



## CHAPTER 7

### *Al-A 'rāf: The Elevated Places*

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 24 sections; 206 verses)

The title of this chapter is taken from the mention of *Al-A 'rāf* or *The Elevated Places* on which stand those righteous servants of Allāh who walk perfectly in the ways of truth and goodness.

The prominent theme of this chapter is the truth of Divine revelation, there being occasional references to the doctrine of Divine unity; hence the references to the histories of previous prophets.

The chapter opens with a statement of the truth of the Divine revelation as granted to the Holy Prophet, and its truth is emphasized by a prophetic reference to the doom of those who oppose the propagation of the truth contained therein. The second section shows that opposition to the Prophet is similar to the devil's opposition to the righteous servants of God, whose prototype is Adam; and is followed in the third section by a warning to all men against the insinuations of the devil. The next four sections are devoted to general statements regarding the advent of prophets, the fate of those who reject and ill-treat them, and the ultimate triumph of the righteous. These are followed by four other sections containing illustrations of these general statements as drawn from the histories of five prophets, whose names, and the prominent incidents of whose lives, were known to the Arabs, viz., Noah, Hūd, Šāliḥ, Lot, and Shu'aib. All these prophets, though belonging to different nations and different countries, are mentioned in the chronological order of their appearance. These histories are followed in the twelfth section by a warning to the opponents of the Holy Prophet that if they did not mend their ways they would meet with the same fate as overtook the former opponents of the Truth.

The remaining half of the chapter, with the exception of the last three sections, is taken up entirely with the history of Moses and the Israelites, importance being attached to that history on account of the close resemblance of the Prophet of Arabia to the great Israelite prophet, and on account of the clear prophecies of Moses regarding the appearance of a prophet from among the Ishmaelites, or the Arab nation. This is the reason that towards the end of that history mention is specially made of the prophecies contained in the Torah and the Gospel. The last three sections are again of a general nature, referring first to the impress of Divine Unity upon man's nature, thus adducing evidence of the truth of revelation; then to the coming of the doom, closing with a final word, containing, as it were, the essence of the two chapters.

The last chapter deals chiefly with the doctrine of Divine Unity, while this deals with the truth of revelation, and as the two subjects are closely inter-related, this chapter complements the last one. Even as the closing section of that chapter deals with the

revelation of the Qur'ān, this one fittingly opens with an assertion relating to the Divine source of the revelation contained in the Holy Qur'ān.

Internal as well as external evidence shows this chapter to have been revealed at about the same time as the last chapter. Hence the date of its revelation may be placed at a period just prior to the Flight. The best opinion among the earliest commentators is that the whole of it was revealed at Makkah.

## SECTION 1: Opponents' Doom

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

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1 I, Allāh, am the best Knower, the Truthful.<sup>a</sup>

الْحَقُّ ①

2 A Book revealed to thee — so let there be no straitness in thy breast concerning it<sup>a</sup> — that thou mayest warn thereby, and a Reminder<sup>b</sup> to the believers.

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِي صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِنْهُ لِتُنذِرَ بِهِ وَذِكْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ①

3 Follow what has been revealed to you from your Lord and follow not besides Him any guardians; little do you mind!

اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ قَلِيلًا مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ②

4 And how many a town have We destroyed! So Our punishment came to it by night or while they slept at midday.<sup>a</sup>

وَكَمْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا فَجَاءَهَا بَأْسُنَا بَيَاتًا أَوْ هُمْ قَائِلُونَ ③

5 Yet their cry, when Our punishment came to them, was nothing but that they said: Surely we were wrong-doers.

فَمَا كَانَ دَعْوَاهُمْ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ④

1a. Of the four letters *alif*, *lām*, *mīm*, and *šād*, the first three are the same as at the commencement of ch. 2, for which see 11; while *šād* stands for *Šādiq*, meaning *Truthful*, Whose promise would not fail (AH), or for *Aḫṣal*, i.e., *the best Decider* (I' Ab-AH), or for *Šabūr*, meaning *the Patient* or *Long-suffering* God Who gives a respite to the wicked and makes His righteous servants to suffer persecution and hardships at their hands for a time.

2a. *Haraj* signifies *straitness*, and the parenthetical passage, *so let there be no straitness in thy breast concerning it*, is introduced to console the Prophet, who at this time was encountering the greatest opposition and was surrounded by difficulties on all sides, and whose mission so far had made very little progress.

2b. The Qur'ān is very often call *dhikr* or *dhikrā*, i.e., *a reminder*, because, being in consonance with human nature, it is a reminder of what is imprinted on human nature. Or *dhikrā* has here the meaning of *dhikr*, i.e., an honour or eminence, as 43:44 may be alternatively rendered: "Surely it is an honour to thee and to thy people" (T, LL), and in 38:1: "By the Qur'ān, possessing eminence" (S, LL).

4a. The Prophet's opponents are here warned of a doom similar to the doom of the opponents of truth before them. Truth must be established, be it by the destruction of its opponents or the overthrow of their power, or their ultimate surrender.

6 Then certainly We shall question those to whom messengers were sent, and We shall question the messengers,<sup>a</sup>

فَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَ  
لَنَسْأَلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٦﴾

7 Then surely We shall relate to them with knowledge, and We are never absent.<sup>a</sup>

فَلَنَقُصِّنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ بِعِلْمٍ وَمَا كُنَّا غَائِبِينَ ﴿٧﴾

8 And the judging on that day will be just; so as for those whose good deeds are heavy, they are the successful.<sup>a</sup>

وَالْوَرُونَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ مَنْ تَقَلَّتْ  
مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٨﴾

9 And as for those whose good deeds are light, those are they who ruined their souls because they disbelieved in Our messages.<sup>a</sup>

وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ  
حَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٩﴾

10 And certainly We established you in the earth and made therein means of livelihood for you; little it is that you give thanks!

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ  
فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

## SECTION 2: The Devil's Opposition to Man

11 And We indeed created you, then We fashioned you, then We said to the

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا

6a. Those to whom messengers were sent will be questioned as to how they treated the messengers, and the latter as to how they were received.

7a. Allāh, being the Knower of all things, will declare to them what they had done; in other words, the consequences of their actions will become manifest.

8a. *Wazn* means *the knowing of the measure of the thing* (R). And referring to the opening words of this verse, it is added the *allusion is to justice in the reckoning of men*. Mjd says *wazn* here means *qadā*, or *judging* (IJ).

The word *mawāzin* occurring in the latter part of the verse is plural of *mauzūn* meaning *what is weighed* and *mizān* meaning *that by which things are weighed* or a *balance*. In the first case *mawāzin* means *good deeds* or *virtues*, because only *good deeds* are weighed — accepted by Mjd; in the second case, the words would be translated as *the scales being heavy* or *light*, but the heaviness or lightness of the scales is meaningless, unless it means the heaviness or lightness of the good deeds which one has to his credit.

9a. *Zulm*, when made transitive by means of *bā*, has the meaning of *kufṛ*. Thus, explaining *zalamū bi-hā* in v. 103, LL says: "It is also made transitive by means of *bā*, as in the phrase in the Qur'ān (7: 103 and 17:59), because the meaning is *kafarū*."

angels: Make submission to Adam.<sup>a</sup>  
So they submitted, except Iblis; he was not of those who submitted.

12 He said: What hindered thee that thou didst not submit when I commanded thee? He said: I am better than he; Thou hast created me of fire, while him Thou didst create of dust.<sup>a</sup>

13 He said: Then get forth from this (state), for it is not for thee to behave proudly therein. Go forth, therefore, surely thou art of the abject ones.<sup>a</sup>

14 He said: Respite me till the day when they are raised.<sup>a</sup>

15 He said: Thou art surely of the respited ones.

16 He said: As Thou hast adjudged me to be erring,<sup>a</sup> I will certainly lie in wait for them in Thy straight path,

لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا  
إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿١١﴾

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ ط  
قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَّارٍ  
وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾

قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ  
تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

قَالَ فَيْسًا أَعْوَيْتَنِي لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ  
صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٦﴾

11a. That what is stated here of Adam is true of all men is made clear by the words of this verse. Men are created first, then fashioned, then the order is given to the angels to make obeisance to Adam, who in this sense typifies man, the verse speaking of men generally in the opening words. Thus the angels are really required to make submission to every man; see 2:34a, 34b, 34c.

12a. The creation of man from dust is frequently referred to in the Holy Qur'an. Not only is Adam created from dust, but all men are spoken of as being similarly created; see 3:59a. As a contrast to man's creation from dust, the devil claims to have been created from fire. The meaning may be that the preponderating element in the creation of man is earth, while in that of the devil it is fire. There may be a reference here to the nature of the temperaments of the two classes, men and devils. The Holy Qur'an says elsewhere: "Man is created of haste" (21:37), which means that he is *hasty*. In like manner the devil's creation of fire may mean that he is made of a fiery temperament, while the perfect man is humble and meek, being created of dust, which stands for humility and meekness. Thus the description given here may stand for the prominent characteristics of the temperaments of the two classes of beings. Elsewhere it is stated that the jinn were created of fire (15:27), and also that Iblis was of the jinn (18:50).

13a. Degradation has always been the punishment of those who oppose the prophets of God. He abases those who consider themselves mighty.

14a. The devil's grip continues only so long as man is not spiritually raised to life. The raising here stands for the spiritual resurrection of man. If the Resurrection is meant, the significance would be that the devil would mislead man so long as man lives on this earth.

16a, see next page.

17 Then I shall certainly come upon them from before them and from behind them, and from their right and from their left; and Thou wilt not find most of them thankful.

ثُمَّ لَا تَبْتَئُهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ ﴿٧﴾

18 He said: Get out of it, despised, driven away. Whoever of them will follow thee, I will certainly fill hell with you all.

قَالَ اخْرُجْ مِنْهَا مَذْذُومًا مَدْحُورًا ط لَسَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَأَمَلَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨﴾

19 And (We said): O Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in the garden, so eat from whence you desire, but go not near this tree, lest you become of the unjust.<sup>a</sup>

وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٩﴾

20 But the devil made an evil suggestion to them that he might make manifest to them that which had been hidden from them of their shame,<sup>a</sup> and he said: Your Lord has forbidden you this tree, lest you become angels or become of the immortals.

فَوَسَّسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوَاتِحِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

21 And he swore to them both: Surely I am a sincere adviser to you—

وَقَالَ لَهُمَا إِيَّايَ اتَّصِحُّوا ﴿١١﴾

22 Thus he caused them to fall by deceit. So when they had tasted of the tree, their shame became mani-

فَدَلَّاهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوَاتِحُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفْنَ عَلَيْهَا

16a. *Aghwā-hu* (from *ghawā*, *he erred*) ordinarily signifies *he caused him to err*, but sometimes also indicates *punishing for error*. Thus *yughwiya-kum* in 11:34 is said to mean if Allāh desire to *punish you for erring* (LL); or, according to T, it means *yahkuma 'alai-kum bi-ghayyi-kum or adjudge you to be erring*. According to Rz, the meaning is that *He should cause you to perish*. But *ghawā* (of which *aghwa* is the causative form) means also *khāba* (T, LA), i.e. *he was disappointed or failed to attain his desire*, and also *fasada 'alai-hi 'aishu-hū* (LA), i.e. *his life became evil to him* (which is the correct significance of *ghawā* in 20:121). Therefore the words may also be interpreted as meaning *Thou hast made life evil to me, or Thou hast caused me to remain disappointed*.

19a. See 2:35c for the significance of the tree.

20a. *Sau'at* signifies *shame or parts of the body which it is necessary to cover*, and also *any saying or action of which one is ashamed when exposed to view, or any evil, abominable or unseemly property, quality, custom, or practice* (T, LL). The devil's suggestions always lead man to the disclosure of his shame.

fest to them, and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the garden.<sup>a</sup> And their Lord called to them: Did I not forbid you that tree, and say to you that the devil is surely your open enemy?

23 They said: Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves; and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers.

24 He said: Go forth — some of you, the enemies of others. And there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time.

25 He said: Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and therefrom shall you be raised.<sup>a</sup>

مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَتَادَاهُمَا رَأْسَهُمَا  
أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلُّ  
لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ۝

قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ  
تَعْفُفْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ۝

قَالَ اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ  
فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ۝

قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ  
وَمِنْهَا تُخْرَجُونَ ۝

### SECTION 3: Warning against the Devil's Insinuations

26 O children of Adam, We have indeed sent down to you clothing to cover your shame, and (clothing) for beauty;<sup>a</sup> and clothing that guards against evil — that is the best.<sup>b</sup> This

يَبْنَىٰ أَدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي  
سَوَآتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا وَلِبَاسَ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ۝

22a. The consciousness of having done something unworthy of oneself is the surest way to the attainment of perfection. The covering with the leaves of the garden is the desire to make up by human effort any fault that may have been committed. The clothing that guards against evil, which is spoken of in v. 26 as being *the best clothing*, explains the meaning of *covering* here. Divine revelation points out to man the true way, enabling him to cover himself or guard himself against evil. And, further, the statement in v. 27, *pulling off from them both their clothing that he might show them their shame* shows that covering with the leaves of the garden is an allegorical statement; see 27a. The Qur'an gives directions regarding the physical requirements of man, too, yet there is even in these an underlying idea of the spiritual elevation of man.

25a. This verse proves conclusively that every man must live and die upon this earth. Jesus could not be an exception to this rule.

26a. *Rishh* means originally *feathers* or *plumage*, constituting the clothing and ornament of birds, and is then applied to *superb* or *excellent clothing*, or *ornament* and *beauty* (LL).

26b. Clothing at first simply served to cover shame; with further progress men sought to embellish their persons with it; but there is yet a third kind of clothing, says the

is of the messages of Allāh that they may be mindful.

**27** O children of Adam, let not the devil seduce you, as he expelled your parents from the garden, pulling off from them their clothing<sup>a</sup> that he might show them their shame. He surely sees you, he as well as his host, from whence you see them not. Surely We have made the devils to be the friends of those who believe not.<sup>b</sup>

**28** And when they commit an indecency they say: We found our fathers doing this, and Allāh has enjoined it on us. Say: Surely Allāh enjoins not indecency. Do you say of Allāh what you know not?<sup>a</sup>

**29** Say: My Lord enjoins justice.<sup>a</sup> And set upright your faces at every time of prayer and call on Him, being sincere to Him in obedience. As He brought you into being, so shall you return.

**30** A party has He guided, and another party — perdition is justly

ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَدَّبَّرُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾

يٰۤاٰدَمُ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكَ الشَّيْطٰنُ كَمَا اَخْرَجَ  
اٰبَايَكَ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَتَرَعَّرُ عَنْهُمَا لِبَاسُهُمَا  
لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْاٰتِهِمَا ۗ اِنَّهٗ يَرٰكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيْلُهُ  
مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيْطٰنِ  
اَوْلِيَاۡ لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾

وَ اِذَا فَعَلُوْا فَاْحِشَةً قَالُوْا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْنَا  
اٰبَاۡنَا وَ اللّٰهُ اَمَرَنَا بِهَا قُلْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ  
لَا يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحِشَآءِ اَتَقُوْذُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ مَا  
لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾

قُلْ اَمَرَ رَبِّيْ بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ وَاَقِيْمُوْا وُجُوْهَكُمْ  
عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ ۗ وَاذْعُوْهُ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الْبَیِّنٰتِ  
كَمَا بَدَاۤ اَكْمُرُ تَعُوْذُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾

فَرِيْقًا هٰدِيًّا وَ فَرِيْقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلٰلَةُ

Qur'ān, which is the best, and that is *libās al-taqwā*, or *the clothing of piety*, literally *the clothing that guards one against evil*. It indicates a further step in the progress of man, for virtue is an embellishment of the mind, and when man has seen the good of embellishing his person, he will soon be aware of the necessity of embellishing his mind.

27a. That the clothing for the body is not meant here is clear from the fact that all men are warned against a similar attack of the devil. As to the clothing of which Adam was divested, there remains no doubt, when it is seen that the devil tries to divest every child of Adam of the same clothing. Mjd says: *It is the clothing that guards against evil, and by their sau'at is meant the evil that afflicted them on account of their disobedience* (AH).

27b. It is because they do not believe in the Truth that the devils are made their friends; those who sever their connection with the Source of purity must fall into impurity.

28a. The indecency here referred to is considered by some their going naked round the Ka'bah (Mjd-II). But the statement is general, and need not be limited.

29a. The word *qist* is variously explained as meaning *Divine Unity*; *what is good and right*; *truth* (AH). All these are really included in the literal meaning of the word *qist*, which signifies *justice* in its broadest sense.



their due.<sup>a</sup> Surely they took the devils for friends instead of Allāh, and they think that they are rightly guided.

**31** O children of Adam, attend to your adornment at every time of prayer, and eat and drink and be not prodigal; surely He loves not the prodigals.<sup>a</sup>

إِنَّهُمْ اتَّخَذُوا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ  
اللَّهِ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

يَبْنِي أَدَمَ خُدُودَهُ وَيُذَيِّبُكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ  
مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا  
إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٦١﴾

#### SECTION 4: Messengers sent for Uplift of Humanity

**32** Say: Who has forbidden the adornment of Allāh,<sup>a</sup> which He has brought forth for His servants, and the good provisions? Say: These are for the believers in the life of this world, purely (theirs) on the Resurrection day.<sup>b</sup> Thus do We make the messages clear for a people who know.

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ  
لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّبْحِ قُلْ هِيَ  
لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً  
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ قُلْ كَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ  
الْأَيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

30a. *Haqqa 'alai-hi kadhā* means *wajaba* or *thabata* (T) and, according to LL, the significance in such cases is that *a certain thing has become necessary as suited to the requirements of justice in his case*. And *ḍalālah* sometimes signifies *the punishment for ḍalālah* (R), or *a state of perdition* (LL). Or, the meaning is that *going astray or remaining in error* is suitable to the requirements of justice in their case. In fact, the words explain themselves: *Error is justly their due because they have taken the devils for their friends*. Whoever continues to follow the devil must surely remain in error.

31a. *Zinat* or *adornment* is here generally understood to mean *apparel*, with reference to the practice of going naked round the Ka'bah, but the word itself has a wider significance. According to R, *real adornment is that which does not disgrace or render unseemly a man in any one of his conditions either in the present life or in that which is to come*. Attending to one's adornment, therefore, carries a double significance here. It requires adorning oneself physically, i.e. a man must have his clothes on when he offers a prayer to God. In congregational prayers, in the vast gatherings on Fridays and 'Īd, the Muslims are required to have a bath before coming to the Mosque, to put their best clothes on and to use scent. But what is specially aimed at is adornment in a spiritual sense. A Muslim must attend to inner beautification, for prayer is really meant as an aid to the beauty of the soul. He must come to prayer with a heart free from all impurities and full of the highest aspirations and noblest sentiments.

32a. *By the adornment of Allāh* is meant *the adornment which Allāh has made lawful for men to avail themselves of*.

32b. The meaning is that in the life of this world the believer and the disbeliever equally profit by the good things, but in the life after death all good shall be exclusively for those who have accepted and acted on the right principles.

33 Say: My Lord forbids only indecencies, such of them as are apparent and such as are concealed, and sin and unjust rebellion, and that you associate with Allāh that for which He has sent down no authority, and that you say of Allāh what you know not.

34 And every nation has a term;<sup>34a</sup> so when its term comes, they cannot remain behind the least while, nor can they precede (it).

35 O children of Adam, if messengers come to you from among you relating to you My messages, then whosoever guards against evil and acts aright — they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.

36 And those who reject Our messages and turn away from them haughtily — these are the companions of the Fire; they shall abide in it.

37 Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allāh or rejects His messages? These — their portion of the Book shall reach them;<sup>37a</sup> until when Our messengers come to them causing them to die, they say: Where is that which you used to call upon besides Allāh? They would say: They are gone away from us. And they shall bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers.

38 He will say: Enter into the Fire among the nations that have passed away before you from among the jinn

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَأَلْتَمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

يَبْنَىٰ أَدَمَ إِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِنْكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

فَسَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَتْلَوْنَ مَا يُعْطَوْنَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ رُسُلُنَا يَتَوَفَّوْنَهُمْ قَالُوا آيُنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا اضْلُوعًا وَشَاهِدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

قَالَ ادْخُلُوا فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ فِي النَّارِ كُلَّمَا

34a. The term of a nation is the time when it is destroyed or punished for its evil deeds. The verse really speaks in general terms of the doom awaiting the opponents of Islām.

37a. That is, the punishment promised in the Book will overtake them.

and men. Every time a nation enters, it curses its sister;<sup>a</sup> until when they all follow one another into it, the last of them will say with regard to the first of them.<sup>b</sup> Our Lord, these led us astray, so give them a double chastisement of the Fire. He will say: Each one has double but you know not.<sup>c</sup>

**39** And the first of them will say to the last of them: You have no preference over us, so taste the chastisement for what you earned.

دَخَلَتْ أُمَّةٌ لَعَنَتْ أُخْتَهَا حَتَّى إِذَا دَارُوا  
فِيهَا جَمِيعًا قَالَتْ أُخْرَاهُمْ لِأُولِهِمْ رَبَّنَا  
هَؤُلَاءِ أَضَلُّونَا قَاتِلْهُمْ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا مِنَ النَّارِ  
قَالَ لِكُلِّ ضِعْفٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

وَقَالَتْ أُولَاهُمْ لِأُخْرَاهُمْ فَمَا كَانَ لَكُلِّ  
عَلَيْتَنَا مِنْ فَضْلِ فَدُّوا الْعَذَابَ بِسَاءِ  
كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

#### SECTION 5: Those who accept the Message

**40** Those who reject Our messages and turn away from them haughtily, the doors of heaven will not be opened for them, nor will they enter the Garden until the camel pass through the eye of the needle. And thus do We reward the guilty.<sup>a</sup>

**41** They shall have a bed of hell and over them coverings (of it). And thus do We requite the wrongdoers.

**42** And as for those who believe and do good — We impose not on any soul a duty beyond its scope —

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا  
عَنْهَا لَا تَفْتَحُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا  
يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي  
سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

لَهُمْ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَمِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ  
غَوَاشٍ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ  
نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ

38a. By the sister nation is meant the nation which resembles it in its deeds.

38b. By the *last* and the *first* are meant here the common people and the leaders, because, though the words would bear both interpretations, i.e. the last and the first in time or the last and the first in position, the latter significance is corroborated by similar expressions in several other places, such as 2:166, 14:21, 34:31–33, 40:47, etc.

38c. The common people would desire that the leaders should suffer a double torment, for their own sins as well as for having misled others. They are told that if the leaders were guilty of misleading them, they themselves deserved a double chastisement for having blindly followed the leaders.

40a. That is, they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, nor can they rise above the low earthly desires, soaring upward to the higher regions of spiritual life.

they are the owners of the Garden; therein they abide.

هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

**43** And We shall remove whatever of ill-feeling is in their hearts — rivers flow beneath them. And they say: All praise is due to Allāh, Who guided us to this! And we would not have found the way if Allāh had not guided us. Certainly the messengers of our Lord brought the truth. And it will be cried out to them: This is the Garden which you are made to inherit for what you did.

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنْ غِلٍّ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنَّ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ ۗ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلًا سَرِينًا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَنُودُوا أَن تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

**44** And the owners of the Garden call out to the companions of the Fire: We have found that which our Lord promised us to be true; have you, too, found that which your Lord promised to be true? They will say: Yes. Then a crier will cry out among them: The curse of Allāh is on the wrongdoers,

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ أَنْ قَدْ وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا رَبُّنَا حَقًّا فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا ۗ قَالُوا نَعَمْ ۗ قَالُوا لَئِن مَّا كُنَّا لَمُؤَدِّينَ بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ أَنْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

**45** Who hinder (men) from Allāh's way and seek to make it crooked, and they are disbelievers in the Hereafter.<sup>a</sup>

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَعُودُنَهَا عِوَجًا ۗ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

**46** And between them is a veil.<sup>a</sup> And on the Elevated Places<sup>b</sup> are men

وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ ۗ وَعَلَى الْأَعْرَابِ رِجَالٌ

45a. By seeking to make Allāh's way crooked is meant that they suggest doubts regarding the Truth.

46a. The veil which here separates the wicked from the righteous and on account of which the former fail to see the bliss which the latter enjoy will assume a perceptible form in the next life. Thus it is not distance that separates heaven from hell but only a veil, and they hear and even see one another.

46b. A *rāf* is a plural of *'arf*, meaning literally *an elevated place*, and hence *al-a-rāf* means *the elevated places*. There has been much discussion as to what a *rāf* is. The majority of commentators say that it is the *hijāb* or *veil* spoken of in the previous words, or the *sūr* or *wall* spoken of in 57:13; while others, among whom are Ḥasan and Zj, hold that *'ala-l-a-rāf* is only equivalent to *'alā ma'rifaati ahl al-Jannat wa-l-Nār*, i.e. *knowing the inmates of Paradise and the inmates of Hell* (RZ). I have already explained the nature of the veil mentioned in v. 46. And the *wall* in 57:13 is mentioned

who know all by their marks. And they call out to the owners of the Garden: Peace be to you! They have not yet entered it, though they hope.<sup>c</sup>

47 And when their eyes are turned towards the companions of the Fire, they say: Our Lord, place us not with the unjust people.<sup>a</sup>

يَعْرِفُونَ كُلًّا بِسِيمَاهُمْ وَنَادُوا أَصْحَابَ  
الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ سَلِّمُوا عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَمَّتْ يَدُهَا  
وَهُمْ يَطْمَعُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

وَإِذَا صُرِفَتْ أَبْصَارُهُمْ تِلْقَاءَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ  
قَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

### SECTION 6: Helplessness of Opponents

48 And the owners of the Elevated Places call out to men whom they recognize by their marks, saying: Of no avail were to you your amassings<sup>a</sup> and your arrogance.

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَابِ رِجَالًا يَعْرِفُونَهُمْ  
بِسِيمَاهُمْ قَالُوا مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ  
وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

49 Are these they about whom you swore that Allāh would not bestow mercy on them? Enter the Garden; you have no fear, nor shall you grieve.

أَهُؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمْتُمْ لَا يَمْلِكُهُمُ اللَّهُ  
بِرَحْمَةٍ أَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ لَا يَخُوفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ  
وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

50 And the companions of the Fire call out to the owners of the Garden: Pour on us some water or some of that which Allāh has provided for you. They say: Surely Allāh has forbidden them both to the disbelievers,

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ  
أَفِيضُوا عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ أَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ  
اللَّهُ ط قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَهَا عَلَى الْفَٰرِيقَيْنِ ﴿٥١﴾

51 Who take their religion for an idle sport and a play, and this world's life deceives them. So this day We

الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَلَعِبًا وَ  
غَرَّبَتْهُمْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا قَالُوا لِمَ نُنسَبُ

in connection with the bringing about of a separation between the sincere believers and the hypocrites. Hence the two verses lend no support to the idea that A'rāf is a particular place midway between paradise and hell. The men spoken of here as being on the elevated places are the same righteous servants of Allāh who are distinctly mentioned in 56: 10, 11: "And the foremost are the foremost — these are drawn nigh to Allāh". Besides this, the prophets are again and again spoken of as a class by themselves, being witnesses over their people.

46c. They are, as it were, standing at the door of the Garden, ready to enter it.

47a. Thus do pray those who hope to enter paradise.

48a. The word *jam'u-kum* may mean either *your amassing worldly wealth*, or it may mean *your multitude or strength in numbers*.

shall forsake them,<sup>a</sup> as they neglected the meeting of this day of theirs, and as they denied Our messages.

52 And certainly We have brought them a Book which We make clear with knowledge, a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe.

53 Do they wait for aught but its final sequel?<sup>a</sup> On the day when its final sequel comes, those who neglected it before will say: Indeed the messengers of our Lord brought the truth. Are there any intercessors on our behalf so that they should intercede for us? Or could we be sent back so that we should do (deeds) other than those which we did? Indeed they have lost their souls, and that which they forged has failed them.

كَمَا نَسُوا لِقَاءَ يَوْمِهِمْ هَذَا وَمَا  
كَانُوا يَأْتِنَنَا يَبْجَحِدُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ  
هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا تَأْوِيلَهُ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي  
تَأْوِيلَهُ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ سَوَّاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ  
قَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ فَهَلْ لَنَا  
مِنْ شَفَعَاءَ فَيَشْفَعُوا لَنَا أَوْ نُورِدُّ مَعْمَلَ  
غَيْرِ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ قَدْ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ  
وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

### SECTION 7: The Righteous will prosper

54 Surely your Lord is Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods,<sup>a</sup> and He is established on the Throne of Power.<sup>b</sup> He makes the

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ

51a. The use of *nisyān* is not limited to *forgetting*; the word applies as well to *dismissing a thing from the mind intentionally* (R). And when the word is used about Allāh, it means *His forsaking them to show His contempt for them* (R).

53a. By *final sequel* is meant the *ultimate state* of the perfect manifestation of truth by the fulfilment of the prophecies, *the end or the ultimate consequence*; see 4:59b.

54a. For *yaum* as meaning a *period, whatever period it may be*, see 1:3b. The six periods of time in which the heavens and the earth are created refer in fact to the six stages in which they have grown to their present condition. In the case of the earth these six stages are detailed in 41:9, 10; see 41:10a.

54b. ‘*Arsh* (“Throne of Power”) literally means a *thing constructed for shade* (LL), or *anything roofed* (R). According to the latter authority *the court or sitting-place of the king* is called ‘*arsh* on account of its eminence. And he adds: It is used to indicate *might or power and authority and dominion*. LL accepts the interpretation of R, who says that “the ‘*arsh* of God is one of the things which mankind know not in reality but only by name, and it is not as the imaginations of the vulgar hold it to be”. In fact, both the

night cover the day, which it pursues incessantly. And (He created) the sun and the moon and the stars, made subservient by His command. Surely His is the creation and the command. Blessed is Allāh, the Lord of the worlds!

الْعَرْشِ تَغْنِيهِ الْيَلَّ الْتَهَّاسَ يَطْلُبُهُ  
حَشِيكًا وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ  
مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ طَالَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْطُ  
تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

words '*arsh*' and *kursi* have been misunderstood as meaning resting-places for Allāh. The latter has already been explained as meaning *knowledge* (2:255b), and the true significance of the former is *power* or *control of the creation*.

*Istawā* signifies, when followed by '*alā*', *he had the mastery or control of a thing or ascendancy over it*, being synonymous with *istaulā* (LL), or *he was* or *became firm* (LL).

*Thumma*, as already shown in 2:29a, has often the same significance as *wāw* and means *and*.

The phrase *Istawā 'ala-l-'arsh* ("He is established on the Throne of Power") is used in the Holy Qur'ān here and on six other occasions, viz., in 10:3, 13:2, 20:5, 25:59, 32:4 and 57:4. A reference to all these places will show that it is invariably used after mentioning the creation of the heavens and the earth and in relation to the Divine control of His creation and the law and order to which the universe is made to submit by its great Author, as shown by the words that follow here, *His is the creation and the command*. The two things mentioned are, in the opening words, *creation* and '*arsh*', and in the concluding words, *creation* and *command*. Similarly in 10:3 where '*arsh*' is spoken of after the creation of the heavens and the earth, it is followed by the explanatory words *yudabbiru-l-amr*, i.e., *He regulates the affair*. What is, therefore, aimed at is that after creating the universe, God has not left it to run its course independently of Him, but He it is Whose command holds sway and Who regulates the affairs as He has planned them. There are many people in this age of scientific advancement who think that, though the conclusion cannot be avoided that there is a God Who created this universe, Whom they call the First or Primal Cause, yet after its creation it runs its course according to certain immutable laws, and God — or the First Cause — has no concern with its affairs. The Holy Qur'ān does not accept this view and hence, when it speaks of the creation of the heavens and the earth, it speaks also of the '*arsh*' which stands for God's control of the universe, as shown above. To make it further clear, the verse is made to end with the words *tabārak Allāhu Rabbu-l-'ālamīn*, i.e., *blessed is Allāh, the Nourisher of the worlds unto perfection*. These words show that the world is still in the process of growth, and according to the Divine plan, it is advancing from one stage to another to attain its perfection. God has not only created it but He is also regulating its affairs to make it perfect.

In the words *Rabb al-'ālamīn* there is also a deeper reference, as shown in 1:1a, to the spiritual evolution of man which is being worked out under the Divine plan, and the '*arsh*' is mentioned specially in this connection, as man's perfection does not consist in the working of the material laws which prevail in the universe but in the spiritual laws which are needed for his perfection. The *amr* (affair) whose regulation is so often mentioned in connection with '*arsh*' is really the spiritual kingdom, what Jesus calls the kingdom of God. This is made clear in 32:5; see 32:5a. The spiritual perfection of man is specially mentioned in connection with '*arsh*' in 40:15: "Exalter of degrees, Lord of the '*arsh*', He makes the spirit (i.e., Divine revelation) to light by His command upon whom He pleases of His servants, that he may warn (men) of the day of Meeting." The *Lord of the 'arsh*' is thus clearly stated to be the *Sender of revelation* to man to bring about his spiritual perfection. Still more clearly in the same *sārah*, the righteous servants

55 Call on your Lord humbly and in secret. Surely He loves not the transgressors.

أُدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56 And make not mischief in the earth after its reformation, and call on Him, fearing and hoping. Surely the mercy of Allāh is nigh to the doers of good.<sup>a</sup>

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا  
وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ  
قَرِيبٌ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57 And He it is Who sends forth the winds bearing good news before His mercy;<sup>a</sup> till, when they bear a laden cloud, We drive it to a dead land, then We send down water on it, then bring forth thereby fruits of all kinds. Thus do We bring forth the dead that you may be mindful.<sup>b</sup>

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ  
يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ طَحَّى إِذَا أَقَلَّتْ سَحَابًا ثِقَالًا  
سُقْنَاهُ لِيَكْلِلَ مَيِّتٍ فَأَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَاءَ  
فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ كَذَلِكَ  
نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَى لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

58 And the good land — its vegetation comes forth (abundantly) by the permission of its Lord. And that which is inferior — (its herbage) comes forth but scantily. Thus do We repeat the messages for a people who give thanks.<sup>a</sup>

وَالْبُكَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ  
رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي خَبثُ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا كَيْدًا ط  
كَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

of God who deliver the Divine messages to men are called the bearers of the 'arsh. Speaking of the messages of the messengers of God and how the people give them the lie, it is added: "Those who bear the 'arsh and those around it celebrate the praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask protection for those who believe" (40:7). The bearers of the 'arsh are, in fact, the bearers of the Divine message.

56a. The feeling which should be entertained towards Allāh should be a combination of fear and hope, of awe as well as love, because the fear of His displeasure ennobles the mind no less than the hope of His mercy.

57a. His mercy represents the rain in the physical world.

57b. The bringing forth of the spiritually dead to life through the revelation of the Qur'an is always likened to the bringing of the dead earth to life by rain. The wind bearing the good news was the movement towards Islām, which was daily becoming more and more powerful.

58a. Revelation is here likened to the rain and the good or bad nature of man to good or inferior land. If some men do not profit by the revelation, it is their own fault, not that of the revelation, just as, if some lands do not profit by rain, it is due to their own inferiority.