

(كَأَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكُونٌ)

(as if they were Bayd Maknun.) means, as if they were hidden pearls. Al-Hasan said:

(كَأَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكُونٌ)

(as if they were Bayd Maknun.) means, protected, never touched by any hands. As-Suddi said, "The well preserved egg in its nest." Sa` id bin Jubayr said:

(كَأَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكُونٌ)

(as if they were Bayd Maknun.) means, "The inside of the egg." `Ata' Al-Khurasani said, "It is the membrane which is between its outer shell and its inner contents." As-Suddi said:

(كَأَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكُونٌ)

(as if they were Bayd Maknun.) means, "The white of the egg when its shell is removed." Ibn Jarir's view concerning the meaning of Maknun (well preserved) is that the outer shell is touched by the wing of the bird and the nest, and by people's hands, unlike the interior of the egg. And Allah knows best.

(فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ - قَالَ قَائِلٌ
مِّنْهُمْ إِنِّي كَانَ لِي قَرِينٌ - يَقُولُ أَءِنَّكَ لَمِنَ
الْمُصَدِّقِينَ - أَءِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَءِنَّا
لَمَدِينُونَ - قَالَ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُّطَّلِعُونَ - فَاطَّلَعَ فَرَءَاهُ
فِي سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ - قَالَ تَاللَّهِ إِن كِدْتَ لَتُرْدِينَ -
وَلَوْ لَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّي لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ - أَفَمَا
نَحْنُ بِمَبِيتِينَ - إِلَّا مَوْتَتَنَا الْأُولَى وَمَا نَحْنُ
بِمُعَدِّيْنَ - إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ - لِمِثْلِ هَذَا
فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعَمَلُونَ)

(50. Then they will turn to one another, mutually questioning.) (51. A speaker of them will say: "Verily, I had a companion (in the world),") (52. "Who used to say: `Are you among those who believe.) (53. (That) when we die and become dust and bones, shall we indeed be indebted (Madinun)"" (54. (The speaker) said: "Will you look down") (55. So he looked down and saw him in the midst of the Fire.) (56. He said: "By Allah! You have nearly ruined me.") (57. "Had it not been for the grace of my Lord, I would certainly have been among those brought forth (to Hell).") (58. "Are we then not to die (any more)"" (59. "Except our first death, and we shall not be punished") (60. Truly, this is the supreme success!) (61. For the like of this let the workers work.)

The gathering of the People of Paradise, and the exchange between One of Them and His Counterpart in Hell, and His Gratitude for the Blessings of Allah

Allah tells us how the people of Paradise will turn to one another, asking one another about their situation, how they were in this world and what they suffered. This is part of their conversation when they get together to converse and drink, sitting on their thrones, servants coming and going, bringing all kinds of good food, drink, clothes and other delights no eye has seen, no ear has heard, never having comprehend the mind of man.

(قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ إِنِّي كَانَ لِي قَرِينٌ)

(A speaker of them will say: "Verily, I had a companion...") Al-`Awfi reported that Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him said, "This refers to an idolator man who had a companion among the believers in this world."

(يَقُولُ أَأَنْتَ لِمِنَ الْمُصَدِّقِينَ)

(Who used to say: "Are you among those who believe...") means, `do you believe in the resurrection after death, and the Reckoning and reward or punishment' He used to say that by way of astonishment, disbelief and stubbornness.

(أَعِدَّا مِثْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَعِنَّا لَمَدِينُونَ)

((That) when we die and become dust and bones, shall we indeed be indebted (Madinun).) Mujahid and As-Suddi said, "Brought to account." Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, and Muhammad bin Ka`b Al-Qurazi said, "Rewarded or punished according to our deeds." Both views are correct.

(قَالَ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُطَّلِعُونَ)

((The speaker) said: "Will you look down") meaning, look over. The believer will say this to his companions among the people of Paradise.

(فَاطَّلَعَ فَرَءَاهُ فِي سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ)

(So he looked down and saw him in the midst of the Fire.) Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, Sa`id bin Jubayr, Khulayd Al-`Usari, Qatadah, As-Suddi and `Ata' Al-Khurasani said, "This means, in the middle of Hell." Al-Hasan Al-Basri said, "In the middle of Hell as if he were a burning star."

(قَالَ تَاللَّهِ إِن كِدْتَ لَتُرْدِينِ)

(He said: "By Allah! You have nearly ruined me.") The believer will say, addressing the disbeliever: `By Allah, you nearly caused me to be doomed, if I had obeyed you.'

(وَلَوْلَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّي لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ)

(Had it not been for the grace of my Lord, I would certainly have been among those brought forth (to Hell).) means, `Were it not for the favor of my Lord towards me, I would have been like you in the middle of Hell where you are, brought forth with you for punishment. But He bestowed His grace upon me, had mercy upon me and guided me to faith and to belief in Him Alone.'

(وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ)

(and never could we have found guidance, were it not that Allah had guided us!) (7:43)

(أَفَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَيِّتِينَ - إِلَّا مَوْتَتَنَا الْأُولَى وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ)

(Are we then not to die (any more) Except our first death, and we shall not be punished) This is what the believers will say when they feel joy at what Allah has given them, and they realize that they are to remain in Paradise forever with no punishment and no death to come. Allah says:

(إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ)

(Truly, this is the supreme success!) Al-Hasan Al-Basri said, "They know that death brings an end to every delight, so they will say,

(أَفَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَيِّتِينَ - إِلَّا مَوْتَتَنَا الْأُولَى وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ)

(Are we then not to die Except our first death, and we shall not be punished) It will be said, "No,

(إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ)

(Truly, this is the supreme success!)."

(لِمِثْلِ هَذَا فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعَامِلُونَ)

(For the like of this let the workers work.) Ibn Jarir said, "These are the Words of Allah, and it means: for the like of this pleasure and this success, let the workers work in this world, so that they may attain it in the Hereafter.

The Story of Two Israelites

They mentioned the story of two men among the Children of Israel who were partners and who are included in the meaning of this Ayah. Abu Ja`far bin Jarir recorded that Furat bin Tha` labah Al-Bahrani said concerning the Ayah,

(إِنِّي كَان لِي قَرِينٌ)

(Verily, I had a companion) "There were two men who were partners and had collected eight thousand Dinars. One of them had a craft and the other did not. The one who had a craft said to the other, `You do not have a craft, so I think I will divide the money with you and leave you.' So he left him. Then the man bought a house, belonging to a king who had died, for the price of one thousand Dinars. He called his companion and showed him the house, saying, `What do you think of this house I bought it for one thousand Dinars.' He said, `How beautiful it is.' When he went out he said, `O Allah, this companion of mine has bought this house for one thousand Dinars; I ask You for one of the houses of Paradise -- and he gave one thousand Dinars in charity.' Then as much time passed as Allah willed should pass. The first man married a woman with a dowry of one thousand Dinars, and invited his companion and made food for him. When he came, he said, `I have married this woman with a dowry of one thousand Dinars.' He replied; `How beautiful this is.' And when he left, he said, `O Lord, my companion has married a woman with a dowry of one thousand Dinars; I ask you for a wife from among Al-Hur Al-`lyn' -- and he gave one thousand Dinars in charity. Then as much time passed as Allah willed should pass. Then the first man bought two gardens for two thousand Dinars, then he called his companion and showed them to him. He said, `I have bought these two gardens for two thousand Dinars.' He replied, `How beautiful this is.' When he came out, he said, `O Lord, my companion has bought two gardens for two thousand Dinars; I ask you for two gardens in Paradise' -- and he gave two thousand Dinars in charity. Then the angel came to them and took their souls in death. He took the one who had given his money in charity and put him in a house that he liked. There, there was a woman who was so beautiful that the ground shinned under her, then he (the angel) took him to two gardens and gave him other things which are known only to Allah. The man said, `This is like a man who has such and such.' The angel said, `That is exactly what it is; this house, these gardens and this wife are all for you.' The man said, `I had a companion who used to say: Are you among those who believe' It was said to him, `He is in Hell.' He said, `Will you look down' So he looked down and saw him in the midst of Hell. At this, he said:

قَالَ تَاللَّهِ إِنْ كِدْتَ لِتُرْدِين - وَلَوْ لَا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّي
لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ)

(By Allah! You have nearly ruined me. Had it not been for the grace of my Lord, I would certainly have been among those brought forth (to Hell).)"

(أَذَلِك خَيْرٌ نُزُلًا أَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّومِ - إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهَا
فِتْنَةً لِلظَّالِمِينَ - إِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِي أَصْلِ
الْجَحِيمِ - طَلْعُهَا كَأَنَّهُ رُءُوسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ - فَإِنَّهُمْ
لَا كَلُونَ مِنْهَا فَالْتُونِ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ - ثُمَّ إِنَّ لَهُمْ
عَلَيْهَا لَشَوْبًا مِنْ حَمِيمٍ - ثُمَّ إِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ لَإِلَى
الْجَحِيمِ - إِنَّهُمْ أَلْفَوْا ءَابَاءَهُمْ ضَالِّينَ - فَهُمْ عَلَى
ءَأْتَارِهِمْ يُهْرَعُونَ)

h(62. Is that (Paradise) better entertainment or the tree of Zaqqum) (63. Truly, We have made it (as) a trial for the wrongdoers.) (64. Verily, it is a tree that springs out of the bottom of Hell-fire,) (65. The shoots of its fruit stalks are like the heads of Shayatin.) (66. Truly, they will eat thereof and fill their bellies therewith.) (67. Then on the top of that they will be given boiling Hamim.) (68. Then thereafter, verily, their return is to the flaming fire of Hell.) (69. Verily, they found their fathers on the wrong path;) (70. So they (too) hastened in their footsteps!)

The Tree of Zaqqum and its Companions

Here Allah asks: `Is that which He has mentioned of the delights of Paradise with its food, drink, companions and other joys better entertainment, or

(أَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّومِ)

(or the tree of Zaqqum) which is in Hell' The meaning here is a specific kind of tree which is called Zaqqum. This is like the Ayah:

وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ طُورِ سَيْنَاءَ تَنْبُتُ بِالذُّهْنِ
وَصَبِغٍ لِلْأَكْلِينَ)

(And a tree that springs forth from Mount Snai, that grows (produces) oil, and (it is a) relish for the eaters.) (23:20) -- which is the olive tree. This is supported by the Ayah:

(ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ أَيْهَا الضَّالُّونَ الْمُكَذِّبُونَ - لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنْ
شَجَرٍ مِّنْ زَقُّومٍ)

(Then moreover, verily, -- you the erring-ones, the deniers! You, verily, will eat of the trees of Zaqqum.) (56:51-52).

(إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهَا فِتْنَةً لِلظَّالِمِينَ)

(Truly, We have made it (as) a trial for the wrongdoers.) Qatadah said, "The tree of Zaqqum is mentioned as a test for those who are misguided. They said, `Your companion tells you that in the Fire there is a tree, but fire consumes trees.' Then Allah revealed the words:

(إِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِي أَصْلِ الْجَحِيمِ)

(Verily, it is a tree that springs out of the bottom of Hell-fire.) meaning, it is nourished by the fire, for it was created from fire." Mujahid said:

(إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهَا فِتْنَةً لِلظَّالِمِينَ)

(Truly, We have made it (as) a trial for the wrongdoers.) Abu Jahl, may Allah curse him, said, "Zaqqum means dates and butter which I eat)Atazaqqamuhu(." I say that the meaning of the Ayah is, "We have told you, O Muhammad, of the tree of Zaqqum as a trial with which We test the people to see who will believe and who will disbelieve." This is like the Ayah:

(وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّءْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ
وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَنُخَوِّفُهُمْ فَمَا
يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا)

(And We made not the vision which we showed you but a trial for mankind, and the accursed tree in the Qur'an. We warn and make them afraid but it only increases them in naught save great disbelief, oppression and disobedience to Allah) (17:60).

(إِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِي أَصْلِ الْجَحِيمِ)

(Verily, it is a tree that springs out of the bottom of Hell-fire.) means, its roots grow at the bottom of Hell.

(طَلْعُهَا كَأَنَّهٗ رُءُوسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ)

(The shoots of its fruit stalks are like the heads of Shayatin.) this is a description of how ugly and repulsive it is. It is likened to

(رُءُوسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ)

(the heads of Shayatin), even though they have never seen them, because it is a well-established idea in people's minds that devils are ugly in appearance.

(فَإِنَّهُمْ لَأَكْلُونَ مِنْهَا فَمَالِئُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ)

(Truly, they will eat thereof and fill their bellies therewith.) Allah mentions that they will eat of this extremely ugly tree even though its fruit tastes and smells so bad; they will be forced to eat from it because they will not find anything else to eat except this tree and similar things, as Allah says:

(لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيعٍ - لَّا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ)

(No food will there be for them but a poisonous thorny plant, Which will neither nourish nor avail against hunger.) (88:6 -7).

(ثُمَّ إِنَّ لَهُمْ عَلَيْهَا لَشَوْبًا مِنْ حَمِيمٍ)

(Then on the top of that they will be boiling Hamim) Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "This means they will be given boiling Hamim to drink after they have eaten from Zaqqum." According to another report, he said that this means a mixture made from boiling water. Someone else said that it means boiling water will be mixed with pus and offensive discharges that leak from their private parts and eyes. Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that Sa`id bin Jubayr said, "When the people of Hell get hungry, they will ask for food from the tree of Zaqqum. They will eat from it, then the skin of their faces will fall off, If someone were to pass by, he would recognize them from their faces. Then thirst will be sent upon them, so they will ask to be given something to drink, and they will be given water like boiling oil that has been heated to the ultimate degree. When it is brought near to their mouths, the flesh of their faces from which the skin has fallen off will be baked by its heat, and whatever is in their stomachs will melt. They will walk with their guts falling out and with their skin falling off, then they

will be beaten with hooked rods of iron. Then every part of their bodies will burst into loud lamentations.

(ثُمَّ إِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ لَإِلَى الْجَحِيمِ)

(Then thereafter, verily, their return is to the flaming fire of Hell.) means, after that interval, they will be sent back to the burning fire, searing heat and scorching flames, and they will rotate between the one and the other. This is like the Ayah,

(يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ ءَانَ)

(They will go between it (Hell) and the fierce boiling water!) (55:44). Qatadah recited this Ayah when discussing this Ayah. This is a good interpretation. `Abdullah bin Mas'ud recited it differently, with the meaning "Their return in the afternoon." `Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, used to say: "By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, midday on the Day of Resurrection will not come until the people of Paradise will be in Paradise and the people of Hell will be in Hell." Then he recited:

(أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَيْرٌ مُّسْتَقَرًّا وَأَحْسَنُ مَقِيلًا)

(The dwellers of Paradise will, on that Day, have the best abode, and have the fairest of places for repose) (25:24). Allah's saying;

(إِنَّهُمْ أَفْوًا ءَابَاءَهُمْ ضَالِّينَ)

(Verily, they found their fathers on the wrong path;) means, `We will punish them for that because they found their fathers following misguidance and they followed them with no evidence or proof.' Allah says:

(فَهُمْ عَلَى ءَأْتَارِهِمْ يُهْرَعُونَ)

(So they (too) hastened in their footsteps!) Mujahid said, "This is like running." Sa`id bin Jubayr said, "They followed ignorance and foolishness."

(وَلَقَدْ ضَلَّ قَبْلَهُمْ أَكْثَرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ - وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ مُّنْذِرِينَ - فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنْذِرِينَ
إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ)

(71. And indeed most of the earlier ones went astray before them;) (72. And indeed We sent among them warners;) (73. Then see what was the end of those who were warned.) (74. Except the chosen servants of Allah.) Allah tells us that most of the previous nations went astray, worshipping other gods alongside Allah. He states that He sent among them warners to alert them to the anger, wrath and vengeance of Allah towards those who disbelieve in Him and worship others besides Him. He tells us that they persisted in their opposition to their Messengers and their disbelief in them, so He destroyed those who disbelieved in Him and saved the believers and caused them to prevail. Allah says:

(فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنذَرِينَ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ
الْمُخْلِصِينَ)

(Then see what was the end of those who were warned. Except the chosen servants of Allah).

(وَلَقَدْ نَادَانَا نُوحٌ فَلَنِعْمَ الْمُجِيبُونَ - وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ
وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ - وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمُ
الْبَاقِينَ - وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ - سَلَّمَ عَلَى
نُوحٍ فِي الْعَلَمِينَ - إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ -
إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا الْآخَرِينَ)

(75. And indeed Nuh invoked Us, and We are the best of those who answer.) (76. And We rescued him and his family from the great distress,) (77. And, his progeny, them We made the survivors.) (78. And left for him (a goodly remembrance) among the later generations) (79. "Salam (peace!) be upon Nuh among the all creatures!") (80. Verily, thus We reward the gooddoers.) (81. Verily, he)Nuh(was one of Our believing servants.) (82. Then We drowned the others.)

Nuh and His People

When Allah tells us about how most of the early people went astray from the path of salvation, He starts the detailed explanation of that with the story of Nuh and the rejection of his people. Only a few of Nuh's people believed in him, despite the long period of time he spent among them. He stayed among them for one thousand years less fifty, and after he stayed among them for so long and their disbelief became too much for him to bear -- for every time he called them, they turned away from him even more -- he prayed to his Lord saying, "I have been overcome, so help (me)!" So Allah became angry because Nuh was angry with them. He says:

(وَلَقَدْ نَادَانَا نُوحٌ فَلَنِعْمَ الْمُجِيبُونَ)

(And indeed Nuh invoked Us, and We are the best of those who answer.)

(وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ)

(And We rescued him and his family from the great distress.) means, their disbelief and their insults.

(وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمُ الْبَاقِينَ)

(And, his progeny, them We made the survivors.) `Ali bin Abi Talhah reported that Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, "There was no one left apart from the offspring of Nuh, peace be upon him." Sa`id bin Abi `Arubah said, narrating from Qatadah concerning the Ayah,

(وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمُ الْبَاقِينَ)

(And, his progeny, them We made the survivors.) "All people descended from the offspring of Nuh, peace be upon him." At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim narrated from Samurah, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet said, concerning the Ayah,

(وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمُ الْبَاقِينَ)

(And, his progeny, them We made the survivors):

«سَامُ، وَحَامُ، وَيَافِثُ»

(Sam, Ham and Yafith.) Imam Ahmad recorded from Samurah, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Messenger of Allah said:

«سَامُ أَبُو الْعَرَبِ، وَحَامُ أَبُو الْحَبَشِ، وَيَافِثُ أَبُو
الرُّومِ»

(Sam was the father of the Arabs, Ham was the father of the Ethiopians and Yafith was the father of the Romans.)" This was also recorded by At-Tirmidhi. What is meant here by Romans is the original Romans, i.e., the Greeks who claimed descent from Ruma (Roma) the son of Liti, the son of Yunan, the son of Yafith, the son of Nuh, peace be upon him.

(وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ)

(And left for him among the later generations.) Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "He is remembered in a good way." Mujahid said this means "An honorable mention by all the Prophets." Qatadah and As-Suddi said, "Allah caused him to be praised constantly by others." Ad-Dahhak said it means "Salam and praise."

(سَلَّمَ عَلَى نُوحٍ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ)

(Salam (peace!) be upon Nuh among the all creatures!) This explains for us the extent of the honorable mention and praise, for he is greeted with peace by all groups and nations.

(إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ)

(Verily, thus We reward the gooddoers.) means, `This is how We reward those of Our servants who do deeds of obedience to Allah. We gave him an honorable mention so that after he died he is still remembered in a manner that befits his status.' Then Allah says:

(إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ)

(Verily, he)Nuh(was one of Our believing servants.) meaning, one of the sincere believers in the Oneness of Allah, one of those who had certain faith.

(ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا الْآخَرِينَ)

(Then We drowned the others.) means, `We destroyed them, and there was no trace whatsoever left of them, and they are only known by this unfavorable description.'

(وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ - إِذْ جَاءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ
سَلِيمٍ - إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُونَ - أَءِفْكَأ
ءَالِهَةً دُونَ اللَّهِ تُرِيدُونَ - فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِرَبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ)

(83. And verily, among those who followed his way was Ibrahim.) (84. When he came to his Lord with a Salim heart.) (85. When he said to his father and to his people: "What is it that which you worship") (86. "Is it a falsehood -- gods other than Allah -- that you desire") (87. "Then what think you about the Lord of the all that exists")

The Story of Ibrahim and His People

Ali bin Abi Talhah reported that Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him:

(وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ)

(And verily, among those who followed his ways was Ibrahim.) means, he was one of the followers of his religion. Mujahid said, "He was following his path and his way."

(إِذْ جَاءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ)

(When he came to his Lord with a Salim heart.) Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "This means that he bore witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah." r Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that `Awf said, "I said to Muhammad bin Srin, `What is the Salim heart' He said, `One which knows that Allah is true and that the Hour will undoubtedly come to pass, and that Allah will resurrect those who are in the graves.'" Al-Hasan said, "One that is free from Shirk." `Urwah said, "One that is not cursed."

(إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُونَ)

(When he said to his father and to his people: "What is it that which you worship") He denounced his people for their worship of idols and false gods, Allah said:

(أَفَكَأَءَالِهَةٍ دُونَ اللَّهِ تُرِيدُونَ - فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِرَبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ)

(Is it a falsehood -- gods other than Allah -- that you desire Then what think you about the Lord of the all that exists) Qatadah said, "This means, `what do you think He will do with you when you meet Him, given that you worshipped others alongside Him"

(فَنظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُومِ - فَقَالَ إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ -
فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِينَ - فَرَاغَ إِلَى ءَالِهِتِهِمْ فَقَالَ أَلَا
تَأْكُلُونَ - مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنْطِقُونَ - فَرَاغَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْبًا
بِالْيَمِينِ - فَأَقْبَلُوا إِلَيْهِ يَزْفُونَ - قَالَ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مَا
تَنْحِتُونَ - وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ - قَالُوا ابْنُوا
لَهُ بُيُوتًا فَأَلْفَوْهُ فِي الْجَحِيمِ - فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا
فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِينَ)

(88. Then he cast a glance at the stars,) (89. And he said: "Verily, I am sick.") (90. So they turned away from him and departed.) (91. Then he turned to their gods and said: "Will you not eat") (92. "What is the matter with you that you speak not") (93. Then he turned upon them, striking (them) with (his) right hand.) (94. Then they came hastily towards him.) (95. He said: "Worship you that which you (yourselves) carve") (96. "While Allah has created you and what you make!") (97. They said: "Build for him a building and throw him into the blazing fire!") (98. So, they plotted a plot against him, but We made them the lowest.) Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said this to his people so that he could stay behind in the city when they went out for their festival. The time was approaching for them to go out to celebrate a festival of theirs, and he wanted to be alone with their gods so that he could break them, so he told them something that was true, for he was indeed sick of the implications of what they believed in.

(فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِينَ)

(So they turned away from him and departed.) Qatadah said, "The Arabs say of one who thinks deeply that he is looking at the stars." What Qatadah meant is that he looked at the heavens thinking of a way to distract his people. So he said,

(إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ)

(Verily, I am sick.) meaning, weak. Ibn Jarir narrated here a Hadith from Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, stating that the Messenger of Allah said:

«لَمْ يَكْذِبْ إِبْرَاهِيمُ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ غَيْرَ ثَلَاثَ كَذَبَاتٍ: ثِنْتَيْنِ فِي ذَاتِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، قَوْلُهُ:

(إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ)

وقوله:

(بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَذَا)

وقوله في سارة: هي أختي»

(Ibrahim (peace and blessings be upon him) did not lie except in three cases. Two were for the sake of Allah: (one is) when he said, (Verily, I am sick); and (the second) when he said, (Nay, this one, the biggest (his wife) of them (idols) did it.) and (the third) when he said concerning (his wife) Sarah, "She is my sister.") This Hadith is recorded in the books of the Sahih and Sunan with various chain of narrations. But this is not the kind of real lie for which a person is to be condemned -- Allah forbid! One calls it a lie for lack of a better word, because it is abstruse speech used for a legitimate religious purpose, and it was said that what was meant by the words,

(إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ)

(Verily, I am sick) was, 'I am sick at heart of your worshipping idols instead of Allah.' Al-Hasan Al-Basri said, "The people of Ibrahim went out to their festival and they wanted to make him go out too. So he lay down on his back and said,

(إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ)

(Verily, I am sick.) and he started looking at the sky. When they had gone out, he turned to their gods and broke them." This was recorded by Ibn Abi Hatim. Allah said:

(فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِينَ)

(So they turned away from him and departed.) meaning, he went to them after they had left, quickly and secretly.

(فَقَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ)

(and said: "Will you not eat") They had placed food before them as a sacrifice, so that the food might be blessed. When Ibrahim, peace be upon him, looked at the food that was before them, he said:

(فَرَاغَ إِلَىٰ ءَالِهَتِهِمْ فَقَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ - مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنْطِقُونَ)

(Will you not eat What is the matter with you that you speak not)

(فَرَاغَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْبًا بِالْيَمِينِ)

(Then he turned upon them, striking (them) with (his) right hand.) Al-Farra' said, "This means, he started to hit them with his right hand." Qatadah and Al-Jawhari said, "He turned to them, hitting them with his right hand." He struck them with his right hand because the right hand is stronger and more powerful. Then he left them broken to pieces, (all) except the biggest of them, that they might turn to it, as we have already seen in the Tafsir of Surat Al-Anbiya'.

(فَأَقْبَلُوا إِلَيْهِ يَزْفُونَ)

(Then they came hastily towards him.) Mujahid and others said, "This means, they came rushing. The story is told in brief here; in Surat Al-Anbiya', it is told in more detail. When they returned, they did not know at first who had done this, until they investigated and found out

that Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was the one who had done it. When they came to rebuke him, he started rebuking and criticizing them and said:

(أَتَعْبُدُونَ مَا تَحْتُونَ)

(Worship you that which you carve) meaning, 'do you worship instead of Allah idols which you yourselves carve and fashion with your own hands'

(وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ)

(While Allah has created you and what you make!) This may mean, 'Allah has created you and what you do;' or it may mean, 'Allah has created you and what you make.' Both views are synonymous. The former is more apparent because of the report recorded by Al-Bukhari in the Book Af' al Al-' lbad from Hudhayfah, attributed to the Prophet :

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَصْنَعُ كُلَّ صَانِعٍ وَصَنَعَتَهُ»

(Allah has created every doer of deeds and what he does.) Thereupon he recited:

(وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ)

(While Allah has created you and what you make!) When the proof had been established against them, they resolved to seize him by force and they said:

(ابْنُوا لَهُ بُنْيَانًا فَأَلْقُوهُ فِي الْجَحِيمِ)

(Build for him a building (i.e., furnace) and throw him into the blazing fire!) There happened what we have already discussed in our Tafsir of Surat Al-Anbiya', (21:68-70) and Allah saved him from the fire and caused him to prevail over them, making his proof supreme and supporting it. Allah says:

(فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِينَ)

(So, they plotted a plot against him, but We made them the lowest.)

(وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ - رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ - فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِعُلْمٍ حَلِيمٍ - فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَبْنَئِي إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ

أَنْى أَدْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى قَالَ يَا بَتِ افْعَلْ مَا
تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللّهُ مِنَ الصّٰرِيْنَ - فَلَمَّا
أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِيْنَ - وَنَدَيْنَهُ أَنْ يَا بَرَهِيْمُ - قَدْ
صَدَقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا إِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ - إِن
هٰذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِيْنُ - وَقَدَيْنَهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيْمٍ
وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِيْنَ سَلْمًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَهِيْمَ
كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحٰقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ وَبَرَكَنَا
عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ إِسْحٰقَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَظَلَمٌ
لِّنَفْسِهِ مُبِيْنٌ)

(99. And he said: "Verily, I am going to my Lord. He will guide me!" (100. "My Lord! Grant me (offspring) from the righteous.") (101. So, We gave him the glad tidings of a forbearing boy.) (102. And, when he (his son) was old enough to walk with him, he said: "O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you. So look what you think!" He said: "O my father! Do that which you are commanded, if Allah wills, you shall find me of the patient.") (103. Then, when they had both submitted themselves, and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead;) (104. We called out to him: "O Ibrahim!") (105. "You have fulfilled the dream!" Verily, thus do We reward the doers of good.) (106. Verily, that indeed was a manifest trial.) (107. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice;) (108. And We left for him among the later generations.) (109. "Salam (peace!) be upon Ibrahim!") (110. Thus indeed do We reward the doers of good.) (111. Verily, he was one of Our believing servants.) (112. And We gave him the glad tidings of Ishaq -- a Prophet from the righteous.) (113. We blessed him and Ishaq. And of their progeny are (some) that do right, and some that plainly wrong themselves.)

Ibrahim's Emigration, the Test of the Sacrifice of Isma`il, and how Allah blessed Him

Allah tells us that after He helped His close friend Ibrahim, peace be upon him, against his people, and after Ibrahim gave up hoping that they would ever believe despite all the mighty signs that they had witnessed, he emigrated away from them, and said:

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ - رَبُّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ)

(Verily, I am going to my Lord. He will guide me! My Lord! Grant me (offspring) from the righteous.) meaning, obedient children, in compensation for his people and relatives whom he had left. Allah said:

(فَبَشِّرْنَاهُ بِعُلْمٍ حَلِيمٍ)

(So We gave him the glad tidings of a forbearing boy.) This child was Isma`il, peace be upon him, for he was the first child of whom glad tidings were given to Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and he was older than Ishaq. The Muslims and the People of the Book agree, and indeed it is stated in their Book, that Isma`il, peace be upon him, was born when Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was eighty-six years old, and Ishaq was born when Ibrahim was ninety-nine years old. According to their Book, Allah commanded Ibrahim to sacrifice his only son, and in another text it says his firstborn son. But here they falsely inserted the name of Ishaq. This is not right because it goes against what their own Scripture says. They inserted the name of Ishaq because he is their ancestor, while Isma`il is the ancestor of the Arabs. They were jealous of them, so they added this idea and changed the meaning of the phrase "only son" to mean 'the only son who is with you,' because Isma`il had been taken with his mother to Makkah. But this is a case of falsification and distortion, because the words "only son" cannot be said except in the case of one who has no other son. Furthermore, the firstborn son has a special status that is not shared by subsequent children, so the command to sacrifice him is a more exquisite test.

(فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ)

(And, when he (his son) was old enough to walk with him,) means, when he grew up and started to go with his father and walk with him, for Ibrahim used to go every so often to check on his son and his mother in the land of Faran (i.e., Makkah), to see how they were doing. It was said that he used to ride on Al-Buraq, traveling there swiftly, and Allah knows best. It was reported from Ibn `Abbas, peace be upon him, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Sa`id bin Jubayr, `Ata' Al-Khurasani, Zayd bin Aslam and others that

(فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ)

(And, when he (his son) was old enough to walk with him,) means, when he became a young man and was able to work as his father did.

(فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَبْنَئِي إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَىٰ)

(And, when he (his son) was old enough to walk with him, he said: "O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you. So look what you think!") `Ubayd bin `Umayr said, "The dreams of the Prophets are revelation," then he recited this Ayah:

قَالَ يَبْنَىٰ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ
مَاذَا تَرَىٰ

(he said: "O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you. So look what you think!"). He told his son that in order to make it easier for him, and also to test his patience and resolve, at a young age, in obeying Allah and obeying his father.

قَالَ يَا بَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ

(He said: "O my father! Do that which you are commanded..." meaning, `obey the command of Allah and sacrifice me.'

سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

(if Allah wills, you shall find me of the patient..) meaning, `I will be patient and will seek the reward for that with Allah.' He, may peace and blessings be upon him, believed in what had been promised. Allah said:

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ
الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَّبِيًّا - وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ
بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ مَرْضِيًّا)

(And mention in the Book Isma`il. Verily, he was true to what he promised, and he was a Messenger, (and) a Prophet. And he used to enjoin on his family the Salah and the Zakah, and his Lord was pleased with him.) (19:54-55).

فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ)

(Then, when they had both submitted themselves, and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead;) means, when both of them had pronounced the Shahadah and remembered Allah -- Ibrahim because he was about to offer a sacrifice and Isma`il because he was about to die. Or it was said that "submitted themselves" means that they submitted and followed the command of Allah; Ibrahim obeyed the command of Allah and Isma`il obeyed Allah and his father. This was the view of Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Qatadah, As-Suddi and Ibn Ishaq, and others. |The meaning of the phrase "and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead" is: he placed him facedown so that he could slaughter him from behind, and not have to see his face at the time of slaughter,

so that it would be easier for him. Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, Mujahid, Sa`id bin Jubayr, Ad-Dahhak and Qatadah said:

(وَتَلَّهُ لِلجَبِينِ)

(and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead;) means, "He turned him upside down on his face." Imam Ahmad recorded that Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "When the rituals were enjoined upon Ibrahim, peace be upon him, the Shaytan appeared to him at the Mas`a and raced with him, but Ibrahim got there first. Then Jibril, upon him be peace, took him to Jamrat Al-`Aqabah and the Shaytan appeared to him, so he stoned him with seven pebbles until he disappeared. Then he appeared him at Al-Jamrah Al-Wusta and he stoned him with seven pebbles. Then he laid him prostrate on his face. Isma`il, peace be upon him, was wearing a white shirt, and he said, `O my father, I do not have any garment in which I can be shrouded apart from this; take it off me so that you can shroud me in it.' He started to take it off, then he was called from behind:

(أَنْ يَابِرَ هَيْمَقْدُ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا)

(O Ibrahim! You have fulfilled the dream!) Ibrahim turned, and saw a fine, horned, white ram." Ibn `Abbas said, "We used to look for similar types of rams." Hisham mentioned this Hadith at length in Al-Manasik.

(وَنَدَيْنَهُ أَنْ يَابِرَ هَيْمُ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا)

(We called out to him: "O Ibrahim! You have fulfilled the dream!") means, `the purpose of your dream has been fulfilled by your laying down your son to sacrifice him.' As-Suddi and others said that he passed the knife over Isma`il's neck, but it did not cut him at all, because a sheet of copper was placed between them. Ibrahim was called at that point, and it was said:

(قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا)

(You have fulfilled the dream!) Allah says;

(إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ)

(Verily, thus do We reward the doers of good.) means, `this is how We deal with those who obey Us in things that are difficult for them; We make for them a way out.' As Allah says:

(فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ
فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَأَشْهِدُوا ذَوَى عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ
وَأَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ ذَلِكَ يُوعِظُ بِهِ مَنْ كَانَ

يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ
مَخْرَجًا - وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ
يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَلِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ
جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا)

(And whosoever has Taqwa of Allah, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed Allah has set a measure for all things.) (65:2-3). On the basis of this Ayah and this story, some of the scholars of Usul have stated that it is valid for a ruling to be abrogated before anyone is able to act upon it -- unlike some of the Mu`tazilah. The evidence for this is obvious, because Allah commanded Ibrahim, peace be upon him, to sacrifice his son, then He abrogated that and pointed out the ransom. The purpose of His command had been primarily to reward His close Friend for his patience and resolve in sacrificing his son. Allah says:

(إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ)

(Verily, that indeed was a manifest trial.) meaning, it was clearly a test when he was commanded to sacrifice his son, so, he hastened to do it, in submission to the command of Allah and in obedience to Him. Allah said:

(وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى)

(And of Ibrahim who fulfilled all that.) (53:37), and

(وَقَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ)

(And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice). It was reported that Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "A ram which had grazed in Paradise for forty years." Imam Ahmad recorded that Safiyyah bint Shaybah said, "A woman from Bani Sulaym, who was the midwife of most of the people in our household, told me that the Messenger of Allah sent for `Uthman bin Talhah, may Allah be pleased with him." On one occasion she said, "I asked `Uthman, `Why did the Prophet call you' He said, `The Messenger of Allah said to me,

«إِنِّي كُنْتُ رَأَيْتُ قَرْنِي الْكَبِشِ حِينَ دَخَلْتُ
الْبَيْتَ فَنَسِيتُ أَنْ أَمْرَكَ أَنْ تُخَمَّرَهُمَا فَخَمَّرَهُمَا،

فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يَكُونَ فِي الْبَيْتِ شَيْءٌ يَشْغَلُ الْمُصَلِّيَّ»

(I saw the horns of the ram when I entered the House)i.e., the Ka`bah(, and I forgot to tell you to cover them up; cover them up, for there should not be anything in the House which could distract the worshipper.)" Sufyan said, "The horns of the ram remained hanging in the House until it was burned, and they were burned too." This offers independent evidence that the one who was to be sacrificed was Isma`il, peace be upon him. The Quraysh had inherited the horns of the ram that Ibrahim sacrificed, and they had been passed down from generation to generation, until the Messenger of Allah was sent. And Allah knows best.

Reports which state that the One Who was to be sacrificed was Isma`il, and that this is Correct without a Doubt

Sa`id bin Jubayr, `Amir Ash-Sha`bi, Yusuf bin Mihran, Mujahid, `Ata' and others reported from Ibn `Abbas that it was Isma`il, peace be upon him. Ibn Jarir narrated that Ibn `Abbas said, "The one who was ransomed was Isma`il, peace be upon him. The Jews claimed that it was Ishaq, but the Jews lied." It was reported that Ibn `Umar said, "The sacrifice was Isma`il." Ibn Abi Najih said, narrating from Mujahid, "It was Isma`il, peace be upon him." This was also the view of Yusuf bin Mihran. Ash-Sha`bi said, "It was Isma`il, peace be upon him, and I saw the horns of the ram in the Ka`bah." Muhammad bin Ishaq reported from Al-Hasan bin Dinar and `Amr bin `Ubayd from Al-Hasan Al-Basri that he did not doubt that the one of the two sons Ibrahim was commanded to sacrifice was Isma`il, peace be upon him. Ibn Ishaq said, "I heard Muhammad bin Ka`b Al-Qurazi say, `The one whom Allah commanded Ibrahim to sacrifice of his two sons was Isma`il.' We find this in the Book of Allah, because when Allah finishes the story of the one of the two sons of Ibrahim who was to be sacrificed, He then says:

(وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَاقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ)

(And We gave him the glad tidings of Ishaq -- a Prophet from the righteous), and

(فَبَشَّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ إِسْحَاقَ يَعْقُوبَ)

(So, We gave her glad tidings of Ishaq and after Ishaq, of Ya`qub) (11:71). He mentions the son and the son of the son, but He would not have commanded him to sacrifice Ishaq when He had promised that this son would in turn have a son. The one whom He commanded him to sacrifice can only have been Isma`il." Ibn Ishaq said, "I heard him say that often." Ibn Ishaq reported from Buraydah bin Sufyan bin Farwah Al-Aslami that Muhammad bin Ka`b Al-Qurazi told them that he mentioned that to `Umar bin `Abd Al-`Aziz, may Allah be pleased with him, when he was Khalifah, while he was with him in Syria. `Umar said to him, "This is something about which I have never given any thought, but I see that it is as you say." Then he sent for a man who was with him in Syria, a Jew who had become a Muslim and was committed to Islam, and he thought that he had been one of their scholars. `Umar bin `Abd Al-`Aziz, may Allah be pleased with him, asked him about that. Muhammad bin Ka`b said, "I was with `Umar bin `Abd Al-`Aziz. `Umar said to him, `Which of the two sons of Ibrahim was he commanded to sacrifice?' He said, `Isma`il. By Allah, O Commander of the faithful, the Jews know this, but they were

jealous of you Arabs because it was your father about whom Allah issued this command and the virtue that Allah mentioned was because of his patience in obeying the command. So they denied that and claimed that it was Ishaq, because he is their father." `Abdullah bin Al-Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, may Allah have mercy on him, said, "I asked my father about which son was to be sacrificed -- was it Isma`il or Ishaq" He said, "Isma`il." This was mentioned in Kitab Az-Zuhd. Ibn Abi Hatim said, "I heard my father say, `The correct view is that the one who was to be sacrificed was Isma`il, peace be upon him." He said, "And it was narrated that `Ali, Ibn `Umar, Abu Hurayrah, Abu At-Tufayl, Sa`id bin Al-Musayyib, Sa`id bin Jubayr, Al-Hasan, Mujahid, Ash-Sha`bi, Muhammad bin Ka`b Al-Qurazi, Abu Ja`far Muhammad bin `Ali and Abu Salih, may Allah be pleased with them all, said that the one who was to be sacrificed was Isma`il." Al-Baghawi said in his Tafsir, "This was the view of `Abdullah bin `Umar, Sa`id bin Al-Musayyib, As-Suddi, Al-Hasan Al-Basri, Mujahid, Ar-Rabi` bin Anas, Muhammad bin Ka`b Al-Qurazi and Al-Kalbi." This was also reported from Ibn `Abbas and from Abu `Amr bin Al-`Ala'.

(وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَاقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ)

(And We gave him the glad tidings of Ishaq -- a Prophet from the righteous.) having given the glad tidings of the one who was to be sacrificed, who was Isma`il, Allah immediately follows that with mention of the glad tidings of his brother Ishaq. This is also mentioned in Surah Hud (11:71) and in Surat Al-Hijr (15:53-55).

(نَبِيًّا)

(a Prophet) means, from him there will come a righteous Prophet.

(وَبَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ إِسْحَاقَ وَمِنَ ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا
مُحْسِنٌ وَظَلِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ مٌبِينٌ)

(We blessed him and Ishaq. And of their progeny are (some) that do right, and some that plainly wrong themselves.) This is like the Ayah:

(قِيلَ يٰ نُوحُ اهْبِطْ بِسَلَامٍ مِّنَّا وَبَرَكَاتٍ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ
أُمَّمٍ مِّمَّن مَّعَكَ وَأُمَّمٍ سَنُنَفِّسُهُمْ ثُمَّ يَمْسُهُم مِّنَّا
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ)

(It was said: "O Nuh! Come down (from the ship) with peace from Us and blessings on you and on the people who are with you, but people to whom We shall grant their pleasures (for a time), but in the end a painful torment will reach them from Us.") (11:48)

(وَلَقَدْ مَنَّا عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ - وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمَا
 وَقَوْمَهُمَا مِنَ الْكُرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ - وَنَصَرْنَاهُمْ فَاكْبَرُوا
 هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ - وَءَاتَيْنَاهُمَا الْكِتَابَ الْمُسْتَبِينَ -
 وَهَدَيْنَاهُمَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ - وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا
 فِي الْأَخْرِينَ - سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ إِنَّا
 كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ إِنَّهُمَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ)

(114. And, indeed We gave Our grace to Musa and Harun.) (115. And We saved them and their people from the great distress,) (116. And helped them, so that they became the victors;) (117. And We gave them the clear Scripture;) (118. And guided them to the right path.) (119. And We left for them among the later generations.) (120. "Salam (peace!) be upon Musa and Harun!") (121. Verily, thus do We reward the doers of good.) (122. Verily, they were two of Our believing servants.)

Musa and Harun

Allah tells us how He blessed Musa and Harun with prophethood and how He saved them, along with those who believed, from the oppression of Fir`awn and his people, who had persecuted them by killing their sons and sparing their women, and by forcing them to do the most menial tasks, then ultimately He caused them to prevail over them and to seize their lands and their wealth and all that they had spent their entire lives amassing. Then Allah revealed to Musa the Clear and Mighty Book, which is the Tawrah, as Allah says:

(وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ الْفُرْقَانَ وَضِيَاءً)

(And indeed We granted to Musa and Harun the criterion (of right and wrong), and a shining light) (21:48). And Allah says here:

(وَءَاتَيْنَاهُمَا الْكِتَابَ الْمُسْتَبِينَ - وَهَدَيْنَاهُمَا
 الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ)

(And We gave them the clear Scripture; and guided them to the right path.) meaning, with regard to words and deeds.

(وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا فِي الْأَخْرِينَ)

(And We left for them among the later generations.) means, that after they died they would be mentioned in good terms and spoken of highly. Then Allah explain this further:

(سَلَّمَ عَلَى مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُحْسِنِينَ إِنَّهُمَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ)

(Salam (peace!) be upon Musa and Harun! Verily, thus do We reward the doers of good. Verily, they were two of Our believing servants.)

(وَإِنَّ إِلْيَاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ - إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَلَا
تَتَّقُونَ - أَتَدْعُونَ بَعْلًا وَتَذَرُونَ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ -
اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبَّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأُولِينَ - فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَإِنَّهُمْ
لَمُحْضَرُونَ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ)

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْأَخْرِينَ- سَلَّمَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ
إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ- إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ-

(123. And verily, Ilyas was one of the Messengers.) (124. When he said to his people: "Will you not have Taqwa") (125. "Will you call upon `Ba`l and forsake the Best of creators,) (126. Allah, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers") (127. But they denied him, so they will certainly be brought forth,) (128. Save the chosen servants of Allah.) (129. And We left for him among the later generations.) (130. "Salam (peace!) be upon Ilyasin!") (131. Verily, thus do We reward the doers of good.) (132. Verily, he was one of Our believing servants.) Ilyas Qatadah and Muhammad bin Ishaq said, "Ilyas is another name for Idris." Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that `Abdullah bin Mas`ud, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Ilyas is Idris." This was also the view of Ad-Dahhak . Wahb bin Munabbih said, "He is Ilyas bin Yasin bin Finhas bin Al-`Izar bin Harun bin `Imran. Allah sent him to the Children of Israel after Hizqil (Ezekiel), may peace be upon them both. They had started to worship an idol called Ba`l, and he called them to Allah, may He be exalted, and forbade them to worship anyone besides Him. Their king believed in him, then he apostatized, and they persisted in their misguided ways, and not one person among them believed in him. So he prayed to Allah against them, and Allah withheld the rain from them for three years. Then they asked him to relieve them from that, and promised that they would believe in him if rain came to them. So he prayed to Allah for them, and the rains

came, but they persisted in their evil ways of disbelief. So he asked Allah to take him to Him. Al-Yasa` bin Akhtub had grown up under his care, may peace be upon them both. So Ilyas was commanded to go to such and such a place, and whatever mount came to him, he was to ride on it and not to give it away. A horse of fire was brought to him, so he rode it, and Allah clothed him with light and covered him with feathers, and he used to fly with the angels as a human angel, heavenly yet also earthly. This is what was narrated by Wahb bin Munabbih from the People of the Book; Allah knows best how true it is.

(إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ)

(When he said to his people: "Will you not have Taqwa") means, 'do you not fear Allah when you worship others instead of Him'

(أَتَدْعُونَ بَعْلًا وَتَذَرُونَ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ)

(Will you call upon Ba`l and forsake the Best of creators,) Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Qatadah and As-Suddi said that the word Ba`l means lord. `Ikrimah and Qatadah said, "This is the language of the people of Yemen." According to another report from Qatadah, it is the language of Azd Shanu'ah. `Abdur-Rahman bin Zayd bin Aslam narrated from his father that it is the name of an idol which was worshipped by the people of a city called Ba`labak (Baalbek) which is to the west of Damascus. Ad-Dahhak said, "It is an idol which they used to worship."

(أَتَدْعُونَ بَعْلًا)

(Will you call upon Ba`l) means, 'will you worship an idol,'

(أَتَدْعُونَ بَعْلًا وَتَذَرُونَ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ - اللَّهُ رَبَّكُمْ وَرَبَّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأُولِينَ)

(and forsake the Best of creators, Allah, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers) means, 'He is the One Who is deserving of your worship alone, with no partners or associates.'

(فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ)

(But they denied him, so they will certainly be brought forth,) means, for the punishment on the Day of Reckoning.

(إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ)

(Save the chosen servants of Allah.) means, those who believe in Him alone.

(وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ)

(And We left for him among the later generations.) means, he is praised and spoken of highly.

(سَلَّمَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ)

(Salam (peace!) be upon Ilyasin!) Similarly, one might say for Isma'il, Isma'in. This is the language (dialect) of Bani Asad; they say Mikal, Mika'il, and Mika'in. They say Ibrahim and Ibraham; Isra'il, Isra'in; Tur Sna', Tur Snin. All of that is fine.

(إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ - إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ)

(Verily, thus do We reward the doers of good. Verily, he was one of Our believing servants.) We have already discussed the meaning of this above. And Allah knows best.

(وَإِنَّ لُوطًا لَّمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ - إِذْ نَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ
أَجْمَعِينَ إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَيْرِينَ ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا
الْآخَرِينَ وَإِنَّكُمْ لَتَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مُصْبِحِينَ وَبِالْأَيْلِ
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ)

(133. And verily, Lut was one of the Messengers.) (134. When We saved him and his family, all,) (135. Except an old woman (his wife) who was among those who remained behind.) (136. Then We destroyed the rest.) (137. Verily, you pass by them in the morning.) (138. And at night; will you not then reflect)

The Destruction of the People of Lut (Lot)

Allah tells us that He sent His servant and Messenger Lut, peace be upon him, to his people, and they denied him, so Allah saved him from among them, him and his family with the exception of his wife, who was destroyed along with her people. Allah destroyed them with different kinds of punishments, and made their vicinity a foul, stinking lake which is on a well-travelled route where people pass by night and day (i.e., the Dead Sea, which lays close to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah on the highway between Arabia and Syria). Allah says:

(وَإِنَّكُمْ لَتَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مُصْبِحِينَ - وَبِالْأَيْلِ أَفَلَا
تَعْقِلُونَ)

(Verily, you pass by them in the morning. And at night; will you not then reflect) meaning, 'will you not learn a lesson from them and how Allah destroyed them, and realize that a similar end awaits the disbelievers.'

(وَإِنَّ يُونُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ - إِذْ أَبَقَ إِلَى الْفُلِكِ
الْمَشْحُونِ - فَسَهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ -
فَالْتَقَمَهُ الْحُوتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ - فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُسَبِّحِينَ - لَلَبِثَ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ -
فَنَبَذْنَاهُ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيمٌ - وَأَنْبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً
مِّنْ يَقْطِينٍ - وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَى مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ
- فَآمَنُوا فَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَى حِينٍ)

(139. And verily, Yunus was one of the Messengers.) (140. When he ran to the laden ship:) (141. Then he (agreed to) cast lots, and he was among the losers.) (142. Then a (big) fish swallowed him as he had done an act worthy of blame.) (143. Had he not been of them who glorify Allah,) (144. He would have indeed remained inside its belly (the fish) till the Day of Resurrection.) (145. But We cast him forth on the naked shore while he was sick,) (146. And We caused a plant of gourd to grow over him.) (147. And We sent him to a hundred thousand (people) or even more.) (148. And they believed; so We gave them enjoyment for a while.)

The Story of Yunus

We have already discussed the story of Yunus, peace be upon him, in Surat Al-Anbiya' (21:87-88). In the Two Sahihs it is reported that the Messenger of Allah said:

«مَا يَنْبَغِي لِعَبْدٍ أَنْ يَقُولَ: أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْ يُونُسَ بْنِ
مَتَّى»

(It is not right for any person to say I am better than Yunus bin Matta.)

(إِذْ أَبَقَ إِلَى الْفُلِكِ الْمَشْحُونِ)

(When he ran to the laden ship.) Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "It was filled with cargo.

(فَسَهُمَ)

(Then he (agreed to) cast lots,) means, to draw lots."

(فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ)

(and he was among the losers.) means among those who have been overcome. This was because the ship was being pounded by the waves on all sides, and they were at risk of drowning, so they drew lots, and whoever lost would be thrown overboard so as to lighten the load. The Prophet of Allah Yunus, peace be upon him, lost the draw three times, but they did not want to throw him overboard. He took off his garment so that he could throw himself into the sea, and they tried to stop him. Then Allah commanded a large fish from the Green Sea (i.e., Mediterranean Sea) to cleave the oceans and come and swallow Yunus, peace be upon him, without cutting his flesh or breaking his bones. The fish came and Yunus, peace be upon him, threw himself overboard, and the fish swallowed him and took him away, traveling through all the seas with him. When Yunus had stayed for some time in the fish's belly, he thought that he had died; then he moved his head and legs and arms, and saw that he was alive. He prayed in the belly of the fish, and one of the things he said in his main prayer was: "O Lord, I have taken as a place of worship to You a place which no other person has reached." They differed as to how long he spent in the belly of the fish. Some said three days; this was the view of Qatadah. Some said seven days; this was the view of Ja`far As-Sadiq, may Allah be pleased with him. Some said forty days; this was the view of Abu Malik. Mujahid said, narrating from Ash-Sha`bi, "It swallowed him in the morning and cast him forth in the evening." And Allah knows best how long exactly was. Allah says,

(قُلُوبًا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ - لَلْبَيْتِ فِي بَطْنِهِ
إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُونَ)

(Had he not been of them who glorify Allah, He would have indeed remained inside its belly (the fish) till the Day of Resurrection.) It was said that, if he had not already done righteous deeds during his time of ease. This was the view of Ad-Dahhak bin Qays, Abu Al-`Aliyah, Wahb bin Munabbih, Qatadah and others, and it was the view favored by Ibn Jarir. This is what is indicated in the authentic Hadith which we quote below, if Allah wills. In a Hadith narrated from Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, he said:

«تَعَرَّفَ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِي الرَّخَاءِ، يَعْرِفُكَ فِي الشَّدَّةِ»

(Remember Allah during times of ease and He will remember you during times of difficulty.) And it was said that what was meant by the Ayah:

(قُلُوبًا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ)

(Had he not been of them who glorify Allah,) was the meaning of the following Ayat:

(فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلْمَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ
إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ)
(فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنَجِّي
المُؤْمِنِينَ)

(But he cried through the darkness (saying): "La ilaha illa Anta, You are glorified! Truly, I have been of the wrongdoers." So We answered his call, and delivered him from the distress. And thus We do deliver the believers.) (21:87-88). This was the view of Sa`id bin Jubayr and others. Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that Anas bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him -- and I do not know of anything narrated from Anas that he did not attribute to the Messenger of Allah :

«إِنَّ يُونُسَ النَّبِيَّ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ حِينَ بَدَأَ
لَهُ أَنْ يَدْعُوَ بِهَذِهِ الكَلِمَاتِ وَهُوَ فِي بَطْنِ الحُوتِ
فَقَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ
الظَّالِمِينَ، فَأَقْبَلَتْ الدَّعْوَةَ تَحْفًا بِالْعَرْشِ، قَالَتْ
المَلَائِكَةُ: يَا رَبِّ هَذَا صَوْتُ ضَعِيفٍ مَعْرُوفٍ
مِنْ بِلَادٍ بَعِيدَةٍ غَرِيبَةٍ فَقَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى: أَمَا
تَعْرِفُونَ ذَلِكَ؟ قَالُوا: يَا رَبِّ وَمَنْ هُوَ؟ قَالَ عَزَّ
وَجَلَّ: عَبْدِي يُونُسُ، قَالُوا: عَبْدُكَ يُونُسُ الَّذِي لَمْ
يَزَلْ يُرْفَعُ لَهُ عَمَلٌ مُتَقَبَّلٌ وَدَعْوَةٌ مُسْتَجَابَةٌ؟
قَالُوا: يَا رَبِّ أَوْلَا تَرْحَمُ مَا كَانَ يَصْنَعُ فِي
الرِّخَاءِ فَنُنَجِّيهِ فِي البَلَاءِ، قَالَ: بَلَى، فَأَمَرَ
الحُوتَ فَطَرَحَهُ بِالْعَرَاءِ»

(When it occurred to the Prophet Yunus, upon him be peace, to call upon Allah in these words when he was in the belly of the great fish, he said, "La ilaha illa Anta, Yo are glorified! Truly, I have been of the wrongdoers." This call went and hovered around the (mighty) Throne, and the angels said, "O Lord, this is the voice of one who is weak but known, in a faraway strange land. Allah, may He be exalted, said, "How do you know this" They said, "O Lord, who is he" Allah, may He be exalted, said, "My servant Yunus." They said, "Your servant Yunus, from whom there kept coming acceptable deeds and supplications which were answered!" They said, "O Lord, will You not have mercy on him for what he did during his time of ease, and save him from this trial and tribulation" He said, "Of course." So, He commanded the great fish, and it cast him forth on the naked shore.) Allah says:

(فَنَبَذْنَاهُ)

(But We cast him forth) meaning, `We threw him out,'

(بِالْعُرَّاءِ)

(on the naked shore) Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, and others said that this refers to land in which there is no vegetation and no buildings.

(وَهُوَ سَقِيمٌ)

(while he was sick,) means, when he was weak of body.

(وَأَنْبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَقْطِينٍ)

(And We caused a plant of gourd to grow over him.) Ibn Mas`ud and Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them both, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Sa`id bin Jubayr, Wahb bin Munabbih, Hilal bin Yasaf, `Abdullah bin Tawus, As-Suddi, Qatadah, Ad-Dahhak, `Ata' Al-Khurasani and several others, all said that gourd means squash. Some of them mentioned that the squash has a number of benefits: it grows quickly, its leaves offer shade because of their large size and smooth texture, flies do not come near it, and its fruits provide good nourishment; they may be eaten raw or cooked, and both the pulp and the peel may be eaten. It was reported that the Messenger of Allah used to like squash and would look for it wherever it was on the serving dish.

(وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَى مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ)

(And We sent him to a hundred thousand (people) or even more.) It is as if he was commanded, after he came forth from the fish, to go back to those to whom he had been sent in the first place, and they all believed in him.

(أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ)

(or even more.) Makhul said, "They numbered one hundred and ten thousand. This was reported by Ibn Abi Hatim. Ibn Jarir said, "Some of the scholars of Arabic, the people of Basrah, said that this means up to one hundred thousand or more." Ibn Jarir interpreted this Ayah as he interpreted the Ayat:

(ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً)

(Then, after that, your hearts were hardened and became as stones or even worse in hardness) (2:74).

(إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَخْشَوْنَ النَّاسَ كَخَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَشَدَّ خَشْيَةً)

(Behold! a section of them fear men as they fear Allah or even more) (4:77), and

(فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ)

(And was at a distance of two bows' length or (even) nearer) (53:9). The meaning is, not less than that, but rather more.

(فَآمَنُوا)

(And they believed;) means, these people to whom Yunus, peace be upon him, had been sent all believed.

(فَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ)

(so We gave them enjoyment for a while.) means, until the time of their appointed end. This is like the Ayah,

(فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ ءَامَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَّا ءَامَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ)

(Was there any town (community) that believed, and its faith (at that moment) saved it -- except the people of Yunus; when they believed, We removed from them the torment of disgrace in the life of the (present) world, and permitted them to enjoy for a while.) (10:98)

فَاسْتَفْتِهِمُ أَلِرَبِّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ الْبَنُونَ - أَمْ خَلَقْنَا
الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنثًا وَهُمْ شَاهِدُونَ - أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ مِّنْ إِفْكِهِمْ
لَيَقُولُونَ - وَادَّ اللَّهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ - أَصْطَفَى
الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِينَ مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ أَفَلَا
تَذَكَّرُونَ أَمْ لَكُمْ سُلْطٰنٌ مُّبِينٌ فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابِكُمْ إِن
كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَبًا وَلَقَدْ
عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ إِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ)

(سُبْحٰنَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ
الْمُخْلِصِينَ)

(149. Now ask them: "Are there (only) daughters for your Lord and sons for them") (150. Or did We create the angels female while they were witnesses) (151. Verily, it is of their falsehood that they say:) (152. "Allah has begotten." And, verily, they are liars!) (153. Has He (then) chosen daughters rather than sons) (154. What is the matter with you How do you decide) (155. Will you not then remember) (156. Or is there for you a plain authority) (157. Then bring your Book if you are truthful!) (158. And they have invented a kinship between Him and the Jinn, but the Jinn know well that they have indeed to appear (before Him).) (159. Glorified be Allah! (He is free) from what they attribute unto Him!) (160. Except the servants of Allah, whom He chooses.)

Refutation of Those Who attribute Children to Allah and say that the Angels are His Daughters

Allah denounces those idolators who attribute daughters to Allah -- exalted be He above that -- and attributed to themselves what they desired, i.e., they wanted male offspring to themselves.

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا
وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ)

(And when the news of (the birth of) a female (child) is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with inward grief!) (16:58), i.e., that upsets him, and he would only choose sons for himself. Allah says: `Then how can they attribute to Allah the share that they would not choose for themselves' Allah says:

(فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ)

(Now ask them) means, quiz them by way of denunciation,

(الرَّبِّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ الْبُيُوتُ)

(Are there (only) daughters for your Lord and sons for them) This is like the Ayah:

(الْكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ - تِلْكَ إِذًا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰ
(

(Is it for you the males and for Him the females That indeed is a division most unfair!) (53:21-22).

(أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنثًا وَهُمْ شَاهِدُونَ)

(Or did We create the angels female while they were witnesses) means, how did they decide that the angels are female when they did not witness their creation This is like the Ayah:

(وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنثًا
أَشْهَدُوا خَلَقَهُمْ سُبُكَّتَبُ شَهِدَتْهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ)

(And they make the angels females who themselves are servants of the Most Gracious. Did they witness their creation Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned!) (43:19), which means, they will be questioned about that on the Day of Resurrection.

(أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ مِّنْ أَفْكَهَمُ)

(Verily, it is of their falsehood) means, it is a part of the lies they tell.

(لَيَقُولُونَ وَلَدَ اللَّهِ)

(that they say: "Allah has begotten.") meaning, that offspring have been born to Him.

(وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ)

(And verily, they are liars!) Allah mentions three of the things they said about the angels, which formed the utmost disbelief and falsehood. They said that they were the daughters of Allah and that Allah had offspring -- exalted and sanctified be He above that. Then they made these offspring female, then they worshipped them instead of Allah, exalted and sanctified be He -- any of which on its own would be sufficient to condemn them to spend eternity in Hell. Then Allah says, denouncing them:

(أَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِينَ)

(Has He (then) chosen daughters rather than sons) meaning, what would make Him choose daughters rather than sons This is like the Ayah,

(أَفَأَصْفَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنَاثًا
إِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُولُونَ قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا)

(Has then your Lord preferred for you sons, and taken for Himself from among the angels daughters Verily, you indeed utter an awful saying.) (17:40) Allah says:

(مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ)

(What is the matter with you How do you decide) meaning, `what kind of reasoning makes you say that'

(أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ - أَمْ لَكُمْ سُلْطٰنٌ مُّبِينٌ)

(Will you not then remember Or is there for you a plain authority) means, `evidence to prove what you say.'

(فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابِكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ)

(Then bring your Book if you are truthful!) means, `produce evidence for that derived from a Book revealed from heaven by Allah, to prove that He has taken what you say (i.e., offspring). What you say is totally irrational.'

(وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَبًا)

(And they have invented a kinship between Him and the Jinn,) Mujahid said, "The idolators said that the angels were the daughters of Allah. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said, 'Then who are their mothers' They said, 'The daughters of the leaders of the Jinn.'" Qatadah and Ibn Zayd also said this. Allah -- may He be blessed and exalted -- says:

(وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ)

(but the jinn know) meaning, those to whom this is attributed

(إِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ)

(know well that they have indeed to appear (before Him).) means, that those who say that will be brought forth for punishment on the Day of Reckoning, because of the lies and falsehood that they uttered without knowledge.

(سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ)

(Glorified be Allah! (He is free) from what they attribute unto Him!) means, exalted, sanctified and glorified be He far above having any offspring and far above what the wrongdoers and heretics attribute to Him.

(إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ)

(Except the servants of Allah, whom He chooses.) The pronoun in the verb translated as "they attribute" refers to all of mankind, then He excludes those whom He chooses, who are the ones who follow the truth revealed to every Prophet who was sent.

(فَإِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ - مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ بِفَتْنَيْنِ - إِلَّا
مَنْ هُوَ صَالِ الْجَحِيمِ - وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ
مَعْلُومٌ - وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّاقِقُونَ - وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ
الْمُسَبِّحُونَ - وَإِن كَانُوا لَيَقُولُونَ - لَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدَنَا
ذِكْرًا مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ)

لَكُنَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ - فَكَفَرُوا بِهِ فَسَوْفَ
يَعْلَمُونَ -)

(161. So, verily you and those whom you worship) (162. Cannot lead astray,) (163. Except those who are predestined to burn in Hell!) (164. And there is not one of us (angels) but has his known place;) (165. And verily, we (angels), we stand in rows;) (166. And verily, we (angels) indeed are those who glorify.) (167. And indeed they used to say:) (168. "If we had a reminder as had the men of old,") (169. "We would have indeed been the chosen servants of Allah!") (170. But (now) they disbelieve therein, so they will come to know!)

No One believes what the Idolators say except Those Who are even more misguided than They

Allah says, addressing the idolators:

(فَأَيُّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ - مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ بِفِتْنِينَ - إِلَّا
مَنْ هُوَ صَالِ الْجَحِيمِ)

(So, verily you and those whom you worship cannot lead astray, except those who are predestined to burn in Hell!) meaning, 'the only ones who will believe what you say and follow your misguided ways of false worship are those who are more misguided than you and are created for Hell.'

(لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَّا
يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَّا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ
كَالْأَنْعَمِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ)

(They have hearts wherewith they understand not, and they have eyes wherewith they see not, and they have ears wherewith they hear not (the truth). They are like cattle, nay even more astray; those! They are the heedless ones.) (7:179). This is the parable of the people who follow the belief and ideas of Shirk, disbelief and misguidance, as Allah says:

(إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ - يُؤَفِّكُ عَنْهُ مَنَ أَفِكَ)

(Certainly, you have different ideas. Turned aside therefrom is he who is turned aside (by the decree of Allah).) (51:8-9) meaning, the one who is misled by it is the one who is turned aside.

The Place of the Angels and Their Ranks glorify Allah

Then Allah says, declaring the angels to be above the position attributed to them by those who disbelieved in them and told lies about them -- that they are the daughters of Allah --

(وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ)

(And there is not one of us (angels) but has his known place;) meaning, each one has his own place in the heavens and in the places of worship, which he does not overstep. Ad-Dahhak said in his Tafsir:

(وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ)

"(And there is not one of us (angels) but has his known place;) Masruq used to narrate that `A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said, `The Messenger of Allah said:

«مَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا مَوْضِعٌ إِلَّا عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ
سَاجِدٌ أَوْ قَائِمٌ»

(There is no place in the lower heaven without an angel standing or prostrating in it.) This is what Allah says:

(وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ)

(And there is not one of us (angels) but has his known place (or position))." It was reported that Ibn Mas`ud said, "In the heavens there is one heaven in which there is no space a hand span wide but there is the forehead or the foot of an angel on it. " Then he recited:

(وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ)

(And there is not one of us (angels) but has his known place;) Sa`id bin Jubayr similarly said:

(وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّاقُونَ)

(And we (angels), we stand in rows.) means, we stand in rows to worship, as we have already seen in the Ayah

(وَالصَّفَّتِ صَفًّا)

(By those ranged in ranks (or rows)) Abu Nadrah said, "When the Iqamah had been given, `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would turn to face the people and say: `Make your rows straight, for Allah wants you to follow the ways of the angels.' Then he would say,

(وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّاقُونَ)

(And verily, we stand in rows;) `Move back, O so-and-so, move forward, O so-and-so.' Then he would go forward and say `Allahu Akbar'" This was recorded by Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Jarir. In Sahih Muslim it is narrated that Hudhayfah, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "The Messenger of Allah said,

«فُضِّلْنَا عَلَى النَّاسِ بِثَلَاثٍ: جُعِلَتْ صُفُوفُنَا
كَصُفُوفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَجُعِلَتْ لَنَا الْأَرْضُ مَسْجِدًا،
وَتُرْبَتُهَا طَهُورًا»

(We have been favored above mankind in three things: our rows have been made like the rows of the angels; the whole earth has been made a place of prayer for us; and its soil is a means of purification for us.)"

(وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَبِّحُونَ)

(And verily, we indeed are those who glorify.) means, `we stand in rows and glorify the Lord, praising Him, sanctifying Him and declaring Him to be above any faults or shortcomings. We are servants of Him and in need of Him, humbling ourselves before Him.'

**The Quraysh wished that They could have a Reminder as had the
Men of old**

(وَإِنْ كَانُوا لَيَقُولُونَ - لَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدَنَا ذِكْرًا مِّنَ
الْأَوَّلِينَ)

(لَكُنَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ-)

(And indeed they used to say: "If we had a reminder as had the men of old, we would have indeed been the chosen servants of Allah!") means, `they used to wish -- before you, O Muhammad, came to them -- that they would have someone to remind them about Allah and what happened in earlier times, and to bring them the Book of Allah.' This is like the Ayat:

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

(And they swore by Allah their most binding oath that if a warner came to them, they would be more guided than any of the nations (before them); yet when a warner came to them, it increased in them naught but flight (from the truth).) (35:42), and

(أَنْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابُ عَلَي طَائِفَتَيْنِ مِنْ
 قَبْلِنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ دِرَاسَتِهِمْ لَغَافِلِينَ - أَوْ تَقُولُوا
 لَوْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لَكُنَّا أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمْ فَقَدْ
 جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَهَدَىٰ وَرَحْمَةً فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ
 مِمَّنْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَصَدَفَ عَنْهَا سَنَجْزِي
 الَّذِينَ يَصْدِفُونَ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا
 يَصْدِفُونَ)

(Lest you should say: "The Book was sent down only to two sects before us, and for our part, we were in fact unaware of what they studied." Or lest you should say: "If only the Book had been sent down to us, we would surely have been better guided than they." So now has come unto you a clear proof from your Lord, and a form of guidance and a mercy. Who then does more wrong than one who rejects the Ayat of Allah and turns away therefrom We shall requite those who turn away from Our Ayat with an evil torment, because of their turning away.) (6:156-157)
 Allah says here:

(فَكَفَرُوا بِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ)

(But they disbelieve therein, so they will come to know!) This is a definite and stern threat because of their disbelief in their Lord and their rejection of His Messenger .

(وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِينَ - إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ
 الْمَنْصُورُونَ - وَإِنَّ جُنَدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ - فَتَوَلَّ

عَنَّهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ - وَأَبْصِرْ هُمْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ
أَفْبِعَادَانَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَاءَ
صَبَاحُ الْمُنذَرِينَ وَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ)
(وَأَبْصِرْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ)

(171. And, verily, Our Word has gone forth of old for Our servants, the Messengers,) (172. That they verily would be made triumphant,) (173. And that Our hosts! they verily would be the victors.) (174. So, turn away from them for a while,) (175. And watch them and they shall see!) (176. Do they seek to hasten on Our torment) (177. Then, when it descends in their courtyard, evil will be the morning for those who had warned!) (178. So, turn away from them for a while,) (179. And watch and they shall see!)

The Promise of Victory and the Command to turn away from Idolators

Allah says,

(وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِينَ)

(And, verily, Our Word has gone forth of old for Our servants, the Messengers,) meaning, it has already been stated in the first decree that the Messengers and their followers will ultimately prevail in this world and the Hereafter. This is like the Ayah:

(كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ
عَزِيزٌ)

(Allah has decreed: "Verily, it is I and My Messengers who shall be the victorious." Verily, Allah is All-Powerful, Almighty.) (58:21), and

(إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهُدُ)

(Verily, We will indeed make victorious Our Messengers and those who believe in this world's life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth.) (40:51).

وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِينَ - إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ
الْمَنْصُورُونَ)

(And, verily, Our Word has gone forth of old for Our servants, the Messengers, that they verily would be made triumphant,) meaning, `in this world and in the Hereafter, as We have already stated that they would prevail over their people who disbelieved in them and went against them, and how Allah destroyed the disbelievers and saved His believing servants. '

(وَإِنَّ جُنَدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ)

(And that Our hosts they verily would be the victors.) means, that they would ultimately prevail.

(فَقُولْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ)

(So turn away from them for a while,) means, `bear their annoyance with patience and wait until an appointed time, when We shall cause you to prevail and will grant you victory.'

(وَأَبْصِرْهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ)

(And watch them and they shall see!) means, `watch them and see what will happen to them by way of punishment for their opposition towards you and their disbelief in you.' Allah said, as a threat and a warning,

(فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ)

(and they shall see!). Then Allah says:

(أَفِعْدَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ)

(Do they seek to hasten on Our torment) meaning, `they seek to hasten on the punishment because they disbelieve in you, and Allah is angry with them because of that and will make them suffer the consequences, and because of their disbelief and stubbornness, He will hasten on the punishment.'

(فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَاءَ صَبَاحُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ)

(Then, when it descends in their courtyard, evil will be the morning for those who had been warned!) means, when the punishment comes down to the place where they are, terrible will be the day of their punishment and destruction. As-Suddi said:

(فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ)

(Then, when it descends in their courtyard,) means, in their homes;

(فَسَاءَ صَبَاحُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ)

(evil will be the morning for those who had been warned!) means, how terrible that morning will be for them. It was reported in the Two Sahihs that Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "On the morning of Khaybar, when the people came out with their tools (to go about their daily work) and saw the (Muslim) army, they went back and said, 'Muhammad by Allah! Muhammad and the army!' The Prophet said:

«اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، خَرِبَتْ خَيْبَرُ، إِنَّا إِذَا نَزَلْنَا بِسَاحَةِ قَوْمٍ فَسَاءَ صَبَاحُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ»

(Allahu Akbar! Khaybar has been destroyed. Then, when it descends in the courtyard of any people, evil will be the morning for those who had been warned!)"

(وَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ وَأَبْصِرْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ-)

(So turn away from them for a while, and watch and they shall see!) This is a reiteration of the command stated above. And Allah knows best.

(سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ-)

(180. Glorified be your Lord, the Lord of Al-'Izzah! (He is free) from what they attribute unto Him!) (181. And Salam (peace!) be on the Messengers!) (182. And all the praises and thanks be to Allah, Lord of all that exists.)

Allah glorified Himself and states that He is far above what the lying wrongdoers say about Him; glorified and sanctified and exalted be He far above what they say.

Allah says:

(سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ)

(Glorified be your Lord, the Lord of Al-`Izzah!) meaning, the Owner of might and power Whom none can resist.

(عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ)

((He is free) from what they attribute unto Him!) means, from what these lying fabricators say.

(وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ)

(And Salam be on the Messengers!) means, may the peace of Allah be upon them in this world and in the Hereafter, because what they say about their Lord is sound, correct and true.

(وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ)

(And all the praises and thanks be to Allah, Lord of all that exists.) means, praise be to Him at the beginning and end of all things. Because Tasbih (glorification) implies a declaration of being free from all shortcomings, the two ideas appear together here and in many places in the Qur'an. Allah says:

(سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ- وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ-)

(Glorified be your Lord, the Lord of Al-`Izzah! (He is free) from what they attribute unto Him! And Salam (peace!) be on the Messengers! And all the praises and thanks be to Allah, Lord of all that exists.) Sa`id bin Abi `Arubah narrated that Qatadah said, "The Messenger of Allah said:

«إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ عَلَيَّ، فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ، فَإِنَّا رَسُولٌ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ»

(When you send Salam on me, send Salam on all the Messengers, for I am one of the Messengers.)" This was recorded by Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim. Abu Muhammad Al-Baghawi recorded in his Tafsir that `Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "Whoever wants a greater measure of reward on the Day of Resurrection, let him say at the end of any gathering,

(سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ- وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ-)

(Glorified be your Lord, the Lord of honor, glory and power! (He is free) from what they attribute unto Him! And Salam (peace!) be on the Messengers! And all the praises and thanks

be to Allah, Lord of all that exists)." Other Hadiths concerning the expiation for any wrongs that may have occurred during a gathering prescribe saying the words: "Glory be to You, O Allah, and praise. There is no God except You; I seek your forgiveness and I repent to you. " I have written a chapter dealing exclusively with this topic. This is the end of the Tafsir of Surat As-Saffat. And Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, knows best.

The Tafsir of Surah Sad

(Chapter - 38)

Which was revealed in Makkah

(بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ)

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

(ص وَالْقُرْءَانَ ذِي الدُّكْرِ - بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي
عِزَّةٍ وَشِقَاقٍ - كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ
فَنَادَوْا وَوَلَّاتٍ حِينٍ مِّنَاصٍ)

(1. Sad. By the Qur'an full of reminding.) (2. Those who disbelieve are in false pride and opposition.) (3. How many a generation have We destroyed before them! And they cried out when there was no longer time for escape.) We have already discussed the separate letters in the the beginning of the Tafsir of Surat Al-Baqarah, and there is no need to repeat it here.

(وَالْقُرْءَانَ ذِي الدُّكْرِ)

(By the Qur'an full of reminding.) means, by the Qur'an which includes all that is in it as a reminder and a benefit to people in this life and the Hereafter. Ad-Dahhak said that the Ayah,

(ذِي الدُّكْرِ)

(full of reminding.) is like the Ayah,

(لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ)

(Indeed, We have sent down for you (O mankind) a Book in which there is Dhikrukum) (21:10). i.e., your reminder. This was also the view of Qatadah and of Ibn Jarir. Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, Sa`id bin Jubayr, Isma`il bin Abi Khalid, Ibn `Uyaynah, Abu Husayn, Abu Salih and As-Suddi said:

(ذِي الذِّكْرِ)

(full of reminding.) "Full of honor," i.e., of high standing. There is no contradiction between the two views, because it is a noble Book which includes reminders and leaves no excuse and brings warnings. The reason for this oath is to be found in the Ayah:

(إِنْ كُلُّ إِلَّا كَذَّبَ الرَّسُلَ فَحَقَّ عِقَابِ)

(Not one of them but denied the Messengers; therefore My torment was justified.) (38:14). Qatadah said, "The reason for it is to be found in the Ayah:

(بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي عِزَّةٍ وَشِقَاقِ)

(Nay, those who disbelieve are in false pride and opposition)." This was the view favored by Ibn Jarir.

(بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي عِزَّةٍ وَشِقَاقِ)

(Nay, those who disbelieve are in false pride and opposition.) means, in this Qur'an there is a reminder for those who will be reminded and a lesson for those who will learn a lesson, but the disbelievers will not benefit from it because they

(فِي عِزَّةٍ)

(are in false pride) meaning, arrogance and tribalism,

(وَشِقَاقِ)

(and opposition.) means, they are stubbornly opposed to it and go against it. Then Allah scares them with news of how the nations who came before them were destroyed because of their opposition to the Messengers and their disbelief in the Scriptures that were revealed from heaven. Allah says:

(كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ)

(How many a generation have We destroyed before them!) meaning, disbelieving nations.

(فَنَادَوْا)

(And they cried out) means, when the punishment came to them, they called for help and cried out to Allah, but that did not save them at all. This is like the Ayat:

(فَلَمَّا أَحَسُّوا بَأْسَنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَرْكُضُونَ - لَا تَرْكُضُوا وَارْجِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَا أَتْرَقْتُمْ فِيهِ وَمَسْكَنِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَسْأَلُونَ)

(Then, when they perceived (saw) Our torment, behold, they (tried to) flee from it. Flee not, but return to that wherein you lived a luxurious life, and to your homes, in order that you may be questioned.) (21:12-13). Abu Dawud At-Tayalisi recorded that At-Tamimi said, "I asked Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, about the Ayah:

(فَنَادُوا وَّلَاتَ حِينِ مَنَاصٍ)

(And they cried out when there was no longer time for escape.) He said that it was not the time for them to call or flee or escape. Muhammad bin Ka`b said, concerning the Ayah:

(فَنَادُوا وَّلَاتَ حِينِ مَنَاصٍ)

(And they cried out when there was no longer time for escape.) "They called for Tawhid when their lives were over, and they resorted to repentance when their lives were over." Qatadah said, "When they saw the punishment, they wanted to repent when there was no longer time to call out." Mujahid said:

(فَنَادُوا وَّلَاتَ حِينِ مَنَاصٍ)

(And they cried out when there was no longer time for escape.) "It was not the time to flee or escape." Allah says:

(وَّلَاتَ حِينِ مَنَاصٍ)

(when there was no longer time for escape.) meaning, there was no time to escape or run away; and Allah knows best.

(وَعَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ وَقَالَ الْكٰفِرُونَ هَذَا سِحْرٌ كَذٰبٌ - أَجَعَلَ الْاٰلِهَةَ اِلٰهًا وَّحِدًا اِنْ هٰذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجَابٌ - وَاَنْطَلَقَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ مِنْهُمْ اَنْ اَمْشُوا وَاَصْبِرُوا عَلٰٓى اٰلِهَتِكُمْ اِنْ هٰذَا لَشَيْءٌ

يُرَادُ - مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهِذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْأُخْرَةِ إِنَّ هَذَا
 إِلَّا اخْتِلَاقٌ - أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُمْ
 فِي شَكٍّ مِّنْ ذِكْرِي بَلْ لَمَّا يَدُوقُوا عَذَابَ - أَمْ
 عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّكَ الْعَزِيزِ الْوَهَّابِ - أَمْ
 لَهُمْ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَلْيَرْتَقُوا
 فِي الْأَسْبَابِ - جُنْدٌ مَّا هُنَالِكَ مَهْزُومٌ مِّنْ
 الْأَحْزَابِ)

(4. And they wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves. And the disbelievers say: "This is a sorcerer, a liar.") (5. "Has he made the gods into One God. Verily, this is a curious thing!") (6. And the leaders among them went about (saying): "Go on, and remain constant to your gods! Verily, this is a thing designed!") (7. "We have not heard (the like) of this in the religion of these later days. This is nothing but an invention!") (8. "Has the Reminder been sent down to him (alone) from among us" Nay, but they are in doubt about My Reminder! Nay, but they have not tasted (My) torment!) (9. Or have they the treasures of the mercy of your Lord, the Almighty, the Real Bestower) (10. Or is it that the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them is theirs If so, let them ascend up with means!) (11. They will be a defeated host like the Confederates of the old times.)

The Idolators were amazed at the Message, Tawhid and the Qur'an

Allah tells us that the idolators wondered at the sending of the Messenger of Allah as a bringer of glad tidings and a warner. This is like the Ayah:

(أَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَنْ
 أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ
 صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ
 مُّبِينٌ)

(Is it a wonder for mankind that We have sent Our revelation to a man from among themselves (saying): "Warn mankind, and give good news to those who believe that they shall have with their Lord the rewards of their good deeds" (But) the disbelievers say: "This is indeed an evident sorcerer!") (10:2). And Allah says here:

(وَعَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ)

(And they wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves.) meaning, a human being like themselves.

(وَقَالَ الْكٰفِرُونَ هٰذَا سِحْرٌ كَذٰبٌ اٰجَعَلَ الْاٰلِهَةَ
اِلٰهًا وَّحِدًا)

(And the disbelievers said: "This is a sorcerer, a liar. Has he made the gods into One God") meaning, does he claim that the One Who is to worshipped is One and there is no god besides Him The idolators -- may Allah curse them -- denounced that and were amazed at the idea of giving up Shirk, because they had learned from their forefathers to worship idols and their hearts were filled with love for that. When the Messenger called them to rid their hearts of that and to worship Allah Alone, this was too much for them and they were astounded by it. They said:

(اٰجَعَلَ الْاٰلِهَةَ اِلٰهًا وَّحِدًا اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجَابٌ
وَاَنْطَلَقَ الْمَلَا مِنْهُمْ)

("Has he made the gods into One God Verily, this is a curious thing!" And the leaders among them went about) meaning the chiefs and masters and nobles,

(امشوا)

((saying): "Go on...") meaning, `persist in your religion,'

(وَاَصْبِرُوا عَلٰى اِلٰهَتِكُمْ)

(and remain constant to your gods!), meaning, `do not respond to Muhammad's call to Tawhid.'

(اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَيْءٌ يُرَادُ)

(Verily, this is a thing designed!) Ibn Jarir said, "The Tawhid to which Muhammad is calling you is something by which he wishes to gain power over you, and exalt his own position, so that he will have followers among you, but we will not respond to him."

The Reason for the Revelation of These Ayat

Abu Ja`far bin Jarir recorded that Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "When Abu Talib fell sick, some of the people of the Quraysh, including Abu Jahl, entered upon him and said, `Your brother's son is insulting our gods; he does such and such and says such and such. Why don't you send for him and tell him not to do that' So he sent for the Prophet and he entered the house. There was space enough for one man to sit between them and Abu Talib, and Abu Jahl, may Allah curse him, was afraid that if)the Prophet (were to sit beside Abu Talib he would be more lenient with him, so he jumped up and sat in that spot, and the Messenger of Allah could find nowhere to sit near his uncle, so he sat by the door. Abu Talib said to him, `O son of my brother, why are your people complaining about you and claiming that you insult their gods and say such and such' They made so many complaints against him. Thereupon, he said,

«يَا عَمَّ إِنِّي أُرِيدُهُمْ عَلَى كَلِمَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ يَقُولُونَهَا
تَدِينُ لَهُمْ بِهَا الْعَرَبُ، وَتُؤَدِّي إِلَيْهِمْ بِهَا الْعَجَمُ
الْحِزْيَةَ»

(O uncle, all I want from them is one word which, if they say it, the Arabs will become their followers and the non-Arabs will pay Jizyah to them.) They were worried about what he said, so they said, `One word Yes, by your father, (we will say) ten words! What is it' Abu Talib said, `What word is it, O son of my brother' He said,

«لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ»

(La ilaha illallah.) They stood up in agitation, brushing down their clothes, saying,

(أَجَعَلَ الْأَلِهَةَ إِلَهًا وَحِدًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجَابٌ
(

(Has he made the gods into One God. Verily, this is a curious thing!) Then this passage was revealed, from this Ayah to the Ayah:

(بَلْ لَمَّا يَدُوقُوا عَذَابِ)

(Nay, but they have not tasted (My) torment!)" This is the wording of Abu Kurayb. Something similar was also recorded by Imam Ahmad and An-Nasa'i, and At-Tirmidhi said, "Hasan."

(مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْأُخْرَةِ)

(We have not heard (the like) of this in the religion of these later days.) means, `we have not heard anything like this Tawhid to which Muhammad calls us in the religion of these later days.' Al-`Awfi reported that Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "We have not heard

of this from the religion of these later days (meaning Christianity); if this Qur'an were true, the Christians would have told us about it."

(إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا اخْتِلَاقٌ)

(This is nothing but an invention!) Mujahid and Qatadah said, "A lie." Ibn `Abbas said, "A fabrication."

(أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا)

(Has the Reminder been sent down to him (alone) from among us) They thought it unlikely that he would be singled out from among them to receive the Qur'an. This is like the Ayat:

(لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ)

(And they say: "Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some great man of the two towns") (43:31). Allah said:

(أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَةَ رَبِّكَ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَّعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ)

(Is it they who would portion out the mercy of your Lord It is We Who portion out between them their livelihood in this world, and We raised some of them above others in ranks) (43:32). When they said this, it indicated their ignorance and lack of understanding since they thought it was unlikely that the Qur'an would be revealed to the Messenger and not to somebody else.

(بَلْ لَّمَّا يَدُوفُوا عَذَابٍ)

(Nay, but they have not tasted (My) torment!) means, they say this because they have not yet tasted the punishment and vengeance of Allah. But they will come to know the consequences of what they say and what they rejected on the Day when they are herded into the fire of Hell. Then Allah points out that He is the One Who is in control of His Creation and Who does whatever He wills, Who gives whatever He wants to whomever He wants, and honors whomever He wants and humiliates whomever He wants, and guides whomever He wants and misguides whomever He wants, and sends the Ruh (Jibril) by His command upon whomsoever He wants among His servants, and seals the hearts of whomever He wants, so no one can guide him apart from Allah. His servants do not possess any power and have no control over His dominion, not even a speck of dust's weight; they do not possess even a thin membrane over a date stone. Allah says, denouncing them: