

SPREAD KNOWLEDGE

THE
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 43
SURAH AZ-ZUKHRUF

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

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HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

043

SURAH AZ-ZUKHRUF

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Introduction and Summary

This is the fourth Surah of *Ha Mim* series of seven Surahs. For their Chronology and general theme see the Introduction to Surah 40.

this Surah deals with the contrasts between the real glory of Truth and Revelation and the false glitter of what people like to believe and worship. It cites the examples of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, as exposing the False and holding up the truth. the keyword (Zukhruf, Gold Adornments) occurs in verse 38, but the idea occurs all through the Surah.

Summary- The Book of Revelation makes things clear, even though the ignorant and foolish mock at it and ignore Allah's Signs; it will last, while its rejecters will perish (43:1-25, and C. 213).

Abraham exposed the falsehood of traditional worship; the glitter and adornments of this world will not last: what was the end of Pharaoh in his arrogant fight with Moses? (43:26-56, and C. 214).

Jesus was a servant of Allah, but his sectarian followers raised false disputations about him; all is known to Allah, Whose Truth will shine, in spite of unfaith (43:57-89, and C.215).

C.213 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(43:1-25)

*Revelation makes everlasting Truths
Clear: those who mock merely undo themselves,
Consider the Signs of Allah's gracious kindness
Around you, and glorify Him; attribute not
Unworthy qualities nor any companions
To the One True God. Seek Truth in worship
More than mere ancestral ways,
And shut not out Revelation's Light.*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

حم (۱)

1. Ha Mim.

C4604. These Abbreviated Letters are discussed in Introduction to Surah 40.

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ (۲)

2. By the Book that makes things clear --

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ (٣)

3. We have made it a **Qur'án in Arabic**, that ye may be able to understand (and learn wisdom).

C4605. Cf. 42:7, n. 4533.

وَلَّيْنَاهُ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِّي حَكِيمٌ (٤)

4. And verily, it is in the Mother of the **Book**, in Our Presence, high (in dignity), full of wisdom.

C4606. Cf. 3:7, n. 347: and 13:39, n. 1864.

The Mother of the Book, the Foundation of Revelation, the Preserved Tablet (Lauh Mahfuz. 85:22), is the core or essence of revelation, the original principle or fountain-head of Allah's Eternal and Universal Law. From this fountain-head are derived all streams of knowledge and wisdom, that flow through Time and feed the intelligence of created minds.

The Mother of the Book is in Allah's own Presence, and its dignity and wisdom are more than all we can think of in the spiritual world.

أَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمْ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا أَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُسْرِفِينَ (٥)

5. Shall We then take away the Message from you and repel (you), for that ye are a people transgressing beyond bounds?

C4607. In vouchsafing Revelation, what an inestimable Mercy has Allah conferred on mankind! Yet so many deluded souls are ungrateful, and ignore or oppose its teaching. If it were not for His attributes of Forgiveness and Forbearing He would be justified in withdrawing that Light, but He continues to shed it, that all who will may come and be blessed by it.

وَكَمْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ نَبِيِّ فِي الْأَوَّلِينَ (٦)

6. But how many were the prophets We sent amongst the peoples of old?

C4608. In spite of, or because of, man's obstinate and rebellious nature, Allah sent prophet after prophet to the

peoples of old, but there was among them always a party that ridiculed them and treated Allah's Signs as naught.

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِؤُونَ (٧)

7. And never came there a prophet to them but they mocked him.

فَأَهْلَكْنَا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا وَمَضَىٰ مَثَلُ الْأَوَّلِينَ (٨)

8. So We destroyed (them) -- stronger in power than these -- and (thus) has passed on the Parable of the peoples of old.

C4609. The result of rebellion was destruction. And the pagan Makkan generation contemporary with the Prophet is reminded that the peoples of old who were destroyed were, many of them, more powerful than they, and that they, in disobeying Allah's Law, were inviting the same fate for themselves. The events of the past have become examples for the present and the future.

وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ...

9. If thou wert to question them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?'

C4610. Cf. 29:61 and n. 3493; and 31:25 and n. 3613.

This class of men acknowledges Allah's Power and Allah's Knowledge or Wisdom, but do not realise Allah's infinite Mercy and care for His creatures.

... لَيَقُولُنَّ خَلَقَهُنَّ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ (٩)

They would be sure to reply,

'They were created by (Him), the Exalted in Power, Full of knowledge' --

C4611. Note the beautiful rhetorical figure of speech here.

The reply of the inconsistent men who do not follow Allah's Law is turned against themselves. When they acknowledge Allah's Power and Knowledge, their speech

is interrupted, and the concomitant qualities of Allah's Mercy and care of His creatures, with pointed reference to the inconsistent ones themselves, is set out in eloquent terms, as completing what they themselves had said, and the right course of conduct is pointed out to them (verses 10-14).

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ (١٠)

10. (Yea, the same that)

C4612. See last note.

has made for you the earth (like a carpet) spread out, and has made for you roads (and channels) therein, in order that ye may find guidance (on the way);

C4613. Cf. 20:53 and n. 2576.

Mihad, a carpet or bed spread out, implies not only freedom of movement but rest also.

The '**roads and channels**' carry out the idea of communications and include land routes, sea routes, and airways.

وَالَّذِي نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ ...

11. That sends down (from time to time) rain from the sky in due measure;

C4614. In due measure: i.e., according to needs, as measured by local as well as universal considerations. This applies to normal rainfall:

floods and droughts are abnormal conditions, and may be called unusual manifestations of His power, fulfilling some special purpose that we may or may not understand.

... فَأَنْشُرْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيِّتًا كَذَلِكَ نُخْرِجُونَ (١١)

and We raise to life therewith a land that is dead; even so will ye be raised (from the dead) --

C4615. The clause '**And We raise ...** (from the dead)' is parenthetical. Cf. 35:9, n. 3881.

Note the transition from the third to the first person, to mark the Resurrection as a special act of Allah as distinguished from the ordinary processes of nature ordained by Allah.

وَالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا ...

12. That has created pairs in all things,

C4616. Cf. n. 2578 to 20:53. Also see 36:36, n. 3981.

... وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْفُلْكِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُونَ (١٢)

and has made for you ships and cattle on which ye ride,

C4617. By analogy all means of transport, including horses, camels, ships, steamers, railways, aeroplanes, airships, etc.

The domestication of animals as well as the invention of mechanical means of transport require a skill and ingenuity in man, which are referred to Allah as His gifts or endowments to man.

لَيْسْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ظُهُورِهِ ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ إِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ
وَتَقُولُوا ...

13. In order that ye may sit firm and square on their backs, and when so seated, ye may celebrate the (kind) favor of your Lord, and say,

C4618. See last note.

People of understanding attribute all good to its true and original source viz.: Allah.

...سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ (١٣)

"Glory to Him Who has subjected these to Our (use), for We could never have accomplished this (by ourselves).

وَأِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ (١٤)

14. "And to Our Lord, surely, Must We turn back!"

C4619. Men of understanding, every time they take a journey on earth, are reminded of that more momentous

journey which they are taking on the back of Time to Eternity.

Have they tamed Time to their lawful use, or do they allow Time to run away with them wildly to where they know not?

Their goal is Allah, and their thoughts are ever with Allah.

وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءًا...

15. Yet they attribute to some of His servants a share with Him (in His godhead)!

C4620. As a contrast to the men of true understanding are the ungrateful blasphemous creatures, who offer a share to others besides Allah! They imagine sons and daughters to Allah, and forget the true lesson of the whole of Creation, which points to the Unity of Allah. This theme is further developed in the following Section.

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ مُّبِينٌ (١٥)

Truly is man a blasphemous ingrate avowed!

Section 2

أَمْ اتَّخَذَ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ بَنَاتٍ وَأَصْفَاكُم بِالْبَنِينَ (١٦)

16. What!

Has He taken Daughters out of what He Himself creates, and granted to you sons for choice?

C4621. To imagine goddesses (female gods) or mothers or daughters to Allah was particularly blasphemous in the mouths of people who held the female sex in contempt. Such were the pagan Arabs, and such (it is to be feared) are some of the moderns. They wince when a daughter is born to them and hanker after sons. With that mentality, how can they attribute daughters to Allah?

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِمَا ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ مَثَلًا ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ

كَظِيمٌ (١٧)

17. When news is **brought** to one of them of (the birth of) what he sets up as a likeness to (Allah) Most Gracious, his face darkens, and he is filled with inward grief!

C4622. Cf. 16:57-59 and notes.

With scathing irony it is pointed out that what they hate and are ashamed of for themselves they attribute to Allah!

أَوْ مَن يُنثَىٰ فِي الْخِلْيَةِ وَهُوَ فِي الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِينٍ (١٨)

18. Is then one **brought up among trinkets**, and unable to give a clear account in a dispute (to be associated with Allah)?

C4623. The softer sex is usually brought up among trinkets and ornaments, and, on account of the retiring modesty which for the sex is a virtue, is unable to stand up boldly in a fight and give clear indications of the will to win.

Is that sort of quality to be associated with Allah?

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنثًا...

19. And they make into females angels who themselves serve Allah.

C4624. Angels for grace and purity may be compared to the most graceful and the purest forms we know. But it is wrong to attribute sex to them. They are servants and messengers of Allah and so far from being rivals seeking worship, are always engaged in devotion and service.

If any persons invent blasphemies about Allah, such blasphemies will form a big blot in their Book of Deeds, and they will be called to account for them.

...أَشْهَدُوا خَلْقَهُمْ...

Did they witness their creation?

سَتَكْتُبُ شَهَادَتَهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ (١٩)

Their evidence will be recorded, and they will be called to account!

وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَا عَبَدْنَاهُمْ...

20. ("Ah!") they say,

"If it had been the Will of (Allah) Most Gracious, We should not have worshipped such (deities)!"

C4625. Worsted in argument they resort to a dishonest sarcasm. 'We worship these deities: if Allah does not wish us to do so, why does He not prevent us?'

In throwing the responsibility on Allah, they ignore the limited free-will on which their whole life is based. They are really playing with truth. They are arguing against their own knowledge. They have no authority in any scripture, and indeed they are so slippery that they hold fast to no scripture at all.

...مَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ (٢٠)

of that they have no knowledge!

They Do nothing but lie!

C4626. Cf. 6:116.

أَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَمْسِكُونَ (٢١)

21. What!

have We given them a Book before this, to which they are holding fast?

بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم مُّهْتَدُونَ (٢٢)

22. Nay!

they say:

"We found our fathers following a certain religion, and We do guide ourselves by their footsteps."

C4627. Then comes the argument about ancestral custom, which was repudiated by Abraham (see verses 26-28 below).

Indeed a good reply to ancestral custom in the case of the Arabs was the example of Abraham, the True in Faith, for Abraham was the common ancestor of the Arabs and the Israelites.

وَكَذَلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا...

23. Just in the same way, whenever We sent a Warner before thee to any people, the wealthy ones among them said:

C4628. It is some privileged position, and not ancestral custom, which is really at the bottom of much falsehood and hypocrisy in the world. This has been again and again in religious history.

...إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم مُّقْتَدُونَ (٢٣)

"We found our fathers following a certain religion, and We will certainly follow in their footsteps."

قَالَ أَوْلَوْ جِنَّتُمْ بِأَهْدَىٰ مِمَّا وَجَدْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَكُمْ...

24. He said:

"What! even if I brought you better guidance than that which ye found your fathers following?"

C4629. The Warner or messenger pointed out the merits and the truth of his teaching, and how superior it was to what they called their ancestral customs. But they denied his mission itself or the validity of any such mission. In other words they did not believe in inspiration or revelation, and went on in their evil ways, with the inevitable result that they brought themselves to destruction.

قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ (٢٤)

They said: "For us, We deny that ye (prophets) are sent (on a mission at all)."

فَأَنزَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ...

25. So We exacted retribution from them:

...فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ (٢٥)

now see what was the end of those who rejected (Truth)!

C.214 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(43:26-56)

*If the Arabs hark back to ancestry, why not
Accept the Faith of Abraham the True?
He joined not gods with Allah. Spiritual
Worth is measured by other things
Than gold or silver or the adornments
Of the world. These are but things of the hour.
The lasting gifts are those of the Hereafter.
If Israel goes back to Moses, how he
Was mocked by Pharaoh in his pride
Of power! Yet Pharaoh and his deluded
People perished; so ends the pomp
And power and vanity of this world!*

Section 3

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ ...

26. Behold! Abraham said to his father and his people:

C4630. The plea of ancestral ways is refuted by the example of Abraham, in two ways:

- he gave up the ancestral cults followed by his father and people, and followed the true Way, even at some sacrifice to himself; and
- he was an ancestor of the Arabs, and if the Arabs stood on ancestral ways, why should they not follow their good ancestor Abraham, rather than their bad ancestors who fell into evil? See n. 4627 above.

The incident in Abraham's story referred to here will be found in 21:51-70.

... إِنِّي بَرَاءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ (٢٦)

"I do indeed clear myself of what ye worship:

إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيَهْدِين (٢٧)

27. "(I worship) only Him Who made me, and He will certainly guide me."

وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقْبِهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ (٢٨)

28. And he left it as a **Word** to endure among those who came after him, that they may turn back (to Allah).

C4631. A Word: i.e., the Gospel of Unity, viz.,: "I worship only Him who originated me", as in verse 27. This was his teaching, and this was his legacy to those who followed him. He hoped that they would keep it sacred, and uphold the standard of Unity.

Cf. 37:108-111.

بَلْ مَنَّتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ وَأَبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَرَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ (٢٩)

29. Yea, I **have given** the good things of this life to these (men) and their fathers, until the Truth has come to them, and a Messenger making things clear.

C4632. Note the first person singular, as showing Allah's personal solicitude and care for the descendants of Abraham in both branches.

The context here refers to the prosperity enjoyed by Makkah and the Makkans until they rejected the truth of Islam when it was preached in their midst by a messenger whose Message was as clear as the light of the sun.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ وَإِنَّا بِهِ كَافِرُونَ (٣٠)

30. But when the Truth came to them, they said:

"This is sorcery, and We do reject it."

C4633. When the pagan Makkans could not understand the wonderful power and authority with which the holy Prophet preached, they called his God given influence sorcery!

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ (٣١)

31. Also, they say:

"Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some leading man in either of the two (Chief) cities?"

C4634. The world judges by its own low standards. From a worldly point of view, the holy Prophet was poor and an orphan. Why, they thought, should he be so richly endowed in spiritual knowledge and power? If such a gift had to come to a man among them, it was the right (they foolishly said) of one of the chiefs in either the sacred city of Makkah, or the fertile garden-city of Taif!

أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَةَ رَبِّكَ...

32. Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of thy Lord?

C4635. That is, spiritual gifts, those connected with Revelation. What audacity or folly in them to claim to divide or distribute them among themselves?

They may think they are distributing the good things of this world among themselves. In a sense that may be true, even here, their own power and initiative are very limited. Even here it is Allah's Will on which all depends. In His wisdom Allah allows some to grow in power or riches, and command work from others, and various relative gradations are established. Men scramble for these good things of this world, but they are of no value compared to the spiritual gifts.

...نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَّعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا...

It is We Who portion out between them their livelihood in the life of this world:

...وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سَخِرِيًّا...

and We raise some of them above others in ranks, so that some may command work from others.

...وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ (٣٢)

But the Mercy of thy Lord is better than the (wealth) which they amass.

وَلَوْ أَن يُكَونَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً لَجَعَلْنَا لِمَن يَكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ...

33. And were it not that (all) men might become of one (evil) way of life, We would provide, for everyone that blasphemes against (Allah) Most Gracious,

C4636. So little value is attached in the spiritual world to silver or gold, or worldly ranks or adornments, that they would freely be at the disposal of everyone who denied or blasphemed Allah, were it not that in that case there would be too great temptation placed in the way of men, for they might all scramble to sell their spiritual life for wealth!

They might have silver roofs and stair-ways, silver doors and thrones, and all kinds of adornments of gold. But Allah does not allow too great a temptation to be placed in the path of men. He distributes these things differently, some to unjust men, and some to just men, in various degrees, so that the possession of these is no test either of an unjust or a just life. His wisdom searches out motives far more subtle and delicate than any we are even aware of.

...لِنُيُوتَهُمْ سَفْعًا مِّنْ فَضَّةٍ وَمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُونَ (٣٣)

silver roofs for their houses and (silver) stair-ways on which to go up.

وَلِنُيُوتَهُمْ أَبْوَابًا وَسُرُورًا عَلَيْهَا يُكْؤُونَ (٣٤)

34. And (silver) doors to their houses, and thrones (of silver) on which they could recline,

وَزُخْرُفًا...

35. And also adornments of gold.

C4637. Adornments of gold. the keyword to this Surah.

All false glitter and adornments of this world are as naught. They more often hinder than help.

...وَأِن كُلُّ ذَلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا...

But all this were nothing but conveniences of the present life:

... وَالْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ (٣٥)

the Hereafter, in the sight of thy Lord, is for the Righteous.

Section 4

وَمَنْ يَعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ (٣٦)

36. If anyone withdraws **himself from remembrance of (Allah)** Most Gracious, We appoint for him an evil one, to be an intimate companion to him.

C4638. If men deliberately put away the remembrance of Allah from their minds, the natural consequence, under Allah's decree, is that they join on with evil. Like consorts with like. We can generalize evil in the abstract, but it takes concrete shape in our life- companions.

وَأِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّونَهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ (٣٧)

37. Such (evil ones) really hinder **them** from the Path, but they think that **they** are being guided aright!

C4639. The downward course in evil is rapid. But the most tragic consequence is that evil persuades its victims to believe that they are pursuing good. They think evil to be their good. They go deeper and deeper into the mire, and become more and more callous.

"**Them**" and "**they**" represent the generic plural of anyone who "withdraws himself from ... Allah" (see last verse).

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَنَا قَالَ ...

38. At length, when (such a one) comes to Us, he says (to his evil companion):

C4640. If ever the presence of Allah is felt, or at the time of Judgment, a glimmering of truth comes to the deceived soul, and it cries to its evil companion in its agony, "Would that I had never come across thee! Would that we were separated poles apart!" But it cannot shake off evil. By deliberate choice it had put itself in its snare.

... يَا لَيْتَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ بُعْدَ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ ...

"Would that between me and thee were the distance of East and West!"

C4641. Distance of East and West: literally, 'distance of the two Easts'.

Most Commentators understand in this sense, but some construe the phrase as meaning the distance of the extreme points of the rising of the sun, between the summer solstice and the winter solstice. Cf. n. 4034 to 37:5.

A good equivalent idiom in English would be "poles apart", for they could never meet.

... فَبِئْسَ الْقَرِينُ (٣٨)

Ah! Evil is the companion (indeed)!

وَلَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ إِذْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ (٣٩)

39. When ye have done wrong, it will avail you nothing, that day, that ye shall be partners in punishment!

C4642. All partners in evil will certainly share in the punishment, but that is no consolation to any individual soul. Evil desires the evil of others, but that does not diminish its own torment, or get rid of the personal responsibility of each individual soul.

أَفَأَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصَّمَّمَ أَوْ تَهْدِي الْعُمْيَ ...

40. Canst thou then make the deaf to hear, or give direction to the blind

C4643. Cf. 30:52-53.

The evil go headlong into sin, and sink deeper and deeper until their spiritual faculties are deadened, and no outside help can bring them back. Allah's grace they have rejected.

... وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ (٤٠)

or to such as (wander) in manifest error?

C4644. There is hope for a person who wanders in quest of truth, and even for one who wanders through mistake or by weakness of will. But there is none for one who, by deliberate choice, plunges into "**manifest error**", i.e., error which any one can see.

فَأِمَّا نَذْهَبَنَّ بِكَ فَإِنَّا مِنْهُمْ مُنْتَقِمُونَ (٤١)

41. Even if We take **thee** away, We shall be sure to exact retribution from them.

C4645. Cf. 8:30: "how the Unbelievers plotted against thee, to keep thee in bonds, or slay thee, or get thee out (of thy home)".

They were always plotting against the holy Prophet in his Makkan period. But even if their plots had succeeded against human beings, they could not defeat Allah's Plan, nor escape the just punishment of their deeds.

Cf. also 10:46, and n. 1438.

أَوْ نُرِيكَ الَّذِي وَعَدْنَاهُمْ فَإِنَّا عَلَيْهِم مُّقْتَدِرُونَ (٤٢)

42. Or We shall show thee that (accomplished) which We have promised them:

for verily We shall prevail over them.

فَاسْتَمْسِكْ بِالَّذِي أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ...

43. So hold thou fast to the Revelation sent down to thee:

C4646. Let the wicked rage, say what they like, or do their worst: the prophet of Allah is encouraged to go forward steadfastly in the Light given him, for he is on a Path that leads straight to Allah. (R).

...إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (٤٣)

verily thou art on Straight Way.

وَأِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ (٤٤)

44. The (Qur'án) is indeed the **Message**, for thee and for thy people; and soon shall ye (all) be brought to account.

C4647. Dhikrun: Message, Remembrance, Cause of remembrance, Memorial. Title for remembrance to posterity.

Thus two meanings emerge, not necessarily mutually exclusive.

- The Quran brings a Message of Truth and Guidance to the Prophet, and his people;
- the revelation of the Quran raises the rank of the Prophet, and the people among whom, and in whose language, it was promulgated, making them worthy of remembrance in the world's history for all time.

But the honour also carried its responsibilities. All who hear it must give an account of how far they profit by it spiritually.

وَاسْأَلْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا ...

45. And question thou Our **messengers** whom We sent before thee;

C4648. That is, by examining their Message, and asking the learned among their real followers. It will be found that no Religion really teaches the worship of other than Allah.

... أَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ آلِهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ (٤٥)

did We appoint any deities other than (Allah) Most Gracious, to be worshipped?

Section 5

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَأِيهِ ...

46. We did send **Moses** aforetime, with Our Signs, to Pharaoh and his Chiefs:

C4649. For the story of Moses in detail, see 7:103-137, but especially 7:104, 130-136.

... فَقَالَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٤٦)

he said, "I am an messenger of the Lord of the Worlds."

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَضْحَكُونَ (٤٧)

47. But when he came to them with Our Signs, behold, they ridiculed them.

C4650. For the mockery of Moses and his Signs see 17:101; also below, 43:49, and 52-53.

وَمَا تُرِيهِمْ مِّنْ آيَةٍ إِلَّا هِيَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ أُخْتَيْهَا...

48. We showed them **Sign** after **Sign**, each grater then its fellow,

C4651. Moses showed them nine Clear Signs: see n. 1091 to 7:133; also 17:101.

Each one of them in its own setting and circumstances was greater than any of its "Sister" Signs.

The object was if possible to reclaim as many Egyptians as possible from their defiance of Allah.

...وَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ (٤٨)

and We seized them with Punishment, in order that they might turn (to Us).

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا السَّاحِرُ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ إِنَّنَا لَمُهْتَدُونَ (٤٩)

49. And they said,

"O thou Sorcerer! invoke thy Lord for us according to His covenant with thee; for We shall truly accept guidance."

C4652. This speech is half a mockery, and half a ruse. In spite of their unbelief, they had fear in their minds, and in order to stop the plagues, one after another, they promised to obey Allah, and when the particular plague was removed, they again became obdurate.

See 7:133-135.

فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابَ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُتُونَ (٥٠)

50. But when We removed the Penalty from them, behold, they broke their word.

وَنَادَى فِرْعَوْنُ فِي قَوْمِهِ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَلَيْسَ لِي مُلْكُ مِصْرَ...

51. And Pharaoh proclaimed among his people, saying:

"O my people! does not the dominion of Egypt belong to me,

...وَهَذِهِ الْأَنْهَارُ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِي...

(witness) these streams flowing underneath my (palace)?

C4653. The **waw** here in Arabic is the **Waw haliya**:

the abundant streams from the Nile flowing beneath his palace being evidence of his power, prosperity, and sovereignty.

The Nile made (and makes) Egypt, and the myth of the god Osiris was a compound of the myths of the Nile and the sun. The Pharaoh, therefore, as commanding the Nile, commanded the gods who personified Egypt. He boasted of water, and he perished in water,-a fitting punishment!

...أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ (٥١)

What! see ye not then?

أَمْ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ مَهِينٌ وَلَا يَكَادُ يُبِينُ (٥٢)

52. "Am I not better than this (Moses), who is a contemptible **wretch** and can scarcely express himself clearly?

C4654. Being a despised Israelite in any case, and having further an impediment in his speech.

See 20:27 and notes 2552-53.

فَلَوْلَا أُلْفِيَ عَلَيْهِ أَسْوِرَةٌ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مُقْتَرِنِينَ (٥٣)

53. "Then why are not gold bracelets bestowed on him

or (why) come (not) with him angels accompanying him in procession?"

C4655. Gold bracelets and gold chains were possibly among the insignia of royalty. In any case they betokened wealth, and the materialists judge a man's worth by his wealth and his following and equipage.

So Pharaoh wanted to see Moses, if he had any position in the spiritual kingdom, invested with gold bracelets, and followed by a great train of angels as his Knight-companions!

The same kind of proofs was demanded by the materialist Quraish of our holy Prophet. These were puerilities, but such puerilities go down with the crowd. Barring a few Egyptians who believed in Allah and in the Message of Moses, the rest of Pharaoh's entourage followed Pharaoh in his pursuit of revenge, and were drowned in the Red Sea.

فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ فَاطَاعُوهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ (٥٤)

54. Thus did he make fools of his people, and they obeyed him:
Truly were they a people rebellious (against Allah).

فَلَمَّا أَسَفَوْنَا انْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ ...

55. When at length they provoked Us, We exacted retribution from them,

C4656. Allah is patient, and gives many and many opportunities to the most hardened sinners for repentance. But at length comes a time when His justice is provoked, and the inevitable punishment follows.

... فَأَعْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ (٥٥)

and We drowned them all --

C4657. Cf. 7:136.

فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَفًا وَمَثَلًا لِلْآخِرِينَ (٥٦)

56. And We made them (a people) of the **Past** and an Example to later ages.

C4658. Pharaoh and his hosts were blotted out, and became as a tale of the past.

Their story is an instructive warning and example to future generations.

The later course of Egyptian religion after the Exodus is referred to in [Appendix V](#).

C.215 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(43:57-89)

*If Christians go back to Jesus, he
Was but a man and a servant of Allah:
He came to still the jarring sects,
Not to create a new one. He preached
The One True God, his Lord. So give up
Disputing, and join in devotion to Allah.
That is the Way to the Garden of Bliss,
But the opposite leads to the Fire. Beware!
The Truth has come, and Allah knows how you
Receive it. He is the Lord of power and mercy.
The Truth must prevail: resist it not.*

Section 6

وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلًا إِذَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْهُ يَصِدُّونَ (٥٧)

57. When (Jesus) the son of Mary is held up as an example, behold, thy people raise a clamor thereat (in ridicule)!

C4659. Jesus was a man, and a prophet to the Children of Israel, "though his own received him not."

Some of the churches that were founded after him worshipped him as "God" and as "the son of God", as do the Trinitarian churches to the present day. The orthodox churches did so in the time of the holy Prophet.

When the doctrine of Unity was renewed, and the false worship of others besides Allah was strictly prohibited, all false gods were condemned, e.g., at 21:98.

The pagan Arabs looked upon Jesus as being in the same category as their false gods, and could not see why a foreign cult, or a foreign god, as they viewed him, should be considered better than their own gods or idols.

There was no substance in this, but mere mockery, and verbal quibbling. Jesus was one of the greater prophets: he was not a god, nor was he responsible for the quibbling subtleties of the Athanasian Creed.

وَقَالُوا آلِهَتُنَا خَيْرٌ أَمْ هُوَ مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلًا...

58. And they say, "Are Our gods best, or He?"

This they set forth to thee, only by way of disputation:

...بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ (٥٨)

yea, they are a contentious people.

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا عَبْدٌ أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ مَثَلًا لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ (٥٩)

59. He was no more than a servant:

We granted Our favor to him, and We made him an example to the Children of Israel.

C4660. A reference to the limited mission of the prophet Jesus, whose Gospel to the Jews only survives in uncertain fragmentary forms.

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَلَائِكَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ يَخْلُقُونَ (٦٠)

60. And if it were Our Will, We could make angels from amongst you, succeeding each other on the earth.

C4661. If it were said that the birth of Jesus without a father sets him above other prophets, the creation of angels without either father or mother would set them still higher, especially as angels do not eat and drink and are not subject to physical laws. But angels are not higher.

وَأِنَّهُ لَعَلَّمٌ لِلسَّاعَةِ ...

61. And (Jesus) shall be a Sign (for the coming of) the Hour (of Judgment):

C4662. This is understood to refer to the second coming of Jesus in the Last Days before the Resurrection, when he will destroy the false doctrines that pass under his name, and prepare the way for the universal acceptance of Islam, the Gospel of Unity and Peace, the Straight Way of the Quran.

... فَلَا تَمْتَرْنَ بِهَا وَأَتَّبِعُونَ...

therefore have no doubt about the (Hour), but follow ye Me:

... هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ (٦١)

this is a Straight Way.

وَلَا يَصُدُّكُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ (٦٢)

62. Let not the Evil One hinder you: for he is to you an enemy avowed.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ عِيسَى بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالَ...

63. When Jesus came with Clear Signs, he said:

...فَقَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَلِأُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي تَخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ...

"Now have I come to you with **Wisdom**, and in order to make clear to you some of the (points) on which ye dispute:

C4663. True wisdom consists in understanding the unity of the Divine purpose and the Unity of the Divine Personality. The man Jesus came to reconcile the jarring sects in Israel, and his true teaching was just the same as that which was expounded in a wider form by Islam. He did not claim to be God: why should not the Christians follow the doctrine of Unity rather than what has become their ancestral and traditional custom?

...فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا (٦٣)

therefore fear Allah and obey me.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ ...

64. "For Allah; He is my Lord and your Lord: so worship ye Him:

C4664.

- In verses 26-28 an appeal is made to the pagan Arabs, that Islam is their own religion, the religion of Abraham their ancestor;
- in verses 46-54, an appeal is made to the Jews that Islam is the same religion as was taught by Moses,

and that they should not allow their leaders to make fools of them;

- in verses 57-65 an appeal is made to the Christians that Islam is the same religion as was taught by Jesus, and that they should give up their sectarian attitude and follow the universal religion, which shows the Straight Way.

... هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ (٦٤)

this is a Straight Way."

فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ...

65. But sects from among themselves fell into disagreement:

...فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ (٦٥)

then woe to the wrongdoers, from the Penalty of a Grievous Day!

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ (٦٦)

66. Do they only wait for the Hour --

that it should come on them all of a sudden, while they perceive not?

C4665. Cf. 12:107.

What is there to wait for?

The Hour of Judgment may come at any moment. It will come all of a sudden before they realise that it is on them. They should make up their minds to give up misleading disputations and come to the Straight Path.

الْأَخِيَاءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ (٦٧)

67. Friends on that Day will be foes, one to another, except the Righteous.

C4666. The hatred and spite, which are associated with evil, will be felt with peculiar intensity in that period of agony. That itself would be a punishment, from which the righteous will be free. The righteous will have passed all perils of falling into wrong frames of mind.

Section 7

يَا عِبَادِ ...

68. My devotees!

C4667. The devotion and service to Allah result in the soul being made free from all fear and sorrow, as regards the past, present, and future, if we may take an analogy from Time for a timeless state. Such devotion and service are shown by

- believing in Allah's Signs, which means understanding and accepting His Will, and
- by merging our will completely in His universal Will, which means being in tune with the Infinite, and acting in all things to further His Kingdom.

... لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ (٦٨)

no fear shall be on you that Day, nor shall ye grieve --

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ (٦٩)

69. (Being) those who have believed in Our Signs and bowed (their wills to Ours) in Islam.

ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُحْبَرُونَ (٧٠)

70. Enter ye the Garden, ye and your wives, in (beauty and) rejoicing.

C4668. The **Garden** is the type of all that is beautiful to eye, mind, and soul, all that is restful and in tune, a complete state of bliss, such as we can scarcely conceive of in this troubled world.

Several metaphors indicate how we can try to picture that bliss to ourselves in "this muddy vesture of decay."

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِصِحَافٍ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُيهِ

الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ ...

71. To them will be passed round, dishes and goblets of gold:

there will be there all that the souls could desire, all that the eyes could delight in:

C4669. We shall have all our neat and dear ones ("wives") with us: perfected Love will not be content with Self, but like a note of music will find its melody in communion with the others. The richest and most beautiful vessels will minister to our purified desires, and give complete and eternal satisfaction to our souls in every way.

...وَأَنْتُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ (٧١)

and ye shall abide therein (for aye).

وَتِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (٧٢)

72. Such will be the Garden of which ye are **made heirs** for your (good) **deeds** (in life).

C4670. We shall be there, not as strangers, or temporary guests, but as heirs,-made heirs in eternity because of the good lives we had led on earth.

لَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ ...

73. Ye shall have therein abundance of **fruit**,

C4671. The "**fruit**" here links on with the last words in the last verse (72), "ye are made heirs for your (good) deeds (in life)".

It is not a doctrine of "rewards", strictly so called.

A reward is measured by merit, but here the bliss is beyond all merits or deserts. It is a doctrine of works and their fruits: every deed must have its inevitable consequences.

At first sight it may be compared to the doctrine of "Karma". but it differ from it in postulating Allah's unbounded Mercy, and the efficacy of Repentance. (R).

... مِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ (٧٣)

from which ye shall have satisfaction.

C4672. "Shall eat". But the word **akala** is used in many places in the comprehensive sense of "enjoy", "**have satisfaction**". For example, see n. 776 to 5:66.

Cf. also 7:19 and n. 1004.

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ (٧٤)

74. The Sinners will be in the Punishment of Hell,
to dwell therein (for aye):

لَا يُفْتَرُ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ (٧٥)

75. Nowise will the (punishment) be lightened for them, and in
despair will they be there overwhelmed.

وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ ...

76. Nowise shall We be unjust to them:

C4673. The wrong-doers suffer not because Allah is unjust or cruel, nor as a deterrent to others, for the probationary period will then have passed, but because their evil deeds must bear their inevitable fruit. Allah's Grace was ever ready to offer opportunities for Repentance and Forgiveness. But they rejected them. They were unjust to themselves. This is complementary to the doctrine of works and their fruits, as explained in [n. 4671](#) above.

... وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ (٧٦)

but it is they who have been unjust themselves.

وَنَادَوْا يَا مَالِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ...

77. They will cry:

"O Malik! would that thy Lord put and end to us!"

C4674. Malik: The name of the Angel in charge of Hell.

... قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ مَّا كُنْتُمْ

He will say, "Nay, but ye shall abide!"

C4675. Cf. 20:74.

Annihilation is better than agony. But wrong-doers cannot destroy the "fruits" of their actions, by asking for annihilation.

لَقَدْ جِئْنَاكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كَارِهُونَ (٧٨)

78. Verily We have brought the truth to you: but most of you have a
hatred for Truth.

C4676. We come back now to the Present,-primarily to the time when Islam was being preached in Makkah, but by analogy the present time or any time.

Truth is often bitter to the taste of those who live on Falsehoods, and Shams and profit by them. They hate the Truth, and plot against it. But will they succeed? See next verse and note.

أَمْ أُبْرِمُوا أَمْرًا ...

79. What!

have they settled some Plan (among themselves)?

C4677. Men cannot settle the high affairs of the universe. If they plot against the Truth, the Truth will destroy them, just as, if they accept the Truth, the Truth will make them free. It is Allah Who disposes of affairs.

... فَإِنَّا مُبْرِمُونَ (٧٩)

But it is We Who settle things.

أَمْ يَحْسُبُونَ أَنَّا لَأَن نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ...

80. Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private counsels?

C4678. However secretly men may plot, everything is known to Allah. His Recording Angels are by, at all times and in all places, to prepare a Record of their Deeds for their own conviction when the time comes for Judgment.

...بَلَىٰ وَرُسُلْنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ (٨٠)

Indeed (We do), and Our Messengers are by them, to record.

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ (٨١)

81. Say:

"If (Allah) Most Gracious had a son, I would be the first to worship."

C4679. The prophet of Allah does not object to true worship in any form. But it must be true: it must not superstitiously attribute derogatory things to Allah, or foster false ideas.

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ ...

82. Glory to the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne (of Authority)!

C4680. Cf. 7:54 and n. 1032.

All Power, Authority, Knowledge, and Truth are with Allah. He neither begets nor is begotten. Glory to Him!

... عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ (٨٢)

(He is free) from the things they attribute (to Him)!

فَدَرُّهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ (٨٣)

83. So leave them to babble and play (with vanities) until they meet that Day of theirs, which they have been promised.

C4681. That Day of theirs: they had their Day on earth;

they will have a different sort of Day in the Hereafter, according to the promise of Allah about the Resurrection and Judgment, or perhaps about Retribution in this very life! So leave them to play about with their fancies and vanities. Truth must eventually prevail!

وَهُوَ الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ إِلَهٌ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَهٌ...

84. It is He Who is Allah in heaven and Allah on earth;

...وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ (٨٤)

and He is full of Wisdom and Knowledge.

وَتَبَارَكَ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا...

85. And blessed is He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all between them:

C4682. We glorify Allah, and we call His name blessed, because He has not only supreme power and authority, but because we shall return to Him and see "the Light of His Countenance" (30:38).

...وَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (٨٥)

with Him is the knowledge of the Hour (of Judgment):

And to Him shall ye be brought back.

وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ...

86. And those whom they invoke besides Allah have no power of intercession;

...إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ (٨٦)

only he who bears witness to the Truth, and they know (him).

C4683. The classical Commentators construe this clause differently. According to their construction, the clause would be translated,

“except those who bear witness to the Truth, and with full knowledge.”

“Truth” they would construe to be the Gospel of Unity.

According to them, while idols and false gods have no power of intercession, person like Jesus, who is falsely worshipped by his misguided followers, but who himself preached the Gospel of unity with full understanding, will have the power of intercession.

This implies that we construe the singular *man shahida* to refer to the same person or persons as the plural *hum ya'lamun*.

This difficulty is removed if we construe as I have translated it. In that case

“he who bears witness to truth” is the holy Prophet, who came to renew the Gospel of Unity, and

“they know (him)” would refer to the Quraysh, amongst whom he was brought up and among whom he earned the reputation of being a man of probity (Amin).

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ ...

87. If thou ask them, Who Created them, they will certainly say, Allah:

C4684. Cf. 31:25, and n. 3613; and 39:38, and n. 4299.

... فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ (٨٧)

how then are they deluded away (from the Truth)?

... وَقِيلَهُ ...

88. (Allah has knowledge) of the (Prophet's) cry,

C4685. Commentators are divided in opinion as to the construction. The best opinion is that which I have adopted, referring back **qilihi** as a genitive governed by 'ilm in verse 85.

An alternative construction is to construe the *waw* here as the *waw qasamiyah*: in that case we should have to suppose some other clause as understood, in order to complete the sense.

... يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ لَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ (٨٨)

"O my Lord! truly these are a people who will not believe!"

C4686. The Prophet was much troubled in mind by the Unfaith of the Quraish: 18:6.

He is here told to leave them alone for a time, for the Truth must soon prevail.

... فَاصْفَحْ عَنْهُمْ وَقُلْ سَلَامٌ ...

89. But turn away from them, and say

"Peace!"

C4687. Cf. 25:63, and n. 3123.

... فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ (٨٩)

but soon shall they know!