

SPREAD KNOWLEDGE

THE
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 36
SURAH YA-SIN

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

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HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

036

SURAH YA-SIN

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Introduction and Summary

See Introduction to Surah 34. This particular Surah is devoted to the Holy Prophet and the Revelation which he brought. The Abbreviated Letters *Ya Sin* are usually construed as a title of the Holy Prophet. But it is not permissible to be dogmatic about the meaning of Abbreviated Letters. See Appendix I after Surah 2.

This Surah is considered to be "the heart of the Quran", as it concerns the central figure in the teaching of Islam and the central doctrine of Revelation and Hereafter. As referring to the

Hereafter, it is appropriately read in solemn ceremonies after death.

In chronology it belongs to the middle or early Makkan period.

In Surah 37:130 (a cognate Surah) occurs the word Ilyasin; see n. 4115a.

Summary- The Quran is full of wisdom, and those are unfortunate who cannot profit by it: Parable of the City that defied-all but one-the Messengers of Grace and Mercy (36:1-32, C. 194).

Various Signs of Allah in nature and Revelation (36:33-50, and C. 195).

The Resurrection and the Hereafter (36:51-83, and C. 196).

C.194 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(37:1-32)

*The wisdom of Revelation-the Quran received
Through the Holy Prophet-is a guide
To the Straight Path, and a warning against
The terrible state in which the yokes
Of Sin enslave us. The righteous receive it
With joy, for they believe in the Hereafter.
Behold, there was once a City, to which
Came two righteous men with the Gospel of Truth,
But they were rejected and persecuted; they were joined
By a third. But the City refused to believe
Or to turn from inequity. Only one man was found
In its outskirts, to bear witness to Truth,
Faith, and Righteousness, and he did suffer
Martyrdom. He attained Peace, but mourned
For his people, in that they shut the gates*

*Of Salvation and Allah's Mercy on themselves.
Alas for man's short-sighted folly in defying
The Grace that would shield and deliver him!*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

یس (۱)

1. Ya Sin.

C3943. Some Commentators take **Ya** to be the vocative particle, and **Sin** to be the abbreviation of **Insan**, **Sin** being the only "Firm Letter" in the word. In that case it would be an address to man. "O man!"

But "man" in this connection is understood to mean the Leader of man, the noblest of mankind. Muhammad the Prophet of Allah. For this Surah deals mainly with the holy Prophet and his Message. But no dogmatic assertion can be made about the Abbreviated Letters, for which see [Appendix 1](#), following Surah 2.

Ya-Sin is usually treated as a title of the holy Prophet.

وَالْقُرْآنِ الْحَكِيمِ (۲)

2. By the Qur'án, full of Wisdom --

C3944. The best credentials of the holy Prophet are:

- the revelation which he brought ("the Quran"), and
- the heroic unselfish life which he led ("on a Straight Way").

The appeal is therefore made on the testimony of these two facts.

إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (۳)

3. Thou art indeed one of the messengers.

عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (۴)

4. On a Straight Way.

تَنْزِيلَ الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ (٥)

5. It is a Revelation sent down by (Him) the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

C3945. The **Revelation** again is characterized by two attributes which we find most helpful in contemplating about Allah.

- It has force and power:
for Allah is Exalted in Might and able to enforce His Will.
- And it brings a Message of hope and mercy;
for Allah is Most Merciful.

By its characteristics we know that the Quran is from Allah. (R).

لِنُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أُنذِرَ آبَاؤُهُمْ فَهُمْ غَافِلُونَ (٦)

6. In order that thou mayest admonish a people, whose fathers had **received** no admonition, and who therefore remain heedless (of the Signs of Allah).

C3946. The Quraish had received no Prophet before, and therefore one of themselves was made the vehicle for the universal Message to the whole world.

لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى أَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (٧)

7. The Word is proved true against the greater part of them; for they do not believe.

C3947. Cf. 7:30, and n. 1012; also 17:16, and n. 2193.

If people deliberately and obstinately refuse "**to believe**", i.e., to receive guidance and admonition, the result must be that Allah's grace and mercy are withdrawn from them. Their own perversity inevitably blocks up all channels for their correction.

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ أَغْلَالًا...

8. We have put yokes round their necks right up to their chins,

C3948. Man's misdeeds inevitably call forth the operation of Allah's Law. The result of man's willful disobedience is now described in a series of metaphors.

1. Refusal of Allah's Light means less and less freedom of action for man: the **yoke** of sin is fastened round man's neck, and it gets more and more tightened, right up to the chin.
2. The head is forced up and kept in a stiff position, so that the mind becomes befogged. Moral obliquity taints the intellect.

According to the Sanskrit proverb,

"When destruction comes near,
understanding is turned upside down."

According to the Latin proverb,

"Whom God wishes to destroy, He first
makes demented."

In other words, iniquity not only is folly, but leads deeper and deeper into folly, narrowness of vision, and blindness to the finer things of life.

3. Ibis state of deprivation of Grace leads to such a decline in spiritual vitality that the victim can neither progress nor turn back, as explained in the next verse.

... فَهِيَ إِلَى الْأَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ مُقْمَحُونَ (٨)

so that their heads are forced up (and they cannot see).

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا...

9. And We have put a bar in front of them and a bar behind them,

C3949. Their retreat is cut off and their progress is impossible. Further the Light that should come from above is cut off, so that they become totally devoid of any hope, and the last gleam of any spiritual understanding is extinguished in them.

... فَأَعَشَيْنَاهُمُ فُجُورَهُمْ لَا يَبْصُرُونَ (٩)

and further, We have covered them up; so that they cannot see.

وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (١٠)

10. The same is it to **them** whether thou admonish them or thou do not admonish them: they will not believe.

C3950. When the stage just described is reached, revelation or spiritual teaching ceases to have any value for them.

Why then preach?

The answer is given in the verses following.

إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ ...

11. Thou canst but admonish: such a one as follows the Message and fears the (Lord) Most Gracious,

C3951. Cf. 35:18.

As far as those are concerned, who have obstinately delivered themselves to evil, the preaching of Allah's Message has no appeal, because their own will shuts them out.

But there are others who are anxious to hear Allah's Message and receive Allah's grace. They love Allah and fear to offend against His holy Law, and their fear is not merely superficial but deep-seated: for while they do not yet see Allah, nor do other people see them, they have the same sense of Allah's presence as if they saw Him, and their religion is not a mere pose, "to be seen of men".

... بِالْغَيْبِ ...

unseen:

C3952. See n. 3902 to 35:18.

Unseen is here adverbial: their reverence for Allah is unaffected by the fact that they do not see Him, or that other people do not observe them, because their attitude arises out of a genuine love for Allah.

... فَبَشِّرْهُ بِمَغْفِرَةٍ وَأَجْرٍ كَرِيمٍ (١١)

give such a one, therefore, good tidings, of Forgiveness and a Reward most generous.

C3953. To such persons the Message of Allah comes as a gospel or good news: because it shows them the way of forgiveness for anything wrong in their past, and it gives them the promise of a full reward in the future,- generous beyond any deserts of their own, but arising out of Allah's unbounded Bounty.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى ...

12. Verily We shall give life to the dead,

C3954. All this is possible, because there is the assurance of a Hereafter, in which Allah will be all-in-all, and evil will no longer bestride the world, as the term of its respite wit] have expired.

... وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآتَاهُمْ ...

and We record that which they sent before and that which they leave behind,

C3955. Our deeds, good and bad, go to Allah before us. They will of course be brought to our account; but our account will also be swelled by the example we left behind us and the consequences of our deeds, that will come into play or continue to operate after our earthly life has ceased.

Our moral and spiritual responsibility is therefore much wider than as affects our own person.

... وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ (١٢)

and of all things have We taken account in a clear Book (of evidence).

C3956. Cf. 2:124 and n. 124.

All our account will be exactly preserved as in a book of record.

Section 2

وَأَضْرِبُ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ ...

13. Set forth to them, by way of a parable, the (story of) the Companions of the City.

C3957. Many of the classical Commentators have supposed that the City referred to was Antioch.

Now Antioch was one of the most important cities in North Syria in the first century of the Christian era. It was a Greek city founded by Seleucus Nicator, one of the successors of Alexander, about 300 B.C. in memory of his father Antiochus. It was close to the sea, and had its sea-port at Seleucia. Soon after Christ his disciples successfully preached there, and they "were called Christians first in Antioch": Acts, 11:26.

It afterwards became the seat of a most important Bishopric of the Christian Church.

In the story told here "**by way of a parable**", the City rejected the Message, and the City was destroyed: 36:29.

Following Ibn Kathir, I reject the identification with Antioch decisively. No name, or period, or place is mentioned in the text.

The significance of the story is in the lessons to be derived from it as a parable, for which see the next note. That is independent of name, time, or place.

... إِذْ جَاءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ (١٣)

Behold, there came messengers to it.

إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا...

14. When We (first) sent to them two messengers, they rejected them:

... فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ ...

but We strengthened them with a third:

C3958. Allah sends His messengers or teachers of Truth by ones and twos, and where the opposition is great and He considers it necessary, he supports them with others.

Their mission is divine, but they do not claim to be more than men. This is used by the unjust and the ungodly as if it were a reproach, whereas it should commend them

to men, for mankind is glorified by such commission and by Allah's Self-revelation.

The Message is clearly expressed in human language, but because it exposes all evil, men think it unlucky, as it checks their selfishness. It is often the poorest and most despised of mankind, from the outskirts or "farthest parts of the City", that accept the Message and are willing to work and die for it. The stiff-necked resist and accomplish their own destruction.

... فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ مُرْسَلُونَ (١٤)

they said, "Truly, we have been sent on a mission to you."

قَالُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلَنَا ...

15. The (people) said:

"Ye are only men like ourselves;

C3959. Cf. Acts, 14:15, where Paul and Barnabas say, in the city of Lystra near the modern Konia, "We also are men with like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities..."

... وَمَا أَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمَنُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ...

and (Allah) Most Gracious sends no sort of revelation:

C3960. They not only reject the mission of the particular messengers, but they deny the possibility of Allah's sending such mission.

Note how they convict themselves of inconsistency by using Allah's name "**Most Gracious**", even though they may mean it ironically!

... إِنَّ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَكْذِبُونَ (١٥)

Ye do nothing but lie."

قَالُوا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ لَمُرْسَلُونَ (١٦)

16. They said:

"Our Lord doth know that we have been sent on a mission to you:

C3961. Just as a Messenger whose credentials are doubted can refer to the authority granted by his Principal, as the highest proof of his mission, so these messengers of Allah invoke the authority of Allah in proof of their mission.

In effect they say: "The knowledge of Allah is perfect, and He knows that our mission is from Him; if you do not, it is your own misfortune." (R).

وَمَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ (١٧)

17. "And Our duty is only to proclaim the clear Message."

C3962. Then they proceed to explain what their mission is.

It is not to force them but to convince them. It is to proclaim openly and clearly Allah's Law, which they were breaking,-to denounce their sins and to show them the better path. If they were obstinate, it was their own loss. If they were rebellious against Allah, the punishment rested with Allah.

قَالُوا إِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَا بِكُمْ...

18. The (people) said:

"For us, We augur an evil omen from you:

C3963. Tair means a bird.

Like the Roman augurs, the Arabs had a superstition about deriving omens from birds.

Cf. the English word "auspicious", from the Latin avis, a bird, and specio, I see.

From **Tair** (bird) came **ta-taiyara**, or **ittaiyara**, to draw evil omens. Because the prophets of Allah denounced evil, the evil-doers thought that they brought ill-luck to them.

As a matter of fact any evil that happened to them was the result of their own Hi-deeds.

Cf. 7:131, where the Egyptians ascribed their calamities to the ill-luck brought by Moses:

and 27:47, where the Thamud ascribed ill-luck to the preaching of Salih.

... لئن لم تنتهوا لنرجمنكم ولنمسننكم منّا عذاباً أليماً (١٨)

if ye desist not, we will certainly stone you, and a grievous punishment indeed will be inflicted on you by us."

قَالُوا طَائِرُكُمْ مَعَكُمْ ...

19. They said:

"Your evil omens are with yourselves:

C3964. 'What ye call omens arise from your own ill-deeds. Do you suppose that a man who comes to warn you and teach you the better way brings you ill-luck?

Fie upon you!'

... أَيْنَ دُكْرُكُمْ...

(deem ye this an evil omen), if ye are admonished?

... بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ (١٩)

Nay, but ye are a people transgressing all bounds!"

C3965. To call Good evil and accuse of falsehood men of truth who come unselfishly to bring the message of the beneficent Mercy of Allah, is the very height of extravagance and transgression.

وَجَاءَ مِنْ أَقْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ يَسْعَى...

20. Then there came running, from the farthest part of the City, a man,

C3966. While the wealthy, influential, and fashionable men in the city were doubtful of Allah's providence and superstitiously believed in Chance and evil omens, the Truth was seen by a man in the outskirts of the City, a man held in low esteem by the arrogant. He had believed, and he wanted his City to believe.

So, in Arabia, when the arrogant chiefs of the Quraish exiled the holy Prophet, it was men from Madinah and from the outskirts, who welcomed him, believed in him, and supported his mission in every way.

... قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اَتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ (٢٠)

saying,

"O my people! obey the messengers:

اَتَّبِعُوا مَنْ لَّا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَجْرًا وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ (٢١)

21. "Obey those who ask no reward of you (for themselves), and who have themselves received Guidance.

C3967. Prophets do not seek their own advantage. They serve Allah and humanity. 'Their hope lies in the good pleasure of Allah, to Whose service they are devoted.

Cf. 10:72; 12:104; etc.

وَمَا لِي لَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي ...

22. "It would not be reasonable in me if I did not serve Him Who created me,

C3968. The argument throughout is that of intense personal conviction for the individual himself, coupled with an appeal to his people to follow that conviction and get the benefit of the spiritual satisfaction which he has himself achieved. He says in effect:

'how is it possible for me to do otherwise than to serve and adore my Maker?

I shall return to Him, and so will you, and all this applies to you as much as to me.'

Note how effective is the transition from the personal experience to the collective appeal.

... وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (٢٢)

and to Whom ye shall (all) be brought back.

أَأَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً ...

23. "Shall I take (other) gods besides Him?

... إِنَّ يُرِيدَنَّ الرَّحْمَنُ بَضْرًا ...

If (Allah) Most Gracious should intend some adversity for me,

C3969. The next plea is that for exclusive service to Allah.

'Suppose it were proper to worship other gods-Mammon, Self, or imaginary deities set up as idols,-yet of what benefit would that be?

All power is in Allah. In His universal Plan, He may think fit to give me some sorrow or punishment: would these subordinate deities be able to help me or intercede for me with Him?

Not at all. What use would they be?

In fact I should obviously be going astray,-wandering from the true Path.'

... لَا تُعْنِ عَلَيَّ شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُنْقِذُونَ (٢٣)

of no use whatever will be their intercession for me, nor can they deliver me.

إِنِّي إِذَا لَفِيَ ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ (٢٤)

24. "I would indeed, if I were to do so, be in manifest Error.

إِنِّي آمَنْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ...

25. "For me, I have faith in the Lord of you (all):

C3970. Again a transition from the assured personal conviction to the appeal to all to profit by the speaker's experience.

'I have found the fullest satisfaction for my soul in Allah. He is my God, but He is your God also. My experience can be yours also.

Will you not follow my advice, and prove for yourselves that the Lord is indeed good?'

... فَاسْمَعُونَ (٢٥)

listen, then, to me!"

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ ...

26. It was said: "Enter thou the Garden."

C3971. This godly and righteous man entered into the Garden.

Perhaps it is implied that he suffered martyrdom. But even then his thoughts were always with his People. He regretted their obstinacy and want of understanding, and wished even then that they might repent and obtain salvation, but they were obdurate and suffered for their sins as we learn from verses 28-29 below.

... قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ (٢٦)

He said:

"Ah me! would that my People knew (what I know)! --

بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ (٢٧)

27. "For that my Lord has granted me Forgiveness and has enrolled me among those held in honor!"

C3972. This man was just a simple honest soul, but he heard and obeyed the call of the prophets and obtained his spiritual desire for himself and did best to obtain salvation for his people.

For he loved his people and respected his ancestral traditions as far as they were good, but had no hesitation in accepting the new Light when it came to him. All his past was forgiven him and he was raised to dignity and honour in the Kingdom of Heaven.

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ جُنْدٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ...

28. And We sent not down against his People, after Him, any hosts from heaven,

... وَمَا كُنَّا مُنْزِلِينَ (٢٨)

nor was it needful for Us so to do.

إِنْ كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً ...

29. It was no more than a single mighty Blast, and behold!

C3973. Allah's Justice or Punishment does not necessarily come with pomp and circumstance, nor have the forces of human evil or wickedness the power to require the exertion of mighty spiritual forces to subdue them. **A single mighty Blast**-either the rumbling of an earthquake, or a great and violent wind-was sufficient in this case.

Cf. 11:67 and n. 1561 (which describes the fate of the Thamud; also. n. 3463 to 29:40).

... فَإِذَا هُمْ خَامِدُونَ (٢٩)

they were (like ashes) quenched and silent.

C3974. Cf. 21:15.

They had made a great deal of noise in their time, but they were reduced to silence, like spent ashes.

يَا حَسْرَةً عَلَى الْعِبَادِ...

30. Ah! alas for (My) servants!

... مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِّن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ (٣٠)

There comes not an messenger to them but they mock Him!

C3975. Cf. 6:10 and many other passages of similar import.

Ignorant men mock at Allah's prophets, or any one who takes Religion seriously. But they do not reflect that such levity reacts on themselves. Their own lives are ruined and they cease to count.

If they study history, they will see that countless generations were destroyed before them because they did not take Truth seriously and undermined the very basis of their individual and collective existence.

My servants is here equivalent to "men". Allah regrets the folly of men, especially as He cherishes them as His own servants.

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِّنَ الْقُرُونِ ...

31. See they not how many generations before them We destroyed?

... أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ (٣١)

Not to them will they return:

C3976. Not to them will they return.

What do the two pronouns them and they refer to?

Commentators and translators have construed them differently, and some of them evade the question. To my mind the best construction seems to be:

- the generations which we have destroyed before the people addressed ('do they not see?') will not be restored to the people addressed:
- generations (*qurn*) standing for the periods of prosperity and good fortune enjoyed by the ancestors. They have all been wiped out:
- they will never be restored, but all people will be brought before the Judgment-seat for giving an account of their deeds.

وَأَن كُلُّ لَمَّا جَمِيعٌ لَدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ (٣٢)

32. But each one of them all -- will be brought before Us (for judgment).

C.195 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(37:33-50)

*Are there not Signs enough around you
To bear witness to Allah, and His saving Grace?
The earth dies and revives; there are mysteries
Of Life and Sex, of Light and the Stars
And Planets in heaven, that follow
Their orbits by Law and in harmony!
There are ships and the modes of transport
By which man can conquer the forces
Around him with God-given Gifts!*

*Learn the Law of Goodness from them
And believe in the Hereafter; it will come
When least expected. Be prepared for Allah!*

Section 3

وَأَيَّةٌ لَهُمُ الْأَرْضُ الْمَيِّتَةُ...

33. A Sign for them is the earth that is dead;

C3977. Lest any one should say, 'if they are destroyed, how can they be brought before the Judgment-seat' a symbol is pointed to.

The earth is to all intents and purposes dead in the winter, but Allah revives it in the spring.

Cf. 2:164, 30:19, and many other passages to that effect.

... أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ (٣٣)

We do give it life, and produce grain therefrom, of which ye do eat.

وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ نَخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ...

34. And We produce therein orchards with date-palms and Vines,

C3978. Date-palms and vines stand as symbols for fruit-trees of all kinds, these being the characteristic fruits of Arabia. Grain was mentioned in the last verse; fruit is mentioned now.

All that is necessary for food and the satisfaction of the choicest palate is produced from what looks like inert soil, fertilised by rain and springs.

Here is wonderful evidence of the artistry and providence of Allah.

... وَقَفَّرْنَا فِيهَا مِنَ الْعُيُونِ (٣٤)

and We cause springs to gush forth therein.

لِيَأْكُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ ...

35. That they may enjoy the fruits of this (artistry):

C3979. Literally, eat (**akala**). Cf. 7:19, n. 1004 and 5:66, n. 776.

The same wide meaning of profit, satisfaction, and enjoyment may be attached to the word "eat" in verse 33 above.

... وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ ...

it was not their hands that made this:

C3980. Man may till the soil and sow the seed, but the productive forces of nature were not made by man's hands. They are the handiwork and artistry of Allah, and are evidence of Allah's providence for His creatures.

See [n. 3978](#) above.

... أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ (٣٥)

will they not then give thanks?

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا ...

36. Glory to Allah, Who created in pairs all things,

C3981. The mystery of sex runs through all creation,-in man, in animal life, in vegetable life, and possibly in other things of which we have no knowledge.

Then there are pairs of opposite forces in nature, e.g., positive and negative electricity, etc. The atom itself consists of a positively charged nucleus or proton, surrounded by negatively charged electrons.

The constitution of matter itself is thus referred to pairs of opposite energies.

... مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (٣٦)

that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they have no knowledge.

وَأَيُّهُ لَّهُمُ اللَّيْلُ...

37. And a Sign for them is the Night:

... نَسْلُخُ مِنْهُ النَّهَارَ فَإِذَا هُمْ مُظْلِمُونَ (٣٧)

We withdraw therefrom the Day, and behold they are plunged in darkness;

C3982. "Withdrawing the Day from the Night" is a striking phrase and very apt.

The Day or the Light is the positive thing. The Night or Darkness is merely negative. We cannot withdraw the negative. But if we withdraw the real thing, the positive, which filled the void, nothing is left but the void.

The whole of this section deals with Signs or Symbols,- things in the physical world around us, from which we can learn the deepest spiritual truths if we earnestly apply ourselves to them.

وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ...

38. And the Sun runs his course for a period determined for him:

C3983. Mustaqarr may mean:

- a limit of time, a period determined, as in 6:67, or
- a place of rest or quiescence; or
- a dwelling place, as in 2:36.

I think the first meaning is best applicable here; but some Commentators take the second meaning.

In that case the simile would be that of the sun running a race while he is visible to us, and taking a rest during the night to prepare himself to renew his race the following day. His stay with the antipodes appears to us as his period of rest.

... لَهَا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ (٣٨)

that is the decree of (Him), the exalted in Might, the All-Knowing.

وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرْنَا مَنَازِلَ ...

39. And the Moon -- We have measured for her mansions (to traverse)

C3984. The lunar stations are the 28 divisions of the Zodiac, which are supposed to mark the daily course of the moon in the heavens from the time of the new moon to the time when the moon fades away in her "inter-lunar swoon", an expressive phrase coined by the poet Shelley.

... حَتَّىٰ عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ (٣٩)

till she returns like the old (and withered) lower part of date-stalk.

C3985. 'Urjan: a raceme of dates or of a date-palm; or the base or lower part of the raceme. When it becomes old, it becomes yellow, dry, and withered, and curves up like a sickle. Hence the comparison with the sickle-like appearance of the new moon.

The moon runs through all her phases, increasing and decreasing, until she disappears, and then reappears as a little thin curve.

لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ...

40. It is not permitted to the Sun to catch up the Moon, nor can the Night outstrip the Day:

C3986. Though the sun and the moon both traverse the belt of the Zodiac, and their motions are different, they never catch up each other. When the sun and the moon are on the same side and on a line with the earth there is a solar eclipse, and when on opposite side in a line, there is a lunar eclipse, but there is no clash. Their Laws are fixed by Allah, and form the subject of study in astronomy.

Similarly Night and Day follow each other, but being opposites cannot coincide, a fit emblem of the opposition of Good and Evil, Truth and Falsehood: see also [n. 3982](#) above.

... وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ (٤٠)

each (just) swims along in (its own) orbit (according to Law).

C3987. Cf. 21:33, and n. 2695.

How beautifully the rounded courses of the planets and heavenly bodies are described, "**swimming**" through space, with perfectly smooth motion!

As Shakespeare expresses it,

each "in his motion like an angel sings, Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims!"

وَأَيَّةٌ لَهُمْ أَنَّا حَمَلْنَا دُرِّيَّتَهُمْ فِي الْفُلِّ الْمَشْحُونِ (٤١)

41. And a Sign for them is that We bore their race (through the flood) in the loaded Ark;

C3988. Besides the beauty of the Night, with the stars and the planets "swimming" in their rounded courses according to perfect Law, suggesting both symmetry and harmony, there are other Signs touching closely the life of man himself, projected through Time, in the past history of his race and in his own personal experience.

The past history of his race takes us to the story of the Flood, which is symbolical of Allah's justice and mercy. Noah's Ark was a "Sign to all People": 29:15.

Man's own personal experience is appealed to in every ship afloat:

see next note.

وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ مِّثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ (٤٢)

42. And We have created for them similar (vessels) on which they ride.

C3989. The stately ships sailing through the seas, heavier than air, yet carrying man and his goods safely and smoothly across the waters, are another Sign for man.

Ships are not mentioned, but (vessels) like the Ark: they would cover all kinds of sea-craft, but also the modern aircraft, which "swims" through air instead of through water.

وَإِنْ نَشَاءُ نُغْرِقْهُمْ فَلَا صَرِيحَ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْقَدُونَ (٤٣)

43. If it were Our Will, We could drown them; then would there be no helper (to hear their cry), nor could they be delivered.

C3990. Were it not that Allah gives man the intelligence and ingenuity to construct and manage sea-craft and air-craft, the natural laws of gravity would lead to the destruction of any who attempted to pass through sea or air. It is the gift (mercy) of Allah that saves him.

إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَمَتَاعًا إِلَىٰ حِينٍ (٤٤)

44. Except by way of Mercy from Us, and by way of (worldly) convenience (to serve them) for a time.

C3991. Cf. 16:80.

Allah has given man all these wonderful things in nature and utilities produced by the skill and intelligence which Allah has given to man.

Had it not been for these gifts, man's life would have been precarious on sea or land or in the air.

It is only Allah's Mercy that saves man from destruction for man's own follies, and that saving or the enjoyment of these utilities and conveniences he should not consider as eternal: they are only given for a time, in this life of probation.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّقُوا مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَمَا خَلْفَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ (٤٥)

45. When they are told,

"Fear ye that which is before you and that which will be after you, in order that ye may receive Mercy," (they turn back).

C3992. Man should consider and beware of the consequences of his past, and guard against the consequences in his future.

The present is only a fleeting moment poised between the past and the future, and gone even while it is being mentioned or thought about.

Man should review his whole life and prepare for the Hereafter. If he does so, Allah is Merciful: He will forgive, and give strength for a better and higher life in the

future. But this kind of teaching does not suit those steeped in this ephemeral life, They are bored, and turn away from it, to their own loss.

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِّنْ آيَةٍ مِّنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ (٤٦)

46. Not a Sign comes to them from among the Signs of their Lord, but they turn away therefrom.

C3993. The Signs of Allah are many, in His great world,-in nature, in the heart of man, and in the Revelation sent through His messengers. They turn away from all of them, as a man who has ruined his eyesight turns away from the light.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ...

47. And when they are told, "Spend ye of (the bounties) with which Allah has provided you."

C3994. To selfish men, the good may make an appeal, and say: "Look! Allah has given you wealth, or influence, or knowledge, or talent. Why not spend some of it in charity, i.e., for the good of your fellow-creatures?" But the selfish only think of themselves and laugh such teaching to scorn.

... قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْطِعِم مِّنْ لَّوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ أَطَعَمَهُ...

You Unbelievers say to those who believe:

"Shall we then feed those whom, if Allah had so willed, He would have fed, (Himself)?"

C3995. They are too full of themselves to have a corner in their hearts for others. "If" they say, "Allah gave them nothing, why should we?"

There is arrogance in this as well as blasphemy: arrogance in thinking that they are favoured because of their merits, and blasphemy in laying the blame of other people's misfortunes on Allah.

They further try to turn the tables on the Believers by pretending that the Believers are entirely on a wrong track. They forget that all men are on probation and trial: they hold their gifts on trust: those apparently less favoured, in that they have fewer of this world's goods,

may be really more fortunate, because they are teaming patience, self-reliance, and the true value of things ephemeral which is apt to be very much exaggerated in men's eyes.

... إِنَّ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ (٤٧)

Ye are in nothing but manifest error."

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (٤٨)

48. Further, they say, "When will this promise (come to pass), if what ye say is true?"

C3996. In addition to the arrogance and blasphemy referred to in the last note, they not only realise Faith, but they taunt the men of Faith as if the men of Faith were dealing in falsehood: "If there is a Hereafter, tell us when it will be!"

The answer is:

"It will come sooner than you expect: you will yet be disputing about things of Faith and neglecting your opportunities in Life, when the Hour will sound, and you will have no time even to make your dispositions in this life: you will be cut off from everyone whom you thought to be near and dear to you, or able to help you!"

مَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً تَأْخُذُهُمْ وَهُمْ يَخِصِّمُونَ (٤٩)

49. They will not (have to) wait for aught but a single Blast: it will seize them while they are yet disputing among themselves!

فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ تَوْصِيَةً وَلَا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ يَرْجِعُونَ (٥٠)

50. No (chance) will they then have, by will, to dispose (of their affairs), nor to return to their own people!

C.196 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(37:51-83)

*When the Day comes, men will be taken
Aback. The Judgement Seat will be established.
Blessed will be those who attain Salvation;
Their Joy, Satisfaction, and Peace will be crowned
With nearness to their Lord!
Alas for the Sinful, who deliberately
Followed Evil: their own nature
And actions will speak against them:
They will face the realities of Punishment!
Both Revelation and Nature are eloquent
In instructing man for his own good
In the Hereafter, which will come
As a certainty. Praise and Glory to Allah!*

Section 4

وَنُفِّخَ فِي الصُّورِ ...

51. The trumpet shall be sounded,

C3997. Traditionally, the angel who will sound the Trumpet is Israfil, but the name does not occur in the Quran.

The Trumpet is mentioned in many places: e.g., 6:73; 78:18, etc.

... فَإِذَا هُمْ مِّنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنسِلُونَ (٥١)

when behold! from the sepulchers (men) will rush forth to their Lord!

قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا مَن بَعَثَنَا مِن مَّرْقَدِنَا...

52. They will say: "Ah! woe unto us! Who hath raised us up from our beds of repose?..."

C3998. The dead will rise as in a stupor, and they will be confused in the new conditions! They will gradually regain their memory and their personality. They will be reminded that Allah in His grace and mercy had already announced the Hereafter in their probationary lives, and the word of Allah's messengers, which then seemed so strange and remote, was true and was now being fulfilled.

... هَذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ ...

(A voice will say:)

"This is what (Allah) Most Gracious had promised,

... وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ (٥٢)

and true was the word of the messengers!"

إِنْ كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً ...

53. It will be no more than a single Blast,

C3999. Time and Space, as we know them here, will be no more. The whole gathering will be as in the twinkling of an eye.

Cf. [36:49](#) above.

... فَإِذَا هُمْ جَمِيعٌ لَدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ (٥٣)

when lo! they will all be brought up before Us!

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا ...

54. Then, on that Day, not a soul will be wronged in the least,

C4000. The Judgment will be on the highest standard of Justice and Grace. Not the least merit will go unrewarded, though the reward will be for the righteous far more than their deserts. No penalty will be exacted but that which the doer himself by his past deeds brought on himself.

Cf. [28:84](#).

... وَلَا تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (٥٤)

and ye shall but be repaid the meeds of your past Deeds.

إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغْلٍ فَاكِهِونَ (٥٥)

55. Verily the Companions of the Garden shall that Day have joy in all that they do;

C4001. We now have the symbolism for the undesirable Bliss of the Hereafter, in four verses 55-58. Notice the subtle gradation in the description.

First, in this verse, we have the nature of the *mise en scene* and the nature of the joy therein.

- It will be a Garden i.e., everything agreeable to see and hear and feel and taste and smell;
- delightfully green lawns and meadows, trees and shrubs;
- the murmur of streams and the songs of birds;
- the delicate texture of flowers and leaves and the shapes of beauty in clouds and mist;
- the flavours of fruits;
- and the perfumes of flowers and scents. The joy in the Garden will be an active joy, without fatigue:

whatever we do in it, every employment in which we engage there, will be a source of joy without alloy.

هُمُ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلَالٍ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ مُتَكِوُونَ (٥٦)

56. They and their associates will be in groves of (cool) shade, reclining on thrones (of dignity);

C4002. Secondly, the joy or happiness is figured to be, not solitary, but shared by **associates** like those whom we imagine in spiritual Love or Marriage; in whose fair faces "some ray divine reflected shines" (Jami): whose society is enjoyed in homes of happiness, situated in soothing shade, and furnished with thrones of dignity and peace.

لَهُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ ...

57. (Every) fruit (enjoyment) will be there for them;

C4003. Thirdly, besides any external conditions of Bliss, the Bliss in the Hereafter has an inner quality, expressed by the word **fakihatun**.

The root **fakihah** means 'to rejoice greatly', to be full of merriment.

The ordinary meaning of 'fruit' attached to **fakihah** is derived from the idea that the flavour of choice, ripe fruit, delights the heart of man. Just as **akala** (to eat) is used for 'enjoyment', (5:66, n. 776 and 13:35, n. 1854), so **fakihah**, 'fruit', stands here for the specially choice enjoyment, which goes with a fastidious and well-cultivated taste.

In other words, it suggests that highest kind of joy which depends upon the inner faculty rather than any outward circumstances.

This is further emphasised by the second clause:

"they shall have whatever they call for".

Again using the language of this life, the musician's heaven will be full of music; the mathematician's will be full of mathematical symmetry and perfection; the artist's will be full of beauty of form, and so on.

... وَلَهُمْ مَا يَدْعُونَ (٥٧)

they shall have whatever they call for;

سَلَامٌ قَوْلًا مِنْ رَبِّ رَحِيمٍ (٥٨)

58. "Peace! --

a Word (of salutation) from a Lord Most Merciful!

C4004. Fourthly, we reach the highest grade of bliss, the salutation "**Peace!**" from Allah Most Merciful. Cf. 10:10.

That Word sums up the attainment of the final Goal. For it explains the nature of the Most High--He is not only a Lord and Cherisher, but a Lord Whose supreme glory is Mercy, Peace, and Harmony!.

وَأَمَّا زُورًا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمَجْرُمُونَ (٥٩)

59. And O ye in sin! get ye apart this Day!

C4005. Notice how this finely balanced passage, after reaching the summit of sublimity in describing the state of the Blessed, in the word **Salam**, gradually takes us down to contemplate the state of the Sinners in a graduated descent.

In the first place, it refers to their negative state, their state of isolation. From this Day of Judgment, they will no longer have the chance of being with the Blessed and perhaps of profiting spiritually by that proximity.

The first feature of the Day of Judgment is that it is a Day of Separation-of sorting out. Each soul now finds its own true level, as the period of probation is over.

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ لَكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ...

60. "Did I not enjoin on you, O ye children of Adam, that ye should not worship Satan;

C4006. Secondly, there is a gentle reproach to the wrong-doers, more in sorrow than in anger. They are addressed as "**children of Adam**", to emphasize two facts,

1. that they have disgraced their ancestry, for Adam after his Fall repented and was forgiven, and the high Destiny of mankind has been the prize open to all his descendants, and
2. that Allah Most Merciful has throughout the ages continued to warn mankind against the snares laid by Satan, the avowed enemy of man, and that Allah's Grace was ever on the watch to help all to freedom from those snares.

... إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ (٦٠)

for that he was to you an enemy avowed? --

وَأَنْ اعْبُدُونِي هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ (٦١)

61. "And that ye should worship Me, (for that) this was the Straight Way?

C4007. Thirdly, besides the negative warning, a positive Way was shown to them-the **Straight Way**, the Way of those who receive Allah's Grace and attain to Bliss, the Rope which would save them from shipwreck, the Shield which would save them from assault, the key to the door of proximity to Allah.

وَلَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنْكُمْ جِبِلًّا كَثِيرًا ...

62. "But he did lead astray a great multitude of you.

... أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْقِلُونَ (٦٢)

Did ye not, then, understand?

C4008. Fourthly, it is pointed out that they were given Understanding ('**aql**), so that by their own faculties they could have judged their own best interests, and yet they betrayed or misused those faculties, and deliberately threw away their chance! And not only a few, but so many! They went gregariously to ruin in spite of the individual care which their Lord and Cherisher bestowed on them!

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ (٦٣)

63. "This is the Hell of which ye were (repeatedly) warned!

C4009. Fifthly, the naked fact is now placed before them,-**the Hell**, the state of damnation, which they could so easily have avoided!

اصْلَوْهَا الْيَوْمَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ (٦٤)

64. "Embrace ye the (Fire) this Day, for that ye (persistently) rejected (Truth)."

C4010. As they deliberately and persistently rejected all teaching, guidance, and warnings, they are now told to experience the Fire of Punishment, for it is but the consequence of their own acts.

الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ ...

65. That Day shall We set a seal on their mouths.

C4011. The ungodly will now be dumbfounded. They will be unable to speak or offer any defence. (The consequences of all acts, which follow according to Allah's Law, are, in Quranic language, attributed to Allah).

... وَتَكَلَّمْنَا بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (٦٥)

But their hands will speak to Us, and their feet bear witness, to all that they did.

But their silence will not matter. Their own hands and feet will speak against them. "Hands and feet" in this connection are symbolical of all the instruments for action which they were given in this life.

The same extended meaning is to be understood for "eyes" in the following verse. Cf. also 41:20-21, where eyes, ears, and skins are all mentioned as bearing witness against such as misused them.

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَطَمَسْنَا عَلَىٰ أَعْيُنِهِمْ...

66. If it had been Our Will, We could surely have blotted out their eyes;

C4012. "If it had been Our Will": i.e., if such had been the Will and Plan of Allah.

If Allah had not intended to give man his limited free-will, or power of choice, the case would have been different: there would have been no moral responsibility which could have been enforced. They could have had no sight or intelligence, and they could not have been blamed for not seeing or understanding. But such is not the case.

... فَاسْتَبَقُوا الصِّرَاطَ فَأَنَّىٰ يُبْصِرُونَ (٦٦)

then should they have run about groping for the Path, but how could they have seen?

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَمَسَخْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِهِمْ...

67. And if it had been Our Will, We could have transformed them (to remain) in their places:

C4013. If Allah's Plan had been to grant no limited freedom of choice or will to men. He could have created them quite different, or could have transformed them into stationary creatures, either in physical form as in the case of trees, or in moral or spiritual qualities, where there was no possibility either of progress or deterioration. Man would then have been unable to reach the heights of grandeur which are now open to him, or, if he goes wrong, to return through the door of repentance and mercy, and still pursue his path of ascent.

But it was Allah's Plan to give man all these privileges, and man must shoulder all the responsibilities that go with them.

... فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مُضِيًّا وَلَا يَرْجِعُونَ (٦٧)

then should they have been unable to move about, nor could they have returned (after error).

Section 5

وَمَنْ نُعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ ...

68. If We grant long life to any, We cause him to be reversed in nature:

C4014. This connects on with the last verse.

Everything is possible with Allah. If you doubt how man can be transformed from his present nature, contemplate the transformations he already undergoes in his present nature at different ages.

- As a child powers of mind and body are still undeveloped.
- As he grows, they grow, and certain moral qualities, such as courage, daring, the will to conquer, unfold themselves.
- In extreme old age these are again obscured, and a second childhood supervenes. The back of the man who walked proudly straight and erect is now bent.

If these transformations take place even in his present nature and constitution, how much easier was it for Allah to cast him in an immobile mould?

But Allah granted him instead the high possibilities and responsibilities referred to in the last note.

... أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ (٦٨)

will they not then understand?

وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشُّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ...

69. We have not instructed the (Prophet) in Poetry, nor is it meet for Him:

C4015. Cf. 26:224 and n. 3237.

Here "**Poetry**" is used as connoting fairy tales, imaginary descriptions, things futile, false, or obscure, such as decadent Poetry is, whereas the Quran is a practical guide, true and clear.

... إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْآنٌ مُّبِينٌ (٦٩)

this is no less than a Message and a Qur'an making things clear:

لِيُنذِرَ مَنْ كَانَ حَيًّا ...

70. That it may give admonition to any (who are) **alive**,

C4016. "**Alive**", both in English and Arabic, means not only "having physical life", but having all the active qualities which we associate with life.

In religious language, those who are not responsive to the realities of the spiritual world are no better than those who are dead. The Message of Allah penetrates the hearts of those who are alive in the spiritual sense.

... وَيَحِقُّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ (٧٠)

and that the **charge** may be proved against those who reject (Truth).

C4017. Cf. 28:63.

If people reject Truth and Faith after they have been admonished and warned, the charge against them, of willful rebellion, is proved. They cannot then plead either ignorance or inadvertence.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِمَّا عَمِلَتْ أَيْدِينَا...

71. See they not that it is We Who have created for them -- among the things which Our hands have fashioned --

... أَنْعَامًا فَهُمْ لَهَا مَالِكُونَ (٧١)

cattle, which are under their dominion? --

C4018. If they are blind to other Signs of Allah, they can at least see the simple homely things of life in which they receive so many benefits from Allah's mercy. How is it that wild animals can be domesticated, and in domestication can be so useful to man?

Man can use them for riding or for drought; he can use their flesh for food and drink their milk; he can use their hair or wool.

Cf. 16:66,80: and 23:21-22.

وَدَلَّلْنَاهَا لَهُمْ فَمِنْهَا رَكُوبُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا يَأْكُلُونَ (٧٢)

72. And that We have subjected them to their (use)?

Of them some do carry them and some they eat:

وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَمَشَارِبُ...

73. And they have (other) **profits** from them (besides), and they get (milk) to drink.

C4019. Such as skins for leather, furs for warmth, sheep's wool or camel's hair for blankets or textiles, musk for perfume, and so on.

... أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ (٧٣)

Will they not then be grateful?

C4020. The whole argument turns on this. 'Our teaching is for your own benefit. We confer all these blessings on

you, and yet ye turn away from the Giver of all, and run after your own vain imaginations!

وَأَتَّخِذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لَعَلَّهُمْ يُنصَرُونَ (٧٤)

74. Yet they take (for worship) gods other than Allah, (hoping) that they might be helped!

لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَهُمْ ...

75. They have not the power to help them:

... وَهُمْ لَهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُحْضَرُونَ (٧٥)

but they will be brought up (before Our Judgment-Seat) as a troop (to be condemned).

C4021. There is some difference of opinion among Commentators as to the exact meaning to be attached to this clause.

As I understand it, the meaning seems to be this.

Man is apt to forget or turn away from the true God, the source of all the good which he enjoys, and to go after imaginary powers in the shape of gods, heroes, men, or abstract things like Science or Nature or Philosophy, or superstitious things like Magic, or Good- Fortune or i11-Fortune, or embodiments of his own selfish desires. He thinks that they might help him in this Life or in the Hereafter (if he believes in a Hereafter).

But they cannot help him: on the contrary all things that are false will be brought up and condemned before Allah's Judgment-seat, and the worshippers of the Falsehoods will also be treated as a troop favouring the Falsehoods and therefore worthy of condemnation.

The Falsehoods, therefore, instead of helping them, will contribute to their condemnation.

فَلَا يَحْزَنُكَ قَوْلُهُمْ...

76. Let not their speech, then, grieve thee.

C4022. If men are so foolish as to reject Allah, let not the men of Allah grieve over it. They should do their duty, and leave the rest to Allah. Allah knows all the

open and secret motives that sway the wicked, and His Plan must ultimately prevail, however much appearances may be against it at any given time.

... إِنَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ (٧٦)

Verily We know what they hide as well as what they disclose.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ...

77. Doth not man see that it is We Who created Him from sperm?

C4023. Man's disobedience and folly are all the more surprising, seeing that-apart from Allah's greatness and mercy-man is himself such a puny creature, created out of something that is less than a drop in the vast ocean of Existence. Yet man has the hardihood to stand out and dispute with his Maker, and institute idle comparisons as in the next verse!

... فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ (٧٧)

Yet behold! he (stands forth) as an open adversary!

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ...

78. And he makes comparisons for us, and forgets his own (Origin and) Creation:

C4024. That is, man thinks that Allah is like His creatures, who at best have very limited powers, or man draws idle parallels like that mentioned at the end of this verse. 'Who can give life to dry bones, and decomposed ones at that?'

Man certainly cannot, and no power in nature can do that. But why compare the powers and capacities of Allah's creatures with the powers and capacities of the Creator?

The first creation-out of nothing-is far more difficult for us to imagine than a second or subsequent process for which there is already a basis. And Allah has power over all things.

... قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ (٧٨)

he says, "Who can give life to (dry) bones and decomposed ones (at that)?"

فَلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ...

79. Say, "He will give them life Who created them for the first time!

C4025. Allah's creative artistry is evident in every phase of nature, and it works every minute or second. The more man understands himself and the things within his reach, the more he realises this.

How foolish, then, for any one to set imaginary limits to Allah's powers?

There are more ways of creation than are dreamt of in man's imagination!

... وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ (٧٩)

For He is well-versed in every kind of creation! -

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا...

80. "The same Who produces for you fire out of the green tree,

C4026. Even older and more primitive than the method of striking fire against steel and flint is the method of using twigs of trees for the purpose.

In the Encyclopedia of Britannica, 14th edition. 9:262, will be found a picture of British Guiana boys making a fire by rotating a stick in a round hole in a piece of wood lying on the ground.

The Arab method was to use a wooden instrument called the **Zinad**. It consisted of two pieces to be rubbed together. The upper one was called the '**Afar** or **Zand**, and the lower the **Markh**.

The **markh** is a twig from a kind of spreading tree, the *Cynanchum viminalis*, of which the branches are bare, without leaves or thorns. When they are tangled together, and a wind blows, they get ignited and strike fire (Lane's Arabic Lexicon).

In modern Arabic **Zand** is by analogy applied to the flint pierce used for striking fire with steel.

... فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ مِّنْهُ تُوقِدُونَ (٨٠)

when behold! ye kindle therewith (your own fires)!

أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ...

81. "Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like thereof?" --

C4027. Cf. 79:27.

Which is the more difficult to create,- man, or the heavens and the earth, with all creatures?

Allah created the heavens and the earth, with all creatures, and He can create worlds and worlds like these in infinity. To Him it is small matter to raise you up for the Hereafter.

... بَلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ (٨١)

Yea,

indeed! for He is the Creator Supreme, of skill and knowledge (infinite)!

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ ...

82. Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is,

C4028. And His creation is not dependent on time, or instruments or means, or any conditions whatsoever. Existence waits on His Will, or Plan, or Intention. The moment He wills a thing, it becomes His Word or Command, and the thing forthwith comes into existence.

Cf. 2:117; 16:40, n. 2066; etc.

... كُنْ فَيَكُونُ (٨٢)

"Be," and it is!

فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ...

83. So glory to Him in Whose hands is the dominion of all things;

... وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (٨٣)

and to Him will ye be all brought back.

C4029. All things were created by Allah; are maintained by Him; and will go back to Him.

But the point of special interest to man is that man will also be brought back to Allah and is answerable to Him, and to Him alone. This Message is the core of Revelation; it explains the meaning of the Hereafter; and it fitly closes a Surah specially connected with the name (Ya-Sin) of the Holy Prophet.