



CHAPTER 13

Al-Ra'd: The Thunder

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 6 sections; 43 verses)

This chapter is named *The Thunder* from the analogy of the rain, which is often likened to revelation in the Holy Qur'ān. As the rain is a mercy from Allāh, so is revelation, yet as rain is accompanied by thunder and lightning, so revelation is accompanied by warning of punishment, though its real object is to confer benefit.

It deals with the truth of revelation, and a reference to previous history in the chapter preceding the last is here followed by a discussion as to the fate of the opponents of the Holy Prophet. It opens with an assertion as to the truth of Divine revelation, and points to the numerous signs in physical nature which bear witness to its truth; but not satisfied with these signs, the disbelievers demand that the punishment with which they were threatened as being their ultimate fate should overtake them. The second section is a reply to this demand. There is a law according to which nations rise and fall, and the fall of idolaters, and the rise of the Muslim nation, were to be brought about in accordance with that law. Here it is that the warning is compared to thunder, revelation being rain, the suggestion being that a demand for punishment is as foolish as a desire to be struck by lightning instead of benefiting by the rain. In the third section the disbelievers are told that there is no showing of partiality for one or hatred for another in Divine nature, but that it is in accordance with Divine laws that righteousness brings its own reward, while continued transgression is followed by evil consequences. And why should they again and again demand a miracle from without? The real miracles, we are told in the fourth section, are the miracles which work within man. The satisfaction which the Holy Book brings to the hearts of the true believers, the great transformation which it was to bring about in the world, the moving away of the great mountains which were obstacles to the spread of truth, and the quickening of those who were dead in spirit, were the real miracles which a heavenly book should work among men. This is what the Qur'ān was destined to do, and what it had already effected to a remarkable extent. Opposition, we are told in the fifth section, was destined to fail because truth must spread in the world and prevail over falsehood. The closing section brings in evidence of the progress of truth, which, however slow, was certainly steady. This chapter, like the three sister chapters preceding it and the two that follow it, was revealed at Makkah in the last Makkan period.

SECTION 1: Truth of Revelation

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

1 I, Allāh, am the Best Knower, the Seer.^a These are verses of the Book. And that which is revealed to thee from thy Lord is the Truth, but most people believe not.

2 Allāh is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars that you can see, and He is established on the Throne of Power,^a and He made the sun and the moon subservient (to you). Each one runs to an appointed term. He regulates the affair, making clear the messages that you may be certain of the meeting with your Lord.

3 And He it is Who spread the earth, and made in it firm mountains and rivers. And of all fruits He has made in it pairs, two (of every kind). He makes the night cover the day. Surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect.

4 And in the earth are tracts side by side, and gardens of vines, and corn, and palm-trees growing from one root and distinct roots — they are watered with one water; and We make some of them to excel others in fruit. Surely there are signs in this for a people who understand.^a

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْمُرَادُ تِلْكَ آيَةُ الْكِتَابِ وَالَّذِي
أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ الْحَقُّ وَلَكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ①

اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ
تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ
الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ
مُسَمًّى يُدِيرُ الْأَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوقِنُونَ ②

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا
سَرَائِصَ وَأَنْهَارًا وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ
جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشَى اللَّيْلُ
الْهَاسَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ③

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قُطْعٌ مُتَبَعِرَاتٌ وَجَنَّاتٌ
مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَزُرُرٌ وَنَخِيلٌ صُفْرَانٌ
وَّغَيْرُ صُفْرَانٍ يُسْقَى بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدَةٍ
وَنُفِصِلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الْأُكُلِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ④

1a. The letters are *alif*, standing for *ana*, meaning I, *lām* for Allāh, *mīm* for A'lam, meaning the Best Knower, and *rā* for Rā'ī, meaning the Seer.

2a. All heavenly bodies are raised high without any pillars that man can see. Those pillars are the laws of gravitation. All heavenly bodies, we are further told, run their course to an appointed term; they have a beginning and an end, as all things on earth have a beginning and an end.

4a, see next page.

5 And if thou wonderest, then wondrous is their saying: When we are dust, shall we then be raised in a new creation? These are they who disbelieve in their Lord, and these have chains on their necks, and they are the companions of the Fire; in it they will abide.^a

وَأِنْ تَعْجَبْ فَعَجَبٌ قَوْلُهُمْ إِذَا كُنَّا
تُرَابًا أَوْ إِنَّا كُنَّا خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ
الْأَغْلَلُ فِي أَعْنَانِهِمْ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ
النَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ⑤

6 And they ask thee to hasten on the evil before the good, and indeed there have been exemplary punishments^a before them. And surely thy Lord is full of forgiveness for mankind notwithstanding their iniquity.^b And surely thy Lord is Severe in requiting.

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ
وَقَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمُ الْمَثَلُ ۖ وَإِنَّ
رَبَّكَ لَكَنُ مُغْفِرٍ رَحِيمٍ ۚ عَلَىٰ ظُلُمِهِمْ
وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَشَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ⑥

7 And those who disbelieve say: Why has not a sign been sent down to him from his Lord? Thou art only a warner and for every people a guide.^a

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ
عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ۖ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ
مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ ⑦

SECTION 2: Fall and Rise of Nations

8 Allāh knows what every female bears, and that of which the wombs

اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ أُنْثَىٰ وَمَا

4a. Unity in diversity is observable in the whole of nature, which is a sure sign of the Unity of the great Author of all existence. Besides this, as there is a difference in the produce of different tracts, though they are subject to the same laws of nature, even so are the hearts of men in relation to the growth of the seed of virtue, which is sown by revelation.

5a. The chains spoken of here are the chains which keep them constrained to evil usages and corrupt practices.

6a. *Mathulāt* is the plural of *muthlah*, which means a punishment that comes down upon a man so that he is made an example by which another is restrained (R).

6b. The Makkans were warned again and again, and they demanded that the threatened punishment should overtake them, but they are told that the Merciful God would deal with them not according to their iniquities, but according to His vast and comprehensive forgiveness. But when evil outsteps all bounds, His very mercy, which must be exercised towards His righteous servants, requires that the iniquitous should not be left without punishment. Hence the Lord is also severe in requiting evil.

7a. The words for every people a guide refer to the Holy Prophet. He was a warner indeed; he warned the evildoers of the evil consequences of their evil deeds, but he was ultimately to be a guide for every people, to lead them out of their evil ways and to set them on the right path.

fall short of completion and that which they grow.^a And everything with Him has a measure.

9 The Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Great, the Most High.

10 Alike (to Him) among you is he who conceals (the) word and he who speaks openly, and he who hides himself by night and (who) goes forth by day.^a

11 For him are (angels) guarding the consequences (of his deeds), before him and behind him, who guard him by Allāh's command.^a Surely Allāh changes not the condition of a people, until they change their own condition. And when Allāh intends evil to a people, there is no averting it, and besides Him they have no protector.

12 He it is Who shows you the lightning causing fear and hope and (Who) brings up the heavy cloud.

13 And the thunder celebrates His praise, and the angels too for awe of

تَغِيصُ الْأَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزِدَادُ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِإِقْدَارٍ ⑩

عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالِ ⑪
سَوَاءٌ مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَسَرَ الْقَوْلَ وَمَنْ جَهَرَ بِهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ مُسْتَخْفٍ بِاللَّيْلِ وَسَائِرُ النَّهَارِ ⑫

لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ⑬ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُعَيِّرُ مَا يَقْوِمُ حَتَّىٰ يُعَيِّرَ ⑭ وَمَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ⑮ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ يَقْوِمُ سَوَاءً ⑯ فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ ⑰ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ ⑱

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنْشِئُ السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ ⑲

وَيَسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ

8a. The wombs fall short of completion when no gestation takes place. The physical law of nature is spoken of here with a deeper reference to the spiritual law, according to which some receive a new birth through the Prophet and others do not. The subject is made clearer in the verses that follow.

10a. A general law is given expression to with a deeper reference to the secret and open counsels against the Prophet and to enemies seeking his life by day and by night. A perusal of the history of his life shows that those who sought his life sometimes followed him secretly, when he went out to pray during the early hours of the morning, and sometimes openly followed him in the daytime with an evil purpose.

11a. While the statement is no doubt general and refers to the guardian angels referred to in 6:61, there is a deeper allusion to the Divine protection specially vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet against the numerous enemies among whom he lived day and night. *Mu'aqqibāt* (sing. *mu'aqqib*) is derived from *'aqqaba*, meaning *he looked to the consequence, or result of the affair* (LL). The word may also be translated as meaning *those following one another*. Such are the angels, who are mentioned as *ḥafāẓah* or *keepers* in 6:61, and as *kirām-an kātibin* or honourable recorders in 82:11, 12. They guard the consequences of the deeds of man, and are therefore spoken of here as *guarding him*, i.e., *guarding whatever he does*, by Allāh's command.

Him. And He sends the thunderbolts and smites with them whom He pleases, yet they dispute concerning Allāh, and He is Mighty in prowess.

14 To Him is due the true prayer. And those to whom they pray besides Him give them no answer, but (they are) like one who stretches forth his two hands towards water that it may reach his mouth, but it will not reach it. And the prayer of the disbelievers is only wasted.

15 And whoever is in the heavens and the earth makes obeisance to Allāh only, willingly and unwillingly, and their shadows, too, at morn and eve.^a

16 Say: Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth? Say: Allāh. Say: Do you then take besides Him, guardians who control no benefit or harm even for themselves? Say: Are the blind and the seeing alike? Or, are darkness and light equal? Or, have they set up with Allāh associates who have created creation like His, so that what is created became confused to them? Say: Allāh is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Supreme.

17 He sends down water from the clouds, then watercourses flow according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam. And from that which they melt in the fire for the sake of making ornaments or apparatus^a arises a

مِنْ خَيْفَتِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ الصَّوَاعِقَ فَيُصِيبُ
بِهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُمْ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي اللَّهِ
وَهُوَ شَدِيدُ الْحِجَالِ ١٤

لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا
كِبَاسٌ كَفِيفٍ إِلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا
هُوَ بِبَالِغٍ ۖ وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ ١٥

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَظِلُّهُمْ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ ١٦

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلِ اللَّهُ
قُلْ أَفَاتُخَذْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ لَا
يَمْلِكُونَ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا قُلْ
هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ
أَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمَاتُ وَالنُّورُ
أَمْ جَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ خَلَقُوا كَخَلْقِهِ
فَتَشَابَهَ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِمْ قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ١٧

أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ
بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَابِيًا
وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَاءَ
حُلِيِّ أَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِثْلُهُ كَذَلِكَ
يُضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْحَقِّ وَالْبَاطِلَ ١٨

15a. The recital of this verse is followed by actual prostration; see 7:206a.

17a, see next page.

scum like it. Thus does Allāh compare truth and falsehood. Then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which does good to men, it tarries in the earth. Thus does Allāh set forth parables.^b

18 For those who respond to their Lord is good. And as for those who respond not to Him, even if they had all that is in the earth and the like thereof with it, they would certainly offer it for a ransom. As for those, theirs is an evil reckoning and their abode is hell; and evil is the resting-place.

فَأَمَّا الرِّبْدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً ۚ وَأَمَّا مَا
يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ
كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ ۝

لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ الْخَيْرُ ۚ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَسْتَجِيبُ آلَهُمْ أَنَّ لَهُمْ
مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ
لَا يَفْتَدُوا بِهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْحِسَابِ
وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَيُسَّاتِرُهُمُهَا ۝

SECTION 3: Good and Evil bring their own Reward

19 Is he who knows that what is revealed to thee from thy Lord is the truth like him who is blind? Only men of understanding mind —

أَلَمْ نَعْلَمْ أَلَمْ نُنْزِلْ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ رَبِّكَ
الْحَقَّ كَمَنْ هُوَ أَعْمَىٰ ۚ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ
أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ۝

20 Those who fulfil the pact of Allāh, and break not the covenant,

الَّذِينَ يُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَلَا
يَنْقُضُونَ الْعَيْثَ ۝

21 And those who join that which Allāh has bidden to be joined^a and have awe of their Lord, and fear the evil reckoning.

وَالَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ
يُوصَلَ وَيَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَيَخَافُونَ
سُوءَ الْحِسَابِ ۝

22 And those who are steadfast^a seeking the pleasure of their Lord, and keep up prayer and spend of that

وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ
وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ

17a. *Matā'* includes here *all kinds of things necessary for the life of man, such as utensils, tools, implements, and instruments of war* (S).

17b. The parable set forth here signifies that the Holy Prophet and his followers will live and prosper, as they work for the good of man. On the other hand, evil practices and worthless usages and customs, as well as those who uphold them, will be swept away before the mighty current of Truth, as rubbish is borne away by a torrent.

21a. While the previous verse deals with man's duty to his Maker, this treats of the relations with His creatures. "What Allāh has bidden to be joined" includes all those ties of love and relationship which Allāh has taught man to observe and keep inviolate.

22a, see next page.

which We have given them, secretly and openly, and repel evil with good;^b for such is the (happy) issue of the abode —

23 Gardens of perpetuity, which they will enter along with those who do good from among their fathers and their spouses^a and their offspring; and the angels will enter in upon them from every gate.

24 Peace be to you, because you were constant — how excellent is then the final Abode!

25 And those who break the covenant of Allāh after its confirmation, and cut asunder that which Allāh has ordered to be joined, and make mischief in the land, for them is the curse, and theirs is the evil end of the Abode.

26 Allāh amplifies and straitens provision for whom He pleases. And they rejoice in this world's life. And this world's life, compared with the Hereafter, is only a temporary enjoyment.

سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً وَيَذَرُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ
السَّيِّئَةِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَمَنْ صَلَحَ
مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَازْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿٢٥﴾

وَالَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ
أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ ﴿٢٦﴾

اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ
وَفَرِحُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ
الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مَتَاعٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

SECTION 4: Revolution to be brought about by Qur'ān

27 And those who disbelieve say: Why is not a sign sent down to him

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ

22a. Patience in trials and sufferings is only one of the ideas which the word *ṣabr* conveys. According to R, *ṣabr* is the keeping oneself constrained to that which reason or law requires, or the withholding from that from which it requires to withhold.

22b. *Evil* is a thing which is by all means to be repelled, and hence *good for evil* is recommended only in cases when *evil* would be *repelled* by that good. Unconditionally requiting evil with good would abolish all safeguards; evildoers who received nothing but good for every evil they committed would most assuredly establish a condition of anarchy by their evil deeds. Elsewhere it is said: *whoever forgives and amends* (42:40).

23a, see next page.

by his Lord?^a Say: Allāh leaves in error whom He pleases, and guides to Himself those who turn (to Him)^b —

28 Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allāh. Now surely in Allāh's remembrance do hearts find rest.

29 Those who believe and do good, a good final state is theirs and a goodly return.^a

30 Thus We have sent thee among a nation before which other nations have passed away, that thou mightest recite to them what We have revealed to thee, and (still) they deny the Beneficent. Say: He is my Lord, there is no god but He; in Him do I trust and to Him is my return.

31 And if there could be a Qur'ān with which the mountains were made to pass away, or the earth were cloven asunder, or the dead were made to

عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّبِينٍ

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ﴿٢٨﴾

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ طُوبَىٰ لَهُمْ وَحُسْنُ مَّآبٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

كَذَٰلِكَ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ فِي أُمَّةٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا أُمَمٌ لَّا تَنبَغُ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّكْرَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ يَا رَحْمَنُ قُلْ هُوَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ مَتَابٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

وَلَوْ أَنَّ قُرْآنًا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ أَوْ قُطِعَتْ بِهِ الْأَرْضُ أَوْ كَلِمَةٌ بِهِ الْمَوْتُ بَلْ لِّلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ جَمِيعًا أَفَلَمْ

23a. The Qur'ān is full of clear statements that women shall enjoy the bliss of paradise. *Azwāj* is the plural of *zauj*, which means either husband or wife, and hence I have rendered it as spouses or mates.

27a. The answer to this question is given in the concluding words of the section: "disaster will not cease to afflict them because of what they do, or it will alight close by their abodes, until the promise of Allāh come to pass". This promise related to the utter annihilation of the power of the disbelievers. The question *why is not a sign sent down to him?* here as elsewhere in the Holy Qur'ān, is really a demand for the promised annihilation of their power and their vanquishment, and the answer is always conveyed in somewhat similar terms, stating first that they should ask for mercy; that the Qur'ān has healing power, the condition of the faithful being a witness to it; that the fate of the former generations affords a lesson; that smaller calamities continue to afflict them, and in these they can see the signs of their ultimate vanquishment; and that finally, if all those tokens are rejected, the great calamity will not fail to overtake them.

27b. The contrast with *those who turn to God* makes it clear that Allāh's pleasure to leave some in error is exercised only in the case of those who, though invited to God, do not turn to Him but choose to remain in error. The first part may also be translated thus: *Allāh leaves in error who will (remain in error)*.

29a. *Ṭūbā*, as an infinitive noun (from *ṭāba*, meaning *it became good*), means a *good final state* or *good future* (LL).

speak^a — nay, the commandment is wholly Allāh's. Do not those who believe know that, if Allāh please, He would certainly guide all the people? And as for those who disbelieve, disaster will not cease to afflict them because of what they do, or it will alight close by their abodes, until the promise of Allāh come to pass. Surely Allāh will not fail in (His) promise.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَوْشِىَ اللَّهُ
لَهْدَى النَّاسِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا نُصِيبُهُمْ بِمَا صَنَعُوا قَارِعَةً أَوْ
تَحُلُّ قَرِيبًا مِنْ دَارِهِمْ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ
وَعْدُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ

SECTION 5: Opposition will fail

32 And messengers before thee were certainly mocked, but I gave respite to those who disbelieved, then I seized them. How (awful) was then My requital!

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
فَأَمَلَيْتُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهُمْ
فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ ۝

33 Is, then, He Who watches every soul as to what it earns —? ^a And yet

أَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَائِمٌ عَلَى كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا

31a. According to some, the words *la-kāna hādha-l-Qur'ān* are understood, i.e. *it is this Qur'ān* (JB). But the answer is contained in what follows and there is no omission here. That the Qur'ān should work great wonders is not here treated as an impossibility, but rather as a fact, for we are immediately told that *the commandment is wholly Allāh's*, which is equivalent to saying that it will be brought about soon by His commandment. At the time when these verses were revealed, difficulties in the spread of Islām appeared like mountains. Formidable opponents of the Prophet stood undoubtedly like impassable mountains — and they were given the name of *jibāl*, or *mountains*, by the Arabs (LL) — in the way of the advance of Truth. That they were made to pass away is a matter of history. The words *quṭṭi'at bi-hi-l-arḍu* may mean *the earth were cloven asunder*, by which is to be understood that the Qur'ān would go deep down into the hearts of men, which are compared here to the earth, which would thus be cloven asunder, with streams and springs flowing in it. Another significance of the words is that the earth will be *travelled over*. There were no facilities at that time for going to distant corners of Arabia, to say nothing of the distant countries of the world. Yet so irresistible was the urge within the hearts of Muslims to deliver the message of Truth that not only was the whole of Arabia travelled over by the message-bearers of Islām within ten years after this in the Prophet's lifetime, but within a hundred years after the Prophet, Islām had traversed the whole of the known world, spreading from the farthest East in China to the farthest West in Spain. As regards the last statement, *the dead were made to speak*, it is again a matter of history. Men who were dead spiritually now spoke with such power that the whole earth from end to end responded to their call. See 6: 122, where it is made clear that by the dead in the terminology of the Qur'ān are sometimes meant the *spiritually dead* and by *giving life* is meant their *spiritual quickening*.

33a, see next page.

they ascribe partners to Allāh! Say: Name them.^b Would you inform Him of that which He knows not in the earth, or of an outward saying?^c Rather, their plan is made fair-seeming to those who disbelieve,^d and they are kept back from the path. And whom Allāh leaves in error, he has no guide.

34 For them is chastisement in this world's life, and the chastisement of the Hereafter is certainly more grievous. And they have no protector against Allāh.

35 A parable of the Garden which is promised to those who keep their duty.^a Therein flow rivers. Its fruits are perpetual and its plenty.^b Such is the end for those who keep their duty; and the end for the disbelievers is the Fire.

كَسَبَتْ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ قُلُوبًا سَمُومًا
أَمْ تُنذِرُونَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي الْأَرْضِ
أَمْ يَبْطِئُ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بَلْ زَيْنٌ لِلَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا مَكْرُهُمْ وَصُدُّوا عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَ
مَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ ۝

لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَعَذَابُ
الْآخِرَةِ أَشَقُّ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَاقٍ ۝

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كُلُّهَا دَائِمٌ
وَوُظِّلَتْ تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا
وَوُعدَ الْكَافِرِينَ النَّارُ ۝

33a. Allāh watches what everyone does, i.e. requites everyone for what he does — their alleged associate-gods are admittedly unable to do this. The answer to the question, Is He ...? is given in the words that follow, *yet they ascribe partners to Allāh*.

33b. It is to show the utmost contempt for the alleged associates of the Divine Being that their worshippers are called upon to give them a name, as if it were said that they are not worthy of a name. Or the meaning may be, give them a name expressing any qualification of godhead, such as a sustainer, creator, etc.

33c. The appeal is to the inner self of man. Is anything hidden from God? Is He not Aware of the inmost feelings of man? Must there be a partner with God, who should tell Him of what He knows not? Are your outward sayings not known to Him, so that there must be a partner to inform Him of what you say? He knows both the inner feelings of man and his outward sayings, and He does not stand in need of a mediator.

33d. It is the devil who makes the evil deeds fair-seeming to men; see 6:43, 16:63. And elsewhere it is made clear: "And the devil made their deeds fair-seeming to them, so he kept them back from the path" (29:38).

35a. It should be noted that the paradise mentioned here is called a *parable*, as also in 47:15. The reason is, as a saying of the Holy Prophet makes clear, that the blessings of paradise are such as no eye has seen, nor has ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of them (B. 59:8). Therefore, what it actually is cannot be known to man, until he has tasted of its blessings; the description given in the Qur'ān being only a likeness of what it actually is, for an impression of a thing which is of a nature entirely different from the things of this world can only be conveyed by parables.

35b. The word *zill* has other meanings besides *shade*. It signifies *mightiness*, *inaccessibility*, *ease*, or *plenty*, (R). It also signifies *protection* (LL).

36 And those to whom We have given the Book^a rejoice in that which has been revealed to thee, and of the confederates are some who deny a part of it. Say: I am commanded only to serve Allāh and not associate anything with Him. To Him do I invite (you), and to Him is my return.

وَالَّذِينَ أُتُوا بِالْكِتَابِ يُفْرَحُونَ بِمَا
أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنَ الْأَخْزَابِ مَنْ يُنْكِرُ
بَعْضَهُ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ
وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ إِلَهِي أَدْعُوا إِلَيْهِ مَآبٍ ۝

37 And thus have We revealed it, a true judgment, in Arabic. And if thou follow their low desires after that which has come to thee of knowledge, thou wouldst have against Allāh no guardian nor protector.

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعَرَبِيًّا ۖ وَكَذَلِكَ
اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ
مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا وَاقٍ ۝

SECTION 6: Steady Progress of Truth

38 And certainly We sent messengers before thee and appointed for them wives and children. And it is not in (the power of) a messenger to bring a sign except by Allāh's permission. For every term there is an appointment.^a

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا
لَهُمْ أَنْسَاءً وَأَوْجَادًا وَذُرِّيَّةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ
أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ لِكُلِّ
أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ ۝

39 Allāh effaces what He pleases and establishes (what He pleases),^a and with Him is the basis of the Book.^b

يَمْحُو اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ ۖ وَعِنْدَهُ
أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ ۝

36a. By the *Book* is meant the *Qur'ān*, as the context clearly shows. Some, however, take the Book to signify the previous revelation given to the Israelite prophets, and understand Jewish or Christian converts to Islām to be meant here.

38a. The significance is that the sign so often demanded will come at the appointed time. The ultimate discomfiture of the power of the opponents had been prophesied in the earliest revelations, hence the repeated demands.

39a. God was now going to efface falsehood and to establish the Truth.

39b. The same word, *umm al-kitāb*, occurs in 3:7, where the verses that are of obvious import are called the *basis of the Book*, because allegorical verses must be interpreted subject to the principles laid down in plain words. Here the Divine ordinance to annihilate the power of the opponents of the Holy Prophet and to bring about the establishment of the Truth is called the *basis of the Book*, because the final vanquishment of the powers of evil, which was previously foretold, would be such a clear sign that it would dispel all doubts.

40 Whether We let thee see part of that which We promise them, or cause thee to die, thine is but the delivery of the message, and Ours to call (them) to account.

وَأَن تَأْتِيَنَّا بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ
نَتَوَفِّيَنَّاكَ فَاثِمًا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلْغُ وَعَلَيْنَا
الْحِسَابُ ④

41 See they not that We are visiting the land, curtailing it of its sides?^a And Allāh pronounces a doom — there is no repeller of His decree. And He is Swift in calling to account.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا
مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا ⑤ وَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ لَا مُعَقِّبَ
لِحُكْمِهِ ⑥ وَهُوَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ⑦

42 And those before them planned indeed, but all planning is Allāh's.^a He knows what every soul earns. And the disbelievers will come to know for whom is the (good) end of the Abode.

وَقَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلِلَّهِ
الْمَكْرُ جَمِيعًا ⑧ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ
نَفْسٍ ⑨ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الْكُفْرُ لِمَنْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ⑩

43 And those who disbelieve say: Thou art not a messenger. Say: Allāh is sufficient for a witness between me and you and whoever has knowledge of the Book.^a

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا ⑪ قُلْ
كُفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ ⑫
يَوْمَ مَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ ⑬

41a. *Aṭrāf* signifies *sides*, as indicating *the high and the low* or *exalted men* (LL). The reference may be either to some of the exalted men having come over to Islām and the opposition being thus weakened, or to the diminution of the number of disbelievers, both high and low, by men daily leaving their ranks and joining the ranks of Islām.

42a. The meaning is that the plans of the enemy need not be feared, for all their planning is controlled by Allāh, or that the requital of their plans is in the hands of Allāh.

43a. The Book here stands for previous revelation from Allāh, and attention is called to the fact that all those who have any knowledge of previous revelation will testify to the truth of the revelation of the Qur'ān, because it fulfils all previous prophecies and satisfies the criteria of a true revelation.