

Sura 6: Al-An'am (The Cattle)

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

This Sura was revealed in Mecca. It thus belongs to the part of Quran normally called the Meccan Quran. The revelations during the Meccan period, which lasted for thirteen years, revolved around a single theme and addressed a single concept. The content was the same, but the presentations were different. The objective of the Meccan Quran was to inculcate the belief in the Oneness of God in the hearts of the believers. Only when this principle was understood and became entrenched in the Muslims' psyche did Quran start talking about systems that organize people's daily lives. The belief in the Oneness of God is the foundation that supports all Islamic systems and rules. Rules that regulate the way of life people lead on earth should spring from this foundation and abide by its principles. There is no room for manmade laws which do not respect this basic principle in an Islamic way of life. This belief frees people from the tyranny of the rulers who think that they have ultimate authority.

This was how the call to Islam started and this is the way it should continue. A call to Islam should start by inculcating the belief in the Oneness of God. Some may argue that it may be easier, when calling people to Islam, to expose people to Islamic systems and way of life first. This is not the way it was meant for this religion to be established. The belief in the Oneness of God is the foundation that needs to be established first then the applications can follow.

Quran used a unique methodology in the presentation of the doctrine of Islam. There was no theoretical formulation, nor philosophical or theological arguments. Quran appealed to the initial natural human disposition. It endeavored to purify spiritual receptors within the human being and open up the channels to receive divine inspiration. It prepared the believers for the fierce fight against the ignorant state of the society around them. The preparation was done in a practical way that matched the dynamics of life. Doctrine should not be studied in isolation of the daily lives of people. Islam offers a dynamic way of life. It should be developed in an interactive way to respond to the ever-changing needs of people and society. Islam's objective went beyond changing what people believed in; it also endeavored to change their way of thinking and their approach to life.

This Sura is the sixth Sura in the Quran; it is a true example of the Meccan Quran. It presents clearly the Meccan Quran characteristics and salient features. However, the Sura has its own characteristics which set it apart from other Suras. Each Sura in the Quran has its own salient features which appear in its organization, its presentation of the topic, and the imagery that accompany the presentation.

This Sura is unique in the way it handles its basic topics: the meaning of divinity and the relationship between the Creator and the creation. God is the Creator, the Provider, the Almighty. He sets the rules that govern His creation. The theme runs through the whole Sura and culminates in dealing with specific cases of lawful and prohibited practices. The

Sura illustrates how some of the prevalent practices contravened the right of God to set the ultimate rule that govern the life of His creation. This specific example is an illustration of the main objective of the Sura: only God has the right to determine what is lawful and what is prohibited.

It has been narrated on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas (RA), and others that the whole Sura was revealed in one session in Mecca. The narrations did not specify an exact date for the revelation of the Sura, nor does the text point to an exact date for the revelation. According to the most probable known order for the revelation of the Suras in the Quran, its order is the fifty-fifth following Surat Al-Hijr (Chapter 15). This does not help in fixing an exact time for the revelation of this Sura. However, we are of the opinion that, most probably, it was revealed during the fifth or sixth year after the advent of the message. This opinion is based on the suggested order for the Sura and the extent and depth of the topics that it dealt with. This indicates that it was revealed at a time when extensive discussions with the idolaters of Mecca were conducted. The Sura included verses which aimed at providing support, solace, and comfort to the Prophet (PBUH) in face of the strong rejection by the idolaters.

Another narration on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) and Qatadah (RA) indicates that the whole Sura was revealed in Mecca except for the two verses (91, and 141), “*They have no grasp of God’s true measure when they say, ‘God did not reveal anything to a mortal.’ Say, ‘who sent down the Scripture, which Moses brought, a light and guidance to people, which you put on parchments, you show some while you conceal much? And you were taught what you did not know, (neither) you nor your fathers.’ Say, ‘God.’ Then leave them to play in their vain discourses.*” (91); and “*And He it is who produces gardens (of vine), with trellises and without, and dates, and crops of all kinds, and olives and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in variety).; eat of its fruit when it bears fruit, and pay its dues on the day of its reaping, and do not act extravagantly; surely He does not love the extravagant.*” (141) The first was revealed regarding the Jews Malik bin Sayf and Ka’b bin Al-Ashraf and the second was revealed regarding Thabit bin Qays. Ibn Jurayj and Al-Mawardi said it was revealed regarding Moa’az bin Jabal (RA).

The reason behind the revelation of verse 91 mentioned above is probable because of the reference to the Scripture revealed to Moses (PBUH), however, Mujahid and Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) argued that the verse came to address objections raised by the idolaters of Mecca and consequently the verse must have been revealed in Mecca.

People who understood that the words “*paying what is due*” in verse 141 refer to paying Zakat concluded that the verse was revealed in Medina. However, “*paying what is due*” may not necessarily have been a reference to Zakat, and since the flow of the topics in the Sura portrays Meccan characteristics, one can conclude that verse 141 is also a Meccan verse. Thus, the whole Sura must have been revealed in Mecca.

We are therefore, of the opinion that this Sura has been revealed in its totality in one night in Mecca. This opinion is supported by the coherent structure of the Sura which flows like a river with no obstacles to resist its flow.

The Sura deals with a single topic: the belief in the Oneness of God. This topic is dealt with in a sequence of waves that complement one another. The first wave consists of three verses. The verses confront the idolaters of Mecca: how can they associate partners with God, in spite of the fact that they are surrounded with many signs which attest to the Oneness of God. The three verses encompass the truth of the whole universe. The first verse talks about the creation of the universe, the second verse talks about the creation of humankind, and the third verse brings humankind and the universe together in the context of the Oneness of God. The three verses contrast the existence of the universe and humankind against the baseless disbelief of the idolaters of Mecca, as a proof for the existence of God.

The second wave deals with those who deny the signs of the existence of the One God. It describes the fate of the previous disbelievers and threatens the new ones with similar endings.

The third wave addresses the essence of God. God the Creator, the Provider, the Lord who owns everything, the Vanquisher, the Protecting Friend, the All-Wise, and the Totally Aware.

The fourth wave describes evidence provided by previous revelations which supported the Quran. The verses in this wave describe associating partners with God as the worst kind of injustice. They paint a picture of the encounter between those who associate partners with God and their false gods on the Day of Judgment.

A fifth wave provides moral support to the Prophet (PBUH) in his endeavor. Reminding the Prophet (PBUH) that he is a member of a brotherhood of the messengers sent by God to guide people to the right path and provides a consolation to support the Prophet (PBUH) in facing the hardships.

Verses: 1 to 3

1. *All praise is due to God, Who created the heavens and the earth and made the darkness and the light; yet those who disbelieve set up equals with their Lord.*
2. *It is He who created you from clay, then He decreed a term; and there is a term named with Him; still, you doubt.*
3. *And He is the God in the heavens and on earth; He knows your secrets and what you make public, and He knows what you earn.” (6:1-3)*

These first three verses establish the foundation for Sura’s topic. They start with praising God and confessing His right to be worshipped alone as the sole Creator of heavens and earth. They emphasize the first attribute of God as the sole Creator of the universe, pointing to two of the major cosmic signs: light and darkness. The ending of the verse expresses amazement at those who are ungrateful and further associate partners with God. The second verse refers to the creation of humankind, the creation that followed the creation of heavens and earth. It is the creation that brought life to the dormant universe.

The verse points to the transition from the darkness of mud to the light of life. The verse refers to the appointed terms of death and resurrection. One can sense the correspondence between the stillness accompanying death and the dormant state of mud; and between the energy accompanying resurrection and the dynamic state of the original birth. This is a correspondence separated by a vast distance and enormous time. Such expressions should fill the human heart with infinite trust in God's plan and a certainty in meeting Him. The verse ends with an appropriate statement, *"still you doubt."*

The third verse puts the creation of the universe and the creation of humankind in the context of the Oneness of the Creator and His boundless ability and complete control, *"And He is the God in the heavens and on earth; He knows your secrets and what you make public, and He knows what you earn."* It is God who created heavens and earth. He is the only Lord of heavens and earth. He controls everything. It is then, appropriate for the human being to follow God's law in whatever decisions he /she makes. Human beings can achieve well balanced lives by aligning their initial natural dispositions, controlled by God, with the material needs of their physical existence. This will bring harmony to human lives. It will protect human life from being subjected to the discord that may result from the contradictions between manmade laws and God-made laws.

This group of verses appeals to the human heart and human logic through the signs of the creation of the universe and humankind. It appeals to the initial natural disposition of humankind to use these signs as a means which lead to the belief in the Oneness of God. The idolatrous Arabs did not challenge the concept of the existence of God. They believed in God, but they challenged the concept of the Oneness of God. They refused to allow God's law to shape their daily lives, and they associated partners with God.

Verses: 4 to 11

4. *And there does not come to them any sign of the signs of their Lord but they would turn aside from it.*
5. *So they have indeed denied the truth when it came to them; therefore, the truth of what they mocked at will shine upon them.*
6. *Do they not consider how many a generation We have destroyed before them, whom We had established on earth as We have not established you, and We sent the clouds pouring rain on them in abundance, and We made the rivers to flow beneath them, then We destroyed them on account of their sins and raised up after them another generation?*
7. *And if We had sent you a Scripture written on paper, then they had touched it with their hands, certainly those who disbelieve would have said, "This is nothing but clear magic."*
8. *And they say, "Why has not an angel been sent down to him?" And had We sent down an angel, the matter would have certainly been decided and then they would not have been granted a respite.*
9. *And if We had made him an angel, We would certainly have made him a man, and thus We would only have confused them in the same way as they are now confusing themselves.*

10. *And certainly messengers before you have been mocked, but those who mocked them were beset with what they used to mock.*
11. Say, *"Travel in the land, then see what was the end of the deniers."* (6: 4-11).

"And there does not come to them any sign of the signs of their Lord but they would turn aside from it. So, they have indeed denied the truth when it came to them; therefore, the truth of what they mocked at will shine upon them." The verses describe the attitude of the disbelievers and how adamant they were in opposing the message and denying the signs of God that were sent to them. A warning was then issued so that they may take heed. The warning was given in general terms; no specific details were given that shed light on the nature of the impending punishment, nor the time it will take place. It reminded them with the fate the previous disbelieving generations met before, *"Do they not consider how many a generation We have destroyed before them, whom We had established on earth as We have not established you, and We sent the clouds pouring rain on them in abundance, and We made the rivers to flow beneath them, then We destroyed them on account of their sins and raised up after them another generation."* These previous generations had more power and wealth, but their power and wealth did not avail them safety or security and they were destroyed. People usually forget the blessings of God. The wealth and power that people acquire are gifts from God. It is easy for Him to take it away since He is the one who has given it in the first place. God's blessings are bestowed to test people. The test shows whether those who have been given power and wealth will be grateful to God or will they become tyrants. This is God's law that many forget, except those who are saved by Him. Power and wealth blind the tyrants and entice them to annul the covenant they had with God; and they breach the conditions that God had established for humankind to qualify as God's vicegerent on earth. But the tyrants will be destroyed on account of their own sins. A study of history shows clearly how sins destroyed many civilizations before.

"And if We had sent you a Scripture written on paper, then they had touched it with their hands, certainly those who disbelieve would have said, 'This is nothing but clear magic.'" The verse continues to paint an image for the obstinacy of the disbelievers and their determination to reject faith. They were given many signs but they chose to ignore them. Even if they were given a written book that they can touch with their hands, they would have still denied the truth and dismissed it as clear magic. They were not interested in the truth. So, they adopted an argumentative attitude. They asked, why did not God send an angel? *"And they say, 'Why has not an angel been sent down to him?' And had We sent down an angel, the matter would have certainly been decided and then they would not have been granted a respite. And if We had made him an angel, We would certainly have made him a man, and thus, We would only have confused them in the same way as they are now confusing themselves."* Two conclusions can be drawn from this request. First, that the idolatrous Arabs were not atheists. They were merely in doubt that the Prophet (PBUH) is a messenger of God. They wanted a proof that he was truly a messenger of God and that the Book he recites is a revelation from God. They requested God to send an angel to support the Prophet's (PBUH) claim. This was only one of the many requests that were made by the disbelievers. The Quran records several of these requests. These were cited in Surat Al-Israa (Chapter 17) *"They say, 'We will not believe*

you (Muhammad) until you make a spring gush out of the ground for us, or until you have a garden of date palms and vines, and make rivers pour through them; or make the sky fall down on us in pieces, as you claimed will happen; or bring God and angels before us face to face; or have a house made of gold; or ascend into the sky- even then, we will not believe in your ascension until you send a real book down for us to read” (17: 90 - 94). In the present Sura, one of these requests was reiterated, namely, to bring down an angel who would support the Prophet (PBUH) and corroborate his claim that he is a true messenger of God.

The vanity of these requests is apparent from the fact that the Arabs of Mecca knew the Prophet (PBUH) as he grew up among them, and they never doubted his truthfulness until he proclaimed himself a messenger of God. They even used to call him the truthful the honest. When the Prophet (PBUH) wanted to announce his message for the first time, he stood on the top of a hill and asked the Arabs to gather around him and listen to a speech he was going to make. He started his talk asking them, would they believe him if he would tell them that there was an invading army behind the hill on which he was standing. Their response was that they never doubted the truth of whatever he said before and they had no reason to doubt anything he said. But they immediately recanted when he announced that he was sent to them as a messenger of God. However, they continued to trust him with their precious possessions even after he declared himself a messenger of God and until he had to flee Mecca to Medina. When he left Mecca for fear of his life, he entrusted his cousin Ali (RA) to return all the possessions that were entrusted to him for safekeeping to their rightful owners.

The idolatrous Arabs were fluent in their language. They appreciated the beauty of the language and the eloquence of the speakers. They were puzzled by the eloquence of the Quran. They must have realized that the Quran could not have been composed by a human being. This was proof enough for them, if they were seeking the truth.

The second conclusion that one may glean from this request is that the Arabs knew of the existence of angels. They wanted God to send an angel to support the Prophet's (PBUH) claim. However, it is clear that they did not understand the nature of the angels, the relationship between God and the angels, and the relationship between the angels and the human beings. The Quran tells about the myth around the Arab's understanding of the angels and their nature and provided corrections for this myth. Their argument shows that their denial of the message was stubborn and rooted in myth.

The verse sheds light on the Islamic perspective of the concept of the “unseen.” Islam talked about the unseen as part of the creation of God so that a Muslim should be aware of the concept. Islam also educated Muslims how to deal with the topic of the unseen. The angels belong to the realm of the unseen. Belief in the angels is an article of faith in Islam. It has been mentioned in the commentary on Surat Al-Baqarah (Chapter 2) that the belief in the unseen moves the human being from the narrow space of the senses to the wide space of the unknown. The scope of the senses is limited; the unseen is limitless.

The belief in the unseen widens the horizon from the scope of the senses to the scope of the awareness.

“And certainly messengers before you have been mocked, but those who mocked them were beset with what they used to mock. Say, ‘Travel in the land, then see what was the end of the deniers.’” The last two verses of this paragraph provide moral support and consolation to the Prophet (PBUH). All messengers before him faced the same impertinence. However, the end result was not in favor of those who rejected the faith. A lesson that can easily be learnt from history: travel in the land and see what the end of those who rejected faith was? This last verse embodies a brand new philosophy in life. It invites people to study history and reflect on lessons from the past, and it also encourages them to explore new avenues for improving life. It is an invitation to seek new methods in trade, innovation, and discovery. This is the methodology which transformed the Arabs within a quarter of a century from a backward nomadic society to a dynamic progressive society.

Verses: 12 to 19

12. Say, *“To whom belongs what is in the heavens and the earth?”* Say, *“To God;”* *He has ordained mercy on Himself; most certainly He will gather you on the Day of Resurrection- there is no doubt about it. (As for) those who have lost their souls, they do not believe.*
13. *And to Him belongs whatever dwells in the night and the day; and He is the All-Hearing, the Omniscient.*
14. Say, *“Shall I take a protecting guardian other than God, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and He feeds (others) and is not (Himself) fed.”* Say, *“I am commanded to be the first who submits himself. And be not of the polytheists.”*
15. Say, *“Surely I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the torment of a grievous day.*
16. *He, from whom it is averted on that day, God indeed has shown mercy unto him; and this is a manifest achievement.”*
17. *And if God touches you with affliction, there is none to remove it but He; and if He touches you with good, then He has power over all things.*
18. *And He is the Omnipotent over His servants; and He is the Wise, the Totally-Aware.*
19. Say, *“What thing is the greatest in testimony?”* Say, *“God is a witness between you and me; and this Quran has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches. Do you really bear witness that there are other gods with God?”* Say, *“I do not bear witness.”* Say, *“He is only one God, and surely I disown that which you set up (with Him).”* (6: 12-19).

This paragraph starts with a rhetorical question, *“To whom belongs what is in the heavens and the earth?”* The answer follows, *“Say, ‘To God;’ He has ordained mercy on Himself; most certainly He will gather you on the Day of Resurrection - there is no doubt about it. (As for) those who have lost their souls, they do not believe. And to Him belongs whatever dwells in the night and the day; and He is the All-Hearing, the Omniscient.”*

The verse prepares the Messenger (PBUH) for the confrontation with the idolaters of Mecca. The idolaters of Mecca knew that God is the Creator but they still set up equals to Him. The Messenger (PBUH) is directed to pose the question to them, *“To whom belongs what is in the heavens and the earth?”* The Messenger (PBUH) was then directed to answer the question, *“To God.”* The Arabs did not dispute this fact. They believed that God is the Creator and that everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him. The verses continue to state that God ordained mercy on Himself without suggestion or compulsion from any authority. Mercy is the foundation underlying how He treats His creation. His is a universal mercy that has been dictated only by His grace; it encompasses all aspects of life. This mercy was manifested in the creation of humankind from nothing; in the empowerment of humankind to be able to live on earth; in educating humankind and giving him the gift of the desire and ability to seek knowledge; in the guidance sent to humankind through the succession of messengers to guide him to the right path; in forgiving the sins of those who repent; and in rewarding those who do good deeds tenfold while only recompensing those who sin according to their sin. A large number of traditions elaborate on the extent and scope of the mercy of God and urges humankind to be merciful in their dealings with each other and with other creations of God. The knowledge about the mercy of God fills the heart of the believer with security and tranquility. It also induces the believer to acquire the character of mercy and practice being merciful, forgiving, and kind towards people and other creatures of God. The verse continues to remind people of the certainty of the Day of Judgment. This will be an opportunity to benefit from the mercy of God. Those who did well will be rewarded tenfold and those who sinned are left to the mercy of God, He can either punish them or forgive their sins. Only those who did not believe will be losers.

The paragraph continues with another rhetorical question: to whom belongs whatever dwells in the night and the day? This expresses the spaciousness of the kingdom of God. The first question is a statement of the extent of the kingdom in space while the second question outlines the extent of the kingdom in time. The second question ends with a reference to the ability of God to hear and know everything which emphasizes His absolute control over this vast kingdom.

Further emphasis of the Godliness of God, is the rhetorical question posed in verse 14, *“Say, ‘Shall I take a protecting guardian other than God, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and He feeds (others) and is not (Himself) fed.’ Say, ‘I am commanded to be the first who submits himself. And be not of the polytheists.’”* Who is more worthy of my loyalty than God, who created heavens and earth and who feeds and is not fed. The use of the word protecting guardian exemplifies the fundamental concept underlying Islam: the absolute and voluntary submission to God and the rejection of all forms of associating partners with God. This is a clear and unequivocal statement of submission to God. Submission means that one does not take a protecting guardian other than God. It means listening, obeying, surrendering, and worshiping God alone. It also means seeking help from God alone. He is the absolute ruler in all affairs.

“Say, ‘Surely I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the torment of a grievous day. He, from whom it is averted on that day, God indeed has shown mercy unto him; and this is a manifest

achievement.''' One motivation for this submission is the fear of the torment on the Day of Resurrection. It will be a grievous day. Those who escape the punishment of that day will be the successful ones.

The paragraph ends with an unequivocal statement of the absolute submission to the one God, a clear declaration of the belief in the Oneness of God. *“And if God touches you with affliction, there is none to remove it but He; and if He touches you with good, then He has power over all things. And He is the Omnipotent over His servants; and He is the Wise, the Totally-Aware. Say, ‘What thing is the greatest in testimony?’ Say, ‘God is a witness between you and me; and this Quran has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches. Do you really bear witness that there are other gods with God?’ Say, ‘I do not bear witness.’ Say, ‘He is only one God, and surely I disown that which you set up (with Him).’”* This is the climax of the discourse. The Prophet (PBUH) has been commanded to submit to God alone. He confronted the idolaters who associate partners with God refuting all their claims and stating in unequivocal terms the demarcation between submitting to God and associating partners with Him. He calls them to submit and accept God’s witness as it has been presented in the Quran which he was commanded to convey to people.

Verses: 20 to 32

20. *Those whom We have given the Scripture recognize (this revelation) as they recognize their sons; (as for) those who have lost their souls, they do not believe.*
21. *And who does greater wrong than he who fabricates a lie against God or (he who) denies His revelation; surely the wrongdoers will not be successful.*
22. *And on the day when We shall gather them all together, then We shall say to those who associated others (with God), “Where are your associates whom you claimed?”*
23. *Then their excuse would be nothing but that they would say, “By God, our Lord, we were not polytheists.”*
24. *See how they lie against themselves, and that which they fabricated has failed them.*
25. *And of them is he who listens to you, and We have cast veils over their hearts lest they understand it, and deafness in their ears; and even if they see every sign, they will not believe in it; so much so that when they come to you, they will only dispute with you; those who disbelieve say, “This is nothing but fables of the ancients.”*
26. *And they prohibit (others) from it; and they go far away from it, and they only bring destruction upon their own souls though they do not perceive it.*
27. *And if you could see when they are made to stand before the fire, then they shall say, “Would that we were sent back, and we would not deny the revelations of our Lord and we would be of the believers.”*
28. *Nay, what they concealed before shall become manifest to them; and if they were sent back, they would certainly go back to that which they are forbidden, and most surely, they are liars.*

29. *And they say, "There is nothing but our lives of this world, and we shall not be raised."*
30. *And if you could see when they are made to stand before their Lord. He will say, "Is not this the truth?" They will say, "Yes, by our Lord." He will say, "Taste then the torment because you disbelieved."*
31. *They are losers indeed who deny the meeting of God; until when the hour comes upon them all of a sudden, they shall say, "Alas for us, that we neglected it." And they shall bear their burdens on their backs; now surely evil is that which they bear.*
32. *And this world's life is nothing but a game and a distraction and certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who remain conscious of God; do you not then understand? (6:20-32)*

"Those whom We have given the Scripture recognize (this revelation) as they recognize their sons; (as for) those who have lost their souls, they do not believe." The statement that the people who were given the Scripture before realized that the Quran was God's revelation and that Muhammad (PBUH) was His Messenger has been repeatedly mentioned in the Quran. This statement was addressed both to the people of the Scripture themselves and to the idolaters of Mecca. The statement was made to confront the people of the Scripture when they opposed the new message. This verse, which has been revealed in Mecca, was addressed to the idolaters of Mecca to remind them that the people of the Scripture knew of the authenticity of this message because they were familiar with God's revelation. Rejection of the new message was then only motivated by their obstinacy and their bigoted attitude. The verse continues to warn that this denial will only result in the loss of the souls of those who disbelieve.

"And who does greater wrong than he who fabricates a lie against God or (he who) denies His revelation; surely the wrongdoers will not be successful. And on the day when We shall gather them all together, then shall We say to those who associated others (with God), 'Where are your associates whom you claimed?' Then their excuse would be nothing but that they would say, 'By God, our Lord, we were not polytheists.' See how they lie against themselves, and that which they fabricated has failed them." The term "wrongdoing" has been used in the Quran as a synonym to associating partners with God. Associating partners with God constitutes rejection of the truth. It is an injustice committed against the truth, an injustice against oneself, and injustice against people. Associating partners with God amounts to usurping God's right to be worshipped alone. Surely those who committed injustice will never be successful.

Associating partners with God has different forms, worshiping idols is only one of them. Associating partners with God, in its essence, is to attach one of God's attributes to someone other than God. Forms of associating partners with God include the belief that someone has the power to control the events of life. Another form is to follow manmade laws which contravene the divine project. Those who practice any kind of associating partners with God will be gathered on the Day of Judgment and will be asked, *"Where are your associates whom you claimed?"* Faced with this great trial, they will renounce

everything they believed in besides God, during their worldly lives. However, it will be too late for salvation. They have believed in a lie, and on this day, all lies will be useless.

“And of them is he who listens to you, and We have cast veils over their hearts lest they understand it, and deafness in their ears; and even if they see every sign, they will not believe in it;” The verse describes the argumentative attitude of the disbelievers and their determination to fight the truth. The verse describes an example of people whose senses do not function, they listen but do not hear, and they look but do not see. Their minds are sealed. This is God’s decree that they would not be able to listen and understand. However, God showed us the way for guidance, *“And those who strive in Our (cause), We will certainly guide them to our Paths; for verily God is with those who do right.”* (29:69). God also says, *“By the soul, and the proportion and order given to it; and how He imbued it with moral failings as well as God consciousness. Truly he succeeds who purifies it; and he fails who corrupts it.”* (91: 7-10). It is the divine formula that guidance is bestowed on those who strive to achieve it. But those mentioned in the verse above did not try to reach for guidance. On the contrary they tuned out the receptors that feed into their initial natural disposition which is designed to reach for guidance. Thus, their initial natural dispositions were sealed off and could not receive guidance. Every human being is born with an initial natural disposition that is designed to seek the truth. They chose to suppress this initial natural disposition so God sealed their minds. They prevented themselves from listening to the Quran and banned others from listening as well. This will only result in their destruction. On the Day of Judgment, they will be faced with a situation that they cannot escape. The truth will be manifest and they will be overwhelmed by their own regret. They will only wish if they can get a second chance. However, even if they were given a second chance, they would not take advantage of this new chance. Their attitudes do not change.

“And they say, ‘There is nothing but our life of this world, and we shall not be raised.’ And if you could see when they are made to stand before their Lord. He will say, ‘Is not this the truth?’ They will say, ‘Yes, by our Lord.’ He will say, ‘Taste then the torment because you disbelieved.’ They are losers indeed who deny the meeting of God; until when the hour comes upon them all of a sudden, they shall say, ‘Alas for us, that we neglected it.’ And they shall bear their burdens on their backs; now surely evil is that which they bear. And this world’s life is nothing but a game and a distraction and certainly the abode of the hereafter is better for those who remain conscious of God; do you not then understand?” These verses address the issue of accountability.

Accountability is an integral part of the belief system in Islam. It is one of the foundations upon which the Islamic way of life is built. It is also the foundation for the holistic approach to life that Islam embraces. From an Islamic perspective, human life extends along the dimensions of time and space. Death is not the end of human life. The life of a human being spans this world and the Hereafter. The life in this world is finite but the life in the Hereafter is eternal. This motivates people to look beyond this life to the Hereafter and work for the eternal life as hard as they work for this life. Human life extends in space because space spans the earth and the heaven with its paradise and Hell fire. The nature of the life in the Hereafter is one of the secrets that only God knows. The verses end with the ultimate verdict: the great loss for those who denied the meeting with

God. They refused to believe in the Day of Judgment and the Hereafter; and they thought that they will not be accountable for their actions in this life. They will carry their sins on their backs in their trek to Hell fire.

Verses: 33 to 39

33. *We know indeed that what they say certainly grieves you. It is not you they deny; but the wrongdoers deny the revelations of God.*
34. *And certainly, messengers before you were denied, but they persevered over their denial and their persecution until Our help came to them; and there is none to change the words of God; and you have already received some account of those messengers.*
35. *And if their turning aside is hard on you, then if you can seek a tunnel in the ground or a ladder to the skies so that you should bring them a sign; and if God had pleased, He would certainly have gathered them all on guidance, therefore be not one of the ignorant.*
36. *Only those who listen will accept; and (as to) the dead, God will raise them, then to Him they shall be returned.*
37. *And they say, "Why has not a sign been sent down to him from his Lord?" Say, "Surely God is able to send down a sign, but most of them do not know."*
38. *And there is no animal that walks on the ground nor a bird that flies with its two wings but (they are) communities like yourselves; We have not neglected anything in the Book, then to their Lord shall they be gathered.*
39. *And they who denied Our revelations are deaf and dumb, in utter darkness; whom God pleases He leaves to go astray and whom He pleases He puts on the straight path. (6:33-39)*

The first three verses bring consolation to the Prophet (PBUH). The idolatrous Arabs, especially those who fiercely resisted the message of Islam, never doubted the honesty and integrity of the Prophet (PBUH). They also realized that the language of the Quran is beyond the linguistic skills of humans. But they were adamant in their rejection. The Quran states that this rejection had nothing to do with doubting the Prophet's (PBUH) honesty; it stemmed from their choice to deny the revelations of God. There is a large volume of traditions which supports this thesis and explains the reason behind their rejection. The Arab chiefs were afraid that the new religion would rob them of their authority and power. The new religion came to state that God has the ultimate authority. They did not want to confess that, "*there is no deity except God*," which is the foundation of Islam, because that meant they would abdicate the limitless authority that they had over their people. The verses reminded the Prophet (PBUH) with what happened to all prophets who came before him and whose stories were told in the Quran, stories that describe the extent of their perseverance and forbearance. God sent prophets, one after the other since the beginning of time to guide people to the right path. They faced denial and persecution and they persevered only to triumph at the end. But the Quran also tells the Prophet (PBUH) to be realistic in dealing with the rejection and to persevere. What other course can he follow? Did he have the means to dig an underground tunnel or to

climb a ladder into the skies to bring the idolaters a convincing sign, a sign that they cannot refute.

God, in His wisdom, created humankind for a purpose. Humankind had to have certain skills and abilities to enable him to achieve that purpose. God, in His wisdom, also decreed that diversity of the human race is the rule. People are different in their ability to receive, to understand, and to respond to the signs of God. Humankind was commanded to seek the truth and was given the ability to choose whether to accept or reject the truth. The verse explained the divine project to His Prophet (PBUH), and admonished him not to be one of those who do not understand this plan.

“Only those who listen will accept; and (as to) the dead, God will raise them, then to Him they shall be returned.” God told His Prophet (PBUH) that he will meet two kinds of people. The first group is alert, with an initial natural disposition that is tuned to receive the truth. This group listens and responds favorably to the call. The other group, whose members chose to shut off their receptors and tune out their initial natural disposition are like those who are dead. This was a fundamental principle that defined the role of the Prophet (PBUH); it is people’s prerogative to choose whether they follow or reject the guidance.

“And they say, ‘Why has not a sign been sent down to him from his Lord?’ Say, ‘Surely God is able to send down a sign, but most of them do not know.’ And there is no animal that walks on the ground nor a bird that flies with its two wings but (they are) communities like yourselves; We have not neglected anything in the Book, then to their Lord shall they be gathered. And they who denied Our revelations are deaf and dumb, in utter darkness; whom God pleases He leaves to go astray and whom He pleases He puts on the straight path.” The disbelievers asked for a sign and the Quran says God is able to bring down a sign but there is a reason for not bringing down a sign and most of them do not understand. And if they reflect on the life around them, they would realize that God’s creations are all around them. Humankind is not alone in this universe. There are other creations leading well organized lives. Everything has been planned, and nothing was left to chance. Those who choose to deny these facts and reject the revelations of God are like the deaf and the dumb in vast darkness. God will leave whom He wills to go astray, and He will guide whom He wills to the straight path. Humankind is equipped with the ability to choose between right and wrong. God helps those who seek the truth and lets those who do not, to go astray. Although everything is controlled by the will of God, He is fair and does not treat anybody unjustly.

Verses: 40 to 49

40. Say, “Tell me if the torment of God should overtake you or the hour should come upon you, will you call (on others) besides God, if you are truthful?”

41. No, it is He you would call, He would remove that which made you to pray if He pleases and you would forget (the false gods) which you join (with Him).
42. And certainly, We sent (messengers) to nations before you then We seized them with tribulation and adversity in order that they might humble themselves.
43. If only, when Our affliction came on them, they humbled themselves. But their hearts were hardened and Satan made all that they used to do seem fair to them.
44. But when they forgot that which they were asked to be mindful of, We opened for them the doors of all things, until when they rejoiced in what they were given We seized them suddenly, and they were in utter despair.
45. So the roots of the people who were wrongdoers were cut off; and all praise is due to God, the Lord of the worlds.
46. Say, "Have you considered that if God takes away your hearing and your sight and sets a seal on your hearts, who is the deity besides God that can bring them back to you?" See how We explain the revelations, yet they turn aside.
47. Say, "Have you considered if the torment of God should overtake you suddenly or openly, will any be destroyed but the wrongdoers?"
48. And We send the messengers only to give good news and to warn, then whoever believes and acts aright, they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.
49. And (as for) those who deny Our revelations, torment shall afflict them because they transgressed. (6:40-49)

"Say, 'Tell me if the torment of God should overtake you or the hour should come upon you, will you call (on others) besides God, if you are truthful?' No, it is Him you would call, He would remove that which made you to pray if He pleases and you would forget (the false gods) which you join (with Him)." The Quran uses different approaches to address the initial natural disposition of humankind. In the previous verses, the approach was to remind people of the miracle of the creation and how it portrays the comprehensiveness of the divine project. In the present set of verses, the approach is to remind people of their spontaneous reaction when an affliction befalls them. Would they call upon anyone else except God? The question is rhetorical and the answer follows directly. It is God that they would call upon and they would forget all the false gods that they have associated with Him.

"And certainly, We sent (messengers) to nations before you then We seized them with tribulation and adversity in order that they might humble themselves. If only, when Our affliction came on them, they humbled themselves. But their hearts were hardened and Satan made all that they used to do seem fair to them." Trials can come in the form of afflictions to be suffered, or bounty to be enjoyed. Previous generations were tried first with afflictions but in their obstinacy, they refused to humble themselves to God. Their hearts were hardened and they succumbed to the temptation of the devil. When they forgot the warning, they were tested with a bounty from God. The verses paint an image of abundant bounty pouring upon them from every direction. Wealth, provisions, and worldly pleasures filled them with joy. They forgot who bestowed the blessings on them and never expressed gratitude to God. Then God seized them and they were left in utter despair. They were then completely destroyed to the last one of them. Praise be to the Lord of the worlds who cleansed the earth from the transgressors.

“Say, ‘Have you considered that if God takes away your hearing and your sight and sets a seal on your hearts, who is the god besides God that can bring them back to you?’ See how We explain the revelations, yet they turn aside.” The afflictions are then personalized and brought close to people by reminding them that God can take away their hearing and their sight. He can seal upon their hearts. No one of their false gods would be able to restore their lost faculties. In spite of having all these signs explained to them they still turned away. The Arabic word used for “turning aside” was usually used to describe how a camel walks askew when it is afflicted by a wound in one of its feet. The expression hints to the similarity between the two situations.

“Say, ‘Have you considered if the torment of God should overtake you suddenly or openly, will any be destroyed but the wrongdoers?’” The verses continue to threaten the disbelievers with an image of torment that will destroy the wrongdoers. Do you know that when the torment of God befalls you only the wrongdoers will perish? God’s torment can descend on them whenever He wills. It can come suddenly and unexpectedly while they are asleep, or it can come during the day when they are up and active. Either way, the torment will destroy the wrongdoers. The term “wrongdoers” is used here, as in other places in the Quran, to describe those who associate partners with God.

“And We send the messengers only to give good news and to warn, then whoever believes and acts aright, they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. And (as for) those who deny Our revelations, torment shall afflict them because they transgressed.” This paragraph ends by outlining the duties of the messengers of God. They were sent to deliver the message, to bring glad tidings, and to warn the people. Messengers are human beings who are sent to deliver the message to their fellow human beings. Those who receive the message have the choice either to believe or disbelieve. Those who believe and do righteous deeds, they shall not grieve for what to come nor will they be saddened for what was done. They will be forgiven for their previous sins and will be rewarded for their good deeds. As for those who denied the truth and transgressed, they will be punished.

Verses: 50 to 55

50. *Say, “I do not say to you, I have the treasures of God, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel; I only follow that which is revealed to me.” Say, “Are the blind and the seeing one alike? Do you not then reflect?”*
51. *Use the Quran to warn those who fear that they shall be gathered to their Lord- there is no protecting guardian for them, nor any intercessor besides Him- that they may remain conscious of God.*
52. *And do not drive away those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, they desire only His face; you are in no way accountable for them nor they are for you; if you should drive them away you would become one of the wrongdoers.*
53. *And thus, We have made some of them a test for the others so that they say, “Are these whom God favored among us?” Does not God know best those who are grateful?*

54. *And when those who believe in Our revelations come to you, say, "Peace be on you, your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself, verily, if any of you did evil through ignorance, then repents after that and acts aright, then He is All-Forgiving, Giver of Mercy."*
55. *And thus, do We explain the revelations and so that the way of the guilty may become clear. (6:50-55)*

"Say, 'I do not say to you, I have the treasures of God, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel; I only follow that which is revealed to me.' Say, 'Are the blind and the seeing one alike? Do you not then reflect?'" The arrogant idolaters of Mecca challenged the Prophet (PBUH) to bring about a miracle. They asked him if he could transform the hills of Safa and Marwa into gold or move them so that they can plant the land in their place. They asked him if he could foretell what will happen in the future, could he bring down an angel, or could he bring down a book from heaven. These questions were the product of previous mythologies that the Arabs were privy to. Old mythologies conveyed distorted concepts of the nature of prophets and prophet-hood. This verse was revealed to correct these false conceptions of the nature, duties and capabilities of the messengers of God. It also portrays the merciful characteristics of God and His grace in accepting the repentance of those who err. One of the aspects of His grace is the detailed guidance given so that people can base their choice of belief or disbelief on clear evidence.

So, the Messenger was asked to respond to the idolatrous Arabs, who demanded the Prophet (PBUH) to perform miracles, explaining to them that he is a mere mortal. He was not given the treasures of God, he was not an angel, nor was he able to prophesy about the future. He brought them a faith that appeals to the initial natural disposition of humankind, free of the myth that distorted previous faiths. The new faith brought guidance that opens the eyes of people to new meanings. The verses likened those who received and accepted the guidance to people who can see, but those who refused the guidance were blind. God gave humankind a brain that is able to receive, reflect, and understand the divine revelations. This is humankind's opportunity for salvation. If humankind turns away from the divine revelation and endeavors to make it independently on his own, then he will certainly stray away from the straight path. Those who claim that human beings can arrive at the truth through a human thought process are misled. Their claim is based on the assumption that human thought and revelation are both God inspired. This claim is certainly untrue. Human intellect is unable to perceive and comprehend in a comprehensive way the whole picture of the universe and the creation. The divine revelation provides a holistic approach to life and the universe. It allows humankind to perceive, comprehend, and experience the universal balance without which humankind becomes prey to its own whims and desires. Humankind is commanded to think and reflect. The divine revelation provides a light to guide the thought process and protect it against going astray. Complying with God's revelation does not limit the domain of the human thought process; it provides the needed protection.

"Use the Quran to warn those who fear that they shall be gathered to their Lord- there is no protecting guardian for them, nor any intercessor besides Him- that they may remain

conscious of God. And do not drive away those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, they desire only His face; you are in no way accountable for them nor they for you; if you should drive them away you would become one of the wrongdoers. And thus, We have made some of them a test for the others so that they say, 'Are these whom God favored among us?' Does not God know best those who are grateful? And when those who believe in Our revelations come to you, say, 'Peace be on you, your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself, verily, if any of you did evil through ignorance, then repents after that and acts aright, then He is All-Forgiving, Giver of Mercy.'" The Prophet (PBUH) was commanded to deliver the message to all people but be sensitive to those who are seeking the grace of their Lord. He was commanded to treat people equally because all members of the human race have equal worth in front of God. These verses came to address a situation which arose when some of the chiefs of Mecca refused the call of the Prophet (PBUH) because they looked down upon those who accepted Islam before them. The earlier followers of Islam were mostly poor and came from the lower strata of the society. The chiefs wanted to be members of an exclusive club. However, the Quran clearly tells the Prophet (PBUH) that humankind's worth is not measured by his earnings. This was a test for the chiefs: what did they consider more important, seeking the grace of God or enjoying the worldly benefits of their social status? The verse gives a clear message that humankind's worth is not measured in terms of ethnicity, gender, wealth, or social status. People have equal worth in the sight of God. He favors those who reflect and embrace His guidance and seek His grace. The arrogant chiefs were taken by surprise, *"Are these whom God favored among us?"* They thought, God should favor them over the poor, were they not the chiefs? The answer they got is full of meaning, *"Does not God know best those who are grateful?"* Guidance is not awarded to people according to their status. Guidance is a blessing from God to be bestowed upon those who appreciate God's blessing. The objections that the chiefs raised were motivated by their ignorance of God's standard.

"And when those who believe in Our revelations come to you, say, 'Peace be on you, your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself, verily, if any of you did evil through ignorance, then repents after that and acts aright, then He is All-Forgiving, Giver of Mercy.'" Those who believe do not only receive the blessing of guidance, but they are also rewarded by God's mercy. God has ordained on himself to be merciful to His servants. The door for God's forgiveness will always be left wide open for those who fall then repent. The word "evil" is quite general, it includes any type of sin. God has promised to forgive all sins upon repentance.

"And thus, do We explain the revelations and so that the way of the guilty may become clear." The message came to clarify and explain the criteria to be used to differentiate between right and wrong for people so that they are able to choose on the basis of clear definitions. The message defines what is right and shows the path that the believers should follow. It also defines falsehood, so that those who choose to follow the path of falsehood may realize their error.

\Verses: 56 to 65

56. Say, *"I am forbidden to worship those whom you call upon besides God." Say, "I do not follow your whims, for if I did, I would go astray and I would not be of those who are rightly guided."*
57. Say, *"I do have a clear proof from my Lord while you deny Him; what you seek to hasten is not in my power; the judgment is God's alone; He tells the truth and He is the best of judges."*
58. Say, *"If that which you desire to hasten was in my power, the matter would have certainly been decided between you and me; and God knows best who the wrongdoers are."*
59. *And with Him are the keys of the unseen - none knows them but He; and He knows what is in the land and sea, and no leaf falls without His knowledge, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything green nor dry but (it is all) in a clear record.*
60. *And He it is who takes your souls at night (in sleep), and He knows what you have done by day, then He raises you up again; that an appointed term may be fulfilled; then to Him is your return, then He will inform you of what you used to do.*
61. *And He is the Omnipotent, over His servants, and He sends keepers over you; until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers cause him to die, and they are not remiss.*
62. *Then are they sent back to God, their true Lord; certainly, His is the judgment and He is swiftest in taking account.*
63. Say, *"Who is it that delivers you from the darkness of land and sea (when) you call upon Him in humility, and discretely: if He delivers us from this, we should certainly be of the grateful ones."*
64. Say, *"God delivers you from them and from every distress, but again you set up partners (with Him)."*
65. Say, *"He has the power to send on you a torment from above you or from beneath your feet, or to throw you into confusion, (making you) different parties; and to make you taste mutual vengeance, each from the other." See how We explain the revelations that they may understand. (6:56-65)*

"Say, 'I am forbidden to worship those whom you call upon besides God.' Say, 'I do not follow your whims, for if I did, I would go astray and I would not be of those who are rightly guided.'" This verse responds to a compromise that the idolaters of Mecca suggested. If the Messenger (PBUH) were to worship their deities, they would join him in worshipping God. God commanded His Messenger (PBUH) to rebuff the idolaters of Mecca, telling them that he could not worship those whom they associate with God. One should reflect on the use of the words "those whom" which would usually refer to living beings. So the reference here extends beyond the idols that the idolaters worshipped to include the chiefs who used to determine the lawful and the forbidden. This is considered a kind of associating partners with God. Since these chiefs usurp God's right as the sole legislating authority. Islam considers following manmade rules which contravene God's law a sin equivalent to associating partners with God.

“Say, ‘I do have a clear proof from my Lord while you deny Him; what you seek to hasten is not in my power; the judgment is God’s alone; He tells the truth and He is the best of judges.’” This was a command to the Prophet (PBUH) to make an unequivocal proclamation of his belief in God, a belief based on deep understanding of the concept of the Oneness of God and the revelation that he received. It is the same proclamation that Noah, Saleh, Abraham, and Jacob (PBUT) all made before. This is a proclamation that reflected a deep faith in God.

“Say, ‘If that which you desire to hasten was in my power, the matter would have certainly been decided between you and me; and God knows best who are the wrongdoers.’” The Messenger (PBUH) reiterated the limits of his power. The idolaters wanted to see a prophet who performs miracles. So, God commanded him to explain to them the limits of his authority. He was only a mortal who received God’s revelations and was commanded to convey them to the people. God states the truth and judges between people. He is totally aware of who the wrongdoers are.

“And with Him are the keys of the unseen - none knows them but He; and He knows what is in the land and sea, and no leaf falls without His knowledge, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything green nor dry but (it is all) in a clear record.” The verses continue to talk about the attributes of God, only God has the comprehensive knowledge of everything. The verses outline the vastness of the unseen. God is aware of every minute detail of everything that happens on land or at sea. Whether it is a falling leaf or a hidden grain; green or dry everything is recorded in a book. God’s knowledge is comprehensive. It encompasses the known and the unknown; and that which grows, and that which perishes.

The verses mention the unseen and its keys and state that the knowledge of these keys belongs only to God. The belief in the unseen is one of the articles of faith. The belief in God encompasses the belief in the unseen. No human is able to understand the essence of God, so we can only recognize God through His actions. The belief in the Hereafter is a part of the belief in the unseen because the Hereafter, the resurrection, the accountability of humankind, and Hellfire are all matters of the unseen. The belief in the unseen includes the belief in the angels and in destiny whether good or bad.

The Quran identifies two realms in this world: the seen and the unseen. Not everything unknown to humankind is unseen. Humankind is given the capability of acquiring the knowledge so he can further the boundaries of the unknown and discover the rules that govern this universe within the boundaries decreed by God. Understanding the rules that govern the universe allows humankind to control the universal powers in order to be able to fulfill the purpose of his creation. Humankind was created to be the vicegerent of God on earth. This entails advancing the knowledge to better utilize the available resources for the benefit of the inhabitants of the earth. The fact that humankind is unable to know the unseen let alone control it does not mean that it does not exist. This is the Islamic concept of the unseen. Muslims believe in the unseen but they also believe that there are rules that govern the universe. We are commanded to explore these rules, understand them, and use

them to the advancement of life on earth. This is the way to fulfill the mission of God's vicegerent on earth.

"And He it is who takes your souls at night (in sleep), and He knows what you have done by day, then He raises you up again; that an appointed term may be fulfilled; then to Him is your return, then He will inform you of what you used to do." Humankind cannot deny the existence of the unseen while we experience its forms in our daily life. The Quran reminds us of the different aspects of the unseen that we experience every day. Sleep, which is a form of death, is one aspect of the unseen. God moves us from the realm of the unseen to the realm of the seen to continue our lives for a certain period of time. He is well aware of what gain or loss, good or bad we attain using our senses. Then to Him we return to be held accountable for our deeds.

"And He is the Omnipotent, over His servants, and He sends keepers over you; until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers cause him to die, and they are not remiss. Then are they sent back to God, their true Lord; certainly, His is the judgment and He is swiftest in taking account." God reigns supreme over His servants, and He has the absolute authority over His creation. No amount of freedom, knowledge, or power can allow humankind to escape God's reach. He sends keepers over His servants. In other places of the Quran, it is explained that the keepers are angels, but the present verses do not dwell on the nature of these keepers. The focus here is on the task of the keepers: keeping records of humankind's actions. Everything humankind does is recorded. Humankind is not alone even for a split second. Each single deed and each single movement are recorded by the keepers. Then the predetermined moment of death comes, a moment predetermined in God's knowledge but is unknown to humankind. It is part of the unseen. At this precise moment which comes unexpectedly, a dedicated messenger performs his task and puts the human being to death. Everyone will return to the true Lord. He is the one who created people, allowed them to lead their lives under His control, and brought them back to Him at the appointed time to judge them. Only He can judge, and only to Him people are accountable. He is swift in His reckoning.

"Say, 'Who is it that delivers you from the darkness of land and sea (when) you call upon Him in humility, and discretely: If He delivers us from this, we should certainly be of the grateful ones.' Say, 'God delivers you from them and from every distress, but again you set up partners (with Him).'" At times of adversity, the initial natural human disposition forces human beings to seek help from God. However, once the affliction is removed and life becomes comfortable, these same human beings quickly forget their Lord. The verses paint vivid images for the times of adversity and images of darkness on land and at sea.

"Say, 'He has the power to send on you a torment from above you or from beneath your feet, or to throw you into confusion, (making you) different parties; and to make you taste mutual vengeance, each from the other.' See how We explain the revelations that they may understand." Then people are reminded that God can overwhelm them with His torment, which can come in the form of a natural disaster or in the form of struggle between different groups of people. Depicting a disaster coming from above or below is more frightening than if it were coming from left or right. One may be able to avoid

danger coming from the side, but danger coming from above or below is usually unavoidable.

Verses: 66 to 70

66. *And your people denied it, although it is the very truth. Say, "I have not been put in charge of you."*
67. *Each announcement has an appointed term, and you will come to know (it).*
68. *And when you see those who engage into false discourses about Our revelations, turn aside from them until they turn to another topic, and if Satan causes you to forget, then, when you have remembered, do not sit with the wrongdoers.*
69. *The righteous are not held in any way accountable for them (the wrongdoers), but their duty is to remind them, that they may become conscious of God.*
70. *And leave those who have taken their religion for a play and amusement and are deceived by this worldly life. And continue to remind (them) with the Quran, lest a soul should be damned for what it has earned; it shall not have besides God neither a protecting guardian nor an intercessor, and if it should seek to offer every ransom, it shall not be accepted from it; these are the ones who will be ruined for what they earned; they shall have a drink of boiling water and a painful torment because they disbelieved. (6:66-70)*

"And your people denied it, although it is the very truth. Say, 'I have not been put in charge of you.' Each announcement has an appointed term, and you will come to know (it)." The verse addressed the Prophet (PBUH) to comfort him, telling him that what was revealed to him is the truth, even if his people rejected it. Their rejection does not change the reality. It is God that decrees what is true and what is false. The Prophet (PBUH) was told that he is not responsible for changing the hearts of people. His task is to deliver the message and it is up to the people to decide and face the consequences of their decision on the appointed time.

"And when you see those who engage into false discourses about Our revelations, turn aside from them until they turn to another topic, and if Satan causes you to forget, then, when you have remembered, do not sit with the wrongdoers. The righteous are not held in any way accountable for them (the wrongdoers), but their duty is to remind them, that they may become conscious of God." The command was then issued to the Prophet (PBUH) and the believers, not to socialize with those who denigrate the words of God. It is a command to abandon an assembly once its participants start reviling the message. However, the disbelievers are only accountable to God and the only responsibility that the believers have is to remind the disbelievers with the message, perhaps they would heed the advice.

"And leave those who have taken their religion for a play and amusement and are deceived by this worldly life. And continue to remind (them) with the Quran, lest a soul should be damned for what it has earned; it shall not have besides God neither a protecting guardian nor an intercessor, and if it should seek to offer every ransom, it shall not be accepted from it; these are the ones who will be ruined for what they earned;

they shall have a drink of boiling water and a painful torment because they disbelieved.” The command was then reiterated to the Prophet (PBUH) and the believers to leave those who consider their religion a game alone. Those were the ones who were deluded by the gains of this worldly life. However, it is the duty of the believers to continue to remind them with the message and the consequences of their behavior. Each soul will be held accountable for its deeds, there will be no intercessor to intercede on its behalf, nor will there be a protecting guardian to protect it from the wrath of God. No ransom will be big enough to save any soul. Those who rejected will be given boiling drinks that will burn their throats and their stomachs. They will be subjected to a painful chastisement in consequence of rejecting the faith.

Verses: 71 to 73

71. *Say, “Shall we call on things besides God, which do not benefit nor harm us, and turn back on our heels after receiving guidance from God, like him whom the devils have lured and confused him so he wanders around through the earth? He has companions who call him to the right way, (saying), ‘Come to us.’” Say, “Definitely, the guidance of God is the only true guidance, and we are commanded that we should submit to the Lord of the worlds.”*
72. *And that you should establish prayers and be conscious of Him; to Him you will be gathered.*
73. *And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in truth, and on the day, He says, “Be” and it will be.” His word is the truth, and His is the Sovereignty the Day when the trumpet shall be blown. He is the Knower of the unseen and the seen; and He is the Wise, the Totally-Aware. (6:71-73)*

“Say, ‘Shall we call on things besides God, which do not benefit nor harm us, and turn back on our heels after receiving guidance from God, like him whom the devils have lured and confused him so he wanders around through the earth? He has companions who call him to the right way, (saying), “Come to us.”” The verses continue to elaborate on the theme of the belief in the Oneness of God and to repudiate associating partners with Him in a strong cadence. It draws the parallel between those who abandon Islam after they have been guided and a person who is confused; he wanders around and does not know the right direction to follow. Only God’s guidance is the true guidance. This strong cadence ends with a note of a high pitch expressing the absolute authority of God. This authority will become apparent to all His creation on the day the trumpet will be blown. On that day all those in the graves will be resurrected, and the truth will become clear to everyone: God has absolute authority, and to Him everyone will return.

“Say, ‘Definitely, the guidance of God is the only true guidance, and we are commanded that we should submit to the Lord of the worlds.’ And that you should establish prayers and be conscious of Him; to Him you will be gathered. And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in truth, and on the day, He says, ‘Be’ it will be. His word is the truth, and His is the kingdom on the day when the trumpet shall be blown. He is the

Knower of the unseen and the seen; and He is the Wise, the Totally-Aware. Muhammad, say to the idolaters that they are worshiping those who can neither benefit nor harm them. Whether it is a person, an idol, a tree, an angel, or a spirit no one can benefit or harm them except God. Things happen only according to God's will. Those who are lured by the devils to turn their backs to the guidance, will be thrown in a state of disarray and confusion. Their hearts will be torn between the various deities they worshiped. Certainly, God's guidance is the only true guidance.

The use of the term, "Lord of the worlds" here is significant. It states unequivocally that God is the Lord of the universe. We are commanded to submit to Him. The whole universe has submitted to God, why would humankind be an exception? God created the heavens and the earth in truth. God has the absolute power to create, change, and transform. He simply says, "Be," and it is. He knows the seen and the unseen and He is the Wise, Totally-Aware.

Verses: 74 to 94

74. *And when Abraham said to his father, Azar, "Do you take idols for deities? Surely I see you and your people in manifest error."*
75. *And thus, did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth so that he may have certitude.*
76. *So, when the night covered him over, he saw a star; he said, "Is this my lord?" So, when it set, he said, "I do not love things that set."*
77. *Then when he saw the moon rising, he said, "Is this my lord?" So, when it set, he said, "Unless my Lord guides me, I shall certainly be among those who go astray."*
78. *Then when he saw the sun rising, he said, "Is this my lord? This is the greatest?" So, when it set, he said, "My people, surely I disown all that what you set up as partners with God."*
79. *Surely, I have set my face firmly and truly, towards Him who originated the heavens and the earth, and I shall never set up partners with God."*
80. *His people disputed with him. He said, "Do you dispute with me about God? And He has indeed guided me; and I do not fear in any way what you associate with Him, unless my Lord pleases; my Lord encompasses all things in His knowledge; will you not then be mindful?"*
81. *And how should I fear what you have associated (with Him), while you do not fear that you have associated partners (with God) about which He did not send down to you any authority; which then of the two parties has more right for security, if you know?*
82. *Those who believe and do not obscure their faith with wrongdoing, those who shall have the security and they are the rightly guided."*
83. *And this was Our argument which we gave Abraham against his people; We exalt in dignity whom We please; your Lord is Wise, Omniscient.*
84. *And We gave him Isaac and Jacob; each did We guide, and We guided Noah before, and of his descendants, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, and Aaron; and thus, We reward the doers of good.*

85. *And Zachary and John and Jesus and Elijah; all in the ranks of the righteous;*
86. *And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot; and all of them We preferred above all other people.*
87. *And from among their fathers and their descendants and their brethren, and We chose them and guided them to the straight way.*
88. *This is God's guidance; He guides whom He pleases of His servants. If they were to associate partners with Him, certainly what they did would be in vain.*
89. *These whom We gave the Scripture, the Wisdom, and the Prophet-hood; therefore, if these disbelieve in it We have already entrusted it to a people who believe in it.*
90. *These are they whom God guided, therefore follow their guidance. Say, "I do not ask you for any reward for it; it is nothing but a reminder for the worlds."*
91. *They have no grasp of God's true measure when they say, "God did not reveal anything to a mortal." Say, "who sent down the Scripture, which Moses brought, a light and guidance to people, which you put on parchments, you show some while you conceal much? And you were taught what you did not know, (neither) you nor your fathers." Say, "God;" Then leave them to play in their vain discourses.*
92. *And this is a Book We have revealed, blessed, confirming that which is before it, and that you may warn the mother of the cities and those around it; and those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it, and they strictly guard their prayers.*
93. *And who does greater wrong than he who fabricates a lie against God, or says, "It has been revealed to me;" While nothing has been revealed to him, and he who says, "I can reveal the like of what God has revealed?" And if you could see the wrongdoers in the agonies of death and the angels shall spread forth their hands, "Give up your souls; today you will be recompensed with an ignominious torment because you spoke against God other than the truth and (because) you showed arrogance against His revelations."*
94. *And certainly, you have come to Us alone as We created you the first time, and you have left behind your backs the things which We gave you, and We do not see with you your intercessors whom you alleged to be God's associates; certainly, the ties between you are now cut off and what you alleged has deserted you.*
(6:74-94)

This long paragraph uses a different approach to discuss the main theme of this Sura. It establishes the fundamentals of faith by introducing a comprehensive understanding of God and the relationship between humankind and his Creator. The paragraph uses a new style. The concept of the Oneness of God is introduced through an example of a dialogue which would have taken place between the messengers of God who were sent before Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and their people. The verses narrate the story of Prophet Abraham (PBUH) and the dialogue between him and his father. It shows how the sound initial natural disposition rejects the belief in the idols and longs to find the One True God. This initial natural human disposition motivated Prophet Abraham (PBUH) to reflect on the creation of God in his search for God. He reached the conclusion that his

father and his people were committing a great error in worshiping idols and he confronted his father with this conclusion.

“And when Abraham said to his father, Azar, ‘Do you take idols for deities? Surely I see you and your people in manifest error.’ And thus, did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth so that he may have certitude. So, when the night covered him over, he saw a star; he said, ‘Is this my lord?’ So, when it set, he said, ‘I do not love things that set.’ Then when he saw the moon rising, he said, ‘Is this my lord?’ So, when it set, he said, ‘Unless my Lord guides me, I shall certainly be among those who go astray.’ Then when he saw the sun rising, he said, ‘Is this my lord? This is the greatest?’ So, when it set, he said, ‘My people, surely I disown all that what you set up as partners with God. Surely, I have set my face firmly and truly, towards Him who originated the heavens and the earth, and I shall never set up partners with God.’” Prophet Abraham’s (PBUH) argument reflected the disposition of the sound initial human nature which refuses to accept idol worship which his people were practicing. Prophet Abraham’s (PBUH) portrays the example of the sound initial natural disposition which God imbued humans with.

Prophet Abraham (PBUH), who was known for his kindness, must have endured a great hardship to confront his father with this conclusion. So, Prophet Abraham (PBUH) was rewarded by God. He was shown the nature of the divine kingdom and the secrets of the universe. His initial disposition to reject the worship of idols is strengthened by this knowledge to move him from the stage of rejecting the worship of idols to the stage of the belief in the One True God. The process is described in a series of observations and conclusions that he drew. This was a difficult journey for Prophet Abraham (PBUH). It was the journey from a belief motivated by the initial natural human disposition to a belief based on awareness, a belief which led to the acceptance of duties and laws dictated by the divine project. These were the duties and laws included in the message delivered by the different messengers of God. The Message became then the covenant between God and humankind.

“His people disputed with him. He said, ‘Do you dispute with me about God? And He has indeed guided me; and I do not fear in any way what you associate with Him, unless my Lord pleases; my Lord encompasses all things in His knowledge; will you not then be mindful? And how should I fear what you have associated (with Him), while you do not fear that you have associated partners (with God) about which He did not send down to you any authority; which then of the two parties has more right for security, if you know?’” His people were misguided in their idol worship, unable to think or reflect. They argued with him, at no avail. He completed his journey seeking the truth, and he was guided by his Lord. He had no fear of the false gods which they worshiped. He responded to his people threats; it is they who should be afraid of God. He asked them a rhetorical question: who is worthy of the security? The answer came from the higher heaven, and God’s decree was pronounced, *“Those who believe and do not obscure their faith with wrongdoing, those who shall have the security and they are rightly guided. And this was Our argument which we gave Abraham against his people; We exalt in dignity whom We*

please; surely your Lord is Wise, Omniscient.” This was the argument that Prophet Abraham (PBUH) had against his people; a God inspired argument that refuted his people’s claims and raised his status high above them. God is surely Wise and Omniscient.

“And We gave him Isaac and Jacob; each did We guide, and We guided Noah before, and of his descendants, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, and Aaron; and thus, We reward the doers of good. And Zachary and John and Jesus and Elijah; all in the ranks of the righteous; and Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot; and all of them We preferred above all other people. And from among their fathers and their descendants and their brethren, and We chose them and guided them to the straight way. This is God’s guidance; He guides whom He pleases of His servants. If they were to associate partners with Him, certainly what they did would be in vain. These whom We gave the Scripture and the Wisdom and the Prophet-hood; therefore, if these disbelieve in it, We have already entrusted it to a people who believe in it. These are they whom God guided, therefore follow their guidance. Say, ‘I do not ask you for any reward for it; it is nothing but a reminder for the worlds.’” The verses continue to mention a number of the messengers of God, seventeen in total, in addition to Prophets Noah (PBUH) and Abraham (PBUH). All were chosen by God, all excelled in performing their tasks and all were rewarded by God. Their status was raised high above their people just like Abraham’s (PBUH) status was raised high above his people before. These are the messengers who brought God’s guidance to their people, who declared that the deeds of all who associate partners with God will be frustrated. This is a statement which identifies the source of guidance that people on earth can avail. The messengers brought God’s guidance to people. This is the only source of guidance and the deeds of those who seek different sources for guidance will be frustrated.

The messengers were given the Scripture, the Prophet-hood and the Wisdom to guide people to the straight path. They are the examples to be followed by those who are guided. Those who are guided will follow the example set by the messengers and will carry the responsibility of spreading the message, in spite of those who associate partners with God. The Prophet (PBUH) should follow the example of the previous messengers. He should make it clear to the idolaters that he is not expecting a reward from them. He is bringing them a reminder so that they can heed God’s guidance.

“They have no grasp of God’s true measure when they say, ‘God did not reveal anything to a mortal.’ Say, ‘Who sent down the Scripture, which Moses brought, a light and guidance to people, which you put on parchments which you show some while you conceal much? And you were taught what you did not know, (neither) you nor your fathers.’ Say, ‘God;’ then leave them to play in their vain discourses. And this is a Book We have revealed, blessed, confirming that which is before it, and that you may warn the mother of the cities and those around it; and those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it, and they strictly guard their prayers.” The idolatrous Arabs refused to admit that Muhammad (PBUH) was a messenger of God. This rejection amounted to a denial that God can send a messenger. They underestimated the power of God. This rejection also portrayed their ignorance of the attributes of God. He is the Generous, the Great, the Just,

the Merciful, the Omniscient, and the Wise. He will not leave His creation without guidance. God knows best His creation and knows best their needs. He knows the struggle that humankind has to go through against his whims and desires on one side and against Satan on the other side. So, humankind needs guidance to support him in this struggle. God provided guidance through His messengers.

An example of these messengers is Prophet Moses (PBUH) who was given a Scripture a light and guidance for people. The Quran is another example for the Scripture that was revealed by God to His messengers. It is a blessed Book that confirms the Scripture that was revealed before it. It brings warning to the people of Mecca and its surroundings. Mecca is the site of the first house that was established on earth for people to worship the One True God. God made this house a safe and secure place for people. From that house came out the universal call to all people to believe in God and to it the believers come back to perform pilgrimage, thus they complete the circle. Those who believe in the accountability of humankind do not find it difficult to believe that God sent messengers to guide people to the straight path. They keep their prayers to maintain a strong relationship with their Lord.

“And who does greater wrong than he who fabricates a lie against God, or says, ‘It has been revealed to me;’ While nothing has been revealed to him, and he who says, ‘I can reveal the like of what God has revealed?’ And if you could see the wrongdoers in the agonies of death and the angels shall spread forth their hands, ‘Give up your souls; today you will be recompensed with an ignominious torment because you spoke against God other than the truth and (because) you showed arrogance against His revelations.’ And certainly, you have come to Us alone as We created you the first time, and you have left behind your backs the things which We gave you, and We do not see with you your intercessors whom you alleged they were God's associates; certainly, the ties between you are now cut off and what you alleged has deserted you.” It has been narrated on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) and Qatadah (RA) that these verses were revealed to respond to Musailimah the liar, his wife Sajah bint Al-Harith, and Al-Aswad Al-‘Ansi who claimed that they were prophets. Each one of them claimed that they received God’s revelation. It was also narrated on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) that ‘Abd-Allah bin Sa’ad bin Abi Sarh was the one who said, “‘I can reveal the like of what God has revealed.” He was a Muslim and one of the scribes of the Prophet (PBUH), however he became an apostate. The verses paint a horrible scene for the torment that the wrongdoers will meet. What is worse than those who make false claims about receiving a revelation from God? Those will suffer most when they are on the death bed as a result of making these false claims. They will meet their Lord as individuals, just as they were created individually in the first place. No supporters will be available to support them, nor will they have intercessors who can intercede on their behalf.

Verses: 95 to 111

95. *It is God who splits the grain and the fruit stone. He brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living; that is God. How you then turn away from the truth?*
96. *He causes the dawn to break; and He has made the night for rest, and the sun and the moon for reckoning; this is laid down by the will of the Eminent, the Omniscient.*
97. *And He it is who has made the stars for you that you may be guided by them in the darkness of the land and the sea; truly We explain Our revelations for a people who know.*
98. *And He it is who has brought you into being from a single soul, then there is (for you) a resting-place and a depository; indeed, We have explained the revelations for a people who understand.*
99. *And He it is who sends down water from the sky, then We bring forth with it buds of all (plants), then We bring forth from it green (foliage) from which We produce thick-clustered grain; and from the palm-tree, and its sheaths, come forth clusters (of dates) within reach, and gardens of grapes and olives and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in variety); watch their fruits as they grow and ripen; most surely there are signs in this for a people who believe.*
100. *And they assign partners to God from among the jinn, while He created them, and they falsely attribute to Him sons and daughters without knowledge; glory be to Him, and highly exalted is He above what they ascribe (to Him).*
101. *He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How could He have a son when He has no consort, and He (Himself) created everything, and He is the Knower of all things.*
102. *That is God, your Lord, there is no deity but He; the Creator of all things, therefore worship Him, and He is the Guardian in charge of all things.*
103. *No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all visions; and He is the Subtle, the Totally-Aware.*
104. *Indeed, there have come to you clear proofs from your Lord; whoever will therefore see, it is for his own soul and whoever will be blind, it shall be to his detriment and I am not a keeper over you.*
105. *And thus, do We explain the revelations and that they may say, "You have studied;" and that We may make it clear to a people who know.*
106. *Follow what is revealed to you from your Lord; there is no deity but He; and turn away from those who associate partners with God.*
107. *And if God had pleased, they would not have associated partners (with Him); and We have not appointed you a keeper over them and you are not a guardian in charge of them.*
108. *And do not revile those whom they call upon others besides God, lest they wrongfully revile God. Thus, to every nation have We made their deeds seem fair; then to their Lord shall be their return, so He will inform them of what they did.*
(6:95-108)

“It is God Who splits the grain and the fruit stone. He brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living; that is God. How you then turn away from the truth?” It is the miracle which no one knows how it happens let alone how to duplicate it, the miracle of initiating life. This paragraph presents yet another approach to establish the belief in the Oneness of God. It invites humankind to reflect on various phenomena that surround us: the germination of seeds, the alternation of day and night, the motion of the sun and the moon, the use of the stars for navigation on land and at sea, and the creation of humankind.

One of the miracles that happen every moment and no one can fathom, let alone control, is the miracle of how life originates from a seemingly dead grain or a fruit stone. Each moment a grain is split and germinates; and a solid fruit stone splits and grows to produce a new tree. How does life originate from a grain or a fruit stone is still a mystery, known only to God. In the beginning, God created life from nothing. This statement is mentioned often in the Quran to point the attention to the process of creation as a confirmation of the fact of the Oneness of God, the Creator. How can people turn away from these facts?

“He causes the dawn to break; and He has made the night for rest, and the sun and the moon for reckoning; this is laid down by the will of the Eminent, the Omniscient. And He it is who has made the stars for you that you may be guided by them in the darkness of the land and the sea; truly We explain Our revelations for a people who know.”

Astronomical phenomena are also signs that point to the Oneness of the Creator. God is the One who alternates the day and night and He is the One who created the sun and the moon. These phenomena point to the delicate control needed to maintain the creation and can only be provided by the One God. Among these signs are the stars which guide people in the darkness on land and at sea. The verses appeal to the initial natural human disposition rather than presenting these facts as dry theories. It appeals to the ability of humankind to observe and reflect on these signs. The verse ends by appealing to those who know, because to be guided by the stars one has to know which stars to look for and to understand their movements.

“And He it is who has brought you into being from a single soul, then there is (for you) a resting-place and a depository; indeed, We have explained the revelations for a people who understand.” The next phenomenon to be addressed in this group of verses is how life began and how it continues through the mating of a male and a female. This verse ends by appealing to the understanding of humankind, because to understand this phenomenon one needs a higher level of knowledge to understand how the sperm (the depository) and egg (the resting-place) come together to form the embryo from which a new human being is formed.

“And He it is who sends down water from the sky, then We bring forth with it buds of all (plants), then We bring forth from it green (foliage) from which We produce thick-clustered grain; and from the palm-tree, and its sheaths, come forth clusters (of dates) within reach, and gardens of grapes and olives and pomegranates similar (in kind) and different (in variety); watch their fruits as they grow and ripen; most surely there are

signs in this for a people who believe.” Another sign of the Creator is the water cycle and the role of water in growing plants: a fact that is known to everyone. The verse paints a beautiful scene of green plants that grow into gardens full of fruit bearing trees: palm-trees, grapevines, olive groves, and pomegranate trees. The branches bring the fruits to be handpicked and provide shade. The verse appeals to the sense of appreciation of the beauty of nature. Look at the beauty of the fruits that come out and reflect on the Creator who created this beauty. These are signs for people who believe, because belief opens the heart of the believer to receive the signs and it provides the insight so that one can sense what is behind the visible.

“And they assign partners to God from among the jinn, while He created them, and they falsely attribute to Him sons and daughters without knowledge; glory be to Him, and highly exalted is He above what they ascribe (to Him). He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How could He have a son when He has no consort, and He (Himself) created everything, and He is the Knower of all things.” Having laid the foundation for the signs that point to the Oneness of the Creator, the verses begin to refute the false claims of the idolaters who worshipped the jinn. The idolatrous Arabs were once, the followers of Prophet Abraham (PBUH), but they deviated from the faith he preached which is based on the belief in the Oneness of God. The deviation must have started slowly, and then developed into a full-blown polytheism which claimed that God has partners from among the jinn. But how can this be, while it is God Who created the jinn. This mythology claimed that God has sons and daughters. Glory be to God Who is high above all these false claims. He is the Creator of everything, how can He have a son while He has no mate. His knowledge encompasses everything. This is certainly your Lord, the creator of everything, so serve Him. Since God is the Creator, He controls everything and He is the provider, then only He deserves to be worshipped.

“That is God, your Lord, there is no deity but He; the Creator of all things, therefore worship Him, and He takes charge of all things. No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all visions; and He is the Subtle, the Totally-Aware.” Humans do not have the ability to see God. Those who request to see God and those who request a material proof for the existence of God do not appreciate the meaning of their requests. It is beyond the ability of human beings to see God, but He sees everything. It is sufficient for them to see God through the signs of His creation. These are the signs that guide humankind to the belief in the Oneness of God. These signs provide the insight for the spiritual sight. Those who got the insight can see clearly, while those who do not have the insight are blind and the Prophet (PBUH) was not appointed a keeper over people.

“Indeed, there have come to you clear proofs from your Lord; whoever will therefore see, it is for his own soul and whoever will be blind, it shall be to his detriment and I am not a keeper over you. And thus, do We explain the revelations and that they may say, ‘You have studied;’ and that We may make it clear for a people who know. Follow what is revealed to you from your Lord; there is no deity but He; and turn away from those who associate partners with God. And if God had pleased, they would not have associated partners (with Him); and We have not appointed you a keeper over them, and you are not a guardian in charge of them.” The verses talk about the reaction of the

idolatrous Arabs when they heard the revelations explaining the astronomical phenomena and the other signs of God which they thought were beyond the understanding of an illiterate human being like Muhammad (PBUH). So, they said to the Prophet (PBUH) you must have studied the Scripture that was revealed before. They did not realize that even the old Scripture did not address such issues. The explanation of the signs of God given in these verses was met with two kinds of reactions. Those who were not interested in the guidance nor wanted the truth, tried to find an explanation to justify Muhammad's (PBUH) knowledge of these phenomena. They fabricated the story that he studied earlier Scripture. But those who were interested in the guidance and endeavored to seek the truth knew that this knowledge is divine and believed in it. Those are the *"people who know"*.

So, God commanded the Prophet (PBUH) to follow what has been revealed to him and to turn away from the idolaters. Had God willed that they follow the guidance, they would have been forced to follow. Had God willed that they would be created with an inclination towards guidance only, like the angels, He could have done that. But God created humankind with equal disposition to guidance and misguidance. God gave humankind the ability to choose, within the limits that God set, the way to follow and to reap the appropriate compensation for his choice. God's will does not force humankind to follow one way or the other so that he can fulfill the role for which he was created. This freedom of choice is further emphasized by reiterating the role of the Prophet (PBUH), he was neither a keeper over them nor was he appointed as a guardian in charge of them. This also outlined the limits of responsibility of the Prophet (PBUH).

"And do not revile those whom they call upon others besides God, lest they wrongfully revile God. Thus, to every nation have We made their deeds seem fair; then to their Lord shall be their return, so He will inform them of what they did. And they swear a solemn oath by God, that if a sign came to them they would most certainly believe in it. Say, 'Certainly, signs are in the power of God; and what makes you sure that when it comes they will not believe?' We confounded their hearts and their eyes, as they did not believe in it the first time, and We let them wander on blindly in their contumacy. And even if We had sent down to them the angels and the dead had spoken to them and We had brought together all things before them, they would not believe unless God so willed, but most of them are ignorant." This was a command to the Prophet (PBUH), and consequently to the believers, to turn away from the idolaters politely. They were commanded not to revile the false deities of the idolaters, so that the idolaters would not have the excuse to revile God. Leave them to God, they will return to Him and they will be told about what they have done. The command indicated also that it does not behoove the believers to use indecent language even in connection with false deities. It is also doubtful that using an abusive language would be productive; it may increase the obstinacy of the idolaters.

The paragraph ends with refuting the claim of the idolaters that if they receive a sign from God, they will believe. The Quran pointed out that the signs of God were all around them but they were obstinate in their rejection, so they ignored these signs. God knew their hearts. He knew how they will react. Even if angels came down to them, or the dead were able to speak to them they would not have believed.

Verses: 109 to 113

109. *And they swear a solemn oath by God, that if a sign came to them they would most certainly believe in it. Say, "Certainly, signs are in the power of God; and what makes you sure that when it comes they will not believe?"*
110. *We confounded their hearts and their eyes, as they did not believe in it the first time, and We let them wander on blindly in their contumacy.*
111. *And even if We had sent down to them the angels and the dead had spoken to them and We had brought together all things before them, they would not believe unless God so willed, but most of them are ignorant. (6:95-111)*
112. *Thus, have We appointed to every prophet an enemy - devils of humankind and jinn who inspire in one another plausible discourse through guile. If your Lord willed, they would not do so; so leave them alone with that which they fabricate.*
113. *That the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter may incline thereto, and that they may take pleasure therein, and that they may earn what they are earning. (6:109-113)*

The first verse is a continuation of the paragraph which was discussed in the previous part. It deals with the challenge that the idolatrous Arabs were posing to the Prophet (PBUH): they wanted the Prophet (PBUH) to bring a miracle to support his claim. They repeatedly assured the Prophet (PBUH) that if he were to bring them a miracle they would believe him. The verses dealing with this episode say, *"And they swear a solemn oath by God, that if a sign came to them they would most certainly believe in it. Say, 'Certainly, signs are in the power of God; and what makes you sure that when it comes they will not believe?' We confounded their hearts and their eyes, as they did not believe in it the first time, and We let them wander on blindly in their contumacy."* Even the believers entertained hopes that the idolaters were honest in their statements. They wished that God would respond favorably to their request. These verses were discussed in the previous section. In this section we will simply outline lessons that we learn from these verses.

The first lesson is that faith, disbelief, guidance, and misguidance are not dependent on factual proofs. The truth is itself the proof of its validity. The truth overwhelms the heart and opens it to accept and submit to guidance. There are other obstacles that prevent people from accepting the truth other than the lack of proof. The verse says, *"Certainly, signs are in the power of God; and what makes you sure that when it comes they will not believe?" We confounded their hearts and their eyes, as they did not believe in it the first time, and We let them wander on blindly in their contumacy."* Even if they receive a miracle, there is no assurance that what happened in the first instance will not repeat again and they would continue to deny the truth as they did before. Faith is a matter of the heart. Sound hearts are ready to receive the truth.

The second lesson is that the will of God is the deciding factor regarding matters of guidance and misguidance. In His wisdom, God allowed humans a certain level of freedom of choice. Humans will be tested how they use this freedom. Those who use their freedom of choice in pursuing the truth and searching for guidance will be helped by God in their pursuit; but those who choose to turn away from pursuing the truth will not get the help and will be left to dwell in darkness. The will of God prevails in any case. To God is the ultimate decision. This is what the verse, *“We confounded their hearts and their eyes, as they did not believe in it the first time, and We let them wander on blindly in their contumacy,”* means. And, *“even if We had sent down to them the angels and the dead had spoken to them and We had brought together all things before them, they would not believe unless God so willed, but most of them are ignorant.”* This has also been referred to in the verse, *“Follow what is revealed to you from your Lord; there is no deity but He; and turn away from those who associate partners with God. And if God had pleased, they would not have associated partners (with Him); and We have not appointed you a keeper over them and you are not a guardian in charge of them.”* In another verse it is stated, *“Thus, have We appointed to every prophet an enemy - devils of humankind and jinn who inspire in one another plausible discourse through guile. If your Lord willed, they would not do so; so leave them alone with that which they fabricate.”*

Thus, it is God who makes the final decision. He has the power to offer or withhold guidance. However, He is going to test people according to the limited freedom of choice that He granted them. He has decreed that those who strive for the truth will be guided with His help, and those who chose the road to misguidance will be left to their devices. There is no contradiction between the infinite power of God and the limited freedom of choice that was granted to humans.

The third lesson is that although humans can exercise their limited freedom of choice to obey or disobey God, both categories are under His control. No one has the ability to escape God’s Omnipotence. However, there are two distinct domains of activities in the life of each human being. The first domain includes activities which human beings have no control over e.g. activities dictated by the biological and psychological composition of the human being. The second domain includes activities which the human being is free (within the boundaries set by God) to make decisions based on knowledge and guidance. The believers are able to maintain a balance between the two domains. This balance allows them to live in peace with themselves, because the two domains are interacting together under one set of rules. The disbelievers, on the other hand, suffer from the conflicting demands of the two domains.

The third lesson is specifically relevant to the topics dealt with in the remaining part of this Sura. The same issue comes up over and over again in different places in the Sura and under various forms. This is simply because the remaining part of the Sura deals with the concept of divinity and the authority and omnipotence of the Divine. Even those who choose to disobey the divine law cannot escape the control of God.

An interpretation of the verse, *“And even if We had sent down to them the angels and the dead had spoken to them and We had brought together all things before them, they would not believe unless God so willed, but most of them are ignorant,”* was given by Abo Ga’far Muhammad bin Jareer Al-Tabari as follows, “God told His Prophet (PBUH), ‘Muhammad, do not have any hope that these who associate partners with God would believe. Those, who said, ‘We will believe if you bring about a miracle to convince us,’ will not believe even if we were to bring the angels down to meet them face to face, or raised the dead to speak to them as a sign that you are the messenger of God; they will not believe except by God’s grace.” Al-Tabari continued to say, “Most of these idolaters do not realize this. They think that faith and disbelief are within their power and according to their will. But God says, ‘Faith and disbelief are in My hand. No one will be guided or misguided except by the will of God.’”

I agree with Al-Tabari’s statement, however, we need to elaborate on it in light of the collection of verses which deal with the topics of guidance, misguidance, the will of God, and the freedom of choice.

Faith and misguidance are occurrences, and every occurrence takes place according to a specified measure. *“We created everything according to specific measure.”* (54:49) The verses that we will cite explain the law according to which a person would believe or disbelieve. Humankind has a measure of freedom in choosing the direction he wants to follow. If a person chooses to head towards guidance and strives to find the truth, he/she will be helped by God to find the truth and become guided by it. If a person chooses the direction of falsehood and hated the truth, then he/she will be misguided.

In other words, humankind has the freedom to choose an attitude, but the final destination is in the hand of God. If the attitude is to seek the truth and look for true guidance, the person will be helped by God to reach that destination. However, if the attitude is to choose falsehood and avoid seeking the truth then no help will be offered by God to change that attitude.

“Thus, have We appointed to every prophet an enemy - devils of humankind and jinn who inspire in one another plausible discourse through guile. If your Lord willed, they would not do so; so leave them alone with that which they fabricate. That the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter may incline thereto, and that they may take pleasure therein, and that they may earn what they are earning.” These devils, from among humans and jinn, and who have been destined by God to be enemies to the messengers, inspire each other with delusional and polished speech. The use of the word *inspire* refers to the effect that these speeches may have on the psyche of disbelievers and how they delude themselves into disbelief.

We know about the devils from among humans. We have seen them in action fighting the prophets, the truth which they brought, and those who believed with them. What about the devils from among the jinn? Jinn belong to the domain of the unseen. Only God knows the unseen. We only know about jinn that which God has told us. On this account, we know that jinn are created from fire, they have supernatural powers, and that some of

them are righteous while others are evil. We also know that they are invisible but they have the ability to see us. The devils from among the jinn are able somehow to whisper to humans and try to lure them away from the straight path. However, these devils have no power over the believers who often remember God. The remembrance of God disarms the devil in his battle to tempt the believer. We know that jinn, like humans, will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment. They will be either rewarded and allowed to enter paradise or punished and destined to Hell fire. Compared to angels, jinn are the weak creation.

This verse tells us about how God made to each prophet enemies from among the devils of the humans and the jinn. Had He willed, He could have subdued these devils and prevented them from fighting the prophets, hurting the believers, and luring people away from the path of God. God could have forced them to be righteous or He could have guided them to the right path if they showed any inclination towards it. But God in His wisdom gave them the freedom of choice. He permitted them, if they wanted to, to inflict a measured amount of harm on the believers. Thus, it is a dual test: a test for the devil's desire to hurt people, and a test for the believer's ability to persevere. Ultimately, the devil can only inflict that measure of harm that God permits, *"If your Lord willed, they would not do so."*

What do we conclude from this analysis? First, only the devils, humans and jinn alike, oppose the prophets and try to harm their followers. They have one role to play: the role of a mutineer. Their objective is to lure the believers away from the path of God, and in doing this, they delude themselves.

Second, these devils are not able to do all of this except by the leave of God. God, in His wisdom, uses them as a tool to test the perseverance of the believers, and to purify their hearts. If the believers pass the test they receive the help of God which fortifies them against their enemies: the devils from among the humans and jinn.

Third, God in His wisdom chose to test both the devils and the believers in this way. The devils are given measured power to inflict harm and to lure the believers away from the truth. This way the sincerity and perseverance of believers are tested. Are they sincere in their belief and can they persevere in face of the affliction? Will they support the truth against falsehood?

Fourth, the devils are weak. They have no innate power to inflict harm on the believers. The believer who believes that all the power is in God's hand is able to recognize the weakness of his/her enemy, and will not be scared by the enemy no matter how powerful they may seem. This meaning is captured in the sentence, *"so leave them alone with that which they fabricate."* It sent a message to the Prophet (PBUH) not to worry about what they fabricate. God is watching over them and He is able to seize them and they will be recompensed for what they did.

In addition to being a test for the devil and the believers, God may have wanted this enmity between the devil and the believers for another reason as well, *"And this is in*

order that the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter may incline thereto, and that they may take pleasure therein, and that they may earn what they are earning” So, let those who do not believe in the Hereafter, those who lead hedonistic life listen to the whisper of the devils. They are fascinated with the way that the devils attack the prophets and the believers, so they become deluded by their inspiration and they commit whatever sin they can commit.

This is what God wanted, and that what life is about: tests and choices; then fair recompense. The worldly life would not have continued without the struggle between right and wrong; truth and falsehood. The crucible of life will separate between the righteous and the devil.

Verses: 114-127

114. *Shall I then seek a judge other than God? And He it is who has revealed to you the Book (which is) explained in detail; and those whom We have given the Scripture know that it is revealed by your Lord with truth, therefore you should not be of those who doubt.*
115. *And the word of your Lord has been fulfilled truly and justly; there is none who can change His words, and He is the All-Hearing, the Omniscient.*
116. *And if you follow most of those on earth, they will lead you astray, away from the way of God; they follow nothing but conjecture and they do nothing but lie.*
117. *Surely your Lord knows best who goes astray from His way, and He knows best those who are rightly guided.*
118. *Therefore, eat of that on which God's name has been mentioned if you are believers in His revelations.*
119. *And why should you not eat of that on which God's name has been mentioned, and He has already explained to you what He has forbidden to you- unless you are compelled out of necessity; and most surely many do mislead (people) by their own whims out of ignorance; surely your Lord knows best those who exceed the limits.*
120. *And abandon all sin, whether committed openly or secretly; surely they who earn sin shall be recompensed with what they have earned.*
121. *And do not eat of that on which God's name has not been mentioned, and that is most surely a transgression; and most surely the devils suggest to their friends that they should dispute with you; and if you obey them, you shall most surely be idolaters.*
122. *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness from which he can never come out? Thus the deeds of the disbelievers were made to seem pleasing to them.*
123. *Thus have We placed in every town the greatest of its criminals to plot therein; but they only plot against their own souls, and they perceive it not.*
124. *And when a sign comes to them they say, “We will not believe till we are given the like of what God's messengers are given.” God knows best where to*

place His message. There shall befall those who are guilty humiliation from God and severe torment because of what they used to scheme.

125. *And whomsoever it is God's will to guide, He expands his breast for Islam, and whomsoever He wills to leave to go astray, He makes his breast constricted and narrow as though he were ascending upwards in the sky; thus does God lay penalty on those who do not believe.*

126. *And this is the path of your Lord, a straight path; indeed, We have explained the revelations for a people who are mindful.*

127. *They shall have the abode of peace with their Lord, and He is their Guardian because of what they did. (6:114-127)*

"Shall I then seek a judge other than God? And He it is who has revealed to you the Book (which is) explained in detail; and those whom We have given the Scripture know that it is revealed by your Lord with truth, therefore you should not be of those who doubt." This is a rhetorical question that the Prophet (PBUH) was asked to pose to the idolaters. It expresses an unequivocal refusal that anyone other than God should have the right to be the judge in the affairs of this world. It is an attestation to the right of God to be the sole judge. The verse also states the logic behind this attestation. God revealed the detailed Book which can be used to establish justice and resolve the disputes that arise in the society with fairness. The Book includes all the fundamentals upon which a system to establish life on earth can be built. It also includes, to a certain extent, details of certain aspects of life that are needed for the welfare of the society. Those who were given the Scripture before were aware that the Book revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the truth. The verse ends by admonishing the Prophet (PBUH) not to be doubtful. But, the Prophet (PBUH) was not doubtful. It was narrated that, when this verse was revealed to him, he said, *"I have never doubted."* So, why was he admonished? This is an indication of the tremendous pressure that the Prophet (PBUH) and the believers were subjected to in the course of their mission. This is a statement meant to lend support to the Prophet (PBUH) and the believers in their struggle and strengthen their resolve in the face of the severe resistance of the disbelievers.

"And the word of your Lord has been fulfilled truly and justly; there is none who can change His words, and He is the All-Hearing, the Omniscient." The word of your Lord has been perfected, what He said is the truth, and what He legislated is just. There is nothing left to be added to the message in the matter of faith, values, morals, or traditions. He hears and knows what His servants say and what they mean. He also knows best what is good for them.

"And if you follow most of those on earth, they will lead you astray, away from the way of God; they follow nothing but conjecture and they do nothing but lie." Most of the people do not consider God to be their judge in the affairs of life. Even the law that organizes life is not inspired, in most cases, by the Book of God. The way of life adopted by most people does not follow the revealed guidance. This is the falsehood of ignorance: conjectures are preferred over ascertained knowledge. This is why the Prophet (PBUH) and the believers were admonished not to follow those people. Although this verse was

revealed to deal with the specific issue of the permissibility of eating slaughtered animals, its veracity applies to other situations as well.

“Surely your Lord knows best who goes astray, away from His way, and He knows best those who are rightly guided.” The verse states that it is only God who has the right to judge people and it is only He who decides who is guided and who is lost. Because it is only He Who knows the inner thoughts, feelings, and intentions of people and He judges them accordingly. The criterion for judging people according to their faith, their values, their activities, and their deeds can only be established by God alone and should not be left to people’s whims and desires. The verse declares that only God has the right to establish this criterion. It should not be left to “the society” to decide upon a criterion to differentiate between right and wrong. The composition, the values, and norms of the society are always changing. Different societies have different values, traditions and norms. If the criterion to differentiate between right and wrong is left to be decided by the society, we will end up with different criteria: one for an industrial society, another for a capitalist society, and a third for a socialist society.

The previous verses serve as an introduction to the discussion of the rules regarding the slaughtering and eating of animals, *“Therefore eat of that on which God's name has been mentioned if you are believers in His revelations. And why should you not eat of that on which God's name has been mentioned, and He has already explained to you what He has forbidden to you- unless you are compelled out of necessity; and most surely many do mislead (people) by their own whims out of ignorance; surely your Lord knows best those who exceed the limits. And abandon all sin, whether committed openly or secretly; surely they who earn sin shall be recompensed with what they have earned. And do not eat of that on which God's name has not been mentioned, and that is most surely a transgression; and most surely the devils suggest to their friends that they should dispute with you; and if you obey them, you shall most surely be idolaters.”* Before we delve into the legal interpretations of these verses, let us first highlight the basic principles of the doctrine underlying these rules. The verses command that one should eat only that which the name of God has been pronounced upon. It further links obedience to faith, *“Therefore eat of that on which God's name has been mentioned if you are believers in His revelations.”* The question is then posed: why don’t you eat from that which the name of God has been pronounced upon? That which God has made lawful to you! The question addressed the myth underlying the rules of the lawful and unlawful which were followed by the idolaters of Mecca. They declared some animals, which God has made lawful, to be unlawful and vice versa. The verses state clearly that the idolater’s laws were only based on their whims and desires. They were usurping God’s role in deciding what is lawful and what is unlawful, *“and most surely many do mislead (people) by their own whims out of ignorance; surely your Lord knows best those who exceed the limits.”*

They were then commanded to abstain from sinning, whether it is committed in the open or secretly. Leading people astray by fabricating rules and regulations and claiming that these rules have been divinely ordained is a major sin. Those who commit this sin will be punished, *“And abandon all sin, whether committed openly or secretly; surely they who earn sin shall be recompensed with what they have earned.”*

The verses go on to detail which animals are decreed to be unlawful. These include sacrificial animals slaughtered for the gods, animals slaughtered for gambling, and dead animals. They also warn the believers of the temptation posed by the devils, both humans and jinn, who argue the legality of their claims, *“And do not eat of that on which God's name has not been mentioned, and that is most surely a transgression; and most surely the devils suggest to their friends that they should dispute with you; and if you obey them, you shall most surely be idolaters.”* This verse established a fundamental rule: following manmade rules that contravene the rules of Islamic jurisprudence amounts to associating partners with God. Ibn Katheer says, “A person commits the crime of ascribing partners to God, when he prefers to follow manmade rulings that contravene a rule dictated by God. This is confirmed by the verse, ‘They have taken their rabbis and their monks as lords besides God.’” (9:31) When ‘Aadi bin Hatem (RA) exclaimed to the prophet (PBUH), “They did not worship their rabbis and their monks.” The Prophet’s (PBUH) answer was that they followed the rules devised by their rabbis and their monks regarding what is allowable and what is forbidden and such rules contravened the rules revealed by God. This amounted to setting up their rabbis and their monks as equals to God.

Ibn Katheer summarized the opinions regarding the allowable meat. The opinions addressed the question whether it is allowable to eat an animal over which the name of God was not invoked at the time of the slaughter. The scholars are divided into three groups regarding this issue.

The first group is of the opinion that it is unlawful to eat the meat of a slaughtered animal over which the name of God was not invoked at the time of the slaughter. This ruling is valid whether the person who is performing the slaughter forgot to mention the name of God at the time of slaughter or did not mention God’s name intentionally. It was narrated that this is the opinion of Ibn ‘Umar (RA), his servant Nafe’ (RA), ‘Amer Al-Sha’abi, and Muhammad ibn Sirin. This has also been narrated about Imam Malek and Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal. It is also the choice of Abu Thawr, Dawud Al-Zahiri, and Abu El-Fotooh Mohamed ibn Mohamed ibn ‘Ali (one of the late followers of Imam Al-Shafey’s school who wrote a book titled “The Forty”). This group made their ruling on the basis of this verse and also based on the verse, *“Then eat of that which was held for you and invoke the name of God” (5:4)* which was also emphasized by the statement that *“it is a transgression.”* Two alternative explanations were mentioned for the verse. One relates the transgression to eating unlawful meat and the second relates the transgression to the neglect of invoking the name of God during the slaughter. This group also relied on the prophetic traditions which commanded invoking the name of God at the time of the slaughter or during hunting.

The second group is of the opinion that invoking the name of God during slaughtering animals is recommended but not an obligation. No harm has been done if God’s name was not invoked whether intentionally or as an act of forgetfulness. This is the opinion of Imam Al-Shafe’i and all his companions. It has also been narrated that this is the opinion of Imam Ahmed and Imam Malek. This is also the opinion of Ashhab ibn ‘Abdel ‘Aziz who is a follower of Imam Malek’s school. It was also narrated that this is also the

opinion of Ibn ‘Abbas (RA), Abu Huraira (RA), and ‘Attaa ibn Rabah, God knows best. Al-Shafe’i explained the verse, *“Do not eat of that over which the name of God was not invoked,”* to mean that do not eat that which was sacrificed for deities other than God. Ibn Jareej narrated that ‘Attaa said, *“That the verse prohibits eating the animals that Quraish used to sacrifice for their idols.”* This is the opinion that has been chosen by Imam Al-Shafe’i. This opinion is supported also by prophetic traditions that have been quoted by Abu Dawud. Although these traditions are considered Mursal traditions but they support one another. One of the traditions states, *“It is lawful to eat an animal slaughtered by a Muslim, whether he invoked the name of God or not.”* Another states, *“It is lawful to eat the meat of an animal slaughtered by a Muslim, even if he did not invoke the name of God at the time of the slaughter because a Muslim has a name of the names of God.”*

The third group is of the opinion that it is lawful to eat the meat of a slaughtered animal if the person who did the slaughter forgot to invoke the name of God at the time of the slaughter, but if that was intentional, then it is unlawful. This opinion is adopted by most of the schools of Imam Malek and Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal. Also, it has been adopted by Abu Hanifa and his companions, Ishaq ibn Rahawaih, Ibn ‘Abbas (RA), Sa’eed ibn Al-Mussaib, ‘Ataa, Tawoos, Al-Hassan Al-Basri, Abu Malek, ‘Abdel Rahman ibn Abu Laila, Jaa’fer ibn Muhammad, and Rabee’aa ibn Abu ‘Abdel Rahman.

Ibn Jareer stated that the scholars differed in the status of the ruling expressed in this verse. Some are of the opinion that it has been abrogated, while others believe that it continues to be valid. The latter is the opinion of Mujahid and many of the scholars. However, it has been narrated on the authority of ‘Eakremah and Al-Hassan Al-Basri that they said, *“That the two verses ‘eat, then, of that over which God's name has been pronounced,’ and ‘Hence, eat not of that over which God's name has not been pronounced: for this would be sinful conduct indeed’ were abrogated and replaced by the verse ‘The food of the people of the book is lawful to you.’* Ibn Abi Hatem said on the authority of Ibn Makhool that the two verses were abrogated and replaced by *“Today all good things have been made lawful to you, and the food of the people of the book has been made lawful to you.”* Ibn Jareer then said, *“That there is no contradiction between the legality of eating the food of the people of the book and the prohibition of that which the name of God has not been invoked upon.”* This is also my opinion and God knows best.

“Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness from which he can never come out? Thus the deeds of the disbelievers were made to seem pleasing to them. Thus have We placed in every town the greatest of its criminals to plot therein; but they only plot against their own souls, and they perceive it not.

And when a sign comes to them they say, ‘We will not believe till we are given the like of what God's messengers are given.’ God knows best where to place His message. There shall befall those who are guilty, humiliation from God and severe torment because of what they used to scheme. And whomsoever it is God's will to guide, He expands his

breast for Islam, and whomsoever He wills to leave straying, He makes his breast constricted and narrow as though he were ascending upwards in the sky; thus does God lay penalty on those who do not believe.” When a heart espouses the faith it is revived as if it was resurrected after death. Faith fills the heart with light that shows the way to a new life. No words can describe such an experience. Disbelief cuts humankind off the eternal reality of life and therefore it is akin to death, and belief connects humankind to the reality of life to communicate and respond. Disbelief covers the spirit in darkness and prevents the light from coming through; and it makes all senses and feelings become dull. Belief brings security, happiness, and easiness in life. Disbelief promotes insecurity, unhappiness and difficulty.

When the light of belief shines on the human heart, it reveals the essence of this religion and how it fits and matches the initial natural human disposition. It also reveals the true nature of life around us. It allows humankind to discover the reality of life, people, and the daily events. These meanings are all captured in the verse, *“Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people”*

But what keeps those who choose to disbelieve from seeing the light, *“Thus, to the disbelievers their own deeds were made to seem pleasing.”* God gave humankind the dual disposition to enjoy light and darkness. Humankind was also given the ability to choose between the two. If he chooses darkness, then darkness becomes more appealing to him. There are also the devils from among humans and jinn who make darkness seem more pleasing and appealing. Those are the guilty ones, who are allowed to plot to tempt others away from the light into darkness, *“Thus have We placed in every town the greatest of its criminals to plot therein; but they only plot against their own souls, and they perceive it not.”* It is the standing natural law to see in each town a group of people who appoint themselves to fight God’s religion. This is a fight that the prophets and the believers cannot avoid. The guilty ones want to exercise their control over people and defy the rule of God, and the prophets and their believing followers strive to bring back the control to God and His rule. This is a never ending battle that will continue till the Day of Judgment. However, there is hope for the believers because the guilty ones are in fact plotting against themselves without perceiving it. The verse ending assures the believers that they will win.

“We will not believe till we are given the like of what God’s messengers are given. God knows best where to place His message. There shall befall those who are guilty humiliation from God and severe torment because of what they used to scheme.” This verse captures the arrogance of the chiefs of the idolaters of Mecca and God’s response. Al-Waleed ibn Al-Mugheerah said addressing the Prophet (PBUH), “If what you got is true prophet-hood, I would have been more deserving than you. I am older and richer than you.” Abu Jahl said, “We will never accept him as a Prophet, and we will never follow what he says, unless we receive a revelation like the revelation that he receives.” But God states that it is only He who decides whom He chooses to convey His Message. Conveying the Message is a grave task. Conveying the Message is a process where the divine decision and the human effort come together. It is a process where a human being

becomes completely devoted to God. The devotion is both spiritual and physical. Conveying the Message is an interface between the human being and God. This requires a human being with certain qualifications and characteristics. Only God knows who is best qualified to deliver the Message. Needless to say, that the self-centered idolaters of Mecca who envied Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for being a messenger of God and wanted to be messengers themselves were not suited for that mission. One of the most important characteristics of the messenger is selflessness. This makes the messenger's soul a suitable receptacle for this grave task. Prophet-hood is not to be requested, it is to be granted. The consequence of their arrogance will be exactly the opposite. Their arrogance will be replaced by humiliation. Instead of being arrogant they will be made abject.

A description of the states of the believers and the disbelievers follows. Those whom God bestowed the blessing of guidance on, according to God's law which makes the way easy for those who pass the test and choose guidance, have their bosoms open to receive guidance. But those who were deprived from guidance, according to God's rule regarding the ability of humankind to choose, will find their bosoms tight as if they were ascending higher in the sky where the air is rarefied and it is difficult to breathe. This is how they meet their punishment.

"And this is the path of your Lord, a straight path; indeed, We have explained the revelations for a people who are mindful. They shall have the abode of peace with their Lord, and He is their Guardian because of what they did." The paragraph ends by a clear statement defining the right path. God's path is the straight path. Salvation is attained by following the straight path. The straight path is the path of Islam which encompasses the doctrine and the law. No separation should be made between these two components. The signs of your Lord are made clear for those who seek the truth. Those will be rewarded with peace, security, and success.

Verses: 128 to 135

128. *And on the day when He shall gather them all together, "Assembly of jinn, you seduced a great part of humankind." And their friends from among the people shall say, "Our Lord, some of us profited by others and we have reached our appointed term which You did appoint for us." He shall say, "The fire is your abode, to abide in it for ever, except as God wills; surely your Lord is Wise, Omniscient."*
129. *And thus do We make some of the wrongdoers to befriend each other on account of what they earned.*
130. *"Assembly of jinn and humankind, did there not come to you messengers from among you, relating to you My revelations and warning you of the meeting of this day of yours?" They shall say, "We bear witness against ourselves." And this world's life deceived them, and they shall bear witness against their own souls that they were disbelievers.*
131. *This is because your Lord would not destroy the towns for their wrongdoing while their people were heedless.*

132. *And for all, there will be ranks according to their deeds; and your Lord is not unaware of what they do.*
133. *And your Lord is Self-sufficient, the Possessor of Mercy; if He pleases, He could destroy you, and in your place appoints whom He pleases as your successors, as He raised you up from the seed of another people.*
134. *Surely that what you are promised must come to pass and you cannot escape (it).*
135. *Say, "My people, do whatever you can, I will do (my part); soon will you know who it is whose end will be (best) in the Hereafter; certain it is that the wrongdoers will not succeed. (6:128-135)*

"And on the day when He shall gather them all together, "Assembly of jinn, you seduced a great part of humankind." And their friends from among the people shall say, 'Our Lord, some of us profited by others and we have reached our appointed term which You did appoint for us.' He shall say, 'The fire is your abode, to abide in it for ever, except as God wills; surely your Lord is Wise, Omniscient.' And thus do We make some of the wrongdoers to befriend each other on account of what they earned." These verses present a scene from the Day of Judgment when the sins of jinn will be stated: you have seduced so many humans away from the straight path. The statement is for the record; it also brings forward the gravity of their deeds. A crime so grave, that they will be speechless. Instead, the response will come from the humans, those who succumbed to the seduction. It reveals the weak nature of these humans. They were looking for a way to indulge in the material pleasures of life which opened a door for the devil to enter into their lives. The devils used their weakness to control them and to steer them to achieve the devils' goals. This enjoyment lasted for a lifetime but now the time for reckoning has come. Today, they assemble to get their punishment. Hellfire is their abode. However, God controls their lives in the Hereafter as He did in their worldly life. Whatever He wills will be. His will is based on His knowledge and His wisdom.

Friendship will bind the transgressors as it did bind the jinn and humans who were misguided. This is a general statement which goes beyond the present scene. It is a general rule, valid for all times. Their enmity to God's religion and Godly people united them. The loyalty that bound them together is based on the similarity in their nature and the oneness of their objective. Their joint abode in the Hereafter will be commensurate with their evil deeds in this life.

The scene continues with a rhetorical question to both the jinn and the humans, *"Assembly of jinn and men, did there not come to you messengers from among you, relating to you My revelations and warning you of the meeting of this day of yours? They shall say, 'We bear witness against ourselves.' And this world's life deceived them, and they shall bear witness against their own souls that they were disbelievers."* This indicates that messengers were sent to the jinn as they were sent to humans. Other verses in the Quran indicate that some jinn were able to listen to the Quran as it was recited and they told their fellow jinn. However, this is part of the unseen which is unknown to us

and there is no need to speculate on it. The reply comes with a confession. The scene is concluded by stating how they ended up in this misery.

“This is because your Lord would not destroy the towns for their wrongdoing while their people were heedless. And for all, there will be ranks according to their deeds; and your Lord is not unaware of what they do.” The mercy of God has dictated that no judgment will be passed before a messenger was sent. The initial natural human disposition was prepared to receive guidance and to recognize the existence of God. The initial natural human disposition was also supported by human intellect. But, the initial natural human disposition may be misguided and the human intellect may succumb to temptation. That is why God sent His messengers to sharpen the initial natural human disposition and to provide a neutral environment for the human intellect to seek the truth. The message clearly indicates that human values have to be supported by God’s revealed message to create a better life for humankind and to support them in the struggle against worldly temptations. The reward is guaranteed according to the deed. God is well aware of what they do.

“And your Lord is Self-sufficient, the Possessor of Mercy; if He pleases, He could destroy you, and in your place appoints whom He pleases as your successors, as He raised you up from the seed of another people.” People should not forget that their existence is contingent on the mercy and will of God. Whatever one has of wealth or power is granted by God. If He wills He can replace the present generation with a new one as He has done with previous generations. This is a strong message to the transgressors who plot to control, those who defy God, and those who challenge the rules of religion. It is also a strong message to the believers who suffer from the transgression of the disbelievers.

“Surely that what you are promised must come to pass and you cannot escape (it). Say, ‘My people, do whatever you can, I will do (my part); soon will you know who it is whose end will be (best) in the Hereafter; certain it is that the wrongdoers will not succeed.’” This message provides security and contentment in the hearts of the believers and poses a threat to the transgressors. Certainly, the promise will be fulfilled. Everything is in the firm grasp of God and under His will and control. There is no escape. One day, you will certainly be part of the scene of the Day of the Judgment that has been described. A challenge is posed, *“My people, do whatever you can”* This is a challenge posed by one who knows that he is on the right path; one who is confident that this path is supported by the truth from his Lord; one who is confident of the final result. Certainly, the transgressors will never succeed. This is a fundamental truth that has been established by God.

Verses: 136 to 153

136. *And they assign a portion for God out of what He has created of tilth and cattle, and they say, “This is for God - so they claim- and this is for our*

- associates; but the share of their associates, does not reach God, while the share of God reaches their associates; evil is that which they judge.*
137. *In the same way, their idols have induced many of the idolaters to kill their own children, bringing them ruin and confusion in their faith; and if God had pleased, they would not have done it, therefore leave them with that which they fabricate.*
138. *And they say, "Such cattle and crops are forbidden, none shall eat of them except such as we please - so they claim." And cattle whose backs are forbidden, and cattle on which they would not mention God's name - fabricating a lie against Him; He shall recompense them for that which they forged.*
139. *And they say, "What is in the wombs of these cattle is reserved for our males, and forbidden to our wives, and if it be stillborn, then they are all partners in it;" He (God) will recompense them for their attributing (falsehood to Him); surely He is Wise, Omniscient.*
140. *They are lost indeed those who kill their children foolishly without knowledge, and forbid what God has given them fabricating a lie against God; they have indeed gone astray, and they are not guided.*
141. *And He it is who produces gardens (of vine), with trellises and without, and dates, and crops of all kinds, and olives and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in variety); eat of its fruit when it bears fruit, and pay its dues on the day of its reaping, and do not act extravagantly; surely He does not love the extravagant.*
142. *And of cattle (He created) beasts of burden and those which are fit for slaughter only; eat of what God has provided for you and do not follow in the footsteps of the Satan; surely he is your avowed enemy.*
143. *Eight in pairs- two of sheep and two of goats. Say, "Has He forbidden the two males or the two females or that which the wombs of the two females contain? Tell me on the basis of knowledge if you are truthful."*
144. *And two of camels and two of cows. Say, "Has He forbidden the two males or the two females or that which the wombs of the two females contain? Or were you witnesses when God gave you these commands?" Who, then, does greater wrong than he who fabricates a lie against God to lead people astray without knowledge? Surely God does not guide the wrongdoers.*
145. *Say, "I do not find in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden to be eaten by one who wishes to eat it, except that it be carrion, or flowing blood, or flesh of swine- for that surely is unclean- or a sinful offering over which a name other than God's name has been invoked; but whoever is compelled, neither craving nor transgressing the limit, then surely your Lord is All-Forgiving, Giver of Mercy."*
146. *And to those who were Jews We made unlawful every animal having claws, and We forbade them the fat of the ox and the sheep, except what adheres to their backs or their entrails or what was mixed up with a bone. Thus, did We recompense them for their rebellion, and We are surely truthful.*
147. *If they deny you, then say, "Your Lord is the possessor of vast mercy; and His punishment cannot be averted from the guilty people."*

148. *Those who are idolaters would say, "If God had pleased, we would not have associated partners with Him, neither had our fathers, nor would we have forbidden (to ourselves) anything." Thus, did those who were before them deny until they tasted Our punishment. Say, "Have you any knowledge so you should bring it forth to us? You only follow a conjecture, and you only tell lies."*
149. *Say, "Indeed God has the conclusive argument; had He willed, He would certainly guide you all."*
150. *Say, "Bring your witnesses who can bear witness that God has forbidden this, then if they bear witness, do not bear witness with them; and do not follow the whims of those who deny Our revelations, those who do not believe in the Hereafter, and those who deem (others) equal to their Lord."*
151. *Say, "Come, I will recite to you what your Lord has prohibited you from: do not associate anything with Him; be good to your parents; and do not slay your children because of poverty, We provide for you as well as for them; and do not come near immoral conduct, those of them which are apparent and those which are concealed; and do not kill the soul which God has forbidden except for the requirements of justice. This He has commanded you, that you may understand.*
152. *And do not approach the property of the orphan except in the best manner, until he attains his maturity; and give full measure and weight with justice, We do not burden any soul beyond its ability; and when you speak, then be just even though it be (against) a close relative; and fulfill God's covenant. This He has commanded you that you may be mindful.*
153. *Verily, this is My path, leading straight, therefore follow it, and do not follow (other) paths, for they will lead you away from His path; this He has commanded you that you may remain conscious of Him."* (6:136-153)

"And they assign a portion for God out of what He has created of tilth and cattle, and they say, 'This is for God - so they claim- and this is for our associates;' but the share of their associates, does not reach God, while the share of God reaches their associates; evil is that which they judge." The verse describes a practice that was prevalent among the idolaters. They forgot that God is He who created the plants and the animals and He is the Provider. They dedicated part of their provision to their idols and part to God. They were very careful that the part dedicated to their idols reaches the idols, but they were not as scrupulous about the part that was dedicated to God. Mujahid mentioned that they used to dedicate part of their harvest to the idols and another part to God. They did not care if some of the harvest dedicated to God was blown by the wind to fall on the part dedicated to the idols. However, if the opposite happened, then they were quick to compensate their idols for the loss in their share. They said that God does not need that which has been dedicated to the idols.

This is how the devils from among the jinn and humans justify their unjust practice. One can find parallels to this example in other communities. Some of these communities are ancient like the Romans, the Persians, and the Greek, while some still exist today in Africa, India and Asia. This can also be extended to modern practices in managing the

wealth of the community when the rules of practice are controlled by the whims of the chiefs and they do not abide by the rule of God.

“In the same way, their idols have induced many of the idolaters to kill their own children, bringing them ruin and confusion in their faith; and if God had pleased, they would not have done it, therefore leave them with that which they fabricate.” Their idols also induced them to practice infanticide against their baby girls for fear of poverty. They also induced them to sacrifice their sons to the idols, as did ‘Abd Al-Muttalib. These traditions were established to confuse people and to keep them away from understanding and following the true faith. Such practices result in moral degradation and will ruin the society as a whole. The message is that societal norms based on human thought with no divine guidance will not lead to a happy and healthy society. This is a fundamental rule that is valid for all times and places. The stories in the Quran serve to establish fundamental principles to be observed at all times and places, as much as to narrate the history of ancient communities. However, believers should not be overwhelmed by the task of fighting these devils because this is the will of God. Ultimately, He is in control. They are given the leave to transgress for a wisdom that only God knows.

“And they say, ‘Such cattle and crops are forbidden, none shall eat of them except such as we please - so they claim.’ And cattle whose backs are forbidden, and cattle on which they would not mention God's name - fabricating a lie against Him; He shall recompense them for that which they fabricated.” Ibn Jareer said, “This is a statement by God, describing idolater’s practices for making things lawful or unlawful without divine guidance.” This rebuts their claim that they only did this because it was God’s law. They did usurp God’s right by introducing laws regarding the lawful and forbidden based on their whims and desires. God promised to punish them for the falsehood they invented.

“And they say, ‘What is in the wombs of these cattle is reserved for our males, and forbidden to our wives, and if it be stillborn, then they are all partners in it;’ He will recompense them for their attributing (falsehood to God); surely He is Wise, Omniscient.” They went far in devising rules defining the lawful and prohibited based on old idolatrous myths. They will be punished for that. God surely knows what they are doing and He is wise in managing the affairs.

“They are lost indeed those who kill their children foolishly without knowledge, and forbid what God has given them fabricating a lie against God; they have indeed gone astray, and they are not guided.” Those who kill their children lost everything. They lost this life as well as the Hereafter. They lost themselves as well as their offspring. They lost their souls. They lost the dignity that God bestowed on them. They lost the guidance and they went astray.

“And He it is who produces gardens (of vine), with trellises and without, and dates, and crops of all kinds, and olives and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in variety); eat of its fruit when it bears fruit, and pay its dues on the day of its reaping, and do not act extravagantly; surely He does not love the extravagant. And of cattle (He created) beasts of burden and those which are fit for slaughter only; eat of what God has

provided for you and do not follow in the footsteps of the Satan; surely he is your avowed enemy.” God is the Creator, the Provider, the Lord, the Owner of everything. No one should dispense of His wealth except by His leave and His law, the law that came with the message revealed to the messengers. God created gardens which provide humankind with different types of crops. He created palm trees and plants with different colors, taste, and shapes. He created olives and pomegranates. He is the Creator of the animals which are used to carry burdens from one place to the other. It is God who created life, planned diversity, and decreed harmony.

Quran often addresses the issue of provision, stating that God is the Provider. It uses this fact as a platform to establish the requirement that it is only God who deserves to be served. No one else but the Creator, the Provider deserves to be worshipped. It is only He, who has the control, the power and the command. The words describe a scene of the harvest of different plants and the creation of different animals to support this concept. Then the command is issued: *“Eat of its fruit when it bears fruit, and pay its dues on the day of its reaping, and do not act extravagantly; surely He does not love the extravagant.”* Some of the commentators are of the opinion that this verse referred to the Zakat (poor dues) that is mandated when a crop is harvested. Accordingly, this would be a verse that was revealed in Medina. It is known that this whole Sura was revealed in Mecca. The contradiction is resolved if we take the opinion that what is meant here is a voluntary charity that is given when the crops are harvested. The verse provides two reminders: do not be extravagant and remember that the devil is your avowed enemy.

“Eight in pairs- two of sheep and two of goats. Say, ‘Has He forbidden the two males or the two females or that which the wombs of the two females contain? Tell me on the basis of knowledge if you are truthful.’ And two of camels and two of cows. Say, ‘Has He forbidden the two males or the two females or that which the wombs of the two females contain? Or were you witnesses when God gave you these commands?’ Who, then, does greater wrong than he who fabricates a lie against God to lead people astray without knowledge? Surely God does not guide the wrongdoers.” This is a list of the animals that the idolaters prohibited. The verse reiterated the fact that when it comes to making things lawful or unlawful we have to take recourse to divine guidance. The lawful and unlawful is determined by God alone.

“Say, ‘I do not find in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden to be eaten by one who wishes to eat it, except that it be carrion, or flowing blood, or flesh of swine- for that surely is unclean- or a sinful offering over which a name other than God’s name has been invoked; but whoever is compelled, neither craving nor transgressing the limit, then surely your Lord is All-Forgiving, Giver of Mercy.’ And to those who were Jews We made unlawful every animal having claws, and We forbade them the fat of the ox and the sheep, except what adheres to their backs or their entrails or what was mixed up with a bone. Thus did We recompense them for their rebellion, and We are surely truthful. If they you, then say, ‘Your Lord is the possessor of vast mercy; and His punishment cannot be averted from the guilty people.’”

Ibn Jareer said, “God said to His Prophet (PBUH) ‘Muhammad, ask the idolaters - who dedicated a share of their harvest and their animals to God and a similar share to their idols, those who prohibited some of their animals and harvest so that nobody can eat it without their permission, those who did not invoke the name of God intentionally when they slaughter their animals, those who prohibited specific animals to the females and allowed the males to eat from it, and they made a false claim that these were the commands of God. Did God send a messenger with these commands? Or did you receive these commands directly from God? You are certainly telling a lie.’ Tell them, Muhammad, ‘The Book that has been revealed to me did not prohibit any of the things that you have prohibited. Only a dead animal, flowing blood, pig meat, or that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice to the idols has been declared unlawful as food’”

This was a declaration to the idolaters who argued with the Prophet (PBUH). The declaration determined clearly what has been prohibited by divine guidance. Even these foods which have been prohibited in normal life are allowed when human life is endangered. If one is faced with the choice whether to eat an unlawful food or to die, the choice should be clear. The duty to preserve human life changes the command.

God’s mercy is all encompassing. It is big enough to encompass all of His creation: the believers as well as the disbelievers, and the pious as well as the sinners. However, His punishment is also severe.

“Those who are idolaters will say, ‘If God had pleased we would not have associated partners with Him, neither had our fathers, nor would we have forbidden (to ourselves) anything.’ Thus, did those who were before them deny until they tasted Our punishment. Say, ‘Have you any knowledge so you should bring it forth to us? You only follow a conjecture and you only tell lies.’” The idolaters lay the burden of their sins, associating partners with God and making what is lawful unlawful and vice versa, on the will of God. How did the Quran respond to this claim? The Quranic response consists of two steps. The first step was to point out the falsehood of their claim. They lied as did who came before them. Those who lied before did taste the wrath of God and so will they.

The second part of the response to the idolater’s claim consisted of correcting the way they think and argue. God did forbid them to do certain things. This is a fact of which they should be certain, but they had no way of knowing what God’s will was. They are simply following a conjecture and only telling lies.

“Say, ‘Then God has the conclusive argument; had He willed, He would certainly guide you all.’” This is God’s conclusive argument. God is able to create a race that has no choice but to accept guidance. But, God in His wisdom, wanted to test humankind with the ability to choose between guidance and misguidance.

“Say, ‘Bring your witnesses who can bear witness that God has forbidden this, then if they bear witness, do not bear witness with them; and do not follow the whims of those who deny Our revelations, those who do not believe in the hereafter, and those who deem (others) equal to their Lord.’” So, we finally come to the challenge. The prophet was

asked to confront the idolaters and declare that what they were saying is falsehood. This confrontation states Islam's rejection of the concept of associating partners with God, whether, these partners are physical like the idols which the idolaters worshipped, or they are manmade laws that are obeyed in spite of the fact that they defy what God has commanded. These are two sides of the same coin; both are rejected by Islam. This is the rule of God regarding those who usurp His role as the sole authority in judicial matters. God accuses those who invent laws without divine guidance of denying the revelations of God. Anyone who denies the right of God to be the sole authority in judicial matters denies the revelations of God. God also accused them of disbelieving in the Day of Judgment, because those who believe in the Day of Judgment would not dream of usurping the role of God as the sole authority in judicial matters. They were also accused of associating partners with God, because had they believed in the Oneness of God, they would not have allowed others to be partners with Him. The role of decreeing what is permissible and what is impermissible is God's only; no one else should assume that role.

"Say, 'Come, I will recite to you what your Lord has prohibited you from.'" So, Muhammad (PBUH) tell them what are the things that are declared prohibited by your Lord; the Lord who is the sole authority in declaring what is lawful and what is unlawful.

"Do not associate anything with Him," This is the fundamental principle on which the faith has been built. This is the principle which organizes the rituals, the commands, the duties, and the rights. It requires the absolute belief in God as a deity and as a Lord. It eliminates associating partners with God as a deity and as a Lord. To Him everyone is accountable. He controls the universe and the creatures that live in this universe. This fundamental concept purifies the soul from the impurities of associating partners with God and it purifies the intellect from the impurities of ancient mythology. All forms of associating partners with God are prohibited. That is why associating partners with God figures at the top of the list of what has been declared unlawful by God.

"Be good to your parents; and do not slay your children because of poverty, We provide for you as well as for them;" Maintaining strong family relations comes after maintaining a strong relation with God through the concept of the belief in the Oneness of God. God is most merciful, He admonished the children to be good to their parents and He admonished the parents to be kind to their children. He declared that He is the Provider so no child shall be overburdened by his duties towards his parents and no parent will be in fear of poverty because of his children.

"Do not come near immoral conduct, those of them which are apparent and those which are concealed;" The third command addressed the health of the community. Abstaining from indecencies and immoral acts protects the society and provides the right environment for strong families to exist and survive.

"Do not kill the soul which God has forbidden except for the requirements of justice." Very often in the Quran the three crimes of associating partners with God, committing adultery, and killing of human beings are mentioned in this particular sequence. All of these crimes involve one form or another of killing. Associating partners with God can be

construed as a killing of the initial natural human disposition. The initial natural human disposition which does not find its way to the realization of the Oneness of God is a dull nature. Adultery can result in the destruction of the community. One of the factors which led to the decline of previous civilizations was the spread of indecencies including adultery. The histories of the Roman and Greek civilizations attest to this. Murder is killing of individuals. The command is a general prohibition of the crime of murder and underscores the sanctity of life in Islam. This has been supported by another verse in the Quran which equates the murder of a single soul to the murder of whole humanity.

God admonishes you to think and reflect. The list of prohibitions continues:

“Do not approach the property of the orphan except in the best manner until he attains his maturity” Orphans are vulnerable, they lost their protecting parents. It is the duty of the community to protect its members who are vulnerable. Before Islam, orphans were often abused. God chose an orphan for the honorable task of delivering His Message to humankind, and instituted in the religion of Islam the obligation to protect and care for orphans. Those who are trustees should be careful in handling an orphan’s wealth. They should invest it wisely and grow it the best way they can until the orphan comes out of age and receives his/her trust.

The point at which a child reaches the age of maturity has been debated by the scholars. ‘Abdel Rahman ibn Zaid and Malek are of the opinion that children reach the age of maturity when they reach the age of puberty, while Abu Hanifa and Al-Sadia fix the age at 25 years and 30 years, respectively. The scholars of Medina have two criteria: reaching the age of puberty and the ability to behave wisely.

“Give full measure and weight with justice, We do not burden any soul beyond its ability.” The command to be fair in all types of business ventures provides a link between human business dealings and the doctrine of Islam which emphasizes its importance. The belief in the Oneness of God should provide the foundation on which all practical human interactions are built. Faith should be reflected on the daily dealings between people. Quran condemned previous communities which used to consider matters of faith and daily business dealings as two separate issues.

“When you speak, then be just even though it be (against) a close relative.” Telling the truth even if it may be against one’s family is one of the principles that Islam emphasized to protect the society against injustice. People usually feel vulnerable when they are alone and therefore they seek protection with their families or tribes. In return, they have to provide support to their family members whether they are right or wrong. Islam came to tell people that security and protection can only be provided by God, so they have to tell the truth when they are asked to give a testimony even if it seems that the truth will hurt someone they care very much for. This is directly related to the next command, *“Fulfill God’s covenant.”* Telling the truth is a component of God’s covenant. In fact, the covenant of God encompasses all the commands made previously. The verse ends by reiterating that these are God’s commands and that believers should remember them and remind each other not to forget them.

These fundamental principles provide an outline of the doctrine and law in Islam. They outline the straight path of God that the believers should follow. These commandments provide a closure to the long discourse which started with the verse, *“Should I seek a judge other than God.”* The discourse included references to the issues of the enactment of laws and the issues of faith and the relationship between humankind and God. The closure emphasizes the requirement to follow the straight path and never deviate from it. The finishing verse reminds people that these are God’s commands and request the believers to endeavor to remain conscious of God, *“This He has commanded you that you may be mindful. Verily, this is My path, leading straight, therefore follow it, and do not follow (other) paths, for they will lead you away from His path; this He has commanded you that you may remain conscious of Him.”*

Verses: 154 to 165

154. *Then, We gave Moses the Scripture completing Our favor on those who do good, and explaining all things in detail and a guide and a mercy, so that they might believe in the meeting of their Lord.*
155. *And this is a blessed Book which We have revealed; so follow it and be conscious of God that you may receive mercy.*
156. *Lest you say that the Book was only revealed to two parties before us and We were unaware of what they studied.*
157. *Or lest you say, “If the Book had been revealed to us, we would certainly have been better guided than they.” So indeed there has come to you a clear proof from your Lord, a guidance, and a mercy. Who then does more wrong than he who denies God's revelations and turns away from them? We will recompense those who turn away from Our revelations with a dreadful torment because they turned away.*
158. *Are they waiting to see if the angels would come to them, or that your Lord, or some of the signs of your Lord would come? On the day when some of the signs of your Lord shall come, no soul will benefit from faith if it had not believed before, or earned good through its faith. Say, “Wait; we too are waiting.”*
159. *As for those who divided their religion and broke it up into sects, you have no concern with them; their case will go to God, then He will inform them of what they did.*
160. *Whoever brings a good deed, he will receive tenfold the like of it, and whoever brings an evil deed, he shall be recompensed only with the like of it, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.*
161. *Say, “Surely, my Lord has guided me to the straight path, the right religion, the faith of Abraham the upright one, and he was not of the idolaters.*
162. *Say, “Surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are (all) for God, the Lord of the worlds;*
163. *He has no partner; and this I am commanded, and I am the first of those who submit.”*

164. Say, "What! Shall I seek a Lord other than God, when He is the Lord of all things.' Each soul is accountable only for its own actions, and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another; then to your Lord is your return, so He will inform you of that in which you differed."
165. And He it is who has made you successors in the land and raised some of you above others in rank, that He might try you by what He has given you; surely your Lord is swift in punishment, and He is most surely the All-Forgiving, the Giver of Mercy." (6:154-165)

"Then, We gave Moses the Scripture completing Our favor on those who do good, and explaining all things in detail and a guide and a mercy, so that they might believe in the meeting of their Lord." This is a continuation of the previous section in which the lawful and prohibited were discussed. God blessed Moses (PBUH) with the Scripture in which were given the details of everything as a reward for his obedience and his dedication in performing the tasks that he was asked to do.

"And this is a blessed Book which We have revealed; so follow it and be conscious of God that you may receive mercy." God also revealed a blessed Book to Muhammad (PBUH). The believers are asked to follow it so they may receive mercy and guidance from their Lord. It should be pointed out that the Book was referred to earlier in the Sura in connection with the doctrine, and here it is mentioned in connection with the law. So, this Book deals with both the doctrine and the law and the believers are asked to follow it to receive the mercy and guidance of their Lord. The Book has all the details that are needed to conduct a life along the straight path. There is no need for other references.

"Lest you say, 'that the Book was only revealed to two parties before us and We were unaware of what they studied.' Or lest you should say, 'If the Book had been revealed to us, we would certainly have been better guided than they.' So indeed there has come to you a clear proof from your Lord, a guidance, and a mercy. Who then does more wrong than he who denies God's revelations and turns away from them? We will recompense those who turn away from Our revelations with a dreadful torment because they turned away." Prior to the advent of Muhammad (PBUH), God sent messengers to their people to convey the message to them in their own language. Then, God sent Muhammad (PBUH) to deliver the final Message to all humankind. No one can claim that the Message was not delivered. Those who deny the truth of this Message are truly committing injustice against themselves and against people. This message calls people to guidance and success and those who reject it aim at spreading mischief in the land by applying the manmade laws of the time of ignorance. God will punish those who turn away from the straight path.

A warning is posed to those who deny the truth, "Are they waiting to see if the angels would come to them, or that your Lord, or some of the signs of your Lord would come? On the day when some of the signs of your Lord shall come, no soul will benefit from faith if it had not believed before, or earned good through its faith. Say, 'Wait; we too are waiting.'" It is a warning to the idolaters that they should be mindful of what they

ask. If their requests were to be answered, and God would bring down the angels to speak to them or another of His signs, it will be too late.

There are various narrations which indicate that the verse, *“On the day when some of the signs of your Lord shall come,”* refers to the signs of the coming of the Day of Judgment. At that time, no deed will be accepted and no faith will be of benefit.

“As for those who divided their religion and broke it up into sects, you have no concern with them; their case will go to God, then He will inform them of what they did.” This is the demarcation line between the Prophet (PBUH) and the others who follow different faiths and traditions. The Prophet (PBUH) is then told not to associate with those who divided their religion into groups and sects. His path is distinct from their paths. His path is based on God’s Book and law. God will judge among them on the Day of Judgment. God will reward everyone according to his/her deeds. God is merciful, those who will do good will get their reward tenfold, but those who do bad deeds will only be recompensed for what they had done. However, God in His mercy will deal with them fairly, *“Whoever brings a good deed, he will receive tenfold the like of it, and whoever brings an evil deed, he shall be recompensed only with the like of it, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.”*

“Say, ‘Surely, my Lord has guided me to the straight path, the right religion, the faith of Abraham the upright one, and he was not of the idolaters.’” Muhammad (PBUH), tell them that you have been guided to the straight path. It is an announcement that embodies gratitude for the blessing that was received and an announcement full of confidence that he is on the right path.

The announcement is followed by an absolute submission and complete dedication. My acts of worship, my life, and my death are all dedicated to God. This is the ultimate expression of the belief in the Oneness of God. *“Say, ‘Surely, my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are (all) for God, the Lord of the worlds; He has no partner; and this I am commanded, and I am the first of those who submit.’”*

The expression is followed by a rhetorical question: who else is deserving of my dedication? Who else deserves to be my Lord and He is the Lord of everything, *“Say, ‘What! Shall I seek a Lord other than God, when He is the Lord of all things.’ Each soul is accountable only for its own action, and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another; then to your Lord is your return, so He will inform you of that in which you differed.”* And He it is who has made you successors in the land and raised some of you above others in rank, that He might try you by what He has given you; surely your Lord is swift in punishment, and He is most surely the All-Forgiving, the Giver of Mercy.”

It is a rhetorical question which berates the thought, *“What! Shall I seek a Lord other than God, when He is the Lord of all things.”* He is the Lord who controls me, arranges my affairs, guides me, and advises me. He knows my intention and my deeds and will recompense me for whatever sin or virtue I gain. He is the owner of the whole universe. He is my Lord and your Lord. He is the Lord who will not burden a soul beyond its

capacity and will not punish a soul for someone else's sin. He is my Lord to whom we will all return, and to whom we will be all accountable. He is my Lord who established people as vicegerents on earth. He is my Lord who tested people with prosperity and adversity. He is my Lord who is swift in reckoning and He is Merciful, Compassionate.

The Sura ends with this magnificent rosary of praise of God the Lord.