

Sura 10: Yunus (Jonah)

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

We return once more to the Meccan Quran with its special atmosphere, its shadows, and its allusions after having lived with two Medinan Suras, Al-Anfal and Al-Tawba. Although the Meccan Quran enjoys the same general characteristics of the Quran as a whole, it has its own specific features which enable it to express its main topics: the essence of God, the nature of the creation of God, and the essence of the relationship between God and His creation. The Meccan Suras exhibit clearly the nature of pure faith and introduce people to their true God who deserves to be worshipped alone.

Verses 1 to 25

1. *Alif. Lam. Ra. These are the verses of the wise Book.*
2. *Is it a wonder for people that We have revealed to a man among them, that he should warn people; and give those who believe the glad tidings that they are on a sure footing with their Lord? The disbelievers said, "This man is clearly a magician."*
3. *Verily your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then established Himself firmly on the throne, governing all things. No intercessor (can plead with Him) except after His leave (has been obtained). This is God, your Lord so worship Him. Will you not be mindful?*
4. *To Him you will all return. This is a true promise from God. It is He who begins the process of creation, and repeats it, that He may justly reward those who believe and do good deeds; but those who disbelieve will have boiling drink and painful torment, because they disbelieved.*
5. *It is He Who made the sun a shining radiance and the moon a light and determined for it phases that you may know the number of years and the reckoning (of time). God did not create this except in truth. Thus, does He explain His signs in detail, for people who know.*
6. *Verily, in the alternation of the night and the day, and in all that God has created, in the heavens and the earth, are signs for those who are conscious of Him.*
7. *Certainly, those who do not expect to meet with Us, but are pleased and satisfied with the life of this world, and those who are heedless of Our signs,*
8. *Their refuge is the Fire, because of the (evil) they earned.*
9. *Those who believe and do righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them because of their faith. Beneath them will flow rivers in gardens of bliss.*
10. *Their prayer therein, "Glory be to You, God;" and their greeting is, "Peace." Their final prayer is, "Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds."*
11. *If God were to hasten for people the evil (they have earned) as they wish to hasten on the good, their respite would already have expired. But We leave those who do not expect to meet with Us to wander blindly on in their contumacy.*
12. *And if an affliction touches a man, he cries out to Us, whether lying on his side or sitting or standing; but when We relieve him of his affliction, he passes on as though he had never cried out to Us to remove his affliction. Thus, do the deeds of those who are given to excesses seem fair to them.*
13. *We destroyed the generations before you when they did commit injustice; and their messengers (from God) came to them with clear signs but they would not believe. Thus do We recompense the criminal folk.*

14. *Then We made you their successors in the land after them, to see how you would behave.*
15. *And when Our clear revelations are recited to them, they who do not expect to meet Us say, "Bring a Quran other than this, or change it." Say (Muhammad), "It is not for me to change it of my own accord. I only follow that which is revealed to me. If I disobey my Lord, I fear the torment of a grievous Day.*
16. *Say, "If God had so willed, I would not have recited it to you nor would He have made it known to you. I dwelt among you a whole lifetime before it (came to me). Have you then no sense?*
17. *Who does greater wrong than he who fabricated a lie against God, or denied His revelations? Certainly, the criminals will never succeed.*
18. *They worship beside God that which neither hurts them nor profits them, and they say, "These are our intercessors with God." Say, "Would you inform God of (something) that He does not know in the heavens or in the earth? Glory be to Him; He is Exalted above all that they associate (with Him).*
19. *Humankind was but one nation then they differed. Had it not been for a word that had already gone forth from your Lord, the matter in which they differed would have been settled.*
20. *And they say, "Why is a sign not sent down to him from his Lord?" Say, "The unseen is only for God (to know), then wait, I too will wait with you."*
21. *When We make people taste some mercy after an adversity has touched them, they take to plotting against Our revelations. Say, "God is more swift in plotting." Verily, Our messengers record all the plots that you make.*
22. *He it is Who enables you to travel through land and sea; when you are aboard ships and they sail with them in a favorable wind, and they rejoice therein; then comes a stormy wind and the waves come to them from all sides, and they think they are being overwhelmed; they cry to God, professing their sincere devotion to Him saying, "If You deliver us from this, we shall indeed show our gratitude."*
23. *But when He delivered them, they transgress insolently through the earth in defiance of the truth. People, your transgression is against your own souls - an enjoyment of the life of the present - in the end you will return to Us and We shall tell you of all that you did.*
24. *The likeness of the life of this world is as the rain which We send down from the sky which is absorbed by the plants of the earth of which people and cattle eat. When the earth has taken on its ornaments and is embellished, and its people deemed that they are its masters, Our command comes by night or by day and We make it as a field mown down as if it had not flourished yesterday. Thus, do we expound the revelations for people who reflect.*
25. *And God summons to the abode of peace and leads whom He wills to a straight path.*
(10:1-25)

"Alif. Lam. Ra. These are the verses of the wise Book." The wise Book is composed of words that use the same letters of the Alphabet that the idolatrous Arabs were familiar with. They were unable to compose a single verse similar to it. Yet, they deny that this is a revelation from God. They should reflect on the fact that Muhammad (PBUH), a human being like them, brought this Book. He could not have concocted it; otherwise, anyone of them could have been able to do the same. It must have been a revelation from God. The wise Book addresses people in a style that is appropriate to their nature. The wise Book exposes specific aspects of the nature of humankind

which are reflected on the behavior of different generations of the human race. The wise Book invites people to think and reflect on the signs of God around them.

“Is it a wonder for people that We have revealed to a man among them, that he should warn people; and give those who believe the glad tidings that they are on a sure footing with their Lord? The disbelievers said, ‘This man is clearly a magician.’” This verse questions the disbelievers reprovingly, deprecating their amazement at the fact that a human being like them should receive a revelation from God. This reaction reflects how human beings underestimate their own value. They were amazed that a human being should become a messenger of God. They expected the messenger of God to belong to a superior kind of creation. They forgot that God honored humankind and made him worthy of delivering God’s message, which guides to the straight path, to his fellow human beings. The intent of the revelation was to warn people of the consequences of disobedience and to bring glad tidings to those who obey. The warning is for all people, while the glad tidings are only for those who believe. Obedience is rewarded by giving the believers a firm footing in the presence of their Lord.

The rationale behind sending a human being as a messenger of God is obvious. A human messenger knows his people and they know him. He is able to communicate with them easily and naturally. We may ask why God would send a messenger in the first place. Humankind was created with propensity to both goodness and evil; however, he was given an intellect to distinguish between good and evil and to be able to make the right choice. The human mind needs a constant reminder of the standard of right and wrong to save it from the perils of succumbing to human desires and lust. This standard is provided by God’s guidance and law.

The disbelievers were unable to find an explanation for the miracle that the Prophet (PBUH) brought, so they said, *“This man is clearly a magician.”* Had they been open to the truth, they could have reached the conclusion that he was a messenger of God. They should have realized the difference between this revelation and magic. Magic does not produce a divine project which helps people in leading life on earth.

“Verily your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then established Himself firmly on the throne, governing all things. No intercessor (can plead with Him) except after His leave (has been obtained). This is God, your Lord so worship Him. Will you not be mindful?” This is the fundamental principle in the doctrine: the principle of the Lordship of God. The principle of existence of God was not challenged by the idolaters. The Quran does not indulge in philosophical arguments about the nature of God but it addresses the initial natural disposition of the human being. It is He who created the heavens and earth and what they encompass. He gave the sun its shining glory and the moon its light. He decreed that the moon should have phases and that day and night should alternate. These phenomena, which are obvious to anyone who can see, should touch the inner feelings and motivate the heart to reflect. The Creator of the universe who maintains it in its equilibrium state is the only one who deserves to be the Lord to be worshiped by all people. He created the heavens and earth in *“six days.”* We are not going to discuss the nature, meaning, and length of these days because they are part of the unseen. This discussion is irrelevant. The lesson to be learnt is that the process of creation needed careful planning and wise execution.

Then God, *“established Himself firmly on the throne, governing all things.”* This expression is a metaphorical representation of the well-established and absolute authority of God. The expression has been phrased in a language that can be easily understood by humans. The word, *“then,”* in the verse does not mean a sequential arrangement of events because *“time”* as we

know it has no meaning in this context. God governs and controls everything. No intercessor can plead with Him, except after His leave has been obtained. This statement rebuts the false belief of the idolaters that the idols are able to intercede on their behalf.

“This is God, your Lord so worship Him.” We mentioned before that the idolaters believed that God is the Creator, the Provider, the One Who gives life, and the One who takes it. However, that belief was not reflected on their way of life. What they missed was to believe in God as a Lord. The direct consequence of this belief is to worship God alone. Worship is servitude, obedience and submission to God. Worship is not limited to the performance of rituals, as the idolaters believed. Performing the rituals is only a component of worship.

Remember that you will return to Him alone, *“To Him you will all return. This is a true promise from God. It is He Who begins the process of creation, and repeats it, that He may justly reward those who believe and do good deeds; but those who disbelieve will have boiling drink and painful torment, because they disbelieved.”* God’s promise will be fulfilled, and His judgment will pass and people will be judged fairly. Those who believed and did good deeds will receive the endless and perfect bliss that they were promised. But those who disbelieved will be recompensed justly for their deeds.

Then the narrative goes back to describe cosmic phenomena, *“It is He Who made the sun a shining radiance and the moon a light, and determined for it phases that you may know the number of years and the reckoning (of time). God did not create this except in truth. Thus, does He explain His signs in detail, for people who know.”* We are used to the scenes of the sunrise, sunset, moon rise and moon set. We see them every day so they no longer evoke any feeling of awe in our hearts. The verse urges us to look at the scenes as if we are seeing them for the first time. What kind of feelings would be evoked in our hearts, when we see for the first time a blazing sun and a moon that gives light? The Arabic word which has been translated here as “shining radiance” implies that the light of the sun is self-produced while the light of the moon is a reflection. Phases of the moon help us keep track of time. This can only be a reflection of the truth behind creation. God is the truth. The truth is His tool and His object.

The alteration of night and day, the changing lengths of the day and night, the creation of God in heavens and earth are all signs of the truth, *“Verily, in the alternation of the night and the day, and in all that God has created, in the heavens and the earth, are signs for those who are conscious of Him.”* Those who observe and reflect should become conscious of God.

Those who observe all these phenomena and do not expect to meet God are heedless of the fact that there will be an end to this transient life and there will certainly be a Day of Judgment, *“Certainly, those who do not expect to meet with Us, but are pleased and satisfied with the life of this world, and those who are heedless of Our signs,”* Those who do not reflect on the creation of the universe, a universe that indicates that it has been created by a Creator, do not reach the conclusion that this universe will end one day. The Hereafter is an integral part of the creation of God and it is necessary for justice to be implemented. These people have no sense of accountability. They are pleased with the life of this world and their souls do not seek a higher goal other than their material satisfaction of this worldly life, *“Their refuge is the Fire, because of the (evil) they earned.”*

On the other side, those who believed and did good deeds and worked hard for the Hereafter will be rightly guided, *“Those who believe and do righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them*

because of their faith. Beneath them will flow rivers in gardens of bliss.” God will guide them to do good deeds. The faith that connects them to God will guide them to the straight path. They will be admitted to a paradise having flowing rivers. Water is the symbol of fertility and growth. They will have nothing to worry about in paradise. Their main interest will be to be fully engaged in the remembrance of God, *“Their prayer therein, ‘Glory be to You, God;’ and their greeting is, ‘Peace.’ Their final prayer is, ‘Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds.’”*

“If God were to hasten for people the evil (they have earned) as they wish to hasten on the good, their respite would already have expired. But We leave those who do not expect to meet with Us to wander blindly on in their contumacy.” The idolaters used to challenge the Messenger of God (PBUH) to hasten the torment that they were promised if they deny him. Several verses in the Quran reiterated this challenge, *“And they say, ‘When is this promise, if you are truthful;”* (34:29) this challenge reflected their obstinacy in rejecting God’s guidance. God, in His wisdom, chose to give them respite. God did not send a punishment to wipe them out as has been done to previous peoples because He knew that many of them will later accept Islam. The verse told them that had God accepted their challenge they would have been decimated. But He gave them respite.

The verses continue to explore the contradictory nature of humankind. They challenged the Prophet (PBUH) to hasten the punishment, yet when they were touched by an affliction they would pray God, *“And if an affliction touches a man, he cries out to Us, whether lying on his side or sitting or standing; but when We relieve him of his affliction, he passes on as though he had never cried out to Us to remove his affliction. Thus, do the deeds of those who are given to excesses seem fair to them.”* The verse paints an image for an all-too-common model of people. When they are in good health and feeling well, they enjoy life and commit sins forgetting to remember God. They remember God only when an adversity strikes. They resort to prayers asking God to remove such adversity. However, once adversity has been removed, they go back to their old ways.

“We destroyed the generations before you when they did commit injustice; and their messengers (from God) came to them with clear signs, but they would not believe. Thus, do We recompense the criminal folk.” The transgression of previous generations led them to self-destruction. Their remnants still exist in the Arabian desert as a witness to their demise. Their messengers came to them, as your Messenger came to you, but they were tyrants and were not prepared to receive God’s guidance. Thus, they ended up criminals. God made you their successors, *“Then We made you their successors in the land after them, to see how you would behave,”* to test you. It is a message that moves the heart of a person having been told that he became the heir of a powerful kingdom whose owners perished a long time ago. The message also stresses the fact that just as the previous generations perished before, so will the present one. Life on earth is merely a testing period.

“And when Our clear revelations are recited to them, they who do not expect to meet Us say, ‘Bring a Quran other than this, or change it.’ Say (Muhammad), ‘It is not for me to change it of my own accord. I only follow that which is revealed to me. If I disobey my Lord, I fear the torment of a grievous Day.’” The new heirs were not any better than the previous ones. They made a strange request of the Prophet (PBUH): bring another Quran. This is a silly request which reflects complete ignorance of the objective of the Quran and its seriousness. Only a people who do not expect that one day they will stand before God could make such a request. The Quran

brought a comprehensive constitution for the way of life that human beings should lead, a way of life that is well designed to suit people, to meet their expectations, and to satisfy their needs. No one can change it. They may have thought that the Quran is only a piece of prose that can be composed by those who are fluent and articulate in the language. But the Prophet (PBUH) was not sent to participate in literary competitions.

“Say, ‘If God had so willed, I would not have recited it to you nor would He have made it known to you. I dwelt among you a whole lifetime before it (came to me). Have you then no sense?’”

Tell them Muhammad (PBUH) that this is a revelation from God. I was commanded to deliver it to you. Had He willed, I would have never recited it to you. The Messenger (PBUH) lived in Mecca for forty years before he became a messenger of God. During these forty years he never recited anything similar to the Quran. Can he suddenly do that out of his own accord? It is God’s revelation and he has no control over it.

Say to them that I could never tell a lie about God, *“Who does greater wrong than he who fabricated a lie against God, or denied His revelations? Certainly the criminals will never succeed.”*

“They worship beside God that which neither hurts them nor profits them, and they say, ‘These are our intercessors with God.’ Say, ‘Would you inform God of (something) that He does not know in the heavens or in the earth? Glory be to Him; He is Exalted above all that they associate (with Him).’” They worship those who neither benefit nor harm them. They think that they can intercede on their behalf. This is indeed ludicrous.

“Humankind was but one nation then they differed. Had it not been for a word that had already gone forth from your Lord, the matter in which they differed would have been settled.” This verse indicates that God created humankind with an initial natural disposition towards the concept of the Oneness of God. The idea of idolatry was developed later. God in His wisdom gave people respite to a certain time before He would settle what they differed about.

“And they say, ‘Why is a sign not sent down to him from his Lord?’ Say, ‘The unseen is only for God (to know), then wait, I too will wait with you.’” As if all of the signs given in this great miraculous Book were not enough. The signs of God were all around them. They requested a material miracle similar to the ones that the previous prophets brought. They did not completely understand the nature of the message that Muhammad (PBUH) was asked to deliver.

Muhammad’s message did not need a miracle that happens only once to show its authenticity. A miracle is only witnessed by those who were present at the time it occurred. The effect of such a miracle is limited and temporary. This message was meant to be an eternal Message, so it required an eternal miracle which addresses the hearts and minds of people one generation after the other. The Quran is the eternal miracle that will last for people to read and understand till the end of time. The unseen is only known by God. He is able to produce a miracle if He so wills, *“then wait, I too will wait with you.”* The statement conveys several messages. It implies that the waiting period is a respite given by God; it also carries a threat to the disbelievers; and it shows that even though Muhammad (PBUH) is one of the greatest messengers of God, he has no authority over the unseen. Muhammad (PBUH) is a servant of God and has no authority over people. This statement clearly defines the demarcation line between God’s authority and the Messenger’s authority.

“When We make people taste some mercy after an adversity has touched them, they take to plotting against Our revelations. Say, ‘God is more swift in plotting.’ Verily, Our messengers record all the plots that you make.” One wonders at the nature of humankind. They only remember God at the time of need. God is quickly forgotten when life is safe and comfortable, except for those who believe; those whose initial natural disposition remained pure and are always in contact with God. This is clearly exemplified in the way the people of Pharaoh dealt with Prophet Moses (PBUH). Whenever an affliction befell them, they would hurry to Moses (PBUH) asking him to pray God to remove that affliction and making promises to believe in God once the affliction has been removed. However, once Moses’ (PBUH) prayers were granted they renege on their promises and go back to their old habits. God’s messengers record everything. God is Omniscient, His knowledge encompasses everything.

The following verse paints a dynamic picture illustrating God’s power, *“He it is Who enables you to travel through land and sea; when you are aboard ships and they sail with them in a favorable wind, and they rejoice therein; then comes a stormy wind and the waves come to them from all sides, and they think they are being overwhelmed; they cry to God, professing their sincere devotion to Him saying, ‘If You deliver us from this, we shall indeed show our gratitude.’”* The verse describes the scene of people enjoying a trip at sea. The sea was calm and the ship was pushed gently by the wind. Then suddenly the wind picked up and the sea became stormy, threatening the safety of the ship. When they recognized the imminent danger and their vulnerability became evident, they prayed God to save them.

But when the storm subsided and they became safe, they forgot God and became tyrants, *“But when He delivered them, they transgress insolently through the earth in defiance of the truth. People, your transgression is against your own souls - an enjoyment of the life of the present - in the end you will return to Us and We shall tell you of all that you did.”* The verse reminds them that they will be the victims of their own transgression. They will taste the result of their transgression in this life before they receive the ultimate punishment in the Hereafter.

“The likeness of the life of this world is as the rain which We send down from the sky which is absorbed by the plants of the earth of which people and cattle eat. When the earth has taken on its ornaments and is embellished, and its people deemed that they are its masters, Our command comes by night or by day and We make it as a field mown down as if it had not flourished yesterday. Thus, do we expound the revelations for people who reflect.” This is an example that illustrates the situation of those who lead a hedonistic life. When water falls down from the sky the plants grow and flourish. The earth becomes covered with plants of different types and colors, such a beautiful scene. Then suddenly, it is destroyed by the command of God and in a split second the beautiful scene disappears as if it has never existed before. This is an example of this worldly life for those who are only interested in its material benefits.

“And God summons to the abode of peace, and leads whom He wills to a straight path.” It is quite a contrast between the example of life described in the previous verse and the peace and security that God calls to.

Verses: 26 to 70

26. *For those who did well is a good (reward) and more. Neither darkness nor ignominy will cover their faces. Such are the rightful owners of the Garden; they will abide therein eternally.*
27. *And those who earned evil, the recompense of an evil deed is its equivalent and ignominy will cover them. They have no protector from God, as if their faces had been covered with a cloak of a very dark night. Such are the rightful owners of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.*
28. *On the day when We gather them all together, then We say to those who ascribed partners (to God), "Stand back, you and your partners." And We separate them, one from the other. Their partners will say, "It was not us you worshipped."*
29. *God suffices as a witness between us and you, that we were unaware of your worship.*
30. *There, (on that day) every soul will be put to trial for what it did before. They will be brought back to God their rightful Lord, and their fabricated falsehoods will leave them in the lurch.*
31. *Say (Muhammad), "Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Who owns the hearing and the sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the living? And who manages everything?" They will say, "God." Then say, "Will you not be conscious of Him?"*
32. *That is God, your true Lord. What is there beyond the truth except error? How then are you turned away?*
33. *Thus is the word of your Lord proved true against those who transgressed - they will not believe.*
34. *Say (Muhammad), "Is there of your partners who can originate creation and repeats it?" Say, "It is God who originates the creation and repeats it, then how deluded you are?"*
35. *Say, "Is there of your partners who guides to the truth?" Say, "It is God who guides to the truth, is then He Who gives guidance to the truth more deserving to be followed, or he who does not find guidance (himself) unless he is guided? What is then the matter with you? How do you judge?"*
36. *But most of them follow nothing but conjecture. Assuredly, conjecture can by no means replace truth. God knows what they do.*
37. *It was not possible for this Quran to be produced by other than God; but it is a confirmation of (revelations) that came before it, and an explanation of the Book - wherein there is no doubt - from the Lord of the worlds.*
38. *Or do they say, "He fabricated it"? Say, "Bring then a Sura like it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can besides God, if you are truthful."*
39. *But they denied that whose knowledge they cannot encompass, even before the elucidation thereof had reached them. Similarly, those before them did deny. See what the end of the wrongdoers was?*
40. *Of them there are some who believe therein, and some who do not. Your Lord knows best those who are those who spread corruption.*
41. *And if they deny you, say, "For me are my deeds and for you are your deeds. You are neither responsible for my actions nor I am responsible for yours."*
42. *And of them are some who listen to you. But can you make the deaf to hear even though they do not understand?*
43. *And of them is he who looks at you. But can you guide the blind even though they see not?*

44. *Verily God does not wrong people at all; but it is people who wrong themselves.*
45. *And on the day He will gather them together, (it will seem) as if they had stayed but an hour of a day. They will recognize each other. Assuredly those will be lost who denied the meeting with God; and they were not guided.*
46. *Whether We show you some of what We promise them or We take your soul - in any case - to Us is their return. Ultimately God is a witness to all that they do.*
47. *To every people (was sent) a messenger. When their messenger comes, it will be judged between them fairly and they will not be wronged.*
48. *And they say, "When will this promise be fulfilled if you are truthful?"*
49. *Say, "I have no power over any harm or benefit to myself except as God wills. To every people is an appointed term. When their term is reached, they can neither delay it nor can they hasten it, even for an hour."*
50. *Say, "Have you considered: When His torment comes to you by night or by day, what is there of it that the guilty ones desire to hasten?"*
51. *Would you then believe in it at last when it actually comes to pass?" It will be said, "Now (you believe), when before you wished to hasten it.*
52. *Then it will be said to the wrongdoers, "Taste the torment of eternity, are you being recompensed except for what you used to earn?"*
53. *And they ask you, "Is it true?" Say, "Yes, by my Lord, verily it is true, and you cannot escape."*
54. *And if every soul that did commit injustice had all that is on earth, it would be willing to give it in ransom. They will express remorse within themselves when they see the torment, but they will be judged with justice, and they will not be wronged.*
55. *Verily, whatever is in the heavens and on earth belongs to God? God's promise is true, but most of them do not know.*
56. *It is He who gives life and who causes death, and to Him shall you all be brought back.*
57. *People, there has come to you an exhortation from your Lord, and a healing for what is in your breasts; and guidance and mercy for the believers.*
58. *Say, "In the grace of God and in His Mercy let them rejoice." That is better than what they amass.*
59. *Say, "Have you considered the provision which God has sent down for you, how you have made (some) unlawful and (some) lawful?" Say, "Did God permit you (to do so), or do you fabricate a lie concerning God?"*
60. *And what do those who fabricate lies against God will think on the Day of Judgment? Verily God is gracious towards people, but most of them are ungrateful.*
61. *Whatever business you may be engaged in, whatever portion you may be reciting from the Quran, and whatever deed you (people) may be doing, We are witnesses thereof when you are deeply engrossed therein. Nothing is hidden from your Lord (even as much as) the weight of an atom on the earth or in heaven. Nor what is less than that or greater than that, but it is (recorded) in a clear Record.*
62. *Verily the allies of God shall have no fear nor will they grieve.*
63. *Those who believe and are conscious of God,*
64. *For them are glad tidings, in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. The words of God will not be changed. This is indeed the supreme achievement.*
65. *And let not their speech grieve you (Muhammad). All might belong wholly to God; He is the All-Hearing, the Omniscient.*

66. *Verily to God belong whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is on the earth? Those who invoke other than God do not (actually) follow (His) partners. They follow only a conjecture, and they are only telling lies.*
67. *He it is who made the night that you may rest therein, and the day to make things visible (to you). Verily in this are signs for those who listen.*
68. *They say, "God has begotten a son;" Glory be to Him; He is Self-Sufficient. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. You have no authority to say this. Do you say about God that which you do not know?*
69. *Say, "Those who fabricate a lie against God will never succeed."*
70. *(They will have) a little enjoyment in this world. Then, to Us will be their return. Then shall We make them taste the severe torment for their disbelief. (10:26-70)*

"For those who did well is a good (reward) and more. Neither darkness nor ignominy will cover their faces. Such are the rightful owners of the Garden; they will abide therein eternally. And those who earned evil, the recompense of an evil deed is its equivalent and ignominy will cover them. They have no protector from God, as if their faces had been covered with a cloak of a very dark night. Such are the rightful owners of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally."

This verse gives details of the reward that awaits those who are guided and the punishment that awaits those who are misguided. The details exhibit God's mercy and justice. Those with strong faith who did good deeds and who understood God's universal law theirs will be a good reward and more. The extra reward is an unlimited bounty from God. They will be secure on the Day of Judgment, *"Neither darkness nor ignominy will cover their faces."* They will not display any sign of sadness. They are the owners of paradise. They will live therein forever. Those who earned evil in their lives will be judged fairly. They will only be punished according to the evil they have done, nothing more, *"the recompense of an evil deed is its equivalent and ignominy will cover them. They have no protector from God, as if their faces had been covered with a cloak of a very dark night. Such are the rightful owners of the Fire; they will abide therein."* They will feel humiliated and their faces will be darkened by their sadness; they will be destined to Hellfire, where they are going stay forever.

But where did their partners go, and why did not they protect them from God's wrath? Here is their story, *"On the day when We gather them all together, then We say to those who ascribed partners (to God), 'Stand back, you and your partners.' And We separate them, one from the other. Their partners will say, 'It was not us you worshipped.'"* Those who associated partners with God will be gathered with whom they associated as partners with God. The Quran sarcastically calls them "the partners" to emphasize that they never were associates to God. They will be told to stand back and wait for God's command. The associates will defend themselves claiming their innocence and denying that they had asked anyone to worship them. They will ask for God's testimony, *"God suffices as a witness between us and you, that we were unaware of your worship."* At this moment the deeds of every person will be evaluated by the One True God, and all false claims will vanish, *"There, (on that day) every soul will be put to trial for what it did before. They will be brought back to God their rightful Lord, and their fabricated falsehoods will leave them in the lurch."* These verses paint a dramatic account of the scene of the gathering on the Day of Judgment.

"Say (Muhammad), 'Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Who owns the hearing and the sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the

living? And who manages everything?’ They will say, ‘God.’ Then say, ‘Will you not be conscious of Him?’ We have mentioned before that the idolatrous Arabs did not contest the fact that God is the Creator. This verse reminds them of that belief to eradicate any doubt about the fact that the idols they worship have no power. God is He who brings down water from the sky to make the plants grow. He provides for them from the sky as well as on land. These facts were easy for them to understand. God is He Who awards the power of hearing and seeing. He *“brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the living.”* The word “dead” is used metaphorically to describe the state of being quiescent or dormant. The Arabs used to refer to a dormant plant as dead and to a growing plant as alive. They knew how a dormant seed produces a live plant and how a dormant egg produces a live chicken. God is He Who controls the universe. If you ask them, Muhammad (PBUH), these questions they will admit that God is He Who does all of that. Should not they then be conscious of Him?

“That is God, your true Lord. What is there after the truth except error? How then are you turned away?” There is only one truth, those who deviate from the truth have only error to fall in. God’s command will pass, *“Thus is the word of your Lord proved true against those who transgressed - they will not believe.”* Not because God steered them away from belief but because they chose to deviate from the straight path which leads to belief.

“Say (Muhammad), ‘Is there of your partners who can originate creation and repeats it?’ Say, ‘It is God who originates the creation and repeats it, then how deluded you are?’” The idolatrous Arabs did acknowledge God’s power and His ability to start the creation but they did not accept the idea of life after death. The verse explained that God’s power extends beyond starting life on earth and ending it by death; it encompasses the resurrection and bringing people to account on the Day of Judgment. He Who started the creation is able to repeat it again. How can they miss this fact? The argument continues, *“Say, ‘Is there of your partners who guides to the truth?’ Say, ‘It is God who guides to the truth, is then He Who gives guidance to the truth more deserving to be followed, or he who does not find guidance (himself) unless he is guided? What is then the matter with you? How do you judge?’”* God sent messengers and Scripture to explain His divine project which guides to goodness and forbids evil. God who guides to the truth deserves to be followed. The verse berates the idolaters for being blind to the fact that those whom they associate with God, whether humans or idols, are unable to offer any guidance. In fact, they need guidance.

“But most of them follow nothing but conjecture. Assuredly conjecture can by no means replace truth. God knows what they do.” They only follow baseless conjectures. Certainly, conjectures are not legitimate alternative to the truth.

“It was not possible for this Quran to be produced by other than God; but it is a confirmation of (revelations) that came before it, and an explanation of the Book - wherein there is no doubt - from the Lord of the worlds.” The Quran is a miraculous book in its literary style. It is a comprehensive book. It deals with a wide range of topics which explain the doctrine and teach the correct appreciation of the Creator, the understanding of human nature, the understanding of the nature of life, and the understanding of the nature of the universe. Only God could reveal a book with such depth and breadth. The Quran came to confirm the previous Scriptures and to provide a detailed explanation for God’s message embodied in them. The different Scriptures

which have been revealed to different messengers agree on the fundamentals but differ in the details. The details of each revelation were appropriate for the time at which it was revealed. The Quran came to provide the final details of God's message.

"Or do they say, 'He fabricated it?' Say, 'Bring then a Sura like it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can besides God, if you are truthful.'" They were challenged and they failed to meet the challenge. They had the same linguistic ability and resources that Muhammad (PBUH) had but they failed to compose a book like the Quran. Those who are able to appreciate the linguistic beauty of the Quran and understand the various systems which it brought are certain that this book could not have been written by a human being. The Quran is a miraculous book, remarkable for the beauty of its language and for the fact that it embodies a collection of harmonious systems which organize human life.

"But they denied that whose knowledge they cannot encompass, even before the elucidation thereof had reached them. Similarly, those before them did deny. See what the end of the wrongdoers was." They denied the truth so they will meet the fate of those who denied the truth before them.

"Of them there are some who believe therein, and some who do not. Your Lord knows best those who are those who spread corruption." Those who do not believe are the mischief-makers. Those who lost guidance and strayed away from the straight path are the source of corruption on earth. They only follow their whims and desires which demonize their lives as well as people's lives.

"And if they deny you, say, 'For me are my deeds and for you are your deeds. You are neither responsible for my actions nor I am responsible for yours.'" So, the Messenger was commanded to simply ignore those who denied him. Everyone will be judged according to their deeds. Leaving them alone may send a message which reaches their inner consciousness.

Types of those who denied the Messenger (PBUH) are then described, *"And of them are some who listen to you. But can you make the deaf to hear even though they do not understand? And of them is he who looks at you. But can you guide the blind even though they see not?"* Some hear but do not understand and some see but do not reflect. They stopped utilizing the senses that God bestowed on them. The Messenger (PBUH) can be of no benefit to them because they rendered their senses useless, *"Verily God does not wrong people at all; but it is people who wrong themselves."*

These verses carried a message of consolation to the Prophet (PBUH). The message stated that the Messenger (PBUH) was not derelict in his duty. He did his best but these people were determined not to listen, and therefore they could not understand the truth.

The verses turn to a description of a scene of the scenes of the Day of Judgment, *"And on the day He will gather them together, (it will seem) as if they had stayed but an hour of a day. They will recognize each other. Assuredly those will be lost who denied the meeting with God; and they were not guided."* The verse reminds people that the life of this world will pass as if it were merely an hour long event. Or does the verse describe the lives of people who made no contribution to life? They only spend an hour to get to know each other. They certainly lost the

opportunities that were awarded them during their lives.

The following verses address a new theme. They start by emphasizing the fact that all people will return to God, *“Whether We show you some of what We promise them or We take your soul - in any case - to Us is their return. Ultimately God is a witness to all that they do.”* God’s plan will pass: a messenger will be sent to each people, they will be then judged according to their response to their messenger, *“To every people (was sent) a messenger. When their messenger comes, it will be judged between them fairly and they will not be wronged.”* These two verses emphasize God’s role as the Creator and the Messenger’s role as a deliverer of the message. The Messenger’s role is to deliver the message; God’s role is to judge people.

“And they say, ‘When will this promise be fulfilled if you are truthful?’” The idolaters used to challenge the Prophet (PBUH) to hasten the punishment which the Quran threatened them with if they reject the message. The Prophet (PBUH) was commanded to tell them, *“I have no power over any harm or benefit to myself except as God wills. To every people is an appointed term. When their term is reached, they can neither delay it nor can they hasten it, even for an hour.”* So if the Prophet (PBUH) has no power over any harm or benefit to himself, how can he inflict harm on them or provide benefit to them. God controls the fate of people, when their term has been reached they will get their recompense. Nothing can change the appointed term. The term for a nation can either end by physical destruction, as it did happen to nations before, or by suffering a loss of identity as a result of general defeat. Some nations recover from the loss of identity but some never recover. The revival of the Muslim nation is contingent on following the Messenger’s way. The Messenger (PBUH) came to invite the nation to its revival, by adopting the Islamic creed and a way of life which reflects this creed in all aspects of life.

Their challenge is rebuffed by a threat, *“Say, ‘Have you considered: When His torment comes to you by night or by day, what is there of it that the guilty ones desire to hasten?’”* What would you do if the punishment came by day or by night? Why then you want to hasten this punishment? The following verse addressed the disbelievers as if the punishment had already taken place, *“Would you then believe in it at last when it actually comes to pass?”* *It will be said, ‘Now (you believe), when before you wished to hasten it.’* This group of verses ends with a scene from the Day of Judgment, *“Then it will be said to the wrongdoers, ‘Taste the torment of eternity, are you being recompensed except for what you used to earn?’”*

The following verse indicates the doubt that fills the hearts of the disbelievers, *“And they ask you, ‘Is it true?’ Say, ‘Yes, by my Lord, verily it is true, and you cannot escape.’”* The Prophet (PBUH) is commanded to give them a definite and unequivocal answer. The punishment is true and you will not escape.

“And if every soul that did commit injustice had all that is on earth, it would be willing to give it in ransom. They will express remorse within themselves when they see the torment, but they will be judged with justice, and they will not be wronged.” No ransom will be accepted from anyone, even if they could afford paying the ransom, to be able to escape the punishment. Their hearts will be full of remorse when they see the torment. They will be judged fairly and they will not be wronged.

“Verily, whatever is in the heavens and on earth belongs to God? God's promise is true, but most of them do not know. It is He who gives life and who causes death, and to Him shall you all be brought back. People, there has come to you an exhortation from your Lord, and a healing for what is in your breasts; and guidance and mercy for the believers. Say, ‘In the grace of God and in His Mercy let them rejoice.’ That is better than what they amass.” It is a loud proclamation that God’s kingdom encompasses all what is on earth and all what is in heavens. His promise will come to pass no one can frustrate Him. The disbelievers deny or doubt only because they are ignorant. God controls life and death and to Him all will return. The purpose of the proclamation is then pronounced, *“People, there has come to you an exhortation from your Lord, and a healing for what is in your breasts; and guidance and mercy for the believers.”* The exhortation came to you in the Book that was sent to you from your Lord. It is not a fabrication, and it has not been authored by a mortal. The exhortation will revive your hearts and cleanse your breasts. It will replace the myth that fills your hearts with doubt and insecurity with the certainty and security of faith. You then can revel in God’s grace and enjoy His mercy. These are the true sources of happiness for the believers. Islam teaches people that there is more to life than accumulating wealth. Wealth is a means, not an end in itself; the purpose of life for a believer is to enjoy God’s grace and mercy.

“Say, ‘Have you considered the provision which God has sent down for you, how you have made (some) unlawful and (some) lawful?’ Say, ‘Did God permit you (to do so), or do you fabricate a lie concerning God?’” This is an address to those who associate partners with God. Consider the provision that God sent you to manage it according to His leave and law. Who gave you the right to classify parts of it as lawful and other parts as unlawful? Did God give you permission to do that? Only God decrees what is lawful and what is unlawful. The concept that only God has the right to decree what is lawful and what is unlawful appears often throughout the Quran. This concept is the practical application of the fundamental statement, *“there is no deity except God.”* The recognition that God is the Creator and the Provider implies that He is the only one who deserves to be worshiped and that He alone has the right to control people’s lives. The verses continue by confronting the idolaters with the lies they fabricated about God, and warns them of the consequences of these lies on the Day of Judgment, *“And what do those who fabricate lies against God will think on the Day of Judgment? Verily God is gracious towards people, but most of them are ungrateful.”* Following the threat issued to those who associate partners with God, the verse reminds them of the bounty that God blessed them with. The bounty includes both the material provisions and the divine project which God bestowed on people. This divine project enables people to lead a better life on earth. It is a project that brings out the best in everyone. It is a project that provides a balance between the needs of this life and the needs of the Hereafter and allows humans to live in harmony with the universe. But most people are heedless of this bounty and they are ungrateful. They abandon the divine project and associate partners with God; and as a result, they end up leading unhappy life because the divine project provides healing to the ailments of the breasts. When people abandon the divine project, they lose the benefit of the healing that it provides. It is an amazing expression which describes a deep truth. The Quran heals all the ailments of the heart. It addresses the natural innate human feelings and fills the hearts with security and contentment.

“Whatever business you may be engaged in, whatever portion you may be reciting from the Quran, and whatever deed you (people) may be doing, We are witnesses thereof when you are

deeply engrossed therein. Nothing is hidden from your Lord (even as much as) the weight of an atom on the earth or in heaven. Nor what is less than that or greater than that, but it is (recorded) in a clear Record.” This verse stirs, in the heart, feelings of security and awe at the same time. This mixture of feelings is evoked by the knowledge that the God Almighty who manages the universe is with us every moment, He sees what we do, He knows what we go through, and He looks after us. We are not atoms that are left to wander aimlessly in this vast universe. There is nothing that escapes God. He is fully aware of all things. Certainly, those who are under the care of God will never fear or grieve, *“Verily the allies of God shall have no fear nor will they grieve.”* How can they fear or grieve when they know that God looks after them? They are true believers. They are fully conscious of God, *“Those who believe and are conscious of God,”* True faith is what rests deep in the heart and is reflected on the deeds. Those have the glad tidings of great success, *“for them are glad tidings, in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. The words of God will not be changed. This is indeed the supreme achievement.”* God then addresses His Messenger (PBUH), *“And let not their speech grieve you (Muhammad). All might belong wholly to God; He is the All-Hearing, the Omniscient.”* The Messenger (PBUH) should not worry about those who fabricate lies about God; even though they are the elite in the community. God Who has all the might will protect His Messenger (PBUH).

“Verily to God belong whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is on the earth? Those who invoke other than God do not (actually) follow (His) partners. They follow only a conjecture, and they are only telling lies.” God controls all people, strong and weak alike. Those who associate partners with God are only following a mirage. God has no partners.

“He it is who made the night that you may rest therein, and the day to make things visible (to you). Verily in this are signs for those who listen.” The verse stresses some of the cosmic signs which people take for granted and ignore the power behind them. God controls the universe. It is He Who chose to make the day for work and the night for rest.

This group of verses ends by refuting the lies made by those who associate partners with God and stresses the consequences of such lies, *“They say, ‘God has begotten a son;’ Glory be to Him; He is Self-Sufficient. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. You have no authority to say this. Do you say about God that which you do not know? Say, ‘Those who fabricate a lie against God will never succeed.’ (They will have) a little enjoyment in this world. Then, to Us will be their return. Then shall We make them taste the severe torment for their disbelief.”* It is silly to imagine that God has begotten a son. It reflects a lack of imagination which causes confusion between the nature of the Creator and the nature of the creature. The Creator is eternal while humans are mortals. God does not need progeny; He does not need help or support. He is Self-Sufficient and Independent. These lies are mere baseless conjectures. Uttering such lies is a great sin. Those who commit this sin will never succeed, neither in this life nor in the Hereafter.

Verses 71 to 103

71. *And recite to them the story of Noah, when he said to his people, “My people, if my presence among you and my reminding you of God's revelations offend you, I have put my trust in God, so decide upon your course of action you and your partners. Let not*

- your course of action be obscure for you. Then execute your decision against me and give me no respite.*
72. *But if you turn away, (consider that) I never asked you for a reward. I seek my reward only from God, and I have been commanded to be of those who submit to God's will."*
 73. *They denied Him so We saved him and those with him in the Ark, and We made them inherit (the earth), while We drowned those who denied Our revelations. Then see what the end of those who had been warned was.*
 74. *Then after him, We sent messengers to their peoples. They brought them clear signs, but they would not believe what they had already denied beforehand. Thus, do We seal the hearts of the transgressors.*
 75. *Then after them We sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his chiefs with Our signs. But they were arrogant. They were a guilty folk.*
 76. *When the truth did come to them from Us, they said, "This is indeed evident magic."*
 77. *Moses said, "Is this what you call the truth when it comes to you? Is this magic? Magicians are never successful.*
 78. *They said, "Did you come to us to turn us away from that which we found our fathers following, in order that you and your brother may have greatness in the land? But we will not believe in you."*
 79. *Pharaoh said, "Bring me every learned magician."*
 80. *When the magicians came, Moses said to them, "Cast what you will cast."*
 81. *When they had cast, Moses said, "What you have brought is magic. God will certainly render it useless. God does not uphold the deeds of those who spread corruption. "*
 82. *And God will vindicate the truth by His words, however much the guilty will be averse."*
 83. *But none believed in Moses except some offspring of his people, in fear of Pharaoh and his chiefs, lest they should persecute them. And certainly Pharaoh was mighty in the land and one who was given to excesses.*
 84. *Moses said, "My people, if you have believed in God, then in Him put your trust if you have indeed submitted to Him."*
 85. *They said, "In God do we put our trust. Our Lord, do not subject us to the persecution of the wrongdoers.*
 86. *And deliver us by your mercy from the disbelievers."*
 87. *We inspired Moses and his brother (saying), "Settle your people in houses in Egypt, make your houses places of worship, and establish prayers. And give glad tidings to the believers."*
 88. *Moses prayed, "Our Lord, You have indeed bestowed on Pharaoh and his chiefs splendor and wealth in the life of this world. Our Lord, that they may lead people astray from Your path. Our Lord, obliterate their wealth and harden their hearts, so they do not believe until they see the painful torment."*
 89. *He (God) said, "Your prayer has been answered, so stay on the straight path and do not follow the path of those who have no knowledge."*
 90. *We took the Children of Israel across the sea. Pharaoh and his hosts followed them in insolence and spite. When the drowning overtook him, he said, "I believe that there is no deity except Him whom the Children of Israel believe in. I am of those who submit (to God)."*
 91. *Now! When you had been a rebel before and had been of those who spread corruption?*

92. *This day We save you in body that you may be a sign for those who come after you. Most people are, indeed, heedless of Our signs.*
93. *And We had certainly settled the Children of Israel in a good dwelling-place, and provided for them sustenance of the best. It was after knowledge had been granted to them, that they fell into schisms. Verily God will judge between them on the Day of Judgment regarding that over which they used differ.*
94. *If you are in doubt concerning that which We have revealed to you, then ask those who have been reading the Scripture before you. The truth had indeed come to you from your Lord, so do not be of those who doubt.*
95. *Do not be among those who deny the revelations of God, for then you would become of the losers.*
96. *Those against whom the word of your Lord has passed will not believe.*
97. *Even if every sign was brought to them, until they see the painful torment.*
98. *If only there had been a community (of all those that were destroyed of old) that believed and profited by its belief as did the folk of Jonah. When they believed We relieved them of the torment of disgrace in the life of this world and gave them comfort for a while.*
99. *And if your Lord had willed, all who are on the earth would have believed together. Would you (Muhammad) compel people until they become believers?*
100. *It is not for any soul to believe save by the permission of God. He has set uncleanness upon those who have no sense.*
101. *Say, "Consider all that is in the heavens and on earth"; but neither signs nor warnings avail those who do not believe.*
102. *What are they waiting for but (what happened in) the days of those who passed away before them? Say, "Wait then, I too will wait with you."*
103. *In the end We save Our messengers and those who believe. It is binding on Us that We should save those who believe. (10:71-103)*

"And recite to them the story of Noah, when he said to his people, 'My people, if my presence among you and my reminding you of God's revelations offend you, I have put my trust in God, so decide upon your course of action you and your partners. Let not your course of action be obscure for you. Then execute your decision against me and give me no respite. But if you turn away, (consider that) I never asked you for a reward. I seek my reward only from God, and I have been commanded to be of those who submit to God's will.' They denied Him so We saved him and those with him in the Ark, and We made them inherit (the earth), while We drowned those who denied Our revelations. Then see what the end of those who had been warned was."

These verses narrate the last episode of the story of Prophet Noah (PBUH). It is an episode which describes the last challenge posed by Prophet Noah (PBUH) to his people after a long series of episodes in which he exhorted them to join the ranks of the believers. Many of the details of the story are absent from these verses because the focus here is on the last attempt of Prophet Noah (PBUH) and his absolute reliance on God. The verses then mention the salvation of Prophet Noah (PBUH) and the few believers who joined him on the Ark. This episode starts with Prophet Noah's (PBUH) resolution, *"My people, if my presence among you and my reminding you of God's revelations offend you, I have put my trust in God, so decide upon your course of action you and your partners. Let not your course of action be obscure for you. Then execute your decision against me and give me no respite."* Plan whatever you can plan and execute your plan I will put my trust in God alone. God is sufficient for me. It is the final

statement which reflects the absolute reliance of the believer on God and the absolute trust in His power and protection. God's messengers are role models for the believers who want to call to God. They should not fear the tyranny of the despots. God will support them and will protect them. The story of Prophet Noah (PBUH) is an example of the struggle of the messenger against the tyrants. His message was that he never asked them a reward for guiding them. So, whether they listen or turn away he will get his reward from God. He will remain steadfast in his faith, *"I have been commanded to be of those who submit to God's will."* God saved him in the Ark when his people denied him.

The verses continue to mention God's messengers who came after Noah (PBUH), *"Then after him, We sent messengers to their peoples. They brought them clear signs, but they would not believe what they had already denied beforehand. Thus, do We seal the hearts of the transgressors."* These messengers brought clear signs to their people but the people continued in their obstinacy to deny the truth because their hearts were sealed.

The following verses narrate the story of Moses (PBUH) in a little more detail. The story encompasses five scenes. *"Then after them We sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his chiefs with Our signs. But they were arrogant. They were a guilty folk. When the truth did come to them from Us, they said, 'This is indeed evident magic.' Moses said, 'Is this what you call the truth when it comes to you? Is this magic? Magicians are never successful.'"* The verses refer to the nine miracles that Moses (PBUH) brought very briefly, no details are given. The verses stress the fact that *"the truth did come to them from Us,"* to emphasize the enormity of their sin in calling the truth *"evident magic."* Moses (PBUH) was appalled by their response. He (PBUH) tried to explain that magic does not guide people to the straight path and it has no basis to stand on; that is why it is doomed to failure.

At this point in the discussion, their true motive becomes apparent, *"They said, 'Did you come to us to turn us away from that which we found our fathers following, in order that you and your brother may have greatness in the land? But we will not believe in you.'"* They wanted to hang on to their old beliefs, in spite of the fact that these beliefs were deeply rooted in myth and falsehood. These beliefs gave them the power over people and they did not want to relinquish that power. Like all arrogant tyrants, they resisted the call to believe in God because the call threatened their power and control.

It seems that Pharaoh and his chiefs believed that they can fight Moses' (PBUH) claims with magic, *"Pharaoh said, 'Bring me every learned magician.' When the magicians came, Moses said to them, 'Cast what you will cast.' When they had cast, Moses said, 'What you have brought is magic. God will certainly render it useless. God does not uphold the deeds of those who spread corruption. And God will vindicate the truth by His words, however much the guilty will be averse.'"* One notices the brief account of the encounter between Moses (PBUH) and the magicians. The main emphasis is placed on Moses' (PBUH) statement, *"What you have brought is magic. God will certainly render it useless."* The statement points out clearly that magic cannot stand in the face of the belief in God. All their tricks will be in vain and the truth will remain unshaken. It is a statement which reflects the deep confidence of the believer in God. The truth will prevail by God's words even though it is against the wish of the disbelievers. The truth prevailed and the magicians lost.

“But none believed in Moses except some offspring of his people, in fear of Pharaoh and his chiefs, lest they should persecute them. And certainly Pharaoh was mighty in the land and one who was given to excesses.” Moses said, *‘My people, if you have believed in God, then in Him put your trust if you have indeed submitted to Him.’* They said, *‘In God do we put our trust. Our Lord, do not subject us to the persecution of the wrongdoers. And deliver us by your mercy from the disbelievers.’* We inspired Moses and his brother (saying), *‘Settle your people in houses in Egypt, make your houses places of worship, and establish prayers. And give glad tidings to the believers.’*” It seems that only a group of young people declared publicly their belief in Moses’ (PBUH) message. This group of young people was persecuted by the Egyptians. They needed to be comforted and assured by Moses (PBUH), *“My people, if you have believed in God, then in Him put your trust if you have indeed submitted to Him.”* Putting one’s trust in God is a sign of the deep faith in Him. Putting one’s trust in God provides a source of power and support to the believer. They responded positively to his words, *“In God do we put our trust. Our Lord, do not subject us to the persecution of the wrongdoers. And deliver us by your mercy from the disbelievers.”* It should be noted that there is no contradiction between this supplication and the fact that they have put their trust in God. On the contrary, it emphasizes their trust in God because it shows that they were certain that God is in control of all affairs. A believer should not wish to be persecuted however, if subjected to persecution, one should persevere. God then commanded Moses (PBUH) to start organizing the campaign for leaving Egypt, *“We inspired Moses and his brother (saying), ‘Settle your people in houses in Egypt, make your houses places of worship, and establish prayers. And give glad tidings to the believers.’”* During this stage, Moses (PBUH) was commanded to launch a campaign to prepare the children of Israel both physically and spiritually for the exodus. Both parts of the campaign were necessary for the exodus to succeed. People may belittle the need for spiritual preparation, but experience has shown repeatedly that a soldier needs a strong faith as well as good fighting equipment to win a battle.

“Moses prayed, ‘Our Lord, You have indeed bestowed on Pharaoh and his chiefs splendor and wealth in the life of this world. Our Lord, that they may lead people astray from Your path. Our Lord, obliterate their wealth and harden their hearts, so they do not believe until they see the painful torment.’” Pharaoh and his chiefs used the power and wealth that God bestowed on them to sway people away from the straight path. They did this both by temptation and persecution. Some people do not persevere in such tests. They are easily influenced by those who have power and wealth. Moses (PBUH) prayed God to remove from Pharaoh and his chiefs the means to tempt and persecute people. His prayer showed that he had despaired that Pharaoh and his chiefs would ever believe in God. God responded favorably to Moses’ prayer, *“Your prayer has been answered, so stay on the straight path and do not follow the path of those who have no knowledge.”*

We now come to the second scene, the scene of the exodus. *“We took the Children of Israel across the sea. Pharaoh and his hosts followed them in insolence and spite. When the drowning overtook him, he said, ‘I believe that there is no deity except Him whom the Children of Israel believe in. I am of those who submit (to God).’”* This is the last scene in the story of the encounter between Moses and Pharaoh. The narrative provides a brief description of the scene. The focus is on the end of the tyrant and the salvation of the believers. The emphasis is not on the details but on the fact that God’s promise, made earlier in the Sura, has been fulfilled. When Pharaoh

realized that his end was near and that his power and arrogance did not save him, he begged for salvation. But, it was too late, *“Now! When you had been a rebel before and had been of those who spread corruption?”*

God chose to save his corpse so that people would know the consequences of arrogance and tyranny, *“This day We save you in body that you may be a sign for those who come after you. Most people are, indeed, heedless of Our signs.”* However, many people do not reflect on these signs.

The verses continue to narrate the events which the children of Israel encountered after the exodus, *“And We had certainly settled the Children of Israel in a good dwelling-place, and provided for them sustenance of the best. It was after knowledge had been granted to them, that they fell into schisms. Verily God will judge between them on the Day of Judgment regarding that over which they used differ.”* The Arabic words which are translated here as “good dwelling-place” suggest that God gave them safe and secure dwellings. However, they differed in their opinions regarding the allowable and the forbidden, so God will settle these differences on the Day of Judgment.

“If you are in doubt concerning that which We have revealed to you, then ask those who have been reading the Scripture before you. The truth had indeed come to you from your Lord, so do not be of those who doubt.” The Messenger (PBUH) was not in doubt. It was narrated that, when this verse was revealed, he said, “I do not doubt and I am not going to ask.” Furthermore, the verse ends by saying, *“The truth had indeed come to you from your Lord.”* So what is the reason behind the command? The verse refers to the difficult situation in which the Prophet (PBUH) found himself after the incident of Israa and Mi’raj (the trip to the Farthest Mosque and the ascension to heaven). Some Muslims simply could not believe the story and they became apostates. This saddened the Prophet (PBUH) in addition to the sadness brought about by the loss of his wife and his uncle. This verse consoled the Prophet (PBUH) and assured him that he was on the right path. It also indicated that punishment is awaiting those who abandoned their faith. The verse also established a basic Islamic principle: when in doubt ask those who have the knowledge. Is there a contradiction between the command not to be of those who doubt and the command to seek clarification? The answer is no. The command not to be of those who doubt means that one should not be of those who persist in doubting; those who do not seek the knowledge which would clarify their doubts.

But those who stubbornly persisted in their denial after they saw the truth are losers *“do not be among those who deny the revelations of God, for then you would become of the losers.”* They were those who earned the painful torment because they closed their eyes so that they do not see the truth, *“Those against whom the word of your Lord has passed will not believe. Even if every sign was brought to them, until they see the painful torment.”*

“If only there had been a community (of all those that were destroyed of old) that believed and profited by its belief as did the folk of Jonah. When they believed We relieved them of the torment of disgrace in the life of this world and gave them comfort for a while.” This statement describes the state of the communities of the past. They did not believe; only a few people believed in each of these communities. Had they believed they would have benefited but they chose to disbelieve except one community: the folk of Jonah. The verse does not detail what happened to Jonah’s (PBUH) folk but simply outlines the end result. The verse states that when

they believed they achieved salvation, had they not believed at the right time, they would have suffered the grave torment.

One can glean two lessons from this account:

1. No one should despair of God's mercy. It is never too late to repent and return to the straight path. This may be a reason for the exemption from the disgraceful torment in this life. God saved the people of Jonah when they repented.
2. God's promise will always be fulfilled. Saving Jonah's people from the torment in this life is an expression of this promise. When they believed they were saved.

"And if your Lord had willed, all who are on the earth would have believed together. Would you (Muhammad) compel people until they become believers?" This is a fundamental rule. Had God willed, He could have created all people the same. He could have made them all believers like the angels. Had God willed, He could have deprived people of the free will, they would have had no ability to choose. God Almighty in His wisdom created human beings with propensity to goodness and evil and gave them the ability to choose either way. People have the free will to choose whether to believe or disbelieve. The Prophet (PBUH) could not compel any one to adopt faith. There should be no compulsion in matters of the heart and conscience.

"It is not for any soul to believe save by the permission of God. He has set uncleanness upon those who have no sense." The verse does not imply that God will force people to believe or disbelieve. It states that faith can be reached only through a certain route, outlined by God. To be a believer one should follow God's route to belief. Those who choose not to apply their ability to discern right from wrong have lost their cleanliness. They will see the signs of God in heavens and earth but will not be able to understand them because they disabled their intellectual ability to think and reflect, *"Say, 'Consider all that is in the heavens and on earth'; but neither signs nor warnings avail those who do not believe."* The Arabs who lived at the time of the revelation of the Quran did not know much about the universe, the heavens and the earth. However, it is important to understand that there is a connection between the initial natural disposition of the human beings and the universe. When humankind tunes this disposition to listen to the universe the communication between the two is established.

God's law is firmly established and never changes. The consequences of denying the truth are well known. No one should expect God's law to change. Thus an ultimatum has been issued, *"What are they waiting for but (what happened in) the days of those who passed away before them? Say, 'Wait then, I too will wait with you.'"* This group of verses ends with a promise to the believers, a promise that God will fulfill, *"In the end We save Our messengers and those who believe. It is binding on Us that We should save those who believe."*

Verses 104 to 109

104. Say, "People, if you are in doubt of my religion, then (know that) I do not worship those whom you worship, other than God. But I worship God who will take your souls (at death). I am commanded to be of the believers,"
- 105 And, (Muhammad) set your face resolutely towards religion, and be not of those who ascribe partners (to God).
106. And do not call besides God on that which can neither benefit you nor harm you, for if you do then surely you will in that case be of the wrongdoers.

107. *If God afflicts you with harm, there is none who can remove it save Him; and if He desires good for you, there is none who can repel His grace. He causes it to reach whom He wills of his servants. He is the All-Forgiving, the Giver of Mercy.*
108. *Say, "People, the truth has come to you from your Lord. So, whosoever is guided, is guided only for (the good of) his soul, and whosoever goes astray only goes astray against it. And I am not a guardian over you.*
109. *And (Muhammad) follow that which is being revealed to you, and persevere until God gives judgment. And He is the Best of Judges. (10: 104-109)*

The Sura ends with a proclamation to all humanity, even though, only the idol worshippers of Quraish were the only people who heard it directly from the Prophet (PBUH), *"Say, 'People, if you are in doubt of my religion, then (know that) I do not worship those whom you worship, other than God. But I worship God who will take your souls (at death). I am commanded to be of the believers, '"* The verse commanded the Messenger (PBUH) to state his position to the idolaters, "I know that I call you to the truth. If you have any doubts about it, I am still going to persevere and I will never worship any except God who will put you to death. I will obey God's command to be a believer."

God's command to His Messenger (PBUH) continued, *"And, (Muhammad) set your face resolutely towards religion, and be not of those who ascribe partners (to God)."* Do not call upon those who could not benefit or harm you, *"And do not call besides God on that which can neither benefit you nor harm you, for if you do then surely you will in that case be of the wrong-doers."*

"If God afflicts you with harm, there is none who can remove it save Him; and if He desires good for you, there is none who can repel His grace. He causes it to reach whom He wills of his servants. He is the All-Forgiving, the Giver of Mercy." God's law of causality is in effect. The consequences of each deed are well established and no one can change them. Only God can change His own law.

The final proclamation then follows, *"Say, 'People, the truth has come to you from your Lord. So whosoever is guided, is guided only for (the good of) his soul, and whosoever goes astray only goes astray against it. And I am not a guardian over you.'" This is the final proclamation; each one should choose the way ahead. The consequences will follow.*

Finally, a command is issued to the Prophet (PBUH) to follow what has been revealed to him, *"And (Muhammad) follow that which is being revealed to you, and persevere until God gives judgment. And He is the Best of Judges."*