



CHAPTER 16

Al-Nahl: The Bee

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 16 sections; 128 verses)

This chapter is very appropriately named *The Bee*, because the bee, guided by instinct, which is called a revelation in its case (v. 68), gathers together sweet honey from flowers of all kinds, taking what is best in them, thus producing “a beverage of many hues, in which there is healing for men”. So Divine revelation to the Holy Prophet collected what was best in the teaching of all the prophets and presented it in the Holy Qur’ān, which is also declared to be a healing (10:57) for the spiritual diseases of men.

The subject-matter of this chapter is the same as that of the preceding six chapters of the *alif lām rā* group, to which it really forms, as it were, a supplement. The first section announces the approach of the doom, and then shows by reference to the great Divine gifts for the physical welfare of man that such a beneficent Master could not have neglected his spiritual welfare. The second section, still dwelling upon the benefits which God has conferred upon man in physical nature, draws attention to man’s superiority over the whole of creation, which is made subservient to him. The next two sections lead us again into the domain of prophecy by stating that the deniers will come to disgrace. These are followed by two sections further explaining the truth of the statements made above and dealing with some of the false excuses of those who rejected the truth. The seventh section shows how human nature revolts against polytheism, and the eighth deals with the iniquities of the deniers, which, however, a Merciful God is slow to punish. The ninth establishes the necessity of revelation by reference to the working of law in nature, and the tenth shows that all men cannot be the recipients of that revelation, but that choice is made of the best. The eleventh speaks of the hour when the opponents will be overthrown, though the punishment is delayed out of Divine mercy. The twelfth refers to the evidence of prophets against their people. The thirteenth shows that it is nothing but good that is enjoined by revelation, and thus appeals to human instinct not to reject it. The Qur’ān is next plainly stated to be a revelation in substitution for the previous revelation. The fate of the opponents who persist in rejecting the Truth is then compared with that of a flourishing town, which is made to suffer fear and hunger because of the ingratitude of its people. The chapter is closed by giving the Muslims certain directions, which they must follow in order to become, and to remain, a great nation.

The revelation of this chapter belongs to the last Makkan period, like that of the group which it supplements. The mention, in vv. 41 and 110, of Muhājirs, i.e. those who fly from their home, has led some to think that these verses must have been revealed at Madinah. It should, however, be noted that the first flight of the Muslims to escape the severe persecution of the Makkans had taken place as early as the fifth year of the Call; but it is more probable that the reference is to the second Muslim exodus from Makkah, which took place before the Holy Prophet’s actual departure from that town.

SECTION 1: Revelation testified to by Nature

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

1 Allāh's commandment will come to pass, so seek not to hasten it.^a Glory be to Him, and highly exalted be He above what they associate (with Him)!

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 أَلَمْ يَأْمُرُ اللَّهُ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ سُبْحَانَهُ
 وَتَعْلَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ①

2 He sends down angels with revelation^a by His command on whom He pleases of His servants, saying: Give the warning that there is no God but Me, so keep your duty to Me.

يُنزِّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ
 عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرُوا
 أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاتَّقُونِ ②

3 He created the heavens and the earth with truth. Highly exalted be He above what they associate (with Him)!

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ
 تَعْلَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ③

4 He created man from a small life-germ,^a and lo! he is an open contender.

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ
 خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ ④

5 And the cattle, He has created them for you. You have in them warm clothing and (other) advantages, and of them you eat.

وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ
 وَمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ⑤

6 And therein is beauty for you, when you drive them back (home) and when you send them out (to pasture).

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرِيحُونَ
 وَحِينَ تَسْرَحُونَ ⑥

7 And they carry your heavy loads to regions which you could not reach but

وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا
 بِلْغِيهِ إِلَّا بِشِقِّ الْأَنْفُسِ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ

1a. The first words of this chapter are a fitting sequel to the previous chapters, which repeatedly give warning of punishment to the opponents of the Truth. The *amr Allāh* (lit., *Allāh's commandment*) signifies the threatened punishment. The disbelievers are asked not to hasten the punishment, for Allāh, Who conferred so many physical benefits on them, is willing to bestow His spiritual gifts, as mercy has the foremost place in Divine nature. This is stated in the verses that follow. What that punishment is going to be is expressly stated at the end of this chapter (v. 112); see 112a.

2a. *Rūḥ* here signifies *Divine revelation*, so called because it quickens to spiritual life. It also signifies the Qur'ān (LL).

4a. *Nuṭfah* signifies originally only *pure water* — *al-mā' al-ṣāfī* — the word being applied to a very small quantity as well as to a very large volume of it, so that any good drink is called a *nuṭfah*, so also is a sea (T). The *nuṭfah* from which man is stated to be created is the small life-germ, or the spermatozoon, in the seminal fluid.

with distress to yourselves. Surely your Lord is Compassionate, Merciful.

8 And (He made) horses and mules and asses that you might ride upon them and as an ornament. And He creates what you know not.

9 And upon Allāh it rests to show the right way, and there are some deviating (ways). And if He please, He would guide you all aright.^a

لَرَوْفٌ سَرِيعٌ ﴿٧﴾

وَالْأَخْيَلِ وَالْبَعَالِ وَالْحَمِيرِ لِيَرْكَبوهَا
وَزِينَةً وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨﴾

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَائِرٌ
وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩﴾

SECTION 2: Nature upholds Unity

10 He it is Who sends down water from the clouds for you; it gives drink, and by it (grow) the trees on which you feed.

11 He causes to grow for you thereby herbage, and the olives, and the date-palms, and the grapes, and all the fruits. Surely there is a sign in this for a people who reflect.

12 And He has made subservient for you the night and the day and the sun and the moon. And the stars are made subservient by His command. Surely there are signs in this for a people who understand.

13 And what He has created for you in the earth is of varied hues. Surely there is a sign in this for a people who are mindful.

14 And He it is Who has made the sea subservient that you may eat fresh flesh from it and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَكُمْ
مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

يُنْبِتُ لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَالزَّيْتُونَ
وَالنَّخِيلَ وَالْأَعْنَابَ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١١﴾

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ
وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ
فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

وَمَا ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لِيَأْتِيَ كُلًّا مِنْهُ
لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً

^{9a}. And so at last it was that at first Makkah and then the whole of Arabia accepted Islām.

And thou seest the ships cleaving through it, so that you seek of His bounty and that you may give thanks.

تَلْبَسُونَهَا ۖ وَ تَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَآخِرَ فِيهِ
وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۚ وَلَكُمْ كَشْرُونَ ۝

15 And He has cast firm mountains in the earth lest it quake with you, and rivers and roads that you may go aright,^a

وَ أَلْقَى فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ
بِكُمْ وَ أَنْهَارًا وَ سُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ۝

16 And landmarks. And by the stars they find the right way.

وَ عَلِمَتْ ۖ وَ بِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ۝

17 Is He then Who creates like him who creates not? Do you not then mind?

أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا
تَذَكَّرُونَ ۝

18 And if you would count Allāh's favours, you would not be able to number them. Surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.

وَ إِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا ۖ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَكَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

19 And Allāh knows what you conceal and what you do openly.

وَ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُسْرُونَ وَ مَا تُعْلِنُونَ ۝

20 And those whom they call on besides Allāh created naught, while they are themselves created.

وَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا
يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَ هُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ۖ ۝

21 Dead (are they), not living. And they know not when they will be raised.^a

أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ ۚ وَ مَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۚ
أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ ۖ ۝

15a. The words of the Qur'ān seem to point to the great upheavals and the violent agitations which led to the formation of the mountains, before man's existence on earth, and, that having been effected, the convulsions are now comparatively insignificant. The present condition of the earth, with man upon it, is therefore one of stability, making life possible. But *an tamida bi-kum* may also mean that *they may be a source of benefit to you as māda means he conferred a benefit*. In accordance with this we have elsewhere: "And the mountains, He made them firm, a provision for you and for your cattle" (79:32, 33).

21a. These two verses show conclusively that neither Jesus Christ nor any other person who is taken for a god ever created anything; and secondly, that Jesus Christ was not alive at the time of the revelation of the Holy Qur'ān: *Dead are they, not living*. The further statement that they do not even know when they will be raised, shows that the verse speaks of men taken for gods, and at any rate includes them.

SECTION 3: Denial due to Ignorance

22 Your God is one God: so those who believe not in the Hereafter, their hearts refuse to know and they are proud.

إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ فَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْآخِرَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مُنْكِرَةٌ وَهُمْ
مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

23 Undoubtedly Allāh knows what they hide and what they manifest. Surely He loves not the proud.

لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا
يُعْلِنُونَ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْتَكْبِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24 And when it is said to them, What is it that your Lord has revealed? they say, Stories of the ancients!

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ مَاذَا أُنزِلَ رَبُّكُمْ ۖ
قَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

25 That they may bear their burdens in full on the day of Resurrection, and also of the burdens of those whom they lead astray without knowledge. Ah! evil is what they bear.

لِيَجْزِيَ أُولَئِكَ فِي الْيَوْمِ الْكَلِيمَةِ
وَمِنْ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يُضِلُّونَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ
عِلْمٍ ۗ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَزُرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

SECTION 4: The Wicked will come to Disgrace

26 Those before them plotted, so Allāh demolished their building from the foundations, so the roof fell down on them from above them, and the chastisement came to them from whence they perceived not.^a

قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَاذَى اللَّهُ
بُيُوتَهُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَسَخَّرَ عَلَيْهِمْ
السَّمَاءَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَأَتَتْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ
مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

27 Then on the Resurrection day He will bring them to disgrace and say: Where are My partners, for whose sake you became hostile? Those who are given the knowledge will say: Surely disgrace this day and evil are upon the disbelievers,^a

ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُخْزِيهِمْ وَيَقُولُ
أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تُشَاقِقُونَ
فِيهِمْ ۗ قَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ إِنَّتِ
الْحُزْيُ الْيَوْمَ وَالسُّوءُ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

26a. The meaning is that the opponents will be given time to complete their plans, and then these plans and all that they spent on them will be brought to naught, and prove a cause of their own ruin. Compare 8:36 "Surely those who disbelieve spend their wealth to hinder people from the way of Allāh. So they will go on spending it, then it will be to them a regret, then they will be overcome".

27a, see next page.

28 Whom the angels cause to die, while they are unjust to themselves. Then would they offer submission: We did not do any evil. Nay! Surely Allāh knows what you did.

الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّوهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي
أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا لَمَّا كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ
مِنْ سُوْءٍ بَلَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

29 So enter the gates of hell, to abide therein. Evil indeed is the dwelling- place of the proud.

فَادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
فَلَيْسَ مَشْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

30 And it is said to those who guard against evil: What has your Lord revealed? They say, Good. For those who do good in this world is good. And certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better. And excellent indeed is the abode of those who keep their duty —

وَقِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا مَاذَا أَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ
قَالُوا خَيْرًا لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ
الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَلِلْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ
وَلِعِمَّةٍ دَارِ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31 Gardens of perpetuity which they enter, wherein flow rivers: they have therein what they please. Thus does Allāh reward those who keep their duty,

جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ
كَذَلِكَ يَجْزِي اللَّهُ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

32 Whom the angels cause to die in purity, saying: Peace be to you! enter the Garden for what you did.

الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّوهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَيِّبِينَ
يَقُولُونَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

33 Await they aught but that the angels should come to them or that thy Lord's command should come to pass.^a Thus did those before them. And Allāh wronged them not, but they wronged themselves.

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
أَوْ يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ
كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

27a. Mark that the punishment of the disbelievers on the Resurrection day is described twice in this verse as *disgrace*. This shows that *disgrace* is a sort of hell-fire, which they had in this very life, too.

33a. What is meant by the coming of the angels or the coming of the Lord is made clear by the next verse; it is the punishment for their evil deeds and ultimately their complete overthrow that is meant. The coming of the angels stands for the smaller afflictions, such as overtook them in the form of famine and war, while the coming to pass of the command of the Lord indicates the complete overthrow of their power. Compare 2:210, 210a.

34 So the evil of what they did afflicted them, and that which they mocked encompassed them.^a

فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

SECTION 5: Prophets are raised to explain

35 And the idolaters say: If Allāh pleased we would not have served aught but Him, (neither) we nor our fathers, nor would we have prohibited aught without (order from) Him.^a Thus did those before them. But have the messengers any duty except a plain delivery (of the message)?

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ نَحْنُ وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَهَلْ عَلَى الرُّسُلِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٣٥﴾

36 And certainly We raised in every nation a messenger, saying: Serve Allāh and shun the devil. Then of them was he whom Allāh guided, and of them was he whose remaining in error was justly due.^a So travel in the land, then see what was the end of the rejectors.

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكذِبِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

37 If thou desirest their guidance, yet Allāh will not guide him who leads astray,^a nor have they any helpers.

إِنْ تَحْرِضْ عَلَى هُدَاهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ يُضِلُّ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

34a. The past tense is used to express the highest degree of certainty relating to the future.

35a. They would not give a serious thought to the Prophet's message that evil works bring an evil consequence, but met it with the rejoinder that, if Allāh did not like evil, He could have diverted them from evil ways. They are told in reply that Allāh's pleasure is not exercised by compelling people to adopt one way or the other, but by sending His messengers in every age and to every nation to point out the right way to the people, and by clear messages through the mouths of His ministers to warn people to avoid evil.

36a. *Ḥaqqā 'alai-hi* means a thing was suitable to the requirements of justice, etc., to take effect upon him (LL). There were some people who did not care for the Prophet's warning and adhered to error. Justice therefore required that they should be left in error. The message was sent by God; the choice was man's own to accept or reject it. The words do not mean that Allāh had foredoomed some people, for then the sending to them of messengers would have been absurd.

37a. I think there has been a great misunderstanding in the interpretation of the words *man yuḍillu*, which clearly mean who leads (others) astray. The meaning is,

38 And they swear by Allāh their most energetic oaths: Allāh will not raise up him who dies. Yea! it is a promise binding on Him, quite true, but most people know not:

39 So that He might make manifest to them that about which they differ, and that those who disbelieve might know that they were liars.

40 Our word for a thing, when We intend it, is only that We say to it, Be; and it is.

وَأَنسَوُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ ۗ لَا يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ مَن يَمُوتُ ۗ بَلَىٰ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا ۗ وَلَٰكِن أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي يُخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ ۗ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا الَّذِينَ كَانُوا ﴿٣٩﴾

إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ أَن نَّقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٠﴾

SECTION 6: Doom of Opponents is coming

41 And those who flee for Allāh’s sake after they are oppressed, We shall certainly give them a good abode in the world; and the reward of the Hereafter is much greater. Did they but know!^a

42 Those who are steadfast and on their Lord they rely.

43 And We sent not before thee any but men to whom We sent revelation — so ask the followers of the Reminder if you know not^a —

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ۗ وَلَا جُزْءَ الْآخِرَةِ الْأَكْبَرِ ۗ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ ۖ فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

therefore, that those who do not only walk in error themselves, but have grown so hostile to the cause of Truth that they mislead others, cannot find the right way, however much the Prophet may be anxious for them.

41a. Here is a clear prophecy regarding those Muslims who had to flee their homes on account of the persecutions of the Quraish. What is promised them is not only a reward of the Hereafter but a *goodly abode in this world, too*. Whether the reference here is only to the earlier flights to Abyssinia, or to the later flight to Madinah, which had begun before the Holy Prophet’s departure, one thing is certain: those who fled their homes in utter helplessness, and were in danger even of their very lives, were given the clearest promise of a great future in this life, and this promise proved true notwithstanding the hard struggle of a powerful nation, united at least in the determination to exterminate Islām. It is related of the Caliph ‘Umar that he used to say, when he gave a gift to one of the emigrants: “Take this — may Allāh bless you! This is what He promised you in this life, and what is for you in the Hereafter is greater” (Kf), evidently referring to this verse.

43a. By the followers of the *Reminder* are generally understood the Jews and the Christians, to whom it is supposed the Quraish are told to refer the question whether it is

44 With clear arguments and Scriptures. And We have revealed to thee the Reminder that thou mayest make clear to men that which has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect.

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ
لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

45 Are they, then, who plan evil (plans), secure that Allāh will not abase them in the earth,^a or that chastisement will not overtake them from whence they perceive not?

أَفَأَمِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ
يَخْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

46 Or that He will not seize them in their going to and fro,^a then they will not be able to escape?

أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ فِي تَقْلُبِهِمْ فَمَا هُمْ
بِعُصِّدِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

47 Or that He will not seize them with a gradual diminution?^a Your Lord is surely Compassionate, Merciful.

أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ عَلَى تَخَوُّفٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ
لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٤٧﴾

48 See they not everything that Allāh has created? Its (very) shadows return from right and left, making obeisance to Allāh, while they are in utter abasement.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
يَتَفَتَّحُونَ ظِلَّهُ عَنِ الْيُسُيُنِ وَالشَّمَالِ
سُجَّدًا لِلَّهِ وَهُمْ دَاخِرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

or it is not true that only men and not angels were sent with Divine revelation before, but the mention in the very next verse of the *Dhikr*, or the *Reminder*, being sent to the Holy Prophet shows that the words apply to the Muslims. Some commentators, however, take the words generally as meaning learned men.

45a. *Khasf*, which is ordinarily rendered as *cleaving open*, or *swallowing*, also means *idhlāl* (T), i.e. *bringing to disgrace*. *Khasafa* also signifies *it became defective*, or *suffered loss*, and the infinitive noun *khasaf* signifies *being vile*, *abject*, or *contemptible*, or *lowering*, *abasing*, or *humbling another* (LL).

46a. *Taqallub* (lit., *turning about*) signifies *journeying for traffic*, because for this purpose one has to go and come again and again (LL). Vv. 45–47 are prophetic. As vv. 41, 42 speak of a prosperous future for those who accepted the truth and now were suffering the severest persecutions, these three verses speak of the different forms of punishment to which the persecutors of the righteous were to be subjected. V. 45 foretells that abasement in the land is in store for them, while in v. 46 they are told that their very journeys to Syria, on which their prosperity depended on account of the trade which was thus kept up, might come to an end. This happened when the Muslims at Madinah became strong and, due to the hostile attitude of the Makkans, who attacked them again and again, became a threat to their Syrian trade, as Madinah was situated on the trade route.

47a. *Takhawwafa-hū* means *he took little by little from it* (LL), and the meaning is that they will be diminished gradually, until disbelief was utterly annihilated. This was their end, their power went on waning till the whole of Arabia bowed before Islām.

49 And to Allāh makes obeisance every living creature that is in the heavens and that is in the earth, and the angels (too) and they are not proud.

50 They fear their Lord above them and do what they are commanded.^a

Prostration

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي
الْاَرْضِ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَهُمْ
لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ۝٤٩

يَخَافُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَيَفْعَلُوْنَ
مَا يُؤْمَرُوْنَ ۝٥٠

SECTION 7: Human Nature revolts against Polytheism

51 And Allāh has said: Take not two gods. He is only one God: So Me alone should you fear.

52 And whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His, and to Him is obedience due always. Will you then fear other than Allāh?

53 And whatever good you have, it is from Allāh; then, when evil afflicts you, to Him do you cry for aid.

54 Then when He removes the evil from you, lo! some of you associate others with their Lord,

55 So as to deny what We have given them. Then enjoy yourselves, for soon will you know.

56 And they set apart for what they know not,^a a portion of what We have given them. By Allāh! you shall certainly be questioned about that which you forged.

57 And they ascribe daughters to Allāh. Glory be to Him! And for themselves is what they desire!

وَقَالَ اللهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوْا الْهٰٓئِيْنَ اٰثَنِيْنَ
اِنَّهَا هُوَ اللهُ وَّ اَحَدٌ فَاِيَّٰى فَاَرْحَبُوْنَ ۝٥١

وَكُلُّ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَكَهُ
الدِّيْنِ وَاَصْبٰطُ اللهِ تَتَّقُوْنَ ۝٥٢

وَمَا بِكُمْ مِّنْ نِّعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللهُ ثُمَّ اِذَا
مَسَّكُمْ الضَّرُّ فَالَيْهِ تَجْعَرُوْنَ ۝٥٣

ثُمَّ اِذَا كُشِفَ الضَّرُّ عَنْكُمْ اِذَا فَرِحْتُمْ
مِّنْكُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝٥٤

لِيَكْفُرُوْا بِمَا اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ فَتَمَتَّعُوْا
فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٥٥

وَيَجْعَلُوْنَ لِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ نَصِيْبًا مِّمَّا
رَزَقْنٰهُمْ ط ثُمَّ لَكُنَّا عَنْكُمْ اَعْمٰٓءُ
تَفْتَرُوْنَ ۝٥٦

وَيَجْعَلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ الْبَنٰتِ سُبْحٰنَهُ لَا وِ
لَهُمْ مَا يَشْتَهُوْنَ ۝٥٧

50a. The recital of this verse is followed by an actual prostration; see 7:206a.

56a. That is, for the idols or their gods, whom they ignorantly take for intercessors.

58 And when the birth of a daughter is announced to one of them, his face becomes black and he is full of wrath.

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِالْأُنْثَىٰ ظَلَّ
وَجْهَهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾

59 He hides himself from the people because of the evil of what is announced to him. Shall he keep it with disgrace or bury it (alive) in the dust? Now surely evil is what they judge!^a

يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءِ مَا
بُشِّرَ بِهِ أَيَسْكُتُ عَلَىٰ هُونٍ أَمْ
يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60 For those who believe not in the Hereafter are evil attributes and Allāh's are the sublime attributes. And He is the Mighty, the Wise.

لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ مَثَلُ السَّوْءِ
وَلِلَّهِ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾

SECTION 8: Iniquity of Deniers

61 And if Allāh were to destroy men for their iniquity, He would not leave therein a single creature, but He respites them till an appointed time. So when their doom comes, they are not able to delay (it) an hour, nor can they advance (it).

وَكُلُّ يَوْمٍ آخِذٌ لِلَّهِ النَّاسَ يَظْلِمُهُمْ مَا تَرَكُوا
عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَىٰ
أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا
يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَأْجِرُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

62 And they ascribe to Allāh what they (themselves) hate,^a and their tongues relate the lie that for them is good. Assuredly for them is the Fire, and they will be (therein) abandoned.

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ مَا يَكْرَهُونَ وَتَصِفُ
أَلْسِنَتُهُمُ الْكُذْبَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۗ
لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ النَّارَ وَأَنَّهُمْ مُّفْرَطُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

63 By Allāh! We certainly sent (messengers) to nations before thee,

تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ

59a. The allusion is to the barbarous custom of burying daughters alive, which was prevalent among the Arabs, especially among their chiefs. Its abolition was one of the numerous blessings of Islām. With no physical or administrative power behind it to ensure its enforcement, the word of Allāh swept away this deep-rooted custom as if by a magician's wand, so that not a single case of the burial of a living girl ever occurred after the mandate came. Attention is drawn to the inconsistency of their avowed beliefs with their inward convictions in v. 62; see 62a.

62a. The reference is to their ascribing daughters to Allāh, while they themselves did not like to have a daughter, thus showing how obviously inconsistent with their inward convictions was their professed belief in the Divine Being.

but the devil made their deeds fair-seeming to them. So he is their patron today, and for them is a painful chastisement.

فَرَبِّينَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَانَهُمْ فَهُوَ
وَلِيُّهُمْ الْيَوْمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾

64 And We have not revealed to thee the Book except that thou mayest make clear to them that wherein they differ, and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe.^a

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِلْبَيِّنِ
لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ۗ وَهُدًى
وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

65 And Allāh sends down water from above, and therewith gives life to the earth after its death.^a Surely there is a sign in this for a people who listen.

وَاللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا
بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

SECTION 9: Parables showing the Truth of Revelation

66 And surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle: We give you to drink of what is in their bellies — from betwixt the faeces and the blood — pure milk, agreeable to the drinkers.

وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً ۗ نُسْقِيكُمْ
مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ
لَبَنًا خَالِصًا سَائِغًا لِلشَّرِبِ ۗ إِنَّ ﴿١٩﴾

67 And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes, you obtain from them intoxicants and goodly provision. There is surely a sign in this for a people who ponder.^a

وَمِنْ ثَمَرَاتِ النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ
تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَرِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۗ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

64a. The previous verse shows that the whole world was in the grip of the devil at the advent of the Prophet. It speaks of messengers having been sent to all nations before the coming of the Prophet, but adds that, as time passed, the followers of the messengers, instead of following their teachings, followed evil ways, which gradually appeared to them so beautiful that the good of this world was all in all for them. This verse shows that the teachings of the previous prophets had been distorted to such an extent that a new Prophet was now needed to lead them aright. Truth had been obscured to such an extent that it could not now be discovered without light from heaven. It also establishes that the new Prophet's message was for the followers of all religions; in other words, for the whole world.

65a. The water from heaven is the Divine revelation, the death of the earth is its corruption, and the giving of life signifies its spiritual awakening, marvellous signs of which had already appeared in Arabia.

67a. This and the previous verse seem to aim at a comparison between the Divine laws as manifested in nature and the handiwork of man. It is the working of Divine law in nature that produces such a valuable and agreeable diet as pure milk, separating it

68 And thy Lord revealed to the bee: Make hives in the mountains and in the trees and in what they build,

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

69 Then eat of all the fruits and walk in the ways of thy Lord submissively. There comes forth from their bellies a beverage of many hues, in which there is healing for men. Therein is surely a sign for a people who reflect.^a

ثُمَّ كُلِي مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

70 And Allāh creates you, then He causes you to die; and of you is he who is brought back to the worst part of life, so that he knows nothing after having knowledge. Surely Allāh is Knowing, Powerful.^a

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَوَفِّقُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يُرَدُّ إِلَى أَرْدَلٍ أَلْسِنَتِهِ لَّا يَعْلَم بَعْدَ عَلِيمٍ شَيْئًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾

from the other elements — blood and dung — to which food is reduced in the belly of a cow, a goat, or other animal, which the hand of man is unable to do. On the other hand, the most agreeable provisions produced by nature in the form of fruits are turned into such a poisonous drug as wine by the hand of man. The two illustrations thus point out that just as Divine laws working in the physical world produce the purest and most agreeable diets, separating them from obnoxious elements and useless excrements, so their working in the spiritual world produces the sublimest moral teachings, which afford to man the purest and most agreeable spiritual diet. But the best teachings given by Divine revelation are likely to be corrupted by the hands of man, as the best of fruits is turned into such a disagreeable and obnoxious thing as wine, though if it had been preserved in its original condition it could have served as an excellent provision.

69a. This is another illustration to show that Divine revelation brings about an object which cannot be effected by human exertions. In this case the Divine laws of nature are shown working in the bee, which gathers the sweet juice of different flowers, making it into honey. What this small creature effects, working instinctively in obedience to Divine laws, cannot be effected by the combined exertions of the whole of humanity. This illustration from the physical world is introduced to show a similar working of the Divine laws in the spiritual world, viz., that the Prophet, working, as it were, instinctively in obedience to the Divine laws prevailing in the spiritual world, collects by Divine revelation all that is best and noblest in any religion, and sums it up in the Holy Qur'ān: a work which could not be effected by human exertion. It should be noted that five kinds of the *wahy* (revelation) of Allāh are mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān: firstly, a revelation to inanimate objects, as *the earth* (99:5) or *the heavens* (41:12); secondly, a revelation to living creatures other than man, as *the bee*; thirdly, a revelation to the angels (8:12); fourthly, a revelation to men and women other than prophets, as the apostles of Jesus (5:111) or the mother of Moses (28:7); and fifthly, a revelation to prophets and messengers. It should be borne in mind that all these kinds of *wahy* are not identical; as, for instance, in the case of the *bee*, it is its very *instinct* that is a revelation to it. The revelation to the prophets is the expression of Divine will for the guidance of men.

70a. As in individuals, so in nations. Those who had been given knowledge of Divine revelation before the Holy Prophet had lost or corrupted it at the time of his advent; hence the necessity for a new Divine revelation.