

# Al-Imran

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Introduction

As mentioned in the introduction, most of the surahs of the Holy *Qur'an* form pairs, surah *Al-Imran* also forms a pair with *Al-Baqarah* since they discuss the same group of subjects and they have a lot of similarities between them. The Prophet (SAW) even named them الزَّهْرَاوَانِ “The two most Shining lights” in a hadith narrated by Abdullah bin Buraydah from his father that the Prophet (SAW) said :

تَعَلَّمُوا سُورَةَ الْبَقَرَةِ وَالْأَمْرَانَ فَإِنَّهُمَا الزَّهْرَاوَانِ، يُظِلُّانِ صَاحِبَيْهِمَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ  
كَأَنَّهُمَا غَمَامَتَانِ أَوْ غَيَّائَتَانِ أَوْ فِرْقَانِ مِنْ طَيْرٍ صَوَافٍ

“Learn Surah *Al-Baqarah* and *Al-Imran* because they are two lights and they shade their people on the Day of Resurrection, just as two clouds, two spaces of shade or two lines of (flying) birds.”<sup>1</sup>

*Al-Imran* like *Al-Baqarah* was revealed in *Madinah*. It contains two hundred *ayat* and twenty *rukus* which are divisible into two parts with ten *rukus* in each part. The first part is further divisible into three sections with the middle section addressing the People of the Book. In the middle section of surah *Al-Baqarah*, Allah (SWT) addresses the *Jews*, whereas in this surah the main address is to the *Christians* who are admonished to give up their erroneous beliefs and accept the guidance of the *Qur'an*. There is a difference of more than a year between the revelation of *Al-Baqarah* and *Al-Imran*. Most of this surah was revealed after the *battle of Uhad* while surah *Al-Baqarah* was revealed before the *battle of Badr*. The events of the *battle of Uhad* are described and commented upon in the last part of this surah.

(1) “*Alif, Lam, Mim*” This surah like *Al-Baqarah* also begins with words which are known as *huruf al-muqatta'at*. Its description has already been commented upon in the beginning of surah *Al-Baqarah*.

(2) “*Allah (SWT)! there is no Allah (SWT) but He the Living the Eternal*” This *ayah* too has already been described in the commentary of *Ayat Al-Kursi* in *Al-Baqarah*. It

states that there is none worthy of worship except Allah (SWT) and He is *Al Hayy* and *Al-Qayyum*, the Ever Living, the One who never dies, who sustains and protects all that exists. He Himself is independent and self-sufficient and all the Creation stands in need of Him and totally relies on Him.

(3) *"It is He Who has sent down the Book to you with truth, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Torah and the Injeel"* This means that Allah (SWT) has sent down this Book i.e. the *Qur'an* to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) with truth and with *Haq* i.e. with a true purpose, and it has come confirming the truth of those scriptures which were present before *Qur'an* was revealed, and it also confirms the truth that Allah (SWT) himself has sent down *Torah* and *Injeel* to his Prophets Moses (AS) and Jesus (AS) respectively.

(4) *"Before this, as a guide to mankind"* i.e. Allah (SWT) sent down the previous scriptures before this *Qur'an* as a guidance for mankind *"and He sent down Al-Furqan"* i.e. the criterion to differentiate between falsehood and the truth, deviation and the guidance. It is the distinction between misguidance and deviation on the one hand, and truth and piety on the other hand. *"Surely those who reject Allah's revelations will be sternly punished"* Whoever denies and rejects His revelations, he will be punished severely on the *Day of Resurrection*. And remember that *"Allah is Mighty, capable of retribution"* i.e. His sovereignty is Infinite, and He is Omnipotent, All-Powerful to take revenge.

(5) *"From Allah (SWT), verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heavens."* i.e. Allah (SWT) has perfect knowledge of the whole universe and nothing in it is hidden from His watchful gaze and observation.

(6) *"it is He Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases."* i.e. it is Allah (SWT) Who has been providing you with all your needs through out your whole life, even when you were in the wombs and He creates you as He wills, whether male or female, black or white, wealthy or poor. Further Allah (SWT) says: *"There is no Allah but He, the Exalted in might, the Wise"* This *ayah* reiterates the central theme of the *Qur'an* i.e. *Tawhid*; that none has the right to be worshipped except Him and no one is to be obeyed independent of Him. And He is '*Al Aziz*', who has the total

authority and He does whatever He likes. He is also '*Al Hakeem*', i.e. alongwith having total authority and power, He is also All-Wise. This *ayah* is an introduction to the birth of Jesus (AS), narrated in the subsequent *Ayat*. He is a created servant of Allah (SWT), just as He created the rest of mankind, so how is it possible that he is divine when he is one of His creations.

(7) "*He is the One Who has revealed to you the Book. Some of its verses are entirely clear - they are the foundation of the Book - while others are allegorical*" This *ayah* is very important to the understanding of the *Qur'an*. There are *ayat* that are *muhkamaat*; they are absolutely clear and precise in their meaning and connotation and are the foundation of the whole *Qur'an*. They are the basis of the law (*Shari'a*) given by Allah (SWT) and they are plain and simple for everyone to comprehend and follow. *Shari'a* Law actually rests on *muhkamaat*, that are fortified and absolutely self evident and there is no doubt in their meaning or understanding. On the other hand there are *ayat* that are *mutashabihat*, they are allegorical which fall in the category of *Al-ghaib*, for which only Allah (SWT) has the knowledge e.g. the angels, the Hereafter, paradise and hell, the heavens and the *Day of Judgment*. Hence, to describe those things which are beyond the reach of human perception Allah (SWT) has used metaphors, similes and allegories. And Allah (SWT) says: "*Those whose hearts are infected with disbelief follow the allegorical part to mislead others and to give it their own interpretation, seeking for its hidden meanings, but no one knows its hidden meanings except Allah (SWT)*" There can be difference in the interpretation of *ayat* that are *mutashabihat* because they are allegories and hence those who are misguided and deviants from truth try to make false interpretations of these *ayat*, so they could misguide people in the search of *Al-ghaib*, which only Allah (SWT) knows. Whereas, the exact meaning and interpretation of these *ayat* is far from the reach of human understanding. "*Those who are well grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in it; it is all from our Lord."*" On the other hand, those who have been endowed with deep knowledge abstain from the ambiguities of these *ayat* and they believe in the word of Allah (SWT) in their obvious meaning without probing much into them and they believe that only Allah (SWT) has the perfect knowledge of these *ayat*. There is a saying in Persian:

*"In the end most of the learned people they are forced to say that now I know that I know nothing."* i.e. we must understand the limitations of human mind instead of probing into hair-splitting distinctions ultimately leading to dissension.

In surah *Al-Baqarah* the first condition given for a believer to benefit from the guidance of the *Qur'an* is to believe in the *Unseen*; the reality which is beyond the range of human perception, and to believe that it belongs to another world which is hidden from us and thus cannot be apprehended with the limited means and little intellect that we have in the terrestrial existence. That is why Allah (SWT) says: *"None will take heed except the people of understanding."* Only the really and genuinely wise take heed.

(8) *"They say: "Our Lord, Do not cause our hearts to deviate now after you have guided us. Grant us Your own mercy"* This is the prayer of those who are firmly grounded in knowledge. The aim and purpose of their lives in this world, a temporary and transient abode, is to make preparation for the eternal life of the Hereafter. So they pray to Allah (SWT) not to make their hearts deviate like those who follow their own desires and bestow mercy on them and make their hearts firm. And they say: *"Truly, You are the Bestower"* i.e. it is only You who can guide us. You are the munificent Giver, the Al-bestower.

(9) *"Our Lord, You will surely gather all mankind before You on the Day about which there is no doubt; surely Allah (SWT) never fails to fulfill His promise."* i.e. They are sure of their eventual return to Allah (SWT) when all disputes will be resolved and all realities will appear in full. Allah will surely gather all mankind before Him on a day that will indubitably come and He will not break his promise.

(10) *"Those who reject faith neither their possessions nor their progeny will avail them aught against Allah (SWT): they are themselves but fuel for the fire."* This means that those who deviate from the truth and deny what Allah (SWT) has revealed to His Prophet (SAW), neither their progeny nor their wealth will avail them anything when they will be questioned by Allah (SWT) on the *Day of Judgment* and they will be the wood with which the Hellfire will be kindled. Those who disbelieve, neither their riches nor their children shall in the least save them from Allah's punishment.

(11) *"(Their end will be) no better than that of the people of Pharaoh and their predecessors: they denied Our Signs and Allah (SWT) called them to account for their sins."* i.e. the disbelievers will not benefit from their wealth and progeny and will meet the same end that the followers of Pharaoh and the previous nations met. They rejected Allah's (SWT) signs and His Messengers, thus He will punish them on the Day of Judgment with the severest of punishments. *"For Allah (SWT) is strict in punishment."* Verily Allah (SWT) is stern in retribution.

(12) *"Say to the unbelievers: "Soon you will be overpowered and driven together to Hell, which is a horrible refuge"* Allah (SWT) commanded the Prophet (SAW) to proclaim to the disbelievers who rejected his prophethood, that they will be defeated and will be overpowered in this world and in the Hereafter they will be driven towards the Hellfire which is indeed a horrible resting-place.

(13) *"Indeed there was a sign for you in the two armies which met on the battlefield: one was fighting for the cause of Allah and another disbelieving; whom they saw with their own eyes as twice their number."* This refers to the battle of *Badr* which had recently taken place before the revelation of this *ayah*. On the battlefield the unbelievers exceeded the believers far more in number and in power. Three hundred and thirteen Muslims were set to fight one thousand strong *Quraysh* army, more than thrice their number, but by Allah's will, the army of the believers, fighting in the way of Allah (SWT) saw the disbelieving army as twice their number, so that they would trust in Allah (SWT) and seek His help. *"But Allah (SWT) strengthens with His own aid whom He pleases. Surely there is a lesson in this for those who have eyes"* i.e. this is a clear proof for the unbelievers that Allah (SWT) is always on the side of the believers and a clear sign for them to see how they are placed in this world and what fate awaits them in the Hereafter. Allah (SWT) strengthens with His aid whom He wills. Surely in that there is a lesson for the discerning.

(14) *"Alluring unto men is the enjoyment of the worldly desires through women, children and heaped-up hoards of gold and silver, and branded horses, and cattle, and fertile land. These are the pleasures of this world, but the most beautiful of goals is with Allah"* Allah (SWT) has

made this world a place of trial and has placed delights and pleasures in it as a test for the mankind. These ephemeral worldly things make a person oblivious of the realities pertaining to the next life and he no longer remembers the fact that the most excellent reward is with Allah (SWT) which is far better than all passing delights of this short life.

(15) *"Say : "Shall I tell you of better things than these. For the righteous there will be gardens beneath which rivers flow, where they will live forever with purified spouses and the good pleasure of Allah (SWT)."*" i.e. These worldly things which allure you are only the glitters of this present life and they will not be of any use in the next life. But those who make the Hereafter their center of attention and are desirous of the next life instead of these earthly delights, Allah (SWT) informs them of great rewards in the Hereafter. They will have gardens with rivers flowing and spouses freed from impurity and they will receive the grace of their Lord, which is indeed the most supreme bliss conceivable. And know that, *"Allah (SWT) is seeing His servants very closely."* Allah (SWT) is watching over his servants.

(16) *"Those who pray: "Our Lord! We have indeed believed in You, so forgive our sins and save us from the agony of the Hellfire"*" The believers further supplicate to their Lord to forgive their sins and faults and save them from the Hellfire with His bounty and mercy.

(17) *"The patient, the true believers, the obedient and those who spend, and who pray for forgiveness in the last hours of the night"* Allah (SWT) mentions the qualities of true believers who are steadfast in avoiding prohibitions and obedient in worshipping Allah (SWT). They spend in His cause and seek Allah's forgiveness in the last part of the night. They are patient, sincere, obedient, and charitable; and implore forgiveness in the early morning hours.

(18) *"Allah bears witness that none has the right to be worshipped but He and so do the angels and those who are well grounded in knowledge standing firm on justice. None has the right to be worshipped except He, the All-Mighty, the Wise"* Allah (SWT) gives the testimony Himself that He alone is the Lord of the universe and there is no deity worthy of worship except Him. Then He mentions the testimonies of the angels and all

those people who have been bestowed with knowledge, they all bear witness that Allah (SWT) alone is the Master and Creator of the whole universe. And He is All-Mighty and Wise in all His commandments and decrees.

(19) *"Surely the only Deen in the sight of Allah is Al-Islam"*. If we refer to the Arabic language dictionaries to know how the Arabs used to understand the word *Deen*, when *Qur'an* was being revealed, we realize that it is wrong to translate it in English with the word *religion*. The word *Deen* is used in the Arabic language for quite wider meanings e.g. subjugation, authority and ruling, obedience and submission, modes of worship and devotional practices etc. All these meanings constitute the holistic concept of *Deen* in the *Qur'an* where it implies a comprehensive system of life in which total authority belongs to Allah (SWT). Therefore, we can summarize that *Deen* is submission, following and worship by man of the creator, the ruler, the subjugator in a comprehensive system of life with all its beliefs: intellectual, moral and political aspects included.

Allah (SWT) states in this *ayah* that the only *Deen* acceptable to Him is Islam i.e. the system of life given to us by Allah (SWT). Further He says: *"Those to whom the Book was given did not adopt ways different than this except out of envy among themselves, and after the true knowledge had come to them"* i.e. Although they were given the divine Books which taught only Islam to them but some of them differed among themselves out of envy and because of the urge to dominate each other. So they distorted their beliefs and practices of the true faith and made it subservient to their own desires. Then Allah (SWT) said *"They should know that Allah is swift in calling to account those who deny His revelations"* i.e. Allah (SWT) will punish those who reject His *Ayat* and He is swift in reckoning.

(20) *"So if they argue with you, say: "I have submitted my whole self to Allah (SWT) and so have those who follow me." Then ask those who are given the Book and those who are illiterates: "Will you also submit yourselves to Allah (SWT)?"* Allah (SWT) commanded His Messenger (SAW) to ask the people of the Book and the disbelievers that I and my followers have submitted to the true *Deen* of Allah (SWT), so will you also give up all the innovations and return to the true *Deen*. Then Allah (SWT) says: *"If they do they shall be rightly guided but if they turn back, then your duty is only to convey the Message"* i.e. it is not the responsibility of the Messenger to forcefully guide anyone, rather

his duty is only to convey the message and it is Allah (SWT) who guides whom He wills and allows whom He wills to stray. And *"Allah (SWT) is watching all His servants very closely"* i.e. He has perfect knowledge of everything and He knows those who are guided and those who stray from the true *Deen*.

(21) *"Warn those who deny Allah's revelations, slay the Prophets without any justification, and kill those from among the people who enjoin justice about the news of a painful punishment"* This *ayah* refers to the People of the book who were asked to acknowledge the Book of Allah (SWT) i.e. the Quran as the final authority and follow His Messengers but they denied His *ayat* and His Messengers due to their deviance and refusal to follow them. This *ayah* also shows the rebellious attitude of the *Jews* towards their prophets and the righteous people who enjoin justice and they killed them because of what they preached to them. Allah (SWT) condemns them for their behavior and gives them the news of a painful and humiliating punishment.

(22) *"They are the ones whose deeds will become void in this world and in the Hereafter"* Those who denied Allah's revelations and killed His Messengers, then their works will bear no fruit for them and it will only bring them ruin in this world and in the next. *"and they will have no helpers"* i.e. no one will be able to save them against the punishment of Allah (SWT).

(23) *"Have you not seen the behavior of those who have been given a portion of the Book? When they are invited to settle their disputes according to the Book of Allah, some of them turn back and decline"* This refers to the *Jews* and the *Christians* who were given a portion of the *Book*. Allah's revelations as a whole throughout the ages is *Al-Kitab* (the Book) and *Torah* given to Moses (AS) and *Injeel* given to Jesus (AS) are portions from that *Book*. Now when they are invited to the final revelation of Allah (SWT) and to follow His Last Messenger (SAW) accepting whatever the Book judges to be right and rejecting whatever it judges to be wrong, they turn their backs away and pay no heed.

(24) *"This is because they say: "The fire of Hell shall not touch us, but for a few days." And they are deceived in their religion by their own self-invented beliefs"* i.e. As mentioned earlier in

*ayah* 80 of *Al-Baqarah* the *Jews* believed that the fire of hell will not touch them except for a few days, and then they will be saved from it. They say it will only touch them for forty days then they will enter the *Paradise*, just by virtue of being *Jews*. They forged this belief which made them so bold and arrogant that they committed the gravest and most heinous crimes fearlessly. But Allah (SWT) says, they deceive themselves because of their self-invented lies which take them away from the right path.

(25) *"How (will it be) when We gather them together on the Day about which there is no doubt, when every soul will be given what it has earned"* i.e. Allah (SWT) warns the *Jews* and the *Christians* to ponder on what will be their condition on the *Day of Judgment*, when they have defied Allah's commandments and killed His prophets. He will surely gather them on that day and will punish them because of their faults and what they invented in their religion. *"And they will not be wronged"* i.e. this punishment will only be because of their own evil deeds that they used to do in this world.

(26) *"Say: "O Allah! Lord of all dominion! You give dominion to whom You will and take away dominion from whom You will; You give honor to whom You will and You humiliate whom You will; in Your hand is all good"* This means that Allah (SWT) is the sole authority and Master of all kingship. Every thing submits to the authority of the master of the universe, the absolute sovereign. All things in the universe have been created by Him and He gives a portion of this authority, power and wealth to whomsoever He wills as He chose Muhammad's Ummah and gave them dominance over all other religions. Similarly, He humiliates whomsoever He wills because He knows who is not deserving of His honor and power. And *"Surely You have power over everything"* i.e. Allah (SWT) is able to do whatever He wills. He exalts whomever He wills and abases whomever He pleases. He (SWT) has power over all things.

(27) *"You cause the night to pass into the day and You cause the day to pass into the night"* i.e. Allah (SWT) merges night into day and day into night i.e. Allah is the agent behind the alternation of day and night. But if they are viewed as symbols then light or day would mean knowledge and night ignorance. And *"You draw the living*

*from the dead and You draw the dead from the living” i.e. the living are those who have attained to faith and follow the right path, whereas the dead are those who disbelieve in Allah’s commandments and thus are spiritually blind. And “and You provide sustenance for anyone You wish without measure.” i.e. He provides to anyone who supplicates to Him without measure. He gives without stint to whom He wills.*

(28) *“Let not the believers make unbelievers their protectors rather than the believers; anyone who does so will have nothing to hope for from Allah - except if you do so as a precaution to guard yourselves against their tyranny. Allah warns you to fear Him: because with Allah is your final refuge”* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) prohibits the Muslims not to take the disbelievers as their friends and protectors instead of the believers. And whosoever commits such acts then Allah (SWT) will never bestow His mercy upon them nor will He help them in this world and in the Hereafter. But if the believers are afraid of tyranny from their enemies then it is allowed to conceal their faith and they can show friendship to them outwardly only to save their life but inwardly a believer should only befriend a Muslim and take Allah (SWT) as his helper and protector. And Allah (SWT) warns you to fear Him, and bear in mind that towards Him is your final return.

(29) *“Say: “Whether you conceal what is in your heart or reveal it, it is known to Allah. He knows whatever is in the Heavens and whatever is in the Earth” i.e. nothing is hidden from Allah (SWT). He knows that which is in the heavens and in the earth and He is also aware of what we conceal and what we disclose. He even knows the intentions and thoughts of a person whether he reveals them or hides them. And “Allah has full power over everything” i.e. His ability encompasses everything.*

(30) *“On the Day of Judgment, when every soul will be confronted with whatever good it has done - as for its evil deeds, it will wish they were a long way off. Allah warns you to have His fear. Allah is full of kindness for His devotees” i.e. Every soul will be paid back in full what it has earned in this world. Those who devoted themselves in Allah's (SWT) worship and obedience will get their reward from Him on the Day of Judgment. But those who are evil doers, will be in a state of terror when they see their evil*

deeds in front of them and that day they will wish that there should be an immense distance between them and the evil deeds they have been committing in this world. Allah admonishes us to fear Him. He is compassionate towards his servants.

#### **Foot Notes**

[1] Musnad Ahmed 5:352 , Also recorded by Ibn Majah 2:1242

(31) "Say: "If you do love Allah (SWT) follow me: Allah (SWT) will love you and forgive you your sins" This *ayah* indicates that love of Allah (SWT), the basis and essence of Islam, is attained by following His Messenger (SAW) sincerely in every aspect of life. Thus Allah (SWT) loves the true followers of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and forgives their sins. "For Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful." i.e. Allah (SWT) will not let those who follow His prophet despair of His mercy.

(32) "Say: "Obey Allah and His Messenger"" Our foremost relationship with the Holy Prophet (SAW) is to have true faith and belief in his Prophethood. Secondly as the *ayah* indicates the second relationship with the last Prophet (SAW) is that of obedience. It is incumbent on every Muslim to obey him without question i.e. this obedience must be unconditional as is commanded by Allah (SWT). "but if they turn back then Allah (SWT) does not love those who reject Faith" This *ayah* proves that defying or rejecting Prophet Muhammad (SAW) constitutes disbelief in Islam.

From here we begin the second section of this surah. It was revealed in 9A.H when a deputation from the Christian state of *Najran*, a city between *Hijaz* and *Yaman*, visited the Prophet (SAW). *Najran* was a Christian city and it was governed by three Christian chiefs who came to visit the Prophet (SAW) accompanied by 60 men. Allah (SWT) sent down the following *ayat* during this period to invite the members of the Christian deputation.

(33) "Allah did choose Adam and Noah the family of Abraham and the family of Imran above all people." In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) states that He chose these Prophets and their households above all mankind. He chose Adam (AS) and commanded all the angels to prostrate before him and He chose Noah (AS) and saved him from his people. He also chose the household of Abraham (AS) and that of Imran<sup>1</sup> (AS) over others.

(34) "Offspring one of the other" i.e. They were all on one line of descent. Imran was amongst Abraham's (AS) offspring and Jesus (AS) and John the Baptist (AS) were in progeny of Imran. And Allah (SWT) says: "and Allah (SWT) hears and knows all things"

(35) *"Remember! when the wife of Imran said: "O my Lord! I do dedicate unto You what is in my womb for Your special service""* This *ayah* describes the birth of Mary (AS), the mother of Jesus (AS). The wife of Imran i.e. the mother of Mary (AS), supplicated to Allah (SWT) to grant her offspring and that she would dedicate her child to Allah's (SWT) service. *"so accept this of me for You hear and know all."* i.e. only You hear Your servants and know their intentions.

(36) *"When she was delivered of the child she said: "O my Lord! behold! I have given birth to a daughter". And Allah (SWT) knew best what she brought forth, "and the male is not like the female. I have named her Mary and I commend her and her offspring to Your protection from the Evil one the Rejected.""* i.e. she was not expecting a girl to be born and hoped that it would have been a male, since a male is free from some physical shortcomings and social disabilities associated with a female so she thought that it would have served the purpose better for which she had dedicated her child. And she sought refuge with Allah (SWT) to save her child and her offspring from the evil of Satan.

(37) *"And her Lord graciously accepted her: He made her grow in purity and goodness"* Allah (SWT) accepted Mary (AS) as a result of her mothers supplication and made her grow up into a pious and righteous person. *"She was assigned to the care of Zechariah (AS)"* Zechariah (AS) was the maternal uncle of Mary (AS) and Allah (SWT) assigned him to be her guardian in the temple. *"Every time that he entered her chamber to see her he found her supplied with sustenance. He said: "O Mary! from where have you gotten this?""* Whenever Zechariah (AS) entered the praying place of Mary (AS), he would find with her all kinds of unseasoned fruits. When he saw this he asked her about these fruits, and she replied, *"She said: "From Allah (SWT); for Allah (SWT) provides sustenance to whom He pleases without measure.""* It is clear from this *ayah* that Mary (AS) received food and provision in her seclusion from Allah (SWT) directly without any human intervention.

(38) *"Thereupon Zechariah (AS) prayed to his Lord: "O my Lord! Grant me upright descendants; surely You hear all prayers.""* Zechariah (AS) had become an old man and

his wife also was very old and sterile but when he saw Mary (AS) with all the provision provided to her miraculously by Allah (SWT), he also supplicated to Him to provide him with a righteous child. And surely Allah (SWT) listens to all prayers of His servants.

(39) *"While he was standing in prayer in the chamber, the angels called unto him: "Allah gives you glad tidings of John (AS) who shall confirm the truth of a Word from Allah (SWT)""* The angels delivered the good news to Zechariah (AS) while he was supplicating to his Lord that Allah (SWT) is going to bless him with a child, his name will be *Yahya* (AS) (John the Baptist) and he will confirm the *word* of Allah (SWT). Jesus (AS) has been described as a *word* of Allah (SWT) in the *Qur'an*, which refers to his birth because he was born at the command of Allah (SWT), when He said: *"Be"*. Therefore by confirming the word of Allah (SWT), it means that John (AS) will be the first person to believe in Jesus (AS) as a true Prophet of Allah (SWT). *"And he will be noble and chaste and a Prophet from among the righteous.""* i.e. he will be a very chaste and righteous person and will be one of His Prophets

(40) *"He said: "O my Lord! how shall I have a son seeing I am very old and my wife is barren?""* When the angels gave the glad tidings to Zechariah (AS) of a child, he was surprised and wondered as how can he have children as he has become very old and his wife is barren. *"(Allah) said: "Thus Allah (SWT) does what He wills.""* i.e. despite your old age and sterility of your wife, Allah (SWT) will bestow upon you a son and He does what He wills.

(41) *"He said: "O my Lord! give me a sign!" "Your Sign shall be that you shall not speak to people for three days but with signals.""* i.e. Zechariah (AS) asked his Lord for a sign to assure him and his wife of the birth of their child. Therefore Allah (SWT) gave him a sign that he will not be able to speak with the people except by sign language for three days. *"Then celebrate the praises of your Lord again and again and glorify Him in the evening and in the morning.""* Then Allah (SWT) commanded Zechariah (AS) to glorify His praise and thank Him for He blessed him with a child.

(42) *"And when the angels said: "O Mary! Allah (SWT) has chosen you, purified you and chosen you above the women of all nations." In this ayah Allah (SWT) states that He chose Mary (AS), for her virtue and chasteness above women of all nations. She was a very unique woman and Allah (SWT) purified her and chose her because of her service to Him. She was one of those women who achieved perfection as Messenger of Allah (SAW) once said: "Many men achieved perfection, but among women, only Mary the daughter of Imran and Asiah, the wife of Pharaoh, achieved perfection." 2*

(43) *"O Mary! Be obedient to your Lord and prostrate yourself and bow down with those who bow down." The angels told Mary (AS) to submit herself in obedience of her Lord, praise Him, increase acts of worship like prostration and bowing and be grateful to Him for what He has bestowed on her. Thus preparing her for the big news of the birth of her son Jesus (AS).*

(44) *" These are the news from the unseen which We are revealing to you" This ayah indicates that the prophets of Allah (SWT) did not know the unseen, unless the knowledge of it was revealed to them as much as Allah (SWT) willed. "You were not present with them when they cast their pens to decide which of them should be the guardian of Mary (AS); nor were you with them when they argued about it" When Mary's (AS) mother dedicated her in the way of Allah (SWT) in the temple, the priests and scholars of the temple started to argue among themselves as to who shall be the custodian of Mary (AS). Prophet Zechariah (AS) asked them to give her in his custody as he was their chief and also the husband of Mary's (AS) maternal aunt. But they did not want to give Mary (AS) to him as each of them wanted to be her guardian himself. Therefore, they decided to cast lots with the pens with which they used to write the Torah and in the end Allah (SWT) made Zechariah (AS) won the lot and thus he took Mary (AS) in his custody.*

(45) *"Remember when the angels said "O Mary! Allah (SWT) gives you the good news with a Word from Him that you will be given a son"" This noble ayah contains the glad tidings given to Mary (AS) about the birth of his son Jesus (AS). As mentioned earlier in ayah 39, the Word of Allah (SWT) refers to his birth because he was born at the command of Allah (SWT), when He said: "Be". Further Allah (SWT)*

says: *"his name will be Christ, Jesus (AS) the son of Mary (AS)"* Allah (SWT) refers to Jesus (AS) as the son of Mary (AS) because he was born miraculously without any father. We will further elaborate this in the next few *ayat*. And Allah (SWT) says: *"He will be noble in this world and the Hereafter; and he will be from those who are very close to Allah (SWT)"* i.e. He will be honored by Allah (SWT) in this world and the Hereafter and will be among those who are foremost in faith, virtue and shall be favoured by Him.

(46) *"He will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity"* This *ayah* states that Jesus (AS) spoke to the people from his cradle defending his mother when they accused Mary (AS) of being unchaste and he will also speak to them when he reaches his maturity. The Arabic word كَاهِلَان (kahlan) is translated as maturity or mature age i.e. when a person reaches its full strength or someone who has reached the ripe age. In *Qur'an* this word is only used in reference to Jesus (AS) and to express the prime of manhood. Islamic scholars agree that it denotes the age of 35 or above. They base their views on a hadith reported by Ibn Abbas (RA) that Jesus (AS) was raised up to Allah's (SWT) presence in his early 30s and that he will live for 40 years when he comes again.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Jesus (AS) has not died yet, Allah (SWT) raised him up unto Himself because the *Jews* wanted to kill him, and he will descend again at the end of time and rule the earth according to Islam. And Allah (SWT) says: *"And he will be among the righteous."*

(47) *"She said: "O my Lord! how shall I have a son when no man has touched me?" He said:!"* When the angels gave the glad tidings to Mary (AS) of a son, she was surprised and astonished as was Zechariah (AS) when he was given the good news of his son John (AS). So she said as to how can I have a child when I did not marry anyone, so Allah (SWT) says: *"Even so: Allah (SWT) creates what He wills; when He has decreed a plan He but says to it 'Be' and it is"* i.e. nothing is beyond His power and whatever He wills comes into existence with the blink of an eye at the mere utterance of 'Be'.

(48) *"And Allah (SWT) will teach him the Book, wisdom, the Torah and the Injeel"* i.e. Allah (SWT) will give Jesus (AS) the knowledge of writing and wisdom and he will

profess the same religion previously given to Moses (AS) along with the knowledge of *Injeel*.

(49) "*And a Messenger to the Children of Israel (saying): I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I make for you out of clay as it were the figure of a bird and breathe into it and it becomes a bird by Allah's (SWT) leave; and I heal the blind and the lepers and bring the dead to life by Allah's (SWT) leave.*" Allah (SWT) sent Jesus (AS) to the *Children of Israel* as His Messenger along with the miracles that he performed by His will. In the previous *ayat* Allah (SWT) mentions John the Baptist (AS) as His Prophet (*Nabi*) whereas He sent Jesus (AS) to the *Children of Israel* as His Messenger (*Rasul*). The *Qur'an* has used these words separately as well as interchangeably. A Prophet (*Nabi*) is an individual who guides his people to Allah's (SWT) path while a Messenger (*Rasul*) has a special position which is only given to a few of the Prophets. Along with being a deliverer of His Lord's message a Messenger also follows a *shari'ah* (divine law) that came before him. All the Prophets are not Messengers, yet all the Messengers are by default Prophets but it is clear that they are two separate designations. "*And I inform you what you eat and what you store in your houses*" i.e. Jesus (AS) would inform people of what they have eaten and what they have stored up in their houses by Allah's (SWT) will. "*Surely therein is a Sign for you if you believe.*" i.e. if you are willing to accept the truth.

(50) "*(I have come to you) confirming which was before me of the Torah and to make lawful to you part of what was forbidden to you*" i.e. Jesus (AS) was not given any new law but he in fact confirmed the same teachings which were brought by Prophets before him and he informed them about the truth regarding things which they were disputing. "*I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord. So fear Allah (SWT) and obey me.*" i.e. I have brought the truth from Allah (SWT), so submit yourselves to Him in all obedience and follow me.

(51) "*Truly, Allah (SWT) is my Lord and your Lord; so worship Him (alone). This is the straight path.*" The path shown by all the Prophets to mankind including Jesus (AS) was to worship Allah (SWT) alone and submit and be loyal to Him.

(52) *"When Jesus (AS) found disbelief in them he said: "Who will be my helpers to Allah (SWT)?""*

The *Jews* disbelieved in Jesus (AS) and planned to kill him. When Jesus (AS) came to know of their disbelief and their intentions, he called out to his people as to who will help him in conveying the message of Allah (SWT). *"Said the Disciples: "We are Allah's (SWT) helpers, we believe in Allah (SWT) and bear witness that we are Muslims"" Hawariyyun* refers to the disciples of Jesus (AS) who were a few amongst the *Children of Israel* that believed in him as the true Messenger of Allah (SWT). They were deputed by Jesus (AS) to preach and deliver the true message of *Injeel*. They supported him and followed him and submitted themselves to Allah's (SWT) obedience.

(53) *"Our Lord! we believe in your revelations and we follow the Messenger" i.e. we follow the Injeel which Allah (SWT) revealed to His Messenger Jesus (AS). "So count us among those who bear witness." i.e. bear witness to the truth of His message.*

(54) *"And they (disbelievers) plotted and planned and Allah (SWT) planned too and Allah (SWT) is the best of planners."* The *Jews* plotted against Jesus (AS) and tried to kill him but Allah (SWT) saved him raising him up from his house to heaven. Thus Allah (SWT) frustrated their plots and surely He is the best of all planners.

(55) *"And (remember) when Allah (SWT) said: "O Jesus! I will take you and raise you to Myself and purify you of those who disbelieve" The Arabic word tawaffi literally means 'to take' and 'to receive' and it is also used in the meaning 'to seize the soul' in the Qur'an as Allah (SWT) says: "It is He who takes your souls by night"<sup>24</sup> Here in this ayah it refers to the fact that Allah (SWT) has raised Jesus (AS) into the heavens and it is the belief of the Muslims that he will return before the *Day of Resurrection*. Further Allah (SWT) says: "I will make those who follow you superior to those who reject Faith till the Day of Resurrection" Those who follow him are the Muslims as they follow all the Prophets and Messengers in the correct manner and *Jews* are the ones who rejected Jesus (AS) along with those Christians who changed and distorted the religion given to Jesus (AS). But among them there were also sincere Christians who followed the true teachings of Jesus (AS) and that is why they always had an upper hand on the *Jews*. *"then shall you all return**

unto Me and I will judge between you of the matters wherein you used to dispute" i.e. All their disputes about faith and religion will be adjudged by Allah (SWT), when they return to Him.

(56) "As to those who reject faith I will punish them with terrible agony in this world and in the Hereafter nor will they have anyone to help" This *ayah* refers to the Jews who rejected Jesus (AS) and those Christians who made changes in their religion. Allah (SWT) says that He will punish them in this world and in the Hereafter and they will not be able to defend or protect themselves against His punishment.

(57) "As to those who believe and do righteousness deeds, Allah (SWT) will pay them their reward in full" On the other hand, Allah (SWT) mentions the rewards of the believers that He will give them their due reward in the Hereafter because of the righteous acts they used to do in this world. But He says: "And Allah (SWT) does not like the wrongdoers"

(58) "This what We recite to you is revelation and a Wise reminder." i.e. what Allah (SWT) revealed to Muhammad (SAW) regarding Jesus (AS) and his life is truth and wise admonition and remembrance.

(59) "This similitude of Jesus before Allah (SWT) is as that of Adam (AS): He created him from dust then said to him: "Be" and he was" This *ayah* addresses the Christians who believed Jesus (AS) to be Allah's (SWT) son or one of the Trinity. Allah (SWT) says. If they claim that because of the miraculous birth of Jesus (AS) i.e. he was created without a father, he is Allah's (SWT) son, then Adam (AS) is more entitled to it because he was created without a father or a mother. Jesus is like Adam in the sight of Allah (SWT). He created him (Adam) of dust and then said to him: 'Be', and he was.

(60) "This is the Truth from your Lord, therefore, do not be of those who doubt" i.e. what we have explained about Jesus (AS) and his life is the truth, therefore do not doubt it.

(61) *"If anyone disputes in this matter with you now after (full) knowledge has come to you say: "Come! let us gather together our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves: then let us earnestly pray and invoke the curse of Allah (SWT) on those who lie!"*"

When the Christian deputation from *Najran* came to visit the Prophet (SAW), they argued with him on some matters regarding Jesus (AS) and his birth. Then Allah (SWT) commanded Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to call them to a *Mubalahah* <sup>5</sup> if they do not accept the truth. The Christians decided not to accept the challenge as they knew within their hearts that Muhammad (SAW) is a true Messenger of Allah (SWT) and that if they invoked Allah (SWT) for curses, then they and their offspring will certainly perish as they were the liars.

(62) *"Verily, this is the true narrative"* i.e. whatever has been narrated regarding Jesus (AS) is the truth. Further Allah (SWT) says: *"and none has to be worshipped but Allah (SWT)"* This *ayah* is condemnation of the Christian believers who worship Jesus (AS) and claim that he is Allah's (SWT) son. *"and indeed Allah (SWT) is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."* This is the true account. There is not god but Allah (SWT). It is the Allah (SWT) who is the Mighty, the Wise.

(63) *"But if they turn back then surely, Allah (SWT) has full knowledge of those who do mischief."* i.e. Allah (SWT) has full knowledge of those who even after they know the truth deny it and persist in their falsehood and thus create mischief.

From here begins the third section of this surah which generally addresses the *People of the Book*. The subject-matter of this section is quite similar to the contents of the middle section of surah *Al-Baqarah*.

(64) *"Say: "O people of the Book! come to equitable agreement among us that we shall worship none but Allah (SWT); that we shall not associate any partners with Him""* Allah (SWT) commands Muhammad (SAW) to call the People of the Book to a common creed between them that we will worship Allah (SWT) alone and associate no partners with Him. And *"that we shall not take from among ourselves any lords beside Allah (SWT)"* The *Jews* and *Christians* used to take their rabbis and priests as their Lords as Allah (SWT) said: *"They (Jews and Christians) have taken their rabbis and priests to be their Lords beside Allah (SWT)..."*<sup>6</sup> Adi bin Hatim (RA) who reverted to Islam

from Christianity after the call of the Messenger (SAW) commented upon this *ayah* and said to the Prophet (SAW) that they (i.e. *Jews* and *Christians*) did not worship them as described in this *ayah*. The Prophet (SAW) replied: “*Yes they did. They (rabbis and priests) prohibited the allowed for them (Jews and Christians) and allowed the prohibited, and they obeyed them. This is how they worshipped them.*”<sup>7</sup> Therefore Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is commanded to call them to come to the common belief which is confirmed by the teachings of their own scriptures that there is none worthy of worship except Allah (SWT), so do not worship other Lords besides Him. Similarly, today in the so-called ‘*modern democratic society*’ people refer to other authorities as their judge and legislators besides Allah (SWT). They believe in secular democracy i.e. the principle of the sovereignty of the people and their right to choose their leaders and legislate whatever law they want even if it opposes the divine laws legislated by Allah (SWT). They believe that in democracy the supreme authority belongs to the peoples legislative assembly. Therefore, legislates that what it wills, without being accounted by anyone. This is the situation in most of the progressive democracies as well as in the most retrogressive dictatorships and these self-proclaimed lords make their own laws forcing others to submit to their standards and values, thus making people worship them. Whereas in Islam the Mastership only belongs to Allah (SWT) and only He has the authority to legislate whatever He wills for His creation. Thus in an Islamic state no legislation can be done and no decision can be taken at any level that is totally or partially repugnant to *Qur’an* and *sunnah*. Further Allah (SWT) says: “*Then, if they turn away, say: "Bear witness that we are Muslims."*” i.e. If they (*Jews* and *Christians*) do not respond to this call, then let them know that unlike them you have submitted yourselves to Allah (SWT).

(65) “*O people of the Book! Why do you argue with us about Abraham (AS), while the Torah and the Injeel were not revealed till after him*” i.e. why do the *Jews* and the *Christians* dispute with the Muslims about Prophet Abraham (AS) that he was one of them, although they know that *Torah* given to Moses (AS) and *Injeel* given to Jesus (AS) were revealed long after him. That is why Allah (SWT) said: “*Have you then no sense*”.

(66) *“So far you have been disputing about which you had some knowledge! But why are you arguing about that of which you have no knowledge. Allah (SWT) knows and you do not know”* i.e. They (*Jews* and *Christians*) do not have any knowledge about the religion of Abraham (AS) and yet they argue about it, whereas Allah (SWT) knows that he was a Muslim, one who surrendered wholly to Allah (SWT).

(67) *“Abraham (AS) was neither a Jew nor a Christian but he was a Muslim, true in faith. And he was not one of those who associate partners with Allah (SWT)”* This is the answer to the arguments of the *Jews* and the *Christians* who claimed Prophet Abraham (AS) to be one of them. But Allah (SWT) says that Abraham (AS) was neither a *Jew* nor a *Christian* but a true Muslim *Hanifa*<sup>8</sup> i.e. one wholly devoted and obedient to Allah (SWT).

(68) *“Verily, those of mankind who have the best claim to Abraham (AS) are those who followed him, and this Prophet and those who have believed”* i.e. Those who can best be described as the followers of Abraham’s (AS) religion are Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his Companions (RA). *“And Allah (SWT) is the Protector and Helper of the believers”* i.e. Allah (SWT) is the guardian of those who believe in all His Messengers and are faithful.

(69) *“Some of the People of the Book want to lead you astray, but they shall not lead astray anyone except themselves, but they perceive not.”* This refers to the *Jews* who wished they could misguide the believers and take them away from Islam but Allah (SWT) says that this behavior will backfire upon them and they will misguide only themselves but due to their arrogance and envy they do not realize it. They mislead none but themselves, though they may not, perceive it.

(70) *“O People of the Book! Why do you deny the revelations of Allah (SWT), while you bear witness”* i.e. Why do you deny Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and *ayat* revealed to him when you yourself know that it is the truth and you bear witness to the fact that you were foretold about the advent of this Prophet in your scriptures.

(71) *"O People of the Book! Why do you confound the truth with falsehood and conceal the truth while you know"* i.e. you know that it is the truth which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) brought but you hide it in your Books and conceal the truth deliberately.

(72) *"Some of the People of the Book say to one another: "Believe in what is revealed to the believers in the morning and deny it in the evening; so that they may turn back"* This was one of the tricks of the *Jews* to make a show of belief for a short span of time and then immediately renounce their belief so as to deceive the simple-minded Muslims who are weak in their religious conviction and take them back to disbelief, thus weakening the force of the Islamic movement. For this purpose they sent people to *Madinah*, who would openly accept Islam in the day and then turn back to their religion in the night so as to create doubts in peoples' hearts about Islam and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). This is the reason for which Islam has ordained the punishment for apostasy. In an Islamic state, a person who abandons Islam is firstly asked to repent but if he does not repent and does not return to the true religion, then he should be killed as an apostate and a disbeliever, because of the command of the Prophet (SAW): *"The blood of a Muslim, who confesses that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that I am His Apostle, cannot be shed except in three cases: In Qisas for murder, a married person who commits illegal sexual intercourse and the one who reverts from Islam (apostate) and leaves the Muslims."*<sup>9</sup>

(73) *"And believe in none except those that follow your religion." Say: "True guidance is the guidance of Allah (SWT)" (Do not believe) "that any one will get the like of that you have received, or they will ever dispute with you in your Lord's presence." Say: "All bounties are in the hand of Allah (SWT), He grants them to whom He pleases"* The *Jews* said to those who were sent to *Madinah* to execute their wicked plan and not to expose their knowledge to the Muslims lest they might learn it and use it as an evidence against them before the Lord. But Allah (SWT) states that those who receive guidance, receive it from Him and none is able to mislead them. Therefore, such tricks of the *Jews* would not avail them anything and He guides whom He wills to the right faith. *"and Allah (SWT) is All-Embracing, All-Knowing"* i.e. Allah (SWT) knows who deserves honor and guidance.

(74) *"He chooses for His mercy whom He pleases, Allah is the Owner of great bounty."* He is merciful to whom He will, His grace is infinite.

(75) *"Among the People of the Book there are some who, if you trust them with a heap of gold, will readily return it back and there are others who, if trusted with a single silver coin will not repay it back unless you constantly stand demanding"* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) acknowledges the honesty and integrity of some *Jews* and *Christians* who were sincere in their faith and obedient to Allah (SWT) which eventually lead them to embrace Islam. On the other hand most of them are deceitful people who whenever get an opportunity try to deceive the believers usurping their wealth and properties unlawfully. *"because they say, "We are not going to be called to account with regard to the non-Jewish Arabs (Gentiles)."* i.e. the *Jews* differentiated between the Israelites and non-Israelites. They believed that it is fair to be unjust in their dealings with non-Israelite and usurp their properties by whatever means. But they did not allow the same towards a fellow Israelite. This is because they only consider themselves as humans and believe that all gentiles<sup>10</sup> are animals. As it is said in *Talmud*<sup>11</sup>: *"All gentile children are animals"*<sup>12</sup> and at another place it is said, *"When a Jew murders a gentile, there will be no death penalty. What a Jew steals from a gentile he may keep"*<sup>13</sup> But Allah (SWT) says: *"And they ascribe a lie to Allah (SWT) while they know it"* i.e. they distorted their Books and deliberately invented these lies against Allah (SWT).

(76) *"But those who fulfill their covenant and fear Allah (SWT) then verily, Allah (SWT) loves the pious."* The fulfillment of a covenant is the quality of a pious person who fears Allah (SWT) and these are the people who are most beloved to Him. The covenant here refers to the pledge of the *Jews* that Allah (SWT) took from them that they will believe in the Last Messenger (SAW) when he is sent.

(77) *"Verily! those who sell the covenant, of Allah (SWT) and their own oaths for a paltry price, they shall have no share in the Hereafter. Allah (SWT) will neither speak to them nor look at them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them and they shall have a painful torment."* Those who break their covenant and prefer the small and ephemeral things of

this life to Hereafter will have no share in the rewards to be given on the *Day of Judgment* nor will Allah (SWT) bestow His mercy on them and in fact they will be dealt in a severe manner and a woeful punishment awaits them which will torment them for ever.

(78) *"And there are some among them who distort the Book with their tongues, so that you may think it is a part of the Book but it is no part of the Book and they say "This is from Allah (SWT)" but it is not from Allah (SWT); and they tell a lie against Allah (SWT) while they know it."* Allah (SWT) describes the characteristics of the *Jews* who distorted their Books and changed their meanings in order to mislead people from the truth. They make the simple-minded people believe that this is from Allah (SWT), but in fact these are their own self-invented beliefs which are nothing but lies. Thus they knowingly ascribe a falsehood to Allah (SWT).

(79) *"It is not (possible) that a man to whom Allah (SWT) has given the Book and Wisdom and Prophethood should say to people: "Be my worshippers rather than Allah's (SWT)" on the contrary (he would say): "Be devoted servants of your Lord, because you are teaching the Book and you are studying it.""* Although this *ayah* specifically refers to the *Christians* but it also refutes the beliefs of those who attribute wrong things to the Prophets, angels or religious scholars and make them an object of worship. This *ayah* states that no Prophet of Allah (SWT) has ever advised people to worship him instead of Allah (SWT) as is the belief of the *Christians* who worship Prophet Jesus (AS) as Allah's (SWT) son. Prophet Jesus (AS) never taught them to worship him or to make him as Allah's son. In fact every Prophet sent by Allah (SWT) invited people to worship Allah (SWT) alone and devote themselves to His obedience and this is what Allah (SWT) revealed in all the Books sent to them for their guidance.

(80) *"Nor would he order you to take angels and prophets for Lords" i.e. the Prophets have always called people to worship Allah (SWT) alone and surely not to worship his self or the angels. "Would he enjoin you to disbelieve after you have become believers" i.e. worshipping anything or any person other than Allah (SWT) constitutes disbelief, so they never call people to become disbelievers; rather they call them to worship Allah (SWT) alone without any partners and to surrender themselves to Allah (SWT).*

## Foot Notes

[1] Scholars are of the opinion that Imran mentioned in these ayat was the father of Mary (AS) and thus grandfather of Jesus (AS). On the other hand some believe that Imran was the father of Moses (AS) and Aaron (AS). It is also possible that both opinions are correct and the father of Mary (AS) was named Imran after their ancestor.

[2] At-Tabari 6:397. Also recorded in The Six Books (Kutub As-Sitta) with the exception of Sunan of Abu Dawood.

[3] Muhammed Khalil Herras, Fasl al-Maqal fi raf'i `Isa hayyan wa nuzulihi wa qatlihi ad-Dajjal (Cairo: Maktabat as-Sunnah, 1990), 20.

[4] Surah Al-An'am (6) : 60.

[5] A **Mubahalah** is a ceremony announced in order to decisively settle a disputed matter, where each party supplicates to Allah (SWT) for immediate destruction upon themselves if they are wrong.

[6] Surah *At-Tawbah* (9) : 31.

[7] Musnad Ahmed 4 : 378, Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhi 8 : 492, At-Tabari 14 : 210.

[8] The Arabic word '*Hanif*' denotes a person who denounces all other paths in order to follow one particular course.

[9] Sahih Bukhari 9 : 17.

[10] The word **Gentile** has several meanings but in the most common modern use it refers to a non-Jew. In their scriptures they define it as following: "A **gentile** is a pagan or a heathen or some one who is not a Jew or a Christian.". Sometimes they also use the term **Goy** as a disparaging term for one who is not a Jew.

[11] The **Talmud** is a rabbinic discussions on Jewish law, Jewish ethics, customs, legends and stories, which Jewish tradition considers authoritative. It expands on the earlier writings in the Torah in general and in the Mishnah in particular. and much of Rabbinic literature. (Wikipedia)

[12] Yebamoth 98a

[13] Sanhedrin 57a.

(81) *"And remember when Allah (SWT) took the covenant of the Prophets saying: "Take whatever I gave you from the Book and Wisdom, and afterwards there will come to you a Messenger confirming what is with you; you must, then, believe in him and help him.""* As mentioned earlier in surah *Al-Baqarah*, Allah (SWT) took a covenant from all the souls before they were sent into the physical world. At the same time Allah (SWT) also took covenant from all the Prophets that after He has given them the Book and Wisdom, then there will come a Last Messenger (SAW) and they will have to believe in him and support him. This ayah actually refers to the *Jews* and the *Christians* who did not believe in Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Therefore, Allah (SWT) reminds them of that covenant which He also took from their Prophets, Moses (AS) and Jesus (AS) that even if Muhammad (SAW) were sent in their time, then they would have to believe in him and support him. *"Allah (SWT) said: "Do you agree and take this My Covenant as binding on you" They said: "We agree." He said: "Then bear witness and I am with you among the witnesses.""* i.e. all the prophets accepted the covenant and promised and testified that their followers will carry out the terms of the covenant.

(82) *"Then whosoever turns back after this, he will become the transgressor"* i.e. whoever turns back from the covenant and rebels and rejects the Messenger (SAW), then he will surely be the transgressor.

(83) *"Do they seek for other than the Deen of Allah (SWT), while all creatures in the heavens and on earth have submitted to Him willingly or unwillingly."* Islam is the only *Deen* approved by Allah (SWT). All the celestial and terrestrial creatures submit to Him alone. The faithful believers submit to His will consciously but those who do not consciously submit to Him, have to submit to the laws of nature enforced by Him which govern the whole universe, thus submitting to His will by compulsion. *"And to Him shall they all be brought back"* i.e. to Him they shall all return on the *Day of Resurrection*.

(84) *"Say: "We believe in Allah (SWT) and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham (AS), Ishmael (AS), Isaac (AS), Jacob (AS) and his progeny and what was given to*

*Moses (AS), Jesus (AS) and the Prophets from their Lord; we make no distinction between one and another among them and to Him we have submitted."* Here as already mentioned in *ayah* 136 of surah *Al-Baqarah*, Allah (SWT) directs the believers to say that we believe in what was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) i.e. the *Qur'an*, and also the previous Prophets of Allah (SWT) and we don't make any distinction between them by following some and rejecting the others and we submit ourselves to His will.

(85) *"And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted of him and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers."* i.e. No religion is acceptable with Allah (SWT) except Islam i.e. belief in Allah (SWT) and accepting Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as His last messenger and following his teachings. But those who prefer any religion other than Islam, then it will not be accepted from them in the Hereafter and they will be amongst the losers.

(86) *"How shall Allah (SWT) guide those who reject faith after they accepted it and bore witness that the Messenger was true and after clear signs came to them."* This *ayah* refers to the *Jews* and the *Christians* who denied Prophet Muhammad (SAW). They bore witness to the fact that they were foretold the coming of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in their scriptures but they still rejected him after all the proofs were established and truth became clear to them. So Allah (SWT) says: *"But Allah (SWT) does not guide the wrongdoers"* i.e. those who do not believe in Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and follow his teachings will not be guided in this world nor will they ever attain salvation in the Hereafter.

(87) *"The reward of such people is that upon them is the curse of Allah (SWT), the angels and all mankind."* i.e. for those who reject Allah's (SWT) Messengers, the reward will be the curse of Allah (SWT), the angles, and all men.

(88) *"They will abide therein; neither will their punishment be lightened nor will they be given respite."* i.e. they will remain under the curse forever and their torment will not be lessened at all; under it they shall abide forever.

(89) *“Except for those that repent after that and do righteous deeds. Verily, Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”* If a person sincerely repents and mends his ways then Allah (SWT) opens the doors of forgiveness and mercy for him, for Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

(90) *“Verily, those who disbelieve after their belief and then went on increasing in their disbelief, their repentance will never be accepted. And they are those who are astray.”* Allah (SWT) states that He will not accept the repentance of those who revert to disbelief after they had believed and they grew in their evil until death approached them. Their repentance shall not be accepted. These are the truly erring ones.

(91) *“Verily, those who disbelieved and die while they were disbelievers, the earth full of gold will not be accepted from anyone of them if they offered it as a ransom. For them is a painful torment, and they will have no helpers.”* i.e. those who die while they are disbelievers, their abode will be Hellfire and they will not be given respite from the dreadful punishment even if they offer as ransom an earthful of gold. This is so because on that Day no amount will be accepted in return of the rescue from the deserved punishment of Allah (SWT). They shall be sternly punished, and none shall help them.

(92) *“By no means shall you attain righteousness unless you spend of that which you love; and whatever of good you spend, Allah knows it well.”* This subject is already dealt with in *ayah* 177 of surah *Al-Baqarah*. This *ayah* states that a person cannot achieve the level of piety and righteousness until he spends in Allah’s (SWT) cause of what he loses and whatever he spends whether openly or secretly, Allah (SWT) knows it well. Whatever one spends is known to Allah (SWT).

(93) *“All food was lawful to the children of Israel except what Israel made unlawful for itself before the Torah was revealed. Say: “Bring the Torah and recite it if you are truthful.””* Prophet Jacob (AS) did not eat certain things because he did not like them or abstained from them because of an illness. But the *Children of Israel* thought that these things were unlawful and they also started to abstain from eating them. One of the things that Jacob (AS) made unlawful to himself was the meat of camel, therefore, the *Jews* objected to the Holy Prophet (SAW) for making

camel meat lawful when it had been made unlawful in time of the previous Prophets. But Allah (SWT) commanded the Prophet (SAW) to ask the *Jews* to provide evidence from their own scripture, the *Torah*, if what they claim is true.

(94) *"Then after this whoever invents a lie against Allah (SWT), it is indeed they who are the wrong-doers."* i.e. those who distorted their scriptures and made lawful what was made unlawful by Allah (SWT) and they made unlawful those things which He had made lawful. Those that after this invent falsehood about Allah (SWT) are great transgressors.

(95) *"Say: "Allah (SWT) has spoken the truth" i.e. Allah (SWT) has made known the truth in the Qur'an through Prophet Muhammad (SAW). "follow the religion of Abraham (AS) the upright, and he was not of the Mushrikeen (idolators)." Abraham was an upright man, no polytheist.*

(96) *"Verily, the first House (of worship) appointed for mankind was that at Bakkah (Makkah) full of blessing and a guidance for all the worlds" The House referred to in this ayah as Bakkah is the Ka'bah, a structure originally built by Prophet Abraham (AS) and his son Ishmael (AS). This is the first mosque that was built for worship of Allah (SWT) on earth which is full of blessings and guidance for all mankind till the Day of Judgment.*

(97) *"In it are manifest signs, the station of Abraham (AS); whoever enters it attains security."* i.e. it has signs that Allah (SWT) has honored and blessed this place like the station of Abraham (AS) (the spot where Abraham stood). Although it was built in a barren place with no food and water for its inhabitants, Allah (SWT) has always provided its people with the best of provisions in all times. He has also made this place a secure sanctuary for whosoever enters it remains safe from his enemies and attain peace. Even in the days of ignorance there was peace and security in the *Ka'bah* and in its surroundings and no one dared to touch his enemy even if he was a murderer of his father. *"Pilgrimage to this house is a duty to Allah (SWT) for those who can afford the journey, but whoever disbelieves"* Pilgrimage to the *Ka'bah* has been made obligatory on those believers who can afford the

journey to carry out the command of Allah (SWT) till the *Day of Resurrection*. But whoever denies the necessity of performing the Pilgrimage becomes a disbeliever as is recorded by Abu Bakr Al Ismaili that Umar bin Al-Khattab (RA) said: *"Whoever can afford the Pilgrimage but did not perform it, there is no difference in his case if he dies while a Jew or a Christian."*<sup>1</sup> *"then Allah (SWT) stands not in need of any of the worlds."* i.e. Allah (SWT) does not need any help from the people whether he is a believer or a non-believer and He is far-Richer than to need him. Allah can surely do without all creatures.

(98) *"Say: "O people of the Book! Why do you deny the revelations of Allah? Allah Himself is a witness to what you do.""* Here the address is to the *Jews* and the *Christians* who had the knowledge from their scriptures that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the last Messenger and what he is sent with is the truth but still they denied it. And Allah (SWT) warns them that He is witness to all their actions.

(99) *"Say: "O people of the Book! Why do you obstruct the believers from the path of Allah (SWT), seeking to make it crooked, while you yourselves are witnesses""* Although they knew that Islam is the truth, yet they rejected it and used to plot against those who believed in it so as to create doubts about Islam and obstruct them from the right path. *"And Allah (SWT) is not unaware of what you do."* i.e. He knows what they plot and what they conceal from the truth.

(100) *"O you who believe! if you obey those who were given the Book, they would (indeed) render you disbelievers after you have believed"* The *Jews* and the *Christians* recognize the virtues of the believers and their Prophet (SAW) because they know that these believers are on the right path and Allah (SWT) has favored them but because of their envy and selfishness they want them to be deprived of the blessing of Allah (SWT) and renounce the truth after they have believed.

(101) *"And how would you disbelieve while revelations of Allah (SWT) are being recited to you, and among you is His Messenger"* i.e. why would you not believe in Allah (SWT) when He has sent a Messenger who recites and conveys to you His *ayat* and calls you to faith with clear proofs and evidences which confirm the truth which he has brought. *"And whoever holds firmly to Allah (SWT), will indeed be guided to the right path."*

i.e. whoever devotes himself to Allah's (SWT) obedience, trusting and relying on Him will indeed achieve guidance and the truth. He that holds fast to Allah (SWT) shall be guided to the right path.

From here begins the second half of this surah. In this section instructions have been given to the Muslim *Ummah* about the reformatory work they had to perform. They have also been taught how to deal with the people of the Book and the hypocrites who were putting different kinds of hindrances in the way of Allah (SWT) and above all, they have been warned to guard against those weaknesses which had come to the surface in the Battle of *Uhud*.

(102) "*O ye who believe! fear Allah as He should be feared*" i.e. you should remain steadfast in your loyalty and obedience to Allah (SWT) and have *Taqwa* of Him. As mentioned in surah *Al-Baqarah* the Arabic word *Taqwa* means piety and righteousness, therefore, it means that you should act righteously and obey Allah (SWT) and remember Him as is His due. When this *ayah* was revealed the Companions (RA) used to ask the Prophet (SAW) as how can they have fear of Allah (SWT) as much as His right. Then the following *ayah* was revealed: "*So fear Allah (SWT) as much as ye can*"<sup>2</sup> i.e. as much as you are able to or endure. Further Allah (SWT) says: "*and die not except as Muslims.*" A Muslim is a person who has submitted himself to Allah (SWT) in total obedience. Therefore, the *ayah* means that you preserve your faith and die only in a state while you have unconditionally submitted and surrendered yourselves to Allah (SWT).

(103) "*And hold fast, all of you together, to the rope of Allah (SWT) and not be divided among yourselves*" The *Qur'an* and every *ayah* therein is a part of the rope of Allah (SWT) i.e. the path of Allah (SWT). Also according to the *ayah* of the *Qur'an*: "*And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it, And whatever he prohibits you from, refrain from it*" the commands and actions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) i.e. the *sunnah*, are also a part of this "*rope of Allah (SWT)*". Thus the only way prescribed for the believers to the straight path by Allah (SWT) is to hold fast to this rope i.e. give your utmost to establish the *Deen* of Allah (SWT) and never divide into factions. "*and remember Allah's (SWT) favor on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts together, so that by His grace you became brethren, and you were on the*

*brink of the pit of fire and He saved you from it. Thus Allah (SWT) makes his revelations clear to you, that you may be guided.*" This *ayah* refers to the horrible state of the Arabs who before Islam were divided into clans and groups, who were always at war and had great hatred and enmity for each other. Then when they embraced Islam, they became one *Ummah* helping each other in piety and righteousness. Thus Allah (SWT) saved them from the Hellfire and delivered them to faith and Paradise. Allah delivered them from the abyss of Fire when they were on the very brink of it. Thus Allah makes plain to you His revelations, so that you may be rightly guided.

(104) *"Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good"* i.e. There should be a segment of Muslims from the *Ummah* who calls others towards Islam i.e. towards the teaching and understanding of the holy *Qur'an*. *"enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. And it is they who are the successful."* i.e. enjoining all that Islam orders and forbid all that Islam has forbidden. The Hadith book 'Muslim' reports that Abu Hurayrah (RAA) narrated the saying of the Messenger of Allah (SAW): *"Whoever among you witnesses an evil, let him change it with his hand. If he is unable, then let him change it with his tongue. If he is unable, then let him change it with his heart, and this is the weakest faith."*<sup>3</sup> Such men shall surely triumph.

(105) *"And be not like those who are divided and differed amongst themselves after clear revelations had come to them"* This *ayah* refers to the previous Muslim *Ummah* i.e. the *Jews*, who even after receiving clear guidance from the Messengers of Allah (SWT), differed among themselves and divided into groups and factions. And for these responsible for division and arguments Allah (SWT) says: *"for such there is an awful torment."* These shall be sternly punished.

(106) *"On the day when some faces will be bright (with joy) and some faces will be black; to those whose faces will be black (will be said): "Did ye reject faith after accepting it? Taste then the torment for rejecting faith."* On the *Day of Judgment* the faces of the believers who followed the *Qur'an* and the sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) will be bright and will radiate with whiteness. But as for the hypocrites and disbelievers, their faces

will be blackened (with grief) and they will suffer the painful torment of Hell forever.

(107) *“As for those whose faces will be white, they will be in Allah's (SWT) Mercy, therein they shall dwell for ever.”* i.e. they will be in Paradise, where they will live forever. They shall abide forever in Allah's mercy.

(108) *“These are the Revelations of Allah (SWT), We recite them to you in truth; Allah (SWT) intends no injustice to the worlds.”* i.e. Allah (SWT) does not want to be unjust to the people of the world, that is why He is showing them all guidance and the way to salvation.

(109) *“All that is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to Allah (SWT) and all matters return to Allah (SWT).”* i.e. all matters return to Him for the final judgment. His is all that the heaven and the earth contain. To Him shall all things return.

(110) *“You are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind. You enjoin good and forbid evil, and you believe in Allah (SWT).”* This subject has already been commented upon in *ayah* 143 of surah *Al-Baqarah*. Allah (SWT) says that He has made the Muslim *Ummah* the best nation ever and it was by following His guidance that they achieved those excellences which led to their appointment to the leadership of the world. They enjoin good, forbid evil and believe that there is no God but Allah (SWT). *“And had the People of the Book believed, it would have been better for them; among them are some who have faith but most of them are transgressors.”* i.e. if the *Jews* and the *Christians* would have believed in Prophet Muhammad (SAW), that surely would have been better for them in this world and in the Hereafter but only a few of them believed in him and most of them disbelieved and are evil-doers.

(111) *“They can do you no harm, barring a trifling annoyance; if they fight against you, they will show you their backs and they will not be helped.”* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) gives the good news to the believers of their victory over the People of the Book that whenever they will fight the Muslims, they will turn their backs and run away. And there shall be none to help them.

(112) *"Ignominy is put over them wherever they may be, except when under a covenant of protection from Allah (SWT) or a covenant from men."* i.e. Allah (SWT) has placed humiliation and misery on the *Jews* wherever they live in the world and they will never be safe except under the covenant of protection, that is by paying *jizyah* (tax) to an Islamic country or under the assured security from other non-Muslim nations as they are protected today within the dominant Christian world. *"they have incurred the wrath of Allah (SWT) and destitution is put over them. This is because they disbelieved Allah's (SWT) revelations and slew His prophets unjustly"* i.e. they were scattered all over the earth dividing into fractions and they were put to humiliation and misery because of their disbelief in Allah's revelations and killing of His Prophets. Further Allah (SWT) says: *"and because they disobeyed and transgressed the limits."* i.e. they transgressed His set limits and defied His commandments. In short, they were rebels and transgressors.

(113) *"Not all of them are alike: of the People of the book are a portion that stand for the right, they recite the revelations of Allah (SWT) all night long and prostrate themselves before Him."* According to the most correct scholarly opinion this *ayah* refers to those People of the Book who eventually embraced Islam. Therefore, those among the People of the Book who were righteous, obeyed Allah (SWT), followed their Prophets before the advent of Islam and then believed in Prophet Muhammad (SAW), will receive their due reward for their good deeds from Allah (SWT). Such are their qualities that they recite Allah's (SWT) revelations and prostrate themselves in the blessed hours of the night.

(114) *"They believe in Allah (SWT) and the Last Day; they enjoin good and forbid evil and they hasten in emulating each other in good works and they are among the righteous."* Allah (SWT) further describes the qualities of these people who followed their scriptures and obeyed Allah (SWT) and afterwards when Islam was presented to them they accepted it.

(115) *"And whatever good they do, nothing will be rejected of them"* i.e. whatever good deeds they did in this world, they will be rewarded for that in the Hereafter. *"for Allah (SWT) knows well the pious."* i.e. Allah (SWT) has full knowledge of their deeds.

(116) *“Those who disbelieve, neither their possessions nor their progeny will avail them aught against Allah; they will be companions of the fire, therein they will abide (for ever).”* On the other hand those who disbelieve in Allah’s (SWT) revelations and His Prophets then their children and their wealth will not be able to save them from His punishment in the Hereafter and they will abide in that state forever. They are the people of the Fire, and there they shall remain forever.

(117) *“The parable of what they spend in this world is that of a wind of Sir: it strikes and destroys the harvest of men who have wronged their own souls. Allah (SWT) wronged them not, but they wronged themselves.”* Allah (SWT) admonishes us with a similitude. It means that as the wind is beneficial for the harvest of a crop, in the same way a charity helps nourish the harvest of life that is to be reaped in the Hereafter but if that wind has frost, it destroys the crop. Similarly charity is of no use in the next life if it is made for boastfulness in this life and with unbelief. The wealth they spend in this world is like a freezing wind that smites the harvest of men who have wronged themselves, laying them waste. Allah (SWT) has not wronged them; but they wrong themselves.

(118) *“O ye who believe! take not into your intimacy those other than your own; since they will not fail to do their best to corrupt you. They only desire to ruin you. Hatred has already appeared from their mouths; but what their hearts conceal is far worse. Indeed we have made plain to you the revelation if you have wisdom.”* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) prohibits the believers from taking the hypocrites into their confidence as their friends or advisors. This refers to the hypocritical attitude of the *Jews of Madinah* who because of their jealousy and enmity towards the believers always tried to find an opportunity to belittle them and oppose them while showing friendship to them outwardly. But Allah (SWT) says, they may pretend to be their friends but in their hearts they have become their bitter enemies. Their hatred was clear from what they said, but more violent was the hatred their breasts concealed.

(119) *“Lo! You are the ones who love them but they love you not, and you believe in all the Scriptures.”* i.e. the believers like and befriend the hypocrites, because they do not know what enmity and rage they conceal in their hearts like the *Jews of Madinah*. The believers also believe in their Books i.e. *Torah* and *Injeel*,

whereas they are the ones who have reservations about your Book and show doubt in it. *"And when they meet you, they say, "We believe". But when they are alone, they bite the tips of their fingers at you in rage. Say: ""* Here Allah (SWT) criticizes their hypocritical behavior who pretended to be believers while they conceal the opposite of it. But Allah (SWT) says: *"Perish in your rage. Certainly, Allah (SWT) knows what is in the breasts."* Allah (SWT) has full knowledge of what is in their chests.

(120) *"If a good befalls you, it grieves them, but if some evil overtakes you, they rejoice at it."* Such is their enmity against the believers that they grieve if the believers enjoy some good like abundance in wealth and land and victory over their enemies. But if some calamity befalls on the believers, these hypocrites become happy and rejoice. *"But if you remain patient and become pious, not the least harm will their cunning do to you."* In this ayah Allah (SWT) directs the believers to safety against the hypocrites by having patience and *Taqwa*. And *"Surely, Allah (SWT) surrounds all that they do."* Allah (SWT) has knowledge of all their actions.

#### **Foot Notes**

[1] cf. Ibn Kathir.

[2] Surah Taghabun (64) : 16.

[3] Sahih Muslim 1 : 69,70.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

From here we begin the fourth part of this surah which describes the events that took place at the *Battle of Uhud*. The defeat in the *Battle of Badr* was so painful for the disbelievers that they wanted to confront the Muslims again. They spent a year after the *Battle of Badr* amassing weapons and strong men and prepared an army of three thousand, including 700 in coats of mail (Zirah Posh) and 200 cavalry to fight against the Muslims. They left *Makkah* for *Madinah* in the beginning of the month of *Shawwal*, the third year of *Hijrah*, in order to avenge their defeat. When they reached the vicinity of *Madinah*, Prophet (SAW) took counsel with his Companions as how best to resist the *Quraysh*. The Prophet (SAW) was of the opinion that they should defend *Madinah* from within the walls but some young enthusiastic men who had not taken part in the *Battle of Badr* longed for martyrdom and felt aggrieved at not having had the opportunity to fight in the *Battle of Badr* and advised the Messenger of Allah (SAW) to go out and meet the enemy in the open. The Prophet (SAW) agreed and left *Madinah* along with a thousand men towards Mount *Uhud*. However, half-way through, one-third of them turned back under the influence of the head of the hypocrites, Abdullah bin Ubay. The Prophet (SAW) proceeded with the remaining men until he camped at the trail of Mount *Uhud* putting the mountain behind him and facing the *Quraysh* army. There was only a mountain pass from where the Muslims could be subjected to a surprise attack. So Prophet (SAW) posted fifty archers there as guards under the command of Abdullah ibn Jubayr, instructing him neither to let anyone approach nor to move away from that spot no matter what happens. Then the two armies confronted each other and in the first stages of the Battle the Muslims gained the upper hand and were victorious by Allah's (SWT) will. When the archers positioned by the Prophet (SAW) saw the disbelievers being defeated, some of them left their position and joined other Muslims in collecting the booty. Khalid bin Walid (RA) who was an unbeliever at that time seized this opportunity and he along with his men went around Mount *Uhud* and attacked the Muslim army from behind. Suddenly the battle turned against the Muslims and they took to their heels in confusion. Still there were some brave Muslims who fought valiantly and rallied around the Prophet (SAW) to protect him and took him to the safe side of the Mount. The disbelievers also went back to

*Makkah* with their injured and dying victims. Thus the Battle of *Uhud* came to an end, leaving behind seventy martyrs amongst the Muslims. The following discourse brings some good lessons learned by the Muslims after the *Battle of Uhud*.

(121) *“And remember when you left your household in the morning to post the faithful at their stations for battle. And Allah hears and knows all things.”* Allah (SWT) is reminding the day, the *Battle of Uhud* took place: when you left your family at an early hour to lead the faithful to their battle-posts. Allah is Hearing, Knowing.

(122) *“And remember when two parties of you almost fell away”* The two parties were Banu Harithah and Banu Salmah who were confused and perplexed by the desertion of Abdullah bin Ubay and his 300 men and they wanted to turn back but were persuaded afterwards not to leave the battlefield. *“And Allah (SWT) was their Protecting Friend. In Allah (SWT) should believers put their trust.”* i.e. they should not have felt weak when Allah (SWT) is their Protector and should put all their trust in Him alone.

(123) *“Allah had helped you at Badr when you were a weak little force; then fear Allah; so that you may be grateful.”* Allah (SWT) reminds the believers of His favors when He made them victorious and destroyed the polytheists in the *Battle of Badr* even though they were few and weak. Therefore, they should only fear Him and be grateful to Him.

(124) *“And remember when you said to the believers, is it not enough for you that Allah (SWT) should help you with three thousand angels sent down?”* When the Muslims saw a *Quraysh* army of 3000 men, they became disheartened as they were already reduced to 700 when Abdullah ibn Ubay along with his men left the battlefield and went back to *Madinah*, but the Prophet (SAW) gave them the good news to strengthen their hearts that Allah (SWT) will help them with three thousand angels.

(125) *“But, if you hold on to patience and Taqwa, and the enemy comes rushing at you; your Lord will help you with five thousand angels having marks.”* Allah (SWT) promised the

believers that if they have patience and obey His commandments while fighting with the enemy, then He will aid them with five thousand angels having marks of distinction.

(126) *“Allah (SWT) made it not but as a message of good news for you and as an assurance to your hearts. And there is no victory except from Allah (SWT)”* i.e. whether there is a miracle or not, all help comes only from Allah (SWT) and He is in need of no one. And He is *“the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.”*

(127) *“That He might cut off a part of those who disbelieve, or expose them to infamy, so that they retire frustrated.”* A part or fringe of the unbelievers may refer to the seventy chiefs of the *Quraysh* who were slain and seventy others that were taken as captive. They came for the purpose of killing the Prophet (SAW) and exterminate the Muslims but in utter despair of failing in their purpose, they went back frustrated. They withdrew utterly defeated.

(128) *“Not for you is the decision; whether He turns in mercy to them or punishes them. Verily, they are the wrongdoers.”* When the Holy Prophet (SAW) was wounded in the *Battle of Uhud*, he cursed the disbelievers and invoked evil upon them and said: *“How can a people achieve success after having injured their Prophet.”*<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Allah (SWT) revealed this *ayah* that it is only He who guides whom He wills and no one can interfere in His decisions. No doubt the disbelievers are wrongdoers.

(129) *“And to Allah (SWT) belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. He forgives whom He wills, and punishes whom He wills. And Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”* His in all that the heavens and earth contain. He pardons whom He wills and punishes whom He pleases. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

(130) *“O you who believe! Eat not usury doubled and multiplied, but fear Allah (SWT) that you may be successful.”* This subject has previously been mentioned in the *ayah* 275 of *surah Al-Baqarah* that was revealed in the ninth year of *Hijrah* but this *ayah* being revealed in the third year of *Hijrah* makes it the first injunction

concerning the prohibition of usury. In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) prohibits His servants not to deal in usury and not to multiply their capital by taking interest on it. And this is only possible if they have *Taqwa* of Him, so that they may achieve success in this world and in the Hereafter. Have fear of Allah, and you shall prosper.

(131) *"Fear the fire which is prepared for the unbelievers."* Allah (SWT) warns them of this punishment if they do not obey Him in His commandments.

(132) *"And obey Allah (SWT) and the Messenger; that you may obtain mercy."*

(133) *"And hasten to the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as are the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who have Taqwa."* In these *ayat* Allah (SWT) commands His servants to obey Him and His Messenger (SAW) so they might attain His mercy and forgiveness and the Paradise with unimaginable width which is prepared for such righteous persons.

(134) *"Those who spend in prosperity and in adversity, who repress anger, and who pardon men."* This *ayah* describes the characteristics of the righteous persons mentioned above. They are those who spend in the way of Allah (SWT) only to attain His pleasure, both in hard times and in prosperity and they suppress their anger and forgive peoples' faults for His sake. So for them Allah (SWT) said: *"Verily, Allah (SWT) loves the good-doers."*

(135) *"And those who, when they have committed indecency or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allah (SWT) and seek forgiveness for their sins. And none can forgive sins but Allah (SWT). And do not persist in what they have done, while they know."* Allah (SWT) further describes their qualities that when any of them does an evil thing or have wronged their souls, they earnestly remember Allah (SWT) and seek forgiveness for their sins. And they know that it is only Allah (SWT) who can forgive their sins and they do not persist in what wrong they did after they repented from it.

(136) *"For such, the reward is Forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath, wherein they shall abide forever. How excellent is this reward for those who do good works."* i.e. who do righteous deeds according to Allah's (SWT) commandments.

(137) *"Many similar examples were faced by nations that have passed away before you, so travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who disbelieved."* Allah (SWT) is encouraging the believers that if you have lost then do not feel dejected or lose heart and learn from the examples of the previous nations who believed in Allah (SWT) and followed His Messengers. They also faced similar hardships and suffering but Allah (SWT) helped them and made them triumph and destroyed their enemies.

(138) *"This is a declaration to mankind, a guidance and admonition to those who have Taqwa."* This *ayah* refers to the holy *Qur'an*. Allah (SWT) states that it is a guide and admonition for all mankind and particularly for the pious.

(139) *"Do not grieve and get disheartened, for you will have the upper hand if you are indeed believers."* Allah (SWT) commands the believers to take heart and not despair because of their partial setback suffered in the *Battle of Uhud*. He heartens them by giving them the good news that ultimately they will be triumphant and victory will be theirs if they truly believe in Him and obey His commandments.

(140) *"If you have suffered from a wound be sure a similar wound has touched the others."* This means, that as you have suffered heavy losses in men and material, so did the disbelievers. So do not grieve or be sad but have patience and be firm. Seventy of the Muslim army were martyred including Prophet's Uncle Hamza (RA) which was indeed a great loss. On the other hand, the Quraysh also suffered considerable casualties not only in the *Battle of Uhud* but also in the *Battle of Badr* but still they regrouped themselves and came back to fight. So why do you O Muslims lose heart by the loss suffered in the *Battle of Uhud*. *"And we alternate these vicissitudes among mankind so that Allah (SWT) may know those who believe, and that He may take martyrs from among you."* i.e. Allah (SWT) sometimes allows the enemy to overcome the Muslims so that He may find out who are the real believers amongst them and those who give their lives as martyrs to seek His pleasure. Further Allah (SWT) says: *"And Allah (SWT) does not like the wrongdoers."* He does not love the evil-doers.

(141) *“And that Allah may test the believers and destroy the disbelievers.”* And that He may purify the faithful from sin and annihilate the infidels.

(142) *“Do you think that you will enter Paradise before Allah (SWT) tests those of you who fought (in His Cause) and tests those who are patient.”* This *ayah* emphasizes the fact that every believer will have to go through the trials and the tests of faith in order to attain victory in this world and Paradise in the Hereafter. Even the previous nations were tried and tested with calamities and oppression from the disbelievers but ultimately the believers are always victorious. Therefore, the believers should always trust Allah (SWT) and His Promise that He will surely destroy the disbelievers who commit oppression against them. But until then, the believers should persevere with patience in their trials because victory will only come after succeeding in tests and trials.

(143) *“You did indeed wish for death before you met it. Now you have seen it openly with your own eyes.”* This *ayah* refers to those Companions of the Prophet (RA) who insisted on fighting the battle with the *Quraysh* army instead of staying behind and defending *Madinah*. They felt aggrieved at not having had the opportunity to fight in the *Battle of Badr* and thus longed for martyrdom. This *ayah* addresses them that you longed for death and wished that you fight your enemy, now Allah (SWT) has given you that opportunity, so fight them and be patient.

(144) *“Muhammad (SAW) is no more than a Messenger, and indeed Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels?”* The Prophet (SAW) suffered severe injuries in the *Battle of Uhud*. At that time the Satan shouted that Muhammad (SAW) had been killed. This made the Muslims lose heart and many of them began to turn away and did not actively participate in the battle. This is why Allah (SWT) revealed this *ayah* which states that if Muhammad (SAW) is killed while delivering His message, just like all the Messengers before him then will you O believers turn your back and not convey His message or defend your religion. And Allah (SWT) said: *“And he who turns back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah (SWT)”* i.e. those who turned back to disbelief after they have believed should know that Allah’s (SWT) religion does not stand in need of you. *“and Allah (SWT) will give reward to those who are grateful.”* i.e.

those who remained steadfast and obeyed Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) whether he is dead or alive. He that recants will do no harm to Allah. But Allah will reward the thankful.

(145) *“And no person can ever die except by Allah’s (SWT) Leave and at an appointed term. And whoever desires a reward in (this) world, We shall give him of it; and whoever desires a reward in the Hereafter, We shall give him thereof. And We shall reward the grateful.”* This *ayah* encourages the Muslims to participate and engage actively in the battlefield and not abandon it in fear of death because doing so will not increase nor decrease their life term ordained by Allah (SWT). Therefore, they should spend it in Allah’s (SWT) cause and not for the sake of transitory enjoyments of this world which unfortunately is the situation regarding most of the Muslims today. Salah (prayer) which has been described as the criterion between faith and disbelief, how much does it feature in the life of the Muslims and how many are there who are punctual in it. How many adhere to the other basic requirements of Islam such as *Fasting, Zakah* and *Haji*. On the other hand, consider the prohibitions of Islam, how many Muslims indulge in these day and night and how many have adopted these as part of their lifestyle? This is because most of us struggle in life only for the enjoyments and luxuries of this earthly life and have forgotten the eternal joys of the next world. But Allah (SWT) says that those who are grateful to Him and appreciate His bounties, they will surely be rewarded for their good deeds in the Hereafter.

(146) *“And how many of the Prophets have fought (in Allah’s (SWT) Cause) and along with him (fought) large bands of religious learned men. But they never lost heart for that which did befall them in Allah’s (SWT) way, nor did they weaken nor degrade themselves. And Allah (SWT) loves the patient ones.”* This *ayah* teaches a lesson to the Muslims that as they have fought their enemies along with their Prophet (SAW), so did the Prophets before them along with their godly men. But what they suffered in Allah’s (SWT) cause did not make them lose heart by going back to disbelief, rather they obeyed Allah (SWT) and followed His Messengers. They neither weakened nor cringed abjectly. Allah loves the steadfast.

(147) *"And they said nothing but: "Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and our transgressions, establish our feet firmly, and give us victory over the disbelieving folk." This is the same prayer which Saul's army made to Allah (SWT) when they advanced towards the army of Goliath. It is mentioned in ayah 250 of surah Al-Baqarah i.e., make us firm of foot and give us victory over the unbelievers.*

(148) *"So Allah (SWT) gave them the reward of this world, and the excellent reward of the Hereafter. And Allah (SWT) loves the good-doers." Therefore, Allah gave them the reward of this life, and the glorious recompense of the life to come. Allah loves the charitable.*

(149) *"O you who believe! If you obey those who disbelieve, they will send you back on your heels, and you will turn back (from Faith) as losers." After the Battle of Uhud, some Jews and the hypocrites tried to seduce the believers to revert to disbelief. This ayah refers to them and Allah (SWT) warns the believers that these hypocrites want them to go back to disbelief after having faith, so do not obey them.*

(150) *"Nay, Allah (SWT) is your Protector and He is the Best of helpers." i.e. if you are sincere and steadfast in your faith then Allah (SWT) promises you of His help and protection from the disbelievers. Allah is your protector. He is the best of helpers.*

(151) *"Soon we shall cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve, because they joined others in worship with Allah (SWT), for which He had sent no authority; their abode will be the fire and how evil is the abode of the wrongdoers." In this ayah Allah (SWT) gives the good news to the believers that He will cast fear of Muslims into the hearts of the disbelievers. This is because the disbelievers disobey Allah's (SWT) commandments and associate partners with Him. And a very painful punishment awaits them in the Hereafter as they serve other gods for whom no sanction has been revealed. Fire shall be their home; dismal indeed in the dwelling place of the evil-doers.*

(152) *"And Allah (SWT) did indeed fulfill His Promise to you when you were killing them with His Permission" This ayah refers to the Battle of Uhud. Allah (SWT) states that He*

fulfilled His promise to the Muslims that they will surely have an upper hand if they show patience and courage, which was indeed the case initially when the Muslims were winning the battle. But some of them lost their courage as Allah (SWT) says: *"until you lost your courage and fell to disputing about the order, and disobeyed after He showed you which you love."* This refers to the archers who were commanded by the Prophet (SAW) not to leave their appointed places. He instructed them, *"Stick to your place, and don't leave it even if you see birds snatching us, till I send for you; and if you see that we have defeated the infidels and made them flee, even then you should not leave your place till I send for you."*<sup>2</sup> But when they saw the disbelievers being defeated and fleeing towards the mountain, they wanted to join their victorious brothers and collect the booty. Their commander Abdullah bin Jubair (RA) commanded them not to leave their places but they disobeyed him and they left their positions and that eventually became the cause of their defeat. It should be mentioned here that listening and obeying Allah's Messenger (SAW) and his appointed *ameer* (commander) is obligatory on a Muslim whether it is pleasing or displeasing to him. The Arabic words for obedience and discipline are *Sama'a* and *Ta'at* i.e. to listen and to obey. The success of an Islamic movement lies in exhibiting the distinctive attitude of *listen* and *obey* i.e. obedience to Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) and to the one in authority from amongst us i.e. the *Ameer*. This last type of obedience is limited with two important conditions. First, the one in authority must be a Muslim and second, his commands must always be in accordance with the *Qur'an* and *sunnah*. It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (RA) that the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Who obeys me obeys Allah (SWT), and whoso disobeys me disobeys Allah (SWT). Who obeys the Ameer obeys me, and who disobeys the Ameer disobeys me."*<sup>3</sup> Further Allah (SWT) says: *"Among you are some that desire this world and some that desire the Hereafter. Then He made you flee from them, that He might test you."* When the disbelievers attacked the Muslims from behind, in utter confusion some of the Muslims turned back and fled from the battlefield. Thus Allah (SWT) says that He made their enemies overcome them, in order to test them. *"But surely, He forgave you, and Allah (SWT) is Most Gracious to the believers."* i.e. He forgave those who fled from the battlefield. And indeed He is gracious to the faithful.

(153) *“And remember when you were climbing up, without even casting a side glance at anyone, and the Messenger (SAW) was in your rear calling you back.”* When the archers guarding the valley behind the battle front left their places, a group of disbelievers army led by Khalid bin Walid (RA) attacked the Muslims from behind which caused great confusion between them and the Muslim warriors were soon surrounded by the army of the *Quraysh*. Then a rumor spread that the Prophet (SAW) has been killed. This news weakened the morale of the Muslims, so much so that some of the Muslims abandoned fighting and started climbing up the mountain to take refuge while the Prophet (SAW) was calling them to come back but only a few of them when noticed that Prophet (SAW) is alive, came back to the field and defended their Prophet (SAW). *“There did Allah (SWT) give you one distress after another by way of requital to teach you not to grieve for that which had escaped you, nor for that which had befallen you.”* i.e. they felt grief over grief because of missing the war booty and triumph of their enemy and not because of their casualties and injuries. *“And Allah (SWT) is well aware of all that you do.”* Allah is cognizant of what you do.

(154) *“Then after the distress, He let peace fall upon you. A sleep overtook a party of you”* While the Muslims were feeling the distress of the battle Allah (SWT) sent down tranquility over them and they started to feel drowsy and because of that they felt calmness and enjoyed kindly sleep. Abu Talhah (RA) explains this strange sense of peace they had, he said: *“I was among those who were overcome by slumber during the battle of Uhud. My sword fell from my hands several times and I would pick it up, then it would fall and I would pick it up again.”*<sup>24</sup> *“While another party was thinking about themselves and thought wrongly of Allah - the thought of ignorance.”* This refers to the hypocrites. While Allah (SWT) sent down tranquility on the believers, the hypocrites were denied just sleep thus increasing their distress and anxiety. These hypocrites abandoned the battle and started to doubt the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) casting evil thoughts about Allah (SWT). They thought that the disbelievers will achieve victory and Islam and the Muslims would perish forever. *“They said, “Have we any say in the matter?” Say: “Indeed all matters belong wholly to Allah.”*” The hypocrites grumbled regarding their advice to remain in *Madinah* instead of coming to Mount *Uhud* where their friends and relatives had been killed. *“They hide within themselves what they dare not*

reveal to you, saying: "If we had any say in the matter, none of us would have been killed here." Say: "Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death,"" The hypocrites started to murmur things like had it been thus and thus, we would not have lost our friend and families but Allah (SWT) states that the appointed destiny is fixed for everyone and when death approaches, no one can escape it. " *but that Allah might test what is in your breasts; and to purify that which was in your hearts (sins), and Allah is All-Knower of what is in the breasts.*" Although Allah (SWT) knows even what is in your breasts but still He tests you to distinguish amongst you as who conceals hypocrisy in their hearts and who are the true believers. He has knowledge of your inmost thoughts.

(155) *"Those of you who turned back on the day the two hosts met, it was the Satan who caused them to backslide because of some (sins) they had earned."* Some of the Companions (RA) turned back from the battlefield in the hue and cry that was created when the disbeliever's army attacked the Muslims from behind. Allah (SWT) says that it was the Satan who made them slip and thus they failed to fulfill their duty. Satan made them err because of their previous faults, otherwise he could not have overcome them. One of the Companions who left the battlefield was Uthman (RA). The enemies of the Companions take this as a reason to curse and hate Uthman (RA) and other Companions of the Prophet (RA) even though Allah (SWT) said: *"But Allah (SWT), indeed, has forgiven them. Surely, Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing."* Allah has pardoned them; He is Forgiving and Merciful.

#### **Foot Notes**

- [1] Fath Al-Bari 7 : 365.
- [2] Sahih Bukhari 4 : 276.
- [3] Sahih Muslim 6 : 13.
- [4] Fath Al-Bari 7 : 22.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

(156) *“O you who believe! Be not like those who disbelieve and who say to their brethren when they travel through the earth or go out to fight; "If they had stayed with us, they would not have died or been killed,"”* This refers to the hypocrites who do not have faith in Allah (SWT). They do not believe in the fact that the decrees of Allah (SWT) are inevitable and cannot be changed. They believe that if their friends and relatives would not have traveled or fought in the way of Allah (SWT) then they would have not died and surely would have been alive. But Allah (SWT) says: *“so that Allah (SWT) may make it a cause of regret in their hearts.”* i.e. because of this thought, they feel grief and sorrow in their loss. And Allah (SWT) says: *“It is Allah (SWT) that gives life and causes death. And Allah (SWT) is All-Seer of what you do.”* i.e. Nothing can happen without Allah’s (SWT) will and it is Allah (SWT) who ordains life and death. This is the essence of faith and the basic difference between a believer and a non-believer. Believers wholly trust Allah (SWT) and submit to Him. They believe that Allah (SWT) holds control over every living thing and nothing occurs without His permission and knowledge. On the contrary, non-believers do not have faith in Allah (SWT), thus they perceive the whole world as a pure coincidence or chance happening. He (SWT) has knowledge of all your actions.

(157) *“And if you are killed or die in the way of Allah (SWT), forgiveness and mercy from Allah (SWT) are far better than all that they amass.”* This means, that those who die or are killed in Allah’s (SWT) cause, earn His mercy and forgiveness which is far better for them than the worldly delights that they will enjoy in this life if they would have stayed alive a little longer. His mercy would surely be better than all the riches they amass.

(158) *“And whether you die, or are killed, verily, unto Allah (SWT) you shall be gathered.”* i.e. whether you die a natural death or you are killed in the way of Allah

(SWT), the fact remains that you all shall be brought before Him. Before Him you shall all be gathered.

(159) *“And by the mercy of Allah (SWT), you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh hearted, they would have deserted you; so pardon them and ask forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs.”* This *ayah* describes that it is Allah’s (SWT) mercy that He has made Prophet Muhammad’s (SAW) heart soft and gentle for his *Ummah*. He has made him full of kindness and mercy for the believers and this is why He has given him the title of *“Mercy to all the creations”*. In another *ayah* *Qur’an* says that it grieves Prophet Muhammad (SAW) if his *Ummah* is in difficulty and always prays for them so that they are rightly guided. On the other hand, Allah (SWT) says that if Prophet’s behavior would have been severe and harsh with his followers then they would surely have deserted him. But Allah (SWT) had made them gather around him because he does not deal with them severely. If they make mistakes, he forgives and implores Allah (SWT) to forgive them. Further this *ayah* indicates that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) always consulted his Companions (RA) for advice in different matters as he did before the Battle of *Uhud* when he asked his Companions (RA), whether to stay in *Madinah* or go out and meet the enemy in the open. Then Allah (SWT) said: *“Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah (SWT).”* i.e. whatever the decision is made after the consultation then stick to it and put your trust in Allah (SWT). *“certainly, Allah (SWT) loves those who put their trust in Him.”*

This *ayah* is also important regarding the leadership of an Islamic movement. It gives us an important clue as to what qualities should a leader (*Ameer*) of an Islamic party possess. It describes the characteristics of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a leader, a perfect example for all to follow.

(160) *“If Allah (SWT) helps you, none can overcome you; and if He forsakes you, who is there after Him that can help you?”* This means that if you struggle hard and devote yourself in Allah’s (SWT) cause, He will surely help you and no one will be able to defeat you. But if He forsakes you because of your own deeds then there will be none to help you after Him. *“And in Allah (SWT) (Alone) let believers put their trust.”*

(161) *“It is not for any Prophet to take illegally a part of booty”* After the battle of Badr some hypocrites accused the holy Prophet (SAW) of taking a red robe illegally from the booty, but Allah (SWT) warns these people for entertaining such evil thoughts and exonerates His Prophet (SAW) of deceit and treachery. *“and whosoever deceives his companions as regards the booty, he shall bring forth on the Day of Resurrection that which he took.”* This *ayah* contains a warning against those who steal from the booty. It states that whoever betrays the trust and steals from the booty then whatever he has stolen will be brought forth from him on the *Day of Judgment*. Further Allah (SWT) says: *“Then every person shall be paid in full what he has earned and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.”* i.e. they will be dealt according to their deeds; none shall be wronged.

(162) *“Is then one who follows (seeks) the good Pleasure of Allah (SWT) like the one who draws on himself the Wrath of Allah (SWT)? His abode is Hell, and worst indeed is that destination!”* The one who seeks Allah’s (SWT) pleasure refers to those who follow His commandments and do not take anything illegally from the booty, and those who have incurred the wrath of Allah (SWT) refers to those who betray their companion’s trust and steal from the booty. They are the people of hellfire and they will remain in it forever. Can the man who seeks to please Allah (SWT) be compared to him who has incurred his wrath? Hell shall be his home. Evil indeed shall be his fate.

(163) *"Varied are their positions with Allah (SWT)"* i.e. Allah (SWT) grades the people of righteousness and people of evil. It means that there are different levels of Paradise for the believers, similarly there are various degrees of punishment and hell for the evildoers and hypocrites. *"and Allah (SWT) is All-Seer of what they do."* i.e. He knows who deserves what rank or grade as He sees all their deeds. Allah (SWT) is fully cognizant, of what they do.

(164) *"Indeed Allah (SWT) conferred a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting unto them His revelations and purifying them, and instructing them the Book (the Qur'an) and the wisdom, while before that they had been in manifest error."* This *ayah* has already been commented upon in *ayah* 151 of surah *Al-Baqarah* which talks about the blessing Allah (SWT) bestowed upon mankind in the advent of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Allah (SWT) sent Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a response to the prayer of Prophet Abraham (AS) and Ishmael (AS), when they supplicated to their Lord to send a Messenger amongst their descendants. Therefore, Allah (SWT) accepted their supplication and sent Prophet Muhammad (SAW) amongst their offspring who recites the Book of Allah (SWT) i.e. the *Qur'an*, to the believers and purifies them from all evils with it, as Allah (SWT) said in another *ayah*: *"We have revealed the Qur'an which is a healing and a mercy to the believers..."*<sup>2</sup> Further the Prophet (SAW) teaches the believers *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, whereas before that they were lost in error and were clearly astray.

(165) *"When a single disaster befell you" "although you inflicted (your enemies) losses twice as great, you say: "From where does this come to us?"*" This *ayah* refers to the hypocrites who after the Battle of *Uhud* started to doubt the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) because of their heavy losses and defeat, but this *ayah* states that they themselves inflicted losses twice as heavy on the enemy in the battle of *Badr* when they killed seventy of

them and captured seventy others so why should they say: "why did this defeat happen to us". So Allah (SWT) answers them: "*Say (to them), "It is from yourselves."* i.e. it is indeed your own fault that you have suffered in the *Battle of Badr* when you (i.e. the archers) disobeyed the Prophet (SAW) and abandoned their positions. "*And Allah (SWT) has power over all things."* i.e. He does what He wills and no one can change His decision. Allah (SWT) is all-Powerful i.e., Omnipotent.

(166) "*And what you suffered on the day when the two armies met, was ordained by Allah (SWT)*" This means, that whatever losses the Muslims suffered in the *Battle of Badr*, it was by Allah's (SWT) will and by His perfect wisdom. He controls everything and nothing happens outside of His will, because all matters rest exclusively with Him. "*In order that He might test the believers."* i.e. He tests them with trials and tribulations so that to distinguish those who are patient, firm and steadfast amongst them. He (SWT) does this so that He might distinguish the true believers and the hypocrites.

(167) "*And that He might test the hypocrites*" This *ayah* refers to the chief of hypocrites, Abdullah bin Ubay, who left the battlefield along with his 300 men and returned to *Madinah*. "*It was said to them: "Come, fight in the Way of Allah (SWT) or (at least) defend yourselves."*" When Abdullah bin Ubay was leaving with his men, some of the 700 Muslims left in the battlefield followed them and tried to persuade him to come back and fight against the 3000 strong *Quraysh* army for the sake of Allah (SWT). When that did not appeal them they tried to convince them to at least fight to defend their city of *Madinah*, when it is being threatened by the enemy. But "*They said: "Had we known that fighting will take place, we would certainly have followed you."*" i.e. if we would have known that you are going to fight today with the unbelievers then we would certainly have followed you in the battlefield. "*They were that day, nearer to disbelief than to Faith, saying with their mouths what was not in their hearts."* They pretended to be as Muslims but

they were nearer to disbelief as they conceal extreme enmity and hatred against the believers but do not utter what they believe in. *“And Allah (SWT) has full knowledge of what they conceal.”* i.e. He knows the hypocrites and what they conceal in their hearts against the believers. Allah (SWT) knew their secret thoughts.

(168) *“They are the ones who said about their killed brethren while they themselves sat (at home)”* Again this *ayah* refers Abdullah bin Ubay who returned to *Madinah* with his 300 men from his way to the battlefield. They said: *“If only they had listened to us, they would not have been killed.”* i.e. if the Muslims would have listened to our advice and not go out in the battlefield but would have stayed with us, then they would not have died or been killed. But Allah (SWT) said: *“Say: “Avert death from your ownelves, if you speak the truth.”* i.e. even though you stayed in *Madinah*, if death suddenly comes to any of you, you will not be able to avoid it. So if you are truthful in what you claim then try to ward off death from yourselves.

(169) *“Think not of those who are killed in the Way of Allah (SWT) as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they are well provided by their Lord.”* This subject has already been mentioned in *ayah* 154 of surah *Al-Baqarah*. Allah (SWT) says that never think of those persons who are martyred in the way of Allah (SWT) as dead. In fact they are alive enjoying an eternal life and He also provides them with sustenance as Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *“The martyrs convene at the shore of a river close to the door of Paradise, in a green tent, where there provisions are brought to them from Paradise day and night”<sup>3</sup>.*

(170) *“They rejoice in what Allah (SWT) has bestowed upon them of His Bounty, rejoicing for the sake of those who have not yet joined them, but are left behind (not yet martyred) that on them no fear shall come, nor shall they grieve.”* i.e. the martyrs are pleased of what Allah (SWT) has given them from His unlimited bounties and they

are also happy to think that there is nothing to fear or to regret for those of their brothers whom they have left behind and who have not yet joined them in their bliss i.e. they are not yet martyred.

(171) *“They rejoice in a Grace and a Bounty from Allah (SWT), and that Allah (SWT) will not waste the reward of the believers.”* i.e. the martyrs are happy to receive Allah’s (SWT) grace and bounty and they are pleased that Allah (SWT) has fulfilled His promise and given them tremendous rewards. And surely the reward of the faithful is not lost. Allah (SWT) will not deny the faithful their reward.

### **Foot Notes**

[1] Surah Sajdah (32) : 18.

[2] Surah Bani-Israel (17) : 82.

[3] Musnad Ahmed 1 : 266.

(172) *“Those who answered (the Call of) Allah (SWT) and the Messenger (SAW) after being wounded”* After the battle of *Uhud* the *Quraysh* marched back to *Makkah* but soon they realized that they did not achieve what they had gone for i.e. to finish off the Muslims, so they turned back and headed towards *Madinah* for a final encounter. At the same time Prophet (SAW) commanded the Muslims to march towards the disbelievers at a place called *Hamra Al-Asad*. Even though the Muslims were still suffering from the wounds of the *battle of Badr*, yet they responded to the call and marched with the holy Prophet (SAW). For them Allah (SWT) says: *“for those of them who did good deeds and feared Allah (SWT), there is a great reward.”* i.e. He will certainly reward them for their patience and obedience. For them Allah shall have ample reward.

(173) *“Those unto whom the people said, "Verily, the people have gathered against you, therefore, fear them." But it (only) increased them in Faith”* After the *battle of Uhud*, the *Quraysh* army challenged the Muslims to a fight the following year at *Badr*. When the time came the hypocrites tried to spread rumors that the *Quraysh* were making great preparations for the war and they have mustered a great army against them. But it did not worry the Muslims; rather, it increased them in faith and they marched towards *Badr*. They had all their trust in Allah (SWT) and, *“they said: "Allah (SWT) (Alone) is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs."* Allah's help is all-sufficient for us. He is the best protector.

(174) *“So they returned with Grace and Bounty from Allah (SWT). No harm touched them; and they followed the good Pleasure of Allah (SWT).”* The *Quraysh* army left *Makkah* and advanced towards *Badr* to fight the Muslims as they had promised them the previous year after the *battle of Uhud*, but just after 2 days of traveling they decided to return back to *Makkah* and asked the Muslims to fight them the next year as they did not find it suitable to fight that year. Meanwhile the Muslims stayed at *Badr* for 8 days. During their stay they did a lot of profitable business with trading parties and when they came to know that the disbelievers have gone back to *Makkah*, they returned to *Madinah*. This way Allah (SWT) helped them and they returned to their land with grace and

provisions provided by Him by following the pleasure of Allah (SWT). And surely, "Allah (SWT) is the Owner of Great Bounty." Allah's bounty is infinite.

(175) *"It is only Satan that suggests to you the fear of his followers, so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are (true) believers."* The Satan frightens the believers with his partners and supporters by pretending that they are strong and fearsome. But Allah (SWT) commands the believers, not to fear them but only fear Him alone and surely He will suffice you.

(176) *"And let not those grieve you, who rush with haste to disbelieve; verily, not the least harm will they do to Allah (SWT). It is Allah's (SWT) Will to give them no share in the Hereafter."* The stubbornness and the deviance of the disbelievers made the Prophet (SAW) sad. But Allah (SWT) said to His Prophet not to grieve by their behavior because the disbelievers can do absolutely no harm to Him or His Messenger (SAW) and it is by His will that they are being given respite, so that they increase in their deviation and thus do not acquire any share in the Hereafter. And *"For them there is a great torment."* i.e. in the Hereafter their punishment shall be terrible indeed.

(177) *"Verily, those who purchase disbelief at the price of Faith, not the least harm will they do to Allah (SWT). For them, there is a painful torment."* i.e. the disbelievers could have attained faith if they would have believed in Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW), but they have chosen disbelief over faith and their actions and behavior will do no harm to Allah (SWT) rather, they will harm themselves. And for them will be a painful punishment in the Hereafter.

(178) *"And let not the disbelievers think that Our respite to them is good for them. We give them respite only so that they may increase in sinfulness. And for them is a disgracing torment."* i.e. the disbelievers should not think that if Allah (SWT) is giving them wealth and children then it means that they will be forgiven or left alone and their evil deeds will not be taken account of but in fact Allah (SWT) gives them respite so that they may increase in their sins and deviation and thus suffer great torment in the Hereafter. Theirs shall be a shameful punishment.

(179) *"Allah (SWT) will not leave the believers in the state in which you are now, until He distinguishes the wicked from the good."* This means that Allah (SWT) does not like to see the believers mixed up with the hypocrites. Therefore, by trials and tribulations He separates the impure from the pure and the evil from the good within them. *"Nor will Allah (SWT) disclose to you the secrets of the unseen, but Allah (SWT) chooses of His Messengers whom He pleases."* i.e. Allah (SWT) out of His wisdom does not give the knowledge of the unseen to His servants so that they can distinguish between a believer and a hypocrite, but for this purpose He chooses one of His servants as His Messenger who delivers His message. *"So believe in Allah (SWT) and His Messengers. And if you believe and fear Allah (SWT), then for you there is a great reward."* Allah (SWT) promises His servants blessings and reward in the Hereafter if they believe in Him and His Messenger and guard themselves against evil.

(180) *"And let not those who are stingy with that which Allah (SWT) has bestowed on them of His Bounty (Wealth) think that it is good for them. Nay, it will be worse for them."* The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) urged the believers to spend in Allah's (SWT) cause, but the hypocrites would covetously withhold their wealth and property thinking it would benefit them in the future. But this *ayah* indicates that a niggardly person only harms himself by only collecting money and not spending it in the way of Allah (SWT). *"The things that they stingy with shall be tied to their necks like a collar on the Day of Resurrection."* This is as the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"Whoever is made wealthy by Allah (SWT) and does not pay Zakah on his wealth, on the Day of Judgment it will become a bald-headed, poisonous, male snake with two black spots over his eyes. The snake, on the Day of Judgment, will encircle his neck, and bite his cheeks and say: 'I am your treasure, I am your wealth.'"*<sup>1</sup> Further Allah (SWT) says: *"And to Allah (SWT) belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth"* i.e. everything belongs to Him and ultimately it has to return to Him as His inheritance. *"And Allah (SWT) is Well-Acquainted with all that you do."* He is fully cognizant, of what you do.

(181) *"Indeed, Allah (SWT) has heard the statement of those who say: 'Truly, Allah (SWT) is poor and we are rich!'"* We shall record what they have said and their killing of the Prophets unjustly,

and We shall say: "Taste you the torment of the burning (Fire)."" When Allah (SWT) revealed the *ayah*: "Who will grant Allah (SWT) a goodly loan which Allah (SWT) will increase many fold"<sup>2</sup>, the *Jews* mocked at the believers and ridiculed this commandment saying, 'O Muhammad (SAW), have your Lord become poor as He is begging His servants for a loan'. Then Allah (SWT) revealed this *ayah* which states that this has been the practice of the *Jews* throughout the history who ridiculed His commandments and killed His Messengers. And Allah (SWT) says that He will punish them for their deeds and they will burn in the hellfire.

(182) "This is because of that (evil) which your hands have sent before you. And certainly, Allah (SWT) is never unjust to (His) slaves." i.e. Allah (SWT) is not unjust to His creatures and the only reason of their disgrace and humiliation in the Hereafter will be because of their own evil deeds in this world. Allah (SWT) is not unjust to His servants.

(183) "Those (*Jews*) who said: "Verily, Allah (SWT) has taken our promise not to believe in any Messenger unless he brings to us an offering which the fire (from heaven) shall devour."" This is another of the lies of the *Jews* attributed to Allah (SWT). They said that Allah (SWT) has taken a covenant from us that we should not believe in any Messenger until a fire comes down from the sky and burns the charity (sacrificial goat etc). Burnt sacrifices are indeed mentioned in the previous scriptures that it was a sign from Allah (SWT) that He has accepted the sacrifice but it was never mentioned to them as a sign of true Prophethood as they proclaim. Then Allah (SWT) said: "Say: "Verily, there came to you Messengers before me, with clear signs and even with what you speak of; why then did you kill them, if you are truthful?"" i.e. if what you claim is true then why did you kill and denied previous Messengers who came with clear signs and even those miracles which you speak of.

(184) "Then if they reject you, so were Messengers rejected before you, who came with clear signs and the Scripture and the Book of Enlightenment." Allah (SWT) comforts His Prophet (SAW), not to become sad because they reject you as they have rejected many Messengers before you who also were sent with divine scriptures and were given the law.

(185) *“Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your rewards in full.”* Everything except Allah (SWT) shall perish. When the term of this world comes to an end no soul will be given respite as Allah (SWT) says: *“But Allah reprieves no soul when its term comes to an end. Allah (SWT) is well aware of all your actions.”*<sup>3</sup> And Allah (SWT) will gather them all on the *Day of Resurrection* and surely He will not be unjust with them but every single soul will be dealt with according to his deeds. *“And whoever is spared the Fire and admitted to Paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception.”* The transitory life of this world is nothing but an illusory enjoyment and insubstantial as compared to the eternal delights of the Hereafter. Thus whoever is saved from the hellfire and enters Paradise, then indeed he has achieved the ultimate success. The life of this world is nothing but a fleeting vanity.

(186) *“You shall certainly be tested in your wealth and properties and in your personal selves, and you shall certainly hear much that will grieve you from those who received the Scripture before you and from those who ascribe partners to Allah (SWT), but if you persevere patiently, and have Taqwa (piety), then verily, that is surely a matter of firm resolution.”* Allah (SWT) states that the believers will be tested in their wealth, properties, offspring and their lives and they will hear many hurtful things from the People of the Book and from the Polytheists to ridicule the Prophet (SAW) and other things provocative to the believers. But if they observe patience and show piety then it will be a proof of their determination and it will surely distinguish them from those who lack in zeal and genuine belief. If they endure with fortitude and guard themselves against evil, they will prove their mettle (???).

(187) *“And remember when Allah (SWT) took a covenant from those who were given the Scripture to make it (the truth) known and clear to mankind, and not to hide it”* This *ayah* again mentions the covenant Allah (SWT) took from the People of the Book that they would surely believe in their scriptures and will disseminate them and make them clear to the mankind and will not hide anything from it, so that the people also believe and follow their scriptures. *“But they cast the scriptures behind their backs, and sold them for a paltry price! And indeed evil was their bargain!”* i.e. they

broke their covenant and hid the truth from the people in order to gain some temporary material benefits of this world instead of the rewards and blessings in the Hereafter, and it is indeed a bad bargain that they have made.

(188) *“Think not that those who rejoice in what they have done and love to be praised for what they have not done, think not that they are secure from the punishment. And for them is a painful torment.”* This *ayah* refers to the hypocrites of *Madinah*. When the Prophet (SAW) would go to the battle, the hypocrites would not accompany him. Instead they would give something in charity to show off and then would rejoice over it. But when the Prophet would come back, they would give him much excuses of not going with the Muslims to the battle and then wanted to be praised for that which they have done i.e. not accompanying the Prophet (SAW) to the battle. But Allah (SWT) says that they shall not think that they will be saved from the punishment, rather they will have a very painful torment. They will not escape the torture. A woeful punishment awaits them.

(189) *“And to Allah (SWT) belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and Allah (SWT) has power over all things.”* i.e. Allah (SWT) is the supreme authority; He alone owns the heavens and the earth; He decides in them whatever He wills; He forbids and repeals whatever He wills and upholds whatever He wills and He has power over everything.

From here begins the concluding part of this surah which also gives the summary of this surah as a whole.

(190) *“Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding.”* This *ayah* gives the proofs of the existence and oneness of Allah (SWT) in the creation of skies and earth. There are galaxies and planets in this vast universe and rivers, mountains, trees, deserts and different kinds of animals on this planet, and the rotation of earth causing the alternation of day and night. All these are clear signs and proofs of Allah’s (SWT) Oneness for those who are intelligent and have sound comprehension. This in brief is the so-called Quranic cosmological argument for the existence and reality of Allah (SWT) — the Creator of everything.

(191) *"Those who remember Allah (SWT) standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth, (saying): "Our Lord! You have not created this without purpose, glory to You! Save us from the torment of the Fire.""* Those who contemplate about the true realities and observe the universe conclude that surely there is a creator of the heavens and the earth and that there is life after death, when every soul will be held accountable for its deeds. This realization fills their heart with Allah's (SWT) fear and they remember Him in every situation and they praise Him and deny that He has created everything in vain and without purpose and they pray to Him to save them from the Hellfire.

(192) *"Our Lord! Verily, whom You admit to the Fire, indeed, You have disgraced him, and never will the wrong-doers find any helpers."* They further supplicate to Allah (SWT) to save them from being disgraced like the inmates of hellfire, on the day when there will be no helper or protector except Him. None will help the evil-doers.

(193) *"Our Lord! Verily, we have heard the call of one calling to Faith (saying): 'Believe in your Lord', and we have believed."* This refers to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who called people towards the oneness of Allah (SWT). The faithful believers responded to his call and followed him and they prayed to Allah (SWT) saying: *"Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and remove from us our evil deeds, and make us die in the company of the righteous."* i.e. make us die with the righteous and keep us in their company in the Hereafter.

(194) *"Our Lord! Grant us what You promised unto us through Your Messengers and disgrace us not on the Day of Resurrection"* They pray to their Lord to grant them what He had promised them through His Messengers i.e. His mercy and forgiveness. And they supplicate to Him not to humiliate them on that day before all His creation by making them enter the hellfire, and they say: *"for You never break Your Promise."* This does not mean that they had any doubts about the promises of Allah (SWT) but they feared whether they are themselves entitled to the blessings that have been promised or not.

(195) *"So their Lord answered them saying: "I will deny no man or woman among you the reward of their labour."* Allah (SWT) accepted the supplication of the faithful believers and said that He will never waste any of their good deeds, rather He will completely reward them whether it be a male or a female. In Islam the status of the two sexes is equal and their distinction does not count in spiritual matters because they are all equal in gaining Allah's (SWT) reward, and that is why He said: *"You are the offspring of one another"* i.e. you are all members of one and the same human race and thus you are all equal to one another. Further Allah (SWT) said: *"so those who emigrated and were driven out from their homes, and suffered harm in My Cause, and who fought, and were killed (in My Cause). Verily, I will remit from them their evil deeds and admit them into Gardens under which rivers flow;"* i.e. those who fled their homes or were expelled from them, and those that suffered persecution and fought and died for My cause, shall be forgiven their sins and admitted to gardens watered by running streams as a reward from Allah. *"A reward from Allah (SWT), and with Allah (SWT) is the best of rewards."* i.e. what better reward can there be than which is from Allah (SWT) Himself. It is indeed Allah who holds the richest recompense.

(196) *"Do not be deceived by the activities and moving about of the unbelievers in this land."* i.e. the influence and the delights enjoyed by the disbelievers in this transitory world should not deceive and delude you.

(197) *"A brief enjoyment; then their ultimate abode is Hell; and worst indeed is that place for rest."* What the disbelievers are enjoying in this world is only temporary but in the Hereafter they will be punished in the Hellfire, which is the severest of the punishments. Their prosperity is brief. Hell shall be their home, a dismal restingplace.

(198) *"But, for those who fear their Lord, are Gardens under which rivers flow; therein are they to dwell (for ever)"* In the previous *ayah* Allah (SWT) mentions that the abode of a disbeliever in the Hereafter is hellfire. On the contrary this *ayah* states that those who believe in Allah (SWT) and fear Him, Paradise awaits them in the Hereafter with rivers and all kinds of delights and they will live therein forever.

And the *ayah* states: *"a Nuzul from Allah (SWT)"* Nuzul is the immediate food or drink served to a guest upon his arrival. This means that all these delights and enjoyments that Allah (SWT) has promised the believers, will be given to them upon arrival in the Paradise as a goodly welcome from Him while the actual delights of the Paradise for a believer surpass the imagination and defy description, as the Prophet (SAW) said that Allah (SWT) said, *"I have prepared for My slaves what no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no human heart can imagine"*<sup>4</sup> They are really not known to the people of this world, no matter how advanced we may become, what we achieve is as nothing in comparison with the delights a believer will have in the Hereafter. *"and that which is with Allah (SWT) is the Best for the righteous."* i.e. His forgiveness and mercy and all the delights and the enjoyments He has prepared for the believers are surely far better for the righteous.

(199) *"And there are, certainly, among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), those who believe in Allah (SWT) and in that which has been revealed to you, and in that which has been revealed to them, humbling themselves before Allah (SWT)."* This *ayah* describes those People of the Book who eventually embraced Islam. Allah (SWT) states that among them are some who believe in Him and in what He has revealed to His Prophet (SAW), along with the previous scriptures. Further Allah (SWT) describes their qualities that they sincerely obey Him and humble themselves before Him, and *"They do not sell the Verses of Allah (SWT) for a little price"* i.e. they do not hide the truth and knowledge of their scriptures from other people for a trifling price. Therefore Allah (SWT) said: *"for them is a reward with their Lord."* i.e. He will reward them for their faith in Him and His Messengers. And *"Surely, Allah (SWT) is Swift in account."* These shall be rewarded by their Lord. Swift is Allah's reckoning.

(200) *"O you who believe! Endure and be more patient, and strengthen each other, and fear Allah (SWT), so that you may be successful."* Allah (SWT) commands His believers to be patient and show more valor and endurance than their enemy. And they should guard their territory against their enemy from possible incursions and fear Allah (SWT), so that they can be successful in this world and most importantly in the Hereafter.

## Foot Notes

- [1] Fath Al-Bari 8 : 78.
- [2] Surah Al-Baqarah (2) : 245.
- [3] Surah Al-Munafiqun (63) : 11.
- [4] Fath Al-Bari 8 : 375.