



CHAPTER 37

Al-Şāffāt: Those Ranging in Ranks

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 5 sections; 182 verses)

The title of this chapter, *Those Ranging in Ranks*, is taken from its opening words, which give a description of the faithful. It is in all likelihood an earlier revelation than the other chapters of this group; see introductory note to chapter 34.

The chapter announces in the first section a clear prophecy of the ultimate prevalence of Unity, and asserts the truth of the judgment in the second; calls attention to the preachings of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elias, Lot and Jonah in the third, fourth and fifth sections; and concludes with a clear prediction of the triumph of the Holy Prophet.

SECTION 1: Unity will prevail

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
the Merciful.

1 By those ranging in ranks,^a

وَ الصَّافَّاتِ صَفًّا ۝

2 And those who restrain holding
in restraint,

فَالرُّجُوتِ تَرَجًّا ۝

1a. The *wāw*, which means *and*, is in such places generally rendered as *by*, and signifies *an oath*. It must, however, be borne in mind that the oath in such cases simply draws attention to a certain testimony. Ordinarily, when a person swears by Allāh, he really calls Allāh to witness that he speaks the truth. The real object in taking an oath is to make an assertion more convincing. But in the Qur'ān, when such a form is adopted, the conviction is produced not by mere allegation, as in the case of an ordinary oath, but by some clear argument which upholds the truth of the assertion made. Sometimes attention is called in these oaths to obvious laws of nature, as the change of night and day, etc., to infer spiritual laws from them, and on other occasions the oath reveals a kind of prophecy, so that the fulfilment of the prophecy makes the truth of the preaching of the Prophet to be obvious. The latter is the case here.

The description given in the first three verses applies to the believers. The first verse shows them as *ranging themselves in ranks*, or praying to God standing in ranks, which the Muslims do five times daily in their prayers in congregation, and may prophetically refer to their subsequent ranging themselves in ranks in the field of battle against their enemies. The second verse describes them as *holding in restraint* their passions, so that

3 And those who recite the Reminder,

قَالَتِلْكَاتِ ذِكْرًا ۝

4 Surely your God is One.

إِنَّ إِلَهُكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ ۝

5 The Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, and the Lord of the eastern lands.^a

رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ ۝

6 Surely We have adorned the lower heaven with an adornment, the stars,

اِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمٰوٰءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةٍ الْكَوٰكِبِ ۝

7 And (there is) a safeguard against every rebellious devil.^a

وَ حِفْظًا مِّنْ كُلِّ شَيْطٰنٍ مَّارِدٍ ۝

8 They cannot listen to the exalted assembly and they are reproached from every side,^a

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ اِلَى الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ الْاَعْلٰى وَيُقَدَّرُونَ مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ ۝

a people who were ruled by their passions or their sensual desires were so entirely changed that they became complete masters of their passions. The words, however, may also contain a prophetic reference to their holding in restraint a powerful enemy born upon their extirpation. These two descriptions are followed by another in the third verse which makes it clear that only the Muslims are described here: *those who recite the Reminder*. It is a special characteristic of the Muslims that they recite the Holy Qurʾān in their prayers, so much so that even their armies in the field of battle are regular in their prayers and recite the Holy Qurʾān in their prayers. And the great Truth that is thus established is Divine Unity — *surely your God is One*.

It may also be noted that, though the commentators have suggested that the description in the first three verses may apply to angels, they also state that the description is applicable to the Muslim armies fighting against the enemies of Islām (Rz).

5a. The reference to the eastern lands in *Rabb al-mashāriq* is a prophecy of the early spread of Islām in the East, while Islām's conquests in the West seem to have been reserved for a later age. *Mashāriq* is the plural of *mashriq*, which means *the rising-place of the sun*, and is, like its English equivalent *east*, applicable to an *eastern land*.

7a. The Prophet's preaching was confronted by a twofold opposition among the Arabs — the secular classes and the priestly class, i.e., the diviners and the soothsayers, the class known as *Kāhin*. It is these soothsayers who are called the rebellious devils, because they thought that they could invoke spirits and answer questions put to them relating to the future. This phase of opposition was equally swept away by the forceful tide of Islamic truth, and the profession of the *Kāhin* disappeared from Arabia as Islām advanced; see LA under the word *kāhin*. The mention of heaven and stars in the previous verse refers to the popular superstition that the diviners and soothsayers obtained their knowledge of the future from the stars. The *safeguard against every rebellious devil* indicates that they have no access to Divine secrets; see further 52:38a and 72:8a.

8a. The reference here is to the conjectures of the soothsayers regarding the future, by which they maintained their ascendancy over the masses. It is pointed out that they have no access whatever to the source of prophecy. The exalted assembly signifies those angels to whom Divine revelation is first made known. If the other significance of the word *yuqdhafūm* (*thrown at* or *pelted*) is adopted, the reference may be to the secular opponents of the Prophet, who, it is here foretold, would be thrown at from every side, so that success could not attend any of their efforts.

9 Driven off;^a and for them is a perpetual chastisement,

دُحُورًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ وَأَصِيبٌ ﴿٩﴾

10 Except him who snatches away but once, then there follows him a brightly shining flame.^a

إِلَّا مَنْ خَطَفَ الْخَطْفَةَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ
شِهَابٌ ثاقِبٌ ﴿١٠﴾

11 So ask them whether they are stronger in creation or those (others) whom We have created. Surely We created them of firm clay.^a

فَأَسْتَفْتِيهِمْ أَهُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ مَنْ
خَلَقْنَا إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ لَازِبٍ ﴿١١﴾

12 Nay, thou wondererest, while they mock,

بَلْ عَجِبْتَ وَيَسْخَرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

13 And when they are reminded, they mind not,

وَإِذَا دُرِّرُوا لَا يُدْكِرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

14 And when they see a sign, they seek to scoff,

وَإِذَا سَأُوا آيَةً يَسْتَسْخِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15 And say: This is nothing but clear enchantment.

وَقَالُوا إِن هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾

16 When we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we then be raised,

ءِذَا دَامِنَّا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا
ءِإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

17 Or our fathers of yore?

أَوِ آبَاؤُنَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

18 Say: Yea, and you will be humiliated.^a

قُلْ نَعَمْ وَأَنْتُمْ دَاخِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

9a. This verse and those preceding it describe the state of the soothsayers at the advent of the Prophet. Before the advent of the Holy Prophet, the soothsayers may have been able to mislead the people to a certain extent by their guesses regarding future events, but after his advent they were reproached on every side, and ultimately the profession of the *kāhin* disappeared from Arabia, as shown in the last footnote. Or, the reference may be to the overthrow of ordinary opposition.

10a. *Khatifa* signifies *he carried off* or *snatched away*, and *Khatfat* signifies *a single act of carrying off* or *snatching away*. The meaning is that, if a soothsayer gets but one opportunity, there soon follows a flame that pierces through the darkness; in other words, dispels the darkness to which the soothsayer leads men. It should be noted that *shihāb* means only *a flame* (see LL, and compare 27:7, where Moses goes to bring a *shihāb*), and *thāqib* means *that pierces through the darkness* or *brightly shining* (LL).

11a. *Lāzib* is derived from *lazaba*, meaning *it was* or *remained fixed, settled, firm, or constant* (LL); hence *lāzib* signifies *firm* (LL). Those created of firm clay are the spiritually perfect men, the Prophet and his followers. The verse points to the opposition of the soothsayers to the Prophet, and warns the former that the Prophet will be triumphant, because he is made perfect by Allāh's hand.

18a, see next page.

19 So it will be but one cry, when lo! they will see.

فَاتَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فَإِذَا هُمْ
يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

20 And they will say: O woe to us! This is the day of Requital.

وَقَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا هَذَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴿٢٠﴾

21 This is the day of Judgment, which you called a lie.

هَذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ
بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

SECTION 2: The Judgment

22 Gather together those who did wrong and their associates, and what they worshipped^a

أَحْشُرُوا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَأَشْرُوا بِهْمُ
وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

23 Besides Allāh, then lead them to the way to hell.

مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَأَهْدُوهُمْ إِلَى
صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٢٣﴾

24 And stop them, for they shall be questioned:

وَتَقْفُوهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ يَسْأَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

25 What is the matter with you that you help not one another?

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنصَرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

26 Nay, on that day they will be submissive.

بَلْ هُمْ الْيَوْمَ مُسْتَسْلِمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

27 And some of them will turn to others mutually questioning —

وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

28 Saying: Surely you used to come to us from the right side.

قَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَأْتُونَنَا عَنِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٢٨﴾

29 They will say: Nay, you (yourselves) were not believers.

قَالُوا بَلْ لَمْ تَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

30 And we had no authority over you, but you were an inordinate people.

وَمَا كَانُوا لَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ
بَلْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا طٰغِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31 So the word of our Lord has proved true against us: we shall surely taste.

فَحَقَّ عَلَيْنَا قَوْلُ رَبِّنَا الَّذِي
كَذَّبْنَا ﴿٣١﴾

18a. That is, you will not only be raised after death to taste of your evil deeds, but even here you will be brought low. This is again a prophecy of the vanquishment of the enemy in this very life.

22a. Though the description of the helplessness of the iniquitous given in this and the following verses applies to life after death, it equally describes their condition in this life.

32 We led you astray, for we ourselves were erring.

33 So, that day they will be sharers in the chastisement.

34 Thus do We deal with the guilty.

35 They indeed were arrogant, when it was said to them: There is no god but Allāh;

36 And said: Shall we give up our gods for a mad poet?

37 Nay, he has brought the Truth and verifies the messengers.^a

38 Surely you will taste the painful chastisement.

39 And you are requited naught but for what you did —

40 Save the servants of Allāh, the purified ones.

41 For them is a known sustenance:^a

42 Fruits. And they are honoured,

43 In Gardens of delight,

44 On thrones, facing each other.

45 A bowl of running water will be made to go round them,

46 White, delicious to those who drink.

47 It deprives not of reason, nor are they exhausted therewith.^a

فَاَعْوَيْنَاكُمْ اِنَّكُمْ تَا غَوِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾

فَاِنَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾

اِنَّكَ كَذَلِك تَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾

اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا اِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللهُ يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّا لَنَارِكُوْا الْاِهْتِنَا لِشَاعِرٍ مَّجْنُوْنٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

بَلْ جَاءَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾

اِنَّكُمْ لَذٰ اِتٰوْا الْعَذَابَ الْاَلِيْمَ ﴿٣٨﴾

وَمَا تُجْزَوْنَ اِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾

اِلَّا عِبَادَ اللهِ الْمُخْلِصِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾

اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ رِزْقٌ مَّعْلُوْمٌ ﴿٤١﴾

فَوَاكِهٌ ۚ وَهُمْ مُكْرَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾

فِي جَنَّاتٍ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٤٣﴾

عَلٰى سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَابِلِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِكَاْسٍ مِّنْ مَّعِيْنٍ ﴿٤٥﴾

بَيضَاءٍ لَّدَيْهِ لِلشَّرْبِ اِيْنٍ ﴿٤٦﴾

لَا فِيْهَا عَوْلٌ ۗ وَلَا هُمْ عَنْهَا يُذْقُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾

37a. The early revelation of this chapter is universally admitted, and here, too, we have a clear statement that the Prophet came in fulfilment of earlier prophecy.

41a. The word *ma'lūm* (known) shows that the sustenance mentioned in the verses that follow is one that is already *known* to those servants of Allāh who are purified from every pollution. This description of the blessings of paradise shows that all those blessings were spiritually tasted by the righteous in this life. In fact, their brief but important description as *fruits* in the next verse clearly shows those blessings to be the fruits of their good deeds.

47a. The word *ghaul* is derived from *ghāla*, which means *it destroyed him*, and

- 48 And with them are those modest in gaze, having beautiful eyes, وَعِنْدَهُمْ فُصْرَتٌ الظُّرْبِ عَيْنٌ ﴿٤٨﴾
- 49 As if they were eggs, carefully protected.أ كَأَنَّهِنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكَتُونٌ ﴿٤٩﴾
- 50 Then some of them will turn to others, questioning mutually. فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾
- 51 A speaker of them will say: Surely I had a comrade, قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لَوْ كَانَ لِي قَرِينٌ ﴿٥١﴾
- 52 Who said: Art thou indeed of those who accept? يَقُولُ أَيُّنَكَ لَيْسَ الْمُصَدِّقِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾
- 53 When we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we then be requited? ءِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا ءَأَنَّا لَمَبِيئُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾
- 54 He will say: Will you look? قَالَ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُطَّلِعُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾
- 55 Then he looked down and saw him in the midst of hell. فَاطَّلَعَ فَرَآهُ فِي سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٥٥﴾
- 56 He will say: By Allāh! thou hadst almost caused me to perish; قَالَ تَاللَّهِ إِن كِدَّتْ لَتُرْدِينِ ﴿٥٦﴾
- 57 And had it not been for the favour of my Lord, I should have been among those brought up. وَلَوْ لَا رَحْمَةُ رَبِّي لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

ghālati-l-khamru means *the wine deprived him of reason*, and *ghaul* means *privation of the intellectual faculties* (LL). *Yunzaḥūn* is derived from *nazaḥa* meaning *he entirely exhausted a well of its water* (LL). *Nazīf* is therefore *one intoxicated or deprived of reason*, and *anzaḥa* carries a more extensive significance (R). The drinks of this life, through a source of pleasure, bring evil in their train. The drinks of the next life, which are called *ma'in* (*water of which one has reached the source, or water running upon the surface of the earth*) (LL), in v. 45, cause neither loss of reason, nor exhaustion. The name is common, but the nature of the two is different.

49a. The description of women given here calls attention to the prominent feature of the character of a good woman. In the first place, they are described as restraining their eyes, and modest in their gaze, and attention is thus called to the fact that the most valuable virtue of woman is that rare chastity which is described here as *restraint* or freedom of the eye from lust. Then the beauty of their eyes is praised, the suggestion clearly being that the purity of the eye leads to its beauty, or that the real beauty of the eye consists in its purity. In the second place, they are described as being eggs carefully protected, which alludes to their pure and unsoiled character. It should, however, be noted that what is apparently a description of women is really a description of the fruits of deeds done in this life, the words adopted being applicable to both (see the word *hūr* in 52:20a), and these are in fact spiritual blessings manifested physically. The blessings which it promises, whatever they may be, are as much meant for men as for women; the only thing certain about them is that their nature is different from the nature of the physical blessings of this life. See also 38:52a.

58 Are we not to die,

أَفَمَا نَحْنُ بِسَيِّئِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59 Except our previous death? And are we not to be chastised?

إِلَّا مَوْتَتَنَا الْأُولَىٰ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60 Surely this is the mighty achievement.

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْقُوَىٰ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾

61 For the like of this, then, let the workers work.

لِيَبْتَلِ هَذَا أَقْلِيَعَمَلِ الْعَمِلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

62 Is this the better entertainment or the tree of Zaqqūm?^a

أَذَلِكْ خَيْرٌ شَرًّا لَّا أَمْ شَجَرَةُ الرَّقْمِ ﴿٦٢﴾

63 Surely We have made it a trial for the wrongdoers.

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهَا فِتْنَةً لِلظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾

64 It is a tree that grows in the bottom of hell —

إِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِي أَصْلِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٦٤﴾

65 Its produce is as it were the heads of serpents.^a

طَلْعُهَا كَأَنَّهُ رُءُوسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ ﴿٦٥﴾

66 Then truly they will eat of it and fill (their) bellies with it.

فَأَتَّهُمْ لَا يَكِلُونَ مِنْهَا فَمَائِئُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

67 Then surely they shall have after it a drink of boiling water.

ثُمَّ إِنَّ لَهُمْ عَلَيْهَا لَشَوْبًا مِّنْ حَيْمٍ ﴿٦٧﴾

68 Then their return is surely to the flaming Fire.^a

ثُمَّ إِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ لَإِلَى الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٦٨﴾

69 They indeed found their fathers astray,

إِنَّهُمْ أَفْوَىٰ أَبَاءَهُمْ صَالِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

70 So in their footsteps they are hastening on.

فَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَشْرِهِمْ يُهْرَعُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

62a. *Zaqqūm* is “a dust-coloured tree, having small round leaves without thorns. It has a pungent odour and is bitter, and has knots in its stems ... the heads of its leaves are very foul” (LL). *Zaqqūm* also means any deadly food (T, LL), and in the dialect of Ifriqiyah, it signifies *fresh butter with dates* (LL). Abū Jahl is said to have scoffed at the idea of *zaqqūm* being the food of those in hell by having prepared a repast of fresh butter with dates for a party of the Quraysh chiefs, telling them that, according to the Prophet, such was the food that would be given to those who go to hell. See also 17:60c.

65a. The correct interpretation of *ru'ūs al-shayāṭīn* is that adopted here, for the Arabs apply the name *shayṭān* to a sort of serpent having a mane, ugly or foul in the head and face. According to others it is the name of a certain ugly plant (T, LL).

68a. The words, *then their return is surely to the flaming Fire*, are very significant, as if the food and drink described above were to be given to them before they went to hell. This is the reason that it is called *an entertainment* (v. 62). It is in fact a description of their evil plight in this life as well as in the Hereafter.

- 71 And most of the ancients surely went astray before them, وَلَقَدْ صَلَ قَبْلَهُمْ أَكْثَرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٧١﴾
- 72 And indeed We sent among them warners. وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ مُنذِرِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾
- 73 Then see what was the end of those warned — فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنذَرِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾
- 74 Except the servants of Allāh, the purified ones. إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

SECTION 3: Noah and Abraham

- 75 And Noah certainly called upon Us, and excellent Answerer of prayers are We! وَلَقَدْ نَادَيْنَا نُوْحًا فَلَنِعْمَ الْمُجِيبُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾
- 76 And We delivered him and his people from the great distress; وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَآهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٦﴾
- 77 And made his offspring the survivors, وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمُ الْبَاقِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾
- 78 And left for him (praise) among the later generations, وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾
- 79 Peace be to Noah among the nations! سَلَامٌ عَلَى نُوحٍ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾
- 80 Thus indeed do We reward the doers of good. إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾
- 81 Surely he was of Our believing servants. إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨١﴾
- 82 Then We drowned the others. ثُمَّ أَعْرَقْنَا الْآخَرِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾
- 83 And surely of his party was Abraham. وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لَإِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٨٣﴾
- 84 When he came to his Lord with a secure heart. إِذْ جَاءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٨٤﴾
- 85 When he said to his sire and his people: What is it that you worship? إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾
- 86 A lie — gods besides Allāh do you desire? أَيْفَاكَ الْإِلَهَةُ دُونَ اللَّهِ تُرِيدُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾
- 87 What is then your idea about the Lord of the worlds? فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

88 Then he glanced a glance at the stars,

فَنظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُومِ ﴿٨٨﴾

89 And said: Surely I am sick (of your deities).^a

فَقَالَ إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾

90 So they turned their backs on him, going away.

فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

91 Then he turned to their gods and said: Do you not eat?

فَرَأَى إِلَى آلِهَتِهِمْ فَقَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٩١﴾

92 What is the matter with you that you speak not?

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

93 So he turned upon them, smiting with the right hand.

فَرَأَى عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْبًا بِالْيَمِينِ ﴿٩٣﴾

94 Then they came to him, hastening.

فَأَقْبَلُوا إِلَيْهِ يَرْعُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

95 He said: Do you worship that which you hew out?

قَالَ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مَا تَنْحِتُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

96 And Allāh has created you and what you make.

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

97 They said: Build for him a building, then cast him into the flaming fire.

قَالُوا ابْنُوا لَهُ بُيُوتًا فَأَلْقُوهُ فِي الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٩٧﴾

98 And they designed a plan against him, but We brought them low.

فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾

99 And he said: Surely I flee to my Lord — He will guide me.

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٩٩﴾

100 My Lord, grant me a doer of good deeds.

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

101 So We gave him the good news of a forbearing son.

فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

102 But when he became of age to work with him, he said: O my son, I have seen in a dream that I should

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَبْنَؤِي إِنِّي أَسَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ

89a. The people with whom Abraham contended were not only worshippers of idols, but also worshippers of stars. Hence Abraham cast a glance at the stars and declared that he could not bear their worshipping others than God. LL gives the following as one of the explanations of the words *saqim* (sick) on the authority of T: *I am sick of your worshipping what is not God*. But we also speak of a person as being *saqim*, when he bears spite against another. Thus you say *huwa saqim al-ṣadr 'alai-hi*, meaning *he is affected with spite against him* (T, LL). The words may thus be translated *I bear spite to your false gods*.

sacrifice thee:^a so consider what thou seest. He said: O my father, do as thou art commanded: if Allāh please, thou wilt find me patient.

103 So when they both submitted and he had thrown him down upon his forehead,

104 And We called out to him saying, O Abraham,

105 Thou hast indeed fulfilled the vision.^a Thus do We reward the doers of good.

106 Surely this is a manifest trial.

107 And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.^a

108 And We granted him among the later generations (the salutation),

مَاذَا تَرَىٰ ط قَالَ يَا بَتِ اٰعْلُ مَا تُوْمَرُ
سَجِدْنِي اِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

فَلَمَّا اَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّكَ لِجَبِيْنِ ﴿١٠٤﴾

وَ نَادَيْنَهُ اَنْ يَا بُرْهِيْمُ ﴿١٠٥﴾

قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّءْيَا اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ
نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

اِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلٰؤُا الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿١٠٧﴾

وَ قَدَيْنَهُ بِذَبِيْحٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾

وَ تَرَكْنٰا عَلَيْهِ فِى الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

102a. That the child spoken of here was Ishmael and not Isaac is made clear by v. 112, which states that it was after this incident that Abraham received the news of the birth of Isaac. This, no doubt, contradicts the Bible statement, but the fact that Ishmael's descendants kept a memorial of this sacrifice in the annual pilgrimage to Makkah shows clearly that Ishmael, and not Isaac, was the son whom Abraham was commanded to sacrifice. Moreover, the Bible contradicts itself when it speaks of Isaac as "thine only son" (Gen. 22:2). Only Ishmael could be spoken of as "only son" before the birth of Isaac. The ḥadīth in which Isaac is spoken of as having been sacrificed is according to Ibn Kathīr *gharīb*, and must be rejected. The Holy Qur'ān makes it clear beyond all doubt that it was Ishmael whom Abraham was ordered to sacrifice.

105a. The words, *Thou hast indeed fulfilled the vision*, show that the act of slaughtering was not needed for the fulfilment of the vision; the preparedness to do it amounted to its fulfilment. According to the Bible, Abraham cast out his son Ishmael and his mother Hagar in some wilderness when Ishmael was fourteen years of age (Gen. 21:9-21). The Holy Qur'ān is silent on this point, but, according to Bukhārī, the incident occurred when Ishmael was yet a suckling, and it was not in accordance with the wishes of Sarah but according to a Divine commandment that Abraham left Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness near the Sacred House, and it was here, when Ishmael was in distress, that Zamzam was discovered (B. 60:9). The reference in the words *Thou hast indeed fulfilled the vision* may be to this incident, Abraham being told that the dream had already been fulfilled by casting out Ishmael and leaving him at Makkah.

107a. To commemorate Ishmael's sacrifice, a great sacrifice was ordered. This was not only the sacrifice of a ram on this particular occasion, but the great institution of sacrifice now connected with the pilgrimage to Makkah. Perhaps there is also a reference here to the abolition of human sacrifice, which was prevalent among most ancient nations, and the significance is that the place of human sacrifice was now forever being taken by the sacrifice of a ram.

109 Peace be to Abraham!

سَلَّمَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

110 Thus do We reward the doers of good.

كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١١٠﴾

111 Surely he was one of Our believing servants.

إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١١﴾

112 And We gave him the good news of Isaac, a prophet, a righteous one.

وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَاقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١١٢﴾

113 And We blessed him and Isaac.⁴ And of their offspring some are doers of good, but some are clearly unjust to themselves.

وَبَارَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ إِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ مُبِينٌ ﴿١١٣﴾

SECTION 4: Moses, Aaron, Elias and Lot

114 And certainly We conferred a favour on Moses and Aaron.

وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾

115 And We delivered them, and their people from the mighty distress.

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمَا وَقَوْمَهُمَا مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١١٥﴾

116 And We helped them, so they were the vanquishers.

وَنَصَّرْنَاهُمْ فَمَا كَانُوا هُمُ الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿١١٦﴾

117 And We gave them both the clear Book.

وَآتَيْنَاهُمَا الْكِتَابَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١١٧﴾

118 And We guided them on the right way.

وَهَدَيْنَاهُمَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١١٨﴾

119 And We granted them among the later generations (the salutation),

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا فِي الْأَخْرَبِ ﴿١١٩﴾

120 Peace be to Moses and Aaron!

سَلَّمَ عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

121 Thus do We reward the doers of good.

إِنَّا كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾

122 Surely they were both of Our believing servants.

إِنَّهُمَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

123 And Elias was surely of those sent.

وَأَنَّ الْيَاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

113a. Abraham and Isaac are spoken of distinctly to show that by blessing Abraham is here meant blessing his descendants through Ishmael.

124 When he said to his people:
Will you not guard against evil?

إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ آلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

125 Do you call upon Ba '1^a and
forsake the Best of the creators,

أَتَدْعُونَ بَعْلًا وَتَذَرُونَ أَحْسَنَ
الْخَالِقِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

126 Allāh, your Lord and the Lord
of your fathers of yore?

اللَّهُ رَبَّكُمْ وَرَبَّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

127 But they rejected him, so they
shall be brought up,

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَنَّهُمْ لَمُحَضَّرُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

128 But not the servants of Allāh,
the purified ones.

إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

129 And We granted him among
the later generations (the salutation),

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

130 Peace be to Elias!^a

سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٤٤﴾

131 Even thus We reward the doers
of good.

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

132 Surely he was one of Our
believing servants.

إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

133 And Lot was surely of those sent.

وَإِنَّ لُوطًا لِمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

134 When We delivered him and
his people, all —

إِذْ نَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

135 Except an old woman among
those who remained behind.

إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

136 Then We destroyed the others.

ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الْآخَرِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾

137 And surely you pass by them
in the morning,

وَأَنَّا لَمُرَّةٍ أُولَئِكَ فِي الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥١﴾

138 And at night. Do you not then
understand?

وَبِاللَّيْلِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

SECTION 5: *Jonah and the Prophet's Triumph*

139 And Jonah was surely of those
sent.

وَإِنَّ يُونُسَ لِمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

125a. Ba '1 stands for the sun, or the sun-god.

130a. *Ilyās* is only another form of the name of Ilyās (Kf) or Elias. Elias is mentioned as being one of the prophets in 6:85. Some commentators are of opinion that Idris

- 140 When he fled^a to the laden ship, إِذْ أَتَىٰ إِلَى الْفُلِّ الْمَشْحُونِ ﴿١٤٠﴾
- 141 So he shared with others but فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾
was of those cast away.^a
- 142 So the fish took him into its فَالْتَمَتَهُ الْحُوتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ ﴿١٤٢﴾
mouth^a while he was blameable.
- 143 But had he not been of those فَكَوَلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾
who glorify (Us),
- 144 He would have tarried in its لَلَيْتَ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٤٤﴾
belly till the day when they are raised.^a
- 145 Then We cast him on the فَدَبَدْنَاهُ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾
naked shore, while he was sick.
- 146 And We caused a gourd to وَآتَيْنَاهُ عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَقْطِينٍ ﴿١٤٦﴾
grow up for him.^a
- 147 And We sent him to a hundred وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَى مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ زَيْدٍ مِّنْ ﴿١٤٧﴾
thousand or more.

and Elias are two different names of the same prophet, but, as I have shown in 19:57a, Idris in the Holy Qur'ān stands for Enoch, and Elias is the same as the Elijah of the Bible.

140a. It is meaningless to say that Jonah fled from God. He was a prophet and knew that no one could flee from God, for God's kingdom is unlimited. Nor does the Qur'ān say that he fled from God. Even the commentators do not accept this (Rz). It would appear that he fled from his people or from the king; see also 21:87b, 87c.

141a. *Sāhama* means *he drew lots* or *he shared with another in a thing* (LL). According to the Bible, Jonah went into a boat but was cast into the sea on account of a storm (Jonah 1:15).

142a. According to Jonah 1:17, Jonah was devoured by a fish. The word used in the Qur'ān is *iltaqama*, which does not necessarily signify the act of devouring. *Laqm* means a morsel, and from the same root is *iltaqama*, which means *he took into his mouth* and also *embraced*; *iltaqama fā-hā fi-l-taqbil* means *he took her mouth within his lips in kissing* (LL). According to one explanation, his heel only was drawn by the fish into its mouth.

144a. The meaning is that the fish would have eaten him, and he would have died. *By the day when they are raised* is not meant the actual day of Resurrection, because the fish was not an immortal fish that could live to the day of Resurrection. A person's death is generally called the day of his resurrection in a certain sense. *Man māta fa-qad qāmat qiyāmatu-hū* — *he who dies, his resurrection comes to pass* — is the heading of a chapter in the *Mishkāt* (Msh. 26:7), a standard Ḥadīth collection.

146a. According to the Bible, the gourd gave shelter to Jonah, but the next day a worm smote the gourd so that it withered, and Jonah grieved for it. The lesson drawn from this incident is stated thus: "Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow.... And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand" (Jonah 4:10–11). These were the hundred thousand or more persons to which Jonah was sent, as stated in v. 147.

148 And they believed, so We gave them provision till a time.

149 Now ask them whether thy Lord has daughters and they have sons?

150 Or did We create the angels females, while they witnessed?

151 Now surely it is of their own lie that they say:

152 Allāh has begotten. And truly they are liars.

153 Has He preferred daughters to sons?

154 What is the matter with you? How you judge!

155 Will you not then mind?

156 Or have you a clear authority?

157 Then bring your Book, if you are truthful.

158 And they assert a relationship between Him and the jinn.^a And certainly the jinn know that they will be brought up (for judgment) —

159 Glory be to Allāh from what they describe!—

160 But not so the servants of Allāh, the purified ones.^a

161 So surely you and that which you serve,

162 Not against Him can you cause (any) to fall into trial,

فَأْمَنُوا فَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٤٨﴾

فَأَسْأَلْتَهُمْ آلَ رَبِّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَ
لَهُمُ الْبَنُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنَاثًا وَهُمْ شَاهِدُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

أَلَا أَنَّهُمْ مِنْ أَفْئِدِهِمْ لَيَقُولُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

وَلَدَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾

أَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

مَا لَكُمْ قَدْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾

أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

أَمْ لَكُمْ سُلْطٰنٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٥٦﴾

فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابِكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَبًا ۗ

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ إِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

سُبْحٰنَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

فَوَاللَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾

مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ بِفِتْرَيْنٍ ﴿١٦٢﴾

158a. They said that they considered the angels to be daughters of God and worshipped them. In the Qur'ān, however, it is stated that it was really the jinn — their own leaders in evil — that they worshipped, not the angels: “then will He say to the angels: Did these worship you? They will say: ... nay, they worshipped the jinn” (34:40, 41).

160a. It is the evildoers that will be brought up for judgment (v. 158), not the servants of Allāh.

163 Save him who will burn in the flaming Fire.

إِلَّا مَنْ هُوَ صَالِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٦٣﴾

164 And there is none of us but has an assigned place,^a

وَمَا مِمَّنْ إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿١٦٤﴾

165 And verily we are ranged in ranks,

وَأِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّافُّونَ ﴿١٦٥﴾

166 And we truly glorify (Him).

وَأِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَبِّحُونَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

167 And surely they used to say:

وَأِنْ كَانُوا لَيَقُولُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾

168 Had we a reminder from those of yore,

كَلَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدَنَا ذِكْرًا مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

169 We would have been sincere servants of Allāh.

لَكِنَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

170 But (now) they disbelieve in it, so they will come to know.

فَكَفَرُوا بِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

171 And certainly Our word has already gone forth to Our servants, to those sent,

وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾

172 That they, surely they, will be helped,

إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ الْمَنْصُورُونَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

173 And Our hosts, surely they, will be triumphant.

وَأِنْ جُنْدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿١٧٣﴾

174 So turn away from them till a time,^a

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾

175 And watch them, they too will see.

وَأَبْصُرُهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصَرُونَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

176 Would they hasten on Our chastisement?

أَفِعِدَّآءِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾

177 So when it descends in their court, evil will be the morning of the warned ones.

فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَاءَ صَبَاحُ الْمُنذَرِينَ ﴿١٧٧﴾

178 And turn away from them till a time,

وَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٧٨﴾

179 And watch, for they too will see.

وَأَبْصُرُ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصَرُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾

164a. These words are put into the mouth of the believers.

174a. That is, the time of victory (Bd).

180 Glory be to thy Lord, the Lord
of Might, above what they describe!

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾

181 And peace be to those sent!

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٨١﴾

182 And praise be to Allāh, the
Lord of the worlds!

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٨٢﴾