

فَاطِر Faatir

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The word *Faatir* of the first very verse is the title given to this Surah, which simply means that it is a Surah in which the word *Faatir* has occurred. The other name is *Al-Malaika*, which also occurs in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The internal evidence of the style shows that the period of the revelation of this Surah is probably the middle Makkan period, and specially that part of it when antagonism had grown quite strong and every sort of mischief was being adopted to frustrate the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Subject Matter and Theme

The discourse is meant to warn and reprove to the people of Makkah and their chiefs for their antagonistic attitude that they had adopted towards the Prophet's (peace be upon him) message of *Tauhid*, as if to say: O people, the message to which this Prophet (peace be upon him) is calling you is to your own advantage. Your anger, your tricks and machinations against it and your conspiracies

and designs to frustrate it are not directed against him but against your own selves. If you do not listen to him, you will be harming your own selves, not him. Just consider and ponder over what he says. There is nothing wrong in it. He repudiates shirk. If you look around carefully, you will realize that there is no basis for shirk in the world. He presents the doctrine of *Tauhid*. If you use your common sense, you will come to the conclusion that there is no being, beside Allah, Creator of the Universe, which might possess divine attributes and powers and authority. He tells you that you have not been created to be irresponsible in this world, but you have to render an account of your deeds before your God, and that there is a life after the life of this world when everyone will meet the consequences of what he has done here. If you think a little, you will see that your doubts and your astonishment about it are absolutely baseless. Don't you see the phenomenon of the reproduction of creation day and night. How can then your own recreation be impossible for that God who created you from an insignificant sperm drop? Doesn't your own intellect testify that the good and the evil cannot be alike? Then think and judge for yourselves as to what is reasonable, should the good and the evil meet with the same fate and end up in the dust, or should the good be requited with good and the evil with evil? Now, if you do not admit and acknowledge these rational and reasonable things and do not abandon your false gods, and wish to continue living only as irresponsible people in the world, the Prophet (peace be upon him) will not lose anything. It is only you

yourselves who will suffer the consequences. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) only responsibility was to make the truth plain to you, which he has done.

In this connection, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been consoled again and again, as if to say: When you are doing full justice to the preaching of your mission, you do not incur any responsibility for those who persist in their error and do not accept and follow the right way. Furthermore, he has also been consoled to the effect: You should neither grieve on account of those who do not want to believe, nor consume yourself with the thought of how to bring them to the right path. Instead of this, you should pay your full attention to those who are inclined to listen to you.

The believers, in this connection, have also been given the good news so that they may feel strengthened and encouraged and remain steadfast on the path of the truth with full faith in the promises made by Allah.

1. All praises be to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, who appointed the angels messengers^{*1} having wings two, and three and four.^{*2} He increases in creation what He wills.^{*3} Indeed, Allah is Able to do all things.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا
أُولَى أَجْنِحَةٍ مَّثْنَى وَثَلَاثَ وَرُبْعَ
يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

*1 This can have two meanings:

(1) That these angels perform the service of communicating messages between Allah and His Prophets.

(2) That it is the duty of these angels to convey and enforce the commands of Allah Almighty throughout the universe.

The object is to impress this truth: The position of the angels whom the polytheists have made their gods and goddesses is no more than of obedient servants of Allah, the One. Just as the servants of a king run about for the implementation of his orders, so do these angels fly about in the service of the real Sovereign of the Universe. These servants have no authority of their own; All powers rest with Allah, Who is the real Sovereign.

*2 We have no means of knowing what is the nature of the wings of these angels. But when Allah has used this word, which in human language is used for the wings of birds, instead of any other words, to express and depict the truth, one can certainly conclude that this very word of our language is nearest to the actual meaning. The mention of two and three and four pairs of the wings shows that different angels have been granted different degrees of powers by Allah. They have been equipped with different powers of speed and efficiency as demanded by the nature of service for which they are employed.

*3 These words show that the number of the wings of the angels is restricted to four, but Allah has provided some angels with more wings than four. According to a Hadith related by Abdullah bin Masud, the Prophet (peace be upon him) once saw the Angel Gabriel with six hundred wings. (Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi). Aishah relates that the

Prophet (peace be upon him) had seen Gabriel twice in his real form: he had six hundred wings and had covered the entire horizon (Tirmidhi).

2. Whatever Allah opens to mankind of mercy, then none can withhold it. And whatever He withholds, then none can release it thereafter.*⁴ And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.*⁵

مَا يَفْتَحِ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ
فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا وَمَا يُمْسِكُ
فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَهُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

*⁴ This is also meant to remove the misunderstanding of the polytheists, who believed that from among the servants of Allah, someone gave them the provision, someone the children and someone health to their patients. All these superstitions of shirk are baseless, and the pure truth is just that whatever of mercy reaches the people, reaches to them only through Allah Almighty's bounty and grace. No one else has the power either to bestow it or to withhold it. This theme has been expressed at many places in the Quran and the *Ahadith* in different ways so that man may avoid the humiliation of begging at every door and at every shrine and may realize that making or marring of his destiny is in the power of One Allah alone and of none else.

*⁵ "He is the All-Mighty": He is dominant and the owner of Sovereignty: none can stop His judgments from being enforced. Also "He is All-Wise": every act of His is based on wisdom. When He gives somebody something He gives because it is demanded by wisdom, and when He withholds

something from somebody, He withholds it because it would be against wisdom to give it.

3. O mankind, remember Allah's favor upon you.*6

Is there any creator other than Allah who provides for you from the heaven and the earth. There is no god except Him. So how are you turning away.*7

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ
عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ هَلْ مِنْ خَلْقٍ غَيْرِ اللّٰهِ
يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ
لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۗ فَاَنۡفِ
تُؤۡفَكُوۡنَ

*6 “Remember Allah's favor upon you”: Do not be ungrateful: do not forget that whatever you have, has been given by Allah. In other words, this sentence is meant to warn that whoever worships other than Allah, or regards a blessing as a favor done by other than Allah, or thanks other than Allah for a favor received, or prays to other than Allah for the grant of a blessing, is ungrateful.

*7 There is a subtle gap between the first and the second sentence, which is being filled by the context itself. To understand this, one may visualize the scene like this: The polytheists are being addressed. The speaker asks the audience: “Is there another creator beside Allah, who might have created you, and might be arranging provisions for you from the earth and heavens?” After this question the speaker waits for the answer. But there is no reply from anywhere. No one replies that there is another one beside Allah, who is their creator and sustainer. This by itself

shows that the audience also believe that there is none beside Allah, who could be their creator and sustainer. Then the speaker says: “If so, then He alone can also be the Deity and no one else. How have you been so deceived? Why have you taken these others as your deities, when Allah alone is your Creator and Sustainer?”

4. And if they deny you (O Muhammad),*⁸ then certainly messengers were denied before you. And to Allah return all matters.*⁹

وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ
رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ
الْأُمُورُ

*⁸ “If they deny”: If they do not believe that there is no one worthy of worship but Allah, and accuse you of having made a false claim to Prophethood.

*⁹ That is, it is not for the people to give the verdict that whomsoever they call a liar should in fact become a liar. The judgment rests with Allah. He shall in the end decide who was the liar, and shall bring the real liars to their evil end.

5. O mankind, indeed, the promise of Allah is true.*¹⁰ So let not deceive you the life of the world,*¹¹ and let not deceive you the great deceiver (Satan) concerning Allah.*¹²

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ
فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا
يَغُرَّنَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ

*¹⁰ “The promise” implies the promise of the Hereafter to which allusion was made in the preceding sentence, saying:

“And to Allah return all matters.”

*11 “Let not deceive you”: Deceive you that the world is an end in itself: that there is no Hereafter when one will have to render an account of one’s deeds: or that even if there is the Hereafter, the one who is enjoying life here will enjoy life there, too.

*12 “Great deceiver”: Satan, as is evident from the next sentence. And “deceive you concerning Allah” means:

(1) That he should make some people believe that Allah does not exist at all.

(2) Involve others in the misunderstanding that Allah after having once created the world, has retired and has now practically nothing to do with the universe any more.

(3) Delude others into believing that Allah no doubt is running the universe, but He has taken no responsibility of providing guidance to man: therefore, revelation and prophethood are a mere deception.

(4) Give still others the false hope that since Allah is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful. He will forgive one whatever sins one might have committed, and that He has some beloved ones too: if one remains attached to them, success and salvation are assured.

6. Indeed, Satan is an enemy for you, so take him as an enemy. He only invites his faction that they may become (the dwellers) of the blazing Fire.

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ
عَدُوًّا ۚ إِنَّمَا يَدْعُوا حِزْبَهُ
لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٦﴾

7. Those who disbelieve,^{*13} theirs will be a severe punishment. And those who believe and do righteous deeds, theirs will be forgiveness and a great reward.^{*14}

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ
وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ
كَبِيرٌ

***13** “Those who disbelieve”: those who will refuse to believe in this invitation of Allah’s Book and His Messenger.

***14** That is, Allah will overlook their errors and will reward them for their good deeds not merely with what they will just deserve but much more richly and generously.

8. Then^{*15} is he to whom the evil of his deed has been made fair seeming, so he deems it good.^{*16} Then indeed, Allah sends astray whom He wills, and guides whom He wills. So do not let yourself perish over them in regret.^{*17} Indeed, Allah is Aware of what they do.^{*18}

أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ
حَسَنًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَلَا تَذْهَبُ
نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَاتٍ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

***15** Verses 3-7 were addressed to the common people. In this paragraph mention has been made of the standard bearers of error and deviation, who were exerting their utmost to frustrate and defeat the mission of the Prophet

(peace be upon him).

***16** That is, one kind of perverted person is he who commits evil but knows and understands that he is committing evil. Such a person can be reformed by counsel and advice, and sometimes his own conscience also pricks and brings him to the right path, for his habits only are perverted, not his mind. But there is another kind of a person whose mentality has been perverted, who has lost the discrimination between good and evil, for whom the life of sin has become alluring and lustrous, who abhors good and takes evil for civilization and culture, who regards goodness and piety as things of the past, and sinfulness and wickedness as progressiveness, and for whom guidance becomes error and error becomes guidance. Such a person is not amenable to any advice and any admonition. He neither takes warning from his own follies nor listens to a well wisher. It is useless to waste one's time and energy for the reformation of such a person. Instead, the inviter to the truth should turn his attention towards those whose consciences may still be alive and who may still be inclined to listen to the truth.

***17** The insertion of the words "Then indeed, Allah sends astray whom He wills, and guides whom He wills" between the preceding and this sentence, clearly gives the meaning that Allah deprives, of the grace of guidance, those who become so perverted mentally, and leaves them to wander aimlessly in the ways in which they themselves wish to remain lost. After making the Prophet (peace be upon him) realize this fact Allah exhorts him to the effect: It is not

within your power to bring such people to the right path; therefore, have patience in their regard. Just as Allah is indifferent about them, so should you also avoid being unduly anxious about their reformation.

Here, one should bear in mind two things very clearly. First, the people being mentioned here were not the common people, but the chiefs of Makkah, who were employing every falsehood, every fraud and every trick to defeat the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him). These people were, in fact, not involved in any misunderstanding about the Prophet (peace be upon him). They knew well what he was calling them to and what were the evils and moral weaknesses which they themselves were striving to maintain. After knowing and understanding all this, they had firmly resolved not to let him succeed in his object. And for this purpose they did not feel any hesitation in using any mean or petty device. Now, evidently the people who deliberately and after annual consultation invent a new falsehood every next day and spread it against a person, can deceive the whole world but as for themselves they know that they are the liars and that the person whom they have accused is free of every blame. Then, if the person against whom the false propaganda is being made also does not react and respond in a way opposed to truth and righteousness, the unjust people also cannot help realizing that their opponent is a truthful and honest man. If in spite of this the people do not feel ashamed of their misconduct and continue to oppose and resist the truth with falsehood, their conduct itself testifies that they are

under Allah's curse and they can no longer discriminate between good and evil.

Secondly, if Allah had only meant to make Prophet (peace be upon him) understand the supreme truth, He could have secretly made him aware of this. There was no need to proclaim it openly in the revelation. To mention it in the Quran and to proclaim it to the world was in fact meant to warn the common people that the leaders and the religious guides whom they were following blindly were the people of perverted mentality, whose mean conduct was itself an evidence that they were under the curse of Allah.

***18** This sentence in itself contains the threat that a time is coming when Allah will punish them for their misdeeds. When a ruler says that he is fully aware of the misdeeds of a culprit, it does not only mean that the ruler has the knowledge of his misconduct, but it necessarily contains the warning that he will certainly punish him for this.

9. And Allah it is who sends the winds so that they raise up the clouds, then We drive them to a dead land, then We revive therewith the earth after its death. As such will be the Resurrection.^{*19}

وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ
سَحَابًا فَسُقْنَهُ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ
فَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا
كَذَٰلِكَ النُّشُورُ

***19** That is, these ignorant people think that the Hereafter is impossible. That is why they are living under the delusion that they may do whatever they like in the world, the time will never come when they will have to appear before their

God and render an account of their deeds. But this is no more than a delusion. On the Day of Resurrection, the dead men of all ages will suddenly rise back to life at one call of Allah just as the dead earth comes back to life at one shower of the rain and the roots, lying dead for ages, become green and start sprouting up from the layers of the earth.

10. Whoever desires honor (through power), then to Allah belongs all the honor.*²⁰ To Him ascend good words, and the righteous deeds does He exalt.*²¹ And those who plot evil deeds,*²² for them will be a severe punishment. And the plotting of those, it will perish.

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ
جَمِيعًا ۗ إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ
الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ ۗ
وَالَّذِينَ يَمْكُرُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ لَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۖ وَمَكْرُ أُولَٰئِكَ
هُوَ يَبُورُ



*²⁰ It should be noted that whatever the chiefs of the Quraish were doing against the Prophet (peace be upon him), they were doing it for the sake of their honor and dignity. They thought that if the Prophet (peace be upon him) succeeded in his mission, their greatness and glory would fade away, their influence would die out and their honor among the Arabs would be ruined. At this it is being said: The honor that you have attained for yourselves by your disbelief and rebellion against Allah is a false honor, which is destined to be ruined. The real and enduring

honor, which can never suffer debasement, can be attained only through service of Allah. If you turn sincerely and faithfully to Him, you will attain it. And if you turn away from Him, you are bound to live an abject and wretched life.

***21** This is the real means of attaining the honor. In the sight of Allah, the false, vicious and mischievous can never rise and flourish. In His sight only such a word can rise and flourish which is honest and pure and is based on the truth, and in which a righteous creed and a correct point of view may have been expressed and presented. Then the thing which makes the pure word to rise and prosper is the action which conforms to it. Wherever the word is pure but the action is opposed to it, the purity of the word suffers a blemish. The mere extravagant rise of the tongue does not exalt a word: the power of the righteous action is needed to exalt and raise it high.

Here, one should also note that the Quran presents the righteous word and the righteous action as interdependent. No action can be righteous merely on the basis of its external and apparent form unless it has a righteous creed behind it. And no righteous creed can be reliable unless it is supported and confirmed by a person's action. For instance, if a person says that he regards Allah, the One, alone as his Deity, but worships others than Allah in practical life, his action belies his word. If a person says that he regards the wine as unlawful but drinks it, his mere word can neither be acceptable to the people nor deserve approval in the sight of Allah.

***22** “Those who plot evil”: Those who propagate false and evil words by means of cunning tricks, deceit and deceptive reasoning, and do not feel any hesitation in employing any device, however mean and depraved, to frustrate and defeat the word of the truth.

11. And Allah^{*23} created you from dust, then from a sperm drop,^{*24} then He made you pairs (male and female). And no female conceives, nor gives birth, except with His knowledge. And no one grows old who grows old, nor is it lessened of his life, but it is in a Book.^{*25} Indeed, that is easy for Allah.^{*26}

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ
نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمَا
تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أَثْقَالٍ وَلَا تَضَعُ إِلَّا
بِعِلْمِهِ وَمَا يُعَمَّرُ مِنْ مُعَمَّرٍ
وَلَا يُنْقَصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهِ إِلَّا فِي
كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ



***23** From here again the discourse is directed to the common people.

***24** That is, man in the first instance was created from the dust directly. Then his race was perpetuated through the sperm-drop.

***25** That is, it is pre-ordained for everyone who is born in this world how long he will live. If a person lives a long life, he does so by Allah’s decree, and if another one lives a short life, he too lives so by Allah’s decree. Some ignorant people give the argument that in the past the death rate of

the newly born children used to be high, and now it has been checked by the advancement of the medical science. And the people used to live short lives in the past, now due to better medical facilities the life span has increased. But this argument could be presented in refutation of the Quranic argument only when it could be ascertained that Allah, for instance, had preordained a two year life for a certain person, and the modern medical facilities have enhanced it by a day. If a person has no such knowledge, he cannot refute this Quranic statement on any rational grounds. Only on the basis of the statistics that the death rate among children has fallen, or that the people now are living longer lives, it cannot be argued that man has now become able to change the decrees of Allah. Rationally it is not impossible that Allah might have fixed different life spans for the people born in different periods, and this might also be Allah Almighty's decree that man in such and such an age would be granted curative power to treat such and such diseases, and in such and such a period man would be given greater means for longevity.

*26 That is, it is not at all difficult for Allah to give commands and pass judgments about each individual of His countless creations when He possesses detailed and perfect knowledge about them.

12. And the two seas are not alike.*27 This, fresh, sweet, good to drink, and this (other) bitter, salty. And from each you eat

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرَانِ هَذَا
عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَائِغٌ شْرَابُهُ
وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَمِنْ كُلِّ

fresh meat,^{*28} and extract the ornament that you wear.^{*29} And you see the ship cleaving them (the seawaters as they sail), that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may give thanks.

تَأْكُلُونَ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا
وَتَسْتَخْرِجُونَ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا
وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ فِيهِ مَوَاحِرَ
لِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ
تَشْكُرُونَ



***27** That is, the body of water in the oceans, and the body of water in the rivers and springs and lakes.

***28** “Fresh meat”: Meat of water animals.

***29** That is pearls and corals and, in some rivers, diamonds and gold.

13. He causes to pass the night into the day and He causes to pass the day into the night.^{*30} And He has subjected the sun and the moon, each running its course for a term appointed.^{*31} That is Allah, your Lord, His is the sovereignty. And those whom you call upon instead of Him do not possess (so much as) the membrane of a date seed (a blade of grass).^{*32}

يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُؤَلِّجُ
النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ
وَالْقَمَرَ كُلًّا يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ
مُسَمًّى ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ
الْمَلَكُ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قِطْمِيرٍ



***30** That is, the light of the day starts diminishing and the

darkness of the night increasing gradually so as to cover up everything completely. Likewise, towards the end of the night, in the beginning, a streak of the light appears on the horizon, and then the bright day dawns.

*31 “Subjected ”: means subjected to a law.

*32 The word *qitmir* in the original means the thin skin that covers the stone of the date fruit; but what is meant to be said is that the gods of the mushriks do not own anything whatever. That is why we have translated it “a blade of grass”, which is an insignificant thing.

14. If you call upon them, they do not hear your call. And if they heard, they would not respond to you.*33 And on the Day of Resurrection they will deny your association.*34

And none can inform you like Him who is the All Knower.*35

إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا
دُعَاءَكُمْ وَلَوْ سَمِعُوا مَا
اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
يَكْفُرُونَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ وَلَا يُنَبِّئُكَ
مِثْلُ خَبِيرٍ



*33 This does not mean that they cannot tell aloud, in answer to your prayer whether your prayer has been accepted or not, but it means that they cannot take any action on your supplications. If a person sends his application to someone who is not a ruler, his application miscarries. For, the person to whom it has been sent, who has no authority whatever: he can neither reject it nor accept it. However, if the same application is sent to the one who is really a ruler, one or the other action will certainly

be taken on it.

***34** That is, they will plainly say: We had never told them that we are Allah's associates and that they should worship us. On the contrary, we were not at all aware that they regarded us as Allah's associates and were invoking us for help. None of their prayers has reached us, nor has any of their gifts and offerings.

***35** "All-Knower": Allah Almighty Himself. It means this: The other person can at the most refine shirk and prove the powerlessness of the gods of the polytheists by rational arguments only, but We are directly aware of the absolute truth. We are telling you, on the basis of knowledge, that all those whom the people believe to be possessing some powers in Our Godhead are absolutely powerless. They have no authority whatsoever by which they might do somebody good or harm. And We know this directly that on the Day of Resurrection, these gods of the mushriks will themselves refute their shirk.

15. O mankind, you are those in need^{*36} of Allah. And Allah, He is Self Sufficient, Praiseworthy.^{*37}

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ
إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ



***36** That is, you should not remain under the delusion that Allah stands in need of your help. If you do not accept Him as God, His Godhead will fail, and if you do not serve and worship Him, He will incur some loss. Nay, but the fact is that you stand in need of Him. You cannot remain alive for

a moment if He does not keep you alive, and does not provide you with the means by which you remain alive in the world and function. Therefore, when you are told to adopt His service and obedience, it is not because Allah stands in need of it, but because upon it depends your own success here as well as in the Hereafter. If you do not do so, you will be harming your own selves only, and not Allah in any way.

*37 The word *Ghani* implies that He is the Owner of everything: He is Self-sufficient and Independent of all. He does not stand in need of anyone's help. The word *Hamid* implies that He is Self-Praiseworthy: someone may praise Him, or may not, but He alone is worthy of *hamd* (praise and gratitude). These two attributes have been used together because one would be *ghani* even if one did not do any good to anyone by one's wealth. In such a case one would be *ghani* but not *hamid* One will be *hamid* only in case one does not draw any benefit for oneself but benefits others in every way from the treasures of his wealth and resources. Since Allah is perfect in these two attributes, it has been said: "He is not just *Ghani* (self-sufficient) but such *Ghani* as is worthy of every kind of praise and gratitude, for He is fulfilling your needs as well as the needs of all other creatures.

16. If He wills, He could take you away, and bring forth a new creation.

إِنْ يَشَاءُ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ
جَدِيدٍ



17. And that is not difficult for Allah.*38

وَمَا ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ ﴿١٧﴾

*38 That is, you are not enjoying life on Allah's earth solely by dint of your own power and might. He has the power to remove you from here in no time and raise another people to take your place. Therefore, you should understand your true worth, and should desist from adopting the conduct which has been causing the downfall of the nations. When Allah wills to send someone to his doom, there is no one in the universe, who can stop Him and withhold His decree from being enforced.

18. And no bearer of burdens shall bear another's burden.*39 And if a heavy laden calls for (help with) his load, nothing of it will be lifted, even if he be of near kin.*40 You can warn only those who fear their Lord unseen, and establish prayer.*41 And he who purifies himself, then he purifies only for (the benefit of) his own self. And to Allah is the journeying.

وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۗ
وَإِنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ إِلَىٰ جِمْلِهَآ لَا
يُحْمَلْ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا
قُرْبَىٰ ۗ إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ
يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ
وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۗ وَمَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ
فَإِنَّمَا يَتَزَكَّىٰ لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ
الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾

*39 "Burden": the burden of the responsibilities of actions. It means: In the sight of Allah every one is responsible for

his own actions and for no one else's. There is no possibility that Allah will place the burden of one man's responsibility upon the other, nor is there the possibility that a person will take the burden of another's responsibility upon himself and get himself seized for the crime committed by the other. This thing has been said here because the polytheist kinsmen and relatives of the people who were embracing Islam in Makkah, used to urge them, saying, Give up Islam and return to your ancestral faith. We take the responsibility of any punishment etc. on ourselves.

***40** In the preceding sentence, Allah's law of justice has been enunciated, according to which He will not seize any person for the sin committed by another, but will hold everyone responsible for his own sin. In this sentence the Muslims have been told: Those who urge you to give up faith and commit evil on the assurance that they will take on themselves the burden of your sins on the Day of Resurrection, are in fact giving you a false hope. When Resurrection comes and the people see what fate they are going to meet in consequence of their misdeed, everyone will be concerned only about himself. Brother will turn away from brother and father from son, and no one will be prepared to take even an atom's weight of another's burden on himself.

***41** In other words, your warnings cannot have any effect on obstinate and stubborn people. Your admonitions can bring only such people to the right path who have fear of God in their hearts and who are inclined to bow before their real Master.

19. Not alike are the blind and the seeing.

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ



20. Nor (are alike) the darkness, nor the light.

وَلَا الظُّلْمَتُ وَلَا النُّورُ



21. Nor (are alike) the shade, nor the sun's heat.

وَلَا الظِّلُّ وَلَا الحَرُّورُ



22. And not alike are the living, nor the dead.^{*42} Indeed, Allah makes to hear whom He wills. And you cannot make hear those who are in the graves.^{*43}

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا
الْأَمْوَاتُ^ج إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ^ط وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّنْ فِي
الْقُبُورِ



***42** In these comparisons the present and the future of a believer and a disbeliever have been contrasted. There is a person who has closed his eyes to the realities and does not care to see as to what truth the whole system of the universe and his own existence itself are pointing. There is the other person, whose eyes are open and who clearly sees that everything outside and inside himself bears evidence to the Unity of God and to man's answerability before him. There is a person, who is wandering blindly in the superstitions of ignorance and the darkness of presumptions and speculations, and is not inclined to benefit by the light of the candle lit by the Prophet. There is the other person,

whose eyes are open and who, as soon as the light spread by the Prophet appears before him, comes to realize that all the ways being followed by the polytheists and the disbelievers and the atheists lead to destruction, and the way to success is only that which has been shown by the Messenger of God. Now how can it be possible that the attitude of the two persons be the same in the world and the two may follow one and the same path together? And how can this also be possible, either that the two should meet the same end and should both end up in the dust after death? Neither should one be punished for his wrongdoings, nor the other be rewarded for his righteous conduct. The sentence, “the cool shade and the heat of the sun are not alike” points to the same fate. The one will be provided shelter under the shade of Allah’s mercy and the other will burn in the fire of Hell. Thus, the notions that the two will ultimately meet the same end, is utterly false. In the end, the believer has been likened to the living and the stubborn disbeliever to the dead. That is, the believer is he whose feeling, understanding and perception are alive and whose conscience is making him aware of the distinction between the good and the evil every moment. Contrary to this, the person who has been, wholly lost in the prejudices of disbelief is even worse than the blind person who is wandering about in darkness. Nay, he is like a dead person who has no sense or feeling left in him.

***43** That is, as for the powers of Allah, they are unlimited. He can even make the stones to hear. But it is not within the power of the Messenger to make those people to listen to

him whose consciences have become dead and whose ears deaf to every call to the truth. He can only make those people to hear him, who are inclined to listen to every reasonable thing.

23. You are not but a warner.*44

إِنَّ أَنْتَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ

“44 That is, your only duty is to warn the people and nothing else. If even after this a person does not come to his senses, and remains lost in his deviations, you are not to blame for that, for you have not been entrusted with the duty of making the blind to see and the deaf to hear.

24. Indeed, We have sent you with the truth, a bearer of good tidings and a warner. And there was not a nation but that there had passed in them a warner.*45

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا
وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ



*45 That there has been no community in the world for whose guidance Allah did not appoint the Prophets. This has been stated at several places in the Quran. In Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 7, it was said: “Every people has its guide”. In Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 10: “O Prophet, We have already sent Messengers before you among many of the ancient peoples”. In Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 36: “We sent to every community a Messenger” and in Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat: 208: “We have never destroyed a habitation unless it had its warners to administer admonition”. But, in this connection, one should note two things so that there remains no misunderstanding. First, one and the same

Prophet is enough for the lands to which his message may reach. It is not necessary that Prophets be sent to every separate habitation and to every separate community. Second, no new Prophet needs to be sent as long as the message and teaching and guidance given by a previous Prophet remains safe and intact. It is not necessary that a separate Prophet be sent for every race and every generation.

25. And if they deny you, then certainly, those before them have denied. Their messengers came to them with clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty),^{*46} and with the Scriptures, and with the enlightening Book.^{*47}

وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ جَاءَتْهُمْ
رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
وَبِالْزُبُرِ
وَبِالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ﴿٢٥﴾

***46** "Clear proofs": Proofs which clearly testified that they were Allah's Messengers.

***47** "Scriptures" probably consisted of good counsels and moral precepts and "the Book" comprised a complete code of the law.

26. Then I seized those who disbelieved, then how (terrible) was My reproach.

ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَكَيْفَ
كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿٢٦﴾

27. Do you not see that Allah sends down water from the sky, then We produce therewith fruits of

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ

divers colors. And in the mountains are tracts, white and red of divers colors, and raven-black.

مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ
جُدَدٌ بِيضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ
أَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٌ

28. And among people and beasts and cattle of divers colors, in like manner.*48 Only those fear Allah, among His slaves, who have knowledge.*49 Indeed, Allah is All Mighty, Oft Forgiving.*50

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالْدَّوَابِّ
وَالْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ
كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ
عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ
غَفُورٌ

*48 This is meant to impress that in the universe created by Allah nowhere is there homogeneity and uniformity; there is variety everywhere. From the same earth and by the same water different kinds of trees are appearing. Even the two pieces of the fruit of the same tree are not uniform in color and size and taste. In the same mountain one will see a variety of colors and a great difference in the material composition of its different parts. Even among human beings and animals one will not see two offspring of the same parents exactly alike. If a person seeks uniformity of the temperaments and dispositions and mentalities in this universe and is bewildered at the differences which have been alluded to in verses 19-22 above, it will be his own

perception and understanding to blame. This same variety and difference, in fact, point to the reality that this universe has been created by a Wise Being with great wisdom; its Maker is a Unique Creator and a Matchless Fashioner, Who does not have the same model of everything before Him, but has a variety of countless and limitless designs of everything. Then if one ponders over the differences in human temperaments and minds, in particular, one will see that it is not a mere accident, but in fact the masterpiece of the wisdom of creation. If all human beings had been created with the uniform temperaments and desires and feelings and inclinations and ways of thinking, and no room had been left for any difference, it would have been absolutely useless to bring about a new creation like man in the world. When the Creator decided to bring into existence a responsible creation, a creation having power and authority, the necessary inevitable demand of the nature of the decision was that room for all sorts of differences should be provided in its nature and structure. This is the main proof of the fact that the creation of man is not the result of an accident, but the result of a wonderful and wise plan and design. And obviously, wherever there is a wise plan and design, there must necessarily be a Wise Being working behind it, for the existence of wisdom without a Wise Being would be un-imaginable.

***49** That is, the more a person is unaware of the attributes of Allah, the more he will be fearless of Him. Contrary to this, the more a person is aware and conscious of Allah's powers, His knowledge, His wisdom, His vengeance and His

omnipotence and His other attributes, the more he will fear His disobedience. Thus, in fact, knowledge in this verse does not imply knowledge of academic subjects like philosophy and science and history and mathematics, etc. but the knowledge of divine attributes, no matter whether one is literate or illiterate. The one who is fearless of God is illiterate merely as regards to this knowledge even if he has all the knowledge of the world. And the one who knows the attributes of God and fears Him in his heart, is learned even if he is illiterate. In the same connection, one should also know that in this verse the *ulama* does not imply the scholars in the technical sense, who are termed as religious scholars because of their knowledge of the Quran and Hadith and Fiqh and philosophy. They will prove true to this verse only when they possess fear of God in their hearts. The same thing has been said by Abdullah bin Masud, thus: Knowledge is not due to much narration of Hadith but due to much fear of Allah. And also by Hassan Basri, thus: The scholar is he who fears Allah though he has not seen Him, and turns to what is approved by Him and keeps away from what makes Him angry.

***50** That is, He is All-Mighty, and therefore, can seize the disobedient as and when He likes: no one can escape His grasp. But He is All-Forgiving also and is, therefore, giving respite to the wrongdoers.

29. Indeed, those who recite the Book of Allah, and establish prayer, and spend of that which We have

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ
وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا

bestowed on them, secretly and openly, they hope for a trade gain that will never perish.

رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً
يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّن تَبُورَ

30. That He may pay them in full their wages, and increase them of His bounty.^{*51} Indeed, He is Forgiving, Responsive.^{*52}

لِيُوفِّيَهُمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ
شَكُورٌ

***51** This kind of conduct and practice of the believers has been likened to a trade bargain because in trade a man invests his money and labor and capabilities in the hope that he will not only get his capital back and his wages for the time and energy spent but in addition some profit as well. Likewise, a believer also invests his wealth and his time and his labor and capabilities in carrying out Allah's commands and in His service and worship and in the struggle to promote the cause of His religion in the hope that he will not only get his full rewards for it but Allah will bless him with much more from His bounty as well. But there is a great difference between the two kinds of bargains. In the worldly trade bargains there is the risk of loss also along with the hope of profits. Contrary to this, in the bargain that a sincere servant makes with his God there is no risk of any loss whatever.

***52** That is, Allah's relation with the sincere believers is not that of a miserly master who checks his servant on trivialities and brings all his services and loyalties to naught

on account of a minor error. But Allah is the Most Beneficent and Generous Master. He overlooks the errors of His obedient servant and appreciates whatever service he might be able to render.

31. And what We have revealed to you (O Muhammad) of the Book, it is the truth, confirming what was before it.*53
Indeed, Allah is All Aware, Seer of His slaves.*54

وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ
الْكِتَابِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا
بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ
بَصِيرٌ

***53** It means: This Book is not presenting anything new which might be opposed to the teaching brought by the former Prophets, but it is presenting the same eternal truth which all the Prophets have been presenting from the very beginning.

***54** The object of mentioning these attributes of Allah here is to arouse the people to the aims and ideals in which their true well being lies, to the principles which alone can afford the right guidance and to the rules and regulations which are precisely in accordance with them. None can know these except Allah, because He alone is aware of the nature of His servants and its demands, and He alone watches over their well-being and affairs. The people do not know their own selves as much as their Creator knows them. Therefore, the truth is that, and can only be that, which He has taught by revelation.

32. Then We made to inherit

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ

the Book to those whom We have chosen of Our slaves.*55

So among them are those who wrong themselves. And among them are those who follow a middle course. And among them are those foremost in good deeds, by Allah's permission. That is what is the great bounty.*56

أَصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ
ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ
وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ إِذِنَ
اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ
الْكَبِيرُ



*55 This implies the Muslims, who have been sorted out from all mankind so that they may become heirs to the Book of Allah, and convey its message to others after the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Though this Book has been presented before all human beings, those who accepted it in the first instance, were chosen for the honor to become heirs to a great Book like the Quran and the trustees of the teaching and guidance imparted by a great Messenger like the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

*56 That is, All these Muslims are not alike but are divided into three classes:

(1) Those unjust to themselves: They are those who believe sincerely and honestly that the Quran is the Book of Allah and Muhammad (peace be upon him) the Messenger of Allah, but in practical life they do not fully follow the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. They are believers but sinful; culprits but not rebellious; weak of faith but not hypocritical and unbelieving at heart.

Therefore, although they are unjust to themselves, they have been included among the chosen servants of God and among the heirs to the Book; otherwise, obviously the rebels and the hypocrites and the unbelieving people could not be so treated and honored. This class of the believers has been mentioned first of All because they are most numerous among the Muslims.

(2) Those following the middle course: They are the people who fulfill the obligations of this inheritance to some extent but not fully. They are obedient as well as erring. They have not left their self altogether free but try as best as they can to turn it to God's obedience. However, at times they give it undue freedom and become involved in sin. Thus, their life becomes a combination of both the good and the evil actions. They are less numerous than the first group but more than the third; that is why they have been mentioned second.

(3) Those excelling in good deeds: They are the people of the first rank among the heirs to the Book, and they are the ones who are doing full justice to the inheritance. They are in the forefront in following and adhering to the Book and the Sunnah; in conveying the message of God to His servants, in offering the sacrifices for the sake of the true faith, and in every pious and good work. They are not the ones who would commit a sin deliberately, but if they happened to commit a sin inadvertently, they would be filled with remorse as soon as they became conscious of it. They are less numerous than the people of the first two groups, and therefore, have been mentioned last, although

they merit the first place in the matter of doing justice to the heritage of the Book of Allah.

As for the sentence, “the great bounty”, if it is related with the last sentence, it would mean that to excel in good deeds is the great bounty, and the people who excel in good deeds are the best of the Muslim community. And if it is taken to be related with the first sentence, it would mean that to be a heir to the Book of Allah and to be chosen for this heritage is the great bounty, and the people who have been so chosen on account of their faith in the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are the best among the human beings created by Allah.

33. Gardens of Eden, which they will enter.^{*57} They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and pearl, and their garments therein (will be) silk.

جَنَّتْ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُحَلَّوْنَ
فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤًا
وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ

***57** One section of the commentators has held the view that this sentence is related with the two sentences immediately preceding it. That is, the ones who excel in good deeds are the best of the people and they alone will enter the Gardens. As for the first two groups, nothing has been stated about them so that they became worried concerning their fate and try to improve their lot. This view has been presented by Allama Zamakhshari forcefully and supported by Imam Razi.

But the majority of the commentators opine that it is related with the whole preceding discourse, which means

that all the three classes of the ummah shall eventually enter Paradise, whether without accountability, or after the accountability, whether remaining secure from every punishment, or after receiving some punishment. This commentary is supported by the Quranic context, for a little below about those who are contrasted with the heirs of the Book, it has been said: “And for those who have disbelieved, there is the fire of Hell.” This shows that there is Paradise for all those who have believed in the Book, and Hell for all those who have refused to believe in it. The same has been supported by the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which Imam Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani, Baihaqi and some other traditionalists have related on the authority of Abu ad-Darda. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Those who have excelled in good works shall enter Paradise without accountability; and those who are following the middle course, shall be subjected to accountability; but their accountability shall be light. As for those who have been unjust to themselves, they shall be detained throughout the long period of Resurrection and accountability (*mahshar*). Then Allah shall cover them also with His mercy. And they are the ones who will say: Thanks to Allah Who has removed sorrow from us.

In this Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) has himself given a complete commentary of the verse under discussion, and stated separately the end to be met by each of the three groups of the believers. The light accountability for the ones following the middle course means this: The

disbelievers will be punished for their disbelief as well as for each single crime and sin of theirs separately, but, contrary to this, the good and bad deeds of the believers who come with both the good and evil deeds will be judged on the whole: they will not be rewarded for each good deed and punished for each evil deed separately. As for those who will be detained throughout the period of Resurrection and accountability because they had been unjust to themselves, it means: They will not be thrown into Hell, but will be sentenced to be detained till the rising of the court. In other words, they will be exposed to all the severities and rigors of the lengthy Day of Resurrection (and God alone knows how lengthy it will be) till Allah Almighty will turn to them in His mercy and command at the rising of the court that they too be admitted into Paradise. The traditionists have cited several sayings to the same effect from many companions like Umar, Uthman, Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Abbas, Aishah, Abu Said Khudri and Bara bin Azib. And obviously, the companions could not have said any such thing in such matters unless they had heard it from the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. But from this one should not form the impression that those who have been unjust to themselves from among the Muslims will only be sentenced to be detained till the rising of the court, and none of them will go to Hell at all. Several crimes have been mentioned in the Quran and Hadith, whose perpetrator will go to Hell in spite of his faith. For instance, Allah Himself has declared that the believer who kills another believer willfully shall go to Hell. Likewise,

Hell has been mentioned as the punishment of those people also who violate the provisions of the divine law of inheritance. Those who devour interest even after its prohibition have been declared to be the dwellers of Hell. Besides these, some other major sins have also been mentioned in Hadith, whose perpetrator shall go to Hell.

34. And they will say: “All the praises be to Allah, who has removed grief (sorrow) from us.^{*58} Indeed, Our Lord is Forgiving, Bounteous.”^{*59}

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ
عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ إِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُورٌ
شَكُورٌ

***58** “Sorrow”: Sorrow of every kind: sorrows and griefs and worries of the world and of the Hereafter with regard to the final end. It means: Now we have nothing to worry about: now there can be no question of any sorrow and trouble afflicting us here.

***59** That is He has forgiven us our errors, has appreciated whatever little provision of deeds we had brought and blessed us with His Paradise as a reward.

35. “He who has lodged us in an eternal abode by His grace.^{*60} There will not touch us in it any fatigue, nor will touch us in it weariness.”^{*61}

الَّذِي أَحَلَّنَا دَارَ الْمُقَامَةِ مِنْ
فَضْلِهِ لَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا نُصَبٌ
وَلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا لُغُوبٌ

***60** That is, the world was a stage in our journey of life, which we have crossed, and the plain of Resurrection also is a stage of the same journey, which we have also crossed.

Now we have reached a place which is our eternal abode: we have not to go elsewhere from here.

***61** In other words, all our toils and afflictions have come to an end. Now we do not have to perform any work here in carrying out which we might have to experience any rigor or hardship and after carrying out which we might be fatigued.

36. And those who disbelieve, ^{*62} for them is the fire of Hell. Neither will it be decreed on them that they should die, nor will its punishment be lightened for them. Thus do We recompense every ungrateful.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ
لَا يُقْضَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَمُوتُوا وَلَا
يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِهَا
كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي كُلَّ كَافِرٍ

***62** “Who disbelieved”: Who have refused to believe in the Book which Allah has sent down on Muhammad (peace be upon him).

37. And they will cry for help therein. (saying): “Our Lord, bring us out, we will do righteous deeds, other than what we used to do.” Did We not grant you a life (long enough), so could have remembered therein, whoever wanted to remember. ^{*63} And the warner had come to you. So taste,

وَهُمْ يَصْطَرِحُونَ فِيهَا رَبَّنَا
أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ
الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ۗ أَوَلَمْ
نُعْمِرْكُمْ مَا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَنْ
تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمْ النَّذِيرُ فَذُوقُوا

then for wrongdoers there is no helper.

فَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

***63** This implies every such age of life in which a person may be able to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, if he likes to, and turn to right guidance instead of deviation, if he wishes. If a person has died before attaining such an age, he will not be called to any account according to this verse. However, the one who has attained this age will certainly be held answerable for his actions. Then, as long as he lives after attaining this age and gets more and more opportunities for choosing and adopting the right path, his responsibility also will increase accordingly; so much so that the one who does not adopt right guidance even in old age will have no chance left for making any excuse. This same thing has been reported by Abu Hurairah and Sahl bin Saad as-Saidi in a Hadith, saying: "The one who lives a short life has an excuse to offer, but there is no room for making an excuse for him who lives for 60 years or more." (Bukhari Ahmad, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim).

38. Indeed, Allah is Knower of the unseen of the heavens and the earth. Indeed, He is Knower of what is in the breasts.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ غَيْبِ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. He it is who has made you successors upon the earth.^{*64} So whoever disbelieves, upon

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ

him will be his disbelief.*65
 And does not increase for the disbelievers, their disbelief, with their Lord except in hatred. And does not increase for the disbelievers, their disbelief, except in loss.

وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا مَقْتًا وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرَهُمْ إِلَّا خَسَارًا



*64 This can have two meanings:

- (1) Now He has settled you on His earth after the passing away of the previous generations and nations.
- (2) The powers and authority that He has given to you over different things in the earth are not meant to make you the owners of these things but are meant to enable you to function as the representatives of their real Owner.

*65 If the previous sentence is taken to mean that you have been made successors to the previous nations, this sentence would mean this: The one who did not learn any lesson from the fate of the previous nations and adopted the conduct of disbelief due to which those nations have gone to their doom, will himself see the evil end of his folly. And if the sentence is taken to mean this that Allah has delegated to you powers and authority as His vicegerents in the earth, this sentence would mean: He who forgot this position of vicegerency and became independent, or he who adopted service of someone else, apart from his real Master, would see the evil end of his rebellious conduct himself.

40. Say: "Have you seen your associates of yours

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ شُرَكَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ

(gods) ^{*66} to whom you call upon besides Allah. Show me what they have created of the earth, or do they have any share in the heavens.” Or have We given them a book so they are on clear proof there from. ^{*67} But the wrongdoers do not promise one another except delusion. ^{*68}

تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أُرُونِي مَاذَا
خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ أَمْ آتَيْنَهُمْ كِتَابًا
فَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْهُ ۚ بَلْ إِنْ
يَعِدُّ الظَّالِمُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ
بَعْضًا إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿٤٠﴾

***66** “Associates of yours”, because they are not in fact the associates of Allah, but the ones whom the polytheists themselves have made associates of Allah.

***67** That is, do they possess a written sanction from Us in which We might have indicated that We have given such and such persons the powers to heal the sick, or to get jobs for the jobless, or to fulfill needs of the needy, or that We have made such and such beings Our representatives in such and such parts of the earth and now it is in their hands to make or mar the destinies of the people of those parts; therefore, Our servants now should pray to them and present gifts and offerings before them, and for whatever blessings they receive they should thank those demigods only? If you possess any such sanction, produce it. And if you have no such sanction, you should consider on what grounds you have invented these polytheistic creeds and practices. When you are asked as to what sign is there in the heavens and the earth that may point to your self

invented gods as being God's associates, you cannot point out any. When you are asked to produce any divine sanction from any Book of Allah, or from your own possession, or from the possession of your self-invented gods, which may testify to God's having Himself delegated to them those powers which you assign to them, you do not produce any. What then is the basis of your these creeds and concepts? Are you the owners of the divine rights and powers that you may assign and distribute them to whomsoever you please?

***68** That is, these religious guides, saints, priests, sorcerers, preachers and attendants of shrines and their agents are fooling the people for selfish motives, and are concocting stories to give them false hopes that if they became the followers of such and such personalities, apart from God, they would have all their wishes and needs fulfilled in the world, and all their sins, no matter-how grave and numerous, forgiven by Allah in the Hereafter.

41. Indeed, Allah holds the heavens and the earth, lest they move away (from their places). And if they were to move away, there is no one that could hold them after Him.^{*69} Indeed, He is Forbearing, Oft Forgiving.^{*70}

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُمْسِكُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَزُولَا ۚ وَلَئِنْ زَالَتَا
إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنْ
بَعْدِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ﴾



***69** That is, this limitless universe is being sustained by

Allah alone. No angel, or jinn, or prophet, or saint can sustain it. Not to speak of sustaining the universe these helpless creatures do not even have the power to sustain their own selves. Each one of them is entirely dependent on Allah Almighty for his birth and survival every moment. To think that any one of them has any share in the attributes and powers of divinity is sheer folly and deception.

***70** That is, it is Allah's Clemency and Forbearance that He is not seizing the culprits immediately in punishment in spite of All kinds of disobedience which are being shown towards Him.

42. And they swore by Allah, their most binding oath, that if a warner came to them they would surely be more guided than any of the nations.^{*71} Yet, when a warner came to them, it did not increase them except in aversion to the truth.

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ
لَئِن جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ لَّيَكُونُنَّ
أَهْدَىٰ مِنْ إِحْدَى الْأُمَمِ فَلَمَّا
جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ مَّا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا
نُفُورًا



***71** Before the advent of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the same thing used to be said by the Arabs, in general, and by the Quraish, in particular, when they witnessed the moral degeneration of the Jews and the Christians. Mention of this saying of theirs has also been made in Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 156-157 and in Surah As-Saffat, Ayats 167-169.

43. Arrogance in the land and plotting of the evil. And the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then, are they awaiting (anything) except the way (fate) of the former peoples.^{*72} So you will never find in the way of Allah any change. And you will never find in the way of Allah any alteration.

أَسْتِكْبَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَكْرَ السَّيِّئِ وَلَا تَحْقِيقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئِ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا سُنَّتَ الْأَوَّلِينَ فَلَن تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَلَن تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا



***72** That is, this Law of Allah that the nation which repudiates its Prophet, is destroyed should be applied in their case as well.

44. Have they not traveled in the land and seen how was the end of those before them. And they were mightier than these in power. And Allah is not such that anything escapes Him in the heavens, nor in the earth. Indeed, He is All Knowing, All Omnipotent.

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَكَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعْجِزَهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا قَدِيرًا



45. And if Allah were to seize the people for what they earned, He would not leave on its (earth) surface a living creature, but He reprieves them unto an appointed term. Then when their term comes, then indeed Allah is ever All Seer of His slaves.

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِمَا
كَسَبُوا مَا تَرَكَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهَا
مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَى
أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ بَصِيرًا

