

Sura 11: Hud

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

This Sura has been revealed, in its totality, in Mecca. Some scholars are of the opinion that verses 12, 17, and 114 were revealed in Medina but when one reflects on the narrative, this seems to be less likely. The three verses flow naturally with the narrative of the whole Sura. In addition, these verses deal with topics which are typical of the verses of the Quran revealed in Mecca. They deal with the issues of the doctrine and Quraish's stance and opposition to the new religion. One can cite for example verse 12 which says, "*Perchance you may (feel inclined) to give up a part of what is revealed to you, and your heart may feel straitened because they say, 'Why is not a treasure sent down to him, or why does not an angel come down with him?'" But you are only there to warn. It is God that arranges all affairs.*" This verse clearly describes Quraish's obstinacy and alludes to the distress that the Prophet (PBUH) suffered as a result of this obstinacy. The verse offers a consolation to the Prophet (PBUH). It is thus clear that such circumstances could only have happened during the Meccan period and around the time of the death of the Prophet's (PBUH) wife and uncle.

It is clear that verse 17, "*Is he (to be counted equal with them) who has a clear proof from his Lord and a witness from Him recites it, and before it was the Book of Moses, an example and a mercy? Such believe therein, and whoso disbelieves therein of the clans, the Fire is his appointed place. So be not you in doubt concerning it. It is the Truth from your Lord; but most people do not believe,*" has all the characteristics of the Meccan Quran. It deals with the fundamentals of faith and it builds a case that this Quran is a divine revelation similar to the revelation that Prophet Moses (PBUH) received before.

Verse 114 came to comfort the Prophet (PBUH) and to remind him of similar difficulties which Prophet Moses (PBUH) faced. It exhorted the Prophet (PBUH) to seek help in prayers and perseverance to be able to face these difficult times.

The whole Sura was revealed after Surat Yunus (Chapter 10) which was revealed after Surat Al-Israa (Chapter 17). This order helps us determine the time when this Sura was revealed. The Sura was revealed during one of the most difficult periods of the life of the Prophet (PBUH) in the Meccan era. This was the period when the Prophet's (PBUH) uncle and wife died. The idolaters of Mecca were reluctant to challenge the authority of Abu Taleb who announced that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) enjoys his protection. Abu Taleb's death encouraged many of the idolaters of Mecca to take advantage of the situation to ridicule and assault the Prophet (PBUH).

Verses 1 to 24:

1. *Alif. Lam. Ra. (This is) a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from One who is Wise, Totally-Aware.*
2. *(Say Prophet), "Worship none but God. I am sent to you from Him as a warner and a bringer of glad tidings."*

3. *And (Saying), "Seek forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance, that He may grant you enjoyment, good (and true), for an appointed term, and He may bestow His grace on all who merit grace. But if you turn away, then I fear for you the torment of a great day.*
4. *To God is your return, and He has power over all things."*
5. *Undoubtedly, they enshroud their hearts that they may hide from Him. Even when they cover themselves with their garments, He knows what they conceal, and what they reveal, for He knows well the (innermost secrets) of the hearts.*
6. *There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance depends on God. He knows the time and place of its definite dwelling place and its temporary deposit. All is in a clear Record.*
7. *He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six Days - and His Throne was over the waters - that He might try you, which of you is best in conduct. But if you were to say to them, "You shall indeed be raised again after death", the disbelievers would surely say, "This is nothing but obvious magic."*
8. *And if We delay the torment for them for an appointed time, they will surely say, "What is keeping it back?" On the day it (actually) comes upon them, nothing will divert it away from them, and they will be beset by that which they used to mock at.*
9. *And if we give humankind a taste of mercy from Us and then We withdraw it from him, indeed he is despairing, ungrateful.*
10. *And if We give him a taste of comfort after distress has afflicted him, he will certainly say, "The misfortune has gone away from me." Most surely he is exultant, boastful.*
11. *Save those who persevere and do good deeds. Theirs will be forgiveness and a great reward.*
12. *Perchance you may (feel inclined) to give up a part of what is revealed to you, and your heart may feel straitened because they say, "Why is not a treasure sent down to him, or why does not an angel come down with him?" But you are only there to warn. It is God that arranges all affairs.*
13. *Or they may say, "He fabricated it." Say, "Then bring ten Suras fabricated like it and call whomsoever you can, other than God, if you are truthful."*
14. *If then they do not respond to you, then you should know that this revelation has been sent down containing knowledge from God, and that there is no deity but He. Will you then submit to Him?"*
15. *Those who desire the life of this world and its glitter; We shall repay them in full according to their deeds therein and they will not suffer any loss.*
16. *Those are they for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire. Their designs here will be fruitless and their deeds will be futile.*
17. *Is he (to be counted equal with them) who has a clear proof from his Lord, recited by a witness from Him, and before it was the Book of Moses, an example and a mercy? Such believe therein, and whoso disbelieves therein of the clans, the Fire is his appointed place. So do not be in doubt concerning it. It is the Truth from your Lord; but most people do not believe.*
18. *Who can be more unjust than those who fabricate a lie against God? They will be brought back to the presence of their Lord, and the witnesses will say, "These are the ones who lied against their Lord." The curse of God is on the wrongdoers.*

19. *Those who would avert (people) from the path of God and desire to make it crooked, these were they who denied the Hereafter.*
20. *They will not frustrate (God's design) on earth, nor will they have protecting guardians besides God. Their torment will be doubled. They could not hear, and they did not see.*
21. *Those are the ones who lost their own souls, and that which they used to fabricate has failed them.*
22. *Assuredly in the Hereafter they will be the greatest losers.*
23. *But those who believe, do righteous deeds, and humble themselves before their Lord they will be companions of the paradise, to dwell therein forever.*
24. *The similitude of the two parties is as the blind and the deaf and the seer and the hearer. Are they equal in similitude? Will you not then be mindful? (11:1-24)*

“Alif. Lam. Ra. (This is) a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from One who is Wise, All-Aware. (Say Prophet), ‘Worship none but God. I am sent to you from Him as a warner and a bringer of glad tidings.’ And (Saying), ‘Seek forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance, that He may grant you enjoyment, good (and true), for an appointed term, and He may bestow His grace on all who merit grace. But if you turn away, then I fear for you the torment of a great day. To God is your return, and He has power over all things.’” These four verses state a number of fundamental principles of the doctrine. These include the truth of the revelation and message, God alone is worthy of being worshipped, the reward in the Hereafter for those who chose to follow the divine project, the punishment for those who deny God, the promise that all people will return to God, and the unlimited power of God.

“Alif. Lam. Ra. (This is) a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from One who is Wise, Totally-Aware.” The Book has been composed using the letters of the Arabic Alphabet. Its verses were perfected. They are well written and provide unequivocal meanings. Each word has been chosen carefully to provide exactly the intended meaning. The sentences are in harmony and the narrative flows without contradictions. It is God who composed the Book. This is why it came in a perfect form.

The Book states the fundamental principles of the doctrine. The first principle, *“Worship none but God.”* This is a statement of the Oneness of God. He is the only One worthy of worship, worthy of obedience, and worthy of service. The second principle is the Message which includes both a warning and a glad tidings. The third principle is the duty to repent and turn back to God. Those who will follow the divine project are then promised a great reward in the Hereafter, *“He may grant you enjoyment, good (and true), for an appointed term, and He may bestow His grace on all who merit grace.”* Then there is the threat of grievous punishment for those who deny God. All people will return to God because God has limitless power, *“To God is your return, and He has power over all things.”* God has absolute power; He is in total control of everything.

This is the Book which brought the fundamental principles on which the religion of Islam is established. The most important principle is the belief in the Oneness of God. It draws a

demarcation line between order and chaos. It liberates people of the myth which drives them to worship human beings like themselves. It allows the establishment of objective and rational systems which are not dictated by the whims and desires of tyrant rulers. The dispute between the believers and disbelievers was not about who is the Creator, but the main issue was and is about who is worthy of taking control of people's lives. Is it God or is it the tyrant rulers? This is the issue that has been addressed in these verses, "*Worship none but God.*" Worshipping God alone means that one accepts to be governed by God's rules and that people should live according to the divine project.

People should then believe in the Message because it came to teach people the details of the divine project. It also implies that only God has the authority to issue the laws which control people's lives. Seeking God's forgiveness is a sign of sound hearts. Only sound hearts feel the pain of sinning and have the desire to be forgiven. The first condition of a genuine repentance is to relinquish sin. The verses then discuss the belief in the Day of Judgment to establish the fact that there is a purpose for this life. The purpose of life is to achieve goodness, and whoever fulfills his/her duty will be rewarded fully. The reward is comprehensive, "*He may bestow His grace on all who merit grace.*" Some of the scholars believe that the reward will be obtained in the Hereafter, but I believe that the verse implies that the reward is in this life as well as in the Hereafter. Any community that lives according to the divine project will be rewarded with a good life; a life of prosperity, peace, and justice.

The verses continue to describe the reaction of the disbelievers to the principles stated in the Book, "*Undoubtedly, they enshroud their hearts that they may hide from Him. Even when they cover themselves with their garments, He knows what they conceal, and what they reveal, for He knows well the (innermost secrets) of the hearts.*" The verse may be describing the actual response of the idolaters of Mecca when they heard the Quran being recited. They lowered their heads as if they were trying to hide from God. It may be also referring metaphorically to their unwillingness to listen to the Quran. However, they were reminded that God knows what people reveal and what they conceal. God even knows their thoughts.

"There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance depends on God. He knows the time and place of its definite dwelling place and its temporary deposit. All is in a clear Record." This is another form of God's comprehensive knowledge and power. He provides for each living creature on earth and knows its place of dwelling. His knowledge is all encompassing and His power is limitless. Although God has pledged to provide for each living creature but this should not be taken as an excuse to stop people from working hard to earn their livelihood. These two verses assert two of God's attributes which should be clear in the minds of people: His is Omniscient and He is the Provider.

The verses continue to teach people about the attributes of their Lord, "*He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six Days - and His Throne was over the waters - that He might try you, which of you is best in conduct. But if you were to say to them, 'You shall indeed be raised again after death,' the disbelievers would surely say, 'This is nothing but obvious magic.'*" We discussed the creation of heavens and earth before in Surat Yunus (Chapter 10). It is mentioned

here to relate the organization of the universe to people's lives. This verse mentions a new aspect of the creation of heavens and earth, "*and His Throne was over the waters,*" which indicates that water was present when the heavens and earth were fashioned in their final forms and God's throne was on water. However, we will not speculate on where was this water and how did it carry the throne. The verse does not mention any details about the process of creation. However, the purpose of the creation is to test people's conduct.

God created the heavens and earth in six days this was necessary for the earth to become, in its final form, suitable for sustaining human life. God created people and designed the earth to become a livable environment for them. God also equipped humankind with the tools and skills suitable for life on earth. God gave humankind an initial natural disposition that is adept to understand the laws that govern the universe. However, God also gave humankind the ability to discriminate between right and wrong and to choose between them. God will help those who choose to follow guidance and will let those who choose not to follow guidance to wander blindly in their misguidance. God made life on earth a testing ground to determine who of them will do good deeds. God does not need the results of the test, because His knowledge is encompassing, however, the results of the test are necessary for the reward or punishment to be decided on the basis of clear material evidence. This is a testament of God's justice.

But people deny the Hereafter and the accountability, "*But if you were to say to them, 'You shall indeed be raised again after death,' the disbelievers would surely say, 'This is nothing but obvious magic.'*" They also have the audacity to mock the prophets, "*And if We delay the torment for them for an appointed time, they will surely say, 'What is keeping it back?' On the day it (actually) comes upon them, nothing will divert it away from them, and they will be beset by that which they used to mock at.*" In the early time of the history of human race on earth, God chose to destroy nations which continued to reject the guidance brought to them after they have received physical miracles which testified to the truth of the Message. God sent specific messages to individual nations. The miracles that God sent to support a message were meant only to be an evidence for those who witnessed it. These were transient situations. The Message that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) brought is the last Message that God sent to the whole human race. The miracle that Prophet (PBUH) brought as an evidence for the truth of the Message is the Quran which is an everlasting miracle. It is available to be witnessed and read by all human generations since the time it was revealed till the end of time. The divine wisdom chose not to destroy those who rejected the message because guidance is a continuous process. The same rule was applied to the previous monotheistic religions. The people who rejected these messages were not annihilated. The disbelievers were ignorant of God's rule. They were wondering why the punishment had not befallen them. They did not appreciate the fact that God created humankind with the ability to choose between right and wrong. They rejected the concept of accountability. That is why they challenged the Prophet (PBUH) and kept asking, "*What is keeping it back.*"

On the Day of Judgment God will hold every one accountable to what they have done during their lives, "*On the day it (actually) comes upon them, nothing will divert it away from them, and they will be completely encircled by that which they used to mock at.*" No believer should ask for God's punishment to be hastened. It is out of God's mercy that people are given respite. When we consider the number of people who adopted Islam after they had initially rejected it, we

understand the wisdom of God in delaying the punishment till the Day of Judgment. God knows best.

The narrative then moves on to a discussion of the human psyche, *“And if we give man a taste of mercy from Us and then We withdraw it from him, indeed he is despairing, ungrateful. And if We give him a taste of comfort after distress has afflicted him, he will certainly say, ‘The misfortune has gone away from me.’ Most surely he is exultant, boastful.”* The verses describe the short sightedness of the human being. Humankind lives the present moment, he easily forgets the past and finds it difficult to think about the future. He does not realize that a loss that he suffered may have been a blessing from God. The difficulty is quickly forgotten when God removes his difficulty and redresses his misery. He then becomes, *“Most surely he is exultant, boastful.”* Except those, *“who persevere and do good deeds. Theirs will be forgiveness and a great reward.”* Those who persevered at the time of difficulty and did not forget God’s favor in the time of comfort will be forgiven and will have a great reward. Certainly the strong faith which is reflected on good deeds is the safeguard which protects the believer against despair in the time of adversity and against ingratitude in the time of comfort.

The Messenger (PBUH) was confronted with many of those short sighted ungrateful people who did not understand why God should send a human being as a messenger. They wanted a material proof. They wanted the Messenger (PBUH) to be an angel or at least to be accompanied by one. Then they wondered why the Messenger (PBUH) would not have a treasure. The Quran consoled the Prophet (PBUH) and reminded him of his duty and assured him of God’s support, *“Perchance you may (feel inclined) to give up a part of what is revealed to you, and your heart may feel straitened because they say, ‘Why is not a treasure sent down to him, or why does not an angel come down with him?’ But you are only there to warn. It is God that arranges all affairs.”* It is a reminder in the form of a rhetorical question. No, you will not succumb to their harassment and give up a part of what is revealed to you. You are only there to warn them; their accountability is to God.

“Or they may say, ‘He fabricated it.’ Say, ‘Then bring ten Suras fabricated like it and call whomsoever you can, other than God, if you are truthful.’” The idolaters of Mecca accused the Prophet (PBUH) repeatedly of forging the Quran. The Quran challenged them in Surat Yunus to forge one verse similar to the verses of the Quran, why then the challenge is repeated here asking them to compose ten Suras? The early scholars who interpreted the Quran are of the opinion that the idolaters were first challenged to bring about a Quran similar to the Quran that was revealed to the Prophet (PBUH). When they failed, the challenge was reduced to ten Suras, then to a single Sura. However, there is no evidence to support this opinion. Our opinion (God knows best) is that these challenges were posed to address specific incidents. Each one had its own circumstance and consequently required a different type of challenge. The challenge posed to the disbelievers to compose a book similar to this Quran aimed at showing that they will not be able to compose a book at the same level of eloquence as the Quran. In such case, the amount does not matter; it is the quality that matters. They were asked to assemble the best authors they can manage to attempt to compose ten Suras similar to this Quran. They were doomed to failure in this endeavor, *“If then they do not respond to you, then you should know that this revelation has been sent down containing knowledge from God, and that there is no god but He. Will you then*

submit to Him?" Their failure should be a clear proof that it has been revealed by God. There is no deity but He. Should not you then submit? But they continued to be stubborn. They were more interested in their wealth and earthly power than in the truth, *"Those who desire the life of this world and its glitter, We shall repay them in full according to their deeds therein and they will not suffer any loss. Those are they for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire. Their designs here will be fruitless and their deeds will be futile."* The efforts that aimed at worldly gains will be rewarded justly in this life, but there will be no reward for them in the Hereafter. We should emphasize that had these efforts been done with the intention of seeking God's pleasure, the reward would have been in both this life as well as in the Hereafter.

"Is he (to be counted equal with them) who has a clear proof from his Lord, recited by a witness from Him, and before it was the Book of Moses, an example and a mercy? Such believe therein, and whoso disbelieves therein of the clans, the Fire is his appointed place. So do not be in doubt concerning it. It is the Truth from your Lord; but most people do not believe." There are different opinions regarding the interpretations of the two sentences, *"Is he (to be counted equal with them) who has a clear proof from his Lord, recited by a witness from Him."* The most probable interpretation, in my opinion, is that, *"Is he (to be counted equal with them) who has a clear proof from his Lord,"* refers to the Messenger (PBUH) as well as to anyone who believes in his message. The sentence, *"recited by a witness from Him,"* refers to the Quran, which God sent as a witness to confirm the truth of the message that Muhammad (PBUH) brought. The previous Book that Moses (PBUH) was given testifies to truthfulness of Muhammad (PBUH) as well.

It seems to me that the verse describes the relationship between God and His Messengers. It indicates that God places faith in the heart of the messengers who have been sent by Him. We can see this clearly from the discussions between the messengers and their people. Noah (PBUH) said, *"My people, think: if I have a clear sign from my Lord, and that He has sent mercy to me from His own presence, but that the mercy has been made obscure to you? Shall we compel you to accept it when you are averse to it?"* (11:28). The same address was made by Saleh (PBUH), *"My people, do you see if I have a clear proof from my Lord and He has bestowed His mercy on me, who then can help me against God if I were to disobey Him? You would only increase my loss."* (11:63). Also, Shu'ayb (PBUH) said, *"My people, do you see if I have a clear proof from my Lord and He gave me fair provision? I do not wish, in opposition to you, to do that which I forbid you to do. I only desire (your) betterment to the best of my power; and my success (in my task) can only come from God. In Him I trust, and to Him I always turn."* (11:88). All these messengers used the same wording in addressing their people. This expression reflects the deep belief that fills their hearts and confirms the connection between them and their true Lord. The objective of the repetition of the same message is to confirm the unity that binds all the messengers of God including Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This refutes the claims made by the idolaters that Muhammad (PBUH) fabricated this Quran.

The verse questions the logic behind the idolaters' claim that Muhammad (PBUH) has fabricated the Quran. It reiterates the argument which supports the prophet-hood of Muhammad (PBUH), showing clearly that he is a member of the group of messengers that God sent to lead humanity to the straight path. Muhammad's (PBUH) message is supported by all the previous messengers. So, let there be no doubt about the authenticity of the Message.

“Who can be more unjust than those who fabricate a lie against God? They will be brought back to the presence of their Lord, and the witnesses will say, ‘These are the ones who lied against their Lord.’ The curse of God is on the wrongdoers.” Those who invent lies against God will be paraded on the Day of Judgment and the witnesses will point to them labeling them liars. The witnesses include the angels, the messengers, and the believers. They will then be cursed for their efforts to bar people from the straight path, *“Those who would avert (people) from the path of God and desire to make it crooked, these were they who denied the Hereafter.”* They wanted people to follow the crooked path and they denied the Hereafter. People servitude to God is a source of honor and dignity while servitude to anyone other than God is a source of humiliation.

“They will not frustrate (God’s design) on earth, nor will they have protecting guardians besides God. Their torment will be doubled. They could not hear, and they did not see.” No one will be able to frustrate God; had He willed He could have punished the idolaters during their lives. They will have no protector to support them against God. In the Hereafter, they will have the punishment that they earned for the deeds they committed during their lives. Those are the ones who lost themselves, *“Those are the ones who lost their own souls, and that which they used to fabricate has failed them.”* This is the greatest loss that a person can suffer. They lost their dignity in the life of this world and they will suffer the humiliation in the Hereafter. They will also lose that which they fabricated against God, *“Assuredly in the Hereafter they will be the greatest losers.”* They lost their souls both in the worldly life and in the Hereafter.

On the other side, one finds the believers who did good deeds secure in their faith, *“But those who believe, do righteous deeds, and humble themselves before their Lord they will be companions of the paradise, to dwell therein forever.”* The Arabic sentence which has been translated as *“humble themselves before their Lord,”* has the connotation of being secure with God, confident of His help, and happy in submitting to Him.

“The similitude of the two parties is as the blind and the deaf and the seer and the hearer. Are they equal in similitude? Will you not be mindful?” The verse paints an image which juxtaposes the two groups: the believers and the disbelievers. The disbelievers are blind and deaf; they do not see nor can they hear. The main function of the senses in the humankind is to act as gates to the heart and mind so that one can understand and reflect. The disbelievers closed these gates and thus deprived themselves of the benefit of the senses. The believers on the other hand enjoy the full benefit of their senses so they become guided. They are certainly not equal.

Verses 25 to 49:

25. *And We sent Noah to his people (and he said), “I have come to you with a plain warning*
26. *That you worship none but God. Verily I do fear for you the torment of a painful Day.”*
27. *But the chiefs of the disbelievers among his people said, “We only see you but a mortal like ourselves. And we see that those who followed you are but the meanest among us,*

- whose judgment is immature. Nor do we see in you (all) any merit above us. In fact, we think you are liars.”*
28. *He said, “My people think, if I have a clear sign from my Lord, and He has sent mercy to me from His own presence, but that the mercy has been made obscure to you? Shall we compel you to accept it when you are averse to it?”*
 29. *And my people, I do not ask you any reward in return. My reward is from none but God. But I will not drive away (in contempt) those who believe. Verily they are to meet their Lord, and I see that you are the ignorant ones,*
 30. *And my people, who would help me against God if I drove them away? Will you not then be mindful?*
 31. *I tell you not that I have the treasures of God, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I claim to be an angel. I will not say, to those whom your eyes do despise, that God will not grant them (all) that is good. God knows best what is in their souls. I should, if I did, indeed be a wrongdoer.”*
 32. *They said, “Noah, you have argued with us for too long, now bring upon us what you threaten us with, if you speak the truth.”*
 33. *He said, “Truly, God will bring it on you if He wills and you will not be able to escape.*
 34. *My counsel will not profit you if I were to advise you, if God's will is to keep you astray. He is your Lord and to Him you will be brought back.*
 35. *Or do they say, “He fabricated it?” Say, “If I fabricated it, I will bear the consequence of my sin. I am innocent of (all) that you commit.”*
 36. *It was revealed to Noah, “None of your people will believe except those who have believed already. So grieve no longer over their (evil) deeds.*
 37. *But construct an Ark under Our eyes and by Our inspiration, and do not speak to Me on behalf of the wrongdoers. They are about to be drowned.”*
 38. *And he was building the Ark, and every time the chieftains of his people passed by him, they mock him. He said, “You may mock us now, but we will mock you as you used to mock (us).*
 39. *You will soon know who it is on whom will descend a torment that will cover them with shame and on whom will a lasting torment come down.”*
 40. *(Thus it was) till, when Our command came to pass and water gushed out of the oven. We said, “Carry therein two of every kind, a pair (the male and female), and your household, save him against whom the word has gone forth already, and those who believe. But only a few believed with him.*
 41. *And he said, “Embark therein. In the name of God be its course and its mooring. My Lord is All-Forgiving, Giver of Mercy.”*
 42. *And it sailed with them amid waves like mountains, and Noah cried to his son – who separated himself from the others – “My son, come ride with us, and be not with the disbelievers.”*
 43. *He (the son) said, “I shall take refuge in some mountain that will save me from the water.” (Noah) said, “This day there is none that saves from the command of God save him on whom He bestowed His mercy.” And the waves came in between them, so he was among those who drowned.*
 44. *And it was said, “Earth, swallow your water and, sky, be cleared of clouds.” And the water subsided. And the command was fulfilled. And it (the Ark) came to rest upon (the mount) Al-Judi and it was said, “Gone are the wrongdoers.”*

45. *And Noah called upon his Lord. He said, "My Lord, my son is of my household, and Your promise is the truth, and You are the Most Just of Judges."*
46. *He (God) said, "Noah, he is not of your household. His conduct was unrighteous. So ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge. I exhort you lest you act like the ignorant."*
47. *He (Noah) said, "My Lord, I do seek refuge with You, lest I ask You that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I should indeed be lost."*
48. *It was said, "Noah, go you down with peace from Us and blessings upon you and some nations (that will spring) from those who are with you. (There will be other) nations to whom We shall give enjoyment for a while, then a painful torment from Us will overtake them."*
49. *These are accounts of the unseen which We reveal to you (Muhammad). Neither you nor your people had any previous knowledge of them, so persevere. The future belongs to those who are conscious of God. (11:25-49)*

"And We sent Noah to his people (and he said), 'I have come to you with a plain warning, that you worship none but God. Verily I do fear for you the torment of a painful Day.'" This is almost the same wording that was used in describing Muhammad's (PBUH) mission. This emphasizes the oneness of the message which was delivered by all messengers. In the Arabic text the verse does not explicitly have *"(and he said)"* which we added in the translation. The Arabic text narrates the encounter between Noah (PBUH) and his people as if it were a live scene that plays in front of us. The verse sums up the role of the messenger, *"I have come to you with a plain warning."* It also emphasizes the essence of the message, *"That you worship none but God."* Then it outlines the consequences of not heeding the warning, *"Verily I do fear for you the torment of a painful Day."* What was the response of the elite among his people? *"But the chiefs of the disbelievers among his people said, 'We see you but a mortal like ourselves. And we see that those who followed you are but the meanest among us, whose judgment is immature. Nor do we see in you (all) any merit above us. In fact, we think you are liars.'"* This was their arrogant response to Noah's (PBUH) call. It is the same response that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) received from the chiefs of Quraish. They did not think that a human being is worthy of being a messenger of God. It is true that delivering God's message is an enormous task, but God in His wisdom must have prepared humankind to carry this responsibility. They were also indignant that a messenger was not chosen from among the elite. They did not understand that carrying the message requires more than being wealthy or powerful. A messenger should be a highly spiritual, honest and perseverant person. They objected to the fact that the messenger was a human being, then they raised another objection about those who followed the messenger, *"those who followed you are but the meanest among us,"* They confused poverty with meanness. They refused to be grouped in one class with those who were less fortunate. They used a materialistic measure to evaluate the worth of people. They did not understand that people's worth is not measured by their wealth, their power, or their status in the society. They forgot that the values of honor, understanding, and knowledge are more important. Then the chieftains made their final conclusion, *"In fact we think you are liars."*

Noah (PBUH) endured their accusations and arrogance with expressions of tolerance. However, his response reflected his confidence in the true message that he brought them. He ignored their rudeness and spoke to them kindly, *“He said, ‘My people think, if I have a clear sign from my Lord, and He has sent mercy to me from His own presence, but that the mercy has been made obscure to you? Shall we compel you to accept it when you are averse to it?’”* He opened his address with an endearing phrase, *“My people.”* Then he explained in plain words, that he may have had certain attributes which made him qualified to receive the true message from his Lord. This is a great mercy from God. However, he did not intend to force them to accept the message if they were averse to it. In his response to them, Noah (PBUH) tried in a nice way to point out the values that they were turning away from.

“And my people, I do not ask you any reward in return. My reward is from none but God. But I will not drive away (in contempt) those who believe. Verily they are to meet their Lord, and I see that you are the ignorant ones.” Noah (PBUH) continued to refute their argument, pointing out that he was not seeking any reward from them and he does not care how wealthy his followers were. He would not expel those who followed him simply because they were poor. He would not transgress God’s standards, *“And my people, who would help me against God if I drove them away? Will you not then be mindful?”*

He then reminded them of the essence of his true message, *“I tell you not that I have the treasures of God, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I claim to be an angel. I will not say, to those whom your eyes do despise, that God will not grant them (all) that is good. God knows best what is in their souls. I should, if I did, indeed be a wrongdoer.”* In this verse, Noah (PBUH) purified the Message which he brought, from all superficial values. It is a true message from God.

“They said, ‘Noah, you have argued with us for too long, now bring upon us what you threaten us with, if you speak the truth.’” This was a response that disguised impotence under a veil of power, weakness under a veil of strength, and fear under a veil of arrogance. Noah (PBUH) responded in a way a noble prophet would respond, *“He said, ‘Truly, God will bring it on you if He wills and you will not be able to escape.’”* He was only a messenger; his duty was to deliver the Message. It is God’s role to inflict His punishment if He wills and when He wills. If God’s will is that you would perish because of your misguidance then you will perish and, *“My counsel will not profit you if I were to advise you, if God's will is to keep you astray. He is your Lord and to Him you will be brought back.”*

The story of Prophet Noah (PBUH) is then interrupted briefly to refute Quraish’s denial of the message which Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) brought, *“Or do they say, ‘He fabricated it?’ Say, ‘If I fabricated it, I will bear the consequence of my sin. I am innocent of (all) that you commit.’”* Forging the Quran is a crime that a prophet would not commit.

After this brief digression, the narrative resumes the story of Prophet Noah (PBUH). We are presented by a scene of Noah (PBUH) receiving a revelation from his Lord, *“It was revealed to*

Noah, 'None of your people will believe except those who have believed already. So grieve no longer over their (evil) deeds.'" No more people will believe in you, so you should not grieve. The warning has been delivered, the period of respite has ended, and it is now time for action, *"But construct an Ark under Our eyes and by Our inspiration, and do not speak to Me on behalf of the wrongdoers. They are about to be drowned."*

The following verses describe the third scene of the story of Prophet Noah (PBUH). The scene of building the Ark, *"And he was building the Ark, and every time the chieftains of his people passed by him, they would mock him. He said, 'You may mock us now, but we will mock you as you used to mock (us). You will soon know who it is on whom will descend a torment that will cover them with shame and on whom will a lasting torment come down.'"* The verses paint a vivid scene. We can see Noah (PBUH) in our imagination, a messenger of God turned carpenter, confidently building the Ark. He was not bothered by the folk mocking him because he knew they cannot comprehend the concept of God's revelation.

Then the expected event occurred, *"(Thus it was) till, when Our command came to pass and water gushed out of the oven. We said, 'Carry therein two of every kind, a pair (the male and female), and your household, save him against whom the word has gone forth already, and those who believe.' But only a few believed with him."* Stories explaining water gushing from the oven are abound, however, all what we will say is that this may have been a sign for Prophet Noah (PBUH) to load the Ark. He was commanded to allow those who believed to embark the Ark with him, *"And he said, 'Embark therein. In the name of God be its course and its mooring. My Lord is All-Forgiving, Giver of Mercy.'"*

The verses describe the stages of the process one after another. The first stage was the command to build the Ark. Then came the stage of loading the Ark. The command excluded those who earned the wrath of God from the list of those who would be allowed to join Noah (PBUH) on the Ark.

The verses continued to describe the horrible image of the flood, *"And it sailed with them amid waves like mountains, and Noah cried to his son – who separated himself from the others – 'My son, come ride with us, and be not with the disbelievers.'"* In addition to the horror brought about by the tremendous flood, Noah's (PBUH) heart was filled with the agony of the prospect of losing his son. He called upon his son to join them on the Ark but the son, full of arrogance, replied, *"I shall take refuge in some mountain that will save me from the water."* Noah (PBUH), knowing the truth, tried again to persuade his son, *"(Noah) said, 'This day there is none that saves from the command of God save him on whom He bestowed His mercy.'"* On that day, there was no escape from what God had ordained. The moment of truth came in a split second, *"And the waves came in between them, so he was among those who drowned."* Even now, after the passing of thousands of years, one can still feel the terror as if we were watching the events unfold in front of our eyes.

The storm abated and the universe was wrapped in stillness and, *“it was said, ‘Earth, swallow your water and, sky, be cleared of clouds.’ And the water subsided. And the command was fulfilled. And it (the Ark) came to rest upon (the mount) Al-Judi and it was said, ‘Gone are the wrongdoers.’”* This is a very brief verse which captures the dramatic event. The command was passed and the disbelievers met their doom.

Noah (PBUH) having seen the horrible events of the flood come to end, remembered his loss. He turned to God, *“And Noah called upon his Lord. He said, ‘My Lord, my son is of my household, and Your promise is the truth, and You are the Most Just of Judges.’”* He asked God about His promise to save Noah’s family. God then reminded him with the truth that he forgot in the midst of the dramatic events, *“He (God) said, ‘Noah, he is not of your household. His conduct was unrighteous. So ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge. I exhort you lest you act like the ignorant.’”* A family in God’s book is not merely a group of people who share a blood relationship. A family is a group of people who share a specific creed. By this definition, Noah’s (PBUH) disbelieving son is not part of the family of the believers. The verse carries the semblance of a warning to Noah (PBUH). The warning came to address Noah’s (PBUH) request of God to fulfill His promise. Noah (PBUH) should have known that the relationship between the believers is stronger than blood relationships. God’s promise has been fulfilled; He saved the family of the believers. Noah (PBUH) understood the lesson and sought God’s forgiveness, *“He (Noah) said, ‘My Lord, I do seek refuge with You, lest I ask You that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I should indeed be lost.’”*

God extended His mercy over Noah (PBUH) and blessed him and his followers, *“It was said, ‘Noah, go you down with peace from Us and blessings upon you and some nations (that will spring) from those who are with you. (There will be other) nations to whom We shall give enjoyment for a while, then a painful torment from Us will overtake them.’”* This was the end of the story. God granted those who believed with Noah (PBUH) and their progeny security and safety while issuing a dire warning to those who preferred the pleasure of this world. The believers received the glad tidings while the disbelievers were promised a severe punishment in the Hereafter.

This part of the Sura ended with a general statement, *“These are accounts of the unseen which We reveal to you (Muhammad). Neither you nor your people had any previous knowledge of them, so persevere. The future belongs to those who are conscious of God.”* The statement declared the truth of the revelation which the disbelievers denied. There are several objectives for this story and the stories mentioned in the Quran in general. The verses narrated events which were known neither to the Prophet (PBUH) nor to the Arabs at that time. These stories were part of a revelation that the Prophet (PBUH) received from the Wise, the Omniscient. The stories are also a statement of the oneness of the creed from the time Noah (PBUH) the second father of the human race. The stories cited the objections that were raised by the disbelievers whenever a messenger was sent to them. The stories also express the eternal truth, *“the future belongs to those who are conscious of God.”*

The story of Prophet Noah (PBUH) left many questions unanswered: was this a universal flood? Was the whole earth covered with water? Or was it a local flood? Where did it take place? We can only speculate about the answers, but there is no way one can find the correct answers to these questions. One can state that, on the face of it, the verses indicate that Noah's (PBUH) people were the only human beings living on earth at that time. The piece of land that they lived on was the only part of the earth that was inhabited at that time. It seems that the flood covered the area on which they were living. Everything perished in the flood except those who were on the Ark.

We would like to outline the lessons that we learn from Noah's (PBUH) story before we continue with the rest of the verses in this Sura. Noah's (PBUH) people were the descendants of Adam (PBUH). Adam (PBUH) was prepared and entrusted to the task of establishing the life of the human race on earth. God struck a covenant with Adam (PBUH) to follow God's guidance. God took the same covenant from Adam's wife and children. The covenant embodied the first articles of faith known to the human race. These articles of faith emanated from the principle of complete submission to God. They all received a warning to beware of the Devil's efforts to tempt them away from the straight path. God promised to guide those who submit to Him; this guidance protects them against the Devil's temptation. As time passed, generation after generation the commitment of the progeny of Adam (PBUH) to God's covenant was weakened. The Devil worked hard and used the natural weaknesses of the human beings to tempt them away from the straight path. The Devil succeeded in convincing people to worship idols as was the case with Noah's (PBUH) people. Thus, the lesson that is given in these few verses is the fact that submission to God is the first creed given to the human race. It is the protection against the Devil's temptation.

Another lesson that can be gleaned from the story is the appreciation of the value of those who submit to God. It is being said that Noah (PBUH) continued to call people to submit to God during his life on earth which is estimated to have been about nine hundred and fifty years. It has also been reported that only twelve people followed him. God saw that this small number of people is worthy of a miraculous change in the natural laws which govern the universe: causing the flood to happen. This is a very important message to the believing few who committed themselves to the absolute submission to God. They will be supported by God, even if this support came in the form of a miracle which breaks the norm of the natural laws which govern the universe. They should continue on the straight path and never despair of God's support.

Verses 50 to 68:

50. And to (the tribe of) 'Ad (We sent) their brother, Hud. He said, "My people, worship God. You have no other god save Him; you are only fabricating lies.

51. My people, I ask of you no reward for it. My reward is the concern only of Him who created me. Do you not have sense?

52. And my people, ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him (in repentance). He will cause the sky to rain in abundance on you and will add strength to your strength. Do not turn away, guilty."

53. *They said, "Hud, you did not bring us a clear proof and we will not abandon our gods on the basis of your words. Nor shall we believe in you.*
54. *We say nothing but that (perhaps) some of our gods may have possessed you in an evil way." He said, "I call God to witness, and you too bear witness, that I am innocent of the sin of associating partners with Him.*
55. *So plot (your worst) against me, all of you, and give me no respite.*
56. *I put my trust in God, My Lord and your Lord. There is no moving creature, but He has grasp of its forelock. Verily, my Lord's way is straight.*
57. *If you turn away, I (at least) have conveyed the message with which I was sent to you. My Lord will make other people to succeed you, and you will not harm Him in the least. For my Lord is Keeper over all things."*
58. *So when Our command came to pass, We saved Hud and those who believed with him, by (special) grace from Ourselves. We saved them from a severe torment.*
59. *And such were 'Ad. They denied the revelations of their Lord and disobeyed His messengers and followed the command of every obstinate tyrant.*
60. *And they were pursued by a curse in this life, and on the Day of Judgment. For 'Ad denied their Lord. Away with 'Ad, the people of Hud.*
61. *And to (the tribe of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih. He said, "My people, worship God. You have no other god save Him. He brought you forth from the earth and has made you dwell in it. So ask forgiveness of Him and turn to Him in repentance. My Lord is near, Responsive.*
62. *They said, "Salih, we used to have such great hope in you. Do you (now) forbid us to worship what our fathers used to worship? We are really in grave doubt concerning that which you are calling us to."*
63. *He said, "My people, do you see if I have a clear proof from my Lord and He has bestowed His mercy on me, who then can help me against God if I were to disobey Him? You would only increase my loss.*
64. *And my people, this is God's she-camel a sign for you. Leave her to pasture on God's earth, and inflict no harm on her, or a swift torment will seize you."*
65. *But they did ham-string her. So he said, "Enjoy yourselves in your homes for three days. This is a threat that will not be belied."*
66. *When Our commandment came to pass, We saved Salih, and those who believed with him, by a mercy from Us, from the ignominy of that day. Your Lord is verily the Strong, the Eminent.*
67. *The (mighty) blast overtook the wrongdoers and they lay dead in their homes before the morning;*
68. *As if they had never dwelt and flourished there. Thamud rejected their Lord; away with Thamud. (11:50-68)*

Hud (PBUH) was a member of the tribe of 'Ad. The verses reflect the strong tie between the members of the tribe. Such tie should have been an important asset in helping to convince the tribe that the message brought by one of them must be good for them. The verses also highlight the error committed by the people when they rejected such a message and how the rejection resulted in creating a divide between the believers and the disbeliever, a divide based on

difference in faith. Hud (PBUH) addressed his people in an endearing fashion, *“And to (the tribe of) ‘Ad (We sent) their brother, Hud. He said, ‘My people, worship God. You have no other god save Him,’”* reminding them of the strong tribal ties that binds him to them then asking them to believe in the Oneness of God. This is the same message that each and every messenger brought to his people. Hud (PBUH) reminded them that idol worship is only a lie, *“You are only fabricating lies.”* He stressed that his motivation is to serve God alone, he does not expect any reward from them, *“My people, I ask of you no reward for it. My reward is the concern only of Him who made me.”* His statement may have been in response to an accusation made by his people that his aim was to receive a material gain. He then stressed his objective, *“Do you not have sense?”* How can a messenger of God ask people for a material gain? God is the owner of everything and it is He who sends the messengers and it is He who provides for everyone. Hud (PBUH) directed them to the way to receive provisions in abundance, *“And my people, ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance. He will cause the sky to rain in abundance on you and will add strength to your strength. Do not turn away, guilty.”* He finished the statement by a warning them against rejecting God’s revelations.

It is interesting to note the relationship between asking God for forgiveness and the increase in provision and strength. Forgiveness is in the realm of the spiritual while provisions and strength are in the realm of the physical which is controlled by God’s universal laws. It is easy to explain the relationship between the spiritual and the physical in regard to strength. Those who have pure hearts and are keen on doing good deeds are in pursuit of pure food which usually promote their well-being. Piety is a sure medicine for stress and other psychological ailments. It provides a sense of security, safety, and a hope in the mercy of God.

Rain is controlled by natural laws. Rain can be useful in sustaining life but it can also be a destructive force. God controls the natural laws. He can direct these laws to produce the amount of rain which help sustain life. On the other hand, He is able also to direct these laws to produce rain which becomes a tool for destruction. God has the power to control the laws and to change them according to His will.

However, they took his warning lightly, *“They said, ‘Hud, you did not bring us a clear proof and we will not abandon our gods on the basis of your words. Nor shall we believe in you. We say nothing but that (perhaps) some of our gods may have possessed you in an evil way.’”* They rejected his call claiming that he did not bring them enough proof to support its veracity. The concept of the Oneness of God does need a proof. A reminder is sufficient to excite the initial natural disposition of the human being to accept this concept. However, they dismissed his reminder arrogantly, thinking that his argument is lacking and he did not bring a solid proof. In explaining what happened to him, they came up with the idea that one of their gods must have struck Hud (PBUH) with a touch of madness.

Hud (PBUH) had no alternative but to accept their challenge and to call upon his Lord as a witness that he has delivered the message, *“He said, ‘I call God to witness, and you too bear witness, that I am innocent of the sin of associating partners with Him. So plot (your worst) against me, all of you, and give me no respite. I put my trust in God, My Lord and your Lord. There is no moving creature, but He has grasp of its forelock. Verily, my Lord’s way is straight.”*

If you turn away, I (at least) have conveyed the message with which I was sent to you. My Lord will make other people to succeed you, and you will not harm Him in the least. For my Lord is a Keeper over all things.” It is a strong declaration that severs the ties between Hud (PBUH) and the disbelievers. He was one of them, the ties between Hud (PBUH) and his tribal brothers were very strong but now, the difference in faith placed a barrier between them. One marvels at the courage of a lone person like Hud (PBUH) to stand up against his tribe and to call upon them to change their faith, not fearing their reprisal. It is the strength of faith and the belief in God which filled Hud (PBUH) with the confidence to stand up against the disbelievers. He had complete confidence in God’s support. God controls every living thing and His path is the straight path. Hud (PBUH) finished his statement by indicating that he had fulfilled his task, he delivered the message and if they turn away they will suffer the consequences. God is the keeper of everything. God can always destroy the disbelievers and establish others on earth. No one can harm God in the least.

The dialogue ended and the time to exercise the threat came, *“So when Our command came to pass, We saved Hud and those who believed with him, by (special) grace from Ourselves. We saved them from a severe torment.”* Hud (PBUH) and those who believed were saved from the severe torment that befell the disbelievers. ‘Ad perished and they were cursed till the Day of Judgment, *“And such were ‘Ad. They denied the revelations of their Lord and disobeyed His messengers and followed the command of every obstinate tyrant.”* Although they only rejected one messenger, but the verse states that they rejected God’s messengers. It is a reference to the fact that all God’s messengers came with the same message. They committed a grievous error by denying God’s “revelations” and rejecting God’s “messengers.” They followed the command of those obstinate tyrants who refused to acknowledge the truth that came to them from God. They met their doom *“And they were pursued by a curse in this life, and on the Day of Judgment. For ‘Ad denied their Lord; away with ‘Ad, the people of Hud”*

The issue at hand is the right of the human beings to free themselves from the hold of the tyrants and to think and choose for themselves. The issue that arose between Hud (PBUH) and the tribe of ‘Ad is the principle of who has the ultimate authority and is worthy of being followed? Is it God or the obstinate tyrants? The sin that the people of ‘Ad committed is that they rejected the command which the messenger brought and they followed the commands of the tyrants. Their messenger commanded them to submit to God. It is the same message that all the messengers of God brought to their people. The absolute submission to God is the essence of the belief in the oneness of God.

The same message was given to Salih (PBUH), *“And to (the tribe of) Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih. He said, ‘My people worship God. You have no other god save Him. He brought you forth from the earth and has made you dwell in it. So ask forgiveness of Him and turn to Him in repentance; my Lord is near, Responsive.’”* It is the same message: worship God alone, seek His forgiveness, and acknowledge the closeness and responsiveness of God. Salih (PBUH) continued to remind his people of their creation and the blessings of God Which He bestowed on them.

The corruption sealed their hearts and prevented them from seeing the truth. They ignored Salih's (PBUH) kind approach and doubted his words, *"They said, 'Salih, we used to have such great hope in you. Do you (now) forbid us to worship what our fathers used to worship? We are really in grave doubt concerning that which you are calling us to.'"* How dare he forbid them to continue worshipping that which their forefathers used to worship? They followed blindly in the footsteps of their fathers. The essence of the call to believe in the Oneness of God is to free oneself from the shackles of servitude to customs and tyrants.

Their statement, *"We used to have such great hope in you,"* reminds one with the response of Quraish to Muhammad (PBUH). They used to call him the trustworthy but when he brought them the message of Islam they turned around and called him magician and liar. They forgot how he lived among them before he was sent as a messenger of God.

Salih (PBUH) responded in the same way his grandfather Noah (PBUH) responded, *"He said, 'My people, do you see if I have a clear proof from my Lord and He has bestowed His mercy on me, who then can help me against God if I were to disobey Him? You would only increase my loss. And my people, this is God's she-camel a sign for you. Leave her to pasture on God's earth, and inflict no harm on her, or a swift torment will seize you.'"* God gave me clear signs that led me to the straight path and He chose me to carry His message to you, would I then disobey Him? No one will help me escape the wrath of God if I disobey Him to please you. I will only suffer a greater loss: the loss of the honor of being a messenger of God, the humiliation in this life, and the punishment in the Hereafter. He then gave them a sign: God's she-camel. The expression, "God's she-camel," indicates that the camel was known to them. He also gave them a warning.

But they did not heed the warning, *"But they did ham-string her. So he said, 'Enjoy yourselves in your homes for three days. This is a threat that will not be belied.'"* God gave them respite for three days and God's threat came to pass, *"When Our commandment came to pass, We saved Salih, and those who believed with him, by a mercy from Us, from the ignominy of that day. Your Lord is verily the Strong, the Eminent. The (mighty) blast overtook the wrongdoers and they lay dead in their homes before the morning."* God saved Salih (PBUH) and those who believed with him as a sign of His mercy. They were saved from death and from the humiliation of that day. The death of Thamud was humiliating, they were seized by God and they perished as if they never existed before, *"As if they had never dwelt and flourished there. Thamud rejected their Lord; away with Thamud."*

Verses 69 to 83:

69. *And Our messengers came to Abraham with good news. They said, "Peace." He answered, "Peace," and without delay he brought a roasted calf.*
70. *But when he saw their hands did not reach towards the (meal), he mistrusted them, and was fearful of them. They said, "Have no fear. We have been sent to the people of Lot."*
71. *And his wife was standing (there), she laughed. We gave her glad tidings of Isaac, and after Isaac of Jacob.*
72. *She said, "Alas for me! How am I to bear a child, seeing that I am an old woman, and my husband here is an old man? This would be indeed an amazing thing."*

73. *They said, "Do you wonder at God's command? The mercy of God and His blessings on you people of the house. He (God) is indeed worthy of all praise, full of all glory."*
74. *When fear left Abraham and the glad tidings had reached him, he began to plead with us on behalf of Lot's people.*
75. *Verily Abraham was, without doubt, forbearing, tender-hearted, and penitent.*
76. *Abraham, forsake this; your Lord's command has gone forth, there will come to them a torment which cannot be averted.*
77. *When Our messengers came to Lot, he was distressed and knew not how to protect them. He said, "This is a difficult day."*
78. *And his people came rushing towards him, and they had been long in the habit of practicing abominations. He said, "My people, here are my daughters. They are purer for you (if you marry). Be conscious of God, and do not disgrace me with my guests. Is there not among you a single right-minded man?"*
79. *They said, "You have certainly known that we have no claim on your daughters. Indeed, you know quite well what we want."*
80. *He said, "If only I had the power to stop you or that I could take refuge in a strong support."*
81. *They said (The Messengers), "Lot, we are messengers from your Lord. They will not reach you. So travel with your people in the dead of the night and let not one of you turn round, except your wife. Whatsoever befalls them shall befall her. Verily their appointed time is the morning, is not the morning soon?"*
82. *When Our command came to pass, We turned (the cities) upside down, and rained down on them brimstones hard as baked clay, spread, layer on layer;*
83. *Marked with fire in the providence of your Lord (for the destruction of the wicked); and they are never far from the wrongdoers. (11:69-83)*

"And Our messengers came to Abraham with good news." The angels came to Abraham (PBUH) with good news. The nature of the good news was not revealed until Abraham's (PBUH) wife was present. "They said, 'Peace.' He answered, 'Peace,' and without delay he brought a roasted calf." Abraham (PBUH) prepared a meal for the guests in keeping with the tradition of hospitality. However, the angels did not eat, "But when he saw their hands did not reach towards the (meal), he mistrusted them, and was fearful of them." When the angels refused to eat, Abraham (PBUH) took this as a sign of bad intention on the part of the guests. This made him apprehensive and he mistrusted them. Feeling this, they disclosed their nature to him, "They said, 'Have no fear. We have been sent to the people of Lot.'" His wife joined them, she was surprised to hear the good news, "And his wife was standing (there), she laughed. We gave her glad tidings of Isaac, and after Isaac of Jacob." She exclaimed, how could she become pregnant being a barren old woman? In addition, her husband was also old, "She said, 'Alas for me! How am I to bear a child, seeing that I am an old woman, and my husband here is an old man? This would be indeed an amazing thing.'" One should not wonder at miracles decreed by God. He is the one who created the laws that govern the nature, and He is able to change these laws as He wishes, "They said, 'Do you wonder at God's command? The mercy of God and His blessings on you people of the house. He (God) is indeed worthy of all praise, full of all glory.'"

Having heard the angels, the trust returned to Abraham (PBUH) but he was saddened with what will happen to the people of Lot (PBUH). He started praying God on behalf of Lot's (PBUH) people, *"When fear left Abraham and the glad tidings had reached him, he began to plead with us on behalf of Lot's people. Verily Abraham was, without doubt, forbearing, tender-hearted, and penitent."* Abraham (PBUH) was forbearing, tender-hearted, and penitent. This indicates that Abraham (PBUH) was perseverant, constant in praying God, and always repenting. These attributes made Abraham (PBUH) to argue with the angels about the doom that was about to befall the people of Lot (PBUH). However, he was admonished by God, *"Abraham, forsake this; your Lord's command has gone forth, there will come to them a torment which cannot be averted."*

The verses turned from Abraham (PBUH) and his wife to the story of the people of Lot (PBUH), *"When Our messengers came to Lot, he was distressed and knew not how to protect them. He said, 'This is a difficult day.'"* Lot (PBUH) knew what his people will do. They deviated from practicing the natural relationship between males and females which was designed to maintain the human race. One can understand the existence of individuals who are homosexuals but the homosexuality of the people of Lot (PBUH) is a strange phenomenon. The whole community practiced homosexuality. Lot (PBUH) tried to argue with his people to save his guests from the expected assault, *"And his people came rushing towards him, and they had been long in the habit of practicing abominations. He said, 'My people, here are my daughters. They are purer for you (if you marry). Be conscious of God, and do not disgrace me with my guests. Is there not among you a single right-minded man?'"* He pleaded with them not to shame him in front of his guests. He suggested that heterosexual relationships are better for them. He appealed to their sense of honor and hospitality, but it was all in vain, *"They said, 'You have certainly known that we have no claim on your daughters. Indeed, you know quite well what we want.'"*

The verses describe Lot's (PBUH) sense of helplessness, *"He said, 'If only I had the power to stop you or that I could take refuge in a strong support.'"* He saw how young the guests were and he realized that they would not be able to defend themselves. He wished that he had a strong support from someone. He forgot that God promised support to those who believe. Then the relief came, *"They said (The Messengers), 'Lot, we are messengers from your Lord. They will not reach you. So travel with your people in the dead of the night and let not one of you turn round, except your wife. Whatsoever befalls them shall befall her. Verily their appointed time is the morning, is not the morning soon?'"* They gave Lot (PBUH) the glad tidings that he and those who believed will be saved but the rest of his people will be destroyed. His wife was among those who were destroyed because she approved of the practices of her people.

"When Our command came to pass, We turned (the cities) upside down, and rained down on them brimstones hard as baked clay, spread, layer on layer; marked with fire in the providence of your Lord (for the destruction of the wicked); and they are never far from the wrongdoers." These verses describe the last scene in the story of the people of Lot (PBUH), what a devastating scene. The cities were completely demolished. Marked stones were sent down from the sky to destroy everything.

Verses 84 to 95:

84. *And to Midian (We sent) their brother Shu'ayb. He said, "My people, worship God. You have no other god save Him. And do not give short measure and short weight. I see you are well-to-do, and I fear for you the torment of an overwhelming day.*
85. *And my people give full measure and weight, do not withhold from the people the things that are rightly theirs, and do not commit evil in the land with the intent of spreading corruption.*
86. *That which God leaves to you is better for you, if you are believers; and I am not a keeper over you."*
87. *They said, "Shu'ayb, does your (religion of) prayer command you that we should forsake that which our fathers (used to) worship, or that we should refrain from doing what we please with our own property. You are the forbearing who guides to good behavior."*
88. *He said, "My people, do you see if I have a clear proof from my Lord and He gave me fair provision? I do not wish, in opposition to you, to do that which I forbid you to do. I only desire (your) betterment to the best of my ability; and my success (in my task) can only come from God. In Him I trust, and to Him I always turn.*
89. *And my people, let not the schism between you and me cause you to sin so that there befalls you that which befell the people of Noah and the people of Hud, and the people of Salih; and the people of Lot are not far off from you.*
90. *But ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him (in repentance). For my Lord is indeed Giver of Mercy, Loving."*
91. *They said, "Shu'ayb, we do not understand much of what you say. We do see you weak among us. If it were not for your family, we would have stoned you, for you are not mighty against us."*
92. *He said, "My people, is my family more honored by you than God? Did you put Him behind your backs? Verily my Lord encompasses what you do.*
93. *And my people, do whatever you can, I will do (my part). Soon you will know who it is on whom descends a disgraceful torment, and who is a liar. And you watch, for I too am watching with you."*
94. *When Our commandment came to pass, We saved Shu'ayb, and those who believed with him, by a mercy from Us, the (mighty) blast overtook the wrongdoers and they lay dead.*
95. *As if they had never dwelt and flourished there; away with Midian as was Thamud removed. (11:84-95)*

"And to Midian (We sent) their brother Shu'ayb. He said, 'My people, worship God. You have no other god save Him. And do not give short measure and short weight. I see you are well-to-do, and I fear for you the torment of an overwhelming day.'" It is the same message: the belief in the Oneness of God. This is the basic principle that should govern the way of life, the law and the dealings of people.

"And my people give full measure and weight, do not withhold from the people the things that are rightly theirs, and do not commit evil in the land with the intent of spreading corruption. That which God leaves to you is better for you, if you are believers; and I am not a keeper over you." Another message that Shu'ayb (PBUH) brought the people of Midian. He commanded them to be honest and fair in their dealings. This is a message that springs directly from the basic principle of the belief in the Oneness of God. The people of Midian, who lived on the route

between the Arabian Peninsula and Syria, used to cheat people in their business dealings. This is a bad trait and an immoral act. They abused their strategic location which controlled the trading route between the Arabian Peninsula and Syria. The verses stress the link between the belief in the Oneness of God and business dealings between people. This link guarantees the establishment of a fair trading system and ensures peaceful life for people. It introduces a permanent standard for people to refer to in all their dealings. The desire of people to gain God's favor is the assurance that they will follow that standard. Shu'ayb (PBUH) reminded his people that God gave them good provision and they do not need to cheat to make more money. He threatened them the torment of an encompassing day. This could happen in the Hereafter or it could happen in this life. In the Hereafter God will punish them for their sins. In this life, cheating will lead to mistrust among people and this will lead to chaos in life. Shu'ayb (PBUH) even goes beyond observing fair practices in trading, he asks his people to be more generous in the exchange of commodities, not to deprive the people their fair share, and not to spread mischief in the land. He reminded them that what God has for them is much better than any other material gain. Shu'ayb (PBUH) reminded them that everyone will answer to his/her own behavior; and that he will not be held accountable for their mistakes.

But they were obstinate, they ridiculed Shu'ayb (PBUH), *"They said, 'Shu'ayb, does your (religion of) prayer command you that we should forsake that which our fathers (used to) worship, or that we should refrain from doing what we please with our own property. You are the forbearing who guides to good behavior.'"* This logic clearly indicates that they did not understand the link between the doctrine and the practices in their daily life. Many of the present day people, Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike, subscribe to the same ideology. They separate between the doctrine of their faith and the daily life practices. They follow God's doctrine in performing the rituals but they follow man made laws in their dealings. Many present day Muslims object to linking the faith to daily practices. They do not see the link between personal behavior and faith. They object on imposing any codes of practice dictated by religion on matters they consider related to personal freedom or even economic matters. In a way this is a kind of associating partners with God. The people of Midian not only objected to what Shu'ayb was asking them to do but they ridiculed him saying, *"You are the forbearing who guides to good behavior,"* while they meant the opposite.

Being confident of his message, Shu'ayb (PBUH) ignored their mockery and addressed them nicely stressing the truth of his message, *"He said, 'My people, do you see if I have a clear proof from my Lord and He gave me fair provision? I do not wish, in opposition to you, to do that which I forbid you to do. I only desire (your) betterment to the best of my ability; and my success (in my task) can only come from God. In Him I trust, and to Him I always turn.'"* His response was clear: he is not seeking personal gains, power, or money. His objective is to improve their characters. He assured them that they will not lose anything if they follow his advice. On the contrary, he assured them of great gains if they change their bad habits. In addressing them, Shu'ayb (PBUH) used endearing language reminding them of the fact that he is one of them. He assured them that his advice is only motivated by the desire to improve their lot. His objective is to bring improvements to their way of life so that everyone in the society can benefit from the pure gain that will result. He then reminded them of the fate that met those before them who refused guidance, *"And my people, let not the schism between you and me cause you to sin so*

that there befalls you that which befell the people of Noah and the people of Hud, and the people of Salih; and the people of Lot are not far off from you.” Do not let your obstinacy drive you away from the guidance that has been brought to you. Shu’ayb (PBUH) opened a door for them to turn back from their obstinacy, *“But ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him (in repentance). For my Lord is indeed Giver of Mercy, Loving.”* But, they were locked in their misguided ways and refused to open their minds and hearts to the truth that has been sent to them, *“They said, ‘Shu’ayb, we do not understand much of what you say. We do see you weak among us. If it were not for your family, we would have stoned you, for you are not mighty against us.’”* They thought that they can use their material standards to measure the extent of the danger that they may be subjecting themselves to. They saw that Shu’ayb (PBUH) has no material support and they reminded him with this fact. They told him that if it were not out of respect for his family, they would have stoned him to death.

Shu’ayb (PBUH) became angry for their trespassing against God, *“He said, ‘My people, is my family more honored by you than God? Did you put Him behind your backs? Verily my Lord encompasses what you do. And my people, do whatever you can, I will do (my part). Soon you will know who it is on whom descends a disgraceful torment, and who is a liar. And you watch, for I too am watching with you.’”* Shu’ayb (PBUH) told them that his family members are only mortals with no power; they should worry more about the wrath of God not the pleasure of his family. God knows everything. The verse describes a model for the believer who cherishes his Creator more than anything else. He then made his final statement indicating the parting of ways and expressing his absolute trust in God.

The curtain falls on the final scene of the story showing the destruction of the people of Shu’ayb (PBUH) and how they vanished from life as if they had never existed, *“When Our commandment came to pass, We saved Shu’ayb, and those who believed with him, by a mercy from Us, the (mighty) blast overtook the wrongdoers and they lay dead. As if they had never dwelt and flourished there. Away with Midian as were Thamud removed.”*

Verses 96 to 99:

96. *And we sent Moses, with Our verses and a clear authority*
97. *To Pharaoh and his chiefs. They followed the command of Pharaoh but Pharaoh was misguided.*
98. *He will go before his people on the Day of Judgment, and lead them into the Fire. But woeful indeed will be the place to which they are led.*
99. *And they were followed by a curse in this (life) and on the Day of Judgment. Woeful is the gift which shall be given (to them). (11:96-99)*

The scene that the verses describe starts with sending Moses (PBUH), supported by the power and authority from God, to Pharaoh and his chiefs, *“And we sent Moses, with Our verses and a clear authority to Pharaoh and his chiefs.”* Then the verses jump to the end of the story, *“They*

followed the command of Pharaoh but Pharaoh was misguided.” God gave them the free will and the power to make the right decision but they abdicated their will to Pharaoh. He will lead them in the Hereafter, as he led them in the life of this world, to their doom, “He will go before his people on the Day of Judgment, and lead them into the Fire. But woeful indeed will be the place to which they are led.” They will be cursed, “And they were followed by a curse in this (life) and on the Day of Judgment.” And they will be disappointed when they find that the gift that Pharaoh has promised them is only Hellfire, “Woeful is the gift which shall be given (to them).”

Verses 100 to 123:

100. *These are some of the stories of communities which We relate to you, of them some are still standing, and some have been mown down (by the sickle of time).*
101. *We wronged them not, but they did wrong themselves; and their gods, on whom they used to call beside God, availed them naught when your Lord's command came to pass; they added to them naught save ruin.*
102. *Such is the seizure of your Lord when He seizes communities while they are committing wrongdoing. Painful, indeed, and severe is His seizure.*
103. *In that is a sign for those who fear the torment of the Hereafter. That is a Day for which all people will be gathered together. That will be a Day that will be witnessed.*
104. *Nor shall We delay it but for an appointed term.*
105. *The Day it arrives, no soul shall speak except by His leave; of those (gathered) some will be wretched and some will be happy.*
106. *As for those who will be wretched, they will be in the Fire sighing and wailing.*
107. *They will dwell therein for all the time that the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord wills. Your Lord always does what He wills.*
108. *And as for those who have been blessed with happiness, they will be in paradise, abiding there so long as the heavens and the earth endure save for that which your Lord wills - unfailing gift.*
109. *Do not be in doubt as to what these worship. They worship nothing but what their fathers worshipped before. Verily We shall pay them back (in full) their portion unabated.*
110. *We certainly gave Moses the Book but differences arose about it. Had it not been for a word that had already gone forth from your Lord, the matter would have been decided between them, but they are in grave doubt concerning it.*
111. *Certainly, your Lord will repay them for their deeds in full. He is well informed of what they do.*
112. *Therefore, stand firm (on the straight path) as you were commanded, you and those who repented. Do not transgress. He (God) certainly sees well all that you do.*
113. *And do not incline to the wrongdoers lest the Fire touches you; and you have no protecting guardians other than God, nor shall you be helped.*
114. *And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and during parts of the night, for those things, that are good remove those that are evil. This is a reminder for the mindful.*
115. *And persevere; for verily God will not waste the reward of the doers of good.*

116. *If only there had been among the generations before you people possessing a remnant (of good sense) to warn against corruption in the earth, as did a few of those whom We saved from among them. The wrongdoers pursued the enjoyment of plenty, and they were guilty.*
117. *Nor would your Lord be the One to destroy communities for a single wrongdoing, if its members were likely to mend their way.*
118. *If your Lord had so willed, He could have made humankind one nation, but they will continue to differ.*
119. *Except those on whom your Lord has bestowed His mercy, and for this did He create them. And the Word of your Lord shall be fulfilled, "I will fill Hell with jinn and humans all together."*
120. *And all that We narrate to you of the stories of the messengers to strengthen your heart therewith; and in this has come to you the truth, an exhortation, and a reminder to the believers.*
121. *Say to those who do not believe, "Do whatever you can, we shall do our part;*
122. *And wait, we too shall wait."*
123. *To God belongs the unseen of the heavens and the earth, and to Him goes back every affair. Then worship Him, and put your trust in Him. Your Lord is not unmindful of what you do. (11: 100- 123)*

"These are some of the stories of communities which We relate to you, of them some are still standing, and some have been mown down (by the sickle of time). We wronged them not, but they did wrong themselves; and their gods, on whom they used to call beside God, availed them naught when your Lord's command came to pass; they added to them naught save ruin. Such is the seizure of your Lord when He seizes communities while they are committing wrongdoing. Painful, indeed, and severe is His seizure." The previous verses presented several images of the doom that befell different peoples when they refused the guidance and rejected their messengers. Of these, those who drowned in the flood, those who perished in the severe wind, those who were destroyed with the blast, and those whose city was turned upside down. Finally, there was the image of the Pharaoh who will lead his people to Hellfire. The present verses sum up the previous stories, telling the Messenger of God (PBUH) that he had no knowledge of these stories before they were revealed to him in the Quran. The remnants of some of these peoples were still there for all to see, e.g. the ruins of the tribes of A'dad and Thamud in Al-Ahqaf and Al-Hijr, respectively. The others, like the people of Noah (PBUH) and the people of Lot (PBUH), left no ruins as if they were like a plant that was completely harvested. God did not wrong them, but it was they who wronged themselves. They did not use the faculties that God gave them, rejected the guidance that was sent to them, and ignored the messengers' warning. Thus, they became wrongdoers. The false gods they adopted did not benefit them. On the contrary their loss was multiplied because their false gods encouraged them in their wrongdoing. They were seized. God's seizure is severe.

"In that is a Sign for those who fear the torment of the Hereafter. That is a Day for which all people will be gathered together. That will be a Day that will be witnessed. Nor shall We delay it but for an appointed term. The Day it arrives, no soul shall speak except by His leave; of those

(gathered) some will be wretched and some will be blessed. As for those who will be wretched, they will be in the Fire sighing and wailing. They will dwell therein for all the time that the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord wills. Your Lord always does what He wills. And as for those who have been blessed, they will be in paradise, abiding there so long as the heavens and the earth endure save for that which your Lord wills - unfailing gift.”

The verses are a reminder of the Day of Judgment. Only those who fear that day will heed the warning. Their sense of God consciousness will be sharpened. The hearts of those who don't fear the Day of Judgment will remain sealed blocking their senses. They cannot see God's signs, nor will they be able to understand God's wisdom. They only understand what they can physically sense. On that day, everyone will be gathered. No one will escape that day. Silence will encompass the place and the scene will be shrouded in fear. No one will be able to speak except by God's leave. Then people will be sorted out: some will be happy and some will be wretched. The wretched will suffer great stress as they are driven into Hellfire. But those who are happy will be led nicely to paradise; they will get their promised gift. Both groups will continue in their places as long as the heavens and earth endure according to God's will. God does what He wills.

“Do not be in doubt as to what these worship. They worship nothing but what their fathers worshipped before. Verily We shall pay them back (in full) their portion unabated.” This is an address to the Prophet (PBUH), a summary of the moral of the stories which were told. This address provides support to the Prophet (PBUH) and those who believed with him but it provides warning to the disbelievers. The disbelievers will surely meet the fate of those who preceded them in rejecting the guidance.

“We certainly gave Moses the Book but differences arose about it. Had it not been for a word that had already gone forth from your Lord, the matter would have been decided between them, but they are in grave doubt concerning it.” We have given Moses (PBUH) the Scripture but his followers differed among themselves, but God decreed that they will face their reckoning on the Day of Judgment. God's wisdom decreed that those who received a Scripture will be given respite until the Day of Judgment. The Scripture is a permanent record of God's message. It is a continuous source of guidance for people, generation after generation. It is different from the physical miracles that God provided to support many of His messengers. A physical miracle can only be witnessed by those who were present when the miracle took place. But the Scripture is a lasting material evidence for everyone to see and read. The Torah and the Bible were revealed to complement each other; then the Quran was revealed as the last and final Book which came to confirm the previous messages. The followers of Moses (PBUH) differed among themselves and they were in doubt of the contents of the Torah because it was written generations after Moses (PBUH) passed away. Even though God gave people respite but they will be given their reward in full, *“Certainly, your Lord will repay them for their deeds in full. He is well informed of what they do.”* The statement that emphasizes that God will repay everyone according to their deeds was meant to be a strong warning to the disbelievers and a support for the believers at the difficult times that they were facing in Mecca.

“Therefore stand firm (on the straight path) as you were commanded, you and those who repented. Do not transgress. He (God) certainly sees well all that you do. And do not incline to the wrongdoers lest the Fire touches you; and you have no protecting guardians other than God, nor shall you be helped. And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and during parts of the night, for those things, that are good remove those that are evil. This is a reminder for the mindful. And persevere; for verily God will not waste the reward of the doers of good.”

This was a command to the Prophet (PBUH) to stand firm. This was a demanding request. Standing firm requires continuous effort to be careful in following God’s message, to be agile in recognizing the boundaries of the permissible, and to control one’s feelings and desires. The Prophet (PBUH) has been quoted to have said that he felt the gravity of the contents of Surat Hud when this verse was revealed. It should be noted that the command to stand firm was not a command that was meant to address the shortcomings of the Prophet (PBUH) in fulfilling his task but it was a command to warn against excesses and transgression. There is always fear of excesses and transgression when people are too sincere and too enthusiastic in performing their duties which will move the injunctions of the religion outside the circle of ease which God wanted for His religion. God wanted the practice of this religion to be rightly balanced without any excesses. Excesses which make the practices extremely difficult as well as excesses which trivializes the practices are both rejected. The essence of this religion is moderation. The believers are warned not to take the side of those who transgress lest they be tormented in Hellfire. They should only seek God’s support. They have no helper but Him. The believers were commanded to perform prayers; prayers provided the support they needed to stand firm in the face of the difficulties they were facing. Prayers provide the link to God and thus bring solace and spiritual strength. The verse mentioned praying at the ends of the day and by night which would cover the five compulsory prayers; however, no other details about these prayers were mentioned. Authentic Prophetic traditions gave the details of the rules that govern the performance of prayers. The command to perform prayers was directly followed by a statement that, *“things, that are good remove those that are evil,”* which is a general rule that applies to all good deeds including prayers. This is a reminder for those who remember. Prayers itself is a reminder. Standing firm requires patience and perseverance, hence the command to persevere. God’s does not waste the reward of those who do good deeds: standing firm is a good deed, establishing prayers is a good deed, and perseverance in the face of difficulty is a good deed.

“If only there had been among the generations before you people possessing a remnant (of good sense) to warn against corruption in the earth, as did a few of those whom We saved from among them. The wrongdoers pursued the enjoyment of plenty, and they were guilty. Nor would your Lord be the One to destroy communities for a single wrongdoing, if its members were likely to mend their way.” These verses state one of the principles that God has decreed in treating nations or groups of people. God will punish a nation whose members give in to corruption and do not try to stand up against tyranny and oppression. But, God will help a nation whose members stand up against corruption and tyranny and He will spare this nation of any torment. A group of people who call to the belief in the Oneness of God are the saviors of their nation from God’s torment.

“If your Lord had so willed, He could have made humankind one nation, but they will continue to differ. Except those on whom your Lord has bestowed His mercy; and for this did He create

them. And the Word of your Lord shall be fulfilled, 'I will fill Hell with jinns and humans all together.'” Had God willed, He could have created all people the same. But it is God’s will and wisdom to create people different, each human being is different from any other human being. God created human beings with different attitudes, attributes, and aptitudes. Each one is free to choose the way he/she will follow in life. Consequently, human beings bear the responsibility for the decisions they make. Those who chose guidance will be saved but those who chose to transgress against God will be among those who are destined to Hellfire.

“And all that We narrate to you of the stories of the messengers to strengthen your heart therewith; and in this has come to you the truth, an exhortation, and a reminder to the believers.

Say to those who do not believe, 'Do whatever you can, we shall do our part; and wait, we too shall wait.' To God belongs the unseen of the heavens and the earth, and to Him goes back every affair. Then worship Him, and put your trust in Him. Your Lord is not unmindful of what you do.” The Messenger (PBUH) faced great difficulty and staunch opposition from his people. God revealed these verses to provide the Messenger (PBUH) with moral support and consolation to enable him to withstand the difficulty that he was facing. The stories that were narrated in this Sura and others assured the Messenger (PBUH) of the ultimate success of his call. The verses brought the truth from God, the glad tidings to the believers, and a warning to the disbelievers. God knows everything, He knows the unseen. He controls everything in the heavens and earth, so worship Him alone and put your trust in Him. God is aware of all what you do.

The Sura ends on the same note that was mentioned in the beginning of the Sura: the note of calling people to worship God alone. It is the same theme that runs through all the Meccan Suras: the belief in the Oneness of God.