



AL-A‘RĀF

(THE HEIGHTS)

Salient Features

1. **Revealed at Makkah.**
2. **Contains 24 Sections and 206 Āyāt.**
3. **Deals with basic beliefs of Islam; the Unity of Allah and the importance of Prophethood to comprehend His Greatness and attain His Cognition, through a process known as Tazkiyah.**

Surāh Al A'rāf (THE HEIGHTS)

The foundation of Islam is on the transparent belief in the Unity of **Allah**. The relationship between man and **Allah** is such that the former must present his needs only before **Him**, display his utter humility and insignificance. The theme of the preceding Surāh is further expanded here, with emphasis on the importance of the Prophethood, because no one can, on his own, comprehend **Allah's** Magnificence. **He** is beyond human senses. **Allah's** Cognition is a feeling induced into the human heart, and this honour is conferred upon the subtle hearts of **His** Prophets^{-AS} through Revelations. They distribute these blessings amongst their followers, through a process known as Tazkiyah. In other words, the heart that receives this light is purified and capacitated to comprehend the Divine Book and the Wisdom. Thus the cognition of the Prophet^{-AS} paves the way to the Cognition of **Allah**. This Sūrah discusses the importance of Prophethood, supporting it with both logical and chronicle evidence, in the light of history of the preceding nations and their Prophets^{-AS}, their conduct and the end results thereof. Towards the end is the discussion on the Unity of **Allah**. Also listed are some of **His** Commands to facilitate **His** Cognition through obedience.

Section 1

In the Name of **Allah**

The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful.

1. Alif Lām, Mīm, Şuad.
2. This is a Book sent down to you: so let there be no straitness in your breast therefore: that you may warn, and this is an admonition to the faithful.
3. Follow what has been brought down to you from your **Rabb**, and do not follow any patrons beside **Him**; yet little are you admonished.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

المص ﴿١﴾

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِي صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِنْهُ

لِتُنذِرَ بِهِ. وَذِكْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢﴾

اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا

مِن دُونِهِ أَزْوَاجًا قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

4. And many a town **We** have destroyed; upon them **Our** scourge came at night or while they were taking their midday rest.
5. Then nothing was their cry when **Our** scourge came upon them save that they said: indeed we have been the wrong-doers.
6. Then **We** will surely question those to whom were **Our** Messengers sent, and **We** will surely question the sent ones.
7. Then **We** will surely recount to them with knowledge, and **We** have not been absent.
8. And the weighing on that Day is certain; then those whose Scales will be heavy, shall fare well.
9. And those whose Scales will be light – they are those who lost themselves in respect of **Our** Signs.
10. And assuredly **We** established you in the earth and appointed for your livelihood therein: yet little thanks do you return.

كَمْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا فَجَاءَهَا بَأْسُنَا بَيِّنًا
وَهُمْ قَائِلُونَ ﴿١﴾

فَمَا كَانَ دَعْوَانَهُمْ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا
إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٢﴾

فَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ
الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٣﴾

فَلَنَقُصَّنَّ عَلَيْهِم بِعِلْمٍ وَمَا كُنَّا غَائِبِينَ ﴿٤﴾

وَالْوِزْنُ يُوَمِّدُ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ
فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥﴾

وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٦﴾

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا
مَعِيشًا قَلِيلًا مَا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧﴾

Secrets of Revelation

What is a Book

As already explained, the knowledge of Isolated Letters is a secret between **Allah** and **His Prophet**^{SAW}. Those whom **Allah** blesses with a cordial relationship with the Holy Prophet^{SAW}, may also be enlightened in accordance

with their spiritual status. It is essential to hold this belief and to enjoy the merit of recitation without probing into their meanings.

This is comprehensive, complete and a true Book. To scribble and put papers together does not make a book. Every book has a certain topic, and it should convey to its readers the true and complete facts about it. Human beings work on assumptions, whereas only **Allah's** Word is final and conclusive. Thus only a Divine Book meets the true definition of a book. Here **Allah** declares the Qurān as the Divine Book revealed unto the Holy Prophet^{SAW} to warn the arrogant of the end results of their wrongdoings, and guide the believers to a Path whereby they may attain the maximum of **His** Nearness. **Allah** consoles the Holy Prophet^{SAW} not to be aggrieved by peoples' negative response to his untiring efforts to convey the Divine Message. Those who do not accept will be condemned to Hell, in perpetual torment. Their denial is by their own choice and free will, therefore, the Holy Prophet^{SAW} need not grieve over it.

It was the innate compassion of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} that he was aggrieved by the inevitable ill fate of even his antagonists. Just imagine how affectionate will he be towards his followers. If only the Muslims realize it, they would not disobey **Allah** lest it aggrieves the Holy Prophet^{SAW} besides causing personal losses. It is also clarified that the interpretation of the Divine Book is the domain of **Allah's** Prophet^{SAW}, and none else, nor is anyone given the capability to do so. Thus the only authentic Commentary of the Qurān will be the one substantiated by Ḥadīth. I believe that without Tazkiyah, a person may force himself to obedience but shall remain void of its pleasure.

O' People! This Book has been revealed by your **Rabb**, whose Providence dictates that **He** will not only fulfill your temporal but also your spiritual and eternal needs. So **He** has provided for both. Just as you take food and medicine for your physical health similarly for your eternal bliss, it is imperative that you worship and obey **Him**. It is your duty to accept the Message of **Allah** whole heartedly. Even if you have to lose your life in the process you must, but do not let the eternal bliss slip out of your hands. This can only be accomplished when **He** is accepted as the centre of all your hopes and aspirations and none else. Obviously, you will have to obey the one you pin your hopes upon. This is a very simple concept, but there have always been very few people who understood it, while most were dazed by the charm and glitter of this world. They indulged in sin to such an extent that they qualified for punishment in this very life. Many of them were destroyed overnight while engaged in merry making, while others perished during their midday siesta, and never got the chance to wake up. All of them inhabited this

very earth, and never gave any consideration to the Divine Commandments. Finally when they were seized by **His** Affliction, the realization of their follies availed them naught. Therefore, O man! Do pay heed to the fate of your disbelieving and defiant ancestors.

This worldly life is neither an idle sport nor fun. Even the Prophets and the Messengers^{AS} will account for their responsibilities, and will be asked whether or not they had conveyed the Divine Message. They will be questioned despite their innocence and the fact that they exerted all their energies to achieve the mission for which raised. The Holy Prophet^{SAW} highlighted this in his Farewell Address in 'Arafāt, when he inquired from the audience as to how did he fare with his mission? All of them replied: "You have indeed fully lived upto the task of conveying the Divine Message." Thereupon the Holy Prophet^{SAW} raised his finger towards the heavens and said thrice: "O' **Allah!** Be my witness."

If this is the state of the Prophets^{AS} with regard to accountability, how come those unto whom they had been sent hope for evading questioning. Still most of them did not even bother to listen to the Prophets^{AS}. The questioning will be thorough, down to the minutest details of actions, which even the doers would have forgotten. Declares **Allah**: "I will make them remember everything as I am always watching, and nothing escapes My knowledge."

Today it is generally believed that the one in power, or the affluent wins the day. Whether one is afraid of the responsibility the power brings, or becomes arrogant once he acquires it will be known on the Day of Judgment, when everything including beliefs and practices will be weighed on the most accurate Scales. Therefore, do not assume any action as intangible or weightless, and therefore, not liable. **Allah** is all Powerful to personify every sin or give weight to states without any physical appearance or form. Thus the acts of obedience shall be placed on one side of the Scales and the deeds of disobedience on the other. If the weight of the former is more, the person will be emancipated. Otherwise the abode will be Hell, proportionate to the gravity of the sins, and this indeed will be a great loss. If one had acquired wealth, power or fame by employing unfair means, he shall face the torment of Hell. The basic cause for this loss is the denial of **Allah's** Signs. Disbelief is such a crime that no piety can ever coexist with it and it drives the disobedient to Hell. On the contrary, the believers are forgiven, as faith does invoke **His** Mercy. The Commentators have discussed the weight of different deeds, and their relative value on the Scales. In case of a believer, there is every hope of

ultimate salvation, even if he has to suffer in Hell for a while for any sin. But disbelief leads to everlasting doom.

Life on Moon and other Planets

Allah has created the earth as human abode and has placed all the material resources of life therein. This clearly shows that all resources of human life are only available on earth. If one aspires to settle on the moon or any other planet, he will have to take all the resources of life from here, not only the food but also the atmosphere, the climate, the oxygen etc. How difficult and unnatural would it be to live there! If only the billions of dollars squandered away senselessly on excursions to the moon and in the space are spent on the earth for the betterment of mankind! In spite of the innumerable blessings there are very few people who show gratitude to Allah by obeying Him.

Section 2

11. And assuredly We created you, then We fashioned you, and thereafter We said to the angels; do Sajdah to Ādam; then they did Sajdah; not so Iblis: he was not of those who made obeisance.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿١١﴾

12. Allah said; what prevented you, that you should not do Sajdah, when I Commanded you? Iblis said: I am better than he; me You have created of fire and him You have created of clay.

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾

13. Allah said; then get you down from hence, not for you is to be stiff-necked herein; so go you forth; surely you are of the abject ones.

قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

14. Iblis said: respite me till the Day they will be raised up.

قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. **Allah** said: surely you are of the respited.
16. Iblis said: because **You** have strayed me I will beset for them **Your** straight path.
17. Then surely I will come upon before them and from behind them and from their right and from their left, and **You** shall not find most of them thankful.
18. **Allah** said: go you forth from hence, scorned, driven away; whoever of them follows you, then of a surety **I** will fill Hell with you all.
19. And: O **Ādam!** Dwell you and your spouse in the Garden, and eat you twain thereof what you will, and also not approach that tree there, lest you twain become of the wrong-doers.
20. Then Satan whispered to the twain in order that he might discover to them what lay hidden from them of their shame, and said: your **Rabb** did not forbid you that tree but lest you should become angels or become of the immortals.
21. And he swore to them both: I am of your good counsellors.
22. In this way with guile he caused the twain to fall. Then when they tasted of the tree, their shame was discovered to them, and they began to cover themselves with leaves from the

قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

قَالَ فِيمَا آغْوَيْتَنِي لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٦﴾

ثُمَّ لَآتِيَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

قَالَ أَخْرَجُ مِنْهَا مَذْمُومًا وَمَأْمُورًا لِمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

وَيَتَكَادُمْ أَتْسُكُنُ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْءِئِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٢١﴾

فَدَلَّهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وُرْقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَمَا

Garden. And their **Rabb** called out to them: did **I** not forbid you that tree, and did **I** not tell you Satan is to you a manifest foe?

23. The twain said: our **Rabb!** We have wronged our souls, and if **You** do not forgive us, we shall of a surety be of the losers.

24. **Allah** said: get you down, one of you an enemy to another; and for you there shall be on the earth a dwelling and provision for a time.

25. **Allah** said: on it you shall live and on it you shall die, and from it you shall be raised up.

الشَّجَرَةَ وَأَقُلُّ لَكُمْ إِنَّا الشَّيْطَانُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٤٢﴾

قَالَ رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

قَالَ اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ
وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَمِنْهَا
تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

Secrets of Revelation

Human life is not a mere accident, nor is the disparity between virtue and vice a game. It has a background that is explained in detail for the betterment of mankind. Once the aim of life becomes clear it will be easier to evaluate success and failure. Until now the concept of success was confined to material achievements, though it is only secondary, while the foremost in importance is the spiritual uplift. If a person is unable to achieve any spiritual elevation, the material gains shall only add to his miseries.

Egoism

And **We** created your progenitor Prophet **Ādam**^{AS} in such a manner that **We** first created his matter, then put it together and fashioned it into an exquisite form. **We** then educated him on the universe and bestowed him its knowledges. Thus he was blessed with superiority over the entire creation including the one created from light and extremely obedient i.e. the angels, who were ordered to prostrate before him. All complied save the **Iblīs**, who was a Jinn, but had earned himself a status to reside with the angels through his worship and endeavour. When questioned why he had defied the Divine

Command, Iblīs said: “ O’ **Allah!** I am better than him”. This indeed is egoism; when a person is blessed with qualities and excellence, instead of thanking **Allah**, he begins to feel proud and arrogant as if he rightfully deserved them. Since it is a very serious crime for which Iblīs was denounced and expelled he, in reverse, tries to allure people to indulge in it, so that they are also abased and share the punishment awaiting him. Given a serious thought, it seems that the root cause of every evil in the world is this very statement: “I am better than him”. The logic the Satan presented for his stance was that he was created from fire and Prophet **Ādam**^{AS} from clay, assuming that the former was superior to the latter. What a silly argument when he himself acknowledges **Allah** as the Creator, the all Knowing, **Who** had ordered him to bow. Indeed it was the arrogance within, which blinded him.

Progress of the Arrogant is Possible but not Everlasting

Thus Iblīs was ordered to leave the heavens abased and descend, as it was not proper to display arrogance at such an exalted place. This happens sometimes with the seekers too, who availing the company of an accomplished Shaikh continue to gain spiritual elevation inspite of egoism hidden in their hearts. However, they are eventually destroyed once it is displayed and become a source of misguidance to others, except the sincere ones without this disease.

Iblīs requested **Allah** to grant him respite until the Day of Judgment, which was promptly done. **Allah** is all Powerful and entertains the requests of even the non believers in this world, but it will not happen in the Hereafter. According to Ḥadīth, this respite shall end when the earth wrecks with the first blow of the Trumpet, and Iblīs will also die.

Supplication of an Infidel

Iblīs said, “O **Allah!** Just as **You** have let me astray I shall also avenge this by employing all possible means to allure his progeny from the right track. “O’ **Allah** you will see that most of them shall follow my instructions and be ungrateful to **You.**”

To Blame Fate for one’s Sins is Satanic

So **Allah** drove away Iblīs, abject and humiliated, for his arrogance and willful defiance of Divine Authority and declared that all his followers would also accompany him to Hell. In mankind, such behaviour stems from prolonged indulgence in sin which blackens the heart and the person puts the onus on

destiny, holding **Allah** responsible for his misdeeds. He thus becomes rebellious before **Allah** like Iblīs.

Prophet **Ādam**^{AS} and his wife were Commanded to take Paradise as their abode and freely enjoy the hospitality, but not to go near a particular tree, which was forbidden lest they err. Iblīs was aware of the fact which was yet unknown to Prophet **Ādam**^{AS}, that the fruit of that tree would expose and activate their reproductive organs. How amazing that this first human being and the Prophet^{AS} had been blessed with the knowledge of everything in the entire universe but was unaware of the mysteries of his own soul! So Iblīs employed whisperings. He beguiled the twain to believe that the fruit of the forbidden tree transforms human mortals into immortal angels, making Paradise their permanent abode and they will never have to leave for earth. To prove his sincerity, he swore upon **Allah** and posed as a real well wisher. They innocently fell into his trap. Being clear hearted they could never expect that anyone could swear by **Allah** over a lie while the heart of Iblīs was in utter darkness and he swore.

As soon as they tasted the tree their shame became manifest and they began to cover themselves up with large leaves from Paradise. **Allah** called out to them: 'Did I not forbid you to eat from that tree and did I not tell you that Iblīs is to you a manifest enemy.' Although they were beguiled, yet by way of penitence, on realizing the mistake they called out to their Creator for Mercy; "O **Allah!** Our Provider and Center of all our hopes, we have indeed wronged ourselves. If **Your** Mercy and Forgiveness will not shelter us we shall stand no where." **Allah** accepted their penitence and bade them to leave for earth where they would live and wherein they and their progeny would be laid to rest after death. They were also informed that the enmity between them and Iblīs would go on forever, and, therefore, they must never be unaware of him; for they have to once again return to Paradise, their final destination after Resurrection. And they must never let this enemy of mankind deceive them once again by making them indulge in misdeeds and alluring them away from the right path. This Divine Address, apparently for Prophet **Ādam**^{AS}, is actually intended for the entire mankind.

Section 3

26. O Children of **Ādam**! Surely We have, sent down to you a garment covering your shame

يَسْبِيءَ آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ لِبَاسًا يُوْرِي سَوْءَ تِكُمْ

and as an adornment; and the garment of piety – that is the best. This is of the Signs of **Allah**, that perhaps they may be admonished.

27. O Children of Ādam! Let not Satan tempt you, as he has driven forth your parents from the Garden, divesting the twain of the garment, that he might discover to the twain their shame. Surely he beholds you, he and his tribe, in a way that you do not behold them. Certainly **We** have made the Satans patrons of those only who are not believers.

28. And when they commit an indecency they say: we found our fathers on it and **Allah** has enjoined it on us. Say you: certainly **Allah** does not enjoin an indecency, you say falsely of **Allah** what you do not know.

29. Say you: my **Rabb** has enjoined equity, and that you shall set your faces aright at every place of worship, and call on **Him**, making faith pure for **Him**. Even as **He** has begun you, you shall be brought back.

30. A party **He** has guided, and upon a party, straying has been justified. Assuredly they have taken the Satans as patrons instead of **Allah** and they fancy that they are guided ones.

وَرِيثًا وِلْيَاسَ النَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ
ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ ءَايَاتِ ٱللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

يَبْنَىٰ ءَادَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ
أَبَوَيْكُمْ مِنَ ٱلْجَنَّةِ يَنْزِعُ عَنْهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا لِيُرِيَهُمَا
سَوْءَٰتِهِمَا إِنَّهُ يَرِنُّكُمْ هُوًّا وَقِيلَ لَهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ
لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَآءَ
لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

وَإِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهَا ءَابَاءَنَا
وَٱللَّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَأْمُرُ بِٱلْفَحِشَآءِ
أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِٱلْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ عِندَ
كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ ٱلدِّينَ
كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

فَرِيقًا هَدَىٰ وَفَرِيقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلَٰلَةُ إِنَّهُمْ
أَتَّخَذُوا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُونِ ٱللَّهِ
وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

which spares a person from disgrace of both worlds and ensures eternal dignity and success. Since nudity was made a part of worship and the infidels would go round the K'abah naked, **Allah** recapitulates the ordeal of the parents of humanity, who tricked by Iblīs to nakedness in Paradise were immediately packed to earth. Now let not Iblīs strip you too and cause you to fall to the lowest ebbs of morality, because he and his progeny observe you whereas you cannot see them with the physical eye. This is a precarious situation. But **Allah** provided you the protection by restricting Iblīs's friendship to the non believers. In other words, once blessed with faith it is easy to ward off the tricks of Iblīs. Besides, every wrongdoing creates a niche in the heart for Iblīs while virtue illuminates the heart and provides a protective shield against his whisperings.

Problem with Infidelity

When Iblīs takes possession of hearts, the evildoers begin to justify their sins instead of feeling ashamed of themselves. This exactly is the dilemma of the modern civilization. The Holy Prophet^{SAW} is told to inform the infidels that **Allah** never enjoins evil and it is indeed an enormity to ascribe it to **Him**. The biggest problem with disbelief is that it deprives the infidels of **Allah's** Fear, and they start justifying their wrong doings merely to satisfy their ego in front of others. **Allah's** Commands are based on absolute justice. These are neither so strait as to bar use of good things nor so lenient as to allow un-necessary freedom of action. This equity in life is a sign of perfection. Unnecessary abstinence from food or conversation or a deliberate use of tattered garments can be a sign of pretence, but certainly not of piety. On the contrary, living beyond means to show, indulging in useless chat or eating out of proportion like animals are also acts of disapproval. Indeed balance in every sphere of life is a sine qua non of Islam.

Balanced Life a Sign of Excellence

Two basic aspects are highlighted here as example. Firstly, to turn in the right direction during Ṣalāt, meaning thereby that outward actions in worship must be in accordance with Sunnah. The expression '*Inda Kulle Masjidin* (at every place of worship) may mean every act of devotion in addition to Ṣalāt, so propriety is the keynote in every action. Secondly, the purity of the motive and inner feelings must be carefully guarded. Seek **Allah** with utmost sincerity without ascribing any partners to **Him**, nor offer worship to invite applause from others, as it is hypocrisy. Ignoring anyone aspect renders the other futile; for instance, a person asserts that the outward is not important as his inner self

is pure, simply tells a lie. For had he a purified soul he would never have indulged in disobedience. On the other hand, if a person though outwardly pious by virtue of his extensive worship yet inwardly seeks worldly benefits, he is at a great loss. The spiritual system of Islam called *Tareeqat* implies not only the outward adherence to Shari'ah in every action but also the inward sincerity and devotion. And it must never be forgotten that **He Who** created man from a state of non-existence, can most certainly resurrect him on the Day of Judgment from the dark alleys of death. No one should even harbour any doubt that once death overtakes him he will not return to life.

Both Aspects of Shari'ah Inseparable

Mankind is eternally divided into two groups. One consists of the people who follow the truth and are rightly guided. The other group comprises those who earn misguidance because of their wrong doings. They certainly wrong themselves by preferring the guidance of Iblīs over **Allah's**. Thus a continuous indulgence in sin makes their misdeeds fair seeming to them. Whereas they should have obeyed the Messengers^{AS} and believed in the Divine Book, yet unfortunately they took self-made traditions as their religion.

Dress for Ṣalāt

At the time of Qurānic Revelation, immodesty and nudity was the order of the day. In Arabia it was considered a worship to go round the K'abah naked. Islam challenged this immorality fourteen centuries ago and eradicated it completely. **Allah** Commands the believers to be properly clad while offering their Ṣalat. It is otherwise obligatory to cover the shame, without which Ṣalat cannot be valid. A mature lady's Ṣalat is not acceptable without a shawl. Here **Allah** Commands the believers to dress up properly for Ṣalat. Just as one gets ready for going to the office or calling on someone, it is far more important to be presentable in the Court of **Allah**. Therefore, Ṣalat in all those outfits in which one may not feel like even visiting friends stands deprecated, although the obligation will be fulfilled even by only covering the shame. Wearing a vest and a loin cloth, or to put handkerchief on the head deprecates the Ṣalat. **Allah** Commands you to dress up properly for Ṣalat and to eat and drink in order to maintain good health. If a person starves deliberately, weakening himself to an extent that he fails to perform his official as well as religious duties, he will indeed be a sinner of the highest order. The jurists deduce that this **Āyah** provides a proof that everything is basically permissible unless forbidden by Shari'ah.

Taking Necessary Nutrition is Obligatory

Balance must not be lost even in dietary habits. Gluttony must be avoided nor should one trespass the limits of lawful food. And remember that to declare the lawful as forbidden or to eat the forbidden are both acts of disobedience to **Allah**. A balanced diet promotes good health, both physical and mental, and is conducive not only to proper handling of mundane affairs but also to the fulfillment of religious obligations. This, in turn, generates a stronger faith in the heart and increases the capacity to do good. Many sayings of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} quoted in Ruḥ al Ma'ānī, Tafsīr ibn-e Kathīr and Tafsīr-e-Mazharī may be referred to for detail.

Extravagance is not permissible in any aspect of life. To throw lavish parties, to buy clothes beyond ones means, and to display affluence on marriages by borrowed money, to waste water during ablution even while on the bank of a river, falls under extravagance. Its outward repercussions can be seen with the physical eye, though the real loss is that **Allah** loves not the extravagant.

Section 4

32. Say you: who has forbidden the adornment that **Allah** has produced for **His** servants and the clean things of food? Say you: on the Day of Resurrection these shall belong to them alone who in the life of this world were believers. Thus **We** expound the Signs to a people who know.

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ،
وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كَذَلِكَ
نُفِصِلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. Say you: my **Rabb** has forbidden the indecencies, the open thereof and the hidden thereof, and sin and high-handedness without justice and that you associate anything with **Allah** that for which **He** has sent down no warranty and that you speak of **Allah** what you know not.

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ
وَإِلَّا تُمْ وَالْبَغْيَ بغيرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ
بِهِ، سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا نَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. For every community there is a doom; then when its doom is come, not an hour will they stay behind nor go in advance.

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ
سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. O Children of Ādam! If there came to you Messengers from among you recounting **My Signs** to you, then whoever shall fear **Allah** and act right, on them shall come no fear, nor shall they grieve.

يَبْنَئِ أَدَمَ إِمَامًا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِنْكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ
عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي فَمَنْ اتَّقَى وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. And those who belie **Our Signs** and are stiff-necked, against them – they shall be fellows of the Fire and therein they shall be abiders forever.

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا أُولَئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. Who does greater wrong than he who fabricates a lie against **Allah** or belies **His Signs**? These! Their full portion from the Book shall reach them until when **Our** messengers come to them causing them to die, and say: where is that which you were used to call upon beside **Allah**? These will say: they have strayed from us. And they will testify against themselves that they have been infidels.

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ
أُولَئِكَ يَنَالُهُمْ نَصِيبُهُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ
رُسُلُنَا يَتَوَفَّوْنَهُمْ قَالُوا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْعُونَ
مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا وَشَهِدُوا
عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. **Allah** will say: enter the Fire among the communities of those who have passed before you, of Jinn and mankind. So oft as a community enters it, it shall curse its sister, until when all have arrived one after another therein, the last of them will say of the first of them: our **Rabb**:

قَالَ ادْخُلُوا فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ
وَإِنْسٍ فِي النَّارِ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ أُمَّةٌ لَعَنَتْ أُخْتَهَا
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا دَارَكُوا فِيهَا جَمِيعًا قَالَتْ أُخْرَبْنَاهُمْ
لِأَوْلَانِهِمْ رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ أَضَلُّونَا فَآتِنَاهُمْ عَذَابًا
بَاضِعًا مِّنَ النَّارِ قَالَ لِكُلِّ ضِعْفٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

these led us astray; so mete out to them a double torment of the Fire. **Allah** will say: to each, double; but you know not.

39. The first of them will say to the last of them: you have then no preference over us. Taste then you all the torment for what you were used to earn.

وَقَالَتْ أُولَئِكَمُ لِأَخْرَجْتُم مِّنْهَا كَانَتْ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا
مِنْ فَضْلٍ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

Secrets of Revelation

Good Food and Clothing

Since human dignity depends entirely on **Allah**'s Pleasure and Approval, one must submit to **His** Will and Purpose with utmost sincerity. Unlike other ungodly religions, Islam forbids self-imposed taboos. Abstaining from culinary delights or fine apparel is not an act of worship. Islam does not ordain this. When **Allah**, the Almighty, the Real Owner, has not forbidden human beings from enjoying good food, wearing nice clothes, or living in a comfortable house and possessing decent transport provided all have been acquired through lawful means how can anyone else dare do so?

It is a wrong concept that pious people wear rags, do not eat well and avoid comfortable beds. The preachers who propagate this image support it by examples of the austerity of the Companions^{-RAU} in the early days of Islam. Whereas the fact is that when they were impoverished they persevered in the Way of **Allah**, and when victories enriched them, their affluence did not detract them from **Allah**. The Holy Prophet^{-SAW} himself wore fine clothes including once a cloak worth a thousand dinar.

After the conquest of Persia and Rome the Companions^{-RAU} had become very rich. When Hadhrat Abū Hurairah^{-RAU}, often hunger-stricken during the Holy Prophet's^{-SAW} days, became rich due to his share of the booty, owned high pile carpets in which his feet would sink to the ankles and he would address himself: "Abu Hurairah! Do not forget your destitute days". Hadhrat 'Ali^{-RAU} too had become very rich while his sons were indeed princely. They had the best of everything: food, clothing and horses. In later times, Imām Abū Hanīfah^{-RUA} always wore fine clothes and so did Imām Mālik^{-RUA}. The latter

would don a new attire everyday, out of the three hundred and sixty five outfits presented to him and would give it away in charity that very day. Similarly Ḥadhrat ‘Abdul Qādir Jilānī^{RAU} and Ḥadhrat ‘Ubaid Ullah Aḥrār^{RAU} were famous for their affluence and fine apparel. Today those who pretend to put on patched garments as a symbol of Wilayah are indeed wrong, as the food, the clothing and the means of conveyance of a person must reflect the bounties that **Allah** has bestowed upon him. Otherwise, it would be an act of sheer ingratitude.

The references to the austerity and simplicity of the Companions^{RAU} during the early days of Islam are based on the fact that in those days the believers were not very rich and whatever they had was diverted to the Cause of **Allah**. But once they became affluent, they did wear fine clothes. However, the Sunnah is that one should not be lavish in his living and be content with what he has and thank **Allah** for it. On the other hand, one should never borrow money for what he cannot afford, nor should he abstain from good standard of living if **Allah** has blessed him with affluence. He should not opt for cheaper stuff when he can easily afford better. Sometimes the saints restrain the seekers from fine garments and sumptuous food as part of their training in Tazkiyah. Once self restraint is achieved and the seekers are strong enough to resist the forbidden, the restrictions are lifted.

Non believers Enjoy because of the Believers!

Allah declares that those worthy of **His** bounties are indeed the believers. Even in this worldly life it is the believer who deserves the best, whereas the infidel enjoys everything only because of him. Indeed the entire cycle of sustenance; the rainfall, the growth of crops and the ripening of fruits goes on because of the believers as the lifeline of this universe is **Zikr Allah**, only practised by the believers. Deprived of it, the universe will simply fall apart. Thus a believer is the cause for the continuation of these blessings, and deserves to enjoy them. Besides, a believer uses lawful means for earning livelihood and does not usurp the rights of others. On the contrary, the economic system of the non believers revolves around the idea of depriving many to the benefit of the privileged few. Why should these transgressors be considered worthy of enjoying better things than the believers? There is no reason.

Some of the Commentators explain that the worldly blessings that a non believer enjoys in this world only act as a source of increase in his eternal torment. Whereas there is always a risk that the worldly possessions may be

lost, it is certain that these will remain behind at death. Compared to this, a believer qualifies for eternal bliss by showing gratitude for what he is blessed with. According to Ḥadith, when there will not remain on earth a single soul remembering **Allah**, this world will be torn apart. This endorses the very fact discussed above that the facilities of this world exist because of the believers. One must, therefore, avail them according to his status. A deliberate preference for inferior things involves many a sins, of which ingratitude and pretence top the list.

Abstaining from Sin Invites His Mercy

Contrary to this mundane life, where **Allah**'s general Mercy embracing all mankind is manifested, it will be **His** selective Mercy at display in the Hereafter. It will deprive the non believers of all the blessings and the believers alone would be able to avail them. Everyone shall personally witness the deprived and the blessed ones. The Almighty reveals and explains the matter at length for everyone to understand. The Qurān outrightly rejects the commonly held idea that to avail the affluence bestowed by **Allah** is against piety.

Allah can be pleased only by abstaining from the forbidden; for instance, all acts of immorality and oppression. All acts of obscenity, whether done in public or in private, discussed with others or brooded over within oneself, are forbidden. Oppression comprises *Ithm* i.e. those sins which are related to ones own self and *Baghye* i.e. those which are related to the rights of others. All such acts of excess are emphatically forbidden. **Allah** forbids imputing any partners to **Him** in terms of **His** Unity or **His** Attributes. This indeed is a very serious transgression. Similarly ascribing such orders to **Allah** that **He** has never given is also calumnious; for example, to create innovations in religion and to adopt ways never endorsed by Shari'ah, considering them to be acts of merit. The polytheists and the ignorant pretend to be pious by donning patched garments and eating sparsely, while they continue to plunder their devotees and also drive them to all sorts of innovations and sinful rituals. Their end would indeed be bleak. It must be remembered that for every nation and community there is respite till a certain time and limit. When that is over, the Divine Punishment can neither be averted nor postponed. Every evil doer shall eventually meet his end.

Devotion to Holy Prophet^{-SAW} only Road to Salvation

O' mankind! You were clearly told on the Day of the Covenant, while in the Realm of Spirits that **Allah's** Prophets and Messengers^{-AS} will continue to bring **His** Message unto you through all Ages. None will remain deprived. It was also made clear that whoever would develop a relationship with **Allah** by obedience will neither fear nor grieve. He would be content with his past and hopeful of his future. Simultaneously it was also clarified that those who would deny the teachings of the Prophets^{-AS} in self conceit and arrogance shall be eternally condemned to Hell. This is because their crime is indeed grave; as denial of the Prophetic teachings involves, firstly, the out right rejection of **Allah**, by itself a great violence, and secondly, fabrication of a whimsical religion, thereby ascribing falsehood to **Allah**. This will certainly invoke **Allah's** Wrath; manifested by Hell. However, it is a separate issue that **Allah** blessed them in this life with provisions, giving them respite and the freedom of choice to opt for either, truth or falsehood. Therefore, if someone opts for falsehood, neither his provisions nor his life is taken away. Yet this outward affluence of the non believers must not beguile the onlookers.

Angels Speaking to non Believers at Death

When the Angels of Death approach the non believers, they tell them that their term of action is over and they must now get ready for the reckoning. The angels question them why their deities whom they preferred over **Allah** are nowhere to be seen. They ought to have been present to requite their worshippers and to help them in this difficult moment. The non believers, in reply, shall remorsefully endorse their own crime, adding that out of sheer waywardness, they had given others the status of worship and adoration only deserved by **Allah**.

And when the Judgment is delivered, the non believing amongst the mankind and the Jinn will be commanded to enter Hell along with their alike precursors. In fact, every non believer will be joined in Hell with the other of the same category. All new entrants would accurse those already admitted for the bad precedent they had set leading to the perdition of their followers. When all the dwellers of Hell would have reached their destined locations, the ones entering in the end would plead before **Allah** to punish those preceding them twice as much, for their misleading role.

Therefore, the Fire will be intensified and the condemned will be told: "You all are subjected to an ever increasing doom which you will equally share. This is the consequence of your being accomplices in sin and evil, which in

fact was the worst enmity.” Those admitted to Hell earlier will in turn tell their successors that they too were no less guilty, because they turned away from **Allah**’s Commands and adopted the absurd rituals of their ancestors. Therefore, all of them will have an equal share in the horrid consequences. May **Allah** protect us!

Section 5

40. Assuredly those who belie **Our** Signs and are stiffnecked against them, for them will not be opened the portals of heaven nor will they enter the Garden until a camel passes through the eye of a needle. Thus do **We** requite the culprits.
41. Theirs will be a bed in Hell, and over them coverings. Thus do **We** requite the wrong doers.
42. And those who believed and worked righteous works – **We** burden not a soul except according to its capacity – they are the fellows of the Garden; therein they shall be abiders forever.
43. And **We** shall recover whatever of rancour may be in their breasts, rivers flowing beneath them, and they will say: all measure of praise be to **Allah** **Who** has guided us on to this, we were not such as to find guidance were it not that **Allah** had guided us; the Messengers of your **Rabb** came with truth. And this shall be cried out to them: this is the Garden; it you

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تُفَتَّحُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

لَهُمْ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَمِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ غَوَاشٍ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلٌ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَنُودُوا أَنْ تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

inherit for what you have been working.

44. And the fellows of the Garden shall cry out to the fellows of the Fire: surely we have found true what our **Rabb** had promised us, have you found true what your **Rabb** had promised you? They shall say: yea! Then a crier in between them shall cry; the curse of **Allah** be upon the wrong-doers.

45. Those who hindered from the Way of **Allah** and would seek to render it crooked and in the Hereafter they were disbelievers.

46. And between the twain there will be a veil, and on the Heights will be men recognizing them all by their marks; and they will cry to the fellows of the garden: peace be on you. They will not have yet entered it while they will be longing.

47. And when their eyes will be turned to the fellows of the Fire, they will cry: our **Rabb**! Place us not with these wrongdoing people.

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ أَنْ قَدْ وَجَدْنَا
مَا وَعَدْنَا رَبَّنَا حَقًّا فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا
قَالُوا نَعَمْ فَأَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ
عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَهُمْ
بِالْآخِرَةِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ وَعَلَى الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ يَعْرِفُونَ كُلًّا
بِسِيمَتِهِمْ وَنَادَوْا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ سَلِّمُوا عَلَيْكُمْ
لَمَّا رَدُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَهُمْ يَطْمَعُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

وَإِذَا صُرِفَتْ أَبْصَارُهُمْ تِلْقَاءَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا
لَا تَجْعَلْنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

Reason For Not having Faith in Supplications

Those who refuse to accept Divine Revelations and display arrogance, their worldly pomp and show is nothing but a façade. They are denied access into the heavens and will not be allowed into Paradise until a camel can pass through a needle's eye. This is to highlight the impossibility of their salvation. The scholars elaborate upon the various aspects of this denial. Firstly, their supplications are denied access to **Allah's** Court, which in itself is a big punishment. This is why very few people believe in supplications because the doors of the heavens are only opened for those who have faith. Majority of the people rely on the material sources whereas supplication is a much more effective source. Secondly, in the light of Aḥādīth the scholars elaborate upon circumstances when the Spirit of a believer is taken across the heavens immediately after death to the Divine Court. The angels escort it with respect; it is honoured at every heaven while on its way and is further honoured by its presence in the Divine Court. The questioning in the grave is carried out on its return whence its connection is established with Paradise. The emancipated is thus blessed with the view and fragrance of Paradise. Further details of this will follow.

But in case of a miserable non-believer, the angels of death approach him with a terrifying appearance, painfully seize his Spirit and escort it to the heavens where it is denied admission and is outrightly rejected. The angels fling it back into its physical body and after the questioning is over, its link is established with Hell, assigning the Register of Conduct to the Sijjīn.

Illiyīn and Sijjīn are two sections of Barzakh: the former ascends upwards while the latter is located in the deeper regions inside the earth. The Illiyīn is allocated to the noble Spirits, while Sijjīn is the abode of the non believers and all those condemned to perdition. They continue to descend deep down according to their levels and therein shall be imprisoned their Spirits along with their records.

Lack of Satisfaction

Yet the third explanation is that the Spirit is associated with 'Alam-e-Amr, a Realm which begins where the limits of 'Alam-e-Khalq comprising the heavens, the 'Urūsh and the Grand Throne, end. Faith gives life to the Qalb and the Spirit while righteous deeds and pious company provide it excellence, until the Spirit establishes a connection with 'Alam-e-Amr after traversing the heavens

and the 'Urūsh. This journey of the Spirit is called Sulūk, the sublime Ṣūfī Path and the various stages of this Path are known as stations of Sulūk. Together with faith and righteous conduct, the condition of noble company is imperative, because the Spirit cannot traverse this Path by itself. The Companions^{-RAU} received this power in the company of the Holy Prophet^{-SAW}; the Tab'aīn acquired it in the company of the Companions^{-RAU} and so the Chain of Transmission continues. A seeker has to strive at his own, but cannot find the Path without the Shaikh. The problem of infidelity is that the gateway to heavens is not opened for an infidel's Spirit. Therefore, he cannot gain any access to the realities of 'Alam-e-Amr, nor can he receive any benefit from them. And so long as the Spirit is not blessed with a link with the 'Alam-e-Amr, neither can a person engage in a continuous Zikr nor can he attain peace of mind. This indeed is a great misfortune, an inevitable consequence of infidelity. Had the infidels embraced faith and mended their ways they too had the natural capacity to attain there spiritual levels; but they opted for the path leading to Hell, a place for eternal and agonizing punishments.

The Path to Paradise is the Easiest

On the contrary, those who take Shahadah and adopt the life style laid down by **Allah** and work for **His** Pleasure are blessed with a very easy life. They are never told to do anything beyond their capacity. There can be no better concept of convenience. One is allowed to leave what one cannot possibly do. However, what one can do must be done in accordance with **Allah**'s directions as conveyed by **His** Prophet^{-SAW}. Such law abiders will be the eternal dwellers of Paradise and will never experience anything unpleasant. It is very natural for two good persons to develop ill feelings for one another in this worldly life. They can have a difference of opinion and can also be annoyed with one another. But Paradise is a place, wherein all bitterness and malice will be erased from the bosoms of its dwellers leaving only love for everyone. The pleasures in Paradise will be subject to the choice of its residents, who while expressing their gratitude to **Allah** will cry out: "O **Allah**! It is indeed a great favour that you admitted us to this exalted place by **Your** Mercy. Indeed **Your** Messengers^{-AS} had come with the Truth and **You** gave us the capacity to obey them".

Stages of Guidance

There are different stages of guidance, which stands for progress in attaining **Allah**'s Nearness, knowing no limits. That is why every Muslim, from an ordinary believer to the Holy Prophet^{-SAW} prays: "Guide us to the Straight

Path". Even the entry into Paradise is a manifestation of Divine Guidance, which will continue to grow by the minute. Thus there is no limit to guidance or the stations of Sulūk and the states of **Allah**'s Nearness. The believers will be told that Paradise belongs to them because of their loyalty to **Allah** and **His** Prophet^{SAW}, which they practically demonstrated in their worldly life.

Dialogue Between the Twain

The dwellers of Paradise will converse with those eternally condemned to Hell for their disbelief. In this worldly phase of life the physical body is entrusted with responsibility while the Rūḥ is subordinated to it. In Barzakh it will be the reverse. From the Day of Reckoning onwards both body and the Rūḥ will be equally responsible. Any spiritual or physical comfort or distress will be experienced equally by both. Just as believers in Paradise will be able to see the distant dweller of Hell, so shall a non believer, in the Hell be able to see those in Paradise, and both will talk to each other. This visualization will generate feelings of gratitude in a believer and that of wistfulness in a non believer.

Insight in Worldly Life

The light of faith can enable a believer to attain insight in this very world, and this is also brought about by the spiritual states. These states or feelings can only be transmitted from one enlightened heart to another. The hearts of the Prophets^{AS} are blessed with the highest spiritual powers, which enable them to converse with **Allah**. Witnessing the Barzakh, talking to the angels and receiving information from 'Alam-e-Amr is the basis of religion, as the entire Dīn is revealed through these sources. Similarly a believer moving in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} attains the spiritual insight or observation; this indeed is termed as Wilayah Khāṣah (Sublime Sainthood) or the spiritual insight of the faith. A Prophet^{AS} attains this directly whereas a Wali gets it through obedience to the Prophet^{AS}. The former is perfect, while observation by the latter is correct only until it remains within the pale of Prophetic teachings; otherwise he has erred. The distinction for a believer is that he can attain the spiritual insight in this very world, which is impossible for a non believer. Since in the Hereafter the Spirit too will have equal sensory powers, therefore, the non believer will also be able to observe. But in this worldly life it is only possible through the light of faith, earnest seeking and the company of an accomplished Shaikh.

The dwellers of Paradise will address those in Fire: "We have found **Allah's** promises fulfilled. Although you made fun of us in the life of the world and never missed any opportunity to belittle us, yet what we believed in did happen. How did you fare? Did the warnings conveyed by the Prophets^{AS} over various matters turn out to be true?" They will reply: "Undoubtedly, they all came out to be true to the last detail." Then a crier shall proclaim: "**Allah** has accursed the transgressors who exerted all their efforts towards hindering people from the Path of **Allah**, and those who tried to create crooked ways of their own choice and denied the Hereafter".

The Intervening Wall between the two groups is called the Al-A'rāf over which some people would have been detained. It is not a dwelling place or residence but just a stopover. According to the Holy Prophet^{SAW} there will be some believers whose good and evil deeds would have weighed equally on the Scales. They will neither qualify for Paradise nor for Hell, and after crossing the Bridge will be detained at Al-A'rāf.

These souls will recognize people on both sides by their faces, and will rejoice on seeing those in Paradise. They will intensify their prayers for admission into Paradise and will send messages of goodwill to their friends therein. But when they will turn to see the other way, they will cry out to **Allah** for Mercy and protection against the fate of the evil doers whom they will also clearly recognize. The Holy Prophet^{SAW} adds that they will be finally given Divine Permission to enter the bliss. May **Allah** bless us with the company of noble souls in this life too!

Section 6

48. The fellows of the Heights will cry to the men whom they would recognize by their marks, and say: your multitude availed you nothing nor that over which you were used to be stiff-necked.

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالًا يَعْرِفُونَ بِسِيمَانِهِمْ
قَالُوا مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

49. Are these the men of whom you swore that **Allah** would not reach them with **His** Mercy? Enter the Garden, on you shall

أَدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ
تَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

come no fear nor shall you grieve.

50. And the fellows of the Fire will cry to the fellows of the Garden: pour out on us some water or anything what Allah has provided you with. They will say: surely Allah has forbidden them both to the infidels.

51. Who took their religion as an idle sport and a play and whom the life of the world beguiled. So today We shall forget them even as they neglected the meeting of this Day of theirs and as they were ever denying Our Signs.

52. And surely We have brought to them a Book which We have detailed according to knowledge, a guidance and a Mercy to a people who believe.

53. They await only its fulfillment. The Day whereon its fulfillment arrives those who had been negligent to it will say: surely the Messengers of our Rabb brought the truth; are there no intercessors for us that they might intercede for us or could we be sent back that we might work otherwise than we were used to work? Surely they have lost themselves, and there has strayed from them what they were used to fabricate.

وَنَادَىٰ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنِ افِيضُوا عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ أَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَهَا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾

الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَلَعِبًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فَالْيَوْمَ نَنْسَهُمْ كَمَا نَسُوا لِقَاءَ يَوْمِهِمْ هَذَا وَمَا كَانُوا بِتَابِعِينَ يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

وَلَقَدْ جِئْتَهُم بِكِتَابٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا نَأْوِيَهُ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي تَأْوِيلَهُ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَذَا نَسْوُهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَاءَنَا رَسُولٌ مِّنَّا بِالْحَقِّ فَهَلْ لَنَا مِن شُفْعَاءَ فَيَشْفَعُوا لَنَا أَوْ نُرَدُّ فَنَعْمَلْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ قَدْ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

Secrets of Revelation

The People at A'rāf will recognize those in Hell by their faces. They will also be aware of their worldly conduct when they, out of sheer arrogance and conceit, had not only become oblivious of **Allah's** Greatness and the Hereafter but also mocked at the pious. They used to taunt at their worship, their trust in **Allah**, their miseries and their belief in Divine Rewards in the Hereafter. Today the People at A'rāf will remind the dwellers of the Fire of their past attitude towards the righteous and will ask them about their mundane power and wealth, which allured them away from the right path and failed them completely. They will point out towards the dwellers of Paradise and ask those in Fire to see for themselves the manifestations of **Allah's** Pleasure and **His** Promise to the successful, that they shall neither fear anything nor grieve.

The Manifestation of Divine Mercy

People usually believe that wealth and power are symbols of Divine Approval, while these indeed become sources of eternal pain if they tempt a person away from **Allah's** Obedience. However, if one is also blessed with the capacity to obey, then these surely are a proof of **His** Mercy. When **His** Obedience is complemented with lawful wealth and powers to govern and enforce **His** Laws on others, such power and influence are indeed a gift of **Allah's** Mercy. It must be borne in mind that power and wealth, which alienates from **Allah**, is a symbol of **His** Annoyance, not **His** Approval.

The People of the Fire will call out to the People of Paradise in desperation, begging them to spare them some water and eatables from the rivers flowing by and the orchards all around them. The People of the Paradise will answer that all these belong to the Almighty, **Who** has denied these to the non-believers. According to a saying of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} the bonds of kinship and love drive us only in this world as the continuity of the human race depends on them. The effects of such relationship can be experienced to a certain extent in the Barzakh also, as Barzakh too is connected at one end to this world and at the other to the Hereafter. But after the Day of Judgment these ties will be severed leaving only the bonds of Faith and Spirit. However, alongwith the bond of faith if there also exists a bond of blood, it will be a bonus. Otherwise even if the son is condemned to Hell the father will not feel the slightest concern, and vice versa. Another Ḥadīth suggests that the Day of Judgment will break all bonds except between those who gathered only to seek **Allah** and separated in the same Cause.

The Curse of Innovations

If the Magnificence and the Greatness of **Allah** is compared to the dwarfness of those who became arrogant and conceited over this petty world and erred, one might ask that **Allah** is so Great whereas these people in Hell failed out of sheer weakness; why then, has **He** imposed such a strict embargo as mentioned above?

The answer is that their crime is not only giving up the worship, but also the rituals and innovations they had concocted and observed with the hope of earning a reward. They had taken religion as a pastime, which means to indulge in all those activities which are undertaken purely for the satisfaction of fancies, such as musical concerts, lavish parties and mixed gatherings for fun.

These condemned people had adopted vices like those mentioned above in the name of religion and worship. The reason was that the temporal life allured them into ignoring the realities, even those about the Day of Judgment and assembly before **Allah**. Had they paid any heed to these matters they would have certainly taken guidance from the Prophets^{AS} of **Allah** and obeyed **Him**. On the contrary they denied all the Divine Commandments and displayed arrogance. The requital corresponds to the nature of deeds. Therefore, just as they had forgotten **Allah's** Greatness and their assembly before **Him** on the Day of Judgment, so has **Allah** completely discarded them.

Allah conveyed **His** Message, which was a comprehensive guidance on all matters as well as a manifestation of **His** Mercy. But instead of appreciating this blessing they deliberately denied it. So whatever they suffer is the result of their own conduct.

Barakah of the Prophethood

These ignorant people merely waited to see whether or not the disasters foretold by the Divine Book would ever occur. But they did not realize that when the promised doom will come the time to act will be over, leaving no room for reformation.

After being enlightened with faith if one is also fortunate enough to be honoured with the Barakah of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}, he develops a strong belief and trust in all that is foretold in the Divine Book. An accomplished Shaikh is a trustee of these Barakah. Due to his company if a seeker begins to develop strength in his faith in the Hereafter as well as an inclination to do

good, he has achieved the desired goal. On the other hand, becoming a disciple only for worldly gains is a sham.

Divine Providence

When everything will be exposed, all those who had denied the Hereafter will confess that undoubtedly the Messengers^{-AS} of their **Rabb** were sent with truth. Here the Messengers^{-AS} are being associated with the Attributive Name **Rabb** instead of the Personal Name **Allah**. This is because the raising of Prophets and Messengers^{-AS} is befitting to Divine Providence. Just as **He** has provided for the physical needs, **He** has also fulfilled all the spiritual needs by sending **His** chosen people as **His** Messengers^{-AS}.

The condemned people will now wistfully wish for an intercessor, but intercession will be denied to the non believers. They will beg to be returned to life so that they could atone for past follies and be obedient to **Allah**. In other words, they will confess that had they wanted they could have lived a noble life but they opted for evil, and destroyed themselves. Nothing will come to their rescue, nor the fabrications in the name of religion be of any avail. Instead these will be a source of punishment.

Section 7

54. In truth your **Rabb** is **Allah** who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then established **Himself** on the Throne, making the night cover the day, seeking it swiftly, and created the sun and the moon and the stars subjected to **His** Command. Lo! **His** is the Creation and the Command. Blessed is **Allah**, the **Rabb** of worlds.

55. Call on your **Rabb** in humility and in secrecy; surely **He** approves not the trespassers.

56. Act not corruptly on the earth after its good ordering, and call

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي
الَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ
وَالْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

أَدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا

on **Him** fearing and longing, surely the Mercy of **Allah** is close to the well-doers.

57. **He** it is **Who** sends forth heralding winds before **His** Mercy, until when they have gathered up heavy-laden cloud, we drive it on to a dead land and send down rain thereby, bringing forth with it all manner of fruit. In this way **We** raise the dead; possibly you may take heed.

58. A good soil! Its herbage comes forth by the will of **Rabb**, and that which is barren brings forth scantily. In this way **We** vary the Signs for a people who return thanks.

وَأَدْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ
مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ
رَحْمَتِهِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَقْلَتِ سَحَابًا ثِقًا أَهْبَطْنَاهُ
لِبَلَدٍ مَّيْتٍ فَأَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَاءَ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ مِنْ كُلِّ
الشَّجَرَاتِ كَذَٰلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَى لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرِجُ نَبَاتَهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي
خَبَثَ لَا يُخْرِجُ إِلَّا نَكِدًا كَذَٰلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ
الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

Secrets of Revelation

O' mankind! Your **Rabb** was indeed Merciful and Munificent **Who**, before your creation, favoured you by completion of the heavens and the earth in six days. Although **He** had the power to do so instantly but **He** preferred a gradual, deliberated and nicely organized mode of action. By doing so **He**, in a way, has guided mankind not to make hasty decisions but to settle all matters after careful deliberation to avoid regretting later. **He**, therefore, created the earth in two days, and in the following two created the sources of human habitation; the mountains, rivers, minerals and plantations. This adds up to four days. And **He** fashioned the heavens in another two days with all the features. The Commentators assert that all was completed in six days and no work was done on the seventh day.

Now the question is how were the days calculated before the creation of the sun and the moon? The learned precursors beautifully answer that in Paradise there will neither be sun nor moon, but the alteration of days and nights will go on. Similarly, before the creation of the heavens and the earth, the cycle of

days and nights was according to the Divine Knowledge. The days and nights we know are worldly, while those discussed here connote those only known to **Allah**.

The Favours of Providence

A single day in the Hereafter is comparable to fifty thousand years of this world. The sun, that we know as a symbol of daytime will not be there in the Hereafter. The point being made here is that people calling out for help to the **Rabb** on this Day of Judgment should have appreciated **His** Munificence, displayed in the creation of such a vast universe even before their birth. **He** created the earth with its unlimited wonders and the heavens laden with Barakah. Then **He** chose the Great 'Arsh as a source of **His** Refulgence, thus opening up an orifice to **His** Cognition unto mankind. By creating the alternation of days and nights, **He** blessed the entire creation with an immaculate proportion and determined the hours of activity and relaxation. The vast universe full of stars and planets is being governed only by **His** Omnipotence and is functioning impeccably to serve mankind. Ever since the creation, all the heavenly bodies are performing their duty diligently and with flawless punctuality.

It is as clear as daylight that to **Allah** belongs everything, and it is **He** Alone **Who** creates, maintains and governs everything. The declaration: "Then **He** settled **Himself** on the Throne"; involves realities beyond human understanding. Therefore, it is obligatory to believe in it as it is. Since the Companions^{-RAU} neither questioned nor argued over such matters, any discussion would amount to innovation. 'Arsh stands for a Royal Throne which can be associated to **Allah** in the same way as the K'abah is connected to **Him** by virtue of being called Bait **Allah** (House of **Allah**). The 'Arsh is the Qibla for supplications, and that is why the hands are raised towards it; though **Allah** is present everywhere. Thus **He** made the 'Arsh the fountainhead of **His** Splendour. To **Him** belong 'Alam-e-Khalq bearing all things created, and beyond it is the 'Alam-e-Amr Command comprising the subtleties. According to Şūfis this Āyah proves the co-existence of the two Realms. And all that is lying within these two belongs to the Sovereign Ruler Alone. **He** is not dependant on anyone for existence or sustenance. Everything is indeed created and sustained by **Him**.

Therefore, it is only appropriate for people continuously benefiting from **His** Bounties to engage in **His** Zikr and to supplicate with humility and awe, as **He** does not approve trespassing even in the supplications. For instance, it is not

proper to pray for things forbidden by Shari'ah or for things logically unreasonable and impossible or to invent ways of supplication.

The Supplication (Du'a)

The word **Du'a** denotes both seeking the fulfilment of needs, as well as worships. Besides, it also means simple remembrance, that is, to remember **Him**, to ask only from **Him** and to worship **Him**. Therefore, the proper manner of supplication is that one must put forth his request before **Allah** quietly in a polite manner. It should not be a display of vocabulary to impress others as is a routine practice today. Rather it should be done quietly, with humility and awe and this indeed is the best way of worship. A worship that can be kept private should not be made public so as to confine the matter between the devotee and **Allah** lest it becomes a pretence.

Zikr-e-Khaffi

Du'a also means **Zikr Allah**, practised with humility and in secrecy. The **Şūfis** practise **Zikr-e-Jahar** (Loud **Zikr**) also. It is supported by the Sunnah provided it is neither done in pretence nor should it be a source of inconvenience to others. However, the superiority of **Zikr-e-Khaffi** is proved in **Ḥadīth**: "The best **Zikr** is **Zikr Khaffi**, and the best provision is that which suffices for one's maintenance."

The specific occasions of **Zikr-e-Jahar** recounted by the Holy Prophet^{SAW} himself are **Azān**, **Iqāmah** (announcement to rise for the **Ṣalāt**) recitation of the **Qurān** in specified cycles of **Ṣalāt** etc. where it is obligatory. Besides these, **Zikr-e-Khaffi** is better as well as more beneficial. Excess must be avoided in matters of **Zikr**, **Du'a** and worship. One should neither innovate nor promote rituals but must always adhere to the ways of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}, as **Allah** does not approve of transgressors.

Mischief on Earth

Allah perfected the earth and gave all **His** creations a viable, comfortable and immaculate order of life. **He** also provided for the inner reformation of mankind by sending **His** Messengers^{AS} and Scriptures, so that there may never be any oppression or polytheism. So O' people! Do not create discord on earth by disobeying **Allah**, making it a troublesome abode for yourself and for others. Sin leads to disobedience of **Allah**, a grave crime by itself. It also influences the environment and every object of the universe, creating mischief and malfunction. What was created for the comfort of mankind turns into a

source of trouble. The routine provisions of life like food, drink and other amenities become a cause of misery and disease. When matters exceed the limits, people begin to oppress each other. They rejoice in killing and are always at daggers drawn with one another. As a result, the air, the water and the earth turn against them; storms and earthquakes rock the lands while deluge visits habitations. All this is the immediate outcome of human conduct whereas the everlasting results will be seen in the Hereafter. It will certainly be far more dreadful than the calamities of this world. Therefore, a sin must not only be seen as a mere slip but its effects must be kept in view. Firstly, it degenerates actions, then it blackens the inner self and lastly it disrupts the entire universe. By being responsible for this turmoil, a person qualifies for **Allah's** Wrath in the eternal life, which becomes grievous and wistful. May **Allah** protect us!

The only solution to this problem is perpetual **Zikr**, a fear of disobeying **Him** and optimism about **His** Mercy. The realization of **Allah's** Greatness is obtained through continuous **Zikr** and in company of the accomplished saints. When the heart is blessed with **Allah's** **Zikr**, a person gives priority to his obligations. Although occasional errors cannot be ruled out, yet **His** Obedience and repentance invoke **His** Mercy. Therefore, always remember **Him** with humility and in secrecy, i.e. within yourself, keeping an eye on your failings. At the same time have complete trust in **His** Mercy, which is always with the righteous. This refers to all those who are blessed with even an iota of **His** Cognition and who lead their lives always mindful that they are constantly under **His** Vigilance.

His general Mercy looks out for those in need. It is **He Who** blows winds, that carry clouds laden with millions of gallons of water in the form of vapour looking for places hit by the drought. They again transform into water and pour down to satiate the arid zones. The barren land resuscitates and is adorned once again with greenery and flowers. Trees of various species bear fruits and the cycle of life moves on. It is the conclusive evidence that **Allah** is Omnipotent and is certainly capable of resurrecting those lost in the valley of death.

Watch the marvels of **His** Omnipotence! How could water mount the air? But **He** did it and fashioned it into a permanent system. The vapour is continuously formed and carried in the form of clouds in the atmosphere, without any trace of water. If we pass through a cloud it looks like fog. It is not floating perchance but drifts by Divine Will and pours down as rainfall in the places of **His** Choice. Still more surprising is the effect it produces on the

lifeless and drought stricken soil. Rainfall heralds glad tidings and the Divine Omnipotence allows tiny seeds to flourish into crops, grass, vines and trees and within days life prevails once again. Similarly, the dead buried in the soil will be quickened once again. Whereas the whole process drives one to ponder over the vastness of Divine Mercy and to rely on it, there is also a lesson that resurrection will be nothing strange as the wonders of Divine Power continue to be manifested before us, day in and day out.

The Soil of the Qalb

As seen commonly, the results of rainfall vary with the quality of the soil receiving it. Fertile land is laden with flowers while nothing grows on the barren and salinated patches. Even if it does, it is of very inferior quality and is useless for mankind. Same is the case with human Qulūb. The Qalb enlightened with Zikr learns a lesson at every step and progresses towards His Nearness constantly. But if the soil of the Qalb is saline, even the Divine Āyāt have no impact on it, nor can it appreciate the benefits of Divine Blessings, enjoyed by the grateful people through every living moment. In other words, the Qulūb having potential receive continuous guidance to the right path. The Divine blessings descend like rain on everyone, but those deprived of the capacity remain unaffected.

Section 8

59. Assuredly We sent Nūḥ to his people, and he said: O my people! Worship Allah, no god you have other than He; verily I fear for you the torment of a Mighty Day.
60. The chiefs of his people said: surely we see you in error manifest.
61. Nūḥ said: O my people! Not with me is error, but I am a Messenger from the Rabb of the worlds.
62. I preach to you the Messages of my Rabb and I counsel you
- لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ ۖ فَقَالَ يَنْقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا
 اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِن إِلَهِ غَيْرُهُ ۖ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ
 عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥٩﴾
- قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِن قَوْمِهِ ۖ إِنَّا لَنَرِيكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ
 مُّبِينٍ ﴿٦٠﴾
- قَالَ يَنْقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي ضَلَالَةٌ وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ
 مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦١﴾
- أَبْلِغْكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَأَنْصَحْ لَكُمْ

good, and I know from **Allah** what you do not know.

63. Do you marvel that an admonition from your **Rabb** should come to you through a man from amongst you, so that he may warn you, and that you may fear God, and that perchance you may be shown Mercy.

64. Then they disbelieved him: thereupon **We** delivered him and those with him in the Ark, and drowned those who disbelieved **Our** Signs, certainly they were a people blind.

وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

أَوْ عَجِبْتُمْ أَنْ جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ
مِنْكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَلِتَتَّقُوا وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَعْيَبْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَأَغْرَقْنَا
الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا
قَوْمًا عَمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

Secrets of Revelation

The literary aspect of all this discourse attending human life is before us like the story of Prophet Nūh^{AS} and his people, who defied **Allah's** Commandments but **He** still did not deprive them of **His** Mercy. **He** favoured them with **His** Messenger^{AS}, like a down pour on arid land. According to Tafsīr-e-Mazharī, Prophet Nūh^{AS} was born in the eighth generation of Prophet Ādam^{AS}. Until his arrival the Divine Commandments revealed had mostly dealt with human needs while infidelity and polytheism had also raised their ugly head. He was, therefore, the first Prophet^{AS} who had to fight against these two evils. According to Ḥadīth, he was conferred with Prophethood at the age of forty, and lived for sixty years after the Deluge. He preached for nine hundred and fifty years from his raising, until the Deluge. Some scholars assert that his real name was Sakan while others list him as 'Abdul Ghaffār. The Deluge devastated the world killing everyone except those who boarded his Ark and who eventually became the procreators of human race to follow. Prophet Nūh^{AS} has also been referred to as Ādam-e-Thani (the second Ādam) and also as Ādam-e-Asghar (Ādam minor).

The Beginning of Polytheism

Intoxicated with superfluous wealth and pedigree people began to lead their lives in extravagance and leisure according to their own whims. They took to infidelity and polytheism. Religion being a basic component of human temperament, once a person closes his eyes to the Magnificence of **Allah** some other name occupies **His** place in the heart. This is where the polytheism originates from. Since a polytheist is deprived of Divine Guidance, he indulges in fabricating rituals of his own choice and observes them as religion. This was the state of affairs when Prophet Nūḥ^{AS} was raised. He invited his nation to worship **Allah** and warned them of the devastating consequences of polytheism.

The Beneficiaries of Rituals

A particular class of people benefits from the rituals promoted in the name of religion, by assuming power and amassing wealth. These people assume the role of leaders or chieftains or religious mentors. Whenever the rituals they thrive at are challenged, it is this class which vociferates the most. They declare the one who rejects these rituals as wayward. This was also the answer given by the chieftains to Prophet Nūḥ^{AS} that he had gone astray by rejecting the practices of his forefathers. They were told that it was impossible because he had been appointed as **Allah's** Prophet and Messenger^{AS}.

Prophethood Mark of Divine Providence.

Allah is the **Rabb** of the worlds. The epitome of **His** Creativity is the creation that was to be blessed with **His** Cognition. This sublime favour can only be dispensed through the Institution of Prophethood. Therefore, **Allah** the Magnificent **Rabb** had assigned this important task to Prophet Nūḥ^{AS}. He reassured the people that he had no intention to force the Divine Message on them. They needed not worry that in supersession of the practices of their forefathers he was imposing his own views. He was only a Messenger^{AS} of **Allah** and it was his assigned duty to convey the Divine Message to them. This is because the knowledge which a Prophet^{AS} receives directly from **Allah** can be attained by the people only through him. There is no other source.

Prophet Nūḥ^{AS} reiterated that he was there to pass on the treasures of wisdom and cognition to the people, as they needed them. There was nothing surprising that **Allah** had chosen someone from amongst them to be **His** Prophet. This is entirely **His** Choice. It must, however, be remembered that Prophets^{AS} sent unto mankind ought to be human beings so that the mankind

may benefit from them. It is the duty of a Prophet^{AS} to forewarn people of the impending dangers inherent in the invisible effects of beliefs and practices. In other words, he cautions of what will be manifested in the Hereafter. The aim of his efforts is that people should qualify for **Allah's** Mercy by opting for the right path in terms of beliefs and practices formulated and approved by **Allah Himself**. This indeed is Taqwa and the sure path to eternal bliss. Just as **He** sends clouds laden with vitality to the barren soil, **He** also dissipates the lights of Prophethood to the dispirited hearts. However, the soil affected by salinity does not benefit from the downpour. Similarly the heart turns saline after a limit of wrongdoings is exceeded, and no longer benefits from the Prophetic radiance.

So the people overwhelmingly defied Prophet Nūḥ^{AS}. He ceaselessly conveyed **Allah's** Message for nine hundred and fifty years and only eighty men and women accepted. Those who denied at last met their fate and were wiped out by the Deluge. Only the believers were saved who had boarded the Ark with Prophet Nūḥ^{AS}. Those who perished had acted as if blind and had failed to recognize the truth. Vain desires and carnal pleasures had blinded them; indeed, blind were their hearts.

Section 9

65. And to 'Ād We sent their brother, Hūd **He** said: O my people! Worship **Allah**, no god you have other than **He**. Do you not fear?

﴿ وَإِلَىٰ عَادِ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۖ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴾
65

66. The chiefs of those who disbelieved among his people said: in truth, we see you in folly and in truth we deem you to be of the liars.

﴿ قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ ۖ إِنَّا لَنَرُوكَ فِي سَفَاهَةٍ وَإِنَّا لَنُظُنُّكَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴾
66

67. Hūd said: O my people! Not with me is folly, but I am a Messenger from the **Rabb** of the worlds.

﴿ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي سَفَاهَةٌ وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾
67

68. I preach to you the Messages from my **Rabb**; and I am to you a counsellor faithful.

﴿ أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَأَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ أَمِينٌ ﴾
68

69. Do you marvel that an admonition from your **Rabb** should come to you upon a man from amongst you so that he may warn you? Remember the time when **He** made you successors after the people of Nūḥ and increased you amply in stature. Remember the bounties of **Allah** that perchance you may fare well.

70. They said: have you come to us that we should worship **Allah** Alone and leave what our fathers were used to worship? Bring you then upon us that with which you have threatened us if you are of the truthful.

71. Hūd said: surely there have befallen you wrath and indignation from your **Rabb**. Do you dispute with me over the names you have named, you and your fathers, for which **Allah** has sent down no warranty? Wait then; I also will be of those who wait.

72. Then **We** delivered him and those with him by a Mercy from **Us**, and **We** utterly cut off those who belied **Our** Signs, and would not be believers.

أَوْ عَجِبْتُمْ أَنْ جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ
مِنْكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَأَذَكُرُوكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ
خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَزَادَكُمْ فِي الْخَلْقِ
بَضْطَةً فَأَذَكُرُوكُمْ وَالْآءَ اللَّهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

قَالُوا أَاجْتَنَّا لِنَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ وَنَذَرَ
مَا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا فَأِنَّا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا
إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾

قَالَ قَدْ وَقَعَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ
وَغَضَبٌ أَتُجَادِلُونَنِي فِي أَسْمَاءِ
سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ
بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ فَأَنْظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ
مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ﴿٧١﴾

فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَقَطَعْنَا
دَابِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَمَا كَانُوا
مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾

The Unity of Allah

As time rolled on the inhabitants of earth flourished and multiplied. In the fifth generation of Prophet Nūḥ^{AS} was born a person named 'Ād, who was a descendant of Prophet Nūḥ's^{AS} son Šām. 'Ād was a man of such prominence that the entire nation became known as Qaum-e-'Ād (People of 'Ād).

The descendants of 'Ād's brother became known as the Children of Thamūd, and also as 'Ād Thani ('Ād the Second). According to the historians, Irum was the grandfather of 'Ād. That is why these people have also been referred to as 'Ād-e-Irum in history. They were well built, tall, strong and affluent, blessed with fertile lands yielding golden crops. Their orchards were laden with fruits. In short, they had every possible provision, in abundance, and this led them into heedlessness of **Allah**. Intoxicated with wealth and power they indulged in polytheism and defiance. This tragic level of their spiritual ailment demanded a healing through Divine Providence. Therefore, **Allah** raised amongst them Prophet Hūd^{AS}, a descendant of Šām. Prophethood is an honour conferred only upon mankind, and no other creation has ever been blessed with. This is because humans could have only benefited from their own species. But here the favour was doubled as Prophet Hūd^{AS} was also from the same community and lineage. He blatantly told his people to worship **Allah**, as **He** Alone is worthy of worship. The Unity of **Allah** was the basic and the foremost concept preached by all the Messengers^{AS} and has always been the corner-stone of all Divine Religions. It must be remembered that concept of Unity demands having a single focal point of all hopes, whereas mere verbal declaration of **Allah**'s Oneness will in fact be a superficial acceptance of Unity.

Prophet Hūd^{AS} told his people that their relationship with **Allah** had deteriorated so much that they no longer felt embarrassed over their conduct. Belief in Unity of **Allah** actually depends upon one's inner relation with **Him**, termed as Taqwa. Once this link is broken, a person begins to idolize many as his **Rabb**, even though he is not vocal about it.

The chieftains of 'Ād who were rejoicing their leadership due to the false religion were outraged. They told him that his words made no sense to them. How could the propensities and practices of their forefathers, which had

always proved beneficial, be wrong? He was either unaware or had some vested interest, they said.

Prophet Hūd^{AS} rebutted that he was certainly not insane, as whatever he had told them could only have been discerned by a Prophet^{AS}. All the philosophers, savants and intellectuals of the world put together can never find a clue to **Allah**'s Attributes. It is the Prophets^{AS} who know, being directly instructed by **Him**. Prophet Hūd^{AS} added that he too was **Allah**'s Messenger and was assigned to convey the Message of the Creator and the Provider of the universe. Moreover, his sole aim was not only to convey the Message but he also deeply sympathized with them. He sincerely wanted to help them improve their ways as he was also a trustee. Prophets^{AS} are trustees in all matters; that is, in conveying the Divine Message, exerting efforts and sincerely wishing to reform people.

He inquired as to why did it amaze them that **Allah** had chosen a commoner from amongst them for Prophethood, and not a chieftain or an angel, to inform them of the end results of their deeds! He told his people to remember the times gone by, when Prophet Nūh^{AS} was sent as **Allah**'s Messenger, whose teachings were the same. Repudiation of his teachings had destroyed the disobedient. **Allah** erased them from the face of this earth and brought in a generation (the 'Ād) stronger and more powerful, blessed with prosperity and affluence. It was only appropriate that they should show gratitude to the Real Bestower, rather than stubbornly clinging to their religious heritage. They bragged that if **Allah** would punish them for being loyal to their deities, then let it happen. In any case they would never abandon the rituals of their ancestors.

A Sign of Allah's Annoyance

When sin crosses certain limits, it invokes **Allah**'s Wrath, symbolized by the loss of the capacity to repent. Instead of being embarrassed, a person feels proud of his wickedness. This state of affairs is a punishment by itself and it was the condition of People of 'Ād when Prophet Hūd^{AS} was raised. He repeatedly warned them. He declared that it was a punishment from **Allah** that they were exerting all their energies in proving hypothetical gods as their Providers. He warned them that if they preferred their rituals over the Divine Message they must stand by for the consequences while he too would be doing so.

The Prophetic lights he generously dissipated were absorbed only by those hearts, which had not lost the ability of acceptance completely. And those

hardened and rendered barren by a constant indulgence in sin were ruined. Winds, normally a sign of glad tidings and life, were imposed on them as Divine Punishment. It was a nation of tall and well built people living in lofty mansions, which were demolished by the furious winds. The trees were uprooted and the stormy and shrieking winds tossed people and animals to the ground, smashing them to pieces. For those with enlightened hearts, Prophet Hūd^{AS} threw a cordon around them within which the weather remained normal. The winds inside the cordon were harbingers of Divine Mercy whereas outside they were a manifestation of **His** Fury.

This punishment was awarded to them when they persistently disobeyed **Allah** and their Qulūb were rendered incapable of accepting guidance. The darkness enveloping their hearts had intensified so much that they were deprived of Divine Mercy and were seized by **His** Wrath. This is why **Allah** says: "They were not to believe."

Section 10

73. To Thamūd **We** sent their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said: O my people! Worship **Allah**; no god you have but **He**; surely there has come to you an evidence from your **Rabb**; this here is the she-camel of **Allah**, a Sign to you; so leave her alone, pasturing on **Allah**'s earth, and do not touch her with evil, lest there seize you a torment afflictive.

74. And remember what time **He** made you successors of 'Ād, and inherited you in earth; you take for yourselves palaces in the plains, and you hew out the mountains as houses. Remember the bounties of **Allah** and commit not evil on the earth as corrupters.

وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا
 اللَّهُ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءَ نَكْمٌ
 بَيْنَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ
 آيَةٌ فَذُرُّوهَا تَأْكُلُ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ
 وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا سُوءًا فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابُ آيَةٍ ﴿٧٣﴾

وَأذْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَادٍ
 وَبَوَّأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَتَّخِذُونَ
 مِنْ سُهُولِهَا قُصُورًا وَتَنْحِتُونَ الْجِبَالَ بُيُوتًا
 فَاذْكُرُوا آيَةَ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتَوُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

75. The chiefs of those who were stiff necked amongst his people said to those who were counted weak – to such of them as believed: do you know that Ṣāliḥ is a sent one of **His Rabb**? They said: indeed we are believers in that with which he has been sent.

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ
لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعِفُوا لِمَنْ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُمْ
أَتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ صَالِحًا مُرْسَلٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ
قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلَ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

76. Those who were stiff necked said: surely we are disbelievers in what you believe.

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا بِالَّذِي
ءَامَنَّا بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾

77. Then they hamstrung the she-camel and disdained the Command of their **Rabb**, and said: O Ṣāliḥ, bring upon us that with which you have threatened us, if you are indeed of the sent ones.

فَعَقَرُوا النَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ
وَقَالُوا لَا يَنْصَلِحُ اتِّبَاعُ مَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ
مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

78. Thereupon an earthquake seized them so that they lay prone in their dwellings.

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ
جَاثِمِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾

79. Then he turned from them, and said; O my people! Assuredly I did deliver to you the Messages of my **Rabb**, and counselled you good, but you do not approve the good counsellors.

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ
رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُحِبُّونَ
النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾

80. And **We** sent Lūṭ, when he said to his people: do you commit an indecency with which none has preceded you in the worlds.

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ ءَاتَاؤُنَ الْفَاحِشَةَ
مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

81. Verily you go in lustfully to men instead of women! Aye! You are a people extravagant.

إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِنْ دُونِ
النِّسَاءِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

82. Nothing was the answer of his people save that they said: drive

وَمَا كَانَتْ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ ءِلاَّ أَنْ قَالُوا

them forth from your city;
indeed they are a people who
would be pure!

83. Then **We** delivered him and his
family, save his wife, she was
among the lingerers.

84. And we rained upon them a rain.
So behold! What like was the
end of the culprits.

أَخْرَجُوهُمْ مِّن قَرْيَتِكُمْ إِنَّهُمْ أَنَاسٌ
يُّنَظَّهُرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ
مِنَ الْفَٰئِرِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَّطَرًا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ
عَٰقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

Secrets of Revelation

The Reality of Supplication

The discussion about **Allah's** Power and extreme Graciousness unto **His** creation continues. **His** Mercy reaches out to those who seek it. If a person remains deprived it is not because there is a scarcity from the source, but because his heart has lost the ability to absorb the Barakah. According to **Hadīth**, people travel long distances and call upon **Allah** with dishevelled hair, dusty countenance and tattered clothes but their prayers are not answered. This is because the food they take is unlawful and the clothes they wear are made out of illegitimate earnings. Some are so unfortunate that they are deprived of the opportunity to supplicate altogether, whereas others practise it outwardly, unaware of its reality. Both these situations refer to a state of deprivation.

After the destruction of 'Ād, their property was taken over by their paternal cousins Thamūd, who are also referred to as 'Ād-e-Thāni. The latter surpassed the former in architecture. Thamūd constructed their palaces on the ruins of their ancestors. They also mastered the art of sculpture and used to cut perpendicular rocks out of mountains and shape them into houses. Even today the porticos, doorways and pillars of those houses reveal the tales of their dexterity as well as of their destruction.

However, when Thamūd began to flourish, a group of religious exploiters also emerged. They attached religious sanctity to the fulfilment of their fancies and promoted their own rituals instead of Divine Commandments. Although the fate of 'Ād was a recent history, yet when the hearts are blinded the symbols

of admonition become invisible. Thus Thamūd, too, indulged in evil and polytheism. When their hearts were on the verge of desolation **Allah's** Mercy once again conferred Prophethood on **His** chosen person from amongst them. Prophet Ṣāliḥ^{AS} was assigned the task, and once again the eternal call of 'La Illaha Ill **Allah**' (There is no god save **Allah**) echoed on the face of earth. He invited his countrymen to worship **Allah** Alone, with patience and confidence. Unfortunately when the inward decadence reaches a certain level the response to such an invitation is only negative. But the Prophet^{AS} did not give up and continued with his mission until the rolling years turned his hair grey. The people became weary of listening to him so they conspired to get rid of him. After much deliberations they came up with a strange and apparently impossible demand. Since their economy was based on cattle, they wanted Prophet Ṣāliḥ^{AS} to make the mountain split and from it should emerge a ten-month gravid dromedary. They told him that since he was inviting them to an Omnipotent God so this demand should be passed on to **Him** and if fulfilled, they would all submit to **Him**.

Prophet Ṣāliḥ^{AS} raised his hands in prayer and the impossible happened. The rock split and out came a colossal she-camel. A few fortunate ones instantly embraced faith while the majority was misled by the affluent leaders living under the façade of religion, who took to all sorts of pretensions.

The Influence of Link

Prophet Ṣāliḥ^{AS} told his people that there was no room left for any pretext now. And it must be remembered that the dromedary was directly linked to **Allah**, in the same way K'abah is called Bait **Allah** (**Allah's** House) and Prophet 'Isā^{AS}, Rūḥ **Allah** (**Allah's** Spirit).

He instructed them to take care of the dromedary as it was a manifestation of **Allah's** Omnipotence. As long as it remained amongst them its presence would ensure their safety against punishment even if they failed to accept guidance. Moreover, it would not cost them anything, as there were vast pastures and meadows for grazing. But if they killed it they would certainly be punished.

Fine Abodes are Allah's Blessing

Addressing his people, Prophet Ṣāliḥ^{AS} said that they should not forget the excruciating doom of 'Ād; and how the Almighty had been Gracious to allow their rehabilitation on the ruins of their ancestors. They were blessed with palaces constructed at the same place and also with the power to sculpt rocks

into houses. It was imperative that they should be grateful to **Allah**. It clearly indicates that it is not prohibited to own a good house; rather it is a Divine Favour for which one must show his gratitude. However, it is impudent to become regretful of **Allah** out of greed for houses. The disgust expressed in a Ḥadīth in this context in fact implies that the pursuit for comfortable abodes is likely to make people negligent towards **Allah**'s Ḥikr. For the same reason it is stressed: "So remember the bounties of **Allah** and do no evil, by making mischief on earth." This is because evil and wrongdoings create discord and conflicts.

But the arrogant who had assumed leadership by exploiting the ignorance of the common man felt threatened, for if they accepted the truth, they would lose their superiority over the masses. So they began to argue with the believers, whom they considered much inferior to them. They asked them how could they be so sure of Prophet Ṣāliḥ^{AS} being **Allah**'s Messenger? The believers told them that it was not a question of his being **Allah**'s Prophet^{AS} because it was as clear as the daylight. The question was as to who would accept the Message he had brought. This honour, of course, was enjoyed by the believers. The arrogant declared that they would never accept his Message and instead began to conspire how to get rid of the dromedary, which they took as the very cause of their dilemma. Commentators assert that the people had become weary of the amount of food and water it consumed. They had to take water for their cattle on alternate days and leave the rest to the dromedary. But after she delivered its little one the amount of milk she produced was far more than the water consumed and it was sufficient for everyone.

Moreover, the important fact highlighted here is that the dromedary was a clear proof of **Allah**'s Greatness, which they had themselves demanded, yet they decided to get rid of it once for all. A rogue from amongst them hamstrung the dromedary and killed it. Now they had the audacity to enquire from the Prophet^{AS} as to where the calamity promised to befall them was.

So **Allah** informed Prophet Ṣāliḥ^{AS} to tell his people that the following day their faces would become pale. The very next day they would turn red and the day after black; and that they would not live any longer. This warning produced a negative effect and they got after his assassination, but he was protected by **Allah**.

The next day their faces did turn pale but their hearts failed to turn to **Allah**. Instead of repenting they intensified their anger against the Prophet^{AS} blaming him for their distress. Eventually, after three days, the earthquake and thunder rocked their settlements and destroyed them completely. Prophet Ṣāliḥ^{AS} still

felt sorry for his people; how they had turned a deaf ear to his Message and how the blindness of their hearts precluded the recognition of a well wisher. Their ruins even todate tell the tales of their misfortune. While passing by these ruins, on way to Tabūk, the Holy Prophet^{-SAW} is said to have forbidden the Companions^{-RAU} from passing through the accursed zone or using the water from a well in that area. This proves beyond any doubt that the conduct of the dweller leaves permanent impact on the dwellings. Whereas it is an honour to live in a noble company, a sojourn with evil people is also dangerous.

As time rolled on and human settlements grew, once again mankind lost its bearings and gave in to idolatry. Estrangement with **Allah** made it a slave of its fancies. The first phase of idol worship begins with the formation of idols of vain desires within, which, though invisible, are worshipped under various pretexts. At long last, a lifeless statue is crafted as a deity with no power or will of its own but which serves as an outlet for the endless fancies of its sculptor. Praise be to **Allah**, **Whose** Mercy never abandons **His** creation! Now Prophet Lūṭ^{-AS} was deputed to the people settled between Jordan and Palestine. Their settlements comprised five major cities with Sodom as the capital.

Punishment of Sodomy

Prophet Lūṭ^{-AS} was Prophet Ibrahīm^{-AS}'s nephew who had migrated alongwith his uncle and was deputed as a Prophet^{-AS} to the aforesaid settlements. He stationed himself at Sodom. This nation indulged in acts not known before in the history of mankind. That is why Prophet Lūṭ^{-AS} reproached them in extremely harsh words. He said that although polytheism and disbelief were grave sins and earlier nations had been destroyed as a result but they had opted for a path of immorality no other nation had ever imagined about. It was a loathsome act which even the animals abhorred. This is why the jurists are of the opinion that sodomy is far worse than adultery. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah^{-RUA} a sodomist must be pushed down from a mountaintop and stoned like the People of Prophet Lūṭ^{-AS}, who were stoned from the sky.

So Prophet Lūṭ^{-AS} openly admonished his people, as to how could they be so blind and obscene to prefer men over women in lust without feelings of disgust? The survival of human race is based on its reproduction, but debauchery and obscenity never yields human beings of high morality. This is why **Allah** has spelled out laws for sexual relationship in order to ensure noble progeny and a clean society. When the limits of **Allah** are trespassed for lust, such a person is guilty of adultery, which is termed as *Faḥīshah* (obscenity) by the Qurān. This is because it causes many sorts of immorality and evil.

Therefore, the punishment for it is very severe. But the act of homosexuality is being termed here as *Al Fahishah* (the obscenity), which means a combination of all forms of obscenity. The people of Prophet Lūṭ^{AS} had trespassed all limits in resorting to this obnoxious act.

Unnatural Way of Copulation

Whereas it has been declared as a blatant evil by the Qurān, the Shi'ites permit sex with a woman in the anus. By doing so they have, like the People of Prophet Lūṭ^{AS}, not only laid the foundation of an evil, but have also given it the status of worship. The pioneers of this abomination are the Shi'ites as prior to them no one ever indulged in it like the people of Prophet Lūṭ^{AS} who pioneered homosexuality.

Punishment a by-Product of Actions

The People of Prophet Lūṭ^{AS} had no justification for their immorality so they resorted to arrogance. They accused him and his followers of being conceited over piety and thus merit expulsion from their cities. Now see the Divine Mercy that inspite of their indulgence in a heinous crime **He** did not deprive them of **His** Attention. **He** raised a Prophet^{AS} amongst them but unfortunately their hearts had degenerated to the level whereby not only did they fail to respond to goodness but became more malicious. Now they were seized by Divine Punishment, except the Prophet^{AS} and his followers. For their act of immorality contrary to nature they were punished in a paranormal manner. After the stones downpour from the sky, the portion of land inhabited by them was uprooted from its core and turned upside down. The sanctity of the relationship of the heart must be taken a note of here. The worldly relationships apart, the wife of Prophet Lūṭ^{AS} had her heart throbbing with the wicked people and not with the Prophet^{AS}. So her physical proximity with him could not save her and she met the same ill fate.

Connection of the Heart

A few people who remained unharmed were those who were connected to the Prophet^{AS} by heart. And if connection of the heart is also complemented with physical relationship it is indeed a great reward. But it must be remembered that physical relationship alone is of no consequence whatever. The ill fate suffered by the evil doers and the wicked can be witnessed even today. The piece of land once inhabited by them is nothing more than a massive pool of

stagnant stinking water wherein no life is possible. That is why it is called the Dead Sea.

Section 11

85. To Madyan We sent their brother Shu'aib. He said: O my people! Worship **Allah**, no god you have but **He**. Surely there has come to you an evidence from your **Rabb**; so give full weight and measure, and do not defraud people of their things, and do not act corruptly on the earth after its ordering; that is best for you if you be believers.

وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ
اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۖ قَدْ
جَاءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَأَوْفُوا
الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَلَا تَخْسُوا النَّاسَ
أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. And do not beset every highway menacing and turning aside from the Path of **Allah** those who believe in **Him** and seeking to render it crooked. And remember when you were small, and **He** thereafter multiplied you; and behold! What like was the end of the corrupters.

وَلَا تَقْعُدُوا بِكُلِّ صِرَاطٍ تُوعِدُونَ
وَتَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَن ءَامَنَ بِهِ ۗ
وَتَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَأذْكَرُوا
إِذْ كُنْتُمْ قَلِيلًا فَكَثَّرَكُمُ ۗ وَانظُرُوا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. And if there is a party of you who believe in that with which I am sent and a party who do not believe, then have patience until **Allah** judges between us, and **He** is the Best of Judges.

وَإِذْ كَانَ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنكُمْ ءَامَنُوا بِالَّذِي
أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ ۗ وَطَآئِفَةٌ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَاصْبِرُوا حَتَّىٰ
يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَنَا وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

88. The chiefs of those who were stiff-necked among this people said, surely we will drive you forth, O Shu'aib and those who have believed with you from our city, or else you shall return to

﴿٨٨﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِن قَوْمِهِ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكَ
يَشُعَيْبُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَكَ مِن قَرْيَتِنَا أَوْ لَتَعُودَنَّ
فِي مِلَّتِنَا قَالَ أَوَلَوْ كُنَّا كَاهِنِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

our faith. **He** said: What! Even though we abhor.

89. We must have been fabricating a lie against **Allah** if we returned to your faith after **Allah** has delivered us from it. And it is not for us to return thereto except that **Allah** our **Rabb** so willed; everything our **Rabb** comprehends in **His** Knowledge, in **Allah** we place our trust. O our **Rabb**! Decide **You** between us and our people with truth; **You** are the Best of the Deciders.

90. And the chiefs of those who disbelieved among his people said: should you follow Shu'aib, lo! Verily you shall be the losers.

91. An earthquake thereupon felled them; so that they lay prone in their dwelling.

92. Those who had belied Shu'aib became as though they had not dwelt therein; those who had belied Shu'aib it is they who were losers.

93. Then he turned from them and said: O my people! Assuredly I delivered to you the Messages of my **Rabb** and counselled you good; how then should I lament over a disbelieving people?

قَدْ افترينا على الله كذبا ان عدنا في مليكم
بعد اذ نجحنا الله منها وما يكون لنا ان نعود فيها
الا ان يشاء الله ربنا وسيع ربنا كل شئ بعلمنا
على الله توكلنا ربنا افتح بيننا وبين قومنا
بالحق وانت خير الفصحين ﴿٨٩﴾

وقال اللذان الذين كفروا من قومه، لئن اتبعتم
شعبيا انكم اذال خسررون ﴿٩٠﴾

فاخذتهم الرجفة فاصبحوا في دارهم
جثيمين ﴿٩١﴾

الذين كذبوا شعبيا كان لم يفتنوا فيها الذين
كذبوا شعبيا كانوا هم الخسرين ﴿٩٢﴾

فقلوبى عنهم وقال ياقوم لقد ابلفنكم
رسالتى ربى ونصحت لكم فكيف اسى
على قوم كافرين ﴿٩٣﴾

Secrets of Revelation

With the passage of time settlements grew at Madyan. According to the Commentators, Madyan was Prophet Ibrahīm^{AS}'s son whose children as well as the settlement was called Madyan after him. As they became prosperous, avarice crept into their hearts. Accumulation of wealth became primary goal of their lives. To become rich, they resorted to all sorts of unfair means, deceiving people in measure and weight and plundering the wayfarers. They would also levy illegal taxes on the wayfarers.

The Divine Mercy came to rescue them and Prophet Shu'aib^{AS} was deputed unto the people of Madyan. He was also related to Prophet Ibrahīm^{AS} and Prophet Lūṭ^{AS} and was thus a brother to the people of Madyan. He invited them to worship **Allah, Who** Alone was worthy of worship. He instructed them to pin all their hopes on **Him** as **He** was their **Rabb. He** had raised him as a clear proof of **His** Providence. Hence whoever wishes to follow the right path could seek guidance from **His** Prophet^{AS}.

Violating Others' Rights is Forbidden

He prompted his people to weigh and measure goods precisely and not to wrong one another. The Commentators assert that no form of usurpation of the rights of others is permissible whether in terms of money, honour or reputation. It is forbidden not to respect someone as much as he deserves or to disobey someone whose obedience is obligatory. So much so that Ḥadhrat 'Umar^{RAU} once admonished a worshipper bending and prostrating hastily saying that he was violating the rights of Ṣalāt. Prophet Shu'aib^{AS} told his people not to become a source of disruption on earth, which **Allah** had furnished with means of comfort and amenities. Whereas injustice apparently creates nothing but unrest, it also shows a weakening of the bonds with **Allah**. Once this connection is upset the result is the destruction of inner self. Therefore, the Prophet^{AS} persuaded his people to follow him as it was the best in their own interest.

Unreasonable Taxes

He told his people to stop collecting toll taxes from wayfarers and plundering them. And also not to prevent others from accepting the true faith. The problem with disbelief and sin is that such a person cannot bear to see others embracing the truth. If a whit of goodness survived in the heart of a sinner, it

would lead him to repentance, else he would wish everyone else to become misguided like him.

Prosperity, Progeny and Power is a Divine Blessing

Prophet Shu'aib^{AS} reminded his people of the time when they were of no significance in terms of manpower as well as political and financial resources. **Allah** blessed them with affluence, children and power; so it was obligatory for them to be grateful to **Him** for **His** favours. He warned them that a failure to do so will become the very cause of destruction. They must not ignore the fate of the People of Prophets Nūḥ^{AS}, Hūd^{AS} Ṣāliḥ^{AS} and Lūṭ^{AS} before them. A few fortunate people embraced the faith presented by Prophet Shu'aib^{AS} while the majority went head long with their disbelief and criminal activities. Rather they felt sorry for the believers, who in their view, were at a loss in terms of riches as compared to them. Prophet Shu'aib^{AS} told them not to jump to conclusions as **Allah** gives respite to wrongdoers, though the ultimate outcome of transgression is indeed tragic. So let **Allah** be the Judge between the believers and the evil doers as **He** is the One **Who** passes the best of judgments!

History repeated itself and once again truth became intolerable for those who had cloaked their vain desires in a religious garb. So the chieftains warned Prophet Shu'aib^{AS} that if he did not turn back to their religion, he and those believing with him shall be forced into exile.

Evil of Rituals

The believers replied that they had abandoned their previous religion knowing it to be logically wrong. Their hearts had attained such a state as to become abhorrent to disbelief. So how could they be forced to renounce the faith. Prophet Shu'aib^{AS}, as **Allah**'s Messenger, could never possibly indulge in any degree of disbelief. The above discussion concerns the believers who were with him. Secondly, if they became apostates it would mean that they had been lying about **Allah** and had not been guided by **Him**. It is indeed a great transgression that lies be fabricated against **Him**. It must be remembered that self created rituals promoted as rewardable deeds is as big a crime as lying about **Allah**. So the believers refused to turn away from the faith, as they were grateful to **Allah** who had delivered them of the ungodly rituals and blessed them with it.

Apostasy Earns Allah's Annoyance

The believers declared that they would never give up the true faith, unless it is taken away by **Allah** due to their own mistakes. For if **Allah** is annoyed **He** may turn off the light of faith kindled in the hearts. **Allah's** Knowledge is unlimited, and **He** is Aware of the secrets burried deep in the hearts. As long as the hearts are pious, **He** facilitates repentance over sins, but once these turn evil, the circumstances change. Therefore, the believers asserted that they banked on **Allah** Alone, as **He** is the One **Who** could keep them steadfast on truth.

At last the believers raised their hands in prayer that if the non believers insist, let the dispute be settled between them by **Allah's** Grace and **His** Justice. It was time for the truth to be established as the wrongdoers had launched a disinformation campaign against the true faith. They were employing all the resources to misguide and confuse the believers and would often remind them of the material losses they suffered by embracing the Divine Faith.

Hence the Divine Punishment caught up. According to the Commentators the temperature rose to such a high degree that it became unbearable. Suddenly a dense cloud appeared over the jungle and they all rushed in that direction. No sooner had they gathered in the jungle, the earth shook and the cloud showered fire and everyone perished. And it looked like as if those who had denied the Prophet^{AS} never existed. The lesson was driven home that only the non believers were at a loss.

Prophet Shu'aib^{AS} remorsefully remarked that he had tried his level best to convince these ill fated people but they never listened. He decided to migrate to Makkah alongwith the believers to live there permanently. Majority of the Prophets^{AS} whose nations were so destroyed had migrated to Makkah alongwith the believers. Although, at that time the building of the K'abah was not there in its present shape but the place as usual was the focal point of Divine Splendour. Therefore, those Prophets^{AS} lived in Makkah, passed away and were buried there. Right now there are many such exalted souls resting in peace under the Muta'af, which only an enlightened heart blessed with Kashf can observe.

Section 12

94. We did not send a Prophet to any town but We afflicted its people with calamities and

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا
بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضَّرَّعُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

disasters that perchance they might humble themselves.

95. Thereafter **We** changed ease for adversity until they abounded and said: even thus did tribulation and prosperity touch our fathers. Then **We** laid hold of them of a sudden while they perceived not.

96. And had the people of those towns believed and feared **Allah**, **We** would of a surety have opened up to them blessings from the heavens and the earth; but they belied, so **We** seized them for what they had been earning.

97. Are the people of towns then secure that **Our** Wrath would not visit them at night while they are slumbering?

98. Or, are the people of towns then secure that **Our** Wrath would not visit them by daylight while they are disporting themselves?

99. Are they then secure against the contrivance of **Allah**? None feels secure against **Allah**'s contrivance except the people who are lost.

ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَا مَكَانَ السَّيِّئَةِ الْحَسَنَةَ حَتَّى عَفَوْا
وَقَالُوا قَدْ مَسَّ آبَاءَنَا الضَّرَّاءُ وَالْبَرَّاءُ
فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا
عَلَيْهِمْ بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَٰكِن
كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

أَفَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا بَيِّنًا
وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

أَوْ أَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا ضُحًى
وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ
إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

Secrets of Revelation

Allah is extremely Gracious and Benevolent, far beyond the sphere of human knowledge. It is said here that whenever and wherever **Allah** deputed **His** Prophets^{AS} a certain level and a kind of intensity occurred in the form of

problems people had to face. Disease, poverty and financial losses would become a common feature so that people would look for an emancipator. This would drive them to **Allah's** Prophet^{AS}, even though it was for some personal interest.

Although man has been given the power to choose between guidance and evil, yet **His** Mercy creates such circumstances whereby he realizes his worthlessness and turns to **Allah** in all humility. And when he does, he receives support immediately.

Divine Clemency

If in spite of everything one fails to turn to **Allah**, the circumstances are eased off for him. The hardships are replaced by comforts. Taking advantage of this respite man progresses in terms of affluence and power and becomes oblivious to **Allah's** Greatness. He actually begins to believe that weal and woe are normal phenomena, not in any way related to piety or otherwise and that his predecessors too lived through similar circumstances. Or may be that his ancestors were not capable of finding proper solutions while he is progressive enough to develop treatment to ills as well as means of comforts. Amidst these perplexed deliberations he is suddenly caught by Divine Wrath, in the form of death, turmoils, natural calamities or hazards. Thus those ignorant of **Allah's** Greatness finally step into the Hereafter.

Taqwa Invokes Barakah

Had the defiant accepted **Allah's** Message and had practised Taqwa **He** would have certainly opened up the doors of blessings of the heavens and the earth for them.

Taqwa has been explained earlier as a state of the heart attained through the Holy Prophet's^{SAW} beneficence. This is why faith is mentioned before Taqwa. The reality of faith is total trust in **Allah's** Prophet^{SAW} whereby the heart of a seeker receives transmissions from his sacred heart, finds himself before **Allah** and dares not disobey **Him**. If this blessing is acquired, the gateway to the Barakah of the heavens and earth are opened up unto him.

What is Barakah?

It is a prosperity substantiated with peace and comfort in one's health, wealth, occupations and time, and is displayed in many ways. Sometimes the quantity of a substance increases; for instance when on a journey the Holy Prophet^{SAW} immersed his fingers into a tumbler filled with water and it became enough to

satiate the entire caravan, including the horses and camels, and also topped up the storage skins. Sometimes the quantity of a substance remains unaltered but it yields the same results which a quantity four times its volume could have produced. Sometimes a single bite provides complete energy and an ordinary medication cures a fatal disease. Many tasks are performed in a short span of time. Many examples of prosperity and abundance may be witnessed in the lives of the Aulia.

Besides, this prosperity also refers to harmony in the earthly as well as celestial conditions; for instance having rainfall at the right time and in the right quantity, so as to yield healthy crops in favourable weather conditions. And then having peace and comfort at heart are also the fruits of Taqwa. These spiritual states are distributed by the Prophets^{AS} in the first place, then by the Companions^{RAU} and, in turn, by those who strive under the guidance of the accomplished.

Affluence: both a Reward and a Punishment

When people opted for denial they had to face the consequences. Time became less fruitful while rains proved to be harmful. In spite of being wealthy they could neither enjoy a good meal nor good health. Similarly, injustice prevailed in the society and ignorant people assumed power and offices of authority. All such punishments were then awarded to the non believers for their denial. In present times similar punishments are inflicted upon the believers because of their disobedience. In other words, it is a law of the nature that Taqwa begets peace and comfort while sin begets remorse and distress.

The Barakah attend the righteous deeds from the heaven as well as from the earth. At the same time the impious also enjoy affluence and power. How, then, would it be judged whether prosperity is a punishment or a reward? The learned scholars give a very simple yardstick; that the circumstances which invoke **Allah's** Zikr and obedience are a Divine Reward, be it affluence or poverty. And all that generates disobedience and indulgence in sin is a kind of punishment, whether it is wealth or power. Besides, peace and tranquility of the heart accompanies the reward whereas punishment renders the heart bleak.

It is amazing how mankind is overpowered by indifference. In spite of being aware of the fate met by their predecessors, no one bothers to think that disobedience amounts to inviting destruction. It is quite possible that **Allah's** Wrath may grip them during the night slumber or in the peak business hours of the day. Have they become heedless of the end results **Allah** has pre-destined

for all actions, that the obedience attracts Barakah while disobedience destroys? Take note that those unmindful of the consequences are always at a loss.

Section 13

100. Does it not guide the people who inherit the land after its people, that had **We** willed, **We** would have afflicted them for their sins? And **We** have put a seal upon their hearts, so that they are bereft of hearing.

أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لِلَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ
أَهْلِهَا أَنْ لَوْ نَشَاءُ أَصَبْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ
وَنَطْبَعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

101. Those towns! **We** recount to you some of their tidings. Assuredly there came to them their Messengers with evidences, but they were not such as to believe what they had first rejected. Thus **Allah** put a seal upon the hearts of the infidels.

تِلْكَ الْقُرَى نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِهَا وَلَقَدْ
جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا
بِمَا كَذَّبُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ
كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠١﴾

102. **We** found no regard for Covenant in most of them; and most of them **We** found ungodly.

وَمَا وَجَدْنَا لِأَكْثَرِهِمْ مِنْ عَهْدٍ وَإِنْ وَجَدْنَا
أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

103. Then **We** sent after them Mūsa with **Our** Signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they wronged them. Behold then what was the end of the corrupters like.

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ
وَمَلَائِيهِ. فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا فَأَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَتْ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

104. And Mūsa said: O Pharaoh! I am a Messenger from the **Rabb** of the worlds.

وَقَالَ مُوسَى يٰفِرْعَوْنُ إِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِنْ رَبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

105. Incumbent it is upon me that I speak nothing concerning **Allah** except the truth; surely I have brought to you an evidence from

حَقِيقٌ عَلَى أَنْ لَا أَقُولُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ قَدْ
جِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعِيَ بَنِي

your **Rabb**; so let the Children of Isrāil depart with me.

106. Pharaoh said: if you have brought a Sign, forth with it if you are of the truth tellers.
107. Then he threw his rod, when, lo! It was a serpent manifest.
108. And he drew forth his hand, it was white to the beholders.

إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

قَالَ إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ بِآيَةٍ فَآتِ بِهَا إِنْ كُنْتَ

مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

فَأَلْقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾

وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنَّاظِرِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

Secrets of Revelation

The annihilated met their fate, becoming a great symbol of admonition for the coming generations. It is amazing how prosperous and most powerful nations possessing immense resources, wealth, grand palaces and mighty armies were seized by Divine Wrath because of their unending sins. Their destruction left nothing save a warning to mankind. So the people who followed in time and are now present are being addressed by this Book and the Message, that they must realize that **Allah** is Omnipotent and can punish the sinful whenever **He** wants to. And they, too, like their predecessor will have to face the consequences of their misdeeds in the form of various calamities, or else the sealing of the hearts.

Effects of deeds on Qulūb

The door of the heart is closed for the truth, as explained by a saying of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}; that indulgence in sin creates a black spot on the heart. Its repetition increases the extent of darkness, while persistent indulgence renders it completely black. This is the condition which has often been referred to as rust or a seal on the heart by the Qurān. Then such people cannot respond to an invitation to piety, though their physical power of hearing is sound and functional. It has often been experienced that despite the best resources people remain without guidance. For instance, some of those who personally attended the Holy Prophet's^{SAW} sermons did not convert to Islam, and felt bored. This was because their Qulūb had been darkened by their misdeeds and had developed aversion to truth. In this state, all the organs serve only for the fulfillment of physical needs. One perceives not that he was wrong and should repent and accept the truth. The majority of non believers displayed such

attitude because of the seal on their hearts. And this majority consists of those who persistently indulge in sin. Similarly if a believer opts for disobedience, it is detrimental to his heart and he may end up renouncing Islam.

Those who get their hearts sealed are the ones who are dishonest and guilty of dishonouring the promise they made to **Allah** on the Day of Covenant. Whenever they are faced with a difficult situation they promise **Allah** that they would reform themselves if given another chance. But as soon as **Allah** makes things easier for them, they revert to their evil ways.

Only Prophet can Inform on Allah's Attributes and Choice

Allah sent Prophet Mūsa^{AS} to the king of Egypt called Pharaoh, a title of all the rulers of that country. He took **Allah's** Message to Pharaoh, his chieftains and the scholars, together with clear manifestations and miracles. But they were arrogant to him as well as the Divine Message and Signs. And the world witnessed the disastrous end of these mischief mongers.

Prophet Mūsa^{AS} invited the attention of Pharaoh and introduced himself as the Messenger of the **Rabb** of the worlds. In other words, sending Messengers^{AS} is indeed befitting to **His** Providence. A Prophet^{AS} cannot possibly associate anything false with **Allah**. The Prophets^{AS} are always innocent and trustworthy and are blessed with the knowledge of **His Being** and **His Attributes**, or Likes and Dislikes directly by **Him**. Therefore, a Prophet^{AS} will never speak anything concerning **Allah** save the truth. And anyone who invents his own rituals taking them to be a source of reward or punishment has certainly lied about **Allah**.

He told Pharaoh and his chieftains that he had also been blessed with miracles by **Allah**, by the One **Who** is also their **Rabb** and desires to reform them. Therefore, it was best for them to keep away from disbelief, polytheism and atrocities against the oppressed community of Banī Isrāīl, who should be given freedom and permitted to go with him so that they could live in peace. The Pharaoh demanded the manifestation of a miracle as a token. Although Prophet Mūsa^{AS} was bestowed with many miracles but the two most prominent were the transformation of his staff into a big serpent and his hand, which glowed at his discretion. It is a Divine Way to bless the Prophets^{AS} with miracles commensurate with the skills and the arts possessed by the people unto whom they are sent. A high standard of sorcery and magic were the hallmark of the Pharaoh's era. Therefore, Prophet Mūsa^{AS} was blessed with miracles that established his supremacy over the magicians. He threw the staff

and it turned into a big serpent, and took out his hand from his armpit and it was so bright as to illuminate the entire surroundings.

Section 14

109. The chiefs of the People of Pharaoh said; this is indeed a magician knowing.
110. He will banish you from land; so what is it that now you propose.
111. They said: put him and his brother off, and send callers to the cities.
112. That they may bring to you every magician knowing.
113. And the magicians came to Pharaoh. They said: certainly there is a reward for us if we are the victors.
114. Pharaoh said: yea! And you shall be of those brought close.
115. They said: O Mūsa! Either you cast down, or we shall be the ones to cast down.
116. Mūsa said: cast down yours. Then when they cast down, they enchanted the eyes of the people and frightened them and brought mighty magic to bear.
117. And We Revealed to Mūsa: cast you rod. And lo! It was swallowing up what they had feigned.
118. Thus the truth prevailed, and what they had prepared vanished.

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّ هَذَا السَّحِرُ
عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾

يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

قَالُوا أَرْجِهْ وَأَخَاهُ وَأَرْسِلْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ
حَاشِرِينَ ﴿١١١﴾

يَأْتُوكَ بِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿١١٢﴾

وَجَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوا إِنَّ لَنَا لَأَجْرًا
إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾

قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ لَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾

قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ
نَحْنُ الْمُثَلِّقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾

قَالَ الْقَوْمُ فَلَمَّا آلَقُوا سَحَرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ
وَأَسْرَبُوا بِهِمْ وَجَاءَ وَبِسِحْرِ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١١٦﴾

﴿١١٧﴾ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَإِذَا هِيَ
تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾

فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾

119. Thus were they overcome and made to look abject.
120. And the magicians flung themselves in Sajdah.
121. They said: we believe in the **Rabb** of the worlds.
122. The **Rabb** of Mūsa and Harūn.
123. Pharaoh said: did you believe before I gave you leave? Assuredly this is a plot you have plotted in the city that you drive forth its people. So now you shall know.
124. Surely I will cut off your hands and feet on the opposite sides and thereafter I will crucify you all.
125. They said: verily to our **Rabb** we are turning.
126. And what is that for which you take vengeance on us save that we believed in the Signs of our **Rabb** when they came to us. Our **Rabb**! Pour out on us perseverance and cause us to die as Muslims.

فَقُلِبُوا هُنَالِكَ وَانْقَلَبُوا صَٰغِرِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

وَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سَٰجِدِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾

رَبِّ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ ءَاذَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَمَكْرٌ مَّكْرْتُمْ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لِتُخْرِجُوا مِنْهَا أَهْلَهَا
فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

لَأَقْطَعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ
ثُمَّ لَأَصْلِبَنَّكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

قَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

وَمَا نَنفِقُ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَتَاءَ ءَامَنَّا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا لَعَجَآءَ تَنَآءَ
رَبِّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَفَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾

Secrets of Revelation

Difference Between Magic and Miracle

When the political chieftains as well as the religious leaders of Pharaoh's Court witnessed the miracle at the hands of Prophet Mūsa^{AS} they exclaimed that he was a magician par excellence. They acknowledged that they had never witnessed anything like that before at the hands of any magician. Their hearts

had been blackened and hardened to an extent that they lost the ability to accept the truth. Otherwise the supremacy of Prophet Mūsa's^{AS} miracles over the magicians had been well established. Besides, there are many ways in which a miracle differs from magic. First of all both involve people different in kind. A sorcerer is associated with Satan and, therefore, is evil, impure and vicious, whereas a Prophet^{AS} is connected to **Allah**, the Almighty and is pure in his beliefs and actions. Secondly, magic is practised to establish one's own superiority or beliefs, whereas a miracle is manifested to establish the superiority of **Allah** and **His** Word. Thirdly, magic cannot alter the originality of a substance but can only cast a spell over the eyes of the beholders, whereas a miracle alters the reality of a substance and that which is witnessed is indeed real. Same is the criterion to differentiate between the Karamah of a Wali and the tricks of a sorcerer. The former is, in fact, a miracle of the Prophet^{AS} depicted at the hands of a Wali due to his ardent adherence to the Prophet^{AS}. The Pharaoh's Courtiers asserted that it appeared as if Prophet Mūsa^{AS} wanted to seize the throne and the country from the Pharaoh and is demonstrating his excellence for this purpose. So to counter this, they invited suggestion from the entire Court.

Magic Need Not be Feared

The Court unanimously decided that the Pharaoh must give respite to Prophet Mūsa^{AS} and make him compete with the renowned magicians of his kingdom, so that he may be defeated and disposed off forever. Everyone hailed this suggestion as they were confident of the skills of their magicians. It was, therefore, decided to send couriers inviting them to the Royal Court.

As a result hundreds of magicians began to pour into the capital. According to some accounts hundreds of camels laden with ropes, cords, and staffs accompanied the magicians, who on arrival in the Court, announced that they expected to be rewarded heavily by the Pharaoh on winning the contest. According to Tafsīr-e-Kabīr this desire of the magicians proved that if magic could really do wonders, the magicians would not be asking the Pharaoh for a reward. They could simply convert soil into solid gold or become the rulers of the world. But magic is only a sensory illusion which by no means can alter the reality of a substance. Therefore, it is unwise to be afraid of a magician. The magicians knew fully well that the Pharaoh himself was scared and in need of help; that was why he had summoned them, but still they adopted a beggar's attitude. The Pharaoh promised them that if they succeeded, he will

not only duly reward them but will also allow them to be amongst his close confidants.

Thus both the sides arrived in the arena on schedule for the contest. One side was well equipped with resources, pomp and show as well as supporting spectators. On the other stood the Prophet^{AS} of **Allah**, clad in a woollen blanket with leather slippers in his feet and a staff in his hand, accompanied only by his brother and, of course, the Divine Support.

The Reward for Respect

The magicians were unacquainted with the concept of Divinity or Prophethood but they were convinced of the eminence of Prophet Mūsa^{AS}. They took him as a man of excellence for sure, who had been able to effectively worry the Pharaoh. So they displayed respect and asked him if he would begin or permit them to perform first. 'Allama Ibn-e-Kathīr^{RUA} argues that since the magicians had shown respect to **Allah's** Prophet^{AS}, **He** blessed them with guidance, while the Pharaoh displayed arrogance and was deprived of the right path. It may also be noted that those who defied the Holy Prophet^{SAW} and even fought against Islam but never showed disrespect to him in any form were rewarded with the capacity to repent. And those who were impudent and abusive remained deprived and died amidst regret and desperation. The same rule applies to the Aulia that the respectful benefits while the arrogant is at a loss.

However, the magicians after seeking permission from Prophet Mūsa^{AS} flung their staffs and ropes on the floor and cast a spell on the spectators. They also psychologically subdued them by announcing that everyone would be responsible for his own safety, as reported in Tafsīr-e-Kabīr. Thus they displayed a great feat of magic by firstly mesmerizing the people and secondly by harassing them, as a perplexed and frightened person can be easily influenced and because of his disturbed state of mind fails to defend himself.

Allah identifies it as a mighty spell which proves that the reality of the substance remained unaltered, the spectators saw only what the magicians wanted them to see. For example, if a magician transforms a human being into a donkey, he will not actually become one but to the people he will appear as a donkey and even to his ownself. He might begin to even act like one but if he dies in this condition, his reckoning will be as a human being and not as a donkey.

Now when the magicians were at the peak of their performance, with serpents and pythons hissing around and they trying to control them while cautioning

the spectators to be careful, **Allah** inspired Prophet Mūsa^{AS} to throw his rod amidst this hustle and bustle. No sooner he did it, the staff became a gigantic python, big enough to swallow all. It is natural with the snakes to devour their smaller kind, so within no time the arena hitherto hissing with millions of reptiles was cleared off and Prophet Mūsa's^{AS} python was still snorting for more!

This was indeed a great victory for the truth and for the Prophet^{AS}. The overawed spectators immediately realised that the magicians had no power; so not only were they defeated but also lost respect. But the magicians fell in Sajdah and proclaimed that they believed in the **Rabb** of the worlds, the **Rabb** of Prophets Mūsa^{AS} and Harūn^{AS}. The Pharaoh and all his subjects also witnessed the miracle but the honour to embrace the faith was blessed only to the magicians. This was **Allah**'s Reward for showing respect to a Prophet^{AS}. And when the magicians announced their conversion, majority of the people were influenced and declared that the truth was with Prophet Mūsa^{AS}.

The Pharaoh now made a clever move declaring that it was a conspiracy against the country. He told the magicians that they had connived with Prophet Mūsa^{AS} to frighten the masses in order to seize power. They had conspired to eventually oust his (Pharaoh's) folk in exile and replace them with his own impoverished people. Mark the resemblance with today's politicians. Whatever is against their wishes, they declare it to be a threat to national security. The pioneer of this psyche was Pharaoh. The performance by the magicians, followed by the miracle of Prophet Mūsa^{AS} and as a result the acceptance of faith by the magicians, a great miracle in itself, all this was dubbed as a political conspiracy! The Pharaoh indeed wanted to subdue the influence of these events over his people. He played yet another card by announcing severe punishment for the magicians whereby their hands and feet would be amputated on the opposite sides and they would be crucified.

Highest Source of Attaining Knowledge

The knowledge pertaining to the Hereafter and the Divine Attributes cannot be acquired by the brain but by the Qalb. The seeker has only to establish a link with the Prophet's^{AS} Qalb, and this knowledge, in its pristine purity, begins to flow into his Qalb without using any conventional means. The magicians who had been non believers a few moments ago, with all their hopes pinned on Pharaoh, became believers. The depth of their knowledge and their longing for Shahadah displayed by their readiness to be crucified in the Cause of **Allah** was incredible. In short, they had not only attained cognition of Divine

Magnificence but had also become aware of the life after death. Association with an accomplished Shaikh has a similar effect. The heart is rekindled and attains true knowledge.

The magicians proclaimed that if believing in **Allah** was a crime liable to punishment it did not worry them at all, because life is meant to be sacrificed for His Cause. Moreover, they were well aware of their own humbleness and begged **Allah** for perseverance and patience to bear the atrocities of the oppressor, so as to embarrass him by not giving out a single cry of pain. They prayed for a believers' death. Praise be to **Allah**! The love for Islam outweighed every other love! Those whom the rising sun had seen as Royal Magicians saw them as Shuhadā', at dust.

Section 15

127. And the chiefs of the people of Pharaoh said: will you leave alone Mūsa and his people to act corruptly in the land and to leave alone you and your gods? Pharaoh said: soon we shall slay their sons and let live their women; we are masters over them.

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَتَنْدَرُ مُوسَىٰ وَقَوْمَهُ
لِيُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَيَذُرْكُمُ فِي الْهَتَكِ قَالَ
سَنُقِيلُ أبنَاءَهُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّا فَوْقَهُمْ
قَاهِرُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

128. Mūsa said to his people: seek help in **Allah** and perseverance; verily the earth is **Allah**'s; **He** makes whomsoever of **His** bondmen **He** wills inherit it; and the happy end is of the God-fearing.

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَصْبِرُوا
إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ
مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾

129. They said: oppressed we have been before you came to us and since you have come to us. He said: May be your **Rabb** will destroy your foe and establish you in their stead in the land, that **He** may see how you act.

قَالُوا أَوَذِينَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَأْتِيَنَا وَمِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا جِئْتَنَا قَالَ عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ
عَدُوَّكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾

Secrets of Revelation

Pharaoh's sly move served to allure his people to a certain extent but in spite of their ignorance they dared ask him as to why he had spared Prophet Mūsa^{AS} and his people while the magicians had been severely punished. They also suggested that if he spared the Banī Isrāīl, they, together with Prophet Mūsa^{AS}, may prove disastrous for him and may abandon him and his deities. On the other hand the Pharaoh had become aware of the reality and deep in his heart was obsessed by fear, but his arrogance precluded his heart to accept the reality, missing the chance to repent. **He** told his people that they had been punishing the Banī Isrāīl for the past many years by executing their newborn sons and sparing their daughters for their service. Now their affliction would, of course, be intensified to teach them a lesson; he reassured his chieftains. The Commentators assert that the Pharaoh was so scared and awestruck that he did not for once mention Prophet Mūsa^{AS} by name.

Solution to Problems

Prophet Mūsa^{AS} reviewed the situation and told his people that there was only one solution to their problems. It was to seek Divine Help, possible only by **His** Obedience. And obedience demands submission to Divine Commandments even if they are against one's personal choice or temperament. The word *Ṣabr* (patience) here means restraining oneself from sin and disobedience and remaining steadfast on piety in the worst of circumstances. So the perfect and simplest solution of problems was to submit to **Allah**, seek **His** Support and to restrain from **His** defiance. It must be remembered that the land belongs to **Him** Alone and **He** may bless rule and domination over it to whoever **He** may please from amongst **His** servants. In other words, if a Government is unjust or undesirable, its replacement by unjust ways will indeed enhance mischief. Therefore, the best option is to become truly obedient to **Allah**, **Who** is indeed capable of dethroning the tyrants and giving control to the oppressed. And as for the eternal bliss, it is decidedly for the righteous; the wrongdoers have nothing to do with it.

Telling the Future

The Banī Isrāīl were strange people. Probably unaware of the priceless blessing of the spiritual states, they were only concerned with worldly comforts. They told Prophet Mūsa^{AS} that his raising had not made much difference to their lives. While they lived a life of humili'ation under the Pharaoh, they were no better off after the deliverance. So in order to reassure

his people, that they may remain steadfast on piety, he predicated that **Allah** would soon destroy their enemy and bless them with power over the land, which had once witnessed their miseries. Possessing power over **His** land tantamounts to being **Allah's** deputy, and **He** would certainly watch their conduct. And if they chose to disobey **Him**, they would certainly invoke disaster.

Power - a Great Trial

It is indeed a great test, whereby **Allah** monitors the one blessed with power, whether he enforces the **His** Laws over the land or his own fancies and whims guide him. According to the Holy Prophet^{SAW} each one of us is a ruler. The power of some may prevail over a country, while some rule over a clan and some are the masters of at least their own selves. Therefore, everyone will be reckoned in terms of his status and the sphere of his influence. The wrongdoers shall certainly be seized by Divine Wrath.

Section 16

130. Assuredly **We** afflicted the people of Pharaoh with lean and lack of fruits, that they might take heed.

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِينَ وَنَقْصِ
مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾

131. So whenever good came their way, they would say: ours is this. And if evil afflicted them, they would lay it to the ill augury of Mūsa and those with him. Lo! Their ill augury was only with **Allah**; but most of them knew not.

فَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوا لَنَا هَذِهِ وَإِنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ
سَيِّئَةٌ يَطَّيَّرُوا بِمُوسَىٰ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّمَا
طَبَّرَهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾

132. They said: whatever the nature of a sign you may bring to us with which to enchant us, in you we are not going to be believers.

وَقَالُوا أَمْ هَمَاتَانِ ۖ مِنْ آيَةٍ لِنَسْحَرَنَّ بِهَا فَمَا
نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

133. Thereafter **We** sent upon them the flood, and the locusts, and the lice, and the frogs, and the blood: Signs detailed; yet you

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ
وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالدَّمَ ۗ آيَاتٍ مُفَصَّلَاتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا

remained stiff-necked and you were a people sinful.

134. Whenever a plague fell on them they said: O Mūsa! Supplicate to your **Rabb** for us by what your **Rabb** has covenanted with you; if you remove the plague from us we will believe in you, and we will send with you the Children of Isrāil .

135. Then whenever **We** removed the plague from them till a term which they were to reach, lo! They were breaking faith.

136. Therefore **We** took vengeance on them and drowned them into the sea: for they belied **Our** Signs and were neglectful of them.

137. And **We** caused the people who had been oppressed to inherit the land, the Eastern and Western parts of it, which **We** had blessed. And fulfilled was the good Word of your **Rabb** to the Children of Isrāil for they were long suffering, and **We** annihilated what Pharaoh and his people had built and what they had raised.

138. And we led the Children of Isrāil across the sea. Then they came upon a people cleaving to the idols they had. They said: O Mūsa! Make for us a god, even as they have gods. He said:

وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ لَئِن كَشَفْتَ عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَنُرْسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمُ الرِّجْزَ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ هُمْ بَلِّغُوهُ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُثُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

فَأَنقَمْنَا مِنْهُمُ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسْتَضَعُونَ مَشْرِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغْرِبَهَا الَّتِي بَشَرْنَا فِيهَا وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ آلَهُمْ سَنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَوَدَّ مَرْنَا مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمَهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

وَجَوْرَنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ يَلِ الْبَحْرِ فَأَتَوْا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَىٰ أَصْنَامٍ لَهُمْ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

verily you are a people given to paganism.

139. Verily those! Vain is that in which they were engaged and vain became what they had been doing.

140. He said; shall I seek for you a god other than Allah, whereas He has raised you above the world?

141. Recall what time We delivered you from the house of Pharaoh perpetrating upon you terrible torment, slaying your sons and letting your women live; and in that was a trial by your Rabb, tremendous.

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ مُتَّبِعُوا مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾

قَالَ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْغَيْكُمْ إِلَهًا وَهُوَ
فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

وَإِذْ أَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ
يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُقْتُلُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ
وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكَ
بَلَاءٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤١﴾

Secrets of Revelation

Soon the people of Pharaoh became victims of misfortune. Allah is so Kind and Gracious that He gradually sent His Signs of admonition unto them, giving them an opportunity to repent. Firstly, they were struck by famine, so that the shortage of fruits and foods may cause them to realise their helplessness. But the darkness of the hearts precludes understanding, just as today we try to take all sorts of measures in order to prevent shortage of food on national and personal level but never do we even think of mending our ways. Similarly the People of Pharaoh would take the credit for any good fortune and blame all their miseries on Prophet Mūsa^{AS} and his followers, who were alleged to have brought them bad luck.

But it must be understood that the inauspiciousness of the evil deeds alone is enough for the destruction of the wrongdoer. And that exactly was the case of the Pharaoh and his folk.

Austerity for Reformation

The state of their hearts was so ruinous that they told Prophet Mūsa^{AS} that it was his magical power that prevailed and they had decided not to ever believe in him. According to Commentators, after the contest with the magicians, Prophet Mūsa^{AS} ceaselessly invited the People of Pharaoh to **Allah**'s Message for two decades. In the meantime they faced many situations of miraculous nature, such as rain and thunderstorm which flooded their fields as well as their homes. The Banī Isrāīl remained unaffected although living in the same areas.

Under great compulsion the Qibtis requested Prophet Mūsa^{AS} to pray for their deliverance from the punishment. And they promised that once rescued they would accept his Message and free the Banī Isrāīl to live in freedom according to their own choice. **Allah** had given them a great offer. They could have kept their land and empire and spared the Banī Isrāīl. But to their misfortune, they went back on their words once the floods subsided and their fields were laden again with the crops. **Allah** then sent swarms of locust which not only ravaged their fields but also devoured all the wood works in their homes. Once again they begged Prophet Mūsa^{AS} to intercede. Delivered from the locust, they once again backed out on their promise. Now their houses and fields were infested with vermins. When that too did not force them to accept the truth, they were invaded by frogs. Their homes, courtyards and their fire places were infested making cooking impossible. Once this was over a bloody affliction struck, wherein all their food items would turn into blood. In short, they were subjected to continuous visitations. Each time when the situation went beyond their control, they begged Prophet Mūsa^{AS} for intercession, and as soon as delivered from the distress, they reverted to disobedience.

Aulia and the Temporal Hardship

This shows that temporal hardships are indeed opportunities for an individual to mend his ways and realize how powerless he is. Moreover, if Aulia are requested to pray, **Allah** may alleviate the sufferings. But the real benefit to be attained from this relief is not material but spiritual, that one should submit to the Will and Purpose of **Allah** and become **His** obedient servant. If this is not done, of course, he is still at a loss.

Anyway, when they failed to reform themselves **Allah** punished them and created such circumstances that they plunged into the death trap themselves. They had left their homes in pursuit of Prophet Mūsa^{AS} and the Banī Isrāīl with the intention of executing them. But on the contrary they were drowned

by Divine Will once their defiance and neglect to **Allah** had crossed all limits of tolerance. Take note of the Absoluteness of Divine Power. The nation subjected to slavery generation after generation and to whom their masters were not ready to give any importance was not only blessed with freedom but also the sway over the same land laden with resources.

The term "inherit the land, the Eastern and Western parts of it" signifies an absolute authority. And the authority and the control is always passed on as patrimony. No one has ever been able to retain it forever. One takes over power only to leave it for his successors. Thus **Allah** deposed the Pharaoh and the 'Amālqah from the thrones of Egypt and Syria respectively, handing them over to the Banī Isrāīl. This was because in spite of all their failings they had persevered and had adhered to Prophet Mūsa^{AS} by obeying him. This is the essence of patience or perseverance. Similarly, today if we stand firm on obedience to the Holy Prophet^{SAW}, our condition will improve in no time. The promise of Divine Succour came true and the Pharaoh together with his nation was destroyed. Neither their impregnable defences nor their immense resources availed them.

On the other end of the sea the Banī Isrāīl landed safely after personally witnessing the fate of Pharaoh's folk. They came across a nation of idolaters and requested Prophet Mūsa^{AS} to chisel out similar idols for them to worship. He became furious and said that they were indeed ignorant. He told them that no analogy could be presented of **Allah**, and all that those idolaters had sculptured was mortal and temporary, which cannot be taken as an alternative for the immortal? Therefore, whatever the idolaters practised was ungodly and perishable so what benefit could its worship provide.

He admonished them that they should never expect him to guide them to anyone other than **Allah**. He reminded the Banī Isrāīl of their misery under the Pharaoh and how they had tortured them by assassinating their newly born males and retaining their females. And how helpless they had been that they could not even complain about it. He reminded them of the Divine Favours in the form of the destruction of Pharaoh and his folk and transfer of power to them. So it was highly unbecoming for them even to think of paying homage to anyone other than **Allah**.

Section 17

142. And We appointed with Mūsa |
thirty nights, and We completed |

﴿وَوَاعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتَمَمْنَاهَا﴾

them with ten; so the appointment of his **Rabb** was completed by forty nights. And Mūsa said to his brother Harūn: act you in my place among my people and rectify, and do not follow the way of the corrupters.

143. And when Mūsa came at **Our** appointment, his **Rabb** Spoke to him, he said: **Rabb!** Show **Yourself** to me, that I may look at **You!** **Allah** said: you cannot see **Me**, but look at that mount there, if it stands in its place, then you will see **Me**. Then when his **Rabb** unveiled **His** Glory to the Mount, it turned it to dust, and Mūsa fell down thunder struck. Then when he recovered, he said: hallowed be **You!** I turn to **You** repentant, and I am the first of the believers.

144. **Allah** said: O Mūsa! **I** have chosen you indeed above mankind by **My** Messages and by **My** Speaking; so hold fast what **I** have given you, and be of the grateful.

145. And in the tablets **We** wrote for him of everything an exhortation, and a detail of everything. So hold you fast with firmness, and bid your people follow the best of it; soon **I** shall show you the abode of the ungod'y people.

عِشْرِينَ فَنَمَّ مِيقَاتُ رَبِّهِ أَزْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً وَقَالَ
مُوسَى لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ أَخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي
وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ
أَرِنِي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ نَرِيكَ وَلَكِنْ أَنْظُرْ
إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ نَرِيكَ
فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ
مُوسَى صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ
بُتُّ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

قَالَ يَمْوَسَىٰ إِنَّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ بِرِسَالَاتِي
وَبِكَلِمِي فَخُذْ مَا آتَيْنَاكَ
وَكَنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَلْوَابِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
مَوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ
وَأْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ يَأْخُذُوا بِأَحْسَنِهَا سَأُرِيكُمْ
دَارَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾

146. I will turn away from **My Signs** those who are big with pride on the earth unjustly, and even though they may see every Sign, they will not believe; and if they see the path of rectitude they will take it as their path, and if they see the path of error they will take it as their path. This is because they belied **Our Signs** and they were ever neglectful of them.

147. Those who belie **Our Signs** and the meeting of the Hereafter – vain shall be their works. They shall be requited only for what they wrought.

سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَاتِيَ الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا
بِهَا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا
وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ذَلِكَ
بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ
حَاطَتْ أَعْمَلُهُمْ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

Secrets of Revelation

Now that the Banī Isrāīl were safe and they had realized that idol worship was not the right thing to do, the determination of a Code of Worship and Divine Law became imperative in order to guarantee salvation in both the worlds. So **Allah** summoned Prophet Mūsa^{AS} to Mount Ṭūr for a thirty nights solitude in worship and prayer. This duration was subsequently extended by ten nights making it a total of forty. In other words, the required level of attention towards **Allah** was achieved in forty nights instead of thirty. A certain spiritual state was the goal, which **Allah** could have blessed otherwise without demanding an effort. But since this is a world of causes and effects, therefore, the Prophet^{AS} was Commanded to use the means and methods.

Effects of Solitude

Prophet Mūsa^{AS} fasted for thirty days and nights continuously. He remained in isolation to meditate because it plays a special role in attaining concentration. When the sensory organs have nothing to see or hear they do not send any information to the Qalb whereby it is invigorated. That is why the seekers turn off the lights while engaging in **Allah**' Zikr in an attempt to achieve

concentration. The extension of ten days in Prophet Mūsa's^{AS} stay at Ṭūr in fact is a lesson that things may not always turn out as expected and extension may have to be given. This implies that a Shaikh must not put the seekers through the meditations until a certain condition is experienced. The prescribed duration of thirty nights also highlights the importance of lunar calendar in matters of religion, though it is permissible and correct to use the solar calendar in worldly matters.

The Basis of *Chillah* (Forty Days)

The basis of *Chillah* is provided by this forty nights sojourn of Prophet Mūsa^{AS} on Mount Ṭūr. Moreover, its role and importance in attaining inner purification is highlighted by a saying of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}: "Whoever will worship **Allah** with devotion for forty days, springs of wisdom will flow from his Qalb". It also drives home a lesson of patience, perseverance and steadiness in all matters of life.

Nominating a Deputy

Prophet Mūsa^{AS} appointed Prophet Harūn^{AS} before leaving for Ṭūr as his representative and deputy. **He** told him to take care of all the matters in his absence. This lays down for us a principle that arrangements must be made, before leaving on any expedition, for the welfare of those being left behind irrespective of how important the task may be. This rejects the view point of those who mistake mismanagement for the sign of saintliness.

Therefore, a ruler whether of a State or a household, must appoint his deputy to take charge in his absence. Those who go out on a *Chillah* for propagation of Islam without leaving any provisions for their dependants, have here a point to ponder over. A Prophet^{AS} of **Allah** leaving to fetch a Divine Code of Life makes arrangements for those being left behind; how can anyone else be justified in going away without any consideration for the dependants?

Although Harūn^{AS} was himself a Prophet but he was given specific instructions by Prophet Mūsa^{AS} to keep a vigilant eye on the conduct of the people after he had gone, and to exert all his efforts for their reformation. And if anyone still opted for the wrong path, that person should not expect or get any cooperation from him. This establishes the fact that an outgoing person must leave a complete and specific set of instructions to his nominee about all matters. The same is also proven by the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}, for he too appointed his deputies to officiate in his absence.

Observing Divinity

While Prophet Mūsa^{AS} was on Mount Ṭūr engaged in **Allah**'s worship, in seclusion, he had the honour to speak to **Him**. This set ablaze in him a desire to behold **Him**, so he requested "O my **Rabb!** Show **Yourself** to me so that I may see **You**". **Allah** answered: "It is no impossible but not in the present situation, that is, in the temporal life." A beholding is not denied here but the dialogue implies that the observation of Divine Splendour cannot be endured in this physical existence. It must be noted that in this temporal life the body is entrusted with all responsibility while the Rūḥ is its subordinate. In the next phase of Barzakh, the Rūḥ will assume the leading role, while the physical body will become subordinate. And in the Hereafter both will share responsibility equally. Thus where the physical comforts will be experienced, the spiritual refulgence and a dialogue with the angels will also be enjoyed. And since the spiritual as well as physical powers will be tremendously increased the believers will be blessed with the honour of beholding the Divinity. Only those engulfed in the darkness of their misdeeds will remain deprived. Since that kind of power is normally not possessed in this temporal existence, therefore, inspite of being logically possible, observing **Allah** is not endorsed by Shari'ah. However, it is not right to discuss the exceptional personage of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} in this context because he was blessed with extraordinary powers. If he could go beyond the Sidrah-al-Muntaha, it is enough to establish that he enjoyed spiritual as well as physical powers par excellence. Here Prophet Mūsa^{AS} is the subject of discussion.

Divine Refulgence

In response to Prophet Mūsa's^{AS} request, he was told that it was not possible to withstand **His** Refulgence in this physical existence. However, as an experiment, he may keep an eye on Mount Ṭūr. If it stayed intact, he too would be able to behold the Splendour. Thus **Allah** manifested **His** Refulgence; the Mount was reduced to dust and Prophet Mūsa^{AS} fell unconscious. With Ṣūfīs, refulgence refers to indirect vision such as seeing through a mirror. Therefore, it cannot be termed as Ru'ait (direct observation) even though the lexicon meaning of refulgence is 'to manifest.'

The States of Kashf

Visualized spiritually, it appears as if the Divine Refulgence was manifested on a peak separated by valley from the one on which Prophet Mūsa^{-AS} was standing. But in spite of this distance, he could not bear the Refulgence and lost his senses. When he recovered he turned to **Allah** in penitence, admitting that **His** Refulgence was too exalted to be captured by the physical eye. He begged forgiveness for his anxious and improper request and at the same time proclaimed his complete submission to **His Will and Purpose**.

Divine Bestowal is Indeed the Best

Allah told Prophet Mūsa^{-AS} that he had not only been appointed as a Messenger but also enjoyed the honour of conversing with **Him**. Therefore, he should hold firmly on to what had been given to him i.e. the Divine Commandments. **He** was told to adhere to them and show his gratitude to **Allah**. This is indeed a lesson for the seekers of the Ṣūfī Path. They should endeavour to their best and leave the rest entirely upto **Allah**, without worrying for the spiritual stations, and be grateful on whatever they are blessed with.

So **Allah** blessed Prophet Mūsa^{-AS} with Tablets inscribed with Divine Commandments, dealing with all aspects of human needs. He was told not only to obey the Commandments himself but also to ensure adherence by his people in the best possible manner. This will ensure their victory over the defiant folk whose townships would be at their feet.

Reason for Misguidance

Those who indulge in sheer arrogance and self conceit shall not be blessed with the capacity to accept the Divine Commandments. Rather their sins will lead to crookedness within their hearts whereby they will fail to become believers even after observing various miracles. They will fail to tread on the path of piety after it has been manifested to them and instead dash towards evil, with all their energy.

This is the fate suffered by those who deny the Signs of **Allah** and become heedless of **His** Zikr. And this neglect culminates into the repudiation of the Hereafter, which alone is enough to mollify any good deed ever done.

Sin and Negligence drive to Disbelief

Disobedience and sin are the sources of neglect towards Allah's Zikr. If this negligence persists and no remedial measures are taken, a person does not only remain heedless to Zikr but also denies Resurrection in the Hereafter. This, in turn, makes him a disbeliever, which ruins all his good deeds that were to earn him the requital.

Section 18

148. And the People of Mūsa, after him, took to them of their trinkets a calf; a body with a low voice. Did they not see that it neither spoke to them nor could it guide them to a way? They took it for their god, and they became evildoers.

وَأَتَّخَذَ قَوْمُ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ حُلِيِّهِمْ عِجْلًا
جَسَدًا لَّهُ خُوَارٌ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمْ
وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا اتَّخَذُوهُ
وَكَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

149. And when they repented and saw that they had strayed, they said: if our Rabb does not have Mercy on us and does not forgive us, we shall surely be of the losers.

وَلَمَّا سَقَطَ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ قَدَّضَلُوا
قَالُوا لَئِن لَّمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا
لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

150. When Mūsa returned to his people indignant and sorrowing, he said: ill is that which you have acted as my successor, in my absence! Did you outstrip your Rabb's Commandments? And he cast the Tablets and seized the head of his brother, dragging him to himself. Harūn said: son of my mother: the people held me weak, and almost slew me, so do not cause the enemies rejoice over me and do not place me with the wrongdoing people.

وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ غَضَبًا أَسِيفًا قَالَ بِسْمَا
خَلَقْتُونِي مِنْ بَعْدِي أَعَجَلْتُمْ أَمْرَ رَبِّكُمْ وَالْقَى
الْأَلْوَابِ وَأَخَذَ بِرَأْسِ أَخِيهِ يَجُرُّهُ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ ابْنَ أُمَّ
إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضَعُّفُونِي وَكَادُوا يَقْتُلُونِي
فَلَا تُشْمِتْ بِيَ الْأَعْدَاءَ وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي مَعَ الْقَوْمِ
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

151. Mūsa said: O **Rabb**: forgive me and my brother, and cause us twain to enter into **Your** Mercy, and **You** are the Most Merciful of the merciful.

قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِإِخِي وَأَدْخِلْنَا
فِي رَحْمَتِكَ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾

Secrets of Revelation

When the People of Prophet Mūsa^{AS} preferred to rely on their own wisdom as compared to the teachings of their Prophet^{AS}, it led them into a peculiar waywardness. Sāmri, a well known person, collected gold and silver in donations from everyone, melted them together and added a handful of dust he had picked up from the footprints of Archangel Jibrail's^{AS} mount. He moulded the melted metals into the shape of a calf which displayed some symptoms of life by mooing like a cow; an effect of that life-giving dust. If the dust from under the hooves of a mount can be life giving, imagine the effects of the Tawwajuh given by the Aulia. The ignorant were overwhelmed by the calf that could produce a sound. They did not even think that the most common features of human beings, that is, to listen, to understand and to answer were missing in the calf. So how could Divinity be attributed to it? Still a majority began to worship it, though they later realised their mistake and confessed that they had committed a grave sin. They begged **Allah** for Mercy and Forgiveness. The event of their atonement has been recounted in detail in Surāh al Baqarah. It is a blessing attainable in the company of **Allah's** Prophets^{AS} and devoted servants, that one realizes his mistakes and is given the chance to repent.

Prophetic Teachings outweigh all Logics

Prophet Mūsa^{AS} returned from Mount Ṭūr enraged and sorrowful. He ruefully addressed his people that they had committed a blunder by not waiting for the Divine Commandments, when they had known that he had been summoned for them. In other words, they had relied more on their logics rather than waiting for the instructions of the Prophet^{AS} who only conveys what he receives from the Almighty. Whereas intellect and reasoning are tools to tackle only the mundane affairs, what concerns the Hereafter is beyond the scope of logics indeed.

He cast aside the Tablets and seized Prophet Harūn^{AS}, his brother, by his locks in great fury, who requested him not to make him a laughing stock in the presence of their enemies; for he had tried his level best to stop them from worshipping the calf. But they did not pay any heed to him, rather threatened his life. So he must not be taken as an accomplice of the evildoers. Prophet Mūsa^{AS} raised his hands asking for Allah's Forgiveness for himself and for his brother. Thus the etiquettes of supplication are that while praying for anyone, one must also pray for himself with humility and awe of Allah's Greatness.

Section 19

152. Those who took to themselves the calf; presently will overtake them wrath from their **Rabb** and abasement in the life of world. Thus do We requite the forgers.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيَنَالُهُمْ غَضَبٌ
مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَكَذَلِكَ
يَجْزِي الْمُفْتَرِينَ ﴿١٥٢﴾

153. And those who committed evils, and thereafter repented and believed, verily your **Rabb** is thereafter Forgiving, Merciful.

وَالَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِن بَعْدِهَا
وَءَامَنُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِن بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٥٣﴾

154. And when the anger of Mūsa was allayed and he took up the tablets, and in the inscription thereon were guidance and Mercy unto those who have an awe of their **Rabb**.

وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَن مُّوسَى الْغَضَبُ أَخَذَ الْأَلْوَابِحَ
وَفِي نُسخَتِهَا هُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِينَ هُمْ
لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْهَبُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾

155. And Mūsa singled out of his people seventy men for **Our** appointment; then when the earthquake seized them, he said: **Rabb**: had **You** willed, **You** would have killed them afore and me also. Will **You** kill us for what the fools among us have done? It is only **Your** trial by which **You** send astray whom **You** will, and keep guided whom **You** will. **You** are our

وَأَخَارَ مُوسَى قَوْمَهُ سَبْعِينَ رَجُلًا لِّمِيقَاتِنَا فَلَمَّا
أَخَذْتَهُمُ الرَّجْفَةَ قَالَ رَبِّ لَوْ شِئْتَ أَهْلَكْتَهُمُ
مِّن قَبْلُ وَإِنِّي أَنُتَلِّكُنَا بِمَافَعَلِ السُّفَهَاءِ مِنَّا إِن هِيَ
إِلَّا فِتْنَتُكَ نُضِلُّ بِهَا مَن نَّشَاءُ وَتَهْدِي مَن نَّشَاءُ
أَنْتَ وَلِيْنَا فَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

Patron. So forgive us **You** and have Mercy on us; and **You** are the Best of the forgivers.

156. And ordain for us good in the world and in the Hereafter; surely we have been guided to **You**. **Allah** said: as to **My** chastisement, **I** afflict therewith whom **I** will, and as to **My** Mercy, it comprehends everything. **I** will, therefore, ordain it for those who fear **Allah** and pay Zakāt and those who believe in **Our** Signs.

157. Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find described in the Torah and Injīl which are with them; he bids them to the proper and forbids them the improper, allows to them things clean, and prohibits them things unclean, and relieves them of their burdens and the shackles which have been upon them. Then those who believe in him and side with him and succour him and follow the light which has been sent down with him; those: they are the prosperous.

﴿ وَأَكْتُبُ لَنَا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي
الْآخِرَةِ إِنَّا هُدْنَا إِلَيْكَ قَالَ عَذَابِي أُصِيبُ بِهِ
مَنْ أَشَاءُ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ
فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ
الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي
يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْنُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ
وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ
عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ
وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ
وَعَزَّزُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ
مَعَهُ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

Secrets of Revelation

Pinning Hopes on Others than Allah is Disgraceful

Allah has laid down a rule that all those who indulged in worshipping the calf will be subjected to **His** Wrath and also humiliation in this worldly life. In

other words, those who surrender quickly to the force of circumstances, renounce the door of **Allah** and rely on other than **Him**; who make their own intelligence and wisdom a guide and a refuge, will have to face twofold punishment in this life. Firstly, **His** Annoyance, which results in waywardness and a distortion of beliefs. Secondly, in the form of humiliation and distress; both these aspects can be witnessed in today's society. Especially, the Western society, estranged to **Allah**, presents a perfect example of the aforementioned dilemma. Their beliefs have been completely distorted and they have lost their morality and sense of honour. Chastity and virtue have gone with the wind because of their habitual indulgence in immorality. This is the Divine Reciprocation of fabricating lies against **Him**. According to Tafsīr-e-Mazharī the invention of rituals and innovations in the name of religion amounts to fabricating a lie against **Allah** and would be punished accordingly. Yet there is one hope of salvation and that is through repentance.

Repentance

Repentance involves reformation of one's beliefs and conduct. The Banī Isrāīl had to suffer death in atonement. Those slain were deemed as martyrs and the survivors were forgiven, as discussed in al-Baqarah. But for the Ummah of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} this Divine Law has been relaxed; for it only expects from the sinner to correct his beliefs, to sever ties of submission with all save **Allah**, and to practically obey **Him**. Once this is done, **Allah** is Forgiving and Merciful for **He** does not deprive the truly repentant of **His** Mercy, no matter how grave a sinner he might have been. When Prophet Mūsa's^{AS} anger subsided, he picked up the tablets having Torah inscribed on them, because these were not only a source of guidance but also a means of attaining Divine Blessings, being the Words of **Allah**.

Benefiting from Divine Scripture

To benefit from any book, acquaintance with the greatness of the author is imperative, otherwise the desired results are not realized. This acquaintance is stirred by reading or learning the book. Through a highly subtle phenomenon, reading the Divine Scripture fuels the drive to recognise **Him** and **His** Attributes. This blessing is acquired from the Holy Prophet^{SAW}, the very source of the Divine Book. Given this cognition, guidance and grace flows out from the Divine Book. This is why the duties assigned to the Holy Prophet^{SAW} have been arranged in a sequence starting from "Recitation of the Āyāt", followed by "purification of the soul" (**Allah**'s Cognition) and lastly "teaching

other words, those who surrender quickly to the force of circumstances, renounce the door of **Allah** and rely on other than **Him**; who make their own intelligence and wisdom a guide and a refuge, will have to face twofold punishment in this life. Firstly, **His** Annoyance, which results in waywardness and a distortion of beliefs. Secondly, in the form of humiliation and distress; both these aspects can be witnessed in today's society. Especially, the Western society, estranged to **Allah**, presents a perfect example of the aforementioned dilemma. Their beliefs have been completely distorted and they have lost their morality and sense of honour. Chastity and virtue have gone with the wind because of their habitual indulgence in immorality. This is the Divine Reciprocation of fabricating lies against **Him**. According to Tafsīr-e-Mazharī the invention of rituals and innovations in the name of religion amounts to fabricating a lie against **Allah** and would be punished accordingly. Yet there is one hope of salvation and that is through repentance.

Repentance

Repentance involves reformation of one's beliefs and conduct. The Banī Isrāīl had to suffer death in atonement. Those slain were deemed as martyrs and the survivors were forgiven, as discussed in al-Baqarah. But for the Ummah of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} this Divine Law has been relaxed; for it only expects from the sinner to correct his beliefs, to sever ties of submission with all save **Allah**, and to practically obey **Him**. Once this is done, **Allah** is Forgiving and Merciful for **He** does not deprive the truly repentant of **His** Mercy, no matter how grave a sinner he might have been. When Prophet Mūsa's^{AS} anger subsided, he picked up the tablets having Torah inscribed on them, because these were not only a source of guidance but also a means of attaining Divine Blessings, being the Words of **Allah**.

Benefiting from Divine Scripture

To benefit from any book, acquaintance with the greatness of the author is imperative, otherwise the desired results are not realized. This acquaintance is stirred by reading or learning the book. Through a highly subtle phenomenon, reading the Divine Scripture fuels the drive to recognise **Him** and **His** Attributes. This blessing is acquired from the Holy Prophet^{SAW}, the very source of the Divine Book. Given this cognition, guidance and grace flows out from the Divine Book. This is why the duties assigned to the Holy Prophet^{SAW} have been arranged in a sequence starting from "Recitation of the **Āyāt**", followed by "purification of the soul" (**Allah**'s Cognition) and lastly "teaching

of the Scripture and Wisdom” (guidance and grace). These blessings are conferred upon those who dread the very thought of annoying their **Rabb**.

When Prophet Mūsa^{AS} presented the Torah to Banī Isrāīl they raised questions on its authenticity as a Divine Scripture. They said that they had not heard it being revealed. Prophet Mūsa^{AS} was very upset. He decided to request **Allah** to allow him to bring along selected persons from Banī Isrāīl so that they also hear the Divine Speech. His request was conceded and he headed for Mount Ṭūr along with seventy selected persons from all the tribes of Banī Isrāīl. As recounted earlier, they said how could they know by merely hearing the voice who the speaker was. They asked Prophet Mūsa^{AS} to bring **Allah** before them so that they could speak to **Him** and verify the Torah that it was indeed the Divine Word. It was a great favour that **Allah** had agreed to speak to them. Had they been contented with it they would probably have been unique in status amongst the entire mankind other than the Prophets^{AS}, to have spoken to **Allah** directly.

Demands Beyond one's Calibre are Suicidal

But unfortunately they forgot their own standing while demanding to behold **Allah**. For this arrogance they were duly punished with death. It has been experienced in Sulūk too that some seekers demand something beyond their capacity, for instance, appointment as a deputy or spiritual mentor. As a result they lose whatever they had acquired and not only do they go astray but become a source of derailing others. **Allah** surely bestows spiritual stations proportionate to the given capacity, but to demand far above one's capacity is very unwise indeed.

Thus the group accompanying Prophet Mūsa^{AS} were seized by thunderbolt and earthquake. Prophet Mūsa^{AS} raised his hands in prayer and begged: “O **Allah!** Had **You** willed **You** could have destroyed them long ago, as they had repeatedly erred. I am myself **Your** humble slave who could have been destroyed too if **You** had so willed. But O' my **Rabb!** This death penalty is too big a trial for their follies. You know the Banī Isrāīl. They will blame me of getting their representatives killed.”

Divine Protection against Trials Must Be Sought.

Allah is all-Powerful. If **He** willed, **He** could have caused others to be guided after witnessing the ill fate of seventy arrogant representatives. And if annoyed, **He** could have caused the Banī Isrāīl to wander astray in ignorance thereby ignoring real reason of the death of group and resort to accusing their

Prophet^{AS}. So Prophet Mūsa^{AS} begged **Allah** to shelter them against **His** trials, for **He** was their Helper and Friend. **He** prayed **Allah** for Mercy and Forgiveness; **He** being the Most Merciful. This Mercy may be displayed so as to make virtue and piety the hallmarks of their character, in order to earn reward in the Hereafter. “We turn to **You**, the One and the Only **Being**, in penitence.” In other words, it is important to seek **His** Protection against trials as well as to seek worldly and eternal bliss from **Him** by turning to **Him** in repentance and pinning all hopes on **Him**.

So **Allah** addressed Prophet Mūsa^{AS}: “Not all wrongdoers are punished by **Me**, but some of them are so thoroughly arrogant and rebellious that they ask for it. Though every wrongdoer deserves to be punished, but **I** overlook. **My** Mercy is so overwhelming that no amount of sin can exceed it”. But it must be remembered that **Allah**’s special Mercy is attained only by those who observe Taqwa; a state of the heart repeatedly explained before. Although the wrongdoer and the non believer also benefits from the Divine Mercy common to all in this world, and is given respite to enjoy the wealth, health, progeny, power and numerous other blessings, yet eventually he remains deprived if he does not repent. The special Divine Mercy is only for those, who have enlightened hearts and are aware of **Him**; those who earn lawfully and spend in **His** Cause and hold the correct beliefs.

Payment of Zakāt

The obligation of Zakāt is always mentioned simultaneously with the faith to emphasize the fact that a believer, besides worship, strives to earn his living lawfully. He does not covet the wealth of others, rather helps the poor and the needy. However, Zakāt is only payable when he holds assets liable to it. But sadly enough, a large number of religious scholars become content with Zakāt as source of livelihood and shirk regular work. Whereas payment of Zakāt is a token of consummation of faith and the beauty of Islam, and only those genuinely incapable of earning a livelihood qualify to receive it.

Companions^{RAU} and Ummah Praised

Allah asserts that these qualities will be possessed by those contemporaries of the unlettered Prophet^{SAW}, who will accept his Message and obey him. The term “unlettered” refers to a person who can neither read nor write and is generally considered a shortcoming. But the Holy Prophet^{SAW} worked such wonders of extraordinary wisdom that the entire mankind fails to present a parallel. Forty years of his noble life, as witnessed by the Makkans, he neither

attended a school nor any sermon. But after he declared his Prophethood, not even a single subject remained un-addressed. Whatever he said about on a particular issue proved to be the final word. So being unlettered became a matter of excellence for the Holy Prophet^{SAW}. The qualities of the unlettered Prophet^{SAW} have been so vividly described in the Torah and the Bible as to reveal his complete personality. Although these Scriptures stand badly mutilated today, yet his eulogies and repeated mention is still retained. The scholars have compiled books comprising those references and it is amazing that the Jews and Christians have not contradicted them, which itself is a living evidence of the validity of Islam. Otherwise they would have kicked up much dust against the Qurān. The Commentators recount a number of references in this regard, which are being skipped here for fear of protraction.

One of the Prophetic Excellences

Another virtue of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} announced is that he enjoins good and forbids evil. Though this task is performed by all the Prophets^{AS} and is befitting to the exalted office of Prophethood yet it is unique that whoever is associated with him develops an affinity towards good and a repulsion for evil. This, in fact, is also the standard to judge a Shaikh's excellence. If the above effect is attained in his company to some extent, it is certainly worthwhile to follow him. Otherwise, he does not deserve to be a Shaikh or a guide.

E'aborating further on his virtues, it is said that he will also permit what is pure, for many good things were forbidden to Banī Isrāīl as punishment, such as the fat of permissible animals. He will forbid all sorts of filth such as the consumption of carrion, blood, wine and wealth acquired by unlawful means or the bad habits etc. In other words, after raising of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} the criterion of virtue and evil will be the Shari'ah enforced by him.

Criterion for Good and Bad

Whatever is permitted by Shari'ah is good and what it defines as permissible is the best. And what is banned by the Holy Prophet^{SAW} is bad. Whatever is forbidden by Shari'ah cannot be of any material benefit to mankind. The next distinction of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} revealed is that he relieves the people of their burdens and shackles. This refers to the austere restrictions enforced on Banī Isrāīl as a punishment for their arrogance. For instance, they were not permitted to wash their soiled clothes but had to cut the dirty portion off, they had to amputate that part of the body involved in sin as an atonement; they

could not take any spoils of war. These and many more restrictions were annulled by Islam to free the mankind.

The Shari'ah that the Holy Prophet^{SAW} brought lays down the most convenient way to live. His introduction is followed by a word on the qualities of those who accepted his Message, the Companions^{RAU}. They were the very first addressees of this Revelation, and were a living example of all the positive qualities. They accepted his Message and held him in the highest esteem. They served him and assisted him in every detail and followed the light he had brought.

The Excellence of Prophethood

Believing, here is synonymous to the respect and adoration of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}. In other words, obedience and adherence out of compulsion is not the underlying aim; rather a devotion stemming out of affection and fond love is demanded. A believer should have so much love and respect for the Holy Prophet^{SAW} in his heart that he develops a distaste for all that is disliked by him. Obeying the Prophets^{AS} has always been obligatory, but for the Holy Prophet^{SAW} obedience based on respect, esteem and adoration is mandatory. That is why the Qurān repeatedly stresses on the etiquettes to be observed in his exalted audience.

The level of respect for the Holy Prophet^{SAW} is judged by the extent of assistance and support offered to him in the accomplishment of his mission. For example, amongst the duties of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} were to convey the Message of **Allah** to mankind and to eliminate injustice and oppression from the face of the earth. The Companions^{RAU} exerted ceaselessly and took this Message across the globe, and eradicated tyranny and oppression from every corner of the land. Even today, faith demands from the Muslims that they should exert all efforts to propagate and spread the beliefs in their pristine purity for upholding Islam. Not only should piety be practised but it should also be enforced through sincere struggle.

To Follow Sunnah is Obligatory

And those who follow the light of the Divine Book leading onto the clear path, in contrast to all the winding roads of darkness, are indeed successful in both the worlds. There are two aspects of Sunnah. Firstly are the matters related to worship. Observing and practising them according to the Sunnah is obligatory. Secondly, are the matters of habit i.e. the practices adopted by the Holy Prophet^{SAW} as habits. Following these is the best way of attaining Barakah,

though it is not mandatory. This is because habits vary across times and regions. For instance, clothing and food may vary but care must be taken that one does not adopt the ways of the non believers in the process. Here the following matters have been revealed in a sequence.

Firstly, adherence to the Prophethood as mentioned in the very outset because faith, practice and belief in the Qurān as **Allah**'s Book depends on obedience and adherence to the Holy Prophet^{-SAW}. Therefore, it is obligatory to adhere to the Sunnah. Secondly, the tenets of Islam handed down by him must be accepted in toto without any alterations. And finally the respect and ardent love of the Holy Prophet^{-SAW} which would compel the believer to obey him and to offer his very life for the fulfilment of his mission. This indeed is the key to Paradise.

Section 20

158. Say you: O mankind! Verily I am **Allah**'s Messenger to you all; of **Him Whose** is the dominion of the heavens and the earth. No god is there but **He**; **He** gives life and causes death. Believe then in **Allah** and **His** Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in **Allah** and **His** Words; and follow him that perhaps you may be guided.

قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنِّي رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ اِلَيْكُمْ
جَمِيْعًا الَّذِيْ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ يَحْيِيْ وَيُمِيْتُ فَاٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ
النَّبِيِّ الَّذِيْ يُوْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ
وَكَلِمٰتِهِ، وَاَتَّبِعُوْهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

159. And of the people of Mūsa there is a community guiding others by the truth and judging thereby.

وَمِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسٰى اُمَّةٌ يَّهْدُوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ
يَعْدِلُوْنَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

160. And **We** divided them into twelve tribes as nations. And we revealed to Mūsa, when his people asked him for water: smite the rock with your staff. Then gushed forth from it twelve springs; each people already knew their drinking place. And **We** shaded them

وَقَطَعْنٰهُمْ اثنى عشر اَسْبَاطًا اُمَّمًا وَاَوْحَيْنَا
اِلَى مُوسٰى اِذَا اسْتَسْقٰنَهُ قَوْمُهُ، اَنْ اَضْرِبَ
بِعَصٰكَ الْحَجَرَ فَاَنْبَجَتْ مِنْهُ
اثنى عشر عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ اُنَاسٍ
مَّشْرَبَهُمْ وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ النَّمْلَ وَاَنْزَلْنَا

with thick clouds; and We sent down upon them the manna and the quails, saying: eat of the pure things with which We have provided you. And they wronged Us not, but themselves they were used to wrong.

161. Recall the time when it was said to them: reside in the over there town and eat from it wherever you wish, and say: forgiveness and enter the gate bowing; and We shall forgive you your trespasses. We give abundance to the well doers.

162. Then those of them who did wrong changed the word that had been told them for another; thereupon We sent a scourge upon them from the heaven for they were used to transgress.

عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَنَ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ
مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلٰكِن
كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾

وَإِذ قِيلَ لَهُمْ اسْكُنُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ وَكُلُوا
مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ وَادْخُلُوا
الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَتِكُمْ
سَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٦٢﴾

فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي
قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزًا مِّنَ
السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾

Secrets of Revelation

All the Prophets^{-AS} informed their respective nations about the future raising of the Holy Prophet^{-SAW}. They instructed them to believe in him and also took a pledge that whoever from amongst them or their progeny would live to see him, must obey him. When Prophet Mūsa^{-AS} requested Allah to bless his nation with exalted levels of excellence it was revealed to him that these will be given to the contemporaries of the unlettered Prophet^{-SAW}, those who will believe in him. Thus the devotion and obedience to the Holy Prophet^{-SAW} has been declared as the consummation of faith and acme of excellence. The Holy Prophet^{-SAW} is told to announce that he is Allah's Messenger for the entire mankind. So if believing in him was enjoined upon the preceding nations, it is obligatory on everyone, forever, to believe in him after his raising.

Miraculous and Final Prophethood

The Holy Prophet^{SAW} is instructed to announce that he was not sent for any specific nation or region or time but for the entire mankind for all times to come, as **Allah**'s Messenger; a Messenger in whom the preceding nations believed through their Prophets^{AS}. And for the contemporary and future generations, it has been made obligatory to believe in him and in his Message. And those failing to do so shall be deemed as non believers. This indeed is the finality of Prophethood as by the raising of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} the Prophethood stood completed. It left no room or need for any new Prophet^{AS} to be sent unto any nation or region or time. Now if anyone makes any such claim, he certainly would be an imposter! This is why Muslim Jurists have declared that an imposter himself is a non believer, and anyone seeking a proof from him also becomes one. This is because the latter has failed to believe in the finality of Prophethood and there lurked in his mind a possibility of a new Prophet. All who go astray by following an imposter are those who had concealed in them the germs of this disbelief all along.

The finality of the Prophethood is also evident from the fact that even if any of the preceding Prophets^{AS} returns to earth, he too will have to follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}. According to Ḥadīth: "If Prophet Mūsa^{AS} was alive today, he would have no option but to follow me; and Prophet 'Isā^{AS} who dwells now in the heavens, on his return to earth, will follow my Shari'ah while retaining his Prophethood."

Secondly, a great miracle of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} is the amazing speed and effectiveness with which his Message spread, in the absence of any worthwhile means of communications: telephone, telegraph, postal system etc, at the time of his raising. The Holy Prophet^{SAW} announces his Prophethood from a hillock of a remote settlement located in the wilderness of a vast desert. The prevalent condition is that not a single soul on the face of the earth is acquainted with **Allah**'s Name. Under these circumstances his declaration is a miracle in itself. Apparently it is impossible to convey the Message to all the far off settlements, let alone enforce it. But the excellence of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} must be acknowledged that not only did people accept his Message but also became a source of conveying it to others over a very short span of time. So much so that within twenty three years of his raising, i.e. by the time the Revelation of the Qurān was completed, the entire Arabian Peninsula had turned into an Islamic State. And within another twenty three years after his passing away, the devotees of his Prophethood established a mighty empire of Islam extending from China to Spain and from Siberia to

Africa. This was a manifestation of faith in **Allah** and obedience to the Holy Prophet^{SAW} as well as an open invitation to it. From these times, the slogans of **Allah's** Unity echo all around the globe and will Insha **Allah** continue to be heard till the Final Day.

Righteous Group Survives for Ever

This is indeed the evidence of the fact that the Ummah of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} will never unite on falsehood. There will always be in every Age, a group of the righteous, who will be the custodians of the light of Prophethood. This is supported by a saying of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}: "There will always be a group of people who will standfast on truth and will negate rituals and absurdities. They will be like my deputies in carrying out the duties of Prophethood," or words to that effect. Imām Razi^{RUA} asserts that the Āyah "be with the truthful" proves that there will always be a group of truthful persons in the world to justify this Divine Command. This also proves the authenticity of Ijm'a (Consensus of the Ummah) as it is impossible that this group of the truthful will ever side with falsehood.

Correction of a Misunderstanding

Some people suggest that a person shall win salvation in the Hereafter no matter what religion he follows so long as he does not hurt anyone and acts piously. This certainly is in-correct as after the raising of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}, believing in him is the very basis of piety. No matter what religion a person may have followed, as soon as he hears about the Holy Prophet^{SAW} he will have to believe in him as **Allah's** Messenger to find an entry in Islam. Only as a Muslim shall a good deed benefit him in this world and the Hereafter. Outside Islam it will benefit him only in this world. But for a person who has not heard of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} and is either the follower of any preceding Divine Religion or is logically convinced of **Allah's** Unity shall qualify for salvation. But there is virtually no place in the world where the lights of his exalted name are not shining. However, to absorb them in one's heart is purely by good fortune. **Allah** declares that the appointment of a single Prophet^{SAW} for the entire mankind is nothing strange. Afterall the Owner of the entire creation is also One, **Whose** Sovereignty prevails over the entire universe. It is **He Who** has sent **His** Messenger. **He** is the Most Glorious and the Only One Worthy of worship. Besides **Him** all the rest are ensnared in a struggle between life and death. It is **He Alone Who** gives life and death to everyone. Therefore O' Children of Ādam! It is for your own good that you accept the Greatness and Unity of **Allah** and believe in the unlettered Prophet^{SAW} who

himself is a believer of **Allah**'s Magnificence, all of **His** Messengers and **His** Scriptures. In other words, inspite of enjoying the most exalted status, he also believes in the status given to others by **Allah**. Therefore, it is best for people to obey and to serve him with sincerity in order to find true guidance. The opinion of our pious precursors is extremely valuable, in that all the paths leading to the Divine Court have been closed except one of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}.

Allah reveals that amongst the followers of Prophet Mūsa^{AS} was also a group of people who always stood firm on truth and propagated it. They pursued their religion, but as soon as the raising of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} was announced, they embraced Islam. Such fortunate people were there amongst the Christians too, and some lucky ones continue to embrace Islam until now.

Now the Divine Address reverts back to Prophet Mūsa^{AS}. He is reminded of the Divine Favour how the twelve clans of Banī Isrāīl were awarded separate status. When they faced the shortage of water, Prophet Mūsa^{AS} raised his hands in prayer. He was told to strike the rock with his rod and from it sprouted twelve water springs, one for each clan. When heat became unbearable, **Allah** provided them with a canopy of clouds and catered for them pure food from the heavens in the form of quails and the sweet grain. They were directed to eat the pure and the lawful, but the fools did not obey and as a result headed for destruction. They did not wrong **Allah** but indeed wronged themselves. These events are recounted to recapitulate **Allah**'s Graciousness bestowed upon mankind by the raising the Holy Prophet^{SAW}, a token of Mercy for the entire universe. Now if someone shrugs the necessity to obey him, he himself will be at a stupendous loss.

Allah gave control to Banī Isrāīl over the cities without having to fight and permitted them to eat and drink at leisure and to prostrate before **Allah** in penitence, upon entering the city. Not only that they shall be forgiven their past follies but the devotees shall also be blessed with more rewards. Yet the ill fated distorted even the words they were directed to utter, let alone act in compliance.

Rituals against Religion are Disastrous

The eternal loss besides, natural calamities gripped them in this world. It clearly shows that if the teachings of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} are renounced giving way to rituals for Divine Reward, it will certainly invoke disasters like loss of crops, famine, disease, earthquakes etc. In the modern world, despite all the technology and other advancements, the Divine chastisement in the form of wars, natural catastrophes and diseases prevails. Nevertheless, for any

one looking for peace, the path of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} is open, a sure way to safety, be it a nation or an individual.

Section 21

163. And you ask them about the town that stood by the sea when they transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath, when their fish came to them openly on the Sabbath Day, and did not come to them on the day they did not observe the Sabbath. Thus **We** tested them for they were used to transgress.

وَسَأَلْتَهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةً
الْبَحْرِ إِذْ يَعْدُونَ فِي السَّبْتِ إِذْ تَأْتِيهِمْ
جِثَانُهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرَعًا وَيَوْمَ
لَا يَسْبِتُونَ لَا تَأْتِيهِمْ كَذَلِكَ نَبْلُوهُمْ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾

164. And recall what time a community of them said: why do you exhort a people whom **Allah** is going to kill or chastise with a severe chastisement? They said: to justify us before your **Rabb**, and that perhaps they may fear God.

وَإِذْ قَالَتْ أُمَّةٌ مِّنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعِظُونَ قَوْمًا اللَّهُ مُهْلِكُهُمْ
أَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا قَالُوا مَعذِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ
وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْقُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

165. Then when they forgot what they had been exhorted with, **We** delivered those who restrained others from evil and **We** seized those who did wrong with a distressing torment, for they were used to transgress.

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ أَنجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ السُّوءِ وَأَخَذْنَا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِعَذَابٍ بَئِيسٍ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٦٥﴾

166. So when they exceeded the limits of what they were prohibited, **We** said to them: be you apes despised.

فَلَمَّا عَتَوْا عَنْ مَّا نُهُوا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً
خَاسِيَةً ﴿١٦٦﴾

167. And recall when your **Rabb** proclaimed that **He** would surely raise upon them, till the Day of Resurrection, someone

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّتْ رِبِّكَ لِيُبَعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ
الْقِيَامَةِ مَن يَسُومُهُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ

perpetrating upon them worst oppression. Verily your **Rabb** is Swift in retribution; and verily **He** is Forgiving, Merciful.

168. And **We** cut them up into communities on the earth; some of them righteous, and some of them otherwise; and **We** tempted them with good and evil, that perchance they may return.

169. Then succeeded them a posterity who inherited the Book, taking this inferior world's gear and saying: assuredly it will be forgiven us. And if there comes to them another gear like it they shall take it. Has there not lain upon them the bond of the Book that they shall say of God anything but truth? And they have read what is in it, and the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who fear. Do you not then understand?

170. And those who stand fast by the Book and establish *Ṣalāt* – verily **We** will not waste the wages of the rectifiers.

171. And recall when **We** shook the mountain over them as though it was a canopy and they imagined that it was going to fall upon them; and **We** said: hold firmly what **We** have given you and remember what is in that; perchance you may fear.

لَسْرِيْعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٦٧﴾

وَقَطَعْنَاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُمَّمَاتٍ مِّنْهُمْ
الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنْهُمْ دُوْنَ ذَلِكَ وَبَلَوْنَاهُمْ
بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَرِثُوا الْكِتَابَ يَأْخُذُونَ
عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَدْنَى وَيَقُولُونَ سَيُغْفَرُ لَنَا وَإِنْ يَأْتِهِمْ
عَرَضٌ مِّثْلُهُ يَأْخُذُوهُ أَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِيثَاقُ الْكِتَابِ
أَنْ لَا يَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ وَدَرَسُوا مَا فِيهِ
وَالدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ
يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

وَالَّذِينَ يُمْسِكُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
إِنَّا لَا نَضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

﴿١٧١﴾ وَإِذْ نُنَقْنَا الْجَبَلَ فَوْقَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُ ظُلَّةٌ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُ
وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧١﴾

Secrets of Revelation

The Holy Prophet^{SAW} is being told to remind the Jews about the fate of a township by the sea, inhabited by their ancestors long time ago. They were forbidden to catch fish on Saturdays. Strangely enough, flocks of fish would surface on Saturdays, whereas catching them on other days was no easy task. It was indeed a test to see if they could resist the temptation.

Chances to Err are Increased as Trial

They were put to this trial because they had often refuted the Divine Commandments. It is a Law of Nature that when pious people are put to trial, their capacity to do good remains unaffected, even though apparently they may be distressed. But in care of wrongdoers their chances to err and disobey are increased. This indeed is a very hard trial. Thus the disobedient dug out ditches by the river to trap the fish on Saturdays in order to catch it during the week. Some pious men protested and tried to stop this sinful ruse, as deception and deceit does not alter the reality. There was yet a group who would discourage the men of piety from preaching on the ground that the wicked have been destined for disaster anyway.

Preaching is Necessary

The righteous asserted that it was only for **Allah** that they spoke against the evil, with the hope that the warning might revert them to **Allah** in penitence. But the transgressors turned a deaf ear and simply ignored the advice. So the pious were spared and the transgressors severely punished. Here the Qurān speaks of salvation of only those who forbade evil, and there is no mention of the group who had deemed preaching a futile effort. Thus the one who does not speak or act against evil around, becomes an accomplice and as such, does not escape punishment. When the wicked crossed all limits, the punishment meted out was proportionate to their misdeeds. **Allah** turned them into abominable apes, depriving them of human appearance.

Due to continuous disobedience and ingratitude of the Jews, **Allah** warned mankind through **His** Messengers that the Jews shall always be subservient to some nation or the other for as long as they exist. And it does not take long for **Allah** to punish the disobedient if **He** wills. However, if a wrongdoer repents, he will find **Him** the Most Beneficent and Merciful. Yet it must not be mistaken that the Jews, having been disgraced throughout history have finally been allowed a State of their own.

The State of Isrāil

In fact Isrāil is nothing but the dominion of various world powers over the Jews. It serves as a base camp of the USA, Britain and Russia for their anti-Islam campaigns. In spite of all facades, it is a matter of common knowledge that Isrāil is nothing more than a representative of the afore mentioned powers with no status of its own. This State is also a form of affliction for them. The treatment they received from Hitler is a well known chapter of history.

Maulānā Mufti Muḥammad Shafī^{-RUA} writes in his Mu'arif al Qurān that the concentration of Jews in Isrāil is a prelude to their destruction, because Prophet 'Isā^{AS} after his descent in Damascus will put them all to sword. As the criminals of **Allah**, driven by the force of circumstances, they themselves approach their altar. **Allah** would not send Policemen with handcuffs to arrest them! **He** dispersed them over land as a punishment and put them asunder in various factions.

Sectarianism-a Form of Punishment

There were some Jews who stood fast on virtue while the wicked were split into factions on mutual differences. Hence it is proven that to deny the truth and to form factions for temporal benefits is a Divine Punishment. By **Allah**'s Grace, Muslims are protected against this evil to a great extent and are a consolidated community in every country, many of which have Muslims Governments. However, the Jews were subjected to hardships and trials in the form of occasional weal and woe, to make them realise their mistakes and to reform themselves. But their succeeding generations plunged deeper into disobedience. They even went as far as to distort and interpolate their Book in return for worldly gains, yet ironically entertaining false hopes for salvation and forgiveness. Instead of being ashamed of their conduct they insist that they shall be pardoned. The fact is that they do not hesitate for a moment before making more amendments in their Book as and when they are offered money. The redemption in the Hereafter depends on giving up sin and repenting sincerely. To insist on sin and expect to be forgiven is nothing but self delusion.

Giving Wrong Verdict

The Jews had taken a pledge in Torah that they would never lie on **Allah** and would speak nothing but the truth. They repeatedly read this point in their Book, that giving a wrong verdict amounts to fabricating lies over **Allah**,

while eternal bliss is for the righteous; those whose hearts are totally dedicated to **Allah**. Still, they miserably failed to discern this point.

No Compulsion in Religion

It is a plain fact that those who adhere firmly to the Divine Book and worship **Him**, are certainly rewarded. The Banī Isrāīl were given many opportunities to stick to virtue. It was indeed **Allah**'s Mercy to suspend the Mount Ṭūr over them as an admonition. They actually experienced the fear of it falling over them. They were commanded to adopt and practise the Divine Commandments revealed in their Book with devotion to help cultivate Taqwa, but to no avail.

Some intellectuals today mistakingly believe that the Āyah "There is no compulsion in Dīn" means that no one should be forced to practise it. In fact it means that no one should be forced into accepting Dīn; a rule common to all the preceding religions. But once it is accepted, any negligence in its practice cannot be allowed. It is the responsibility of the Islamic State to make sure that people abide by **Allah**'s Book. For this purpose the Islamic Penal Code assigns penalties for the defaulters.

Section 22

172. And recall when your **Rabb** brought forth from the children of Ādam their posterity from their backs and made them testify as to themselves, saying: am **I** not your **Rabb**? They said: yea! We testify. That was lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: verily of this we have been unaware.

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ
وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا
بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَن تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا
عَن هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

173. Or lest you should say: it was only our fathers who associated before, and we have been a posterity after them, will **You** destroy us then for what the followers of falsehood did?

أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً
مِّن بَعْدِهِمْ أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿١٧٣﴾

174. And thus do **We** detail the revelations, that perchance they might return.
175. And recite to them the story of one to whom **We** gave **Our** Signs but he sloughed them off; so Satan followed him. And he became of the perverted.
176. And had **We** willed **We** would surely have lifted him thereby; but he clung to the earth and pursued his desire, so his parable is the parable of a dog, who, if you assail him lolls out his tongue and if you leave him alone, then also lolls out his tongue. Such is the parable of the people who belie **Our** Signs. So recount you the story that perchance they may reflect.
177. Vile is the likeness of the people who belie **Our** **Āyāt**, and their own souls they are used to wrong.
178. Whomsoever **Allah** guides he is the rightly guided, and whomsoever **He** sends astray – those! They are the losers.
179. Assuredly **We** have created for Hell many of the Jinn and mankind. They have hearts, yet do not understand with them; they have eyes yet do not see with them; and they have ears yet do not hear with them. They are like cattle: nay, even further

وَكَذَلِكَ نَفْصِلُ الْآيَاتِ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٧١﴾

وَأَتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي ءَاتَيْنَاهُ ءَايَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ

مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحَمَلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثَ أَوْ تَرَكَهُ يَلْهَثُ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا ءَايَاتِنَا فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾

سَاءَ مَثَلًا الْقَوْمُ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا ءَايَاتِنَا وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ كَانُوا بِظُلْمٍ ﴿١٧٧﴾

مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِي وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٧٨﴾

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْإِغْصِقِ بِرَبِّهِمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾

astray. Those! They are the heedless ones.

180. **Allah's** are the Excellent Names; so call **Him** by them, and leave alone those who profane **His** Names. Presently will they be requited for what they have been doing.

181. And of those whom **We** have created there is a community guiding others with truth as by it they act justly.

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذُرُوا الَّذِينَ
يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾

وَمِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا أُمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ
يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٨١﴾

Secrets of Revelation

As for the awareness of Dīn, it had been inspired into every human being. Firstly, the Spirit is a native of 'Alam-e-Amr which is far exalted than the 'Alam-e-Khalq because it is directly related to the Divine Attributes. Then after creating the Spirits they were not left on their own, rather all individuals in the posterity of Prophet Ādam^{AS} were brought forth from their reins, their seed and made to testify: "Am **I** not your **Rabb**?" All answered, "Yes! We do testify! And not only do we accept but bear witness." Thus they became witnesses upon their own selves.

Was Covenant from Spirit or also from the Physical Body?

The Commentators have dwelt at length whether the Covenant was taken only from the Spirits or from both the Spirits and the physical bodies together. The quintessence of all the opinions has been summed up by Mufti Muḥammad Shafi^{RUAA}. He writes that elements of the body were brought together in subtle form and united with the Spirits. Nothing is beyond the scope of the Powers of the Omnipotent **Who** has established a mini solar system in a single atom. The fact revealed in this Āyah that the Children of Ādam were drawn from his loins also endorses the same view. The loins being at the centre of the physical body, it is here that the ingredients of a man's descendents are stored. The Spirits are not stored in the loins but from the time of creation reside in 'Alam-e-Amr until their transfer into their respective bodies in the wombs of the mothers. The Spirit by itself cannot disobey **Allah**, it is the darkness of the

physical body which conceals the Majesty of **Allah** from its vision. It is this darkness which blurs the vision of the Rūḥ also whereby the latter fails to see Divine Magnificence. Thus the inclusion of physical body to this Covenant was more important.

In short, from the loins of Prophet Ādam^{AS} was brought forth the seed of his children and in turn of those of the descendents to be born until the Doomsday. They were all gathered together and united with their respective Spirits. And with it, all were granted the power to speak and to discern the truth. **Allah** manifested the excellence of **His Being** in the form of **His Attribute of Providence** and then asked **His Creation**: Is there anyone save **Me** worthy of being called as your **Rabb**?

Confession of Allah's Providence

It is worth noticing that **Allah** did not demand a confession of **His Divinity** but of **His Providence**. The reason is very obvious. When a person begins to attach hopes with anyone other than **Allah**, he also gives up **His Obedience** in favour of the one who is the focus of his hopes. However, if one strongly believes that his **Rabb**, that is, the Sole Provider of all his needs is **Allah**, he avoids heading in the wrong direction. And if an error is committed he immediately turns to **Allah** seeking **His Forgiveness**. Therefore, on the Day of the Covenant, the oath was taken only on **His Providence**. Although on arrival in this arena of life, the memory failed but the seed had been sown in the human existence. A glance at the history of mankind shows that it has always practised some rituals or the other in the name of religion. Even today those who are unaware of the true religion, do observe some customs and rituals in its name. Probably it is because of the seed of seeking **Allah**, sown through the Covenant unto mankind. This stimulant did perform its task. Although many failed to find guidance because the darkness of their deeds precluded them to hit the right track, yet the desire to seek **Allah** is embedded in every human soul.

Pedigree Must be Assigned to Father

By the mention of the loins of fathers and not the wombs of mothers it has been clarified that the children must be assigned to the father. This also causes piety in a society. Besides, the children inherit from their father not only the material assets but also often the moral and the spiritual values. But unfortunately in a situation whereby the declaration of the real father is no longer a requirement, sin and debauchery get a chance to flourish in the

society. This is why the Holy Prophet^{SAW} said that the child shall be assigned to the one on whose bed it is conceived i.e. in whose wedlock the woman is. And for the adulterers are the stones. If a woman conceives without wedlock she will be punished. First of all the Shi'ites produced illegitimate children by Mut'a. This led to the creation of a generation in Iran whose slogan was: 'Mother known, father unknown'. Today this evil has become wide spread in the modern so-called civilized society of the West where women have many children without ever getting married. If it is made a legal requirement to assign the child to its lawful father it would eradicate the problem of illegitimate children from their society. Hence on the Day of the Covenant, the pedigree was assigned to the father; for he can remain concealed from the world but not from **Allah**. Everyone was destined to have a father, whether by adopting the right or the wrong path is a separate issue.

Where did the Covenant Take Place?

According to Tafsīr-e-Mazharī quoting Ḥadhrat ibn-e-'Abbas^{RAU}, supported by many scholars of Ḥadīth, the Covenant was taken in the Plain of 'Arafāt. Prophet Ādam^{AS} after his decent from the Paradise arrived in 'Arafāt or the Valley of N'amān where he was pardoned and began his new life. It was then that this Covenant was taken. This version is supported by very authentic evidence, although a report by Kalbi says that it was taken after the creation of Prophet Ādam^{AS} in the heavens. This Āyah highlights the virtues of taking an Oath of Allegiance; for sure it has a unique impact.

Oath of Allegiance and its Benefits

The Holy Prophet^{SAW} took an Oath of Allegiance from the Anṣār at 'Uqbah, and later many oaths were taken on important occasions. The Oath taken at Ḥudaibiyah finds a mention in the Qurān. It was also taken when Makkah was conquered. This practice continued after the Holy Prophet^{SAW} in the era of the four righteous Caliphs^{RAU} and is carried on to date by the learned scholars. However, these oaths vary in nature. The issues on which such oaths are taken range from repenting on sin or on disbelief, to following and practising Islam, to practising piety, to choosing a ruler, to Jihād or to the attainment of spiritual states of the Qalb. The last one in the order is the oath taken by the Ṣūfī saints.

So **Allah** directs mankind to remember the Covenant lest they say on the Day of Judgment that they had forgotten it. **Allah**, the Most Gracious also created a sacred group of **His Messengers**^{AS} from whom **He** took an Oath of Allegiance and support for the Holy Prophet^{SAW}. These noble personages reminded mankind of this promise through time and invited people repeatedly to their

One and the Only Provider. These were Divine Favours, which reached the climax with the raising of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}. Only those shall fail to benefit from him who have drenched their souls in sin to such an extent that **Allah** has denied them the opportunity to repent.

The mankind is also being told not to present the excuse that they were misled by their forefathers, who were responsible for the invention of all sorts of ungodly rituals and polytheistic practices. Their plea for Mercy, based on the argument that they were not the inventors but just the followers will not be entertained, because **Allah**'s Plan of directly introducing the entire mankind to **His** Greatness and Providence has forestalled their logics. **He** has instilled a passionate yearning for **Him** in the Qulūb. Now it is the duty of every individual to safeguard this priceless emotion so that it may constantly provoke them to piety and force them not to be contented with anything save the truth.

This indeed is a favour that **Allah** explains matters in such details so that people may perceive the reality and thus turn back to **Him**. This graciousness and solemnity is being showered to highlight the dire consequences of man's indulgence in the pursuit of carnal desires. To give an idea of how much damage it can cause, the Holy Prophet^{SAW} is being instructed to recount the tale of the man who had been blessed with **Āyāt** here the term **Āyāt** refers to a knowledge and perception of the Revelations.

Āyāt Refers to State of Qalb

In my humble opinion it refers to that state or feeling which is experienced at the recitation of each individual **Āyah**. The accomplished **Ṣūfīs** are generally blessed with the feeling that with the recitation of each **Āyah** they receive a particular reflection of Divine Splendour, which leaves a certain impact on their hearts. This is why even the imposters tell their disciples to recite an **Āyah** and watch its impact on the heart. Whereas if one is fortunate enough to have an accomplished Shaikh, one does not need to create these feelings artificially for they are showered by **Allah**. This is because meditations or the spiritual states of the Qalb are rewards, and rewards are always bestowed by **Allah**.

Misfortune of an Exalted Ṣūfī

It is reported that he got involved in the carnal desires and stripped himself of the distinction and spiritual enrichment just as a snake sloughs off its skin, or an animal is skinned off. In other words, overwhelmed with avarice he lost his

spiritual states and immediately slipped into the control of Satan who led him astray.

According to a saying of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} as reported by Ḥadhrat ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas^{RAU} this person was a spiritual leader of exalted status from Jabbārīn tribe of the Banī Isrāīl. He was also a Mustajāb ud D‘awāt (person whose prayers are surely answered). When the Pharaoh was drowned and the Banī Isrāīl turned to Syria, they were commanded to take over the cities occupied by the Jabbārīn tribe. The tribesmen rushed to their spiritual leader to inform him that Prophet Mūsa^{AS} was a very stern ruler and was heading towards their territory with hundreds of thousands of fighters. The fate of the Pharaoh had frightened them, so they requested him to pray to **Allah**, being a person whose prayers are accepted, that no harm should come to them from Prophet Mūsa^{AS}. He said that Mūsa^{AS} was **Allah**’s Prophet, always escorted by angels, so he dared not say anything against him; and anyone who clashed with him would surely be destroyed. When they insisted, he said that he would seek permission from **Allah** at night. The next day they approached him again. He told them that **Allah** had commanded him to obey Prophet Mūsa^{AS} and not to oppose him. But his people kept on pressing him. When he finally refused they brought money and valuable gifts which he kept on the insistence of his wife. They visited him again on the following day. He was now under obligation, so Satan and his soul misled him further. He took his people on a hillock and raised his hands in prayer against the Prophet^{AS}. But praise be to **Allah**, whatever evil words he would use for Prophet Mūsa^{AS}, would come out of his mouth against his own people. They protested that he was himself invoking destruction for them. He said that it was from **Allah** and as such beyond his control. Meanwhile his tongue dangled out of his mouth and all the spiritual states he had were seized. And when these are seized, they take one’s faith along.

Seizure of Spiritual States Results in Loss of Faith

It is a strange phenomenon that if the spiritual states of a seeker are seized, he generally loses his faith and turns an apostate. This is why Shaikh Allah Yār Khan^{RUA} never seized anyone’s states or stations except in the case of one of his students who had extraordinary Kashf and high spiritual stations. When this unfortunate seeker, misinterpreting his spiritual visions, began to act upon them and in spite of being repeatedly cautioned did not pay heed, the Shaikh seized his spiritual states so that he should not mislead others. After this, he denied the very existence of **Allah**. May **Allah** protect us! Many such cases,

have also been seen who were once men of feelings but the temporal greeds misled them and they lost their sublime states along with their faith.

Now the spiritual leader of the tribe of Jabbārīn after losing his sublime states, fell prey to Iblīs and lost his track. He realised that he had lost everything so he told his people that he could only think of a trick which might help them. He advised them to send their beautiful young girls as vendors unto the People of Prophet Mūsa^{AS}, telling these girls not to discourage anyone's amorous advances. If his people fell prey to adultery, they, too will lose Divine Help. They tried this and a chieftain of Bani Sham'on, Ibn-e-Shalum, fell for one of the women and committed adultery. It resulted in the outbreak of plague in the ranks of Prophet Mūsa's^{AS} Army, killing thousands of men. At last, they executed both the chieftain and his mate, hung them outside their abode begging for **Allah's** Forgiveness and they were duly forgiven. The name of this spiritual leader of the Jabbārīn has been recorded as Bal'am bin Ba'or.

These spiritual states were such a blessing that **Allah** might have graced him with much higher spiritual stations but because of his greed and lowliness he clung to the soil. Whether it be jewels or gold, money or power, it is nothing but dust; for it is worldly and shall one day be reduced to dust. So this man, too, clung to this dust and became a slave of his fancies. He fell low like a dog who pants with its tongue lolled out whether carrying a load or not. All those who falsify the Divine Revelations get to this state. Same is the case of these Jews and Christians who had been waiting for the Final Prophet^{SAW}. They would recount his signs and in any encounter with the infidels would seek Divine Succour through his intercession. But once he was raised, they fell victim to mundane power and greed. Not only did they fail to accept the faith but remained in the frontline of opposition.

Allah, therefore, tells the Holy Prophet^{SAW} to recount this event to Jews and the Christians. They must not be proud of their knowledge and piety; for it does not take long to be ruined like Bal'am bin Ba'or. Therefore, if one is blessed with spiritual states and good deeds, with a passion for worship, he must thank **Allah** and pray for holding fast to Sunnah of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}. This parable is a great lesson to learn from. Besides, all those who oppose the Divine Commandment indeed become destitute and wrong their own selves.

Guidance and the Misguided

Only those whom **Allah** guides find the guidance and those whom **Allah** sends astray are indeed at a great loss. Here it should not be mistaken that **Allah** coerces some to be misguided. It has been revealed that **Allah** created

human beings and Jinn to worship **Him** i.e. to attain **His** Cognition. Unfortunately some people opt for the path of disobedience either by personal choice or by following their ancestors or because of bad company. As a punishment, their capacity to receive and accept guidance is seized. Yet there are others who are fortunate enough to seek good company and act piously. To them **Allah** guides further and opens out avenues of spiritual elevation. This is what the **Āyah** stands for, that no one can help a person who himself spoils his terms with **Allah**, and no one can harm the one who has earned Divine Support and Pleasure. All this, however, depends on human conduct. Nothing happens out of the blue without being in **Allah's** Knowledge. **He** did not create mankind in vain. The Shi'ites, on the contrary, believe in Bida' for **Allah**.

Negation of the Belief in Bida'

It means that **Allah** is not Aware of the consequences of events until they actually occur. The Shi'ites concocted this in negation of the **Āyāt** revealed in honour of the Four Noble Caliphs. They wanted to prove that at the time of revelations these exalted Companions^{RAU} were good but later on they changed. **Allah** asserts that it is in **His** Knowledge as to how many Jinn and human being will eventually go to Hell. And so sure is **His** Knowledge as if they were actually created for Hell. Scholars have dilated here on the issue of destiny but it is not a topic of discussion for the layman. It is sufficient to understand that **Allah** is the Sovereign Ruler, the Only Creator and the Only Owner and is thus free to decide the placement of **His** creation. No one has the right to question **His** decisions. Nevertheless, it is very clear that the absurdness of Bida' cannot be attributed to **Allah**, nor does **He** forget anything. **His** Knowledge is Absolute and Eternal and **He** is constantly Vigilant over everything and everyone. The past or the future is present before **Him**. He knew even before the birth of mankind as to who would come out triumphant from the practical field of life and who would qualify for Hell. But in spite of knowing **He** did allow them to be born and blessed with all sorts of faculties.

Qalb

Firstly, all the creations possess life and its awareness. They also have the capacity to contemplate their survival as well as improvement. The clay, stones or the inert substances have animation which cannot be observed with physical eyes. Secondly, the plants which grow and flourish not only accept the climatic effects but it has been experimented that they yield better results

when given the human love and attention. Thirdly, are the animals who have more understanding than the preceding two groups. Therefore, they manage to have their food and shelter, to procreate and to protect themselves from their enemy. And above all is human being who not only can maintain his physical existence but can also protect it. He enjoys various bodily delights and a colourful social life. He builds beautiful cities and means of communication and spends billions on beautification. He also has the sense to appreciate the Magnificence of his Creator and thus alongwith his physical development he also caters for the nourishment of his Spirit. This is because he has been blessed with a Qalb equipped with the highest standards of perception enabling him to perceive the Greatness of **Allah**. Commensurate to his capacity he can attain **His** Cognition and submit to **His** Will and Purpose.

The inert substances, the plants and the animals are merely there to serve mankind in this world and will not exist in the Hereafter. Whereas human being is a temporary dweller of this world who will live forever in the Hereafter. Therefore, his needs are not confined to the nourishment of his body but extend to his welfare in the Hereafter. The satiation of the eternal needs is hinged on the Qalb. It is the subtle organ which is blessed with Divine Address and a taste for eternal bliss. **Allah** asserts that **He** blessed every human being with a Qalb but the ill fated who are Hell bound have indeed failed to utilize this faculty for discriminating between right and wrong and understanding the reality. When Qalb is indifferent and insensitive, neither the eyes see nor the ears can listen to the truth, which could facilitate **Allah's** Cognition. Thus the life of a person gets restricted to that of an animal, concerned only with the fulfilment of physical demands. He can not see beyond his food, his abode and his childrer. And qualifies to be in Hell forever. It is a matter of common observation that the people whose Qulūb are deprived of the light of faith and understanding direct their entire effort towards the attainment of worldly pleasures. Even if they excel in the fields of astronomy or nuclear technology while being heedless of **Allah** and the Hereafter, they have not utilized their senses as they should have as human beings. Using these faculties merely as animals tantamounts to not having used them at all. Therefore, such people are worst than animals because animals are neither obliged to work for the Hereafter nor for the attainment of **Allah's** Cognition. The animals have not been blessed with a Qalb whereas man has everything, but out of sheer negligence heads for destruction. Thus there is only one way of avoiding this ill fate and that is to invoke **Allah** by **His** Most Beautiful Names.

The Need for Allah's Zikr

Here invoking stands for **His** Zikr and for hymning **His** Praises. Both are the main sources of enlightenment and purification of the heart, and enable it to discern the truth. Secondly, invocation is done for the fulfilment of some need or for worship. The Beautiful Names of **Allah** are those which have been endorsed by the Qurān and the Sunnah. No other name should be attributed to **Him** even if it has a similar meaning. Moreover, the methods of worship have also been spelled out by Qurān and the Sunnah leaving no room for any rituals. Hence the first thing enjoined is to invoke **Allah's** Names and do Zikr. However, doing Zikr of **His** Personal Name '**Allah**' has been strongly recommended as revealed in the beginning of Surāh Muzammil. Besides, call out to **Allah** for the fulfilment of every need, that is, do employ worldly means, but firmly believing the fact that the end results will be according to the will of the Most Merciful. Those who display an attitude of denial and crookedness towards **Allah's** Zikr and invocations are not only unfortunate but also are unworthy of attention. For example, if they make fun of those who do **Allah's** Zikr or threaten them or if the seeker himself begins to feel that he should quit doing Zikr as the majority is not doing so, is not only absurd but also harmful. The right course of action is not to give them any importance; they shall soon bear the brunt of their actions.

The Invitation to Truth

However, not everyone has deviated from the right path, for there is a group which invites the people to truth. Not only do they practise and are steadfast themselves but also invite others to Dīn and settle all their affairs in the light of the truth. This is a distinction conferred upon the most fortunate group and is a distinguishing feature of the Ummah of Prophet Muḥammad^{SAW}. But it involves two aspects which call for special care. Firstly, the beliefs of the inviter himself must be free from any adulteration of rituals and innovations. Secondly, he should invite others to the right path and make sure that his own words and deeds are in harmony. His personal conduct should not undermine his preaching mission, like in case of those who do not leave any provisions for their families behind nor consult them. Similarly, those who invite others to Zikr but are themselves not regular; cannot achieve the expected results. Besides, the harmony and coherence of a society hinges on two factors: that all affairs of peace and war, enmity and friendship, trading and commerce are settled with justice and fairness, and this message is conveyed to the rest of the mankind. A living example in this regard are the Companions^{RAU}, who

conducted all business of life in the light of the truth. Then **Allah** blessed them with the ability to convey this truth to the rest of the mankind.

Today the biggest problem we face is that from the politicians to the religious scholars and the spiritual mentors, and from the rulers to the ordinary farmers and traders, all are in the clutches of greed and personal interests. This is why disharmony and discord prevails everywhere. May **Allah** grant us once again the capacity to practise the truth for salvation in both the worlds!

Section 23

182. And those who belie **Our** Signs
We lead them on, step by step,
in a way they do not know.
183. I respite them; **My** contrivance
is severe.
184. Do they not reflect that there is
no madness in their compatriot?
He is nothing but a warner
manifest.
185. Do they not look at the
governance of the heavens and
the earth and whatever **Allah**
has created of anything and at
the fact that their own term
might be drawn near? In what
discourse will then they believe
thereafter?
186. Whoever **Allah** sends astray no
guide is then for him and **He** lets
them wander perplexed in their
exorbitance.
187. They ask you concerning the
Hour and when it is to come?
Say you: its knowledge is with
my **Rabb** alone: none can
disclose its time but **He**; heavy it
is in the heavens and the earth; it
- وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٢﴾
- وَأَمْلِي لَهُمْ آيَاتٍ كِيدِي مَتِينٌ ﴿١٨٣﴾
- أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا مَا بِصَاحِبِهِمْ مِنْ جِنَّةٍ
إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٨٤﴾
- أَوَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ
أَجَلُهُمْ فِي آيٍ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾
- مَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَكَلا هَادِي لَهُ، وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ
يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾
- يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا
عِنْدَ رَبِّي لَا يُجَلِّيهَا لِوَقْتِهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ثَقُلَتْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْةٌ يُسْأَلُونَكَ كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ

shall not come upon you except of a sudden. They ask you as if you were familiar with it. Say you: knowledge of it is with **Allah**; but most of them know not.

188. Say you: I possess no power of benefit or hurt to myself save as **Allah** wills; and had I knowledge of the unseen I would have amassed ample good, and evil would not have touched me. I am nothing but a warner and bringer of good tidings to a people who believe.

عَنْهَا قُلُوبٌ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ لَا سَتَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾

Secrets of Revelation

All those who took the path of disbelief, denial and evil, are gradually being surrounded by a hard grip of the Almighty, without being aware of it.

Istadrāj

The word *Istadrāj* stands for doing something slowly and gradually but in the terminology of Shari'ah, it refers to every apparent excellence which actually leads to heedlessness towards **Allah** and causes gradual destruction. For example, certain acts of wonder may give a person the false impression of Wilayah in him and keep him misguided. In another situation, a person getting richer by the day but failing to obey **Allah** may believe that **Allah** is pleased with him. Or else a person blessed with State power without correct beliefs and conduct may misconstrue it to be a proof of **Allah**'s Nearness and Approval. All these attitudes can be termed as *Istadrāj*. Eventually, after a life spent in neglect, they will suffer eternal doom of which they had no awareness all their lives.

Respite on Sin.

Allah gives respite to the wrongdoers because if **He** was to reprimand every sinner instantly, the freedom of action given to human beings would have been

compromised. So **Allah** gave them the right to choose their courses of action and at the same time, gave them the respite to practise what they believed. He also reminds the mankind of **His** Omnipresence that no one can hide from **Him** and eventually everyone will be produced before **Him**.

Eulogy of the Beloved

Did the opponents of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} ever bother to think why this exalted being who had been brought up amongst them had suddenly become so fanatically concerned for their good? Why cannot they see how hard he is trying to reform each and every individual. It is also amazing how he cautions them over the end results of their misdeeds after death, in the grave and on the Day of Judgment. He explains everything explicitly and exquisitely. Is this grand empire of the earth and the heavens, and the endless phenomena of Divine Creativity not enough to open the eyes of the ignorant? Can't they see how every birth is gradually drawn to the doorsteps of death; how a mountain crumbles and yet another takes its place? Is it not amazing how the grass is reduced to ashes and replaced by fresh greenery and how a generation passes away allowing the next to enter the field of practical life? Can't they discern from all this that death may be waiting around the corner and whether they are prepared to face it?

If all the facts laid bare by the Qurān are not enough to open their eyes, then there is nothing else to convince mankind. The Qurān has no parallel and it is the Final Revelation. It does not lack in the explanation of any aspect of life. Therefore, it should not be expected that there ever will be another Divine Revelation after the Qurān.

The Day of Judgment

Who can guide those who have spoiled their terms with **Allah** because of their misdeeds? Certainly no one! **Allah** gives them respite to further advance into error, because they have lost the ability to be guided. They come up with all sorts of crazy questions to the Holy Prophet^{SAW}. They ask him about the time of occurrence of the Doomsday.

So **Allah** tells the Holy Prophet^{SAW} to inform them that the time is known only to **Him** and none else need to know about it. Its onslaught will certainly be an open secret for everyone. However, it will be such a clamorous Day that the sky would be torn apart and the earth will be rocked out of existence. A recount of events at this stage shall render people's lives miserable.

Therefore, it will happen suddenly just like sudden death. Yet the Signs of its occurrence have been clearly stated by the Holy Prophet^{SAW}. Just as the various stages of human life provide evidence of death, like greying hair, weakening eyesight and falling teeth. These are all indicators of aging and a warning of the approaching death. Similarly the Holy Prophet^{SAW} highlighted the Signs of nearing of the Doomsday. Should people insist on knowing the precise details they must be told that a Prophet^{AS} needs to know only what is necessary for his mission. To have a knowledge of everything, all the time, is a Divine Attribute. Thus there are many things which are not even known to the angels and the Prophets^{AS}. Since it does not form part of the duty of a Prophet^{AS} to unleash the Doomsday, he is not aware of its precise onset. But it is very much amongst the duties of a Prophet^{AS} to warn the people in time how to prepare for that Day.

The Exalted Office of Prophethood

The Holy Prophet^{SAW} is being told to inform the people that he has no power over his own gain and loss, for it is purely in the control of the Almighty. It is **His** Will that prevails and it is by **His** Grace and blessing that he enjoys an exalted status, which depends upon **His** Pleasure. Prophets^{AS}, too, are **Allah's** creation who submit to **His** Omnipotence and always look up to **Him** for **His** Blessings. To ascribe partners in Divine Attributes is polytheism; neither a Prophet^{AS}, nor an angel nor a Wali can be taken as partners in any of **His** Attributes. In fact, to eradicate this very evil **Allah** sent **His** Messengers^{AS} unto mankind. It is not proper to hope for the attainment of health, affluence or other worldly needs from a Prophet^{AS} or to make obedience conditional to the fulfilment of mundane desires. The expectation generally associated with the Aulia' that they can prevent a loss or cause benefit is absolutely wrong. Take note that these are Divine Attributes and whatever happens is by **His** Free Will.

The Holy Prophet^{SAW} told the people that he had no knowledge of the unseen. Had he any control over his gain and loss, he would have never gone through any distress. He could have avoided all problems by making the correct choice and avoiding possible loss, had he known the unseen. But they could see how he endured hardships and temporal losses. Though he was not responsible for the worldly loss or gain yet the status he enjoyed was to impart broad and enlightened vision and knowledge to the mankind through which they can perceive the end results of evil and the reward of piety, to help cultivate a strong faith in the Day of Judgment. Take note that the Messengers of **Allah** are the personalities whose mildest gestures can brighten the destiny of

millions. At the same time it can also be a source of punishment if in spite of being associated with a Prophet^{AS}, one fails to accept the faith and be obedient. Therefore, all authority rests with **Allah**. Barakah can be acquired through the Prophets^{AS} and the Aulia but it is not a rule that all associating with them will always be guided.

Knowledge of the Unseen

Secondly, it is worth paying attention that the topics addressed by the Prophets^{AS} pertain to the unseen, such as the Angels, Barzakh, Hereafter and the Almighty **Himself, Who** is the Greatest of the Unseen. The Prophets^{AS} do inform mankind on the unseen but reiterate that they do not possess the Knowledge of the Unseen themselves. In fact, all realities pertaining to the unseen conveyed to mankind by the Prophets^{AS} are revealed unto them by **Allah**. The major share of such knowledge, of course, went to the Holy Prophet^{SAW} and his knowledge excels all his distant and recent predecessors. But this is termed as Information on the Unseen whereas Knowledge of the Unseen is that which is not attained through a medium or a source and is an Attribute of the Almighty. The excellence of Prophethood is that people become not only aware of good and evil but also practically begin to refrain from the latter and thus receive the glad tidings of salvation. This is also an indicator of the distinction of a Wali that those who associate with him are blessed with correction of beliefs and practices. But only those shall be blessed with this correction who embrace faith because the pre requisite of receiving beneficence from a Prophet^{AS} is faith.

Section 24

189. **He** it is **Who** created you from a single soul, and **He** created of him his mate that he might find comfort in her. Then when he covers her she bears a light burden and passes by with it; then when she grows heavy the twain call upon **Allah** their **Rabb**: if **You** grant us a goodly child we shall surely be of the grateful.

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا فَلَمَّا تَغَشَّاهَا حَمَلَتْ حَمْلًا خَفِيفًا فَمَرَّتَ بِهِ فَلَمَّا أَثْقَلتْ دَعَوَا اللَّهَ رَبَّهُمَا لَئِنْ آتَيْتَنَا صَبْلًا لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾

190. But when **He** bestowed the twain a goodly child they set up to **Him** the associates in respect of what **He** has bestowed upon them. Exalted be **Allah** far from what they associate!

فَلَمَّا آتَاهُمَا صَالِحًا جَعَلَا لَهُ شُرَكَاءَ فِيمَا
آتَاهُمَا فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٩٠﴾

191. Do they associate those who cannot create anything, and are created?

أَيُّشْرِكُونَ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ﴿١٩١﴾

192. And who cannot succour them, nor can succour themselves.

وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا وَلَا أَنْفُسَهُمْ

193. And if you call them towards guidance they do not follow you. It is the same to you whether you call them or be silent.

يَنْصُرُونَ ﴿١٩٢﴾

وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى لَا يَتَّبِعُوكُمْ سِوَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَدْعَاؤُهُمْ أَمْ أَنْتُمْ صَاعِتُونَ ﴿١٩٣﴾

194. Verily those whom you call upon besides **Allah** are creatures like you; so call on them and let them answer you, if you say sooth.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عِبَادٌ
أَمْثَلُكُمْ فَأَدْعُوهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا
لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾

195. Have they feet with which they walk? Have they hands with which they grip? Have they eyes with which they see? Have they ears with which they hear? Say you: call upon your associate gods and then plot against me and give no respite.

أَلَهُمْ أَرْجُلٌ يَمْشُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَيْدٍ يَبْطِشُونَ
بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ آعِينٌ يَبْصُرُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ آذَانٌ
يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا قُلْ أَدْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ كِيدُونِ
فَلَا تُنظِرُونِ ﴿١٩٥﴾

196. **My Protector** surely is **Allah** **Who** has revealed the Book, and **Who** protects the righteous.

إِنَّ وَلِيِّ اللَّهِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ وَهُوَ تَوَلَّى
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٩٦﴾

197. And those whom you call upon beside **Allah** cannot succour you nor themselves can they succour.

وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ
نَصْرَكُمْ وَلَا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ ﴿١٩٧﴾

198. And if you call them towards guidance they will not hear, and you will behold them looking at you, yet they do not see.

وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ لَا يَسْمَعُوا وَتَرَاهُمْ
يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾

199. Show forgiveness and enjoin what is honourable and turn away from the ignorant.

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ
عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

200. And if there come to you a prompting from Satan, seek then refuge in **Allah**; verily **He** is Hearing, Knowing.

وَإِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ
بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾

201. Verily those who fear **Allah** when an instigation from Satan touches them, they call to mind, and lo! They are enlightened.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَا شَهُمْ طَلَبَتْ
مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

202. And their brothers drag them on towards error, so they stop not short.

وَإِخْوَانُهُمْ يَمُدُّوهُمْ فِي الْغَيِّ ثُمَّ
لَا يُقْصِرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

203. And whence you bring them not a particular Sign they say: why have you not brought it? Say you: I follow only what has been revealed to me by my **Rabb**. This is an enlightenment from your **Rabb** and a guidance and a Mercy to people who believe.

وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ تَأْتِيهِمْ بَيِّنَةٌ قَالُوا الْوَلَا أَجْتِيبُهَا
قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَتَّبِعُ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ مِنْ رَبِّي هَذَا بَصَائِرُ
مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

204. So when the Qurān is recited listen to it and keep silence; perhaps you may be shown Mercy.

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ
وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

205. Remember you your **Rabb** within yourself with humility and awe, without loudness in word, morning and evening, and be you not of the heedless.

وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً
وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ
وَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

206. Assuredly those who are with your **Rabb** do not disclaim against **His** Service, they hallow **Him** and before **Him** they prostrate themselves.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ
وَيَسْجُدُونَ لَهُ، وَلَهُ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾

Secrets of Revelation

As for the Divinity, the Knowledge of the Unseen, the Gain and the Loss, these are the Attributes of the Most Exalted Being. **He, Who** created mankind from a single soul, Prophet **Ādam**^{AS}. **He** is so Beneficent that for the procreation and preservation of human race **He** created a mate for him from his very person, **Hawwa** (the Eve). **He** instilled love and affection in their hearts and a pleasure in intimacy so that their union may not only be the source of procreation but also of soothing pleasure for one another. These indeed are **His** Favours.

Wherever a couple gathers in marriage and the female conceives, only **Allah** knows about it. The one who carried the seed in his back and the one who received it both do not know. She, unaware of the event, continues to carry on her daily chores. When the weight of pregnancy is felt the couple realises the situation. They do not know whether they will have a baby boy or a girl, good looking or ugly, lucky or an unlucky one. They do not know whether the baby will live long or die young, or whether it will be pious or wicked, rich or poor. So the couple begins to implore **Allah** in apprehension. It is deep in their hearts that only **Allah** can help them, so they beg **Him** to bless them with a child sound in every aspect.

But generally it is seen that when people are blessed with a normal and healthy baby, they begin to deviate from their beliefs and tend to ascribe partners in **His** Attributes. For example, it is assumed that the child has been blessed by a **Walī** or a saint and that the child is associated with a living or a dead saint. Or else they believe the child to be a gift from a deity, an idol or goddess and make the child to do **Sajdah** before these idols. Whereas **Allah** is far exalted than such polytheism and has no partners in the creating and fashioning of human beings nor does **He** need any assistance.

Of Idols and materialistic Saints

People who carry on such practises are foolish enough to take those as **Allah**'s partners who themselves have been created and cannot help them in

any way, rather depend on their care. Now if this situation is considered in terms of the idols, it is clear that the idols are dependant on human beings for their making and maintenance. But when referred to the materialistic saints, it means the rabbis of the Jews and the Christians who have been leading people astray. Even amongst the Muslims there are many who do not possess the correct beliefs let alone the practice, but pose as saints and mislead people. Their followers are convinced that whatever they get is because of their religious guides. These saints are no different than the idols except for the fact that they are human. Also, they never strive to earn lawful livelihood but depend on the offerings presented to them by their ignorant disciples. Hence those who cannot help themselves and live as parasites on others can do no good to them. On the contrary, if one tries to reform them and invite them to the truth, they do not listen. Whether someone calls out to them or not it is the same for them. In the literal sense it is true for an idol, for it certainly cannot hear. But those humans who stubbornly cling to this misguidance are also not influenced. With due respect to the noble souls, it is also an established fact that Dīn cannot be acquired without the company of the righteous, it is extremely important to avoid the imposters.

All those who seek help from others than **Allah** and call out for assistance, can't they understand the simple fact that dependence is typical to all creations? Therefore, a creation can never claim the ability to fulfil the needs of others. **Allah** invites the ungodly to call out to their deities for help so that the truth of their beliefs can be exposed. **Allah** asks them whether their idols have feet to walk with or hands to hold something with or eyes to behold or ears to hear something? So when they do not even possess the physiological senses required to perform in this world of causes and effects, how can they create or destroy and give sustenance and health which are far dignified performances? Generally the pseudo saints too are as helpless as the idols, because they cannot provide for themselves. How, then, can they favour others?

Protection against Jinn and Satans

The Holy Prophet^{SAW} is being told to outrightly reject all those forces which the infidels take as **Allah's** partners. He is told to challenge these forces to cause him harm if they can, without any respite. They certainly can do nothing because he is protected and supported by **Allah, Who** has revealed the Qurān. **He, Who** is so Gracious that **He** protects and helps every true believer. This shows that if one does not have Divine Support, he can be harmed by the Jinn and the devils. This Divine Support actually refers to that relationship of the

Qalb with **Allah** which is attained in the company of an accomplished Shaikh. The Qalb then gains so much strength that the Jinn cannot harm such a person, because the lights reflected from his Qalb are too strong for them to bear. So all those who are worshipped besides **Allah** have no power to help anyone or to even protect themselves. And if they are invited to do something they simply turn a deaf ear. It appears as if they can see but in fact they cannot. This was exactly the condition of the infidels that they could neither understand the importance of the Message nor could their eyes behold the splendour of the glowing countenance. They could only see Muḥammad^{SAW} bin ‘Abdullah but could not behold Muḥammad^{SAW}, the Messenger of **Allah**, because indulgence in sin maligns the insight. Thus a person deprived of beholding the Holy Prophet^{SAW} constantly engages in sin. And if ever the vision is enlightened and one can behold the beauty of his countenance, disobedience becomes unimaginable.

Standard of Worship

Believers should strive with their lives in order to serve the Holy Prophet^{SAW}, who is being told not to fix a very high criterion of allegiance for people. Rather he should accept whatever a believer sincerely and devotedly does. This is because not everyone has the same level of observation and absorption. Therefore, even if people are able to display a nominal level of obedience, the Holy Prophet^{SAW} should accept it so that more and more people can be blessed with Divine Mercy. This Āyah may also imply that the Holy Prophet^{SAW} should be patient towards even those who vex him and do not obey him, dishing out forgiveness as much as possible. And he should continuously invite them to virtue and piety. Even then, if out of sheer ignorance, someone intends to cause him pain, it is best that all ties are severed with such a person.

The Rules of Propagating Islam

These are the rules of propagation that the way people are worshipping with ease should be accepted and worships should not be made difficult for them. Nor should people be questioned about their inner feelings. Secondly, propagation must be done purely to seek **Allah**'s Pleasure and the task of training people must always be carried on with love and care. However, if someone tries to argue only for the sake of argument, one should not indulge in futile discussion but should avoid it. Time should not be wasted with ignorant people, but if a situation does arise which threatens Islam or the Muslims then in self defence Jihād becomes obligatory.

If one feels angry he must seek refuge in **Allah** because anger is a Satanic whisper and the easiest refuge is the Divine Protection. **Allah** is always well Aware of everything. The *Āyah* pertains to the anger which one feels for the other for his personal sake. Whereas if it is felt on matters pertaining to *Dīn* and one counters evil zealously then this emotion is a Divine Blessing. Often sarcastic remarks and ignorant false accusations of people generate a feeling of distress and a spirit to defend oneself. This generally culminates in a conflict and mischief. Such an emotion is a whisper of the devil, therefore, immediately one must seek **Allah's** Protection by reciting *Ta'ūz*. This will help one to cool down.

People with Insight

When people blessed with *Taqwa* and insight are faced with a similar situation and Satan tries to allure them, they instantly turn to **Allah's** *Zikr*. This, in turn, enlightens their hearts and becoming cognizant of the inner reality, they succeed in warding off the Satanic trick. The others who have cultivated friendship with him and follow him are allured further into the quagmire of misguidance.

A Great Miracle

Sometimes people would demand all sorts of miracles. When their demand is denied they simply deny the Prophets^{AS}. The miracles of the Holy Prophet^{SAW} excelled the miracles of the preceding Prophets^{AS} and were clear enough to verify his Prophethood. It is, therefore, sheer malice to demand a particular manifestation in order to become a believer. It is the same as if a person demands certain evidence in a court of law, and once it is presented he starts insisting on some other evidence. This certainly will not be allowed. The Holy Prophet^{SAW} is being told to inform these people that he only follows the Revelations of **Allah** in the form of *Qurān*, which by itself is a living miracle. It lays down the entire Code of Life perfectly on every matter. It explains everything by the Grace and Mercy of **Allah** in the simplest and the easiest manner. But only the believers benefit from it. All these blessings are based on faith, and faith demands from a believer to listen quietly and carefully to the recitation of the *Qurān*. This also means that the listener must try to act in accordance with the *Qurān* in order to receive Divine blessings.

Etiquettes of Reciting the Qurān

Whereas it is heard quietly during the *Ṣalāt*, one must also try to concentrate on its meaning. It is not permissible to speak during the Friday sermon nor to

offer Sunnah while it is in progress. According to scholars listening to Qurān in silence and with full attention is obligatory when it is especially being recited for the benefit of listeners. However, if some people are individually reciting the Qurān sitting at a public place, it is not obligatory for any one to be silent, nor is it possible. Practically it should not be read out in a manner whereby it becomes impossible for people to listen carefully, for instance, throughout the night from the mosques on loud speakers or in a crowd where people are busy in daily routine of life, tuning Qurānic lesson on a loud volume is also disrespectful. Besides, reciting the Qurān in a way which causes discomfort to people or interferes with their worship is not permissible. The best thing to do is to lend an attentive ear to the recitation wherever and whenever it is heard.

The Emphasis on Zikr and its Method

In the end, the emphasis to practise Zikr and its method being highlighted. All Muslims must be told to remember **Allah**. Whether it is recitation of the Qurān, hymning **His** Praise or Zikr-e-Qalbi all come in this slot, because the etiquettes to be observed in both Zikr and the recitation of the Qurān are the same. Mufti Muḥammad Shafi' asserts that according to the consensus this Āyah refers to **Allah's** Zikr only.

The best way of doing Zikr listed here is to remember **Allah** within oneself with humility and awe of **His** Majesty. If it is Zikr-e-Lisāni, it should be done in a low voice and not by screaming on the microphone.

Zikr-e-Khaffi

This term refers to Zikr-e-Qalbi, with or without the participation of the tongue. This blessing is attained by virtue of Tazkiyah, which emanates from the duties of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}. Whoever, as a believer, met him or was seen by him was honoured with the status of a Companion^{RAU}. The distinction of the Companions^{RAU} as revealed in the Qurān is that their entire selves, from outer skin to their hearts became engrossed in perpetual Zikr. This priceless condition was passed to Taba'ian^{RU} by the Companions^{RAU} and in turn, to Tab'a Tab'a'in. Then from one generation to the other these spiritual states were transmitted by the Aulia. Once Qalb takes to Zikr, not a single moment goes without remembering **Allah**. Whether a person is at work or idle, travelling or stationed, each and every single heart beat calls out **Allah's** Name many times. This leads to the desired level of contemplation, termed as Murāqabah. It is a name given to a state in which one gets engrossed in his

spiritual states, with his head down. This is a great blessing which once attained can enable a person to experience the real and eternal pleasure of his worship and his virtue in this very life, while the hideousness of sin also appears before him personified.

Zikr-e-Jahr

The second method is Zikr-e-Jahr, also termed as Zikr-e-Lisāni, and is performed by the tongue. It can be the recitation of the Qurān, hymning **His Praises** or Zikr of **His Personal Name, A l l a h**.

It must be ensured that the voice is kept low without making noise. This will allow one to concentrate his attention towards **Allah** without causing disturbance in the worship or the peace of others. Besides, it will also help in avoiding pretence. Many Şūfī Orders teach the seekers Zikr-e-Lisāni in the beginning for developing concentration but eventually lead to Zikr-e-Khaffī. Hence both methods of practising Zikr are correct and must be done in accordance with the conditions laid down. Same applies to the recitation of the Qurān, and the reciting in Şalāt too.

Timings and Duration of Zikr

The Āyah lays down both morning and evening. It may well mean that Zikr must be done especially at these occasions. However, by enjoining it at morning and evening it indeed covers the entire day. Just as Ḥadhrat ‘Āyeshah Şiddiqah^{-RAU} once reported that the Holy Prophet^{-SAW} practised Zikr all the time.

This alludes to Zikr-e-Qalbī which is free from interruption. Thus it will go on during sleep, while walking and talking etc. Zikr-e-Lisāni is also a stepping stone to Zikr-e-Qalbī. It must be remembered that Zikr-e-Qalbī or Khaffī can only be attained in the company of a Shaikh. There is no other source. A person practising Zikr-e-Qalbi can also do Zikr-e-Lisāni in a better way but not all those doing Zikr-e-Lisāni can attain Zikr-e-Qalbī; for it is a light reflected unto the Qalb.

It must also be noted that as long as the limits of Shari‘ah are not trespassed one can practise Zikr the way he wants. The important thing is that one must never be heedless of Zikr, not even for a moment. This is because heedlessness is mortality whereas life is in being present in Divine Court. This state of constant Zikr can only be attained through Zikr-e-Qalbī, and not through neglect. Hence Zikr-e-Qalbī must be practised.

The Quality of Aulia'

It is a special feature of **His** Court that the more one gets closer to **Him** the more active and determined he gets in worship. Those near to **Him**, human beings or angels, Prophets^{AS} or the Aulia do not worship **Him** in pride. Nothing becomes a barrier in their acceptance of improvement in their beliefs. They constantly praise **Allah** and remember **Him** and remain in Sajdah, which represents all the supererogatory worships. Sajdah holds a special place in worship as reported in Ḥadīth that a person is nearest to **Allah** during Sajdah. Therefore, one should pray during Sajdah. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah^{RAU} excessive Sujūd refers to excessive supererogatory Ṣalāt. However, it is also permissible to prostrate only to supplicate. In any case, the Aulia are not exempted from worshipping **Him** as the ignorant would have it believed. People mistake those who do not even offer their Ṣalāt as accomplished saints. On the contrary, the Aulia constantly engage themselves in worship. According to a saying of the Holy Prophet^{SAW}, for admission to Paradise and elevation of spiritual status, one must be frequently in Sajdah, that is, to offer supererogatory Ṣalāt frequently. It is obvious that the one who offers the supererogatory Ṣalāt will certainly offer his obligatory as well as Sunnah Ṣalāt diligently.
