

Sura 26: Al-Shu'araa (The Poets)

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

Verses 1 to 9:

1. *Ta. Sin. Mim.*
2. *These are verses of the Book that makes (things) clear.*
3. *It may be that you torment yourself with grief, that they do not become believers.*
4. *Had We wished, We could have sent down to them from the sky a sign, to which they would bend their necks in humility.*
5. *Whenever a newly revealed message from the Lord of Mercy is brought to them, they turn away from it.*
6. *They have indeed denied (the Message), so they will know soon the truth of what they mocked at.*
7. *Do they not look at the earth, how many noble things of all kinds We have produced therein?*
8. *Verily, in this is a sign, but most of them do not believe.*
9. *And verily, your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy. (26: 1 – 9)*

The main theme of this Sura revolves around the doctrine; as is the case with all the Meccan Suras of the Quran. The Sura discusses the different components of the doctrine: the belief in the Oneness of God, the fear of the Day of Judgment, and the belief in the revelation which the Messenger of God (PBUH) received. In addition, it elaborates on the consequences of disbelief, and it provides comfort to the Messenger of God (PBUH) to support him in his struggle against the disbelievers.

“*Ta. Sin. Mim,*” The discursive letters of the Alphabet at the beginning of the Sura allude to the fact that the Quran has been composed using the letters of the Arabic Alphabet. The disbelievers knew the language, but they were unable to compose a similar text. The subsequent verse connects the letters to the Book, “*These are verses of the Book that makes (things) clear.*” The narrative then turns to comforting the Messenger (PBUH), “*It may be that you torment yourself with grief, that they do not become believers.*” One senses a hint of rebuke in the wording of the verse for the Messenger’s (PBUH) sadness caused by the rejection of the Quran by the idolaters of Mecca. The verse comforted the Messenger (PBUH) telling him that it was not his fault that they denied him and rejected the Quran. Had God willed He would have forced them to believe, “*Had We wished, We could have sent down to them from the sky a sign, to which they would bend their necks in humility.*” But it is God’s will that the evidence of the truth of His last Message would be the Quran and not a physical miracle. The Quran is the miracle that testifies to the truth of this Message. The miracle of the Quran has been manifested in various ways. It is manifested in its consistent style, in the logical argument that it provides, and in its appeal to the human heart. It continues to provide messages to all people, at all places, and at all times.

"Whenever a newly revealed message from the Lord of Mercy is brought to them, they turn away from it." This Message is a mercy that the Lord of Mercy bestowed on His creatures. But they rejected it, therefore they had to suffer the consequences, *"They have indeed denied (the Message), so they will know soon the truth of what they mocked at."* The verse embodies a dire threat wrapped in a mocking style to address their mocking attitude.

"Do they not look at the earth, how many noble things of all kinds We have produced therein?" They requested a physical miracle to support the Message, while they ignored all the signs around them which testify to the power of God. The verse refers to the miracle of growing plants from the earth. It alerts the human mind to reflect on the signs of God in the universe around us. These signs point to the unity of the creation and the role of the human being as part of this creation, *"Verily, in this is a sign, but most of them do not believe."* Many people ignore these signs and refuse to believe. However, God is both Exalted in might and Most Merciful, *"And verily, your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy."* God has the power to produce these signs, but He also exercises His mercy and sends messengers to guide people to the right path before He holds them accountable.

Verses 10 to 69:

10. *And when your Lord called to Moses, "Go to the wrongdoers,*
11. *The people of Pharaoh. Will they not be conscious of God?"*
12. *He said, "My Lord, I do fear that they will deny me,*
13. *And that my breast will tighten and my tongue will not be fluent, so send Aaron too.*
14. *And they have a charge of crime against me; and I fear they may slay me."*
15. *God said, "No (they will not). Go both of you, with Our signs; We are with you and will be listening.*
16. *So go forth, both of you, to Pharaoh, and say, 'We have been sent by the Lord of the worlds;*
17. *Send the Children of Israel with us.'"*
18. *(Pharaoh) said, "Did we not raise you as a child among us? And did you not stay with us for many years of your life?*
19. *And you did your deed which you did, and you were of the ungrateful."*
20. *Moses said, "I did it then, I was misguided when I did it.*
21. *So, I fled from you when I feared you; but my Lord has invested me with judgment (wisdom) and appointed me as one of the messengers.*
22. *And this is the favor with which you remind me – that you enslaved the Children of Israel."*
23. *Pharaoh said, "And what is the 'Lord of the worlds?'"*
24. *(Moses) said, "The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and everything in between, if you only have certitude."*
25. *(Pharaoh) said to those present, "Do you hear (what he says)?"*

26. *(Moses) said, "He is your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers."*
27. *(Pharaoh) said, "Indeed your messenger who has been sent to you is mad."*
28. *(Moses) said, "Lord of the East and the West, and everything between them, if you only have sense."*
29. *(Pharaoh) said, "If you take any god other than me, I will certainly put you in prison."*
30. *(Moses) said, "Even if I showed you a clear and convincing sign?"*
31. *(Pharaoh) said, "Show it then, if you are telling the truth."*
32. *So (Moses) threw his staff, and suddenly it became a serpent, plain (for all to see).*
33. *And he drew out his hand, and it was white for all the observers to see.*
34. *(Pharaoh) said to the Chiefs around him, "This is indeed a learned magician.*
35. *His plan is to get you out of your land by his magic; what do you advise?"*
36. *They said, "Keep him and his brother for a while, and send messengers to the cities;*
37. *Who will bring you every accomplished magician."*
38. *So, the magicians were gathered together for the appointment on a specified day,*
39. *And the people were asked, "Will you congregate?*
40. *That we may follow the magicians if they win?"*
41. *So, when the magicians arrived, they said to Pharaoh, "Shall we be rewarded if we win?"*
42. *He said, "Yes, and you shall be among those who are favored by me."*
43. *Moses said to them, "Throw whatever you will throw."*
44. *So, they threw their ropes and their staffs, and said, "By the might of Pharaoh, it is we who will certainly win."*
45. *Then Moses threw his rod, and at once it swallowed up all the falsehoods which they faked.*
46. *The magicians fell down in prostration,*
47. *They said, "We believe in the Lord of the Worlds,*
48. *The Lord of Moses and Aaron."*
49. *(Pharaoh) said, "Did you believe in him before I give you permission? He must be your leader, who has taught you magic. But soon you shall know. I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will cause you all to die on the cross."*
50. *They said, "That will do us no harm. We shall return to our Lord.*
51. *Our only desire is that our Lord will forgive us our faults, since we were the first to believe."*
52. *And We inspired Moses. "Travel by night with my servants; for surely you shall be pursued."*
53. *Then, Pharaoh sent messengers to (all) the cities,*
54. *(Saying), "These (Israelites) are but a small band,*
55. *And they are enraging us;*
56. *But we are all cautious of them."*
57. *So, We drove them out of gardens, springs,*
58. *Treasures, and every kind of honorable position.*
59. *Thus, it was, but We made the Children of Israel inheritors of such things.*

60. *Then they pursued them at sunrise.*
61. *And when the two groups saw each other, the people of Moses said, "We shall definitely be overtaken."*
62. *(Moses) said, "By no means, my Lord is with me. Soon will He guide me."*
63. *Then We inspired Moses, "Strike the sea with your staff." It parted, and each separate part became like a huge, firm mountain.*
64. *And We brought the other party near.*
65. *We delivered Moses and all who were with him;*
66. *And We drowned the others.*
67. *Verily in this is a Sign, but most of them do not believe.*
68. *And verily your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy. (26: 10 – 68)*

This episode of the story of Prophet Moses (PBUH) is narrated in a way consistent with the theme of the present Sura. The focus of the story is on aspects of the consequences of rejecting the Message and how God supports His messengers and the believers even when they do not have the material power needed for victory on earth. The Sura draws a parallel between the conditions of the Children of Israel in Egypt and the Muslims in Mecca.

Different episodes of the story of Prophet Moses (PBUH) have been narrated so far in several Suras of the Quran: Al-Baqara (Chapter 2), Al-Maidah (Chapter 5), Al-A'raf (Chapter 7), Yunus Chapter (10), Al-Israa (Chapter 17), Al-Kahf (Chapter 18), and Taha (Chapter 20). In addition, it has been also referred to in other Suras as well. Each of these episodes focused on an aspect of the story which is closely related to the theme of the Sura in which it was narrated; in addition, the episodes provided appropriate arguments which supported the theme of the Suras. This episode from the story of Prophet Moses (PBUH) consists of seven scenes. The first scene describes God's assignment to Moses (PBUH) to become a messenger of God. The second scene depicts the confrontation between Pharaoh and Moses (PBUH). The third scene describes Pharaoh's scheme to defeat Moses (PBUH). The fourth scene depicts the dialogue between Pharaoh and his magicians before the actual confrontation with Moses (PBUH). The fifth scene is the scene of the confrontation between Moses (PBUH) and the magicians which Pharaoh brought to defeat Moses (PBUH). The sixth scene consists of two parts: the first deals with God inspiration to Moses to flee with the Children of Israel and the second deals with Pharaoh's call to assemble an army to follow them. The last scene describes the problem that faced the Children of Israel when they reached the seashore and the miracle of the parting sea.

"And when your Lord called to Moses, 'Go to the wrongdoers, the people of Pharaoh. Will they not be conscious of God?'" This is the first scene, the scene that narrates the details of the encounter between God and Moses (PBUH) during which Moses (PBUH) was given the responsibility of delivering the Message to Pharaoh and his people. The verse describes the people of Pharaoh as wrongdoers because they wronged themselves by rejecting guidance and they wronged the Children of Israel by persecuting them. They killed their baby boys and they enslaved the adults. How could any people do this? Did they not fear God's wrath which was certain to befall them as a result of their

wrongdoing? Moses (PBUH) was familiar with the tyranny of Pharaoh, he therefore appealed to God for help, *“He said, ‘My Lord, I do fear that they will deny me, and that my breast will tighten and my tongue will not be fluent, so send Aaron too. And they have a charge of crime against me; and I fear they may slay me.’”* He made a reference to the impediment in speech that he suffered from. He was worried that this impediment would not allow him to be eloquent enough to convince Pharaoh. This would also make his breast tighten. A reference to this condition was made in Chapter 20 (Taha), *“And remove the impediment from my speech.”* (20: 27). Moses (PBUH) asked God to appoint Aaron (PBUH) to help him in his mission because Aaron (PBUH) was more articulate than him. Aaron (PBUH) could also continue the mission in case the Egyptians tried to kill Moses (PBUH) in revenge for killing an Egyptian before. God accepted his request and assured him that He will be with them, *“God said, ‘No (they will not). Go both of you, with Our signs; We are with you and will be listening. So go forth, both of you, to Pharaoh, and say, ‘We have been sent by the Lord of the worlds. Send the Children of Israel with us.’”* So, they were commanded to go to Pharaoh and deliver the Message and show him God’s signs: the staff and the white hand. God assured them of His support. He will be with them, and He will be listening to what will transpire. God will be there providing His protection when they will confront Pharaoh. They should have no fear confronting Pharaoh because God is on their side. The Arabic text indicates that they were sent as “one messenger,” because they brought a single message to Pharaoh. It is obvious from these verses and others that Moses (PBUH) was not sent to call Pharaoh and his people to follow his religion. He was only sent to request Pharaoh to deliver the Children of Israel so that they can worship God according to the religion that Prophet Jacob (PBUH) brought before for them.

The narrative moves on to the second scene, where we see the confrontation between Moses (PBUH) and Pharaoh, *“(Pharaoh) said, ‘Did we not raise you as a child among us? And did you not stay with us for many years of your life? And you did your deed which you did, and you were of the ungrateful.’ Moses said, ‘I did it then, I was misguided when I did it. So, I fled from you when I feared you; but my Lord has invested me with judgment (wisdom) and appointed me as one of the messengers. And this is the favor with which you remind me – that you enslaved the Children of Israel.’”* Pharaoh was shocked when Moses (PBUH) told him that he and Aaron (PBUT) were messengers of the Lord of the Worlds and then asked him to set the children of Israel free. Pharaoh reminded Moses (PBUH) that he was a baby whom they picked up from the river. They adopted him and raised him in the palace. He killed an Egyptian and then fled. Pharaoh wondered how did he become a messenger of God? His surprise was reflected on his sarcastic words, *“Did we not raise you as a child among us?”* Pharaoh wanted to say to Moses (PBUH), *“Is this the reward for saving you and raising you in the palace? and how come you spent all these years in the palace and never said anything about being a messenger of God.”* Pharaoh reminded him with the killing of the Egyptian using euphemism, *“And you did your deed which you did, and you were of the ungrateful,”* to magnify the effect of the deed showing that it was so horrendous that he could not speak of it explicitly. Pharaoh thought that his answer would silence Moses (PBUH) but with God’s help the words came fluently from his mouth, *“I did it then, I was misguided when I did it. So, I fled from you when I feared you; but my Lord has invested me with*

judgment (wisdom) and appointed me as one of the messengers.” Moses (PBUH) responded to Pharaoh’s sarcasm with sarcasm, reminding him that he ended up in the palace only because the Children of Israel were enslaved and persecuted. His mother threw him in the sea to save him from the fate of being killed at the hands of Pharaoh’s soldiers.

Pharaoh continued to question Moses (PBUH), *“And what is the ‘Lord of the worlds?’ ”* The question reveals that Pharaoh found Moses’ (PBUH) claim unbelievable. Moses (PBUH) responded, *“The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and everything between them, if you only have certitude.”* He is the Lord of the huge universe; Pharaoh’s kingdom is only an atom in this universe. Pharaoh’s response reflected his amazement at Moses’ (PBUH) claim; he asked those who were around him *“Do you hear (what he says)?”* Moses continued to describe the attributes of God, *“He is your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers.”* This was a blunt statement directed at Pharaoh’s claim that he is god. At this point Pharaoh loses his patience and he becomes agitated, *“Indeed your messenger who has been sent to you is mad.”* Pharaoh tried to belittle Moses’ (PBUH) message and described him as a mad man, but Moses (PBUH) continued relentlessly, *“Lord of the East and the West, and everything between them, if you only have sense.”*

When his argument with Moses (PBUH) failed, he started threatening Moses (PBUH), *“(Pharaoh) said, ‘If you take any god other than me, I will certainly put you in prison.’ ”* This threat showed that Pharaoh could not respond to Moses’ (PBUH) argument with a logical counter argument. However, the threat did not deter Moses (PBUH), he continued, *“Even if I showed you a clear and convincing sign?”* Would Pharaoh imprison Moses (PBUH) even if Moses (PBUH) brought him convincing proof? This challenge put Pharaoh in a bind. He had to accept Moses’ (PBUH) challenge, *“(Pharaoh) said, ‘Show it then, if you are telling the truth.’ ”* Moses (PBUH) displayed his miracles, *“So (Moses) threw his staff, and suddenly it became a serpent, plain (for all to see). And he drew out his hand, and it was white for all the observers to see.”* The narrative indicates that the staff actually became a living serpent and that his hand became actually white. This was not a trick of magic; these were actual miracles.

Pharaoh’s reaction was quick, he said to the Chiefs around him, *“This is indeed a learned magician.” His plan is to get you out of your land by his magic; what do you advise?”* He was impressed by the miracles, but he called it magic to attenuate its effect on those who were present. He tried to counter the effect of Moses’ (PBUH) miracles by posing the threat that Moses’ (PBUH) objective was to get them out of their country using his magic. Then he asked them for their advice. This was also part of the trick; he wanted to appease them by asking for their advice. This was lip service on his part. Would a god ask his servants for advice? But they were his close followers. They stood to lose if Pharaoh was defeated, so they advised him, *“Keep him and his brother for a while, and send messengers to the cities; who will bring you every accomplished magician.”*

Then we move to the scene of the preparations for the meeting between the magicians and Moses (PBUH), *“So, the magicians were gathered together for the appointment on a*

specified day, and the people were asked, 'Will you congregate? That we may follow the magicians if they win?'” The verses point to Pharaoh’s efforts in mobilizing the people for the showdown between Moses (PBUH) and the magicians. The verse describing the meeting between Pharaoh and the magicians before the showdown portrays their greed. They negotiated their reward, *“So when the magicians arrived, they said to Pharaoh, ‘Shall we be rewarded if we win?’”* He promised them more than they aspired for, he promised to make them part of his favored company, *“He said, ‘Yes, and you shall be among those who are favored by me.’”*

Now we come to the scene for the great showdown, *“Moses said to them, ‘Throw whatever you will throw.’”* This was a statement which reflected the confidence that Moses (PBUH) had in God. He was neither intimidated by the number of the magicians who came to challenge him nor by the people who came to witness the showdown. The magicians did their best, *“So they threw their ropes and their staffs, and said, ‘By the might of Pharaoh, it is we who will certainly win.’”* The following verse jumps to the conclusion of the scene without giving any intermediate details, *“Then Moses threw his staff, and at once it swallowed up all the falsehoods which they faked.”* The magicians prepared for this challenge; they did their best and were sure that they will win. But suddenly all their hopes collapsed. They realized that what they saw was not magic, but it was a miracle. They saw the truth and they could not but submit to it, *“The magicians fell down in prostration, they said, ‘We believe in the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of Moses and Aaron.’”* The truth they saw changed them from being a hired hand selling their expertise to Pharaoh to believers in God.

This was a shocking experience for Pharaoh. He mobilized the people and prepared them to see his ultimate victory over the Children of Israel. But the magicians let him down and revolted against him in front of his people. His immediate reaction was to take recourse to threatening the magicians, *“(Pharaoh) said, ‘Did you believe in him before I give you permission? He must be your leader, who has taught you magic. But soon you shall know.’”* How dare they believe before taking Pharaoh’s permission? Then he accused them of being complicit in Moses’ (PBUH) conspiracy. Then he escalated the tone of his threats, *“I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will cause you all to die on the cross.”* However, it was too late for the magicians to be deterred by threats. They tasted the sweetness of faith which touched their hearts. Their faith gave them the strength to challenge the tyranny of Pharaoh, *“They said, ‘That will do us no harm. We shall return to our Lord. Our only desire is that our Lord will forgive us our faults, since we were the first to believe.’”* The faith filled their hearts with confidence and security; faith made them rise above the material world that they lived; they yearned to be connected with God.

The narrative jumps over a number of years during which Moses (PBUH) continued to live in Egypt. The details of what happened during these years are mentioned in Surat Al-A’raf (Chapter 7). The following verses describe how Moses (PBUH) and his people fled Egypt, *“And We inspired Moses. ‘Travel by night with my servants; for surely you shall be pursued.’ Then Pharaoh sent messengers to (all) the cities, (Saying), ‘These (Israelites) are but a small band, and they are enraging us; but we are all cautious of*

them.” God inspired Moses (PBUH) to travel by night with his people. The travel was well planned beforehand. Moses (PBUH) knew that Pharaoh and his soldiers will follow them. Pharaoh, on the other hand started mobilizing his army to pursue the Children of Israel.

The narrative then moves to describe the consequences of the tyranny of Pharaoh, “*So We drove them out of gardens, springs, treasures, and every kind of honorable position; thus it was, but We made the Children of Israel inheritors of such things.*” When they went out to pursue the Israelites they met their doom. They never returned back to their comfortable life in which they enjoyed gardens, springs, and the treasures they had.

After this short digression the verses turn back to the last scene in this episode, “*Then they pursued them at sunrise. And when the two groups saw each other, the people of Moses said, ‘We shall definitely be overtaken.’*” The Egyptians followed the Israelites at sunrise. The Israelites having reached the seashore and seeing that they were being followed, panicked. They braced themselves to be overtaken, but Moses (PBUH) was confident of God’s promise, “*(Moses) said, ‘By no means, my Lord is with me. Soon will He guide me.’*” He was certain of God’s help. This help came in an inspiration, “*Then We inspired Moses, ‘Strike the sea with your staff.’ It parted, and each separate part became like a huge, firm mountain.*” The miracle happened and the sea parted. The Children of Israel crossed the sea walking. Pharaoh must have been shocked by the surprise. Then he and his soldiers continued to pursue the Israelites, “*And We brought the other party near. We delivered Moses and all who were with him; and We drowned the others.*” God’s plan was completed; the Israelites were saved and the Egyptians were drowned. This is certainly a sign, but not many people believe even when they see these signs, “*Verily in this is a Sign, but most of them do not believe. And verily your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy.*”

Verses 69 to 104

69. *And recite to them the story of Abraham.*
70. *When he said to his father and his people, “What do you worship?”*
71. *They said, “We worship idols, and we remain constantly in attendance on them.”*
72. *He said, “Do they listen to you when you call (on them);*
73. *Or do they benefit or harm you?”*
74. *They said, “No, but we found our fathers doing so.”*
75. *He said, “Do you then see whom you have been worshipping,*
76. *You and your fathers before you?*
77. *Indeed, they are enemies to me; except the Lord of the Worlds;*
78. *Who created me, and it is He who guides me.*
79. *And who gives me food and drink.*
80. *And when I am ill, it is He who cures me.*
81. *And who will cause me to die and then bring me to life.*
82. *And who, I hope, will forgive me for my faults on the Day of Judgment.*
83. *My Lord, grant me wisdom, and join me with the righteous.*
84. *And grant me honorable mention among the later generations.*

85. *And make me one of the inheritors of the Garden of Bliss.*
86. *And forgive my father, for he was among those who have gone astray.*
87. *And do not disgrace me on the Day when people will be resurrected;*
88. *The Day on which neither wealth nor children will be of benefit;*
89. *Except those who come to God with a sound heart.*
90. *And the Garden will be brought near to those who are God conscious.*
91. *And the Hellfire will be placed in full view to those who had gone astray.*
92. *And it shall be said to them, "Where are the (gods) you worshipped,*
93. *Besides God. Can they help you or help themselves?"*
94. *Then they will be thrown headlong into the (Fire), they and those who had gone astray,*
95. *And the soldiers of Iblis all together.*
96. *They will say there, in their mutual bickering,*
97. *"By God, we were truly in evident error,*
98. *When we held you as equals with the Lord of the Worlds.*
99. *And our seducers were only those who were steeped in guilt.*
100. *Now, we have none to intercede on our behalf.*
101. *Nor do we have a single friend.*
102. *If we only had another chance, we shall truly be of those who believe."*
103. *Verily, in this is a sign but most of them do not believe.*
104. *And verily, your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy. (26: 69 – 104)*

The following verses narrate the story of Prophet Abraham (PBUH). The Messenger (PBUH) was commanded to narrate it to the idolaters of Mecca. They claimed that they were the descendants of Prophet Abraham (PBUH) and that they were following his religion. The story showed them that the practices which they adopted were foreign to Abraham's (PBUH) religion. Different episodes of this story were mentioned in other Suras. Each episode focused on a theme which was congruent to the theme of the Sura.

"And recite to them the story of Abraham." The idolaters of Mecca claimed that they were followers of Prophet Abraham (PBUH). The Prophet (PBUH) was commanded to narrate to them the story of Prophet Abraham (PBUH) so that they would realize that their claim was far from the truth and so that they would recognize that Prophet Abraham (PBUH) disapproved the worship of idols practiced by his father and his people, *"When he said to his father and his people, 'What do you worship?'"* They responded, *"We worship idols, and we remain constantly in attendance on them."* So, they knew that those whom they worshipped were mere idols. Abraham (PBUH) tried to raise their awareness of the stupidity of what they were doing, *"He said, 'Do they listen to you when you call (on them); or do they benefit or harm you?'"* How could these people worship an idol which did not hear them when they call upon it? His people did not attempt to refute his argument but simply ignored it saying, *"No, but we found our fathers doing so."* It is an embarrassing response, but they had the audacity to use it. They stated that the only reason they were worshipping idols was that they saw their fathers do it. Abraham (PBUH) tried to respond strongly announcing that he hated these idols, *"He said, 'Do you then see whom you have been worshipping, You and your fathers before you? Indeed, they are enemies to me; except the Lord of the Worlds;'"* He announced that

he will not follow in the footsteps of his father. This verse established a principle that the obligation to faith is more important than the obligation to kin relationship. Abraham (PBUH) realized that some of his people may have worshiped God, hence his statement, *“except the Lord of the Worlds.”*

Abraham (PBUH) continued to describe his Lord, *“Who created me, and it is He who guides me.”* The statement shows the close relationship between Abraham (PBUH) and his Lord. Abraham (PBUH) put his trust in his Lord, he loved Him, and he lived every moment of his life remembering Him. God created him; God knows everything about him. God guided him to the straight path. This is a statement which reflects Abraham’s (PBUH) absolute submission to God. He then explained how God takes good care of him, *“And who gives me food and drink. And when I am ill, it is He who cures me.”* Then he expressed his absolute faith in God who is the Creator of life and death; and who will resurrect people on the Day of Judgment, *“And who will cause me to die, and then bring me to life. And who, I hope, will forgive me for my faults on the Day of Judgment.”* Abraham’s (PBUH) ultimate hope is to be forgiven by God on the Day of Judgment. This is the ultimate hope of those who are God conscious. Abraham (PBUH) summarized in these statements the basic tenets of the true doctrine: the belief in the Oneness of God, the belief that God has complete control over His servants, the belief in the inevitability of resurrection, and the belief that people will be held accountable for what they have done during their lifetimes on earth. These were the tenets which his people rejected.

Abraham (PBUH) asked God in humility to accept his prayers, *“My Lord, grant me wisdom, and join me with the righteous. And grant me honorable mention among the later generations. And make me one of the inheritors of the Garden of Bliss; and forgive my father, for he was among those who have gone astray. And do not disgrace me on the Day when people will be resurrected; the Day on which neither wealth nor children will be of benefit; except those who come to God with a sound heart.”* In this long supplication, Abraham (PBUH) never asked for worldly gains, he did not even ask for good health. He asked for better and higher things. He asked for wisdom which will help him differentiate between true and false values, so he can remain on the straight path that leads to God. He asked to be one of the righteous, a request which reflects Abraham’s (PBUH) humility and piety. He asked that God extends his call to the later generations. This may be the same prayer that he made in a different place when he prayed, *“Our Lord, accept (this service) from us. Indeed, You are the All-Hearing, the Omniscient. Our Lord, make us bow to You in submission, and of our progeny a people who bow to You in submission; and show us our way of worship; and relent towards us. Verily, You are the Ever-Relenting, Giver Mercy. Our Lord, and raise up in their midst a messenger from among them who shall recite to them Your revelations, and shall instruct them in the Scripture and in wisdom and purify them. Verily, You are the Eminent, Wise.”* (2: 128-129) This was the prayer that God accepted; the prayer that was fulfilled thousands of years after it had been made.

He then asked that God make him of those who reside in Paradise, *“And make me one of the inheritors of the Garden of Bliss.”* He asked before to be one of the righteous and the righteous are destined to live in Paradise. Then He asked God to forgive his father in

spite of the harsh treatment that he received from him. Abraham (PBUH) did promise his father to ask God to forgive him, and he fulfilled this promise. The Quran has explained later that it is not appropriate to ask God to forgive those who associate partners with Him and that the reason that Abraham (PBUH) made this request was that he had promised his father to do so. However, when Abraham (PBUH) realized that his father was God's enemy he absolved himself from any relationship with his father. *"The prayer of Abraham for the forgiveness of his father was only because of a promise he had promised him, but when it had become clear to him that he (his father) was an enemy to God he (Abraham) disowned him."* (9:114) This is one of the basic Islamic values. The most important bond that brings people together is the bond of the faith in God. This bond is the foundation of all other bonds that bring people together.

Abraham (PBUH) finished his prayer by asking God, *"And do not disgrace me on the Day when people will be resurrected; the Day on which neither wealth nor children will be of benefit; except those who come to God with a sound heart."* This prayer reflected his sheer apprehension about the Day of Judgment. It reflected his appreciation of the importance of being sincere in faith to God, the importance of purifying the heart from all sinful feelings, and the importance of dedicating the heart completely to the belief in God.

The following verses describe some of the scenes of the Day of Judgment which Abraham (PBUH) prayed God to save him from, *"And the Hellfire will be placed in full view to those who had gone astray. And it shall be said to them, 'Where are the (gods) you worshipped, besides God. Can they help you or help themselves?' Then they will be thrown headlong into the (Fire), they and those who had gone astray, and the soldiers of Iblis all together. They will say there in their mutual bickering, 'By God, we were truly in evident error, when we held you as equals with the Lord of the Worlds.'"*

On the Day of Judgment, Paradise will be brought near to those who were conscious of their Lord and who feared His punishment. Hellfire will be clear to be seen by those who lost their way and denied the Day of Judgment. A rhetorical question will be posed to them, *"Where are the (gods) you worshipped, besides God. Can they help you or help themselves?"* Then they will be, *"thrown headlong into the (Fire), they and those who had gone astray, and the soldiers of Iblis all together. They will say there in their mutual bickering,"* They will bicker with their idols, *"By God, we were truly in evident error, when we held you as equals with the Lord of the Worlds. And our seducers were only those who were steeped in guilt."* They will have no friend or helper, *"Now, we have none to intercede on our behalf. Nor do we have a single friend."* They will wish that they were given a second chance, *"If we only had another chance, we shall truly be of those who believe."* But it will be too late. This group of verses ends with the same comments that usually come at the end of the stories which describe the fate of those who denied the messengers and went astray, *"Verily in this is a sign but most of them do not believe. And verily your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy."*

Verses 105 to 122

105. *The people of Noah denied the messengers.*
106. *When their brother Noah said to them, "Will you not be conscious of God?"*
107. *I am a trustworthy messenger sent to you.*
108. *So be conscious of God and obey me.*
109. *I do not ask you for a reward. My reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds.*
110. *So be conscious of God and obey me."*
111. *They said, "Shall we believe in you when it is the meanest (of people) that followed you?"*
112. *He said, "And what do I know as to what they do?"*
113. *Their account is only with my Lord, if you could (but) perceive.*
114. *I am not going to drive away those who believe.*
115. *I am sent only as a clear warner."*
116. *They said, "Noah, if you do not desist, you shall be stoned."*
117. *He said, "My Lord, my people have denied me.*
118. *Judge You, then, between me and them openly, and deliver me and the believers who are with me."*
119. *So, We delivered him and those with him, in the Ark filled (with all creatures).*
120. *Thereafter, We drowned those who remained behind.*
121. *Verily in this is a sign, but most of them do not believe.*
122. *And verily your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy. (26: 105 – 122)*

The narrative in the Quran does not follow a chronological order. The next few verses address the story of Prophet Noah (PBUH). Different aspects of the story of Prophet Noah (PBUH) have been dealt with in several Suras of the Quran. The presentation in this Sura focuses on Noah's (PBUH) call to his people to become conscious of God telling them that he did not expect any reward from them. Those who were powerful among his people refused to associate themselves with the poor people who followed Noah (PBUH). His answer was clear; he was not going to abandon the poor believers who followed him because they were poor.

"The people of Noah denied the messengers." The narrative started with an outline of the conclusion of the story then, the details followed. It is interesting to note that the verse wording indicated that Noah's (PBUH) people rejected the "messengers" while in fact they only rejected Noah (PBUH). This is a powerful indication that God sent all the messengers with the same message. So, when people reject one messenger, it is as if they rejected all messengers.

"When their brother Noah said to them, 'Will you not be conscious of God? I am a trustworthy messenger sent to you. So be conscious of God and obey me. I do not ask you for a reward. My reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds. So be conscious of God and obey me.'" This was Noah's (PBUH) message to his people. They should have trusted him because they knew him well, but they did not give any weight to the relationship that he had with them. He invited them to be conscious of God assuring them

that he is a trustworthy messenger of God and reminding them that he was not interested in a worldly reward, his reward is with God. In these few verses he reiterated the concept of God consciousness three times to emphasize its importance.

Their objection was, *“They said, ‘Shall we believe in you when it is the meanest (of people) that followed you?’”* They objected that his followers were the poorest among them. His answer established the basic principle that underlies the mission of the messenger, *“He said, ‘And what do I know as to what they do? Their account is only with my Lord, if you could (but) perceive. I am not going to drive away those who believe. I am sent only as a clear warner.’”* All what Noah (PBUH) was commanded to do was to deliver the message. His only task was to warn people. It is God who holds people accountable for what they do; He rewards and He punishes.

They were stunned by his clear arguments so they took recourse to threats, *“They said, ‘Noah, if you do not desist, you shall be stoned.’”* Noah (PBUH) knew that there was no use in pursuing the argument, so he asked God to judge between him and his people, *“He said, ‘My Lord, my people have denied me. Judge You, then, between me and them openly, and deliver me and the believers who are with me.’”* God responded favorably to His messenger and delivered him and the believers who followed him, *“So We delivered him and those with him, in the Ark filled (with all creatures).”* The disbelievers were drowned, *“Thereafter We drowned those who remained behind.”* This was God’s sign, *“Verily in this is a sign, but most of them do not believe. And verily your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy.”*

Verses 123 to 140

- 123. *The people of 'Ad denied the messengers.*
- 124. *When their brother Hud said to them, “Will you not be conscious of God?*
- 125. *I am a trustworthy messenger sent to you.*
- 126. *So be conscious of God and obey me.*
- 127. *I do not ask you for a reward. My reward is only from the Lord of the*
 Worlds.
- 128. *Do you build a monument on every high place to amuse yourselves?*
- 129. *And do you get for yourselves fine buildings in the hope of living therein*
 (for ever)?
- 130. *And when you strike, you strike like tyrants?*
- 131. *So be conscious of God and obey me.*
- 132. *Be conscious of Him who has bestowed on you freely all that you know.*
- 133. *He provided you with cattle and children,*
- 134. *And gardens and springs.*
- 135. *I truly fear for you the torment of a grievous day.”*
- 136. *They said, “It is the same to us whether you admonish us or do not*
 admonish.
- 137. *We only do what our forefathers did.*
- 138. *And we will not be tormented.”*

139. *So they denied him, and We destroyed them. Verily in this is a sign, but most of them do not believe.*
 140. *And verily your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy. (26: 123 – 140)*

The people of Hud (PBUH) used to reside in a place called Al-Ahqaf. Al-Ahqaf were sand dunes near Hadramout near Yemen. They came after the people of Noah (PBUH) drowned. However, they went astray. Their story was told in greater detail in Surat Al-A'raf (Chapter 7) and also in Surat Hud (Chapter 11) and Surat Al-Muminun (Chapter 23). Only a brief account of this story is given this Sura, *"The people of 'Ad denied the messengers. When their brother Hud said to them, 'Will you not be conscious of God? I am a trustworthy messenger sent to you. So be conscious of God and obey me. I do not ask you for a reward. My reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds.'"* Their Prophet Hud (PBUH) came to them with the same message that other messengers brought from God. He asked them to be conscious of God assuring them that he is giving them a sincere advice and that he did not expect any reward from them.

Hud (PBUH) berated them for their extravagance, *"Do you build a monument on every high place to amuse yourselves? And do you get for yourselves fine buildings in the hope of living therein (for ever)?"* They spent their money and effort erecting great buildings, thinking that these buildings will provide them with protection. He also berated them for their ferocity in vengeance, *"And when you strike, you strike like tyrants?"* and finally he advised them to heed his message, *"So be conscious of God, and obey me."* He reminded them of God's bounty which He bestowed on them. God gave them great knowledge and great resources, *"Be conscious of Him who has bestowed on you freely all that you know. He provided you cattle and children, and gardens and springs."* Then he warned them of the torment on the Day of Judgment, *"I truly fear for you the torment of a grievous day."* However, his words fell on hard hearts. They expressed their rejection in an impertinent way, *"They said, 'It is the same to us whether you admonish us or do not admonish. We only do what our forefathers did. And we will not be tormented.'"* They were following in the footsteps of their predecessors.

So, they rejected his message and they were punished, *"So they denied him, and We destroyed them."* In their story there is a sign, but most people do not believe, *"Verily in this is a sign, but most of them do not believe. And verily your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy."*

Verses 141 to 159:

141. *The people of Thamud denied the messengers.*
 142. *When their brother Salih said to them, "Will you not be conscious of God?"*
 143. *I am a trustworthy messenger sent to you.*
 144. *So be conscious of God and obey me.*
 145. *I do not ask you for a reward. My reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds.*
 146. *(Do you think) you will be left secure forever in what you have,*

147. *Gardens and springs,*
 148. *And fields of crops and palm trees with softened fruits?*
 149. *And you carve houses out of (rocky) mountains with great skill.*
 150. *So, be conscious of God and obey me;*
 151. *And do not follow the bidding of those who are given to excesses.*
 152. *Who spread corruption in the land, and do not mend (their ways)."*
 153. *They said, "You are only one of those bewitched.*
 154. *You are no more than a mortal like us. Bring us a sign, if you are telling*
the truth."
 155. *He said, "Here is a she-camel. She should have her turn to drink and so*
should you, each on a specified day.
 156. *Do not touch her with harm, lest the torment of a grievous day seizes*
you."
 157. *But they ham-strung her. Then they became full of regrets.*
 158. *But the torment seized them. Verily in this is a sign. And most of them do*
not believe.
 159. *And verily your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy. (26: 141 – 159)*

Prophet Salih (PBUH) repeated to his people the same message, which each previous messenger brought before, but they rejected him, *"The people of Thamud denied the messengers. When their brother Salih said to them, 'Will you not be conscious of God? I am a trustworthy messenger sent to you. So be conscious of God and obey me. I do not ask you for a reward. My reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds.'"* Then Prophet Salih (PBUH) continued to remind them of the bounties that God blessed them with. He tried to evoke in their hearts the feeling of gratitude to God for His blessings, *"(Do you think) you will be left secure forever in what you have, gardens and springs, and fields of crops and palm trees with softened fruits? And you carve houses out of (rocky) mountains with great skill."* Do you think that these blessings will last forever? Then he exhorted them to be conscious of God, *"So be conscious of God and obey me; and do not follow the bidding of those who are given to excesses, who spread corruption in the land, and do not mend (their ways)."* But his call fell on deaf ears and did not reach the solid hearts. They responded, *"You are only one of those bewitched. You are no more than a mortal like us. Bring us a sign, if you are telling the truth."* They thought he was crazy and they were astonished that a mere mortal like them brings them a message from God. They challenged him to bring them a sign. So, he brought them a sign, *"He said, 'Here is a she-camel. She should have her turn to drink and so should you, each on a specified day. Do not touch her with harm, lest the torment of a grievous day seizes you.'"* God sent them the she-camel as a sign. They will alternate their drinking with the she-camel: one day for her and one day for them. He warned them against harming the she-camel. But they did not heed the warning, *"But they ham-strung her. Then they became full of regrets. But the torment seized them. Verily in this is a sign. And most of them do not believe. And verily your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy."* An evil group of people among them killed the she-camel but they were all responsible and they were all punished for that evil act.

Verses 160 to 175:

160. *The people of Lut denied the messengers.*
 161. *When their brother Lut said to them, "Will you not be conscious of God?"*
 162. *I am a trustworthy messenger sent to you.*
 163. *So, be conscious of God and obey me.*
 164. *I do not ask you for a reward. My reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds.*
 165. *Of all the creatures in the world, will you approach the males?*
 166. *And you leave those whom God has created for you to be your mates? You are exceeding all bounds."*
 167. *They said, "Lut, if you do not desist, you will assuredly be cast out."*
 168. *He said, "I do detest what you do.*
 169. *My Lord, deliver me and my family from what they do."*
 170. *So, We delivered him and his family all,*
 171. *Except an old woman who lingered behind.*
 172. *And We destroyed the rest.*
 173. *And We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone). Evil was the shower on those who were admonished (but heeded not).*
 174. *Verily in this is a sign. But most of them do not believe.*
 175. *And verily your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy. (26: 160 – 175)*

The verses tell the story of Prophet Lut (PBUH) and it starts in a way similar to the other stories. Lut (PBUH) started by reassuring his people that he was God's messenger. He came to deliver a message for them to be conscious of God. He reassured them that he was not after a worldly reward. His interest is to guide them, and this would start by being conscious of God, "*The people of Lut denied the messengers. When their brother Lut said to them, 'Will you not be conscious of God? I am a trustworthy messenger sent to you. So be conscious of God and obey me. I do not ask you for a reward. My reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds. Of all the creatures in the world, will you approach the males? And you leave those whom God has created for you to be your mates? You are exceeding all bounds.'*" The people of Lut (PBUH) were practicing homosexuality. Lut (PBUH) called upon them to relinquish this practice, but they rejected and threatened him, "*They said, 'Lut, if you do not desist, you will assuredly be cast out.'*" Lut (PBUH) was not originally of this country, but he came to it with his uncle Prophet Abraham (PBUH) and he resided with them until God sent him as a messenger to these people. In response to their threat, he told them that he did not like what they were doing, "*He said, 'I do detest what you do.'*" He then continued to pray to God to save him from these people, "*My Lord, deliver me and my family from what they do.*" God delivered him and his family except his wife who approved her people's practices, "*So, We delivered him and his family, all except an old woman who lingered behind. And We destroyed the rest. And We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone). Evil was the shower on those who were admonished (but heeded not). Verily in this is a sign. But most of them do not believe. And verily your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy.*"

Verses 176 to 191:

176. *The companions of the thicket denied the messengers.*

177. *When, Shu'aib said to them, "Will you not be conscious of God?*
 178. *I am a trustworthy messenger sent to you.*
 179. *So, be conscious of God and obey me.*
 180. *I do not ask you for a reward. My reward is only from the Lord of the*
Worlds.
 181. *Give full measure, and do not be of those who cause loss (to others).*
 182. *And weigh using just scales.*
 183. *Do not deprive people of what is rightly theirs. And do not spread*
mischief in the land.
 184. *And be conscious of Him who created you and (who created) the earlier*
generations."
 185. *They said, "You are only one of those bewitched.*
 186. *You are no more than a mortal like us, and indeed we think you are a liar.*
 187. *Let a piece of the sky to fall on us, if you are truthful."*
 188. *He said, "My Lord knows best what you do."*
 189. *But they denied him. Then, the torment of the Day of the Shadow seized*
them, and that was the torment of a grievous day.
 190. *Verily, in that is a sign; But most of them do not believe.*
 191. *And verily your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy. (26: 176 – 191)*

This is the story of Prophet Shu'aib; it occurred before Moses' time, but it comes here because it conveys the same lesson as the other stories narrated in this chapter. The people of the thicket were most probably the people of Midian. The geographical position of Midian is between Palestine and Hijaz around the Gulf of Aqaba. The first few verses are similar to the first few verses in the previous stories, *"The companions of the thicket denied the messengers. When, Shu'aib said to them, 'Will you not be conscious of God? I am a trustworthy messenger sent to you. So be conscious of God and obey me. I do not ask you for a reward. My reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds.'"* Then he continued to berate them on the practice of unfair measure in their business, *"Give full measure, and do not be of those who cause loss (to others). And weigh using just scales. Do not deprive people of what is rightly theirs. And do not spread mischief in the land."* They used to usurp people's rights and use unfair practices in their dealings. Shu'aib (PBUH) tried to dissuade them from these bad practices and remind them of God consciousness, *"And be conscious of Him who created you and (who created) the earlier generations."* They called him a mad man and a liar, *"They said, 'You are only one of those bewitched. You are no more than a mortal like us, and indeed we think you are a liar.'"* They challenged him to punish them for their transgression, *"Let a piece of the sky to fall on us, if you are truthful."* He responded saying, *"My Lord knows best what you do."* And the conclusion of the story came swiftly, *"But they denied him. Then, the torment of the Day of the Shadow seized them, and that was the torment of a grievous day. Verily in that is a sign; But most of them do not believe. And verily your Lord is the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy."*

Verses 192 to 227:

192. *Verily, this is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds.*

193. *The Trustworthy Spirit brought it down,*
194. *To your heart that you may be of the warners;*
195. *In a clear Arabic tongue.*
196. *And indeed, it is mentioned in the Scriptures of previous peoples.*
197. *Is it not a sign to them that it has been recognized by the scholars of the*
 Children of Israel?
198. *Had We revealed it to any of the non-Arabs,*
199. *And had he recited it to them, they would not have believed in it.*
200. *So, We make it pass straight through the hearts of the criminals.*
201. *They will not believe in it until they see the grievous torment;*
202. *But the (torment) will come to them suddenly, while they are unaware;*
203. *Then they will say, "Shall we be reprieved?"*
204. *Do they then ask for Our torment to be hastened on?*
205. *Then have you considered if We do let them enjoy (this life) for a few*
 years,
206. *Then there came to them the torment which they were promised?*
207. *It will not benefit them that they enjoyed (this life).*
208. *Never did We destroy a town, but it had its warners.*
209. *As a reminder; and We are never unjust.*
210. *And the devils did not bring down this (Revelation).*
211. *It is not in their interest nor in their power.*
212. *Indeed, they have been removed far from even (a chance of) hearing it.*
213. *So, call not on any other deity with God, or you will be among those who*
 will be tormented.
214. *And admonish your nearest kinsfolk,*
215. *And lower your wing to the believers who follow you.*
216. *Then if they disobey you, say, "I bear no responsibility for what you do."*
217. *And put your trust in the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy,*
218. *Who sees you when you stand up,*
219. *And your movements among those who prostrate themselves,*
220. *For He is the All-Hearing, the Omniscient.*
221. *Shall I inform you, on whom the devils descend?*
222. *They descend on every lying, wicked person,*
223. *(Into whose ears) they pour hearsay vanities, and most of them are liars.*
224. *Only those who have gone astray follow the poets.*
225. *Do you not see how they roam aimlessly in every valley?*
226. *And they say what they do not do?*
227. *Except those who believe, and do righteous deeds, and remember God*
 often, and defend themselves only after they have been unjustly attacked. And
 soon will the unjust know what vicissitudes their affairs will take. (26: 192 – 227)

The conclusion of the Sura picks up the theme that the Sura started with the rejection of the Quran by the idolaters of Quraish. This rejection annoyed the Messenger of God (PBUH). The conclusion emphasizes the nature of the Quran. It is certainly a divine revelation. It was brought down by the angel Gabriel (PBUH) and delivered to the heart of the Messenger (PBUH). The Messenger (PBUH) kept it in his heart and delivered it as

he received it in a sound Arabic tongue. The Arabs knew that the Quran was a literary miracle, and they recognized the fact that such a text could not have been composed by a human being, *“Verily this is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds. The Trustworthy Spirit brought it down, to your heart that you may be of the warners; in a clear Arabic tongue.”*

In addition, it has been mentioned in the previous Scriptures, *“And indeed it is mentioned in the Scriptures of previous peoples. Is it not a sign to them that it has been recognized by the scholars of the Children of Israel?”* The idolaters rejected the Quran not for the lack of evidence that it was a divine revelation but because they were stubborn. Even if it were revealed to a non-Arab, they would have still not believed, *“Had We revealed it to any of the non-Arabs, and had he recited it to them, they would not have believed in it.”*

“So, We make it pass straight through the hearts of the criminals. They will not believe in it until they see the grievous torment; But the (torment) will come to them suddenly, while they are unaware; then they will say, ‘Shall we be reprieved?’” They were stubborn in their disbelief to the extent that it passed through their hearts but left no impact on them. They will never change their minds until they see the torment, then they will beg for getting a second chance. They used to challenge the Messenger (PBUH) to hasten God’s torment, thinking it will never come, *“Do they then ask for Our torment to be hastened on? Then have you considered if We do let them enjoy (this life) for a few years, then there came to them the torment which they were promised? It will not benefit them that they enjoyed (this life).”*

God implanted the belief in Him in the initial natural disposition of humankind. That belief will grow in human nature as long as it is kept sound and uncorrupt. God also placed many signs around us. When people forget about these signs or their nature deviates from the initial sound state, God sends His messengers to warn people and to bring them back to the straight path, *“Never did We destroy a town, but it had its warners. As a reminder; and We are never unjust.”*

The following verses address a new theme, *“And the devils did not bring down this (Revelation). It is not in their interest nor in their power. Indeed, they have been removed far from even (a chance of) hearing it.”* The previous verses ascertained that the Quran is a divine revelation. These verses reiterate the same fact by refuting the claim that it was brought down by the devil. It is not appropriate to say that the devils brought it down. The Quran preaches goodness and guidance, and the devils preach misguidance, corruption and disbelief. They have been kept segregated from it, so they could not even listen to it.

The verses move to yet another theme, warning the Messenger of God (PBUH) from associating partners with God, even though he was so remote from committing such act, *“So call not on any other deity with God, or you will be among those who will be tormented.”* The Messenger (PBUH) could not have committed this sin; however the verse is meant to magnify the consequences of associating partners with God.

Then the Messenger (PBUH) was commanded to warn the nearest of kin and to put his trust in God, *“And admonish your nearest kinsfolk.”* When this verse was revealed, the Messenger (PBUH) went to the top of mount Al-Safa and called upon his nearest of kin, they all came to listen to what he was going to say. He asked them first, “If I were to tell you that people on horses are gathered in the valley behind this mountain waiting for an opportune moment to attack you, would you believe me?” They said, “Yes.” He then said, “I was sent as a warner, to save you from the torment of Hellfire.” So, he did what he was commanded to do and fulfilled his responsibility towards his kinsfolk.

The Messenger (PBUH) was commanded to treat his followers kindly, *“And lower your wing to the believers who follow you.”* The Messenger (PBUH) gave the highest example of humility and kindness in dealing with his followers all his life. His manners were a physical depiction of the commandments of the Quran. He was not responsible for those who deviate, *“Then if they disobey you, say, ‘I bear no responsibility for what you do.’”*

“And put your trust in the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy, who sees you when you stand up, and your movements among those who prostrate themselves, for He is the All-Hearing, the Omniscient.” He was told to put his trust in God, the Eminent, the Giver of Mercy. He sees you when you pray, and when you are alone. God is the All-Hearing, the Omniscient.

Then, the narrative turns again to the topic of the Quran. First, it was ascertained that the Quran is a divine revelation. Then the verses refuted the claim that it had been brought down by the devils. The next few verses indicate that the Messenger of God (PBUH), who is an example of trustworthiness, honesty and credibility could not have been associated with devils. The devils are only associated with people who are liars and wicked, *“Shall I inform you, on whom the devils descend? They descend on every lying, wicked person, (Into whose ears) they pour hearsay vanities, and most of them are liars.”* There were priests among the Arabs who claimed that they were able to communicate with the devils. Through these communications they were able to predict future events. They were mostly lying. In any case, they were not in the business of guiding people to the right path, or commanding people to be conscious of God. The Messenger (PBUH) was definitely not one of these priests.

The idolaters of Mecca claimed that the Quran was a form of poetry. But the Quran was written using a style far different from poetry and the behavior of the Messenger (PBUH) was completely different from the behavior of the known poets. So, the verses came to refute that claim, *“Only those who have gone astray follow the poets. Do you not see how they roam aimlessly in every valley? And they say what they do not do.”*

The Quran provides a structured way of life for humankind. Poets create their own imaginary world and are creative about what they do and what they would like to do. However, it should be stressed that Islam does not fight poetry and poets as such, but it frowns upon the style which is motivated by whims, desires and emotions that are not guided by any principle or value.

There were Muslim poets whose style did conform to the Islamic values and principles and these were exempt from the criticism that the Quran leveled at the Arab poets of that time, *“Except those who believe, and do righteous deeds, and remember God often, and defend themselves only after they have been unjustly attacked.”*

The chapter concludes by issuing a threat to the disbelievers, *“And soon will the unjust know what vicissitudes their affairs will take.”*