



Part 29

CHAPTER 67

Al-Mulk: The Kingdom

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 2 sections; 30 verses)

The title of this chapter is taken from the statement contained in the first verse, that *The Kingdom* is in the hands of Allāh, the evident conclusion of which is, that that kingdom which was known as *the Kingdom of God* in prophetic language was now about to be established on earth. Attention is then called to the perfect working of Divine laws in physical nature, and from this the inference is drawn that, as one law is working in the physical universe, so there is a law relating to good and evil working in the spiritual realm. The second section speaks of the doom that awaits the disbelievers because of their ungratefulness to the Divine Being.

From here to the end there are forty-eight chapters, and all these were revealed at Makkah, with the single exception of ch. 110, which belongs to the Madīnan period of revelation, though it too was revealed at Makkah when the Holy Prophet was there on his last pilgrimage. All of them, sometimes in plain and sometimes in metaphorical language, contain prophecies of the greatness to which Islām would rise and of the failure of opposition. But while they mostly belong to the earliest period of the Holy Prophet's revelation, the prophecies contained in them very often relate to the distant future of Islām, and are certainly not limited to the prevalence of Islām in Arabia or to the lifetime of the Prophet. While the distinct character of each chapter will be dealt with in the usual introductory note, these few words will suffice as to their general character and their relation towards each other.

SECTION 1: The Kingdom of God

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

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1 Blessed is He in Whose hand is the Kingdom, and He is Possessor of power over all things,^a

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝

2 Who created death and life that He might try you — which of you is best in deeds. And He is the Mighty, the Forgiving,^a

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝

3 Who created the seven heavens alike.^a Thou seest no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent. Then look again: Canst thou see any disorder?^b

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۗ مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَوُّتٍ ۗ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ ۗ هَلْ تَرَى مِن فُطُورٍ ۝

4 Then turn the eye again and again — thy look will return to thee confused, while it is fatigued.

ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ ۝

1a. The short Makkan chapters, which are no doubt generally among the earliest revelations of the Holy Prophet, often speak most forcibly of the greatness and glory of Allāh. The statement here that *the Kingdom is in Allāh's hand* and that He has power over all things is like a prophetic statement as to the establishment of the kingdom of Islām, which was really the kingdom of God. This is made clear by what Jesus Christ said: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43).

2a. The law of life and death or growth and decay works throughout nature, but it has a special meaning in reference to man, because death does not end his life, but is really the starting-point for a new life of spiritual progress. Life to him below is, therefore, a trial, i.e., a means of bringing to light his hidden qualifications for the performance of good. But life and death have another and a deeper significance for man in the life and death of nations. Nations that work evil are swept away, and others are raised in their place that they may do good.

3a. You say, such a thing is *ṭabq* or *ṭibāq* of that, meaning that *this thing is the match of that or conforms or corresponds with that or is the like of that* (LL). This significance, moreover, suits the context, for the verse goes on to describe the uniformity prevailing in nature.

3b. Attention is here called to the regularity and uniformity of the laws working in nature. There is no incongruity, so that things belonging to the same class should be subject to different laws, nor is there a disorder (*fuṭūr*, which R translates as meaning *ikhṭilāl*, i.e., *disorder* and *laxity*), so that a law should not work uniformly. The verse, while calling attention to the existence of a Supreme Being, as witnessed in the regularity and uniformity of the laws working in creation, draws special attention to spiritual laws, which also work uniformly, and thus evil and good must each bring its special reward.

5 And certainly We have adorned this lower heaven with lamps and We make them means of conjectures for the devils,⁴ and We have prepared for them the chastisement of burning.

6 And for those who disbelieve in their Lord is the chastisement of hell, and evil is the resort.

7 When they are cast therein, they will hear a loud moaning of it as it heaves,

8 Almost bursting for fury. Whenever a group is cast into it, its keepers ask them: Did not a warner come to you?

9 They say: Yea, indeed a warner came to us, but we denied and said: Allāh has revealed nothing; you are only in great error.

10 And they say: Had we but listened or pondered, we should not have been among the inmates of the burning Fire.

11 Thus they will confess their sins; so far (from good) are the inmates of the burning Fire.

12 Those who fear their Lord in secret, for them is surely forgiveness and a great reward.

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحٍ
وَجَعَلْنَهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا
لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ ④

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ
جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ⑤

إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهِيقًا
وَهِيَ تَفُورُ ⑥

تَكَادُ تَمَيِّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ كُلَّمَا أُلْقِيَ
فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ
يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ ⑦

قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا
وَأَكْذَبْنَا مَا كُنَّا اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ⑧
إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ ⑨

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا
فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ⑩

فَاعْتَرَفُوا بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسُحْقًا لِأَصْحَابِ
السَّعِيرِ ⑪

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ
لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ⑫

5a. The lamps with which the lower heaven is lighted, i.e., the stars, are made the means of conjectures regarding the future by the astrologers. *Rujūm* is the plural of *rajm*, and explaining it IATH says: "*Rajm* means *conjectures about what Allāh has not stated*" (N). And classing the *munajjim*, i.e., *the astrologer*, and the *kāhin*, i.e., *the diviner*, and the *sāhir*, i.e., *the magician*, as one, he goes on to say: "Thus he (i.e., the Prophet, whose saying is explained) considered the astrologer, who learns about stars so that he may judge thereby, and attributes to them the effect of good and evil, to be a disbeliever" (N). Explaining these very words, Rāghib says: "And *rajm* is used metaphorically to signify *conjectures and surmises*" (R). LL also gives this significance of the verse on the authority of Bd and TA: "We have made them to be means of conjectures to the devils of mankind, i.e., to the astrologers". Thus the astrologers, who deceived people by telling them many things which they posed as having learned from the stars, are referred to here.

13 And conceal your word or manifest it, truly He is Knower of that which is in the hearts.

وَأَسْرُؤُا قَوْلِكُمْ أَوْ إِجْهَرُوا بِهِ إِنَّهُ
عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٣﴾

14 Does He not know Who created? And He is the Knower of subtleties, the Aware.

أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ
الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾

SECTION 2: The Disbelievers' Doom

15 He it is Who made the earth subservient to you, so go about in the spacious sides thereof, and eat of His sustenance. And to Him is the rising (after death).

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا
فَأَمْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهَا
وَالِيَهُ التُّشُورُ ﴿١٥﴾

16 Do you feel secure that He Who is in the heaven will not make the earth to swallow you up? Then lo! it will shake.^a

أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَنِ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ
بِكُمْ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ ﴿١٦﴾

17 Or do you feel secure that He Who is in the heaven will not send on you a violent wind?^a Then shall you know how (truthful) was My warning!

أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَنِ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ
عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرِ ﴿١٧﴾

18 And certainly those before them denied, then how (terrible) was My disapproval!

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿١٨﴾

19 Do they not see the birds above them spreading and contracting (their wings)? Naught upholds them save

أَوْ لَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صَفًى
وَيَقْبِضْنَ ط مَا يُسْكِنَنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمَنُ

16a. God is spoken of here as being in heaven; elsewhere He is spoken of as being in heaven and earth alike (43:84); and again He is spoken of as being "with you wherever you are" (57:4). The one thing certain is that God is not in one particular place to the exclusion of other places. Punishment sent by God is often spoken of as coming from heaven, and it is in reference to the punishment of the deniers of truth that He is spoken of here as being in heaven, or above all, so that none can avert the punishment sent by Him.

17a. The word *ḥāṣib* has already been explained in 17:68a. It is derived from *ḥāṣab* meaning *stones or pebbles that are thrown* and means *a violent wind that raises dust and pebbles* (LL). In the well-known *Battle of the Allies*, when an army of twenty thousand was besieging Madinah and the Muslims were almost helpless against this mighty force, it was a violent wind which put all the hosts to flight; see 33:9b.

the Beneficent. Surely He is Seer of all things.^a

20 Or who is it that will be a host for you to help you against the Beneficent? The disbelievers are in naught but delusion.

21 Or who is it that will give you sustenance, if He should withhold His sustenance? Nay, they persist in disdain and aversion.^a

22 Is, then, he who goes prone upon his face better guided or he who walks upright on a straight path?^a

23 Say: He it is Who brought you into being and made for you ears and eyes and hearts. Little thanks it is you give!

24 Say: He it is Who multiplies you in the earth and to Him you will be gathered.

25 And they say: When will this threat be (executed), if you are truthful?

26 Say: The knowledge is with Allāh only, and I am only a plain warner.

27 But when they see it nigh, the faces of those who disbelieve will be grieved, and it will be said: This is that which you used to call for.

إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ۝١٩

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَكُمْ
يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَّ
الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ ۝٢٠

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ
رِزْقَهُ ۚ بَلْ لَجُّوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ ۝٢١

أَمَّنْ يَمِشُ مِمْشًا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ ۙ هَادِي
أَمَّنْ يَمِشُ سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ۝٢٢

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ
السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا
مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ۝٢٣

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ۝٢٤

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۝٢٥

قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا
أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ۝٢٦

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً سَبَّحَتْ وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا وَقِيلَ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ
بِهِ تَدْعُونَ ۝٢٧

19a. *Yumsiku-hunna* may mean *uphold them* or *withhold them*. The withholding of the birds signifies the delay of the punishment, for the birds are spoken of as following a victorious army; see 16:79a. The question in the next verse as to who will help them corroborates this significance.

21a. This is also a prophecy. Their sustenance was withheld in the great famine which prevailed at Makkah, prophecies regarding which are met with in the Holy Qur'an in early as well as later revelation; see 44:10a.

22a. One going "prone upon his face" is one who stumbles and falls at every step. Such a one is he who is not guided by truth.

28 Say: Have you considered if Allāh should destroy me and those with me — rather He will have mercy on us — yet who will protect the disbelievers from a painful chastisement?^a

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكْنِي اللَّهُ وَمَنْ
مَعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا لَنْ يَجِيرَ الْكٰفِرِينَ
مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾

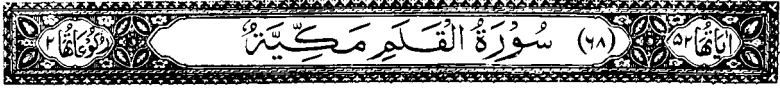
29 Say: He is the Beneficent — we believe in Him and on Him do we rely. So you will come to know who it is that is in clear error.

قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمٰنُ اُمْتًا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ
تَوَكَّلْنَا ۗ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي
ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

30 Say: Have you considered if your water should subside, who is it then that will bring you flowing water?

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاءٌ كُمْ عَوْرًا
فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَّعِينٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

28a. The meaning is that the guilty will by all means be called to account and suffer the evil consequences of what they have done, whether the Prophet and his companions live or die, but the uncertainty as to the reward of the righteous is at once removed by the words *rather He will have mercy on us*. For *au*, meaning *rather*, see LL.



CHAPTER 68

Al-Qalam: The Pen

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 2 sections; 52 verses)

When the Holy Prophet delivered his message, the disbelievers first called him a madman. The inkstand and the pen and all writings are called to bear witness to the fact that the utterances of the Prophet are not those of a madman; hence this chapter is called *The Pen*. The first section closes with a parable clearly foretelling that all the struggles of the Makkans against the Holy Prophet will be a complete failure, and that they will in the end regret what they did. The second section lays stress on the knowledge of the future which was revealed through the Holy Qur'ān; the example of Jonah is quoted to show how trials and sufferings sometimes make the issue doubtful, and the chapter concludes with the statement that the Holy Qur'ān will ultimately raise the whole of humanity to eminence. In this chapter, which is admittedly one of the earliest revelations, it should be noted that the message of the Holy Qur'ān is declared to be meant for all nations.

As regards the time of revelation, learned opinion is admittedly in favour of a very early date, so much so that it is generally considered to be the second chapter in order of revelation. But as the 74th chapter is shown by trustworthy reports to have been the second revelation, we can only place it after that chapter.

SECTION 1: Not a Madman's Message

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

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1 (By) the inkstand^a and the pen and that which they write!

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ ﴿١﴾

2 By the grace of thy Lord thou art not mad.^a

مَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢﴾

3 And surely thine is a reward never to be cut off.^a

وإِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٣﴾

4 And surely thou hast sublime morals.^a

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ حُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

1a. *Nūn* is not an abbreviation, but a word meaning *inkstand*. There is the authority of the earliest commentators that the letter *nūn* here stands for the word *nūn*, for both Ḥasan and Qatādah regard it as meaning *inkstand*, while I'Ab considers the meaning to be *fish*. The context, which mentions the pen and writing, clearly favours the former interpretation.

Rodwell's note here, that "the meaning of this, and of the similar symbols throughout the Qur'ān, was unknown to the Muhammadans themselves even in the first century", shows a lamentable ignorance on the part of a translator of the Holy Qur'ān. The abbreviations in the beginning of chapters are in many cases explained by the companions of the Holy Prophet, Ibn 'Abbās being the chief authority. But here the Holy Qur'ān itself, in the very first abbreviation used in it, gives us a clue to the significance of the abbreviations used in it by giving an abbreviation *nūn*, which is also a significant word.

2a. The first allegation of the disbelieving Makkans against the Holy Prophet was that he was *majnūn*, i.e., *mad*, and this allegation is dealt with in this chapter. The first answer to it is contained in the first two verses. By mentioning the inkstand and the pen and that which they write, attention is really called to the fact that the Prophet's prophecies about his own future and the fate of the opponents, which were already put down in writing, would prove that the Prophet was not mad, for the ravings of a madman could not bear fruit. It should be noted that the Holy Qur'ān again and again challenges its opponents to write down their prophecies about the Holy Prophet, thus showing that its own were actually written down from the first; and thus this chapter, which is one of the earliest, conclusively establishes the truth that every revelation of the Holy Qur'ān was put down in writing as soon as it was communicated to the Prophet. For the assertion made here see v. 47, and 52:41: "or possess they the unseen, so they write (it) down"

But the words have a wider significance, indicating that the Qur'ān will always continue to occupy a unique position among all the books which are ever written. This unique position consists in its completeness and exhaustive dealing with all the truths about religion, so that every religious truth is found within its covers; see 25:33a.

3a. The Prophet is further told that his exertions will be followed by a reward which will never be cut off, i.e., he will be successful in establishing a religion whose blessings will continue forever, while a madman's actions cannot bear any fruit. Thus there is not only a clear prophecy here of the final triumph of the Prophet over his enemies, but there is also a prophecy that what is stated in the Qur'ān rests on such a firm foundation that it will never prove untrue.

4a, see next page.

5 So thou wilt see, and they (too) will see,

فَسَتُبْصِرُ وَيُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٥﴾

6 Which of you is mad.

بِأَيِّكُمْ الْمَفْتُونُ ﴿٦﴾

7 Surely thy Lord knows best who is erring from His way, and He knows best those who go aright.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٧﴾

8 So obey not the rejectors.

فَلَا تُطِعِ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٨﴾

9 They wish that thou shouldst be pliant, so they (too) would be pliant.^a

وَدُّوا لَوْ تُدْهِنُ فَيُدْهِنُونَ ﴿٩﴾

10 And obey not any mean swearer,^a

وَلَا تُطِعِ كُلَّ حَلَّالٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴿١٠﴾

11 Defamer, going about with slander,

هَمَّازٍ مَّشَّاءٍ بِنَمِيٍّ ﴿١١﴾

12 Hinderer of good, outstepping the limits, sinful,

مَمَّاءٍ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ أَنْ يُوْذَىٰ ﴿١٢﴾

13 Ignoble, besides all that, notoriously mischievous —

عُتْلٍ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ زَنِيٍّ ﴿١٣﴾

14 Because he possesses wealth and sons.

أَنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَبَنِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

15 When Our messages are recited to him, he says: Stories of those of yore!

إِذَا تَشَلَّىٰ عَلَيْهِ أَيُّمًا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

4a. The Prophet's possession of the sublimest morals is a further proof that he cannot be a madman. In fact, he had already won from his contemporaries the recognition of his sublime morality, inasmuch as he had won the title of *al-Amin*, the faithful one. The Arabs, on account of their haughty spirit and tribal and family feuds, could not bow their heads to a man who was neither a king, nor the chief of a tribe, nor a great warrior, nor a famous poet. Nor could flattery have been their motive in according an unparalleled honour to a man who would not even mix with them, and led the life almost of a recluse. By calling him *al-Amin*, the people expressed their high appreciation of his sublime morality, as if he were the one, and *only one*, as indicated by prefixing *al*, who could be trusted in all matters. His moral greatness was thus testified to by 'A'ishah, than whom none was more intimate with the Holy Prophet: *His morals are the Qur'an*; meaning that all the pictures of sublime morality depicted by the Holy Qur'an afford really a glimpse of the moral greatness of the Prophet.

9a. The first desire of the Quraysh was no doubt, owing to their great respect for the Holy Prophet, that he should not condemn their evil deeds in strong language, and thus they too would not be severe in opposition to him.

10a. The description applies to all leaders of opposition to Truth. As against the sublime morals of the Inviter to Truth, vv. 10–13 describe the low state of morality of those who do not care for the moral values of life.

16 We shall brand him on the snout.^a

سَنَسِبُهُ عَلَى الْخُرْطُومِ ۝

17 We shall try them as We tried the owners of the garden, when they swore to pluck its fruits in the morning,^a

إِنَّا بَكَّرْنَاهُمْ كَمَا بَكَّرْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ
إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِينَ ۝

18 And would not set aside a portion (for the poor).

وَلَا يَسْتَنْتُونَ ۝

19 But a visitation from thy Lord came on it, while they slept.

فَنَاطَافَ عَلَيْهَا طَائِفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ
وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ ۝

20 So it became as black, barren land —

فَأَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيمِ ۝

21 Then they called out one to another in the morning,

فَتَنَادَوْا مُصْبِحِينَ ۝

22 Saying: Go early to your tilth, if you would pluck (the fruit).

أَنْ اْعُدُّوا عَلَى حَرْدِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
صِرْمِينَ ۝

23 So they went, while they said one to another in low tones:

فَانطَفُوا وَهُمْ يَتَخَفُونَ ۝

24 No poor man shall enter it today upon you.

أَنْ لَا يَدْخُلَهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ
مِسْكِينٌ ۝

25 And in the morning they went, having the power to prevent.

وَعَدَّوْا عَلَى حَرْدٍ قَدِيرِينَ ۝

26 But when they saw it, they said: Surely we are in error;

فَكَلَّمَا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا كَضَّا لَنْؤُنَ ۝

27 Nay, we are made to suffer privation.

بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ ۝

16a. Branding on the snout is equivalent to bringing a man to disgrace which sticks to him (R). *Khurṭūm* signifies really "the proboscis of an elephant (R), or the nose of a beast of prey (T), or a large or an elevated nose" (LL), and the word is here applied to the nose of a man to indicate its ugliness (R). Some commentators apply this description to Walid ibn Muḡhirah in particular, and take the branding on the snout literally, a prophecy fulfilled in the battle of Badr, where Walid received a wound on his nose, the mark of which remained till his death (Rz).

17a. This is a parable which sets forth the ultimate fate of the opponents. Stated as it is in unmistakable terms, it is one of the earliest prophecies, when opposition to the Holy Prophet had not yet assumed the severity of the later days. It foretells not only the failure of opposition but shows also that the Prophet's heart was full of sympathy for the poor from the very first.

28 The best of them said: Said I not to you, Why do you not glorify (Allāh)?

قَالَ أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ
لَوْ لَا تُسَبِّحُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

29 They said: Glory be to our Lord! surely we were unjust.

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنْ كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

30 Then some of them advanced against others, blaming each other.

فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَلَاوَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31 Said they: O woe to us! Surely we were inordinate —

قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا إِنْ كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

32 Maybe, our Lord will give us instead one better than it — surely to our Lord we make petition.^a

عَسَىٰ رَبَّنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَنَا خَيْرًا مِنْهَا
إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا مَرْغُوبُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

33 Such is the chastisement. And certainly the chastisement of the Hereafter is greater, did they but know!^a

كَذَلِكَ الْعَذَابُ ۗ وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ
أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

SECTION 2: A Reminder for the Nations

34 Surely the dutiful have with their Lord Gardens of bliss.

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٍ
الَّتِي فِيهَا ۖ ﴿٣٤﴾

35 Shall We then make those who submit as the guilty?

أَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ ۗ ﴿٣٥﴾

36 What is the matter with you? How do you judge?

مَا لَكُمْ ۗ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

37 Or have you a book wherein you read

أَمْ لَكُمْ كِتَابٌ فِيهِ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

38 That you shall surely have therein what you choose?

إِنَّ لَكُمْ فِيهِ لَمَا تَخَيَّرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

32a. It shows that while the Qur'ān threatened the opponents with punishment, it foretold at the same time that they would accept the Truth ultimately. This happened about twenty years afterwards. All their exertions came to naught and their power in the land was frustrated, but they then saw their error, came over to Islām, and were made the rulers of vast kingdoms. Thus their Lord gave them instead *one better*, because they made their petition to Him.

33a. The separate mention of the chastisement of the Hereafter is clear evidence that the punishment spoken of in the previous verses, which is referred to at the commencement of this verse in the words *such is the chastisement*, was a punishment which was to overtake them in this life, and thus to afford a proof of the truth of the chastisement of the Hereafter.

39 Or have you covenants from Us on oath, extending to the day of Resurrection, that yours is surely what you judge?

أَمْ لَكُمْ أَيْمَانٌ عَلَيْنَا بِالْغَةِ إِلَى
يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ لَكُمْ لَمَا تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

40 Ask them which of them will vouch for that.

سَأَلَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ يَدْلِكُ نَزْعِيْمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

41 Or have they associate-gods? Then let them bring their associates, if they are truthful.

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فُلْيَاتُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ
إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

42 On the day when there is a severe affliction, and they are called upon to prostrate themselves, but they are not able^a —

يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ وَيُدْعَوْنَ
إِلَى السُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسْتَضِعُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

43 Their looks cast down, abasement will cover them. And they were indeed called upon to prostrate themselves, while yet they were safe.

خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهُقُهُمْ ذُلٌّ
وَقَدْ كَانُوا يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ
وَهُمْ سَالِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

44 So leave Me alone with him who rejects this announcement. We shall overtake them by degrees, from whence they know not.

فَدَارَنِي وَمَنْ يُكَدِّبْ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ
سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

45 And I bear with them, surely My plan is firm.^a

وَأْمُرِي لَهُمْ إِنَّ كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ ﴿٤٥﴾

46 Or dost thou ask from them a reward, so that they are burdened with debt?

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَعْرَمٍ
مُتَّقِلُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

42a. The meaning of *kashf* 'ani-l-sāq has been explained in 27:44a. I may add here a few words from the commentaries. Bd says: *On the day when there is a severe affliction, giving the alternative significance, When the truth of the matter is laid bare.* Kf says: "*Kashf* 'ani-l-sāq is a proverb signifying the hardness of an affair and the severity of a calamity, and the origin of it is in the fright and the flight and the tucking up of their garments by women from their shanks in fleeing, and the disclosing of their anklets"; and then, quoting two pre-Islamic verses as his authority for the statement made, he adds: "The words here mean the day when the affair becomes hard and formidable, and there is neither any laying bare nor a shank". Ibn Athīr in explaining similar words, occurring in a saying of the Holy Prophet, almost repeats the words of Kf. Rz holds the meaning of *al-sāq* to be *al-shiddat*, and quotes five verses in support of this.

Commentators also differ as to whether this severity will be brought about in this life or in the life after death, Abū Muslim holding the first opinion, which Rz admits.

45a. They are given respite, but their punishment is sure.

47 Or is the unseen with them so that they write (it) down?^a

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

48 So wait patiently for the judgment of thy Lord, and be not like the Companion of the fish, when he cried while he was in distress.^a

فَأَصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ
الْحُوتِ إِذْ نَادَى وَهُوَ مَكْظُومٌ ﴿٤٨﴾

49 Had not favour from his Lord reached him, he would certainly have been cast down on naked ground, while he was blamed.

لَوْلَا أَنْ تَدْرَكَهُ نِعْمَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ
لَكُنَّ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ مَذْمُومٌ ﴿٤٩﴾

50 Then his Lord chose him, and He made him of the righteous.

فَأَجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ وَجَعَلَهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾

51 And those who disbelieve would almost smite thee with their eyes when they hear the Reminder, and they say: Surely he is mad!^a

وَإِنْ يَبْكَدُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيُزْفِقُونَكَ
بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَ
يَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٥١﴾

52 And it is naught but a Reminder for the nations.

وَمَا هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

47a. Writing is always mentioned in connection with the knowledge of the unseen, because it is writing alone that makes the truth of a prophecy sure. Such verses are a clear proof that the Qur'ān itself, containing as it did numerous prophecies, was written from the first, otherwise a challenge to the opponents in these early revelations to write down the knowledge of the future which they had through their diviners would be meaningless.

48a. The Prophet Jonah is here called the Companion of the fish, because of the incident mentioned in 37:142.

51a. The chapter ends with exactly the same allegation on the part of the disbelievers as the one with which it opened. And the last verse, *and it is naught but a Reminder for the nations*, thus sums up the arguments advanced against that allegation. In fact, the arguments advanced in this chapter are equally true in all ages and for all nations. Note that even as early as the revelation of this chapter, the Prophet's message is declared to be meant for all nations.