



CHAPTER 6

Al-An‘ām: The Cattle

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 20 sections; 165 verses)

The name of this chapter is taken from the mention of *cattle* in connection with certain superstitions and idolatrous practices of the Arabs, the abolition of which was needed to establish the doctrine of Divine Unity in all its purity. The object of Islām was not simply to preach Unity, but to make it the basis of a Muslim’s practical life, and so to uproot all idolatrous practices.

The last chapter deals towards its close with the Christian doctrine of the deification of Jesus, and hence this chapter is introduced to deal at length with the doctrine of Divine Unity and its ultimate triumph, not only over idolatry, but over all kinds of polytheism. The Prophet had preached this noble doctrine for twelve whole years, without apparently causing any great change in the national idol-worship of the people. To an outward observer, therefore, the cause of the Prophet seemed an utter failure, yet so marvellous was his faith in the ultimate triumph of Divine Unity that no obstacle, no apparent failure, had shaken it in the least, and the words with which this chapter opens were uttered with unshakable confidence in the ultimate triumph of his cause, as if he had never received the least check in his onward course, and as though the goal was not only within sight, but close at hand.

Opening with a forcible declaration of the ultimate triumph of Divine Unity, and referring to the greatness of His mercy in the second section, the doctrine of Unity being always combined with the doctrine of the unique mercy of the Diving Being, it refers in the third to the polytheists’ own evidence against their polytheism. The rejection of this great truth and its consequences are then stated in the fourth and fifth sections, mentioning incidentally the reward of believers in the sixth section. In the two succeeding sections the Divine judgment is declared to be imminent. The ninth, while calling attention to the necessity of submission to the Divine Being — the pith of Abraham’s religion — mentions the arguments by which Abraham, that great Patriarch who may be said to be the father of monotheism, convinced his countrymen of the futility of the worship of any object other than Allāh. The tenth section mentions the names of seventeen other prophets who preached the Unity of the Divine Being, and the Holy Prophet is enjoined to follow in their footsteps. The eleventh section draws attention to the truth of the Divine revelation of the Qur’ān, which was now the bearer of that noble message of Divine Unity to mankind, and the next speaks of the ultimate triumph of that message. The thirteenth section states that this triumph would be brought about by a gradual progress, and the fourteenth refers to the polytheists’ opposition. The plans adopted by the chief opponents are then hinted at in the fifteenth, and their failure prophesied in the sixteenth section, which deals with some of the evils of idolatry. The next two refer to

the polytheists' self-imposed superstitious restrictions against the use of the flesh of certain animals, and the prohibited foods. The guiding rules of life are then briefly stated in the nineteenth section, while the chapter is closed by drawing attention to the great goal before the faithful; because, undoubtedly, the doctrine of Unity raised the ideal of human life to a very high standard.

The whole of this chapter was revealed in one portion (I'Ab-Rz). It is generally considered to belong to the last year of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah.

SECTION 1: Ultimate Triumph of Divine Unity

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Praise be to Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth, and made darkness and light. Yet those who disbelieve set up equals to their Lord.^a

2 He it is Who created you from clay, then He decreed a term. And there is a term named with Him; still you doubt.^a

3 And He is Allāh in the heavens and in the earth. He knows your secret (thoughts) and your open (words), and He knows what you earn.^a

4 And there comes not to them any message of the messages of their Lord but they turn away from it.

5 So they rejected the truth when it came to them, but soon will come to them the news of that which they mocked.

6 See they not how many a generation We destroyed before them, whom We had established in the earth as We have not established you, and We sent

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٥

أَحْمَدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَ الْأَرْضَ وَ جَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَ النُّورَ
ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ ٦

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ قَضَىٰ
أَجَلًا وَ أَجَلَ مُسَمًّى عِنْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ
تَسْتُرُونَ ٧

وَ هُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَعْلَمُ
سِرَّكُمْ وَ جَهْرَكُمْ وَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُونَ ٨

وَ مَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ
إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ٩

فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَسَوْفَ
يَأْتِيهِمْ أَنْبَاءُ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ١٠

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ
قَرْنٍ مَكَّيْنَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا لَمْ نُمْكِنْ
لَهُمْ وَ أَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِدْرَارًا

1a. The words that Allāh is the Maker of darkness and light are directed against the dualistic doctrine of the Magian religion, which holds light and darkness to be two co-eternal principles. The religion of Islām is the purest monotheism, and thus it holds that the ultimate cause of all things is the Great Maker of the heavens and the earth. Pure monotheism holds out before man the bright hope that, as goodness is inherent in the Divine Being, it is also the goal to which the creation moves on; while dualism considers the prevalence of evil to be necessary.

2a. The first term is that of life and the second the Resurrection. All men are here said to be created from clay, which means, in the case of Adam as well as men generally, that the earth is the original source, and dust the first stage, of life.

3a. Life in Resurrection spoken of in the previous verse is here stated to be the result of man's own actions, which, whether done secretly or openly, are known to God. It is out of *what you earn* that He shapes a new life for you.

the clouds pouring abundant rain on them, and We made the rivers flow beneath them? Then We destroyed them for their sins, and raised up after them another generation.

7 And if We had sent down to thee a writing on paper, then they had touched it with their hands, those who disbelieve would have said: This is nothing but clear enchantment.^a

8 And they say: Why has not an angel been sent down to him? And if We send down an angel, the matter would be decided and then they would not be respited.^a

9 And if We had made him an angel, We would certainly have made him a man, and (thus) made confused to them what they confuse.^a

10 And certainly messengers before thee were derided, but that which they derided encompassed those of them who scoffed.^a

وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَنْهَارَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ
فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ
بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا آخَرِينَ ①

وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قِرطَابِينَ
فَلَمَسُوهُ بَأْيَدِهِمْ لِقَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ②

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ وَكُورٌ
أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكَاتِنَا فَتَفْضَى الْأَمْرُ شَمًّا
لَا يَنْظُرُونَ ③

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكَ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا
عَلَيْهِمْ مَا يَلْبَسُونَ ④

وَلَقَدْ اسْتَهْزَأُوا بِرُسُلِهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَجَاءَ
بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ فَأَكَاؤُا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ⑤

7a. Compare 4:153: "The People of the Book ask thee to bring down to them a Book from heaven". So far removed are people from spiritual realities that they want to see them in a physical form. If truth had been sent down to man in the physical form of a book, and had not been revealed to the mind of man, it could not bring about a transformation in the minds of men. But even if it had taken a physical shape, they would have called it an enchantment, and still rejected it.

8a. The Divine message was undoubtedly brought by an angel, but here again they wanted to see the spiritual reality of the angel in a physical form. The presence of angels was felt by the righteous in the transformation which they worked in their hearts but the hearts of the wicked were impervious to all good, and hence the only form in which the angels could make their presence felt to them was by punishing them for their evil deeds. Hence the coming of the angels to the guilty is always spoken of in the Qur'an as being synonymous with the infliction of the punishment with which they were threatened. Compare 2:210, and v. 158.

9a. The meaning is that if an angel were made a messenger to mankind, he would doubtless appear in the form of man inasmuch as the physical eye cannot see angels. Moreover only a human being could serve as a model for men. Thus in case an angel appeared in the shape of a man, there would still be the same confusion in their minds as when a human being was entrusted with the Divine message.

10a, see next page.

SECTION 2: Greatness of Divine Mercy

11 Say: Travel in the land, then see what was the end of the rejectors.

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انظُرُوا كَيْفَ
كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ⑩

12 Say: To whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth? Say: To Allāh. He has ordained mercy on Himself.^a He will certainly gather you on the Resurrection day — there is no doubt about it. Those who have lost their souls will not believe.

قُلْ لَيْسَ مَنَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ
لِلَّهِ كُتُبٌ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةُ لِيَجْمَعَكُمْ
إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ أَذَلَّ لَيْسَ
حَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ⑪

13 And to Him belongs whatever dwells in the night and the day. And He is the Hearing, the Knowing.

وَلَهُ مَا سَكَنَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ⑫

14 Say: Shall I take for a friend other than Allāh, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and He feeds and is not fed? Say: I am commanded to be the first of those who submit. And be thou not of the polytheists.

قُلْ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَنْتَجِدُ وَلِيًّا قَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ يُطْعِمُ وَلَا يَطْعَمُ قُلْ
إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ
وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ⑬

15 Say: Surely I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the chastisement of a grievous day.

قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ
يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ⑭

16 He from whom it is averted on that day, Allāh indeed has had mercy on him. And this is a manifest achievement.

مَنْ يُصِرْ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمَهُ
وَذَلِكَ الْقَوْمُ الْمُبِينُ ⑮

17 And if Allāh touch thee with affliction, there is none to remove it but He. And if He touch thee with good, He is Possessor of power over all things.^a

وَإِنْ يَمَسَّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ
لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يَمَسَّكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ⑯

10a. They ridiculed the idea of the Prophet and the believers being triumphant. Truth had always triumphed, they are told, and it would triumph even now.

12a. The words *He has ordained mercy on Himself* imply that mercy is in fact His very nature. The evidence of Divine mercy is manifest in the physical world: He has created all things for the benefit of man. Would He not deal equally mercifully with man in his spiritual needs and send a revelation to guide him?

17a. I.e. Allāh, being All-powerful, will bring good to you.

18 And He is the Supreme, above His servants. And He is the Wise, the Aware.

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾

19 Say: What thing is the weightiest in testimony? Say: Allāh is witness between you and me. And this Qur'ān has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches.^a Do you really bear witness that there are other gods with Allāh? Say: I bear not witness. Say: He is only One God, and surely I am innocent of that which you set up (with Him).

قُلْ أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَكْبَرُ شَهَادَةً قُلِ اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَأُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنذِرَكُمْ بِهِ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ أَتَيْكُمْ لَتَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهَةً آخَرَ قُلْ لَأَشْهَدُ قُلْ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

20 Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons.^a Those who have lost their souls — they will not believe.

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ آبْنَاءَهُمُ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

SECTION 3: Polytheists' Witness against Themselves

21 And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allāh or gives the lie to His messages? Surely the wrongdoers will not be successful.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ إِنَّكَ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

22 And on the day We gather them all together, then We shall say to those who set up gods (with Allāh): Where are your associate-gods whom you asserted?

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا آيِنَ شُرَكَائِكُمْ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

23 Then their excuse^a would be nothing but that they would say: By Allāh, our Lord! we were not polytheists.

ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِتْنَتُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

19a. The Holy Prophet was thus a warner, not for the Arabs only, but for all people whom the Qur'ān may reach, i.e. for the whole world.

20a. For as they recognize their sons, see 2:146a.

23a. *Fitnah*, according to II, means here either *answer* or *excuse*, the answer or the excuse being so called because of its being a *lie*.

24 See how they lie against their own souls, and that which they forged shall fail them!

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَذَّبُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَصَلَ
عَنَّهُمْ مَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ۝

25 And of them is he who hearkens to thee and We have cast veils over their hearts so that they understand it not and a deafness into their ears. And (even) if they see every sign they will not believe in it.^a So much so that when they come to thee they only dispute with thee — those who disbelieve say: This is naught but stories of the ancients.

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ
قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ
وَقْرًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كَلِمَةَ آيَةٍ إِلَّا يُؤْمِنُوهَا
بِهَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوكَ يُجَادِلُونَكَ يَقُولُ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۝

26 And they forbid (others) from it, and they keep away from it; and they ruin none but their own souls while they perceive not.

وَهُمْ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَإِنْ
يُهَاكِدُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۝

27 And if thou couldst see when they are made to stand before the Fire, and say: Would that we were sent back! We would not reject the messages of our Lord but would be of the believers.

وَكُلُّ تَرَىٰ إِذْ يُفْعَلُ عَلَى النَّارِ فَمَا لَوْ
يَلِيْتَنَا كُرْدٌ وَلَا تُكَذِّبُ بِآيَاتِ سَرِينَا
وَنَكُونُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

28 Nay, that which they concealed before will become manifest to them. And if they were sent back, they would certainly go back to that which they are forbidden, and surely they are liars.^a

بَلْ بَدَأَهُمْ مَّا كَانُوا يُخْفُونَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَأُورِدُوا الْعَادُ الْبَاهُوَ اعْنَهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ۝

29 And they say: There is nothing but our life of this world and we shall not be raised again.

وَقَالُوا إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا وَمَا
نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ۝

25a. Veils were cast over their hearts because they would not believe even if they saw all the signs. As the words that follow show, they came to the Prophet, not for the purpose of listening to and pondering over what he said, but to dispute with him. The veils were due to their own actions; see 2:10a.

28a. The evil consequences of their deeds were hidden in this life, but they will become manifest in the life after death. And since, if they were sent back, the evil consequences of evil deeds would again be hidden from the physical eye they would revert to evil deeds.

30 And if thou couldst see when they are made to stand before their Lord! He will say: Is not this the truth? They will say: Yea, by our Lord! He will say: Taste then the chastisement because you disbelieved.

وَكُلُّ تَكْرَىٰ اِذْ وُقِفُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ اَلَيْسَ
هٰذَا بِالْحَقِّ قَالُوا بَلٰى وَرَبِّنَا قَالَ
فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

SECTION 4: Rejection of the Truth

31 They are losers indeed who reject the meeting with Allāh, until when the hour^a comes upon them suddenly, they will say: O our grief for our neglecting it! And they bear their burdens on their backs. Now surely evil is that which they bear!

قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ حَتَّىٰ
اِذَا جَاءَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً قَالُوا اِحْسَرْتَنَا
عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِيهَا وَهُمْ يَحْمِلُونَ
اَوْزَارَهُمْ عَلَىٰ ظُهُورِهِمْ اَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَزُرُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

32 And this world's life is naught but a play and an idle sport. And certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who keep their duty. Do you not then understand?

وَمَا الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا اِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَّالْهُوَ طَلَلٌ
الْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ يَتَّقُوْنَ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾

33 We know indeed that what they say grieves thee, for surely they give not thee the lie, but the wrongdoers give the lie to Allāh's messages.^a

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا اِنَّهٗ لَيَحْزُنُّكَ الَّذِيْنَ يَقُولُوْنَ
فَاِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُوْنَكَ وَلٰكِنَّ الظَّالِمِيْنَ
يَاۤئِتِ اللّٰهُ يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾

34 And messengers indeed were rejected before thee, but they were patient when rejected and persecuted, until Our help came to them. And there is none to change the words of Allāh.^a And there has already come

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا
عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا وَاُوْدُوْا حَتَّىٰ اَنۡهٰهُمْ نَصْرُنَا
وَلَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكَ

31a. By the *hour* is meant their *doom*, as well as the hour of *final judgment*.

33a. The Prophet was known among them as *al-Amīn*, i.e., *the Faithful* or *the Truthful one*. His worst enemies at the height of their enmity admitted that he had never told a lie (B. 1:1). It was after he received the Divine revelation that he was called a liar, and hence it was really a denial of the Divine revelation, not a denial as to the Prophet's truthfulness.

34a. The context shows clearly that by *the words of Allāh* here are meant *the prophecies* foretelling the triumph of Truth and the overthrow of all opposition. As help

to thee some information about the messengers.

35 And if their turning away is hard on thee, then, if thou canst, seek an opening into the earth or a ladder to heaven, to bring them a sign!^a And if Allāh pleased, He would certainly have gathered them all to guidance, so be not of the ignorant.

36 Only those accept who listen. And (as for) the dead, Allāh will raise them, then to Him they will be returned.^a

37 And they say: Why has not a sign been sent down to him from his Lord? Say: Surely Allāh is Able to send down a sign, but most of them know not.^a

38 And there is no animal in the earth, nor a bird that flies on its two wings, but (they are) communities like yourselves. We have not neglected anything in the Book. Then to their Lord will they be gathered.^a

مَنْ نُبَايَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَإِنْ كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكَ إِعْرَاضُهُمْ فَإِنْ
اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تَبْتَغِيَ نَفَقًا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ
سُلَّمًا فِي السَّمَاءِ فَتَأْتِيَهُمْ بآيَةٍ طَوْسُو
شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجْمَعَهُمْ عَلَى الْهُدَى فَلَا
تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ وَالْمَوْتَى
يَعْتَهُمُ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ
قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَادِرٌ عَلَى أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ آيَةً
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا ظَلِيٍّ
يُطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَّةٌ أُمَّتُكُمْ ط
مَا فَزَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ
إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

came to messengers before the Holy Prophet, so would help come to him, and this was a prophecy which none could change and whose fulfilment was sure.

35a. By *sign* is meant a sign that should bring all to guidance, as shown by what follows. Their doom was pronounced, and that word must be fulfilled, as affirmed in the previous verse; but the demand of the people to be overawed into an immediate submission to the Prophet by a sign was not in accordance with the Divine Law.

36a. Those addressed by the Prophet are here divided into two classes: (1) those who listen: they accept the Prophet and become believers; (2) those who are spiritually dead and pay no heed to the Prophet's warning. Even the latter are not to be despaired of, for Allāh will raise them too to spiritual life. Their being returned to Allāh stands here for their submission to God and ultimate acceptance of the Truth.

37a. The sign spoken of here is the sign asked for in v. 35. Allāh did send the very sign demanded, as we find the Arabs submitting to the Holy Prophet almost in a body after the conquest of Makkah.

38a. Other creatures are all provided for by Allāh as men are, so far as physical needs are concerned, and therefore man must obey the laws of nature as other animals do. But man's nature aspires to something higher, and it is to satisfy that spiritual

39 And those who reject Our messages are deaf and dumb, in darkness. Whom Allāh pleases He leaves in error. And whom He pleases He places on the right way.

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُمُّوْا وَبُكْمٌ فِي
الظُّلُمٰتِ مَن يَشَآءُ اللّٰهُ يُضِلُّهُۥ وَمَن
يَشَآءُ يُجْعَلُهُۥ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٣٩﴾

40 Say: See, if the chastisement of Allāh overtake you or the hour come upon you, will you call on others than Allāh, if you are truthful?

قُلْ اَرَءَآءَ يَدْعُوْنَ اِلٰى اِلٰهٍ اَوْ
اَتَّخَذُوْا السَّاعَةَ اَغْيَرُ اللّٰهُ تَدْعُوْنَ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾

41 Nay, Him you call upon, so He removes that for which you pray, if He pleases, and you forget what you set up (with Him).^a

بَلْ اِيَّاهُ تَدْعُوْنَ فَيَكْنُفُ مَا تَدْعُوْنَ
اِلَيْهِ اِنْ شَآءَ وَتَنْسُوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ
كُوْنُ ﴿٤١﴾

SECTION 5: Consequences of Rejection

42 And indeed We sent (messengers) to nations before thee then We seized them with distress and affliction that they might humble themselves.

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا اِلٰى اُمَمٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ
فَاَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْبِاسِ اِذْ اَنذَرْنَاهُمْ
الضَّرَّاءَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾

43 Yet why did they not, when Our punishment came to them, humble themselves? But their hearts hardened and the devil made all that they did seem fair to them.

فَاَوْلٰٓآءُ اِذْ جَآءَهُمْ بَآسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوْا وَلٰكِن
قَسَتْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ وَرَبَّنَّ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ
مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾

44 Then, when they neglected that with which they had been admonished, We opened for them the gates of all things. Until, when they rejoiced in that which they were

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوْا بِهِ فَتَخَنَّا عَلَيْهِمْ
اَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ طَحَّيْنَا اِذَا فَرِحُوْا بِمَا
اُوتُوْا

craving that prophets are sent. This verse, moreover, points, as it were, to two classes of men — those who, like beasts, are wholly bent on earth and cannot rise, and those who rise like birds, soaring upward to the higher spiritual regions. The concluding words of the verse — *then to their Lord will they be gathered* — are in reference to mankind and, as compared with other animals, point to the Higher life, the life eternal in God. There is no mention here or anywhere else in the Holy Qur'an of the lower animals being raised to a new life for Judgment.

41a. In dire distress and affliction even the polytheist finds nobody to call upon but God. This shows that a belief in the Divine existence and Unity of God is inherent in human nature.

given, We seized them suddenly; then lo! they were in utter despair.^a

45 So the roots of the people who did wrong were cut off. And praise be to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds.^a

46 Say: Have you considered that if Allāh should take away your hearing and your sight and seal your hearts, who is the god besides Allāh that can bring it to you? See how We repeat the messages yet they turn away!

47 Say: See, if the chastisement of Allāh should overtake you suddenly or openly, will any be destroyed but the wrongdoing people?

48 And We send not messengers but as bearers of good news and warners; then whoever believes and acts aright, they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.

49 And as for those who reject Our messages, chastisement will afflict them because they transgressed.

50 Say: I say not to you, I have with me the treasures of Allāh, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel; I follow only that which is revealed to me. Say: Are the blind and the seeing alike? Do you not then reflect?^a

أَخَذُوا لَهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

فَقَطَّعَ دَائِرُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ط

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ وَ

أَبْصَارَكُمْ وَخَتَمَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ مَنْ إِلَهٌ

غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ

نُصِرْتُ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ هُمْ يَصِدُّونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ عَدَابِ اللَّهِ

بَغْتَةً أَوْ جَهْرَةً هَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا

الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ

وَمُنذِرِينَ ۚ فَمَنْ أَمَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا

خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَسْخَبُهُمُ الْعَذَابُ

بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ

وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ رُوحِي

مَلَكَ ۚ إِنْ أَتَيْتُمْ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَىٰ قُلْ هَلْ

يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

44a. By *opening the gates of all things* is meant that all comforts of life were made accessible to them.

45a. By cutting off the *roots* is meant the destruction of the ringleaders in particular.

50a. Never did a prophet talk in plainer language and with a greater modesty to his people. Appearing among a superstitious and ignorant people, he could have claimed any supernatural powers for himself, and the people would willingly have accepted him. But he told them plainly that he was but a man; he had no treasures, nor did he lay claim for himself as a man to know the secrets of the future, nor did he profess to be any more than a mortal. What distinguished him from the rest of mankind was that Allāh revealed

SECTION 6: Reward of Believers

51 And warn with it those who fear that they will be gathered to their Lord — there is no protector for them, nor any intercessor besides Him — so that they may keep their duty.

وَأَنْذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يُجَسَّرُوا
إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ وِليٌّ وَلَا
شَفِيعٌ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

52 And drive not away those who call upon their Lord, morning and evening, desiring only His pleasure. Neither art thou accountable for them in aught, nor are they accountable for thee in aught, that thou shouldst drive them away and thus be of the wrong-doers.^a

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ
وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ
حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ
عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ
مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

53 And thus do We try some of them by others so that they say: Are these they upon whom Allāh has conferred benefit from among us?^a Does not Allāh best know the grateful?

وَكَذَلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لِيَقُولُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ
مَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ
بِأَعْلَمَ بِالشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

His will to him, and he faithfully followed and translated into practice everything that he received from on High. And as he himself was, so he wanted others to be. It was not his object to make his followers possessors of treasures, or wonder-workers, or fortune-tellers, but *men* first and last — men true to themselves and true followers of the high principles of life which had been revealed to him. He plainly told the people what was wanted of them, and it is for his plain speaking that he is frequently called in the Holy Qur'ān a *plain warner*.

“Here he declares himself unacquainted with the secrets of God” is the remark which the noble words of the above verse draw from a Christian annotator, and the grotesque conclusion is immediately drawn that “he confesses he does not possess the gift of prophecy”. What is meant by the verse is that, as a man, Muḥammad was like other men, i.e., he did not know the unseen, etc., but, as a prophet, he knew and followed everything revealed to him by Allāh. The unique greatness and nobleness of the Prophet lie in the fact that he never tried to put himself before people as superhuman.

52a. The commentators agree that this verse was revealed when some leading Quraish expressed their willingness to accept the Prophet if the poorer Muslims were not allowed to remain in his company at the time. The poor and the rich are here brought to the same level; they are all men, they have equal claims to learn and practise the truth. Nay, those who accepted the truth had a prior claim on the Prophet's attention. Truth is equally accessible to all; to the religion of Islām, no aristocracy is known. Before the Great Master the differences of rank, wealth and colour sink into insignificance, and therefore before Allāh's Messenger, as before Allāh Himself, they must all stand upon one level. *Everyone is answerable for what he does* is the golden principle preached by Islām.

53a. The simple and decisive answer given above no doubt wounded the pride of the wealthy Quraish, who were required to sit along with the poor slaves whom they never treated as human beings, and thus they were tried.

54 And when those who believe in Our messages come to thee, say: Peace be to you, your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself, (so) that if anyone of you does evil in ignorance, then turns after that and acts aright, then He is Forgiving, Merciful.

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ
سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ
الرَّحْمَةَ أَنْتُمْ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا
بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ
فَأَنْتُمْ عَفْوٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

55 And thus do We make distinct the messages and so that the way of the guilty may become clear.

وَكَذَلِكَ نَفْصَلُ الْآيَاتِ وَلِيَسْتَبَيِّنَ
سَبِيلُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

SECTION 7: Divine Judgment

56 Say: I am forbidden to serve those whom you call upon besides Allāh. Say: I follow not your low desires, for then indeed I should go astray and should not be of the guided ones.

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ
مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَأَتَّبِعُ أَهْوَاءَكُمْ قَدْ
ضَلَلْتُمْ إِذَا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57 Say: Surely I have manifest proof from my Lord and you call it a lie. I have not with me that which you would hasten. The judgment is only Allāh's. He relates the truth and He is the Best of deciders.

قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَكَذَّبْتُمْ
بِهِ مَا عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ إِنْ
الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ يَفْصُلُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ
خَيْرُ الْفَاصِلِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

58 Say: If that which you would hasten were with me, the matter would have certainly been decided between you and me. And Allāh best knows the wrongdoers.

قُلْ لَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ
لَفَضَيْتُ الْأَمْرَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
أَعْلَمُ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59 And with Him are the treasures^{59a} of the unseen — none knows them but He. And He knows what is in the land and the sea. And there falls not a leaf but He knows it, nor is there a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَازِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا
هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبُرُوجِ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا
تَسْقُطُ مِنْ سَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ
فِي ظِلْمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ

59a. The word *mafātih* is plural of *miftāh* as well as of *mafṭah*, the former meaning *key* and the latter *repository* or *a treasure* (LL). Hence both significances are admissible.

anything green or dry, but (it is all) in a clear book.^b

إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ٥٩

60 And He it is Who takes your souls at night, and He knows what you earn by day, then He raises you up therein that an appointed term may be fulfilled. Then to Him is your return, then He will inform you of what you did.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُم بِالنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَىٰ أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ٦٠

SECTION 8: Divine Judgment

61 And He is the Supreme above His servants, and He sends keepers over you; until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers cause him to die, and they are not remiss.^a

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْرِطُونَ ٦١

62 Then are they sent back to Allāh, their Master, the True one. Now surely His is the judgment and He is Swiftest in taking account.

ثُمَّ رُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقِّ أَكْرَمًا لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَهُوَ أَسْرَعُ الْحَسِيبِينَ ٦٢

63 Say: Who is it that delivers you from the calamities^a of the land and the sea? (when) you call upon Him, in humility and in secret: If He deliver us from this, we will certainly be of the grateful ones.

قُلْ مَنْ يُجِيبُكُم مِّنْ ظُلُمَاتِ السَّبْرِ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً لَّئِنْ أَنْجَانَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ٦٣

64 Say: Allāh delivers you from this and from every distress, yet you set up others (with Him).

قُلْ اللَّهُ يُجِيبُكُم مِّنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ مُّشْرِكُونَ ٦٤

59b. The clear book is the great law of cause and effect. The falling of the leaf indicates that its power to draw nourishment has come to an end; thus do individuals and nations fall. The grain in the darkness of the earth stands for the mission of the Prophet, for that grain was destined to sprout forth, growing into a tree of exceptional proportions. The “green” indicates those people that prosper and the “dry” those that must fall off.

61a. The allusion seems to be to the ultimate sweeping away of all opposition. The next verse makes it clear. The *ḥafazah* are the guardian angels, for which see 13:11a.

63a. *Zulumāt* (plural of *zulmat*, lit., *darkness*) means the *troubles, afflictions, calamities* or *hardships* (of the sea). Also *a day of much evil* or *a day in which one finds hardship or difficulty* (LL).