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**THE
HOLY QURAN**

**ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 46
SURAH AL-AHQAF**

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

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HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

046

SURAH AL-AHQAF

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Introduction and Summary

This is the seventh and last Surah of the **Ha Mim** series. For the general theme and chronological place of these Surahs see the [Introduction to Surah 40](#).

The *Ahqaf* (mentioned in verse 21) are the long and winding crooked tracts of sandhills, characteristic of the country of the 'Ad people, adjoining Hadramawt and Yemen; see 7:65, n. 1040. These people had, at that time, probably a fertile irrigated country, but their sins brought on the calamity mentioned in 46:24-25. The lesson of this Surah is that if the Truth is challenged, the challenge will be duly answered, and Truth vindicated.

Summary- All Creation has a purpose behind it: Truth and Revelation will be vindicated, and those who question it will be undone by the very means by which they set such store: the righteous should wait in patience and constancy (46:1-35, and C. 219).

C.221 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

*Creation is for just ends, and Falsehood
Is but straying from the Path:
Say what people may
Truth carries its own vindication:
Follow it firmly. Let age think of youth,
And youth not turn rebellious. There are fine
Gradation in the kingdom of Allah; then strive
For the best. Let not pride and arrogance
Undo you: the humble are often the best
Recipients of Truth. All will come right
In good time: so persevere with patient firmness
Of purpose. Justice that seems to tarry
Comes really on swiftest foot but sure.*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

حم (۱)

1. Ha Mim.

C4774. See Introduction to Surah 40.

تَنْزِیْلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِیْزِ الْحَكِیْمِ (۲)

2. The **revelation** of the Book is from Allah the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom.

C4775. This verse is the same as the second verse of the last Surah, but the theme is worked out differently in the two Surah.

In Surah 45 was shown how deniers of Revelation will at last be humbled until they can no longer deny its truth and power. In this Surah is shown how Truth and Revelation will be vindicated by patience and constancy (46:35).

مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى...

3. We created not the heavens and the earth and all between them but for just ends, and for a term appointed:

C4776. Cf. 45:22.

Many things may appear to us in the present world as strange and inexplicable. But everything made by Allah has a just purpose which must be fulfilled.

Nothing in this world is permanent: everything is for an appointed term. The Word of Allah alone abides. All else will pass away after it has fulfilled its purpose. But Unbelievers refuse to face the danger of which they are warned.

...وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَمَّا أُنذِرُوا مُّعْرِضُونَ (٣)

but those who reject Faith turn away from that whereof they are warned.

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ...

4. Say:

"Do ye see what it is ye invoke besides Allah?"

C4777. Some people may rush thoughtlessly into false worship, because it is the fashion or an ancestral custom, etc. They are asked to pause and see for themselves.

Have the false gods or falsehood created anything? (They destroy much).

Or have they any share or lot in the things we associate with the heavens,-spiritual well-being, etc.?

... أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ...

Show me what it is they have created on earth,

...أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ...

or have they a share in the heavens?

...إِنِّي نَزَّيْتُ بِكِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ هَذَا ...

Bring me a Book (revealed) before this,

C4778. 'Or is there any warrant for you from any earlier revelation, assuming that you do not believe in this Revelation?

Or can you point to the least scrap or remnant of real knowledge on which you can base what We condemn as your false life?'

No, you cannot.

... أَوْ آثَارَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (٤)

or any remnant of knowledge (ye may have), if ye are telling the truth!"

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُو مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَن لَّا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ...

5. And who is more astray than one who invokes, besides Allah, such as will not answer him to the Day of Judgement,

C4779. As there is no argument at all in favour of your sham worship, what sense is there in it?

Either your false gods are senseless stocks and stones which will never answer you to the end of Time, being themselves devoid of understanding, or they are real objects which will disown you at the last.

If you worshipped Self, your own misused faculties will witness against you at the last (41:20-23).

If you worshipped good men or prophets, like Jesus, they will disown you (5:116-117). Similarly, if you worshipped angels, they will disown you (34:40-41).

...وَهُمْ عَن دُعَائِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ (٥)

and who (in fact) are unconscious of their call (to them)?

وَإِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوا لَهُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَكَانُوا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ (٦)

6. And when mankind are gathered together (at the Resurrection), they will be hostile to them and reject their worship (altogether)!

وَإِذَا نُنزِلُ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ ...

7. When Our Clear Signs are rehearsed to them, the Unbelievers say, of the Truth when it comes to them:

C4780. When the truth is actually brought to their doors, they call it sorcery!

Cf. 37:12-15, and n. 4042.

... هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ (٧)

"This is evident sorcery!"

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ...

8. Or do they say, "He has forged it"?

... قُلْ إِنْ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَلَا تَمْلِكُونَ لِي مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا...

"Had I forged it, then can ye obtain no single (blessing) for me from Allah.

C4781. 'If I forged a message from myself as one purporting to come from Allah, you would not be able to see me enjoy any of the blessings from Allah which I enjoy: you would not see me calm and relying on Allah, nor would you see me bear the reputation of being a trustworthy man. A liar comes to an evil end.

But what about those who talk so glibly and freely about things which they knows not? Allah knows all and He is my witness!

But even against your false accusation, I pray for His forgiveness and mercy to you, for He is oft-Forgiving, Most merciful!

... هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ كَفَىٰ بِهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ...

He knows best of that whereof ye talk (so glibly)!

Enough is He for a witness between me and you!

...وَهُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ (٨)

And He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدَعَا مَنْ الرُّسُلَ وَمَا أَدْرِي مَا يُفَعَّلُ بِي وَلَا بَكُمْ...

9. Say:

"I am no bringer of new-fangled doctrine among the messengers, nor do I know what will be done with me or with you.

C4782. 'What is there to forge? All prophets have taught the Unity of Allah and our duty to mankind. I bring no new fangled doctrine, but eternal truths that have been known to good men through the ages. It is to reclaim you that I have come, I do not know what will be your fate for all this callousness, nor what you will do to me. But this I know, that I am preaching truth and righteousness as inspired by Allah. My duty is only to proclaim aloud and clearly the Message entrusted to me by Allah. The rest I leave to Allah.'

...إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ (٩)

I follow but that which is revealed to me by inspiration: I am but a Warner open and clear."

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ...

10. Say:

"See ye? If (this teaching) be from Allah, and ye reject it,

C4783. Another side of the argument is now presented.

'You pagan Arabs! You are puffed up with pride, though you are an ignorant nation. Among Israel there are men who understand the previous scriptures, and who find in the Quran and its Preacher a true confirmation of the previous scriptures.

They accept Islam as a fulfilment of the revelation of Moses himself! (See Deut. 18:18-19).

And yet you hold back, though the Quran has come in your own language, in order to help you to understand. How unjust and how shameful!

In that case, with what face can you seek guidance from Allah?'

... وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَىٰ مِثْلِهِ فَأَمَنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا...
... and a witness from among the Children of Israel testifies to its

similarity (with earlier scriptures), and has believed while ye are arrogant,

C4784. There were learned Jews (and Christians) who saw in the holy Prophet the Messenger of Allah foreshadowed in previous Revelations, and accepted Islam.

As this is a Makkan Surah we need not construe this as a reference to Abdullah ibn Salam, whose conversion was in Madinah only two years before the Prophet's death, unless we accept this particular verse to be so late in date. The sincere Jews were in a position to understand how this Revelation fitted in with all they had learnt about Revelation.

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (١٠)

(how unjust ye are!) truly, Allah guides not a people unjust."

Section 2

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَّوْنَا إِلَيْهِ...

11. The Unbelievers say of those who believe:

"If (this Message) were a good thing, (such men) would not have gone to it first, before us!"

C4785. A great many of the early Muslims were in humble positions, and were despised by the Quraish leaders. 'If such men could see any good in Islam, they said, 'there could be no good in it: if there had been any good in it, we should have been the first to see it!'

The spiritually blind have such a good conceit of themselves!

... وَإِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوا بِهِ فَسَيَقُولُونَ هَذَا إِفْكٌ قَدِيمٌ (١١)

and seeing that they guide not themselves thereby, they will say,

"This is an (old), old falsehood!"

As they reject it, and as the Revelation is proved to have historic foundations, they can only call it "an old, old falsehood"!

وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كِتَابُ مُوسَى إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً...

12. And before this, was the Book of Moses as a guide and a mercy;

C4786. The last revealed Book which was a Code of Life (Shariah) was the Book of Moses; for that of Jesus was not such a Code, but merely moral precepts to sweep away the corruptions that had crept in. The Quran has the same attitude to it as the teaching of Jesus had to the Law. Jesus said (Matt. 5:17): "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

But the corruptions took new forms in Christian Churches: an entirely new Shariah became necessary, and this was provided in Islam.

... وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّسَانًا عَرَبِيًّا ...

and this Book confirms (it) in the Arabic tongue;

... لِيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَبُشِّرَى لِّلْمُحْسِنِينَ (١٢)

to admonish the unjust, and as Glad Tidings to those who do right.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا ...

13. Verily those who say,

"Our Lord is Allah," and remain firm (on that Path) --

C4787. To say, "**Our Lord is Allah**" is to acknowledge that we owe no service to any creature, and shall render none: Allah shall have our exclusive devotion.

"**To remain firm on that Path**" is shown by our conduct.- we prove that we love Allah and all His creatures, and will unflinchingly do our duty in all circumstances.

... فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ (١٣)

on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

C4788. Cf. 2:38.

The phrase occurs in numerous other places, with a new application on each occasion.

Here, if our claim is true that 'our Lord is Allah', what fear can possibly come on us, or what calamity can there be to cause us grief? For our Lord is our Cherisher, Defender, and Helper, our Hope and our Comfort, which can never fail.

أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا جَزَاءَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (٤١)

14. Such shall be Companions of the Garden, dwelling Therein (for aye):
a recompense for their (good) deeds.

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا ...

15. We have enjoined on man Kindness to his parents:

C4789. Cf. 29:8 and 31:14.

... حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا ...

in pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth.

... وَوَحَمَلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا ...

The carrying of the (child) to his weaning is (a period of) thirty months.

C4790. In 31:14 the time of weaning was stated to be at the age of two years, i.e., 24 months. See also 2:233.

That leaves six months as the minimum period of human gestation after which the child is known to be viable.

This is in accordance with the latest ascertained scientific facts. The average period is 280 days, or ten times the inter-menstrual period, and of course the average period of weaning is much less than 24 months.

The maximum period of breast-feeding (2 years) is again in accordance with the time that the first dentition is ordinarily completed in a human child.

The lower milk incisors in the centre come out between the 6th and 9th months; then come out the milk teeth at intervals, until the canines appear. The second molars come out at about 24 months, and with them the child has a complete apparatus of milk teeth. Nature now expects him to chew and masticate and be independent of his mother's milk completely. On the other hand it hurts the mother to feed from the breast after the child has a complete set of milk teeth.

The permanent teeth begin at the sixth year, and the second molars come at 12 years. The third molars are the wisdom teeth, which may appear at 18 to 20 years, or not at all.

...حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ...

At length, when he reaches the age of full **strength** and attains forty years, he says,

C4791. The age of full strength (**ashudd**) is held to be between 18 and 30 To 32. Between 30 and 40 the man is in his best manhood. After that he begins to look to his growing issue, and rightly commends the new generation to Allah. Perhaps his spiritual faculties also gain the upper hand after 40.

...رَبِّ أَوْزَعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ...

"O my Lord! grant me that I may be grateful for Thy favor which Thou hast bestowed upon me, and upon both my parents,

...وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحَ لِي فِي دُرِّيَّتِي...

and that I may work righteousness such as Thou mayest approve;

and be gracious to me in my issue.

...إِنِّي نُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ (١٥)

Truly have I turned to Thee and truly do I bow (to Thee) in Islam."

...وَأُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا...

16. Such are they from whom We shall accept the best of their deeds

C4792. Cf. 29:7 and n. 3429.

...وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ...

and pass by their ill deeds:

(they shall be) among the Companions of the Garden:

...وَعَدَ الصِّدْقَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ (١٦)

a promise of truth, which was made to them (in this life).

وَالَّذِي قَالَ لِوَالِدَيْهِ ...

17. But (there is one) who says to his parents,

C4793. A godly man often has an ungodly son, who flouts all that the father held sacred, and looks upon his father himself as old-fashioned and unworthy of respect or regard.

The contrast in an individual family may be matched by the contrast in the passing and the rising generations of mankind. All this happens as a passing phase in the nominal evolution of mankind, and there is nothing in this to be despondent about.

What we have to do is for the mature generations to bring up their successors in godly ways, and for the younger generations to realise that age and experience count for something, especially in the understanding of spiritual matters and other matters of the highest moment to man.

... أَفْ لَكُمَا أَتَعِدَانِي أَنْ أُخْرَجَ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ الْفُرُوزُ مِنْ قَبْلِي...

"Fie on you!

Do ye hold out the promise to me that I shall be raised up, even though generations have passed before me (without rising again)?"

... وَهُمَا يَسْتَعِينَانِ اللَّهَ وَيَلْتَكِمُ آمِنٌ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ...

And they two seek Allah's aid, (and rebuke the son):

"Woe to thee! have Faith! For the promise of Allah is true."

...فَيَقُولُ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ (١٧)

But he says, "This is nothing but tales of the ancients!"

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمَمٍ...

18. Such are they against **whom** is proved the Sentence among

C4794. Cf. 41:25 and n. 4494,

Each individual, each generation, and each people is responsible for its own good deeds or misdeeds. The law of actions and their fruits applies: you cannot blame one for another. The only remedy lies in seeking for Allah's Grace and Mercy, not only for ourselves but for others in brotherly or fatherly love.

This verse is in balanced contrast to verse 16 above,

قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مَنَّ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَاسِرِينَ (١٨)

the previous generations of Jinns and men, that have passed away; for they will be (utterly) lost.

وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٍ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا وَلِيُوقَفِيَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ (١٩)

19. And to **all** are (assigned) degrees according to the deeds which they (have done), and in order that (Allah) may recompense their deeds, and no injustice be done to them.

C4795. There is fine grading in the Hereafter. Every deed, good or bad, is judged and weighed to the minutest degree, with its motives, intentions, results, and relevant circumstances.

It is not a mere rough classification. The fruits of evil will be exactly according to the degree of evil. But, as stated in other passages (e.g., 28:84), the reward of good deeds will be far beyond their merits, on account of the Mercy and unbounded Bounty of Allah.

وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ...

20. And on the Day that the Unbelievers will be placed before the Fire,

...أَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبَاتِكُمْ فِي حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا وَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا...

(it will be said to them): "Ye received your good things in the life of the world, and ye took your pleasure out of them:

C4796. "Received your good things" implies (in Arabic) grabbing at them, being greedy of them, seeking them as fleeting pleasures rather than the more serious things of life, sacrificing the spiritual for the material.

... فَأَلْيَوْمَ تُجْرَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ...

but today shall ye be **recompensed** with a Penalty of humiliation:

C4797. They will be told: 'You took your choice, and you must pay the price, You did wrong in a rebellious spirit, and prided yourselves on your wrong-doing, not occasionally, but of set purpose and constantly. Now you will be humbled in the dust, as a fitting punishment.'

... بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْسُقُونَ (٢٠)

for that ye were arrogant on earth without just cause, and that ye (ever) transgressed."

Section 3

وَأَذْكُرَ أَخَا عَادٍ ...

21. Mention (Hud) one of 'Ad's (own) brethren:

C4798. Cf. 7:65. and n. 1040.

The point is that the Warner who was raised among the 'Ad people-as among other peoples-was not a stranger, but one of their own brethren, even as the holy Prophet began his preaching with a call to his own brethren the Quraysh.

... إِذْ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ بِالْأَحْقَافِ...

behold, he warned his people about the winding Sand-tracts:

C4799. Winding Sand-tracts: Ahqaf: see [Introduction to this Surah](#).

The very things, which, under irrigation and with Allah's Grace, gave them prosperity and power, were to be their undoing when they broke Allah's Law and defied His Grace.

See [verses 24-26 below](#).

...وَقَدْ خَلَتْ النُّذُرُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ...

but there have been Warners before him and after him:

"Worship ye none other than Allah:

...إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ (٢١)

truly I fear for you the Penalty of a Mighty Day."

قَالُوا أَجِئْنَا لِنُؤْفِكَنَا عَنْ آلِهَتِنَا...

22. They said:

"Hast thou **come** in order to turn us aside from Our gods?

C4800. They were too much wedded to their evil ways-to the false gods that they worshipped-to appreciate the sincere advice of the prophet of Allah. They defied him and defied Allah Who had sent him. Mockingly they challenged him to bring on the threatened punishment! For they did not believe a word of what he said.

...فَأْتِنَا بِمَا نَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ (٢٢)

Then bring upon us the (calamity) with which thou dost threaten us, if thou art telling the truth!"

قَالَ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ...

23. He said:

"The **Knowledge** (of when it will come) is only with Allah:

C4801. The coming of the Punishment for evil was (and is always) certain. At what particular time it would come he could not tell. It is not for the prophet, but for Allah, to bring on the Penalty. But he saw that it was useless to appeal to them on account of the ignorance in which they were content to dwell.

...وَأَبْلَعُكُمْ مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَأَيْكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ (٢٣)

I proclaim to you the mission on which I have been sent: but I see that ye are a people in ignorance!"...

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ عَارِضًا مُسْتَقْبِلَ أَوْدِيَّتِهِمْ ...

24. Then, when they saw the (Penalty in the shape of) a cloud traversing the sky, coming to meet their valleys,

C4802. The Punishment came suddenly, and when they least expected it. They wanted rain, and they saw a cloud and rejoiced. Behold, it was coming towards their own tracts, winding through the hills. Their irrigation channels would be full, their fields would be green, and their season would be fruitful.

But no!

What is this?

It is a tremendous hurricane, carrying destruction on its wings! A violent blast, with dust and sand! Its fury destroys everything in its wake! Lives lost! Fields covered with sand-hills!

The morning dawns on a scene of desolation! Where were the men who boasted and defied their Lord! There are only the ruins of their houses to witness to the past!

... قَالُوا هَذَا عَارِضٌ مُّمْطِرُنَا...

they said,

"This cloud will give us rain!"

... بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهِ رِيحٌ فِيهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (٢٤)

"Nay,

it is the (calamity) ye were asking to be hastened! --

a wind wherein is a Grievous Penalty!

... نُذَمَّرُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّهَا ...

25. "Everything will it destroy by the command of its Lord!"

... فَأَصْبَحُوا لَا يُرَىٰ إِلَّا مَسَاكِينُهُمْ...

Then by the morning **they** -- nothing was to be seen but (the ruins of) their houses!

C4803. Here is the figure of speech known in rhetoric as aposiopesis, to heighten the effect of the suddenness and completeness of the calamity.

In the Arabic text, the verb **asbahu**, in the third person plural, leads us to expect that we shall be told what they were doing in the morning. But no! They had been wiped

out, and any small remnant had fled (see n. 1040 to 7:65). Nothing was to be seen but the ruins of their houses.

...كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ (٢٥)

Thus do We recompense those given to sin!

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِيمَا إِنْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِيهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا وَأَبْصَارًا وَأَفْئِدَةً...

26. And We had firmly established them in a (prosperity and) power which We have not given to you (ye Quraish!) and We had endowed them with (faculties of) hearing, seeing, heart and intellect:

C4804. The 'Ad and their successors the Thamud were more richly endowed with the faculties of the arts, sciences, and culture than ever were the Quraish before Islam.

"Hearing and seeing" refer to the experimental faculties;

the word "**heart**" in Arabic includes intellect, or the rational faculties, as well as the instruments of feeling and emotion, the aesthetic faculties.

The Second 'Ad, or Thamud, have left interesting traces of their architecture in the country round the Hijr: see n. 1043 to 7:73, and notes 2002-3 to 15:80-82.

...فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُهُمْ وَلَا أَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ...

but of no profit to them were their (faculties of) hearing, sight, and heart and intellect,

...إِذْ كَانُوا يَجْحَدُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ...

when they went on rejecting the Signs of Allah;

C4805. The highest talents and faculties of this world are useless in the next world if we reject the laws of Allah and thus become outlaws there.

... وَحَاقَ بِهِم مَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِؤْنَ (٢٦)

and they were (completely) **encircled** by that which they used to mock at!

C4806. See n. 4770 to 45:33.

They used to mock at Allah's Signs, but those were the very things which hemmed them in, and showed that they had more power and effectiveness than anything else.

Section 4

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا مَا حَوْلَكُمْ مِّنَ الْقُرَىٰ ...

27. We destroyed aforetime populations round about you;

C4807. In Arabian history and tradition alone, to say nothing of Allah's Signs elsewhere, sin inevitably suffered its Punishment, and in various ways. Would not the later people take warning?

... وَصَرَّفْنَا الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ (٢٧)

and We have shown the Signs in various ways, that they may turn (to Us).

قُلُوبًا نَّصَرَّهُمْ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ قُرْبَانًا آلِهَةً...

28. Why then was no help forthcoming to them from those whom they worshipped as gods, besides Allah, as a means of access (to Allah)?

...بَلْ ضَلُّوا عَنْهُمْ...

Nay, they left them in the lurch:

...وَذَلِكَ إِفْكُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ (٢٨)

but that was their Falsehood and their invention.

C4808. The false things that they worshipped were figments of their imagination. If they had had any existence in fact, it was not of the kind they imagined.

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمْعُونَ الْقُرْآنَ...

29. Behold, We turned towards thee a company of Jinns (quietly) listening to the Qur'án:

C4809. A company of Jinns. **Nafar** (company) may mean a group of from three to ten persons.

For Jinns, see n. 929 to 6:100.

They listened to the reading of the Quran with great respect.

The next verse shows that they had heard of the Jewish religion, but they were impressed with the Message of Islam, and they seem to have gone back to their people to share the Good News with them. (R).

...فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ قَالُوا أَنْصَبُوا فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِم مُّذْنِبِينَ (٢٩)

when they stood in the presence thereof, they said,

"Listen in silence!"

When the (reading) was finished, they returned to their people, to warn (them of their sins).

قَالُوا يَا قَوْمَنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَابًا أُنزِلَ مِن بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰ...

30. They said,

"O our people! We have heard a Book revealed after Moses,

...مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَإِلَىٰ طَرِيقٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ (٣٠)

confirming what came before it:

it guides (men) to the Truth and to a Straight Path.

يَا قَوْمَنَا أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ وَآمِنُوا بِهِ ...

31. "O our people,

hearken to the one who **invites** (you) to Allah, and believe in him:

C4810. The one who invites all to Allah is the holy Prophet. He invites us to Allah: if we believe in Allah and His Prophet, Allah will forgive us our sins on our repentance and amendment of our lives, and save us the Penalty of the future life.

...يَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ...

He will forgive you your faults,

...وَيُجْرِمُكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ (٣١)

and deliver you from a Penalty Grievous.

وَمَنْ لَّا يُجِبْ دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ...

32. "If any does not hearken to the one who invites (Us) to Allah, he **cannot** frustrate (Allah's Plan) on earth,

C4811. If a person refuses to believe the Truth, or opposes it, it has not the least effect on Allah's holy Plan, which will go on to its completion; but it will deprive him of Grace and of any protection whatever; he will wander about as an outlaw in manifest helplessness.

...وَلَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ...

and no protectors can he have besides Allah:

...أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ (٣٢)

such men (wander) in manifest error."

أُولَئِكَ يَرَوْنَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْْيَ بِخَلْقِهِنَّ...

33. See they not that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, and never wearied with their creation,

C4812. Cf. 2:255 (Verse of the Throne): "His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them."

He Whose power is constant and unwearied in creating and preserving all things in heaven and earth can surely give life to the dead at the Resurrection.

...بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَى...

is able to give life to the dead?

...بَلَىٰ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (٣٣)

Yea, verily He has power over all things.

وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ ...

34. And on the **Day that** the Unbelievers will be placed before the Fire, (they will be asked,)

C4813. Cf. 46:20, where the argument was closed about the undutiful son of a good father. After that the example of the 'Ad and of the believing Jinns was cited, and now is closed that argument in similar terms.

... أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ ...

"Is this not the Truth?"

... قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّنَا ...

They will say, "Yea, by our Lord!"

... قَالَ فذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ (٣٤)

(One will say:) "Then taste ye the Penalty, for that ye were wont to deny (Truth)!"

C4814. The Truth which they denied is now all too clear to them. They are out of the Light of Truth, out of the Light of Allah's Countenance. And that in itself is a terrible Penalty.

فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ...

35. Therefore patiently persevere, as did (all) messengers of inflexible purpose; and be in no haste about the (Unbelievers).

... كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبِثُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّن نَّهَارٍ ...

On the Day that they see the (Punishment) promised them, (it will be) as if they had not tarried more than an hour in a single day.

C4815. All spiritual work proceeds in its own good time. We should never be impatient either about its success or about the punishment which is bound to come for those who oppose it or wish to suppress it.

The inevitable punishment is spoken of as the Punishment promised. It will come so soon and so suddenly that it will appear as if there was not the delay of a single hour in a single day!

Time is a great factor in our affairs in this world, but it hardly counts in the spiritual Kingdom.

...بلاغ...

(Thine but) to proclaim the Message:

C4816. The Preacher's duty is to proclaim the Message in unmistakable terms. If any human beings come in the way, it will be to their own destruction; but none but rebellious transgressor will be punished. There is always hope and forgiveness for repentance and amendment.

... فَهَلْ يُهْلَكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (٣٥)

but shall any be destroyed except those who transgress?