revealed to you *in the above verses*, then ask those *Ahlu 'l-kitāb* who read the Book *which was revealed* before you. *I swear that* surely the truth has come to you from your Lord; therefore do not be of the doubters, ⁹⁵nor be of those who rejected the revelations of Allāh, otherwise you will be one of the losers.

⁹⁶As for those *obstinate unbelievers* against whom the word of your Lord has been proven true, *they will not believe* ⁹⁷even if every sign comes to them. *They will not believe* until they see the painful chastisement; *but then it will be too late for them.*

⁹⁸Why was there never a city (*among those cities which had rejected their messengers*) that believed *before seeing the chastisement*, so that its belief would have benefitted it? *Alas there was no such city* except that of the people of Yūnus (Jonah): when they believed *while they still had the choice*, We removed from them the chastisement of disgrace in the present life; and We gave them provision till the time *of their natural life-span.*

⁹⁹If your Lord had wished, surely all those who are in the earth would have believed, all together. *But He never wished to use force.* Will you then force the people till they become believers? ¹⁰⁰It is not for any soul to believe except by the 'permission' of Allāh; and He lays abomination upon those who do not *want to understand.*

¹⁰¹O Muḥammad, say: "Look and consider what is in the heavens and the earth. *If you look with open mind and heart, you will see the signs of Allāh everywhere.*"

But neither the signs nor the warnings avail a people who *obstinately* do not believe. ¹⁰²So are they waiting for *nothing* but the like of the days of those who passed away before them? Say O Muḥammad, "So wait for the *chastisement*; I too am waiting with you." ¹⁰³Then We deliver Our messengers and also those who have believ-

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ed *in their message*—it is binding upon Us to deliver the believers.

A Summary of this Chapter

¹⁰⁴O *Muḥammad*, say: "O people! If you are in doubt regarding my religion, *then let me state it very clearly for you that* I do not worship those *idols* whom you worship besides Allāh, but I worship Allāh who *has the power to cause you to die*. And I have been commanded to be one of the believers."

¹⁰⁵O *Muḥammad*, you have also been commanded to keep your face (*i.e., your self*) towards the religion uprightly; and you should not be one of the polytheists.

¹⁰⁶O *Muḥammad*, do not call besides Allāh upon *the idol* which can neither benefit you nor harm you; for if you do so, then you will surely be one of the unjust *people*. ¹⁰⁷If Allāh touches you with affliction, then none can remove it but He; and if He desires any good for you, then none can repel His grace—He bestows it to whomsoever He pleases from among His servants. He is the Forgiving *and* Merciful.

¹⁰⁸O *Muḥammad*, say: "O people! Surely the truth has come to you from your Lord. Therefore whoever is rightly guided, he is guided *only* for his own good; and whoever has gone astray, he has gone astray *only* to his own disadvantage—I am not in charge of you."

¹⁰⁹O *Muḥammad*, follow what is being revealed to you and be patient *in delivering My message to the unbelievers* until Allāh shall judge *between you*—He, *indeed*, is the best of judges.

Chapter Eleven

SŪRAH HŪD *(Prophet Hūd)*

(revealed at Mecca; consisting of 123 verses)

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The Qur'ān

¹Alif Lām Rā.

This Qur'ān is a book whose verses (i.e., their meanings) are well consolidated around the concept of unity of Allāh but, at the same time, they are divided into different chapters and subjects; it is from the Wise, the All-aware God.

²O Muḥammad, say: "Do not worship any one but Allāh. (As for me, I am to you just a sincere warner of

The Qur'ān

punishment and a bearer of goodtidings from Him.) ³And ask forgiveness of your Lord *for your sins*, then turn to Him *obediently*. He will give you good provision until the final term *of your life*; and He will give His grace to every gracious person. But if you turn away *from my advice*, then surely I fear for you the chastisement of a great day—*the day of judgement*. ⁴Unto Allāh is your return, and He has power over everything."

The Unbelievers of Mecca (VI)

⁵Behold, the *unbelievers of Mecca* fold their breasts *by bending their heads forwards whenever they came across the Prophet in order to hide themselves from him, so that they could claim that they never received the divine message*. Why? *Don't they realize that even when they hide themselves in their garments, Allāh knows what they conceal and what they display—He knows what is in the hearts*.

PART TWELVE

⁶*How can anyone hide anything from Allāh because there is no creature on the earth but that its provision is upon Allāh; He knows its lodging-place and its depository—all these matters are in a "Manifest Book (i.e., Allāh's knowledge)"*.

⁷He is the one Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods of time* —and His "throne" was upon the water *which is the source of life*— so that He might try you, which one of you is best in deeds.

O Muḥammad! If you say *to the Meccans that, "You have been created for a test and you shall surely be raised*

* See note under 7:54

Hūd 11 Hud

up after death *for the day of judgement*”, the unbelievers will certainly say, “This is nothing but a manifest sorcery.”

⁸And I swear that if We defer the punishment from them until a specific period of time *in future*, they will *mockingly* say, “What is preventing the punishment *from us?!*” Surely, on the day it shall come to them, it shall not be turned away from them—they shall be encompassed by *the punishment* which they mocked at.

⁹If We let a person taste mercy from Us and then We wrest it from him, he surely becomes desperate *and ungrateful*. ¹⁰But if We make him taste a favour after an affliction has visited him, he will surely say: “The evils have gone from me *by my own efforts*.” Surely he is joyous *and boastful*. *In other words, man becomes desperate and blames others in case of misfortune; but, in case of success, he claims the whole credit for himself. This is the ‘nature’ of human being* ¹¹except those *believers* who are patient and do good deeds; they are the ones who shall have forgiveness and a great reward *from their Lord*.

After all the persuasion by Prophet Muḥammad, the unbelievers of Mecca still stubbornly refused to believe in the message of Allāh, but they went on asking for more signs to be sent from Allāh. It seemed as if the Prophet was not conveying the message completely! Pointing to this apparent, but certainly untrue, cause of their disbelief, Allāh says: O Muḥammad! Look at these Meccans! After all the revelations We have sent to you, the Meccans are still refusing to believe. ¹²Thus, *by their refusal, they portray that perhaps you are leaving part of what is being revealed to you; and your breast is straitened by what they say, “Why has not a treasure been sent down upon him or why has not an angel come with him as a proof of his claim?” We know that you convey Our messages faithfully because you are only a warner, you don’t lose anything in this work. Besides,*

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Allāh has power over everything.

¹³Or, one of their other reason for disbelief was their saying that: "He (i.e., Muḥammad) has forged it." O Muḥammad, say: "If you think that I have forged this Qur'ān, then produce ten forged chapters like it, and call on whomsoever you can besides Allāh for help, if you are truthful in your assumption. ¹⁴But if the most capable persons among you or your idols do not answer you in forging ten chapters, then know that this Qur'ān is revealed with Allāh's knowledge, and that there is no god but He. Will you then submit to Him?"

¹⁵Whosoever desires the present life and its adornment, then We will pay them in full for their deeds therein, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. ¹⁶These are the ones for whom there is nothing in the hereafter but the Fire; and what they had done in this world will be forfeited, and, I repeat that what they were doing is void.

¹⁷Describing Prophet Muḥammad, Allāh says: Is he better who stands upon a clear proof from his Lord (while a witness from God follows him) and before him is the Book of Mūsā as a guide and mercy, or others? Those who stand upon a clear proof believe in it; but whoever from the different groups disbelieves in it, then his promised place is the Fire. So do not doubt in it; surely it is the truth from your Lord, but most of the people do not believe.

¹⁸Who is more unjust than the one who forges a lie against Allāh? On the day of judgement, these people shall be brought before their Lord, and the witnesses will say: "These are the ones who lied against their Lord." Surely the curse of Allāh is upon the unjusts.

The unjusts are those ¹⁹who prevent the people from Allāh's upright way, seeking to make it crooked and they disbelieve in the hereafter. ²⁰They were not able to

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escape from *Allāh* on the earth, and on the day of judgement they shall not have any protector besides *Allāh*; the punishment shall be doubled for them. They could not hear nor did they see *with their hearts*. ²¹They are the ones who have lost their souls, and what they were forging has gone astray from them. ²²No doubt, in the hereafter they are the greatest losers.

²³As for those who believe, do good *deeds* and become humble before their Lord, they are the inhabitants of the Paradise, in it they shall abide.

²⁴The likeness of the *above-mentioned* two groups is as the blind and the deaf *person on the one hand*, and the seeing and the hearing *person on the other*—are they equal in likeness?! Will you not then remember?

Prophet Nūḥ (III)

²⁵And when We sent Nūḥ to his people, he said to them:

I certainly am an obvious warner for you. *I have been sent to warn you* ²⁶that you should not worship anyone but *Allāh*. *If you do not heed to my warning*, then I fear for you the chastisement of a painful day.

²⁷The aristocrats of the unbelievers among his people said, "We do not see you other than a human being like ourselves; and, at first thought, we do not see anyone following you except those who are *of low status* among us. *In short*, we do not see in you any superiority over us, rather we think you *all* are liars."

²⁸Nūḥ said:

O my people! Tell me! What do you think if I have with me a clear proof from My Lord —and He has surely granted me *a proof as mercy* from Himself, but it has remained obscured to you *because of your insolence*— then shall we force you to *accept* it while

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you are averse to it?

²⁹O my people! *If you do not believe in my message, then I will not lose anything because I do not ask you for any wealth for this work of prophethood. My wage for calling you to the right path falls only on Allāh. As for my followers whom you judge as 'low', I am not going to drive away those who have believed in Allāh irrespective of their 'social status'; and they shall surely meet their Lord. Rather I consider you as an ignorant people.* ³⁰O my people! Who will help me against Allāh if I drive them away? Will you not then mind?

³¹And *as for your comment that you do not see any superiority in me, I never claimed such a thing. I do not say to you that, 'I possess the treasures of Allāh'; and I do not know the unseen; and I do not say that, 'I am an angel.' Nor do I say about those whom your eyes hold in contempt that, 'Allāh will not give them any good' because Allāh knows best what is in their souls. If I say these things, then I should surely be among the unjust people.*

³²When Nūḥ refuted all their arguments, they said, "O Nūḥ! You have indeed disputed with us and have exhausted *in your* disputation with us *but we still will not believe in your God, therefore bring to us the chastisement which you threaten us with—if you are of the truthful ones.*"

³³Nūḥ said, "Only Allāh will bring it to you if He please; and *at that moment you will not be able to escape from it. All depends totally on Allāh's will.* ³⁴If Allāh intends to leave you in error, *then even if I intend to advise you, my sincere advice will not benefit you. He is your Lord, and to Him shall you be returned.*"

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³⁵Or do they, *the Meccans*, say about the story of Nūḥ that, "He (i.e., Muḥammad) has forged it"? O Muḥammad, say: "If I have forged it, then upon me falls my guilt; but, *as a matter of fact*, I am free from *the forging of associates of God*—the sin that you commit."

³⁶Then it was revealed to Nūḥ that: "None of your people will believe except those who have already believed, therefore do not grieve at what they are doing. ³⁷O Nūḥ! Make the Ark before Our eyes and *according to Our revelation*, and do not address Me concerning those who have done evil *because they shall surely be drowned*."

³⁸So Nūḥ began to make the Ark.

And whenever the aristocrats from his people passed by Nūḥ, they laughed at him.

He said, "If you laugh at us, surely *very soon* we too shall laugh at you as you are laughing *at us*. ³⁹And soon shall you know upon whom will come a chastisement which will disgrace him, and upon whom will ascend a lasting chastisement."

⁴⁰*This situation continued* until when Our punishment came and *the water in the pit boiled over*, We said: "O Nūḥ! Carry in *the Ark* a pair (*that is, two*) of every kind of animal, and your family —except those *like your wife* against whom the word of punishment has already preceded— and those who believe."

But *alas*, there believed not with him but a few.

⁴¹Nūḥ said *to his party*, "Embark in it. In Allāh's name be its course and its anchorage. Surely my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful."

⁴²The Ark sailed on with them amid waves *which were high like mountains*.

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When the flood started, a son of Nūḥ, known as Kan'ān, had not joined them in the Ark. Nūḥ did not know that Kan'ān was a hypocrite; therefore, as a father, he was concerned for his son. Nūḥ called out to his son (who had separated from his father), "O my son! Embark with us, and do not be with the unbelievers."

⁴³Nūḥ's son said, "I will seek refuge in a mountain that will protect me from the water."

Nūḥ said, "There is no protector today from the punishment of Allāh but for a person on whom He has mercy."

Then suddenly the wave came between them and he became one of those who were drowned.

⁴⁴And when Allāh wanted to bring the flood to an end, it was said: "O earth, swallow your water; and, O clouds, clear away." The water subsided and the mission was accomplished.

The Ark came to rest on the Mount Judi.

At the end, it was proclaimed: "Away with the unjust people!"

⁴⁵Still unsure of his son's hypocrisy, Nūḥ cried out to his Lord and said, "O my Lord, my son is a member of my family, and Your promise to save my family is surely true; and You are the Most-Decisive of all the judges therefore, please save my son."

⁴⁶Allāh said, "O Nūḥ! As for your son, you should know that he is not among those members of your family whom I had promised to save, because he is the doer of bad deeds. Therefore do not ask of Me about the matters whereof you have no knowledge. I admonish you lest you should be among the ignorants."

⁴⁷When Nūḥ came to know the truth about Kan'ān, he said, "O my Lord! I seek refuge in You, lest I should ask You a thing whereof I have no knowledge. And if You do not forgive me and have mercy upon me, I shall

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be one of the losers.”

⁴⁸Then it was said, “O Nūḥ! Get down *from the Ark* with peace and blessings from Us upon you and upon the *future* generations of those who are with you. And *there shall be among the future generations some people* to whom We will give provisions, *but they also will go astray* and then a painful chastisement from Us shall afflict them.”

⁴⁹O Muḥammad! These are the news of the unseen (i.e., past) *events* which We reveal to you. You did not know them —neither you nor your people— before this. Therefore be patient *in regard to the attitude of the unbelievers*; surely the ultimate *victory* is for those who guard themselves against displeasing Allāh.

Prophet Hūd (II)

⁵⁰When We sent to the people of ‘Ād their brother Hūd, he said:

O my people! worship Allāh, you have no god other than Him. You are nothing but forgers of *lies*.

⁵¹O my people! I do not ask you for any wage; my wage *for calling you to the right path* falls only on Him who created me. Do you then not understand *that whatever I am doing is for your own good?*

⁵²O my people! ask forgiveness of your Lord *for your sins*, then turn to Him *obediently*. If you do so, He will send the clouds pouring rain over you copiously and increase you in strength to your *already existing* strength; and do not turn back as sinners.

⁵³His people said, “O Hūd! You have not brought to us any clear proof; and we are not going to leave our

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gods on the strength of your words, and we are not going to believe in you. ⁵⁴*As for you, we do not say anything but that one of our gods has smitten you with evil.*"

Hūd said:

I call Allāh to witness, and you too bear witness, that I am free from what you associate *with Allāh* ⁵⁵other than Him.

If you think your gods have any power, then try to outwit me all together and give me no respite. I am sure you will not be able to outwit me because ⁵⁶*I have put my trust in Allāh, who is my Lord and your Lord; there is no creature on this earth but that He takes it by the forelock. Surely my Lord is on the straight path.*

But if you turn away from my advice, then I do not lose anything because I have delivered to you the message with which I have been sent to you, and my Lord will bring another people in your place. By your disbelief and disobedience, you do not harm Him in any way. My Lord is, indeed, the Guardian of everything.

⁵⁸*When Our punishment came, We delivered Hūd and those who had believed with him by a mercy from Us—We surely delivered them from a harsh chastisement.*

⁵⁹*That was the eventual outcome of the people of 'Ād because they denied the signs of their Lord, disobeyed His messengers, and followed the command of every obstinate tyrant. ⁶⁰As a result of their disbelief, they were pursued in this world and will be pursued on the day of resurrection by a curse of Allāh: "Surely the 'Ād disbelieved in their Lord; so away with 'Ād, the people of Hūd."*

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Prophet Ṣāliḥ (II)

Prophet Ṣāliḥ was a messenger of God sent to the nation known as Thamūd. The Thamūd were Arabs who lived in the post Nūḥ era, in northern Arabia. According to their description in the various verses of the Qur'ān, it seems that their civilization was of an advanced nature. But as they progressed materially, their spiritual life deteriorated and they started worshipping idols. Then Allāh raised Ṣāliḥ among them to call his people to the straight path, but very few of them believed in him.

⁶¹When We sent to the people of Thamūd their brother Ṣāliḥ, he said:

O my people! worship Allāh, you have no god other than Him. He has created you from the earth, and has settled you in it; therefore ask His forgiveness for your sins, then turn to Him obediently. Surely my Lord is nigh, answering your prayers.

⁶²They said, "O Ṣāliḥ! Before this, you were a source of expectation among us. Do you now forbid us from worshipping the idols that our fathers worship?! As for the God that you call us to, we truly are in disquieting doubt; therefore we will not believe in you."

The Thamūd said that they will not believe unless Ṣāliḥ could miraculously bring a she-camel with specific qualities from the mountain. Allāh accepted their demand, and Ṣāliḥ brought a she-camel from the mountain as a proof of his truth.

⁶³Ṣāliḥ said:

O my people! Tell me! What do you think if I have with me a clear proof from My Lord —and He has surely granted me a proof as mercy from Himself— then who will help me against Allāh if I disobey Him? If I lived upto your expectations, then you would increase nothing for me except loss.

⁶⁴O my people! This she-camel of Allāh is a sign of

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my truth for you. Therefore leave her alone so that she may pasture on Allāh's earth, and do not harm her otherwise a nigh chastisement will seize you.

⁶⁵But they still disobeyed Allāh and eventually slew her.

So Ṣāliḥ said, "O my people! Although I had warned you, but you disobeyed me. Therefore enjoy in your abode for three day, then the chastisement will seize you—that is a promise not to be belied."

⁶⁶So when Our punishment came, We delivered Ṣāliḥ and those who had believed with him by a mercy from Us, and We also delivered them from the disgrace of that day. Your Lord is surely the Strong, the Mighty.

⁶⁷And the rumbling of the earthquake seized those who were unjust, and thus they became lifeless bodies in their houses ⁶⁸as if they had never dwelt there.

Surely the Thamūd disbelieved in their Lord; so away with the Thamūd!

Prophet Ibrāhīm (I)

⁶⁹When the angels Our messengers came to Ibrāhīm with the good news, they said, "Peace be upon you." Ibrāhīm said, "Peace be upon you", and welcomed them.

It did not take long before he brought a roasted calf for his guests. ⁷⁰But when he saw that their hands were not reaching out towards it, he became suspicious of them and conceived fear of them. When the guests saw this, they said, "Do not fear us; we are not eating because we are angels who have taken human form, and we have been sent to the people of Lūt."

⁷¹And his wife, Sarah, was standing by. (Sarah was a barren women, and she had already passed the child-bearing age.) By Our blessings she began to have her period. Therefore, through the angels, We gave her the good news of Ishāq, and after Ishāq, of Ya'qūb.

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⁷²When Sarah heard the good news, she said, "Woe unto me! Shall I bear a son while I am an old woman, and this my husband is an old man? This is surely a wonderful thing."

⁷³The angels said, "Are you amazed at the command of Allāh? The mercy of Allāh and His blessings are upon you, O people of the house. Surely He is Praised and Glorious."

⁷⁴So when fear had gone away from Ibrāhīm and good news came to him, he began to plead with Us for the people of Lūṭ. ⁷⁵Surely Ibrāhīm was forbearing, compassionate and oft-returning to Allāh.

⁷⁶In answer to his pleading, We said, "O Ibrāhīm! Leave off this pleading for the people of Lūṭ because the decree of your Lord has surely come, and a chastisement that cannot be averted is coming upon them."

Prophet Lūṭ (II)

⁷⁷When Our messengers (i.e., the angels) came to Lūṭ in form of handsome young men, he was grieved for them because he knew that his people had evil desires for such persons, and that he was unable to do anything in way of protection for them. He said to himself, "This is a critical day."

⁷⁸When the people of Lūṭ saw the handsome young men, they came to him, running towards him. Lūṭ had anticipated this because they had been doing evil deeds from before.

When Lūṭ saw that they have come with evil intentions, he said pointing towards his daughters that, "O my people! These are my daughters, they are purer for you. Why don't you marry them and fulfill your sexual desire lawfully. Fear Allāh and do not disgrace me with regard to my guests. Isn't there among you a man of right

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mind?"

⁷⁹They said, "You know better that we have no desire for your daughters; and you surely know what we desire."

⁸⁰Lūṭ said, "If only I had power against you, or might take refuge in a strong support *so as to protect my guests!*"

⁸¹Then the angels disclosed their true identity and said, "O Lūṭ! We are messengers of Your Lord. *Do not be grieved as they shall by no means reach you or us. We have been sent for punishing your people. So go forth outside the city with your family —except your wife, surely whatever will smite them will also smite her— in a part of the night, and let no one among you turn around to look at the city. The promised time of their punishment is the morning. Is not the morning nigh?*"

⁸²So when Our punishment came upon the people of Lūṭ, We turned the city upside down and showered them with stones of baked clay, one after another, ⁸³that had been marked by Your Lord. And O Muḥammad, it (*i.e., the city of the people of Lūṭ*) is not far from the unjusts of Mecca.

Prophet Shu'ayb (II)

⁸⁴When We sent to the Madyan their brother Shu'ayb, he said:

O my people, worship Allāh! You have no god other than Him.

Do not lessen the measure and the balance. *You should refrain more from such things because I see you in prosperity. I fear for you the chastisement of the encompassing day.*

⁸⁵O my people! Fill up the measure and the balance with fairness, and do not diminish the goods of the

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people;

and do not act wickedly in the earth, making mischief.

⁸⁶*The good deeds which remain with Allāh are better for you if you are believers.*

This is my advice; otherwise I am not a watcher over you.

⁸⁷They said, "O Shu'ayb! Does your prayer command you that we should forsake what our fathers worshipped or that we should not do what we please with our goods?! O Shu'ayb, you should not say such things because you are the forbearing and the right-minded person."

⁸⁸Shu'ayb said:

Tell me! What do you think if I have a clear proof from my Lord, *will you then listen to me?*

As for your suspicion that I intend to gain power over you and your wealth, then you know that He (i.e., my Lord) has given me a goodly provision from Himself. I do not desire to oppose you in betaking myself what I forbid you. I desire nothing but to reform, as far as I am able to do so; and my success is only with Allāh, in Him I have put my trust and to Him I turn obediently.

O my people! let not the breach with me make you commit sin so that there may befall you *a punishment* like what befell the people of Nūḥ, or the people of Hūd, or the people of Sāliḥ; and the people of Lūṭ are not far away from you, *so at least learn a lesson from their outcome.*

⁹⁰Therefore ask forgiveness of your Lord *for your sins*, then turn to Him *obediently*. Surely my Lord is Merciful, Loving.

⁹¹The people of Shu'ayb said: "O Shu'ayb! We do not understand much of what you say. *What matters is that*

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we truly see you as weak among us. And had it not been for *the regard of your tribe*, we would have stoned you; and you are not strong *to defend yourself* against us."

⁹²Shu'ayb said:

O my people! Is my tribe more important to you than Allāh?! *Look at you!* You have taken Him as something to be thrown behind your backs! Surely my Lord encompasses what you are doing.

⁹³O my people! Do *whatever* you like in your situation, I *too* am doing what I believe is right. Soon you will know to whom will come the chastisement that will disgrace him, and who is the liar. Therefore be on look-out *for it*, I too am watching *with you*.

⁹⁴When Our punishment came *upon them*, We delivered Shu'ayb and those who had believed with him by a mercy from Us. And the rumbling *of the earthquake* seized those who were unjust, and thus they became lifeless bodies in their houses ⁹⁵as if they had never dwelt there—so away with the *people of Madyan*, just as the Thamūd were done away!

Prophet Mūsā (IV)

⁹⁶We sent Mūsā with Our signs and a clear evidence ⁹⁷to Fir'awn and his aristocrats.

Mūsā demonstrated those signs to the aristocrats of Fir'awn, but still they followed the command of Fir'awn although Fir'awn's command was not a wise one.

⁹⁸Fir'awn shall lead his people on the day of resurrection, and will bring them down to the Fire—evil is the destination to which they were lead!

⁹⁹They were pursued in this *world* and *will be pursued* on the day of resurrection by the curse of Allāh—evil is the 'gift' which is offered *to them!*

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A Review of the Above

¹⁰⁰This is from the news of the *ancient* cities which We relate to you O Muḥammad; some of them are still standing while some are stubble, *i.e.*, in ruin.

¹⁰¹By *punishing them*, We did not treat them unjustly, rather they were unjust to themselves *by rejecting Our messengers*. When the punishment from Your Lord came to them, their gods (whom they called upon besides Allāh) were of no avail to them in anything; and they added for them nothing but destruction.

¹⁰²Such is the seizing of your Lord when He seizes the towns that are unjust; surely His seizing is painful, severe.

¹⁰³Surely in this *punishing* there is a sign for a person who fears the chastisement of the hereafter—that is a day in which the people shall be gathered, that is a day which shall indeed be witnessed. ¹⁰⁴We shall not postpone it but to an appointed term.

¹⁰⁵On the day when *the time of judgement* shall come, no soul shall speak except by His (*i.e.*, God's) permission: some of them shall be unhappy and some happy.

¹⁰⁶As for those who are unhappy, they shall be in the Fire—in it they shall have *only* moaning and sighing, ¹⁰⁷they shall abide in it, so long as the heavens and the earth last* (unless your Lord pleases *to forgive and transfer them to the Heaven*). Surely your Lord accomplishes what He desires.

* The Qur'ān has clearly stated that the Paradise and the Hell will last for ever (see, for example, 64:9, 33:64-65), whereas the heavens and the earth will come to perish (see 46:3, 21:104, 39:67, 56:6). Therefore the words "heavens" and "earth" in verses 107 and 108 do not refer to the present perishable earth and heavens, rather they refer to the earth and the heavens of the hereafter which will last for ever. The heavens and earth of the hereafter have been mentioned in 15:48; 39:74. (*al-Mizān*, vol. 11, Arabic ed. Tehran 1976, p. 23) (Cont. P.46)

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¹⁰⁸As for those who are happy, they shall be in the Garden—they shall abide in it, as long as the heavens and the earth last unless your Lord pleases *otherwise*, but that would not happen because admission in Paradise is a gift which will never be cut off.

¹⁰⁹Therefore, O Muḥammad, do not be in doubt as to *the final defeat of the idols* which these people of Mecca worship—they worship just as their fathers worshipped before. *As for the punishment they earned by their evil deeds*, We shall pay them back in full their portion undiminished.

¹¹⁰Certainly *before you*, O Muḥammad, We gave the Book (*Tawrāt*) to Mūsā, but *inspite of its being a revelation*, there was disagreement about it *among the Israelites*. Had not a word —*about deferring their punishment to the day of judgement*— preceded from your Lord, the matter would have been *immediately* resolved between them; they surely are in a disquieting doubt about it. ¹¹¹And surely your Lord will pay each of them in full for their *evil deeds*; He surely is aware of what they are doing.

In the same way, the people of Mecca have disagreed about the Qur'ān. ¹¹²So stay firm as you have been commanded, O Muḥammad and also he who has turned to Allāh obediently with you; and do not exceed the proper bounds *as He surely sees what you are doing*.

¹¹³O Muslims! Do not *incline towards, or rely on*, those

Another explanation is that the sentence "as long as the heavens and the earth last—*mā dāmati 's-samāwātu wa 'l-'arḍ*" was a common way of expressing the concept of perpetuity and eternity among the Arabs of the pre-Islamic era. Therefore, this sentence should not be taken to mean that the Hell and the Paradise will last only as long as the present world lasts. Rather, it says that the Hell and the Paradise will last for ever.

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who are unjust, otherwise the Fire will touch you. You have no guardians besides Allāh; so if you incline towards the unjusts, then you will not be helped by Him.

¹¹⁴O Muḥammad! Establish the prayer in the two extreme parts of the day, and in the first hours of the night. Surely the good deeds like prayers drive away the evil deeds. This is a reminder for those who remember Allāh.

This verse has been personally addressed to Prophet Muḥammad as a demonstration of the respect and eminence which he holds in the eyes of Allāh; otherwise, its contents are meant for all the believers. This verse is about three of the five daily prayers: (a) "in the two extreme parts of the day" refers to the dawn prayer (subḥ) and the evening prayer (maghrib). (b) "in the first hours of the night" refers to the night prayer ('ishā).

¹¹⁵O Muḥammad, be patient, for surely Allāh does not waste the reward of the good-doers.

¹¹⁶Alas! Why were there not among the generations before you, men of intelligence who would be forbidding corruption in the earth? There were no such persons except a few among those whom We delivered of them; but as for the majority who were unjust, they blindly went after the luxury in which they were surrounded and became sinners. ¹¹⁷And remember that your Lord would never have destroyed the cities unjustly, while their people were those who did things right.

¹¹⁸If your Lord had pleased, He would have forcefully made the people a single nation instead of being divided into different religions. But He will not do so because He has

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given mankind the freedom in action, therefore they shall continue to differ ¹¹⁹*except those upon whom your Lord has mercy by guiding them—they shall stay united in their faith. And He has created them for this mercy and guidance; but alas not all will follow it, thereby proving that the word of your Lord will certainly be fulfilled when He said that: "I shall surely fill the Hell with jinn and men, all together."*

A Summary of the Chapter

¹²⁰*O Muḥammad, all that We relate to you of the news of the past messengers is so that We may strengthen your heart with it in your work for guiding the people to the right path.*

And in this chapter and its stories, there has come to you the truth about the beginning and the end, and about the way Allāh deals with mankind.

It also serves as an admonition and a reminder to the believers.

¹²¹*Therefore, O Muḥammad, say (just as Shu'ayb and other messengers said) to those who do not believe: "Act according to your ability, we too are acting according to our ability; ¹²²and wait for the outcome, we too are waiting."*

¹²³*Allāh's is the unseen in the heavens and the earth. To Him the whole matter is returned, therefore worship Him and put your trust in Him. Your Lord is not heedless of what you are doing.*

Chapter Twelve

SŪRAH YŪSUF *(Joseph)*

(revealed at Mecca; consisting of 111 verses)

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Introduction

¹Alif Lām Rā.

These are the verses of the Manifest Book. ²We have revealed it *as* an Arabic Qur'ān so that you —*the immediate audience of Prophet Muḥammad*— may understand it.

³*O Muḥammad*, We relate the best of stories to you by having revealed to you this Qur'ān, though before it you were of those who did not know *these stories*.

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The Dream of Yūsuf

Prophet Ya'qūb (Jacob) had twelve sons; Yūsuf was one of the youngest. One night, Yūsuf had a dream in which he saw that eleven stars, the sun and the moon were prostrating before him. This was actually God's way of telling him that he is among the chosen ones.

⁴Remember when Yūsuf said to his father: "O my father! I saw eleven stars, the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating before me."

Ya'qūb immediately realized that this dream was a sign of God that Yūsuf has been chosen to be a prophet. He also realized that if Yūsuf's elder brothers come to know about it, they will envy him and, probably, even try to harm him. ⁵So he said: "O my son! Do not relate your vision to your brothers, lest they become jealous and devise a plan against you on insinuation of the Satan who surely is an open enemy of man.

⁶"O my son! In this way your Lord will choose you, teach you the interpretation of dreams and other events, and complete His blessings upon you and upon the family of Ya'qūb as He completed it for your fathers before you, i.e., Ibrāhīm and Ishāq. Your Lord is Knowing, Wise."

⁷O Muḥammad, in the story of Yūsuf and his brothers are signs for those who ask about it.

Yūsuf's Brothers Envy Him

As mentioned above, Ya'qūb had twelve sons; the youngest were Yūsuf and Benjamin, both were from the same mother. As these two were the youngest, Ya'qūb had assigned no family

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work for them; and when the elder sons went to the desert with their flocks, he never allowed them to take the two younger ones alongwith them.

The elder brothers became envious of the two younger ones. ⁸Remember when the elder sons of Ya'qūb said: "Surely Yūsuf and his brother, Benjamin, are dearer to our father than we, though we are a strong group who take care of the family work. Surely our father is in manifest error by loving them more than us."

Someone among them proposed: ⁹"So kill Yūsuf or cast him forth into some foreign land, so that your father's attention may be exclusively for you; and after that crime, be a righteous people."

¹⁰One of them said, "No, do not kill Yūsuf, instead cast him into the bottom of a well and hopefully some traveller will pick him out and take him away. Throw him into a well if you must have to do something about him."

They agreed upon the last proposal and planned to act upon it. First they had to get hold of Yūsuf, so ¹¹they went to their father and said: "O our father, why is that you do not trust us in regard to Yūsuf and do not let him come with us to the desert. We surely are his sincere well-wishers. ¹²So please send him with us tomorrow so that he may enjoy and play; surely we shall be protecting him."

¹³Ya'qūb said, "It grieves me that you should take him with you, and I fear that the wolf may eat him while you are heedless of him because of your work."

¹⁴They said, "Certainly if the wolf should eat him while we (a strong group) are present there, then surely we are losers! But this can't happen!"

¹⁵So the next day when they had gone off with Yūsuf to the desert and agreed to put him in the bottom of the well, We revealed to him, "O Yūsuf, do not worry because certainly a time will come when you shall tell them of this their doing when they are unaware."

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After taking his shirt off, they threw Yūsuf into a well, stained his shirt with sheep's blood, ¹⁶and came to their father in the evening, weeping.

¹⁷They said, "O our father, we went off to race and left Yūsuf with our belongings, and a wolf *came and* ate him. O father, we know that you will not believe in us, even though we are truthful." To prove their story, ¹⁸they brought to him Yūsuf's shirt with false blood on it.

He said, "No, but you let yourselves be tempted to something *evil*. As for me, patience is good; Allāh will help against what you describe."

Yūsuf is Caught and Sold

After Yūsuf was thrown in the well, ¹⁹a caravan came and stopped nearby. They sent their water-drawer to the well; and he let down his bucket into it. When he pulled the bucket up, he was surprised to see a boy hanging on to it. "O Good news!" he said, "this is a young boy." So they concealed him as a piece of merchandise, but Allāh knew what they were doing.

When they reached Egypt, ²⁰they sold him for a very low price, just a few dirhams; because they showed no desire for keeping him or for increasing his price.

The man who bought Yūsuf was the chief of the Egyptians and a noble person. Being a chief he was known as 'Azīz (lit. chief, noble person). He and his wife, Zulaykhah, had no child. ²¹The Egyptian who had bought him said to his wife, "Give him a good lodging, may be he will be useful to us or we may even adopt him as a son." Thus did We establish Yūsuf in the land, and We might teach him the interpretation of the savings in the dreams. Allah has full power over His affairs, but most of the people do not know.

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In the House of the 'Azīz

²²When Yūsuf had attained his maturity *and grown up into a very handsome young man*, We gave him wisdom and knowledge—thus do We reward the good-doers.

²³*It was during those days that the woman, Zulaykhah (in whose house Yūsuf was) had become obsessed with his handsomeness and sought to seduce him.*

Therefore, *one day when she found herself alone with Yūsuf*, she closed the doors of her bedroom chamber and said, "Come here!"

Yūsuf said: "Allāh be my refuge! Surely He is my Lord, *and He has given me a goodly lodging. Surely the unjust, i.e., the sinners, do not prosper.*"

²⁴She certainly was interested in him; and he would have been interested in her, if he had not seen the proof of his Lord—this was done so that We might turn away from him evil and abomination *because he was one of Our sincere servants.*

²⁵*After Yūsuf's refusal, they both raced towards the door—he, to get away from her; and she, to prevent him from leaving. When Zulaykhah reached Yūsuf, she got hold of his shirt and tore it from behind. Yūsuf was successful in getting away from her but at the door, they encountered her husband, the 'Azīz of Egypt.*

To save herself from blame, Zulaykhah immediately accused Yūsuf and said to her husband: "What is the punishment of him who intends evil against your wife except imprisonment or a painful chastisement?"

²⁶Yūsuf said: "She is the one who sought to seduce me!"

Thereupon, a person from her own folk described the nature of witness by saying: "If Yūsuf's shirt has been torn from front, then she speaks the truth and he is one of the liars; ²⁷but if his shirt has been torn from behind,

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then she has lied and he is one of the truthful."

²⁸So when *the 'Azīz* saw that Yūsuf's shirt was torn from behind, he said to his wife: "Surely this is a guile of you women; surely your guile is great."

²⁹Turning towards Yūsuf, he said: "O Yūsuf! Turn away from this *unfortunate event* (i.e., forget it and do not mention it to anyone)." Then turning again to his wife, he said: "Ask forgiveness of your sin from God. Surely you are one of the wrong-doers."

When the news of this episode spread around, ³⁰the women of the city said: "The chief's wife has been seeking to seduce her slave?! He must surely have affected her heart with love; we see her in manifest error."

³¹When *Zulaykhah* heard the sly talks of the leading ladies of the city, she sent invitations to them to visit her.

When they came to her she prepared for them a repast, and gave each of them a knife to cut the fruits.

Then she went to Yūsuf and said, "Go to them." When Yūsuf went inside and the ladies of the city saw him, they admired him greatly and become so obsessed with his beauty that they unknowingly cut their hands with the knives given to them by *Zulaykhah*. In amazement, they said, "God forbid! This is not a human being, he is no other but a noble angel!"

³²It was then that *Zulaykhah* said, "Now you see! This is the person you blamed me for! Certainly, I sought to seduce him, but he abstained. Yet if he will not do what I command him, he shall be imprisoned and be among the humiliated ones."

³³When Yūsuf heard this threat, he prayed, "O My Lord! The prison is dearer to me than the sin to which they call. O My Lord! If You do not turn away their guile

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from me, then I shall yearn towards them and become among the ignorants." ³⁴So his Lord accepted his prayer and turned their guile away from him; He is surely the Hearing, the Knowing.

Yūsūf in Prison

When the 'Azīz heard that the story of his wife's attempt to seduce Yūsuf was circulating around the city, he became worried about his family's reputation. ³⁵Therefore he discussed it with his advisers and it occurred to them —after they had seen the signs of Yūsuf's innocence— that they should imprison him for a while.

³⁶Two youths (who were slaves of the 'Azīz and had been convicted for some charges) also entered the prison with Yūsuf.

After some time, both of them saw some dreams. Thereupon, one of them said, "I dreamed that I was pressing grapes." The other said, "I dreamed that I was carrying bread on my head while the birds were eating it." Then both of them said, "O Yūsuf! Tell us their interpretation; we consider you as one of the good-doers who have the ability to know the interpretation of dreams because of their spiritual purity."

³⁷Yūsuf said:

Be assured that whatever I say to you is true—no food with which you are fed shall come to you in this prison but that I can tell you its reality before it comes to you. This knowledge of the unseen is of what my Lord has taught me.

The reason why Allāh has given me this knowledge and chosen me is because I have forsaken the religion of a people who do not believe in Allāh, and they also are unbelievers in the hereafter. ³⁸Instead, I have

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followed the religion of my fathers—Ibrāhīm, Ishāq and Ya'qūb. It is not *right* for us to associate anything with Allāh. This *ability to reject polytheism and believe in monotheism* is indeed a grace of Allāh upon us, and *consequently* upon the people *because they look at us as models of truth*; but most of the people do not thank *Him*.

³⁹O my fellow-prisoners! Are many gods at variance better or the only One Allāh who can subdue *everything and everyone*? ⁴⁰Whatever you worship other than Him are nothing but names —*without any point of reference*— which you and your fathers have named; Allāh has sent down no authority concerning them. Judgement belongs only to Allāh. He has commanded that you shall not worship anything but Him—this is the right religion, but most people do not know.

⁴¹O my fellow-prisoners! *Now coming to the interpretations of your dreams*: As for one of you (*who saw himself pressing grapes*), he shall be forgiven and employed to pour wine for his lord. As for the other (*who saw the birds eating bread over his head*), he shall be crucified and birds will eat of his head. The matter has been decreed concerning which you inquired.

⁴²Yūsuf said to the one whom he knew would be saved of the two *fellow-prisoners*: "Mention me in your lord's presence so that he may release me from the prison." But *when that prisoner was released*, the Shayṭān caused him to forget the mentioning of Yūsuf to his lord; therefore, Yūsuf remained in the prison for some years.

Freedom of Yūsuf

After a few years the 'Azīz of Egypt saw a dream. He gathered

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his advisers in the court to find out the interpretation of his dream.

⁴³The king (*i.e.*, the 'Azīz) said:

I had a dream in which I saw seven fat cows which were being eaten by seven lean ones; I also saw seven green ears and seven dry ones. O aristocrats of Egypt! Give your opinions to me about my dream if you can interpret the dream.

⁴⁴They answered: "*Surely what you have described are confused dreams; and we do not know the interpretation of such confused dreams.*"

Among the people who were present in the court at that time was ⁴⁵*one of the two prisoners who had been saved and was now among the servants of the 'Azīz. When he heard the talk about 'Azīz's dream, he remembered Yūsūf after a long time. Facing the 'Azīz and his advisers, he said, "I will tell you of the interpretation of the dream, so allow me to go to Yūsuf in the prison."*

When that person came to the prison, he said, ⁴⁶*"O Yūsuf! O the truthful one! Give your opinion to us about a dream in which appeared seven fat cows which were being eaten by seven lean ones, and seven green ears and seven dry ones; so that I shall return to the people in the 'Azīz's court and inform them so that they may come to know."*

⁴⁷Yūsuf said:

*You shall sow for seven years continuously and during these seven years whatever you reap leave it in its ear (*i.e.* store it) except a little which you will eat.*

⁴⁸*Then after these seven years another seven years of hardship shall come in which you shall eat what you had stored for them, all except a little which you shall preserve for future cultivation.*

⁴⁹*Then after the period of hardship, a year will come in which people shall have rain through which they*

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will be able to cultivate their farms and eventually press grapes for their drinks.

Then the former prisoner came back to the court and related the interpretation of Yūsuf to the 'Azīz and his advisers. ⁵⁰The king was impressed and, at the same time, felt guilty for imprisoning Yūsuf without any sin. He said, "Release him and bring him to me."

When the messenger of the 'Azīz came, Yūsuf said, "Go back to your lord and ask him 'What was the case of the women who cut their hands?' Surely my Lord knows their guile." (Yūsuf said this because he wanted his innocence to be proved beyond any doubt.)

The 'Azīz gathered his wife and the ladies who had cut their hands when they saw Yūsuf. ⁵¹He said, "What was the matter with you when you sought to seduce Yūsuf?"

They confessed and said, "God forbid! We know of no evil on his part."

Zulaykhah, the wife of the 'Azīz, said, "Now the truth has come to light—I sought to seduce him, and he is surely one of the truthful ones when he said that he had not seduced me!"

⁵²When Yūsuf was informed about these confessions, he said, "I have asked the 'Azīz to investigate this matter again so that he may know that I have not been unfaithful to him in secret; and that surely Allāh does not guide the treachery of the unfaithful even if they be from the king's family.

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⁵³"Yet I do not claim the innocence of my soul by my own power—surely the human soul insites evil—rather by the mercy which my Lord had upon me. Surely my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful."

⁵⁴Then the king said to his officers, "Bring Yūsuf to

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me, I would like to choose him for myself.”

So Yūsūf was released and brought to the court. When the king had spoken with Yūsuf, he said, “Because of your chastity, innocence, patience while you were in prison and your knowledge of the unseen, today you truly have appeared to us as a honourable and faithful person.”

⁵⁵Yūsuf said, “Place me in charge of the treasure-houses of this land. I will administrate in such a way that we will be able to survive the seven dry years—surely I am a guardian with knowledge.”

The king readily agreed to this request.

⁵⁶Thus We firmly established Yūsuf in the land of Egypt; he can settle in it wherever he liked—We send down Our mercy upon whomsoever We please, and We do not waste the reward of the good-doers. ⁵⁷But of course, the reward of the hereafter is better for those who believe and guard themselves against displeasing Allāh.

Yūsuf's Brothers in Egypt

After the first seven years came the dry seasons. During this famine years many people from far away places started to come to Egypt to buy food. By that time Yūsuf had succeeded the 'Azīz as the ruler of Egypt.

Prophet Ya'qūb and his sons also were suffering because of the famine. Therefore, Ya'qūb sent his sons to Egypt for some food. All the sons of Ya'qūb —with the exception of Benjamin— prepared themselves for the journey to Egypt. After Yūsuf's disappearance, Ya'qūb never allowed his sons to take Benjamin with them to anywhere.

⁵⁸Yūsuf's brothers came to Egypt. They went to Yūsuf who was personally incharge of distributing the food during

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the famine period. When they entered unto him in his palace, he recognized them, but they did not recognize him.

Yūsuf listened to their request and talked with them at length about their family. The brothers even mentioned Benjamin and the special affection which their father had for him.

⁵⁹When Yūsuf furnished them with their provision, he said, "When you come next time, bring to me the brother of yours from your father. Do not you see that I fill up the measure of your provision and that I am the best of hosts? ⁶⁰But if you do not bring him to me, there shall be no measure of food for you with me, nor shall you be able to come near me."

⁶¹They said, "We will try to win him from his father, and we will surely do it."

While the brothers were getting ready to leave, ⁶²Yūsuf said to his servants, "Put their merchandise which they had brought as price of the food in their bags so that they may recognize it when they go back to their family—maybe they will return to me again because of my generosity."

⁶³So as soon as they returned to their father, they said, "O our father! We were able to buy the food this time; but as for the next time, the measure for food has been withheld from us unless Benjamin comes with us to Egypt. So, O father, please send our brother with us so that we may get the measure of food; and we promise that we will surely guard him."

⁶⁴Ya'qūb said, "Can I trust you in regard to him in any way except as I trusted you before in regard to his brother?! Allāh is the best Guardian, and He is the most Merciful of the mercifuls."

⁶⁵When the brothers opened their goods, they found

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that their merchandise *with which they had bought the food* had been returned to them. *This discovery was an evidence that Yūsuf meant no harm by telling them to bring their brother.* They said, "O our father! What more could we desire? See this is our merchandise, it has been returned to us. At least now you should send Benjamin with us. This way we will provide for our family, guard our brother and add a camel-load of the measure of food—it is an easy means of obtaining a measure of food.

⁶⁶Ya'qūb said, "I will never send Benjamin with you until you give me a firm promise in Allāh's name that you will surely bring him back to me, unless you are completely surrounded by enemies or unfortunate circumstances." When they gave him their promise, Ya'qūb said, "Allāh is a Guardian over what we say."

Thus the elder brothers got Ya'qūb's permission to take Benjamin with them, and they started preparation for another visit to Egypt. When their caravan was about to leave, ⁶⁷Ya'qūb said, "O my sons! Do not enter by one gate altogether, enter by different gates of the city. * I cannot avail you of anything against Allāh. Judgement is only Allāh's; in Him I put my trust, and those who need to rely should also put their trust in Him."

When the eleven brothers reached Egypt, they entered from different gates. ⁶⁸When they had entered the city as their father had ordered them, it did not avail them of anything against Allāh—rather *this act was just a desire in the heart of Ya'qūb which he fulfilled.* Surely Ya'qūb possessed knowledge because We had taught him, but most of the people do not know.

* According to some commentators, Ya'qūb most probably feared that if his eleven sons entered the city together, they might be afflicted by someone's evil eye.

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The Second Visit

⁶⁹When they entered unto Yūsuf, he *welcomed all of them but* lodged his brother, Benjamin, with himself. When they were alone, Yūsuf said, "I am your brother; therefore do not grieve at what they have been doing." And told him to keep it a secret.

⁷⁰When Yūsuf furnished his brothers with their provisions and they were about to leave, someone, on Yūsuf's order, put his drinking-vessel in his brother's (Benjamin's) bag.

When the caravan started to leave, a herald proclaimed: "O Caravan! You are thieves."

⁷¹The brothers said, while they were facing the servants of Yūsuf: "What is it that you are missing?"

⁷²The servants said, "We miss the king's drinking-vessel, and he who shall bring it shall have a reward of a camel-load—that I guarantee."

⁷³The brothers said, "By Allāh! You know for certain that we have not come to make mischief in the land of Egypt, and we are not thieves."

⁷⁴The servants said, "Then what shall be the recompense of this crime, if you are liars?"

⁷⁵The brothers said, "The recompense of this crime shall be that in whomsoever's bag it is found, he himself shall be its recompense. Thus do we punish the wrongdoers."

⁷⁶So Yūsuf began the search with their sacks before of his full-brother, then at last he took it out of his brother's sack."

In this way We made a plan for the sake of joining Yūsuf with his brother and, consequently, with his father.

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It was not right for Yūsuf to take his brother *as a recompense* under the law of the king unless Allāh pleased.

We raise the position of whomsoever We please; and above every possessor of knowledge is the All-Knowing God.

When the drinking-vessel was found in Benjamin's sack, ⁷⁷the brothers said, "We certainly are not surprised if he stole today, because previously a brother of his also stole."

Yūsuf knew they were liars, but he kept it secret in his heart and did not disclose the truth to them. He said, "You are an evil abode, and Allāh knows best what you describe."

After this immediate reaction, the brothers realized that Benjamin will be held by Yūsuf in Egypt on basis of their own judgement; and they also remembered that they had promised their father to bring him back safely. ⁷⁸Therefore they said to Yūsuf, "O Chief! He (Benjamin) has a father, a very old man; therefore retain one of us in his place. Surely we regard you as one of the good-doers."

⁷⁹Yūsuf said, "God forbid that we should seize anyone other than him with whom we found our property, for then we would most surely be unjust."

⁸⁰When they despaired of seeking the release of Benjamin, they retired to confer in privacy.

Their eldest brother said:

"Do you not know that your father has taken a promise in Allāh's name from you, and don't you remember how you remissed in regard to Yūsuf before this? Therefore I will not leave the land of Egypt until my father permits me or Allāh decides for me—and He is the best of the judges.

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⁸¹“Go back to your father, and say: ‘O our father! Surely your son, *Benjamin*, committed theft. And, O father, please believe in us because we do not bear witness except to what we have known. We could not keep watch over the unseen (*i.e., the theft committed by Benjamin*). ⁸²O father! You may ask the town in which we were, and even the caravan with which we came; we surely are truthful ones.’”

So the eldest brother remained in Egypt while the others went back to their father. When they met Ya'qūb, they described the unfortunate incident just as their eldest brother had told them.

After hearing their story, ⁸³Ya'qūb said, “No! Rather you let yourselves be tempted to something. But remember that patience is good. May be Allāh will bring all three of them together to me; surely He is the Knowing, the Wise.”

⁸⁴Then he turned away from them, and said: “O my sorrow for Yūsuf!” His eyes had become white (*i.e., he had become blind*) because of the sorrow which he suppressed *within himself*.

⁸⁵When his sons heard this, they said, “By Allāh! You will not cease to remember Yūsuf until you become seriously ill or you become one of the perishing!”

⁸⁶He said, “I only complain of my grief and sorrow to Allāh; and I know from Allāh what you do not know. ⁸⁷O my sons! Go and inquire about Yūsuf and his brother, and do not give up hope of Allāh's mercy; surely no one gives up hope of Allāh's mercy except the unbelieving people.”

The Thrid Visit to Egypt

The sons of Ya'qūb came to Egypt for the thrid time for two reasons: food and their brother Benjamin. Ya'qūb's family

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was going through some difficult times, and they didn't have enough merchandise to pay for the food.

⁸⁸So when they entered unto Yūsuf, they said:

"O Chief! Financial affliction has touched us and our family; and therefore we have brought the merchandise of scant value only, so kindly give us full measure of food. And please be charitable to us by releasing our brother. Surely Allāh rewards the charitable."

Yūsuf had now decided to reveal his true identity to his brothers: ⁸⁹He said, "Do you know what you have done to Yūsuf and his brother while you were ignorant?!"

Yūsuf uttered this sentence in such a way that his brothers immediately realized that they had been dealing all along with none other than their own brother. ⁹⁰In astonishment, they said, "Are you really Yūsuf?"

He said, "I am Yūsuf and this is my brother, Benjamin; Allāh has indeed been gracious to us because we guarded ourselves against displeasing Him and were patient in worldly afflictions—surely he who guards himself against displeasing Him and is patient in afflictions will be rewarded fully; for surely Allah does not waste the reward of the good-doers."

⁹¹They said, *"By Allāh! now we have realized that Allāh has indeed chosen you above us, and that we certainly are sinners."*

⁹²He said, *"There shall be no reproach against you today, Allāh will forgive you because He is the most Merciful of the mercifuls."*

Then Yūsuf decided to send his brothers back to bring his father and the rest of the family to Egypt. When his brothers got ready to go, Yūsuf said, ⁹³"Take this shirt of mine and cast it on my father's face, he shall regain his eye-sight; and then come to me with your families all together."

Father and Son are United

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⁹⁴When the caravan of *Yūsuf's* brothers left Egypt, their father said to his family, "If you do not refute me, I would like to say that surely I feel the scent of *Yūsuf*."

⁹⁵*Ya'qūb's* family said, "By Allāh, you are certainly in your old error about *Yūsuf* being alive!"

Soon the caravan reached its destination. And when the bearer of good news —the eldest son of *Ya'qūb*— came, he cast the shirt on his father's face. *Ya'qūb* regained his eye-sight; he said, "Did not I say to you that I know from Allāh what you do not know."

⁹⁷They said, "O our father! Ask Allāh for forgiveness of our sins for us; surely we were sinners."

⁹⁸He said, "I will soon ask my Lord to forgive you; He surely is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

Ya'qūb and his whole family packed their belongings and started the journey towards the kingdom of *Yūsuf*. When they reached near Egypt, *Yūsuf* was informed about the approaching caravan. He came out to the gate of the city to welcome his family.

⁹⁹When they entered unto *Yūsuf*, he welcomed his parents and said, "God willing, enter Egypt with peace." ¹⁰⁰Then he ordered his servants to lift his parents upon the throne.

After they reached the palace, and his parents and brothers had sat down in one room, *Yūsuf* entered graciously and stood in front of them. They were so much overcome with *Yūsuf's* majesty that they fell down in prostration before him.

When *Yūsuf* saw his parents and his eleven brothers prostrating before him, he remembered his dream and said:

O my father! This is the interpretation of my dream of long ago, my Lord has indeed made it come true. He was good to me when He got me out of the prison and brought you to me from the desert after the Satan had sown dissension between me and my brothers. Surely my Lord is gentle to whom He

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pleases; He is surely the Knowing, the Wise.

¹⁰¹O my Lord! You have given me the kingdom and taught me the interpretation of the dreams. *You are the Originator of the heavens and the earth; You are my Guardian in this world and the hereafter. O my Lord! make me die a Muslim (one who submits to Allāh) and join me with the righteous people.*

¹⁰²O Muḥammad! This story of Yūsuf is from the news of the unseen (*i.e., past*) events which We reveal to you, *you could not have known this* because you were not with *the brothers* when they agreed upon their affair while they were devising a plan.

Muḥammad & the Qur'ān

¹⁰³Even if you, O Muḥammad, desire it eagerly, most of the people will not believe *in your message* ¹⁰⁴*even though* you do not ask them for a wage for it—it is nothing but a reminder for all mankind.

¹⁰⁵How many a sign of Allāh's existence there are in the heavens and the earth that they pass by, yet they turn away from it! ¹⁰⁶Most of them do not believe in Allāh, but *even if they believe*, they associate others with Him. *Why do these people ignore the signs of Allāh?* ¹⁰⁷Do they feel secure that no misfortune from Allāh's chastisement shall come upon them, or that the hour of judgment shall not come upon them suddenly while they do not perceive?!

¹⁰⁸Say, O Muḥammad, "This is my way. I call the people to Allāh. I, and whoever follows me, stand on the foundation of sure knowledge. Glory be to Allāh! And I am not one of the polytheists."

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¹⁰⁹O Muḥammad, the people should not be surprised that My messenger is a human being like them because We did not send before you an angel rather We sent men like you—from among the people of the cities—to whom We revealed Our messages. Have not these people travelled in the land so that they may see what was the out-come of those unbelievers who were before them? Certainly the abode of the hereafter is better for those who guard themselves against displeasing Allāh. Do you not understand?

Many of the past messengers strived very hard to guide their people and to warn them against Allāh's punishment. ¹¹⁰This continued until, when the messengers lost hope and thought that they were belied, Our help (i.e., chastisement) came to them and whosoever We pleased was saved while others perished because Our punishment is not averted from the guilty people.

¹¹¹In their stories (i.e., stories of the past nations and messengers) there is certainly a lesson for men of understanding. This Qur'ān is not a forged narration, rather it is a confirmation of the revelation which is before it, and a detailed statement of all things, and a guide and mercy for the people who believe.

Chapter Thirteen

SŪRATU 'R-RA'D *(The Thunder)*

(revealed at Mecca; consisting of 43 verses)

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Allāh—the Creator of the Universe

¹Alif Lām Mīm Ra.

These are the verses of the Book; and *the message* which has been revealed to you from your Lord is the truth, but *unfortunately* most of the people do not believe.

²Allāh is the One who raised up the heavens which you see without any pillars. Then He sat down upon the "throne", and made the sun and the moon subservient to *His command*. All these creations are moving up to a time appointed by Allāh.

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Allāh directs the affairs of *the universe*, making clear the signs of *creation* so that you may be certain of meeting your Lord.

³He is the one Who has stretched out the earth and placed firm mountains and *flowing* rivers in it; of all the fruits, He has made them in two kinds—*wet and dry, sweet and sour, big and small, hard and soft, some grow in winter and some in summer, some on the land and some on the trees*. He makes the night cover the day—in these *wonders of the universe* are signs for the people who reflect.

⁴In the earth, there are neighbouring tracts of *land with different productivity* and gardens of grapes, green crops, palms *some of which are twins and some are not twins (i.e., some have common roots and some not)*—all different although they are watered with one and the same water. And among the fruits, We have excelled some over others. Surely in *all* these are signs for the people who understand.

The Unbelievers of Mecca (VII)

⁵O Muḥammad, if you have to be amazed at *strange things*, then know that strange is the Meccans' saying: "What! when we have become dust *after rotting in the grave*, shall we indeed be *raised up again* in a new creation?!" These *types of people* are those who have disbelieved in their Lord, they have chains on their necks, and they are the inmates of the Fire, in it they shall abide!

Some obstinate unbelievers of Mecca used to ridicule the Prophet by saying that if you are true in your warnings about the punishment of Allāh, then we dare you to ask your God to punish us right now: ⁶They ask you, O Muḥammad, to hasten the evil (*i.e., the punishment*) before the good (*i.e., forgiveness and mercy*). But they seem to forget the examples

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of such punishments that have indeed passed before them. Do not they realize that your Lord is Possessor of forgiveness for the people in spite of their transgression, and, at the same time, He is severe in requiting. But His forgiveness comes before His anger. So instead of asking for God's mercy and forgiveness, the Meccans are asking for His punishment—that is, indeed, strange!

⁷Those who disbelieve in the Qur'ān as a sign of Muḥammad's truth, say: "Why has not a sign, other than the Qur'ān, been sent down upon him from his Lord?" Allāh answers them indirectly by saying to Muḥammad that, "You are only a warner of Allāh's punishment, and there is a guide for every people." The Prophet's only duty was to warn them; if they don't believe, then it is their problem. Muḥammad is not obliged to bring another sign for them.

Knowledge & Power of Allāh

⁸Allāh knows what every female carries in her womb, what the wombs diminish, and what they increase—everything with Him has a measure.* ⁹He is the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Great, the Exalted.

¹⁰Therefore he who conceals his saying and he who speaks out aloud among you, and also he who hides himself by the night and he who is visible by the day are all alike to Allah. ¹¹There are angels following human being, in front of him and behind him, watching over

* "What the female carries" refers to the foetus; "what the wombs diminish" refers to the absence of mensus during pregnancy; "what the wombs increase" refers to the occasional bleeding by a pregnant women. According to ḥadith, the mensus blood provides the nutrition for the foetus; and in a case where the mensus blood is more than the foetus's need, it is discarded just like mensus bleeding. For the aḥādith see the present translator's *The Ritual Ablutions for Women*, part 3.

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him *and his actions* by Allāh's command.

Surely Allāh does not change a condition of any people until they change their own condition. But, *on the other hand*, when Allāh intends evil for a people (*in response to their transgressions*), then there is nothing to turn it back; and they have no protector besides Him.

¹²He is the one Who manifests for you the lightning causing fear (*e.g., for a ship crew*) and hope (*e.g., for those suffering famine*), and produces the heavy clouds.

¹³The thunder sings His praise, and *also* the angels *do so* in awe of Him. He sends the thunderbolts and smites with them whomsoever He pleases. Yet they *still go on* disputing about Allāh. And He is mighty in power.

¹⁴To Him is due the true prayer. As for those "gods" whom *the unbelievers* call upon besides Allāh, they do not answer *their worshippers* at all. Rather *these unbelievers are* like the one who stretches out his hands towards water so that it may reach his mouth, but *the water* does not reach it. *Similarly* the prayers of the unbelievers is just lost.

¹⁵To Allāh prostrate all those who are in the heavens and the earth, willingly and unwillingly, and also their shadows *do the same*, in the mornings and the evenings.

¹⁶Say, "Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?" Say, "Allāh."

Say, "Do you then take besides Him *others* as your guardians who have no power to benefit or harm themselves?" Say, "Are the blind and the seeing man equal? Or, can the darkness be equal to the light?" Or have those *false gods* (whom they have made associates of Allāh) created *anything* like His creation, so that the creation became all alike to them *and they got confused?* Say, "Allāh is the Creator of everything, and He is the One, the Supreme God."

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The Believers & the Unbelievers

¹⁷He (*Allāh*) sends down water from the sky, then river valleys flow according to their capacity, and the torrent carries along a swelling foam—and a similar scum rises from *the material* which they melt in the fire for the purpose of *making* ornament or ware. Thus does Allāh prove the truth and the falsehood. As for the foam, it passes away uselessly, and as for *the water* which profits men, it remains in the earth. Thus does Allāh give parables. (*In the same way, faith in God benefits man even after his death; whereas the worldly wealth leaves him alone in the long journey to the eternal abode.*)

¹⁸There is the best reward for those who have answered *the call* of their Lord. But as for those who have not answered *the call* of their Lord, even if they possessed all that is in the earth and the like of it with it which they would certainly offer as ransom *against their sins*, *it shall not be accepted from them*. They are the ones who shall have the evil reckoning *on the day of judgement*, and their abode is hell—it is *certainly* an evil abode.

¹⁹What, can the person who knows that *the Qur'ān* (which has been revealed to you from your Lord) is the truth be like him who is blind? *Can a believer be like an unbeliever? No, certainly not! None will remember this except the people possessed of mind.*

The people possessed of mind are ²⁰those who fulfil the promise of Allāh, and do not break the covenant, ²¹those who join *the relationships* which Allāh has commanded to be joined, fear their Lord and are afraid of the evil reckoning *of the day of judgement*, ²²those who are patient, seeking the 'face' (*i.e., pleasure*) of their Lord, establish the prayer, spend secretly and openly *in charity* from *the wealth* which We have given them, and they repel evil *deeds* with good *deeds*.

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Those are the ones who shall have the ultimate abode, ²³the gardens of eternity which they shall enter. *They will not be alone in it.* Those who do good from among their parents, their spouses, their offsprings, *their other relatives* and the angels *also* shall enter unto them from every gate. *The angels will say:* ²⁴“Peace be upon you for being patient—how excellent is the ultimate abode!”

²⁵*But* those who break the promise of Allāh after His covenant, cut *the relationship* which Allāh has commanded to be joined, and act wickedly in the earth, they are the ones who deserve the curse of Allāh and they shall have the evil abode.

²⁶Allāh outspreads and straitens the provision. *He gives worldly provision to whomsoever He pleases.* And they, *the unbelievers,* rejoice in the present life—but this present life, in proportion to the hereafter, is nothing but a temporary enjoyment.

²⁷Those who disbelieve *in the Qur'ān as the word of Allāh,* say, “Why has not a sign, *other than the Qur'ān,* been sent down upon him from his Lord?” Say, O *Muḥammad,* “Surely Allāh leaves whomsoever He wants in error, and guides towards Himself whosoever turns *to Him, i.e.,* ²⁸those who believe and whose hearts are at rest by the remembrance of Allāh—surely by Allāh’s remembrance are the hearts at rest.

²⁹Those who believe and do good *deed,* for them shall be a good *reward* and the best destination.

³⁰And thus We have sent you, O *Muḥammad,* to a nation —before whom many nations have passed— so that you may recite to them *the messages* which We have revealed to you, and yet they disbelieve in the Beneficent God! O *Muḥammad,* say to them: “He (*the Beneficent God*) is my Lord, there is no god but He; in Him I have put my trust and to Him shall be my return.”

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The unbelievers' demand that a new sign other than the Qur'ān should be sent by Allāh found some sympathy among some believers who came to the Prophet and said that what is wrong in agreeing to their demand. Allāh revealed the following verses:

³¹Even if there had been a Qur'ān with which the mountains could be moved or the earth could be cleft or the dead could be raised to life and be made to speak, still, O Muḥammad, these unbelievers would not believe. Do not they understand that Allāh is not bound by their wishes? Rather, the command altogether is Allāh's.

And have not the believers given up all hopes about the Meccan unbelievers after knowing that if Allāh had pleased He would have guided all the people?

The unbelievers of Mecca will continue to be smitten by a calamity because of what they wrought, or, at the least, the calamity will alight near their habitation, until Allāh's promise about their final defeat comes about. Surely Allāh does not fail in His promise.

³²O Muḥammad, many messengers were indeed mocked at before you, but I did not punish the mockers immediately rather I granted respite to the mocking unbelievers, and then at the peak of their power, I seized them with surprise—how was my punishment?!

³³Is He (Allāh) who watches over and knows every soul for what it earns, to be associated with false gods who can't even help themselves?! No, never. Yet they, the unbelievers of Mecca, ascribe partners to Allāh. O Muḥammad, say: "Name them (i.e., Allāh's so-called partners)! Or, by associating the idols with Allāh, do you intend to inform Him of what He does not know in the earth?! Or is your belief in Allāh's partner just an outwardly statement without any real meaning?!"

Nay, rather their evil devising was presented to the unbelievers in favourable light, and they prevented the

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people from Allāh's way; and whomsoever Allāh leaves astray, he shall have no guide. ³⁴They shall have chastisement in the present life, and the chastisement of the hereafter is certainly more grievous—and they shall have none to protect them from Allāh.

³⁵The likeness of the Paradise which has been promised to those who guard *themselves against displeasing Allāh is as follows*: Rivers flow beneath it, and its fruits and shades are eternal—this is the ultimate *abode* of those who guard *themselves against displeasing Allāh*; and the ultimate *abode* of the unbelievers is the Fire.

³⁶O Muḥammad, *there are some among the Ahlu 'l-kitāb who rejoice in the Qur'ān which is being sent down to you; but, of course, there are some among their groups who reject some of it. Say to them: "I have only been commanded to worship Allāh and not to associate anything with Him. Towards Him I call the people, and to Him shall be my return."* ³⁷Thus We have revealed the Qur'ān as a judgement in Arabic language; and if you, O Muḥammad, follow their whims after the knowledge which has come to you, then you shall have no friend and no protector against Allāh.

³⁸We have indeed sent messengers before you, and We gave them wives and children. *They lived among their people like human beings with their families.* And it is not within the power of a messenger to bring a sign (*i.e., a miracle*) except by Allāh's permission.

Every term of death, sustenance, etc., which has been decreed by Allāh has a Book—³⁹Allāh blots out and confirms whatever He wants *in it*; and with Him is the Original Book which has His final decrees.

⁴⁰O Muḥammad, We shall either show you some of the chastisements with which We threaten the Meccan unbelievers, or We shall cause you to die before that—the decision of chastisement rests totally with Allāh. Your obliga-

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tion is only to deliver *the message*, and Ours is the reckoning of *the people's belief and deeds*.

⁴¹Do not *the unbelievers of Mecca* see how We approach the earth, diminishing it in its extremities?* *Only Allāh judges the proper time for a people's doom*—there is none to repel His judgement, He is swift in reckoning.

⁴²Those *unbelievers* who were before them had indeed devised *evil plans*, but Allāh's is the *final* devising altogether. He knows what every soul earns, and the unbelievers shall soon come to know whose will be the ultimate abode of *Paradise*.

⁴³Those who disbelieve say to *Muḥammad*, "You are not a messenger." *O Muḥammad* say, "Allāh is sufficient as a witness between me and you, and *also he* who has the knowledge of the Book.

* It means: "Do not they see how We approach the inhabitants of the earth, diminishing their increasing numbers by death and chastisement?"

Chapter Fourteen

SŪRAH IBRĀHĪM (*Abraham*)

(revealed at Mecca; consisting of 52 verses)

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The Qur'ān

¹Alif Lām Rā.

This Qur'ān is a Book which We have revealed to you, O Muḥammad, so that you may bring forth the mankind, by their Lord's permission, from the darkness towards the light—towards the path of the Mighty and the Praiseworthy ²Allāh to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth.

And woe unto the unbelievers for the severe

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chastisement; ³*the unbelievers* who prefer the present life to the hereafter, prevent *the people* from Allāh's upright way, seeking to make it crooked—they are in a great error.

⁴We did not send any messenger but with *the ability to communicate* in the language of his people so that he may clarify *God's message* for them. Allāh leaves astray whomsoever He pleases and He guides whomsoever He pleases, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.

Prophet Mūsā (V)

⁵We certainly sent Mūsā with Our signs saying, "Bring forth your people from the darkness towards the light, and remind them of the days of Allāh."* Surely in this are signs for every patient *and grateful person*.

And *remember* when Mūsā said to his people, "Remember the blessing of Allāh upon you when He delivered you from the people of Fir'awn who imposed upon you severe torment—killing your sons and sparing your women. In this was a great trial from your Lord."

⁷And *remember* when your Lord announced that, "If you be thankful *to Me*, I will surely increase *My blessings* for you; but if you be ungrateful, *then know that My chastisement* is surely severe."

⁸Mūsā said *to his people*, "If you are ungrateful, you and whosoever is in the earth altogether, *then be aware*

* All the days belong to Allāh; but in this verse, Allāh is referring to the days in which important events took place—events which demonstrated Allāh's power and glory, like the day when Nūḥ and his followers were saved, the day Mūsā was delivered, the days when Allāh punished the unbelieving nations, and the day when Allāh gave final victory to Prophet Muḥammad over the unbelievers of Mecca, etc.

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that it will in no way harm Allāh because Allāh is surely Self-sufficient and Praiseworthy."

The Messengers of God

⁹Has there not come to you the news of those who were before you *like* the people of Nūḥ, 'Ād and Thamūd, and those *nations* after them whom no one knows but Allāh?

Their messengers came to them with clear signs, but 'they thrust their hands into their mouths' (*i.e., they prevent the messengers from talking easily to the people*). They said to their messengers, "We certainly disbelieve in the message with which you have been sent; and we truly are in disquieting doubt concerning *the belief in One God* that you call us to, we truly are in disquieting doubt."

¹⁰As for the latter doubt about the One God, their messengers said, "Is there any doubt about Allāh, the Originator of the heavens and the earth?! He is calling you so that He may forgive your sins for you and defer your death to the final term."*

The *unbelievers* said, "You are nothing but human beings like us—if you can receive God's message we should also be able to do so, and as we don't receive such messages therefore you are just liars; you seek to prevent us from what our fathers worshipped. If you are true then bring us a clear evidence, for example, a miracle."

¹¹Their messengers said to them, "We surely are nothing but human beings like you, but Allāh bestows His favour (*i.e., prophethood and messengership*) upon whomsoever He pleases from among His servants. As

* "...so that He may defer you to the final term" means 'so that He may let you live your life up to its normal span and not cause your early death by chastisement, etc.'

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for a miracle, it is not *right* for us to bring an evidence to you except by Allāh's permission.

"The believers should put all their trust in Allāh. ¹²And why should we not put all our trust in Allāh seeing that He has already guided us to our ways? We will surely patiently bear howsoever you persecute us. Those who need to trust should put all their trust in Allāh."

¹³Those who disbelieved said to their messengers: "Either we will surely expel you from our land, or you will certainly come back into our religion."

Upon this threat, their Lord revealed to the messengers that, "We will surely destroy the unjust people ¹⁴and certainly We will settle you in the land after them—this is for a person who fears My power and fears My threat."

¹⁵The messengers sought for Allāh's assistance; and when their prayer was accepted, every insolent tyrant was disappointed—¹⁶beyond him is the Hell; and in it he will be made to drink from the watery pus, ¹⁷he will gulp it but it will not be easy to swallow; he will feel as if death is coming to him from every side, yet he will not die; and still beyond him is a harsh chastisement.

¹⁸The parable of the deeds of those who disbelieve in their Lord is like ashes on which the wind blows violently on a stormy day, they have no power over anything that they have earned—this is, indeed, the great error!

¹⁹Do not you see that Allāh has created the heavens and the earth with truth, *i.e.*, with purpose? If He pleases, He can put you away and bring a new creation in your place; ²⁰and that is not at all difficult for Allāh.

²¹On the day of judgement, the unbelievers shall come forth unto Allāh altogether; then the weak (*the followers*) will say to those who were arrogant (*the leaders*): "We surely were your followers in rejecting the messengers; can you therefore now help us against the chastisement of

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Allāh in any way?" *The leaders* said, "If God had guided us, we too would have guided you. Now it is same for us whether we regret or bear *the consequences* patiently—there is no place of refuge for us."

²²When the fate of the unbelievers will be decided, *they will start blaming the Shayṭān for misleading them*. The Shayṭān will say: "Certainly Allāh promised you *through His messengers* a true promise; and I *also* promised you but failed to keep *my promise* to you. And *remember that* I had no power over you, however I called you and you answered me *with your free will*. So do not blame me, but blame yourselves. I cannot call you for help, neither can you call me for help. I certainly reject your associating me with Allāh aforetime."

Surely the unjusts shall have a painful chastisement.

²³Those who believe and do good deeds will be admitted into the gardens of *Paradise*, beneath which rivers flow; they shall abide in it by the permission of their Lord; their greeting therein shall be "salām" (peace).

²⁴Have you not 'seen' how Allāh gave a parable of a good word? A good word (*i.e., Islam*) is like a good tree—its roots are firm and its branches are in heaven, ²⁵it bears its fruit every season by the permission of its Lord. Allāh gives parables for the mankind so that they may remember.

²⁶The parable of an evil word (*i.e., kufr*) is like a bad tree—it is uprooted from the earth's surface, it has no stability.

²⁷Allāh confirms those who believe with the firm

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word, in the present life and in the hereafter; and Allāh leads the unjust astray—Allāh does what He pleases. (*That is, Allāh strengthens the faith of those who believe, and He leaves the obstinate unbeliever in error.*)

²⁸Have you not seen those *leaders of the past and the present nations* who changed *the gratefulness of Allāh's blessing* into ungratefulness and made their people to settle in the abode of ruin, ²⁹the Hell? They shall enter it—it is *surely* an evil resting-place. ³⁰They set up partners for Allāh so that they may mislead *the people* from His *rightful way*. O Muḥammad, say: "Enjoy yourselves in this worldly life! Your final destination is surely the Fire."

³¹O Muḥammad, say to My servants who believe that they should establish prayer and spend *in charity* from *the wealth* which We have given them, secretly and openly before the day comes in which there shall be neither bargaining nor befriending.

³²Allāh is He who created the heavens and the earth, and send down the water from the sky with which He brought forth fruits as a sustenance for you. He made the ships subservient to you so that they may flow in the sea with His command. He made the rivers subservient to you, ³³and He made the sun and the moon — which are persistent *upon their course*— subservient to you, and He made the night and the day subservient to you. ³⁴*In short*, He gave you of all that you asked Him. If you count Allāh's blessings, *they are so many that you will never be able to number them—but still man is very unjust and very ungrateful!*

Prophet Ibrāhīm (II)

Ibrāhīm had left his wife and an infant child (Ismā'īl) in a barren desert which later became the city of Mecca. When

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he returned to them from Palestine, He prayed to Allāh for the safety of the city of Mecca and his family.

³⁵And remember when Ibrāhīm said in his prayers:
O my Lord! Make this city secure,
and keep me and my son away from worshipping the
idols. ³⁶O my Lord! I ask you to keep us away from the
idols because they have surely caused many of the
people to go astray.* And whoever follows me, then
he is surely of me, and whoever disobeys me,** then
his affair is with You as You are the Forgiving, the
Merciful.

³⁷O my Lord! I have settled some of my offspring
in a valley which is not capable of cultivation, near
Your Sacred House. O our Lord, I have settled them
there so that they may establish prayer, therefore
please make the hearts of the people incline towards
them; and provide them with fruits, haply they will
be grateful to You.

³⁸O our Lord! You know what we hide and what
we make known by our speech. Nothing from the
earth nor from the heaven is hidden from Allāh.

³⁹Praise be to Allāh, who has given me Ismā'īl and
Ishāq inspite of my old age. Most surely My Lord
hears the prayer.

⁴⁰My Lord! Make me perform the prayer, and also
of my offspring. O our Lord, and accept my prayer.

⁴¹O our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and the
believers upon the day when the reckoning shall
come to pass!

* The act of misleading has been attributed to the idols because of the close relationship between idol-worshipping and being led astray.

** By saying that those who follow him are of him and those who disobey him are not of him, Ibrāhīm is actually defining the words "my sons" in verse 35.

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The Day of Judgement (III)

⁴²Do not *ever* think that Allāh is heedless of what the unjust do; He is only deferring *their punishment* to a day when the eyes shall be staring *straight*, ⁴³when they shall be walking with protruded necks and erect heads, their glances never reverting on themselves, and their hearts will be empty.

⁴⁴O *Muḥammad*, warn the people of the day when the chastisement shall come upon them, then those who were unjust will say: "O our Lord! Defer *our punishment* to a near term, and *during this period* we shall answer Your call and follow the messengers." *At that time, Allāh will say:*

"What! Did you not swear before that there shall be no end *to your life*? ⁴⁵And *did you not* dwell in the cities of those who were unjust to themselves *and were punished*; and *therefore* it became clear to you how We dealt with them. We made *them* examples for you. ⁴⁶And *remember* they had devised their plan *just like you*, but their plan was known to Allāh *therefore He easily defeated it* even though their devising were such that the mountains could be moved *from their place*."

⁴⁷Therefore do not think that Allāh will fail in His promise to His messengers *about punishing the unjust*. Allāh is surely All-mighty *and Vengeful*, ⁴⁸*especially* on the day when the earth shall be changed into other than the earth, and the heavens *likewise*; and they shall come forth unto Allāh, the One, the Supreme.

⁴⁹On that day *of judgement*, you will see the guilty people bond together in chains, ⁵⁰their shirts will be *made* of pitch, and the fire shall cover their faces, ⁵¹so that Allāh may recompense every soul for *the sins* that it earned. Allāh surely is swift in reckoning.

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⁵²This *Qur'ān* is a message for the people so that they may be warned by it *about the hereafter*, and so that they may know that He is One God, and that the *people* possessed of mind may remember.

Chapter Fifteen

SŪRAHTU 'L-ḤIJR *(The Rock)*

(revealed at Mecca, consisting of 99 verses)

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

¹Alif Lām Rā.

These are the verses of the Book and *of* the clear Qur'ān.

PART FOURTEEN

The Unbelievers of Mecca (VIII)

²*A time will come when* perhaps those who disbelieve

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will wish that they had become Muslims. ³O *Muḥammad*, leave them to eat and enjoy *in worldly pleasures*, and be amused by *their vain hope*. Soon they will come to know *about their outcome*.

⁴We never destroyed a city, but that it had a decreed term of *doom*. ⁵No nation will be able to put its doom forward nor will they be able to delay *it*.

⁶The Meccan unbelievers said, "O you to whom the Reminder (*i.e., the Qur'ān*) has been revealed! You surely are insane. ⁷Why do you not bring us the angels *as a proof* if you really are from the truthful ones?"

Replying to them, Allāh says, ⁸"We do not send the angels but with the truth (*i.e., the final verdict*), and if people still do not believe then they are not given respite.

⁹"We indeed have revealed the Reminder, and We shall most surely be its Guardian."

¹⁰O *Muḥammad*, do not be disappointed by the unbelievers, because We sent many messengers before you among the ancient nations—¹¹never did a messenger come to them but that they mocked at him. Nevertheless, My message was carried on. ¹²In the same way, We shall make *the truth* enter into the hearts of the guilty people, although We know that ¹³they will not believe in it *in spite of the example of ancient people that has already passed before them*.

O *Muḥammad*, they are asking for angels as proof of your truthfulness, but be sure that ¹⁴even if We open a gateway in the heaven for them so that they may continue to ascend into it, yet they would say, "Surely our eyes have been inebriated, nay, we are a bewitched people!"

Allāh—the Creator of the Universe

¹⁶We have made constellations *for the sun and the moon* in the heaven, and We have decorated it *with stars*

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for the beholders, ¹⁷and We guard it against every accursed Satan ¹⁸except the one who listened stealthily *to the heavenly talks of the angels*, therefore a manifest flame pursued him.

¹⁹The earth—We stretched it, and placed firm mountains on it, and therein We caused every thing to grow in a proper measure. ²⁰And in it We appointed subsistence for you and *the other creatures* whom you do not provide for.

²¹*In short*, there is nothing but that with Us are its treasures—and We do not send it down but according to a decreed measure.

²²We send the winds as pollinators *of the plants*, then We send down water from the clouds so that We may give it to you to drink; and you are not able to preserve it.

²³Surely it is Us who give life and cause death, and We are the inheritors *of the universe*. ²⁴We know those who have passed before you, and We certainly know those who will come later on. ²⁵Your Lord will gather them altogether; surely He is Wise, Knowing.

Creation of Adam

²⁶We certainly created *the first man, i.e., Adam*, from a clay of moulded mud; ²⁷and *as for the jinn*, We created him before *man* from the hot fire.

²⁸When your Lord *intended to create Adam*, He said to the angels, "I am going to create a human being from a clay of moulded mud. ²⁹So when I have shaped him and breathed My spirit into him, *I want you to fall down in prostration before him.*"

³⁰When Adam came to life with Allāh's spirit, the angels prostrated themselves all together ³¹except Iblīs, *the Satan*—he refused to be among those who prostrated

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themselves *before Adam*.

³²Allāh said, "O Iblīs! What is the matter with you that you do not want to be among those who prostrated themselves *before Adam?!"*

³³Iblīs said, "I would never prostrate myself before a human being whom You have created from a clay of moulded mud—I *am better than him.*"

³⁴Allāh said, "You *have disobeyed Me*, therefore get out of this *heavenly station* because you are accursed!
³⁵Upon you shall be the curse till the day of judgement!"

³⁶Iblīs said, "O Merciful Lord! I have served you for so long, so please respite me till the day when they are raised up *after their death.*"

³⁷Allāh said, "You are among the respited ones ³⁸till the day whose time is known *only to Me.*"

³⁹Iblīs said, "O my Lord! As You have perverted me, I will certainly present *the evil deeds* in a favourable light to them in the earth, and I will certainly mislead them all together ⁴⁰except the devoted servants of Your's from among them."

⁴¹Allāh said, "It is upon Me *to keep* this path —*the path of total submission to the will of God*— straight. ⁴²As for My servants, you have no power over them except those who follow you from among the misled *people.*"
⁴³Surely the promised place of them all is Hell ⁴³which has seven gates; a *separate group of unbelievers* shall be assigned to each gate.

⁴⁵Those who guard *themselves against displeasing Allāh* shall be in the midst of gardens and fountains of the *Paradise*. ⁴⁶They will be welcomed by the angels: "Enter the *gardens* in peace and security!" ⁴⁷We shall remove all hatred that is in their hearts; *they shall become* as brothers

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seating face to face upon the raised couches; ⁴⁸therein no fatigue shall overcome them, nor shall they ever be driven out from there.

⁴⁹O *Muḥammad*, tell My servants that I am the Most Forgiving, the Merciful God, *but at the same time, they should know that* ⁵⁰My punishment is the painful punishment.

Prophet Ibrāhīm (III)

⁵¹O *Muḥammad*, tell them about the guests of Ibrāhīm. (*The guests were the three angels who came to Ibrāhīm in human form.*)

⁵²When the angels entered upon Ibrāhīm, they said, "Peace be upon you."

When he sat down to eat with them, he said, "We are afraid of you." (*see p. 000*)

⁵³They said, "Do not be afraid, we have come to give the good tidings of a knowledgeable boy."

⁵⁴He said, "What! You give me good tidings though the old age has already come upon me? What good tidings are you giving me?"

⁵⁵They said, "We have given you a true good tiding, therefore do not be one of those who despair."

⁵⁶He said, "Of course, I am not despaired of Allāh's blessings! Who can despair of his Lord's mercy except those who have gone astray. I am just surprised at this good tiding because of my old age." Ibrāhīm realized that this good tidings could not have been the only reason for this visit by the angels, therefore ⁵⁷he said, "Then what is your main concern in this visit, O the messengers of God?"

⁵⁸They said, "We have been sent to the guilty peo-

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ple of Lūṭ with orders to root them out ⁵⁹except the family of Lūṭ, we shall surely deliver them all ⁶⁰except his wife—we know that she shall be among those who will remain behind *in the city.*”

Prophet Lūṭ (III)

⁶¹When the messengers of Allāh came to the family of Lūṭ, ²he said, “You people are unknown to me.”

⁶³They said, “Nay, but we have come to you with the chastisement concerning which your people were doubting; ⁶²we have come to you with the truth, and surely we are truthful. ⁶⁵Therefore go forth with your family in a part of the night, and you yourself follow after them; and no one from you should turn around to look at the city. Go forth as you have been commanded.”

⁶⁶And We revealed to him the decree that the roots of these people shall be cut off in the morning.

⁶⁷When the news of the handsome young guests of Prophet Lūṭ spread around, the people of the city came rejoicingly towards them with evil intentions.

⁶⁸Lūṭ said, “These people are my guests, therefore please do not disgrace me by trying to fulfill your evil urges through them; ⁶⁹fear Allāh and do not dishonour me.”

⁷⁰They said, “Have we not forbidden you from interfering with the people?”

⁷¹As a last resort, Lūṭ said, “These are my daughters, marry them and fulfill your urge if you must do what you want to do.”

⁷²O Muḥammad, I swear by your life that because of their evil deeds they wandered blindly in their inebriety.

⁷³So the rumbling of the earthquake seized them at the sunrise. ⁷⁴We turned the city upside down and showered them with stones of baked clay.

⁷⁵In this chastisement of Lūṭ's city are signs for those

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who examine *it* closely, ⁷⁶and it is on a road which still exists. ⁷⁷Surely there is a sign in it for the believers.

⁷⁸The dwellers of the Aykah* were surely unjust, ⁷⁹so We took revenge from them. And both of them — *the cities of Lūt and the Aykah*— are upon a clear roadway *between Madinah and Damascus*.

⁸⁰The dwellers of the Hijr** certainly rejected the messengers of God, ⁸¹and We gave them Our signs, but they turned away from them.

⁸²They hewed the mountains to make houses to be secure *from natural and divine afflictions*. ⁸³Then the rumbling of the earthquake seized them in the morning; ⁸⁴and what they had earned *in their worldly life* did not avail them *of anything*.

The Conclusion

⁸⁵We have not created the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them but with the truth, *i.e., with a purpose*. And the hour of judgement is surely to come. So, O Muḥammad, turn away from the unbelievers with a gracious pardoning. ⁸⁶Surely your Lord is the Creator, the Knowing.

⁸⁷We have certainly given you seven *verses* of the oft-repeated *chapter* (*i.e., sūratu 'l-fātiḥah*), and the whole glorious Qur'ān.

⁸⁸O Muḥammad, do not turn your eyes towards *the material blessings* which We have given to some groups of the unbelievers to enjoy *in this world*, and do not be sad

* "Aykah" means thicket, forest. The dwellers of the Aykah were the people of Prophet Shu'ayb.

** "Hijr" means stone. The dwellers of the Hijr were the Thamūd, the people of Prophet Ṣāliḥ. They lived in houses that had been hewed out in the mountains, and thus the name "dwellers of the Stone".

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for them. *Rather* make yourself more accessible to the believers.

⁸⁹O *Muḥammad*, say, "I surely am a plain warner of Allāh's punishment." A punishment will come upon the unbelievers just ⁹⁰like what We sent upon those who divided the revelations among themselves and ⁹¹tore the Qur'ān to shreds.

⁹²So, by your Lord, We shall surely question all of them ⁹³about what they were doing; ⁹⁴therefore, O *Muḥammad*, you just announce what you have been commanded to announce, and turn away from the polytheists.

⁹⁵We surely suffice you against the mockers ⁹⁶who set up another god besides Allāh. They shall soon know their outcome. ⁹⁷We know indeed that your heart is straitened by what they say about you, but do not be grieved because We know whatever they are doing and We will surely punish them.

⁹⁸So sing the praise of your Lord, and be of those who prostrate themselves to Him, ⁹⁹and serve your Lord until the certain death comes to you.

Chapter Sixteen

SŪRATU 'N-NAḤL *(The Bee)*

(revealed at Mecca; consisting of 128 verses)

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Allāh—the Creator of the Universe

¹Allāh's command (*i.e., the chastisement*) is surely to come, therefore, *O the unbelievers of Mecca*, do not seek to hasten it. Glory be to Him, and He is highly exalted above *the idols whom they associate with Him*.

²He sends the angels with inspiration by His command upon whomsoever He pleases from among His servants, saying: "Announce *to the mankind* that there is no god but Me, therefore guard yourselves *against displeasing Me*."

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³He created the heavens and the earth with the truth, *i.e.*, a purpose. He is highly exalted above what they associate *with Him*.

⁴He created the human being from a drop of sperm, and lo! he has become an open adversary.

⁵He created the cattle; in them *and their hides* is warmth and benefits for you, and of them you eat.

⁶There is beauty in them for you when you let them rest *after a day's work* and when you let them graze freely.

⁷They *also* carry your loads to cities which you could not reach except with great difficulty. Your Lord is indeed Compassionate *and Merciful because He has also created for you* ⁸horses, mules, and asses so that you may ride upon them, and *it is also* an adornment for you. And He creates *many other things which benefit you but which you do not know*.

⁹It is upon Allāh to keep the path straight, but *of course* there are some *paths* which are deviating from the right direction; if He had wished, He would certainly have guided you altogether.

¹⁰He is the one who sends down water for you from the clouds; from it is *your* drink, and by it *grows* the trees upon which you pasture *your* cattle. ¹¹Through it He *also* causes the crops, the olives, the palms, the grapes and all types of fruits to grow. In this is a sign for a people who reflect.

¹²He has made the night, the day, the sun and the moon subservient for you, and the stars have *also* been made subservient by His command. In this are signs for the people who think.

¹³*In short*, He has created various *things of different colours* that are in the earth for you. In this is a sign for the people who remember.

¹⁴He is the one who has made the sea subservient so that you may eat fresh meat *of fish* from it, you may

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bring forth from it ornaments which you wear, and you see the ships plowing in it so that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may be grateful *to Him*.

¹⁵He has cast firm mountains on the earth lest it shake violently with you. And *He has also made* rivers and roads so that you may be guided aright; ¹⁶and *for the same purpose, He has also made* many waymarks. And many *travellers* find the way by the stars.

¹⁷Then is He (*Allāh*) who creates like him (*idol*) who does not create?! Do you not then remember *such a simple fact*.

¹⁸If you count Allāh's blessings, *they are so many that* you will never be able to number them. Allāh surely is Forgiving *and* Merciful. ¹⁹Allāh knows what you conceal *in your hearts* and what you display *by your actions*.

²⁰Those *idols* whom they call upon besides Allāh do not create anything, rather they themselves are created; ²¹they are dead, not alive *at all*. And they, *the polytheists*, do not know when they shall be raised.

The Unbelievers of Mecca (IX)

All these blessings are sufficient to prove that ²²Your God is only One God. But those who do not believe in the hereafter, their hearts are denying *the truth*, and therefore they are arrogant. ²³Certainly Allāh knows what they conceal *in their hearts* and what they display *by their actions*. He surely does not like the arrogant *people*.

When outsiders inquired about Muḥammad's revelation from the Meccan unbelievers, they tried to mislead them: ²⁴When it is said to them, "What is it that your Lord has revealed *to Muḥammad?*" They say, "Stories of the ancient *people*." *They say so to mislead others.* ²⁵On the day of judgement, let them bear their own full burden of sins and also some burden of those whom they lead

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astray without any knowledge. How evil is the load of sins which they bear!

The Meccans should realize that they are not the first to disbelieve and mislead others. ²⁶Those who were before them, indeed, devised *similar* plans; but then Allāh demolished their building from the foundations, so that the roof fell down on them from over them. The chastisement came to them from where they were not *even* aware. ²⁷Then on the day of judgement, Allāh will disgrace them by saying, "Where are My *so-called* partners for whose sake you rebelled *against My messengers?*"

And those who had been given knowledge (*i.e., the believers*) will say, "Surely today disgrace and evil are upon the unbelievers." ²⁸*These unbelievers* are those whom the angels caused to die while they were being unjust to themselves. Then *at the time of death*, they surrender themselves to Allāh by saying, "We were not doing anything evil!" *The angels will say*, "Nay, surely Allāh knows what you were doing!" ²⁹So enter the gates of Hell, to abide in it." Evil is the abode of the arrogant people.

³⁰When it is said to those who guard *themselves against displeasing Allāh (the muttaqīn)*, "What has your Lord revealed upon Muḥammad?" They say, "Good!" There is good *reward* for those who do good in this world; and, *of course*, the abode of the hereafter is better. Surely the *final* abode of the muttaqīn is excellent—³¹they shall enter the gardens of Paradise, beneath which rivers flow; in it they shall have whatsoever they wish. Thus does Allāh reward the muttaqīn ³²whom the angels cause to die while they are pure *from sins*, saying, "Peace be upon you; enter the Paradise for what you were doing."

³³O Muḥammad, do the Meccan unbelievers expect nothing but that the angels should come to them *with chastisement*, or that your Lord's command *about the day*

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of judgement should come to pass? *Their obstinacy is not a surprise*, those who were before them did the same. *By punishing them Allāh did not treat them unjustly, rather they were unjust to themselves.* ³⁴Therefore the evil consequences of their deeds afflicted them, and they were encompassed by *the chastisement* which they were mocking at.

³⁵The idolators say, "If Allāh had willed, we would not have worshipped any thing other than Him, neither we nor our fathers; nor would we have forbidden any thing without *orders from Him!*" *O Muḥammad*, this is not a new excuse for their refusal to accept the truth; those who were before them did the same. Is there anything upon the messengers except the clear conveying of the message?! ³⁶We have certainly raised a messenger in every nation *with the message saying: "Worship Allāh and shun the ṭāghūt."** *The past nations were no different from the Meccans: some among them were those whom Allāh had guided, and there were others among them who deserved the error. Therefore travel on the earth, observe the history and remains of their "civilization" and behold what was the eventual outcome of those who rejected God's message.*

³⁷Even if you, *O Muḥammad*, are bent on guiding them, but Allāh certainly does not guide him who has *arrogantly* gone astray and they shall have no helpers on the day of judgement.

³⁸They have sworn by Allāh the most earnest oaths that Allāh will not raise up a person who dies. Nay, *He will indeed raise all after their death!* It is a promise binding upon Him; but most people do not know. ³⁸*He will raise them from death so that He may show to them the day of judgement* about which they were disputing, and

* See the note under 2:256

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so that the unbeliever may know that they were liars.
³⁹*Do not under-estimate Our power; when We desire a thing, the only word which We say to it is "Be," and it comes to exist.*

⁴¹*Those early Muslims who migrate from Mecca in the cause of Allāh after they were oppressed, We shall surely settle them excellently in this world; and the reward of the hereafter is even greater—if they only knew!* ⁴²*This is for those who bear patience and put their trust in their Lord.*

⁴³*O Muḥammad, the Meccans idolators should realize that We did not send any one before you, except men like yourself to whom We revealed Our messages. O Meccans: Ask the people of remembrance (i.e., those who know the past), if you do not know.* ⁴⁴*We sent Our messengers with the clear arguments and the scriptures. And We revealed to you the Reminder (the Qur'ān) so that you may explain to the people what has been sent down for them, and so that they may reflect.*

⁴⁵*Do those who commit evil deeds cunningly feel secure that Allāh will not make them sink into the ground, or that the chastisement will not come from where they do not perceive,* ⁴⁶*or that He will not seize them in their free movements on the earth—but surely if He seizes them, they shall not be able to escape—* ⁴⁷*or that He will not seize them by causing them to fear?! Your Lord is surely Compassionate, Merciful.*

⁴⁸*Do not the Meccan idolators see all the things that Allāh has created—casting their shadows to the right and*

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the left, prostrating before Allāh in all humbleness? ⁴⁹To Allāh prostrate whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth from among the creatures; and the angels *also do the same* and they do not display arrogance, ⁵⁰*rather* they fear their Lord above them and do whatever they are commanded.

⁵¹Allāh said, "Do not take two gods, He is but One God, *and that One God is Me*; therefore of Me alone should you fear." ⁵²Whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him, and the *right* religion is only His. So will you fear other than Allāh?!

⁵³Whatever blessings you have is from Allāh. Moreover when the affliction touches you, you pray frequently to Him; ⁵⁴and when He removes the affliction from you, then a group from among you associate others to their Lord ⁵⁵so that they may be ungrateful for what We have given them. Therefore, *enjoy in your worldly pleasures as much as you want*, for soon you will know *your final and evil abode*.

⁵⁶Out of *the blessings* which We have given them, *the idolators* set aside a portion for *a cause* which they do not know. * By Allāh, you shall be questioned about what you were forging.

The pre-Islamic Arabs regarded daughters as a sign of disgrace. But these very people, in order to ridicule the True God, used to ascribe daughters to Him. Allah says: ⁵⁷They ascribe daughters to Allāh—glory be to Him! *He is above the need of any child. And as for themselves, they wanted to have sons that they desire.*

⁵⁸And when any of them is given the good news of a *new born* daughter, his face turns black, he is filled

* See 6:137.

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with anger, ⁵⁹and he hides himself from the people because of the evil of the news which was given to him. He wonders whether he should keep her with disgrace, or bury her *alive* in the dust? Oh! how evil was their judgement!

⁶⁰Those who disbelieve in the hereafter, their's is an evil example; and Allāh's is the loftiest example, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.

⁶¹If Allāh were to punish the people *immediately* for their transgressions, He would not leave a *single* creature on *the earth*; but He defers them to the final term of *their death*, and when their term comes they shall neither be able to delay it by a single hour nor shall they be able to put it forward.

⁶²The Meccans ascribe to Allāh *the daughters* which they themselves dislike while their tongues describe the lie that they shall have the good, *i.e., sons*. Certainly they shall have the Fire, and they shall be sent *into it* before *others*.

⁶³By Allāh, We sent *messengers* to the nations before you, *O Muḥammad*, but the Satan presented their *evil* deeds to them in a favourable light, and therefore he is their leader today; and *in the hereafter* there is a painful chastisement for them.

⁶⁴We have not revealed the Book upon you but that you may explain to them *the truth* concerning which they differ, and *as* a guidance and a mercy for the people who believe.

The Blessings of Allāh

Water: ⁶⁵Allāh sent down the water from the cloud

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and thus revived the earth after its 'death'; in this surely there is a sign for the people who listen.

Milk: ⁶⁶Surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle: We give you to drink of what is in their bellies — from between *the intestine which holds the filth and the blood vessels*— pure milk, easy to swallow for those who drink.

Drinks: ⁶⁷And from the fruits of the palms and the grapes, you make intoxicating *drinks* and *other* goodly provision—surely there is a sign for the people who understand.

Honey: ⁶⁸Your Lord revealed *in His creative command* to the bees, saying: Make houses out of the mountains, and out of the trees and *the hive that the people build for you*; ⁶⁹and eat of all the fruits, and then take the ways of your Lord *back to your house* gently.

A drink of diverse hues —*honey*— comes out of their bellies, in it is healing *effect* for the people. Surely there is a sign in this for the people who reflect.

Life: ⁷⁰Allāh has created you, and then He will cause you to die. *Some will die at middle age*, while *others* among you will be returned back to the vilest *state of life*—*senility and decrepity*, at that age he may not know anything after having knowledge of *some many things*. In short, *your life and death is not in your power, rather it is in Allāh's power*; surely Allāh is Knowing, Powerful.

⁷¹Allāh has made some of you excel in provision over the others. But those who are excelled do not give away their provision to their slaves, so that they may be equal in it. What, do they deny Allāh's blessings?

Wife & Children: ⁷²Allāh has made for you wives from yourselves and has given sons and grandsons from your wives, and He has provided you with the good *things*.

What, do they believe in the falsehood, and are they

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ungrateful for the blessings of Allāh? ⁷³They worship besides Allāh *the idols* that do not possess for them any thing of the provision from the heavens and the earth, nor are they capable of such a thing.

⁷⁴Therefore do not give examples to Allāh; surely Allāh knows while you do not know. ⁷⁵It is Allāh who has given a parable: Consider on one hand a slave, possessed by his master, he cannot do anything; while, on the other hand, a person to whom We have given from Ourselves a good provision, he expends in charity from it secretly and openly. Are they equal? Surely not; so praise be to Allāh! Nay, most of them do not know.

⁷⁶Allāh has given a parable: Consider two persons, one of them is dumb, not capable of anything and he is a burden on his master—wherever he sends him, he brings no good. Can he be equal to a person who bids others to justice and he himself is on the right path?

⁷⁷The unseen beings in the heavens and the earth belong to Allāh.

And the matter of the hour of resurrection is nothing but like a twinkling of the eye, or even faster than that. Surely Allāh has power over all things.

Knowledge Faculties: ⁷⁸Allāh has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers while you did not know anything; then He gave you the hearing, the sight, the other senses, and the minds so that you may be able to gain knowledge through them and that you may thank Him.

⁷⁹Do not they see the birds suspended high above

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in the sky? Nothing holds them but Allāh. Surely in this are signs for the people who believe.

House:⁸⁰Allāh has made a part of your houses as a resting-abode for you.

Cattle: And from the skins of the cattle, He has made tents for you which you carry away easily on the day of your trekking and on the day of your settling down. And of their wool, their fur, and their hair *He has provided you with furniture and other necessities of life for a fixed period of time.*

Shadows: ⁸¹Allāh has made shadows *and coverings* for you from *the various things —the night, the mountains, the trees, the houses, etc—* that He has created.

And He has made refuges for you from the mountains.

Garments: And He has made garments for you to protect you from the heat, and *also* coats of mail to protect you in your fighting.

Thus does Allāh complete His blessings upon you so that you may submit yourselves *to Him.* ⁸²*O Muḥammad, if they submit after seeing all these blessings of Allāh, then they will surely be successful; but if they turn away from submission to Allāh, then do not worry for them because upon you is only the clear conveying of the message.* ⁸³They recognize the blessings of Allāh, yet they deny it; surely most of them are ungrateful.

The Day of Judgement (IV)

⁸⁴On the day *of judgement* when We shall raise up a witness from every nation, no permission shall be given to those who disbelieve *to disrupt the testimony,* nor shall they be troubled *to please their Lord (i.e., they shall not get a second chance to become obedient servants of Allāh).* ⁸⁵And when those who were unjust shall see the

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chastisement of *Fire*, it shall not be lightened for them nor shall they be given respite.

⁸⁶When the idolators shall see their *so-called associates of Allāh*, they shall say, "O our Lord! these are those whom we called upon besides You." *Their gods* will direct the reply to them: "You surely are liars!" ⁸⁷On that day, *the unbelievers* will surrender *themselves* to Allāh; and what they were forging *against Allāh* shall go away from them.

⁸⁸As for the leaders of those who disbelieve and prevent *the people* from Allāh's way, We shall increase their chastisement over *and above* the *normal* chastisement of *the unbelievers* because of their transgressing.

⁸⁹On the day of judgement when We shall raise up in every nation a witness against them from among themselves, *then* We shall bring you, O *Muḥammad*, as a witness for those *witnesses*; and that is why We have revealed to you the Book as a means of explaining everything, and as a guidance, a mercy and a good tiding for those who submit themselves to Allāh (*Muslims*).

On Promise & Oath

⁹⁰Surely Allāh bids justice, doing good to others, and giving *alms* to relatives; and He forbids indecency, evil *deeds*, and rebellion—He is admonishing you, so that you may remember *these important socio-ethical pillars of human society*.

⁹¹Fulfil the promise *made in the name* of Allāh when you make promise *to others*, and do not break the oaths after confirming them *because* you have made Allāh your surety; surely Allāh knows what you do.

⁹²Do not be like a woman who tears her yarn after spinning *it* strongly—you take your oaths as deceit bet-

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ween yourselves *just because* one group *among you* is more numerous than another group! (Allāh is only trying you by this *law*; and on the day of resurrection, He will certainly make clear to you about what you were differing.) ⁹³If Allāh had willed, He would have made you *all* a single nation, but *He did not will so instead* He 'leads' astray whomsoever He pleases and guides whomsoever he pleases; and surely you will be questioned *on the day of judgement* about the things you were doing *in this world*.

⁹⁴Do not take your oaths as a means of deceit between yourselves, lest a foot should slip after its steadiness, *lest* you should taste the evil *chastisement* because you turned away from Allāh's way, and *lest* you should have a grievous chastisement.

⁹⁵Do not sell the promise *made in the name* of Allāh at a very low price; surely what is with Allāh is better for you, did you but know. ⁹⁶Whatever *from the material possessions and relations* is with you will come to an end, but whatever *from your good deeds* is with Allāh will last *for ever*. And to those who were patient, We shall surely recompense their reward for the best of what they were doing *in this world*.

Man & Woman—Equal in Faith & Deed

⁹⁷Whosoever does good —be it a male or a female— as long as he *or she* is a believer, We shall surely make him *or her* live a good *spiritual life in this world* and We shall certainly recompense them their reward *in the hereafter* for the best of what they were doing.

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⁹⁸When you *begin to* recite the Qur'ān, seek refuge

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in Allāh from the accursed Satan.* ⁹⁹Surely he, *the Satan*, has no power over those who believe and put their *complete* trust in their Lord; ¹⁰⁰*rather* his power is only over those who take him as their master and those who associate *him* with Allāh.

¹⁰¹When We exchange (*i.e.*, *abrogate*) *command* of a verse in the place of another verse —and Allāh knows best what He reveals— the *Meccans* say, “You are just a forger!” No! *They are wrong*, but most of them do not know *the wisdom of abrogating the command of a verse and replacing it with another*. ¹⁰²O *Muḥammad*, say to them: “The Holy Spirit (*i.e.*, *Jibrā’īl*) has revealed it from your Lord with the truth so that it may confirm *the faith* of those who believe, and *it is* a guidance and a good tiding for those who submit themselves to Allāh (*muslimīn*).”

¹⁰³O *Muḥammad*, We surely know that they say about you: ‘Only a human being is teaching him.’ *But are they fools?! Don’t they realize that the language of the person towards whom they lean in their accusation is non-Arabic, whereas this Qur’ān is in clear Arabic language? (So how can a non-Arab teach Muḥammad —upon whom be peace— such eloquent and excellent Qur’ānic Arabic which could not be surpassed by the most capable men of the pre-Islamic era!)*

Allāh reveals the Qur’ān to *Muḥammad* and guides him; ¹⁰⁴*as for* those who do not believe in His signs, Allāh will surely not guide them, and they shall have a painful chastisement *in the hereafter*. ¹⁰⁵*Muḥammad is not a forger; only those who do not believe in the signs of Allāh forge the lie, and they surely are the liars.*

* It is on basis of this verse that all Muslims start the recitation of the Qur’ān with: “*A’ūdhu bi’l lāhi mina ‘sh-Shayṭāni ‘r-rajīm* = I seek refuge in Allāh from the accursed Satan.”

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Imān—a spiritual reality, not a verbal statement

When ridiculing, bribing, and excommunicating proved useless against the Muslims of early days of Islam, the leaders of the Meccan unbelievers resorted to physical torture.

Among those tortured Muslims were Yāsir, his wife Sumayyah and their son 'Ammār. Abu Jahl, with the help of other unbelievers, started torturing the whole family mercilessly. 'Ammār was tied to a pole and forced to see the sufferings of his parents who were tied by their hands and feet to the ground. When Yāsir and Sumayyah refused to denounce Muḥammad and his message under such severe torture, Abu Jahl and his men murdered them very brutally. Sumayyah became immortal in history by becoming the first woman martyr in Islam.

When 'Ammār saw the suffering and the brutal death of his mother and father, he pretended to reject Islam by uttering the words of kufr (unbelief). Then he came to the Prophet bitterly upset over what he had to utter in order to save his life. The Prophet asked, "How was your heart when you uttered those words? Was your heart delighted with what you said?" 'Ammār said, "No!" Then Allāh revealed the following verse:

¹⁰⁶He who disbelieves in Allāh after he had believed—except the person (like 'Ammār) who has been forced to utter the statement of kufr while his heart is at rest in his faith—but he who opened his heart for disbelief, on them shall be the wrath of Allāh and they shall have a grievous chastisement.

¹⁰⁷This is so because they prefer the present life over the hereafter, and because Allāh does not guide the unbelieving people. ¹⁰⁸These are the people on whose hearts, ears and eyes Allāh has set a seal; and these are the heedless ones. ¹⁰⁹No doubt that they will be the losers in the hereafter.

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¹¹⁰Moreover, surely your Lord to those *early Muslims* who emigrated after being persecuted, then they struggled *with their wealth and lives* and were patient—surely your Lord thereafter—is Forgiving, Merciful.

¹¹¹Remember the day when every soul shall come disputing for itself—every soul shall be paid in full for what it had done, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.

On Gratefulness & Food

¹¹²Allāh sets forth a parable: Consider a city that was safe and confident, its provision came to it affluently from every place; but it became ungrateful to the blessings of Allāh, so Allāh made it taste the garment of hunger and fear because of what they were doing.* He also gave them a spiritual blessing: ¹¹³A messenger of Allāh from among themselves certainly came to them, but they rejected him; therefore the chastisement seized them while they were unjust.

¹¹⁴So eat of *the lawful and good things* that Allāh has provided you, and thank for the blessings of Allāh if it is Him that you serve.

¹¹⁵He has only forbidden you *the animal* that dies of itself, the blood, the edible parts of the swine** and *the animal* over which a name other than that of Allāh has been recited *while slaughtering*.

* "Make it taste the garment of hunger and fear" means causing the hunger and fear to encompass the city just as a garment encompasses a body.

** The word "*lahim*" is normally translated as "flesh"; but in this and similar verses (e.g., 2:272) it does not just mean "the flesh" of swine with the exclusion of its other parts, like fat, etc. In Qur'ānic Arabic, the word "*lahim*" includes the totality of the edible portion of the animal, including its fat. (See the usage of the word "*lahim*" in 2:259, 16:14, 23:14.) In conclusion, the prohibition of the "*lahim*" of swine includes lard also. (Sakr A.H., *Pork—Possible Reasons for its Prohibition*, n.d., n.p., p.9)

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But, of course, the one who is compelled *in case of an emergency to eat these forbidden things* without desiring it or exceeding the limits *by eating more than necessary*, then there is no sin upon him because surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.

¹¹⁶And do not speak out what your tongues describe that, "This is lawful and this is unlawful," so that you may forge the lie against Allāh; surely those who forge the lie against Allāh shall not prosper, ¹¹⁷*they shall just have a little enjoyment in this world*, then they shall have a painful chastisement.

¹¹⁸For those who were Jews, We have forbidden them *the things* that We related to you before (*in 6:147*); *by forbidding those things* We were not unjust to them, rather they were unjust to themselves.

¹¹⁹Moreover, surely your Lord to those who do an evil in ignorance, then repent after that and amend *their wrong behaviour*—surely your Lord after that— is Forgiving, Merciful.

Prophet Ibrāhīm (IV)

¹²⁰Surely Ibrāhīm was a nation *by himself*, obedient to Allāh, upright *in faith*, he was not from among the polytheists, ¹²¹and he was grateful for His blessings; *therefore Allāh* choose him and guided him to the right path. ¹²²And We gave to him good in this world, and in the hereafter he shall most surely be among the good ones.

¹²³Then We revealed to you, *O Muḥammad*, that follow the religion of Ibrāhīm who was upright *in faith*, and he was not from among the polytheists.

¹²⁴The Sabbath was appointed only for *the Jews* who differed about it; and surely your Lord will judge between them on the day of resurrection concerning the

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issue about with they differed.

¹²⁵O Muḥammad, call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good admonition, and argue with them in a friendly manner. Surely your Lord knows best the person who has gone astray from His way and He knows best those who are guided aright.

Retaliation & Forgiveness

¹²⁶O Muslims! If you punish *the Meccan unbelievers in retaliation for their tortures*, then you may punish them just as you had been punished; but if you bear patience and let go your right to retaliate, then certainly it will be better for you the patient ones.

¹²⁷O Muḥammad! Be patient, and your patience is only with *the help of Allāh*. And do not grieve for *the unbelievers; and do not be distressed because of the plans that they devise against you*. ¹²⁸Surely Allāh is with those who guard themselves against displeasing Him and those who do good to others.

PART FIFTEEN

Chapter Seventeen

SŪRAH BANĪ ISRĀ'ĪL *(The Children of Israel)*

(revealed at Mecca; consisting of 111 verses)

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The Ascension of the Prophet

¹Glory be to Him who led His servant, *Muḥammad*, by night from the Sacred Mosque of Mecca to the al-Aqsa Mosque in Quds whose precincts We have blessed. And from there We took him to the heavens so that We may show him some of Our signs. Surely He is the Hearing, the Seeing.

This verse is about the physical ascension of the Prophet

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from Mecca to Jerusalem and from there to the holiest station in the heaven. This great miracle of the Prophet took place a few years before his emigration to Medina.

Allāh & the Human Society

In the following verses the Qur'ān, by using the Israelites as example, describes the principles on which Allāh deals with the human society.

²We gave Mūsā the Book (*the Tawrāt*) and made it a guidance for the children of Israel, and We said, "Do not take anyone as guardian besides Me."

We provided the guidance for the Israelites because they are ³*the offspring of those whom We carried in the Ark with Nūḥ; surely he was a grateful servant.*

⁴We made it known to the Children of Israel in the Book, *the Tawrāt*: "You shall make mischief in the land of Palestine twice, and surely you shall attain great exaltedness and rebel against God. It is My promise that whenever you make mischief, I shall seize you severely."

⁵So when *the time for fulfilling the promise of the first of the two mischiefs came, We sent over you Our servants** who possessed great might, and they searched around the houses and punished you. The promised was fulfilled.

*After their abasement and humility, the Israelites repented and amended their behaviour: "*⁶*Then We gave back to you the turn to prevail against them (your oppressors), and*

* "Our servants" in this case refers to a nation or people who subjected the Israelites to humiliation and servitude. In verse 5 above, it most probably refers to Nebuchadnezzar II, the Babylonian emperor (605-562 BC) who destroyed Jerusalem and sent thousands of Jews into exile. In verse 7 below, it most probably refers to Vespasian, the Roman emperor (69-79 BC) who also attacked Jerusalem. (aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān*, vol. 13 [Arabic edition] Tehran 1976, p. 46.)

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We helped you with wealth and children, and We made you great in number. ⁷*So always remember that if you do good, you do good only for your own selves; and if you do evil, it will be likewise only for your own selves.*

So when the time for fulfilling the second promise came, We sent Our servants again so that they may cause discountenance to you, and that they may enter the Temple and humiliate you as they entered it the first time, and that they may utterly destroy the exaltedness which the Israelites attained.

⁸*Perhaps your Lord may have mercy upon you. But remember that: If you return to arrogance and rebellion against Allāh, then We too shall return with reprisal. We have made the Hell a prison for the unbelievers.*

The Guidance & Retribution from Allāh

⁹*Surely this Qur'ān guides to the religion of Islam which is the most straight path, and gives good news to the believers who do good deeds that they shall have a great reward in the hereafter. ¹⁰As for those who do not believe in the hereafter, We have prepared for them a painful chastisement.*

¹¹*Man prays for evil things just as he prays for good things. This is so because man is ever hasty and follows his desires without thinking whether what he wants is good for him or bad.*

¹²*We have made the night and the day as two signs of Our power. Then We blot out the night-sign and We make the day-sign illuminant so that you may seek the favours from your Lord, and so that you may be able to know the number of the years and the reckoning. And We have explained everything distinctly.*

¹³*We have made the deeds of every human being*

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to cling to his neck. And on the day of resurrection We shall bring out a book for him which he shall find wide open. *Then We shall say, ¹⁴''Read your book of deeds! To-day, you by yourself are sufficient as a reckoner against yourself.*

¹⁵Whosoever is guided aright, he is guided aright for his own self; and whosoever goes astray, he goes astray to his own disadvantage. No bearer of responsibility shall bear the load of another *person.*

We never chastise *a people* until We have raised a messenger *among them.* ¹⁶And when We intend to destroy a city, We command its *sinful people* who live in ease *and luxury to return to obedience,* but they still go on transgressing therein. And thus the word of *retribution* against them is proved true; so We utterly destroyed it.

¹⁷How many generations We have destroyed after Nūḥ! *They should be sufficient examples for you.* And remember that your Lord suffices as *a witness who is Well-aware of and Seeing the sins of His servants.*

¹⁸Whosoever desires this immediate *worldly* life, then We quickly bring therein for him what We please unto whomsoever We desire; *but* then We appoint the Hell as *a recompense* for him—he shall be burnt in it, condemned and banished. ¹⁹And whosoever desires the hereafter and strives for it as he ought to strive, provided he is *also* a believer, then such are *the people* whose striving shall deserve thanks *in form of reward from their Lord.*

But of course, all human beings are Our servants, therefore ²⁰We help them all —these *believers* and those *unbelievers*— *in this world* from your Lord's gift; and your Lord's gift is not restricted. ²²See how We have made some of them excel *physically and materially* over others.

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But remember that the reward of the hereafter is certainly greater in ranks and greater in esteem than the worldly gains.

Some Socio-ethical Laws

²²Do not set up with Allāh any other god, otherwise you will sit down, condemned and banished *in the Hell*.

Parents' Rights: ²³Your Lord has commanded that you should not serve any *thing or person* but Him and *be good to the parents*.

Whether one or both of them attain old age with you, *then do not say to them so much as "Ugh" out of complain* neither chide them, rather say a respectful word to them, ²⁴and lower to them the wing of humbleness *out of compassion*, and say, *in your prayers*, "O my Lord! Have mercy upon them just as they raised me up *with love and mercy*."

Therefore be careful in your duties towards your parents because ²⁵your Lord very well knows what is in your minds. If you are good *and feel sorry for your slight misbehaviour with your parents*, then surely He (Allāh) is Forgiving to those who turn to Him *in repentance*.

Charity: ²⁶Give to the relative his dues *from the charity*, and *also to the needy and the traveller*. And do not spend wastefully *because* ²⁷the squanderers are indeed the brothers of the Satans, and Iblīs, the Arch-Satan, is ungrateful to his Lord.

²⁸But if you *have to turn away from helping them — because you yourself are in need*, seeking mercy from your Lord hopefully— then say a gentle word to them.

²⁹Follow the path of moderation in charity: neither keep your hand shackled to your neck *out of greed*, nor outspread it completely open otherwise you will sit reproached and denuded.

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³⁰Surely your Lord outspreads and straitens the provision for whomsoever He pleases; He surely is Well Aware of *and* Seeing His servants.

Infanticide: ³¹Do not kill your children for fear of poverty; We will give provision for them and you *too*. Surely the killing of the *children* is a great error.

Adultery: ³²Do not go near adultery; surely it is an indecency and an evil way of *fulfilling sexual urge*.

Murder: ³³Do not kill the soul that Allāh has forbidden except by the right of *retaliation*.

Whosoever is killed unjustly, We have indeed given to his heir an authority *to retaliate or compromise on blood-money*; but let him not exceed in *retaliatory* slaying (e.g., *by killing the murderer's relatives*) for surely he has been helped *in obtaining his rights*.

Orphans: ³⁴Do not approach the property of the orphan but in a friendly manner until he attains full maturity.

Promise: And fulfil the promise *because fulfillment of the promise shall surely be questioned of*.

Honesty in Measuring: ³⁵Fill the measure when you measure *the merchandise*, and weigh with the correct scales, that is eventually good and better *for yourselves*.

Blind Following: ³⁶Do not follow *the ideas* of which you have no knowledge, *because even the ears, the eyes and the mind—all these means of knowledge—* shall surely be questioned of.

Arrogance: ³⁷Do not walk on the earth arrogantly, *for by doing so you will never be able to make a hole in the earth, nor will you ever reach the mountains in height*.

³⁸All of *the forbidden acts that have been mentioned above—specially its evilness—* is disliked in the view of your Lord.

³⁹This is of the wisdom that your Lord has revealed

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to you, therefore do not set up another god with Allāh otherwise you will be thrown into the Hell, reproached *and* banished.

Oneness of Allāh

Addressing the Meccan idolators who believed that the angels were Allāh's daughters, Allāh says: ⁴¹What! Has your Lord granted you the sons *in preference to Himself*, while He *Himself* has taken daughters from among the angels?! Surely you are saying a disgusting statement!

⁴¹We have indeed repeated *the true teachings and warnings* in this Qur'ān so that *the idolators* may remember, but *unfortunately* it does not increase *anything* in them but aversion.

⁴²O *Muḥammad*, say: "If there had been other gods with Him as they say, then surely they would have sought a way unto the Lord of the Throne." ⁴³Glory be to Him! He is highly exalted above what they say. ⁴⁴The seven heavens and the earth, and whosoever is in them, glorifies Him; there is not a single thing but that it sings His praise—but you do not understand their glorification. He surely is Forbearing, Forgiving.

⁴⁵O *Muḥammad*, when you recite the Qur'ān *to the Meccans*, We place a spiritual barrier between you and those who do not believe in the hereafter *obstinately*; ⁴⁶and We has cast veils over their hearts and a heaviness in their ears lest they understand it—*this is their punishment because* when you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'ān, they turn their backs in aversion. ⁴⁷We very well know *their ears* with which they listen when they listen to you, and *also their hearts with which they conspire* when they conspire *secretly against you*: when the unjust say *to the believers*, "You are only following a bewitched man."

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⁴⁸See how they set forth parables for you and so they went astray, they can no longer find the *right* path:

⁴⁹They said, "What! O Muḥammad, you say that when we shall become bones and broken pieces, then shall we really be raised up, as a new creation?!"

⁵⁰O Muḥammad, say: "Do not be surprised at being raised up again from decaying bones; if you wish, become stones or iron ⁵¹or a creature that is *even* more greater in your minds! Still you will be raised up again."

Then they shall say, "Who will bring us back to life?"

Say, "He who created you the first time."

Then they shall shake their heads at you and say, "When will it be?"

Say, "It may be very nigh. ⁵²On the day of resurrection He will call you forth and you will answer by praising Him, and you will think that you tarried in the graves only a little."

Some early Muslims of Mecca were losing patience with the mocking behaviour of the Meccan unbelievers and so they asked the Prophet to retailate, at the least, verbally. Then came the revelation: ⁵³O Muḥammad, say to My believing servants, "Talk to the unbelievers in a friendly manner; because surely the Satan sows dissensions between them. Surely the Satan is an open enemy of man. ⁵⁴Your Lord knows you very well; if He pleases He may have mercy upon you, or if He pleases He may chastise you—the judgement is only for Allāh." And, O Muḥammad, We did not send you as a person who is responsible for them.

⁵⁵Your Lord knows whosoever is in the heavens and the earth. And We have made some of the prophets to excel others, and We have given the Zabūr to Dāwūd.

⁵⁶Say to the Meccans, "Call on those idols in whom you believe besides Him—you will surely find that they have no power to remove the affliction from you or to

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divert it *from you*." ⁵⁷Those *idols* whom they call upon are themselves seeking the means *and testing it to find out* which is the nearest one to their Lord, and they hope for His mercy and fear His chastisement. Surely the chastisement of your Lord is *a fact* of which one should be aware.

⁵⁸There is no city but that We shall destroy it before the day of resurrection or chastise it with a severe chastisement; this is written in the Book, *i.e., the knowledge of Allāh*.

⁵⁹Nothing prevents Us from sending the *miraculous signs that the Meccans demand* except that the ancient people rejected them, *and We know that the Meccans would do the same. Remember the example of the people of Thamūd: We gave to Thamūd the she-camel as a clear miracle, but they were unjust to her. We do not send the signs except to frighten the unbelievers.*

⁶⁰Remember when We said to you, "Surely your Lord encompasses the people." *An example of Our knowledge about the people is the vision which We showed to you about a tribe from among your followers who will destroy the spirit of Islam after you; that will be a time of trial for the true believers: We did not make the vision—which We showed to you about the accursed family-tree in the Qur'ān—except as a trial for the people. And We frighten them, but unfortunately it only increases their great insolence.*

Satan—the Arch Enemy of Mankind

⁶¹When We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam," so they bowed themselves except Iblīs *who refused*.

When Allāh asked him to explain his disobedience, he arrogantly said, "Shall I prostrate myself before him whom You have created of clay?!" ⁶²*Iblīs continued to say,*

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“Tell me *O Lord!* Is this the man whom You have honoured above me *and punished me for not prostrating before him?! So if You give respite to me till the day of resurrection, then I shall certainly tame his progeny against You except a few.*”

⁶³Allāh said, “Get lost! As for those of them who follow you, surely the Hell is your recompense, a complete recompense. ⁶⁴*Go and incite whomsoever of them you can by your voice, gather your armies on horses and on foot against them, share with them in the wealth and in the use of their children, and promise them!*” And, of course, there is nothing that the Satan promises them except delusion.

⁶⁵Allāh said, “*O Satan! As for My servants, you have no power whatsoever over them; and your Lord is sufficient for them as a Protector.*”

Oneness of Allāh

⁶⁶Your Lord is He who pushes for you the ships in the sea so that you may seek of His grace; surely He is Merciful to you.

⁶⁷When distress afflicts you in the sea, *all the idols* whom you call upon are lost *and useless* except Him. *You pray to Him and He helps you; but when He delivers you safely to the land, you turn away from Him—indeed man is ever ungrateful.*

⁶⁸What! *Do not you think that He who delivered you can easily punish you on the land?* Do you then feel secure that He will not make you sink in the ground, or send upon you a hurricane? Then you will not find a protector for yourselves! ⁶⁹Or, do you feel secure that He will not return you into *the stormy sea* a second time, then send upon you a shattering wind and drown you for your ungratefulness? Then you will not find any assistant for

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yourselves against Us.

⁷⁰We have indeed honoured the children of Adam, carried them in the land and the sea, provided them with good things and preferred them in esteem over many of those whom We have created *like the animals and the jinn*. Therefore, there is no justification whatsoever for man's ungratefulness.

⁷¹Remember the day of judgement when We shall call every people with their leader (*imām*).

Then whosoever is given his book of deeds in his right hand, then these shall read their book *joyfully*, and they shall not be wronged at all. ⁷²But he who is blind *in recognising the rightful leader in this world*, he shall be blind in the hereafter and further away from the *straight path*.

The Unbelievers of Mecca (X)

The leaders of the Mecca tried through various ways to prevent the Prophet from calling the people to the only One God, rejecting the idols, and behaving with the Muslim slaves equally, etc. But none of their plans —ridiculing, bribing, seducing and threatening— succeeded. In the following verses, the Qur'ān describes the Meccans' extra-ordinary efforts to achieve their aim, and the Prophet's remarkable resistance which was indeed a gift from Allāh.

⁷³They would have almost turned you away from the Qur'ān and its teachings which We have revealed to you so that you may forge against Us *the teachings which are different from what We revealed*, and then certainly they would have taken you as a friend.

⁷⁴And had We not strengthened you *with the quality of infallibility*, you would have almost inclined to them

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a little; ⁷⁵and in that case We would have made you taste the double of the punishment of this life and the double of the chastisement after death, then you would not be able to find any helper for you against Us.

Now that the Meccans have exhausted all their means to prevent you from calling the people to Islam, ⁷⁶they surely are very close to arouse you from the land of Mecca so that they may expel you from it; and in that case, O Muḥammad, I promise you that they will not tarry after you but a little—⁷⁷this promise is Our norm for the sake of those messengers whom We have sent before you; and you will not find a change in Our norm.

The Five Daily Prayers

⁷⁸Establish the prayers at time of the declining of the sun (noon) till the mid-night; and also establish the dawn recitation—surely the dawn recitation is witnessed by the angels of both the night and the day. *

⁷⁹And during a part of the night, stay awake in prayer which is a supererogatory act for you; may be your Lord will raise you to a laudable position.

⁸⁰Say in your prayers: "O My Lord! Wherever You admit me, admit me in a goodly manner, and from wherever you take me out, take me out in a goodly manner; and grant me from Yourself a powerful helper."

⁸¹Say, "Finally the truth has come and the falsehood has vanished; surely the falsehood is bound to vanish."

* The command of establishing prayers from "noon till mid-night" covers four daily prayers: noon, afternoon, sunset and night prayers. "The dawn recitation" refers to the dawn prayers.

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⁸²We send down *the revelation* of the Qur'ān which is a *spiritual* healing and a mercy for the believers; and it adds nothing for the unjusts but loss.

⁸³When We bestow favours upon man, he turns away and remains aloof *from Us*; and when evil afflicts him, he becomes desperate. ⁸⁴Say, "Every person acts according to his own manner, but your Lord knows very well who is best guided to the *right path*."

⁸⁵O *Muḥammad*, they ask you about the soul; say, "The soul is from the command* of my Lord. And you have not been given the knowledge but a little." *The soul is totally in the hands of Allāh*; ⁸⁶if We had pleased, We certainly would have taken away *the Qur'ān* that We revealed upon your *soul*, and then you would *not be able* to find any protector for yourself against Us, ⁸⁷except by the mercy from your Lord. Surely His grace upon you is great.

⁸⁸O *Muḥammad*, if the Meccans think that you have forged the Qur'ān, then say: "Even if men and jinn get together to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they will never be able to produce *a book* like it, though some of them become helpers of others."

⁸⁹We have certainly repeated every kind of examples in this Qur'ān for the people, but most of the people

* The soul is from the command of Allāh, it is His creation in which He does not need anything; He just gives the command, and the soul comes to exist.

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have refused *to do anything* but deny the truth.

The obstinate unbelievers of Mecca rejected the Qur'ān and demanded from the Prophet to bring other miracles for his truth. ⁹⁰They say:

We will never believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth from the *barren* land of Mecca for us; ⁹¹or *until* you possess a garden of palms and grapes, and then in their midst you cause the rivers to gush forth explodingly;

⁹²or *until* you make the heaven to fall upon us in pieces as you believe*;

or *until* you bring Allāh and the angels face to face to us;

⁹³or *until* you have a house *made* of gold;

or *until* you ascend to the heaven, and we will never believe in your ascending *to the heaven* unless you bring down to us a book which we may read.

O Muḥammad, say, "Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a human being *who has been sent as a messenger?*" (Being a human being, how can I do such things? And being a messenger of Allāh, how can I bring any sign without His permission?)

⁹⁴Nothing prevented the people of Mecca from believing in Muḥammad when the guidance came to them except *the amazement which they expressed* by saying, "What! Has Allāh raised up a human being *among us as a messenger?!*"

⁹⁵O Muḥammad, say to them, "If there had been in the earth angels walking peacefully,* We would certainly have sent down from the heaven an angel *as a messenger* upon them, *just as We sent a human being as*

* This statement of the Meccans refers to verse 34:9 in which Allāh had said, "Or We would make the heavens fall upon you in pieces."

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a messenger for you." 96Say, "Allāh is sufficient as a witness between me and you; He is Well-Aware of and sees His servants."

97Whomsoever Allāh guides, he is indeed guided aright; and whomsoever He 'leads' astray, then you, O Muḥammad, will not find guardians for them other than Him. On the day of resurrection, We shall gather them together *while they will be lying* upon their faces, blind, dumb and deaf—their *final* abode is the Hell, whenever *the fire* dies, We will add for them the blazing flames.

98That is their recompense because they disbelieved in Our signs, and said, "What! O Muḥammad, you say that when we shall become and broken pieces, then shall we really be raised up, as a new creation?!" 99Have they not considered that the Allāh who has created the heavens and the earth is indeed capable of creating the like of them? *One sign of his irrefutable power is that* He has appointed for them a term of death in which there is no doubt; but *still* the unjusts have refused to do anything but deny the truth.

100Say, "If you possess the treasures of my Lord's mercy, then you would surely have withhold *them* for fear of expending; and man is *indeed* very niggardly."

Similarity Between Fir'awn & the Meccans

O Muḥammad, the Meccans are not different from Fir'awn and his followers who reacted to Mūsā in exactly the same way. Just as We gave the Qur'ān to you, likewise 100We gave to Mūsā nine clear signs—the staff, the illuminant

* "Walking peacefully" means if the angels had been at home on this earth and bound by the physical laws, then Allāh would have sent an angel as a messenger.

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hand, the flood, the locust, the louse, the frogs, the blood, etc.

¹⁰¹So go and ask the Children of Israel about the reaction of Fir'awn; you will come to know that he said the same thing which the Meccans say about you: When Mūsā came to them, Fir'awn said to him, "I surely think that you, O Mūsā, are bewitched."

¹⁰²Mūsā said to Fir'awn, "You surely know that no one has sent these signs but the Lord of the heavens and the earth, as clear proofs; and I surely think that you, O Fir'awn, are bound to perish."

¹⁰³Then Fir'awn decided to arouse the Israelites from the land of Egypt, therefore We drowned him and those who were with him, altogether. ¹⁰⁴And We said to the Children of Israel, "Dwell in the land of Palestine; and when the time for the fulfillment of the final promise comes, We shall bring you all assembled together for judgement." (In the same way, the Meccans have decided to kill you, but We will surely deliver you and settle you in a favourable land.)

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So O Muḥammad, do not grieve for what the Meccans say about you because ¹⁰⁵We have revealed the Qur'ān with the truth, and it has indeed come down with the truth. As for yourself, We have not sent you except as a bearer of good-tidings and as a warner of Allāh's punishment.

¹⁰⁶And We have divided the revelation of the Qur'ān so that you may recite it to the people gradually—We have indeed revealed it gradually.

¹⁰⁷O Muḥammad, say to the unbelievers, "Whether you believe in the Qur'ān or do not believe in it, it will not harm me in any way. But you should know that when the revelation is recited to those who were given knowledge before the commencement of Islam, they fall down upon their faces in prostration ¹⁰⁸and they say, "Glory be to

Bani Isrā'īl 17 The Israelites

our Lord! The promise of our Lord *about resurrection* will surely be fulfilled." ¹⁰⁹They used to fell down on their faces weeping, and *the Qur'ān* increased them in humility *before Allāh*.

¹¹⁰Say, "Call upon Allāh or call upon the Beneficent God—whichever *name* you call upon *is same* because He has the beautiful names."

And do not be *always* loud in your prayers, nor be *always* silent in it, rather seek a way in between these *two extremes—be loud in some, and be silent in others*.

¹¹¹Say, "All praise be to Allāh who has not taken *unto Himself* a son, neither He has any partner in the Kingdom, nor has He any helper out of humility, and proclaim His greatness increasingly."

Chapter Eighteen

SŪRATU 'L-KAHF *(The Cave)*

(revealed at Mecca; consisting of 110 verses)

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

¹All praise be to Allāh who revealed the Book *known as the Qur'ān* upon His servant, *Muḥammad*, and did not make it crooked, ²*rather He made it valuable* so that *Muḥammad* may give the warning of a severe punishment from Him and give good tidings to the believers—those *among them* who do good deeds—that they shall have a goodly reward *in form of Paradise* ³wherein they shall stay forever.

⁴And *Muḥammad* was given the Book so that he may warn those who say that, "Allāh has taken *unto Himself* a son." ⁵*Those who say so* they have no knowledge of

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it, nor had their fathers—it is *indeed* a most distressing word which comes out of their mouths, they are not saying anything but a lie.

⁶And if they, *the unbelievers*, do not believe in this tiding, then perhaps you will kill yourself with grief immediately after them.

⁷We have made whatever is on the earth —*the forests, the mountains, the oceans, etc*— an adornment for it, and We have placed the human being on it so that We may try them to see which of them is best in deeds. ⁸And surely at the decreed doom of the earth, We shall change whatever is on it into a plain land.

The Aṣḥābu 'l-Kahf or The Dwellers of the Cave

⁹Or, O Muḥammad, do you think that the Dwellers of the Cave and Raqīm were among Our astonishing signs? No, not at all!

The Aṣḥābu 'l-Kahf (or the Dwellers of the Cave) were seven young men who lived during the last quarter of the first and the early second centuries of the Christian era. They lived in a society which was completely idolatrous, although they themselves were believers in only One God and followers of Jesus.

The city in which they lived was under the rule of the Roman emperor, Marcus Ulpius Trajanus (famous as Trajan) who ruled from 98 to 117 A.D. Trajan was a tyrant, and an idol-worshipper. All those who lived under his rule were forced to worship the idols. In 112, he issued an order saying that any citizen who refused to worship the idols is a traitor and can be condemned to death.

Soon the seven young men —the Aṣḥābu 'l-Kahf— realized that they were the only people left who refrained from worshipping the idols. This forced the Aṣḥābu 'l-Kahf to re-

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evaluate their situation: either give in to the majority pressure to worship idols, or refuse and be killed. None of these alternatives seemed favourable. Therefore, they decided to leave the city and seek refuge elsewhere, away from the reach of Trajan.

So they left the city. Outside the city, a dog —named in Islamic traditions as Qiṭmīr— joined them. They went towards the hills and finally found a cave for themselves. They prayed for Allāh's help, and Allāh made them sleep for about 300 years. After that they were raised up again. This event is one of the examples of Allāh's power to resurrect all human beings after their death for the day of judgement.

The following verses, describe the story of the Aṣḥābu 'l-Kahf:

¹⁰When the young men sought refuge in the Cave, they said: "Our Lord! Give us mercy from Yourself, and prepare for us a forthright *course* for our situation."

¹¹So We imposed *sleep* on their ears* in the Cave for a number of years. ¹²Then We raised them up so that We may know which of the two groups *among these seven youths* would better count the time during which they had remained *sleeping*. (See verse 19)

¹²We relate to you their story with truth. They were young men who believed in their Lord and so We increased them in guidance.

¹⁴We strengthened their hearts, when they *bravely* stood up *in front of their peers* and said, "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth; we will never call upon any god other than Him. *If we call upon others*, then surely we would have said what exceeds the proper bounds. ¹⁵These our people have taken gods other than Him: if only they had brought clear proof for them. *But they know they cannot do so because there exists no pro-*

* The expression, "imposing sleep on the ears" indicates sound and deep sleep in which one cannot hear anything.

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of. Who then is more unjust than the person who forges a lie against Allāh?!"

After discussing about their next step, one of them said, "16Since you withdrew yourselves from the idolators and what they worshipped other than Allāh, then seek refuge in the Cave; your Lord will surely spread out for you His mercy and prepare for you a favourable course for your problem."

If you go and stand at the cave of Aṣḥābu 'l-Kahf, 17you will see the sun —when it rises— turning away from their cave to your right; and when it sets, you will see it to your left severing off from them—thus the sun rose and set all the time while they were in a wide space inside the cave, away from the sun-rays and its effects. This is one of the signs of Allāh. Whomsoever Allāh guides, he is indeed guided aright; and whomsoever He leads astray, then you will never find for him a guardian who would guide him.

18If you had seen the Aṣḥābu 'l-Kahf with their eyes open, you would have thought them awake while they were actually sleeping—and during all those years We turned them from left to the right and from right to the left; and their dog was lying at the threshold of the cave, outstretching its paws. If you would have seen them in that situation, you would surely have turned away from them in flight and you would have been filled with fright of them.

19We raised them up from their sleep so that they may ask each other about the duration of their sleep in the cave:

One of them said, "How long have you remained sleeping in this cave?"

They said, "We have remained here for a day or part of a day."

Finally they said,

Your Lord knows better how much you remained

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in this cave.

Now send one of you with this silver coin of yours to the city, let him look which of the merchants has best food so that he may bring you provision from it; and let him be polite, and let him not appraise any one about you because²⁰if the idolatrous people of the city come to know about you, they would either stone you to death or force you back into their religion, and then you will never succeed against them.

*So one of them went to the city. He was surprised to see that everything had changed: the people, the shops, the houses, etc. When he tried to buy food with the three centuries old silver coin, the shop-keeper refused to accept it. Upon inquiring about the ruler, the man was surprised to hear the name of Theodosius II, emperor of Rome 408-450. He was unaware of the fact that the Trajan had passed away three hundred years ago, and that now the people of that city had all become Christians. Soon other people gathered to hear his story and the news spread around the city. At last, the leaders of the city and its citizens came with that young man to the cave.**

²¹*Thus We made the people of the city acquainted with the Dwellers of the Cave so that they may know that the promise of Allāh is true and that there is no doubt in the coming of the hour of resurrection.*

After that Allāh gave death to those seven young men. When this happened, the people of the city disputed among themselves about their affair: Some said they are alive;

* The exact date of this event is unknown. The dates and names of the rulers given above are based on the research of Mr. Rafiq Wafā ad-Dujāni, an archeologist of Jordan. A cave, known as Kahf Rajīb, was excavated by ad-Dujāni in 1962 near Amman. Among all the caves associated to the Aṣḥābu 'l-Kahf, this cave fits properly with the descriptions provided by the Qur'ān. (See *al-Mizān*, vol. 13, p. 319-20.)

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others said they have been put to sleep again; still others said that they have died so bury them; the idol-worshippers said, "Build an edifice over them; their Lord knows better about them *whether they are alive or dead.*" But those believers who had eventually prevailed over the affairs of the city, said, "We will raise over them a place of worship."

²²O Muḥammad! Some unbelievers of Mecca will say, "The Dwellers of the Cave were three, the fourth was their dog." Others will say, "They were five, the sixth was their dog." They are just guessing about the unseen. Still some others will say, "They were seven, and the eighth was their dog."

O Muḥammad: say, "My Lord knows better their number; no one knows them except a few persons;" therefore do not dispute with them except *in case of a clear argument*, and do not question any of them about *the Dwellers of the Cave*.

²³And, remember, do not ever say about anything, "I will surely do it tomorrow," ²⁴but say, "I will do it tomorrow, if Allāh wills (*inshā Allāh*)." And when you forget to say "If Allāh wills," then remember Allāh and say, "Perhaps my Lord will guide me to *something more nearer than this in uprightness.*"

²⁵The seven young men remained in their cave for three hundred years, and others have added nine more years

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to that. ²⁶O Muḥammad, say, "Allāh knows better how long they remained *in the cave*; to Him belongs the unseen in the heavens and the earth. How well seeing is He! How well hearing is He! They do not have any guardian other than Him; and He associates no one in His judgement.

The Unbelievers of Mecca (XI)

²⁷O Muḥammad, recite from the Book what has been revealed to you from your Lord—there is no one to change His words; and you will not find a refuge *in anyone* besides Him. ²⁸Bind yourself with those who call upon their Lord at morning and evening desiring His favour; and do not let your eyes bypass them *and settle on the rich persons* in desire of the beauties of the present life; and do not obey the person whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his caprice, and whose affair has exceeded *the proper bounds*.

O Muḥammad, do not grieve for the disbelief of the unjust Meccans, you are just a messenger of your Lord. ²⁹Therefore just say, "The truth (*the Qur'ān*) is from your Lord." Then whosoever wants *to believe* may believe *in it*; and whosoever wants *to disbelieve* may disbelieve in it.

They may do whatever they want, but they should know that We surely have prepared for the unjusts a fire whose canopy has surrounded them; if they cry for help, they will be 'helped' with water like molten brass that will roast their faces—evil *indeed* is the drink, and evil is the resting-place. ³⁰But as for those who believe and do good deeds, they should know that We do not waste the reward of a person who does a good deed. ³¹These are *the people* who shall have gardens of eternity beneath which rivers flow; they shall be adorned in it with bracelets of gold, and they shall wear green dress *made* of silk and

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brocade, reclining therein upon raised couches—it is indeed the best recompense, and a good resting-place.

Two Parables for the Worldly Life

³²O Muhammad, set forth for them a parable of two men:

To one of them, We gave two gardens of grapes, We surrounded them both with palm-trees, and between *the two gardens* We made a crop-plantation. ³³Both the gardens yielded their fruits *on time* and never failed in any thing; and We caused a river to gush forth amidst them.

In short, ³⁴he had *much* wealth from all these gardens and plantation. All this wealth made him very arrogant and proud. So one day while he was having a conversation with his companion, he said, "I am greater than you in wealth, and more powerful in man-power."

³⁵And he entered his garden while he was unjust to himself *by forgetting the power and blessings of Allāh*. He said, "I do not think that this garden and everything around it will ever perish. ³⁶And I do not think that the hour of resurrection and judgement will ever come. And if it comes and I am returned to my Lord," he continued boastfully, "then I shall surely find a resting-place better than this garden."

³⁷His companion (while he was having a conversation with him) said to him, "Have you disbelieved in Him who has created you from dust, then from a drop of sperm, and then He shaped you into a man? Have you forgotten Him who gave you the physical strength and intelligence to exploit the land and animals for your own benefit? ³⁸But as for me, I believe that He is my Lord, and I do not associate any one with my Lord.

"³⁹When you entered the garden, why did you not

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say *gratefully* that, 'As Allāh wills; there is no power except in Allāh'? If you see me *at this moment* that I am less than you in wealth and children, *then do not be arrogant* ⁴⁰because maybe my Lord will give me a bounty better than your garden. And *He may even* send on *your garden* a thunder-bolt from the sky so that it will become a sludgy land *unable to bear any plant*, ⁴¹or He may make its water sink into the earth, then you shall not be able to find it."

⁴²And *so it happened*: his wealth was encompassed by *total destruction*; and he began to wring his hands *feeling sorry* for what he had invested in it —*now* it was completely devastated— and he said, "I wish I had not associated any one with my Lord!"

⁴³And *now* there was no host to help him other than Allāh, nor could he seek revenge. ⁴⁴Here protection belongs only to Allāh, the True God; He is the best *in rewarding*, and the best *in regard to our outcome*.

⁴⁵O *Muḥammad*, set forth for them a parable of the present life: *it is* like the water which We send down from the cloud; it mingles with the plants of the earth *and after fulfilling its purpose for men and animals*, it becomes a straw which the winds scatter *around*. Allāh possesses power over all things.

⁴⁶The wealth and the children are the adornment of the present life, while the ever-lasting good deeds are better with your Lord in reward and *also* better in *hope of His mercy*.

The Day of Judgement (V)

⁴⁷Remember the day of resurrection when We shall set

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the mountains in motion; and *when the mountains are gone, you will see the furthest parts of the earth projecting itself.*

We shall gather them altogether *in such a way that We shall not leave any one of them behind.* ⁴⁸They shall be presented before your Lord, *standing in ranks. Then We shall say: "You surely have been brought to Us just as We created you the first time. Nay, you thought that We shall never appoint a time for you to be resurrected for reckoning!"*

⁴⁹The book *of their deeds* shall be placed *before them, then you will see the guilty people fearful of what has been preserved in it. After looking through the book, they shall say, "Woe unto us! What is this book?! It does not leave a minor sin nor a major sin, unless it has counted it!"* And they shall find whatever they had done *in the worldly life present in that book, and they shall be judged accordingly—your Lord is not unjust to anyone.*

The Satan & the Mankind

⁵⁰And *remember when We said to the angels: "Prostrate yourselves before Adam;" all those who were present in that gathering prostrated themselves except Iblīs, the Satan—he was not an angel, he was from among the jinn—and he deviated from the command of his Lord. What! Then do you take him and his offspring, with the exclusion of Me, to be your masters while actually they are your enemies?! Surely this exchange of masters is eventually evil for the unjust people.*

How can you take the Satan and his offspring as your masters while ⁵¹*I did not even make them witnesses of the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor of the creation of themselves?! I would never take those who mislead others as My assistants.*

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⁵²And remember the day when He (*Allāh*) shall say, "Call upon those whom you thought to be My associates." They shall call them, but *the so-called associates of God* will not answer them—We shall create a distance between them.

⁵³The guilty people shall see the fire, and they shall come to know that they are about to fall into it and they will not find any escape-way from it.

The Unbelievers of Mecca (XII)

⁵⁴We have certainly repeated in this Qur'ān every kind of examples for the people, but man is the most disputatious of *all* beings.

⁵⁵When the guidance comes to them, what prevents the people from believing in *Allāh* and asking forgiveness of their Lord? *Why do they have to disbelieve until the total and sudden destruction which came upon the ancient nations comes upon them, or until the chastisement comes face to face with them? (In the first case, they will be destroyed; in the latter case, their faith at the last moment will be unacceptable.)*

So, O Muḥammad, do not be grieved for the lack of response from the Meccans because ⁵⁶We do not send the messengers except as the bearers of *good-tidings* and warners of *Allāh's punishment only*. But those who disbelieve, they dispute falsely so that they may weaken the truth; and they have taken My revelations and *the reckoning* of which they are warned, as a mockery.

⁵⁷So who can be more unjust than the person who was reminded the revelations of his Lord, but he turned away from them and forgot *the evil deeds* which his hands have sent before? *As a result of their obstinate disbelief, We have cast veils over their hearts and a heaviness in their ears lest they understand the revela-*

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tion. And now even if you, O Muḥammad, call them towards the guidance, they will never be guided aright.

⁵⁸O Muḥammad, your Lord is the most Forgiving and the Lord of mercy. If He was to punish them for *the evil deeds* which they have earned, He would certainly have hastened the chastisement for them; but *He does not do so because* there is for them a promised time from which they shall never find a refuge.

⁵⁹As for the inhabitants of those ancient cities, We have destroyed them when they acted unjustly, and for their destruction *also* We had appointed a promised time.

Prophet Mūsā & Khizr

In the following verses, the Qur'ān describes the meeting which took place between Mūsā and a chosen servant of Allāh who had been given more knowledge than Mūsā. The Islamic traditions give his name as Khizr, who was also a prophet. Allāh told Mūsā that if he wanted to see a more knowledgeable person, then he should go to meet him at the place where the two seas come together. The sign for that meeting place was that a fish will disappear in the water.

⁶⁰Remember when Mūsā said to his assistant, Yūsha' (Joshua), "I will not cease to travel until I reach the place where the two seas meet,* or I will go on for years."

⁶⁰So when they reached the place where the two seas meet, Yūsha' placed their roasted fish on a stone near the sea. While Yūsha' was looking on, the fish fall into the sea and disappeared. Both of them forgot their fish, and it took its way into sea, flowingly. (That means: Yūsha' forgot to tell Mūsā about the disappearance of the fish — the disappearance which was the sign of the meeting place— and Mūsā forgot to ask about it.)

* According to some commentators, "majma'u 'l-baḥrayn — the place where the two seas meet" refers to the place where the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba meet.

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⁶²So when they had passed *the meeting-place*, Mūsā said to his assistant, "Bring us *the fish*, our breakfast; we have indeed experienced much hardship in this journey of ours."

⁶³Then Yūsha' remembered *the fish* and said, "Tell me! When we took refuge on the rock, then I forgot *to tell you about* the fish—and none made me forget the mentioning of it except the Satan—it took its way into the sea in a strange manner."

⁶⁴Mūsā said, "This is *the sign* which we were seeking!"

So they *immediately* turned back retracing their tracks and reached *the meeting-place* where ⁶⁵they found Khizr—a servant from among Our servants whom We had granted mercy from Ourselves and whom We had taught knowledge from Ourselves.

After the initial introduction between them, ⁶⁶Mūsā said to him, "Can I follow you so that you may teach me from the right knowledge which you have been taught by Allāh?"

⁶⁷Khizr said, "Surely you will not be able to bear with me patiently. ⁶⁸How can you bear patiently *with my actions* of which you do not have a comprehensive knowledge?"

⁶⁹Mūsā said, "If Allāh wills, you will find me patient, and I promise that I shall not disobey you in anything."

⁷⁰Khizr said, "If you insist, then you may follow me; but do not question me about anything until I myself initiate to talk about it."

Mūsā agreed to this condition.

⁷¹So they went on *together* until they reached a river where they embarked in a boat. While the boat was reaching its destination, Khizr made a hole in it.

Mūsā protestingly said, "Have you made a hole in

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it to drown its passengers?! Surely you have done a grievous thing!"

⁷²*Khizr* said, "Did I not say that you will not be able to bear with me patiently?"

⁷³*Mūsā* said, "O *Khizr*! Forgive me for what I forgot, and do not make me undergo a difficult thing."

Khizr forgave him and ⁷⁴they went on until they met a boy; then *Khizr* slew him.

Mūsā again said, "Have you killed an innocent person who had not killed any one?! You have indeed done a horrible thing!"

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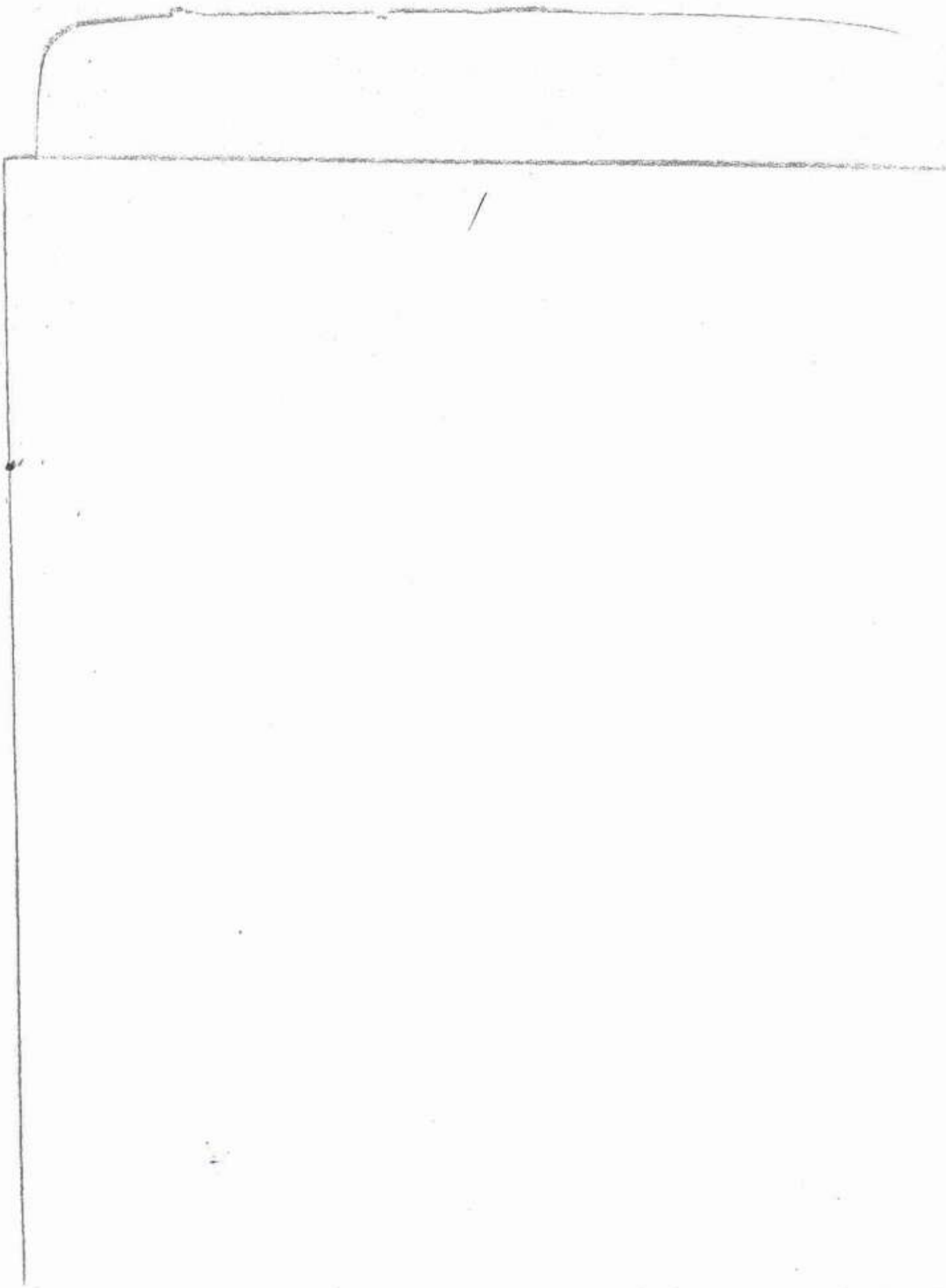
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